KH 505
Phil 15.5 F

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 27. SUNDAY, JULY 4, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE OLD WAX NOSE.

V.—MIRACLES AND WITCHCRAFT.

DR. FARRAR, as we have seen, holds that the Bible is not a revelation in science. The inspired writers were, in such matters, left to their natural knowledge. The Holy Spirit taught them that God made the world and all which it inhabits; but *how* it was made they only conjectured. The truth, in *this* respect, was left to the discovery of later ages.

This is a pretty and convenient theory. But it does not get rid of every difficulty in the relationship between science and the Bible. There still remains the question of miracles.

Dr. Farrar does not discuss this question thoroughly. He only ventures a few observations. In his opinion, the two miracles of the Creation and the Incarnation "include the credibility of *all* other miracles." We agree with him. Admit creation out of nothing, and there is nothing to be astonished at in the transformation of water into wine. Admit the birth of a boy from a virgin mother, and you need not raise physiological objections to the story of a man being safely entertained for three days in a whale's intestines. It is absurd to strain at gnats after swallowing camels. For this reason we are unable to understand Dr. Farrar's fastidiousness. He is ready to believe that some miracles are mistaken metaphors, that some were due to the action of unnoticed or ill-understood natural causes, and that others were providential occurrences instead of supernatural events. All this, however, is but a concession to the sceptical spirit. It is throwing out the children to the wolves. It may stop their pursuit for a little while. But they will come on again, and will flesh their jaws upon the parents.

A mixed criterion of true miracles is laid down by Dr. Farrar. They must be (1) adequately attested, and (2) wrought for adequate ends, and (3) in accordance with the revealed laws of God's immediate dealings with man. The second and third conditions are too fanciful for discussion. They are, in fact, entirely subjective. The first condition is the only one which can be applied with decisive accuracy. The miracles must be *adequately attested*. Good. But was it not David Hume who declared that "in all history" there was not a single miracle attested in this manner? And did not Professor Huxley say that Hume's assertion was "least likely" to be challenged by those who are used to weighing evidence and giving their decision with a due sense of moral responsibility?

It is easy enough to sneer at Hume. It is just as easy to answer what he never said. What the apologists of Christianity have to do is to take a single miracle of their faith and show that it rests upon adequate evidence. Anything short of this is intellectual thimble-rigging.

Dr. Farrar does not face this dreadful task. He treats us, instead, to some personal observations on the Fall, the Tower of Babel, Balaam's ass, Joshua's arrest of the sun and moon, and Jonah's submarine excursion. Let us examine these observations.

No Christian, says Dr. Farrar, is called upon to believe in an actual Garden of Eden and an actual talking serpent. Christians *have* believed in these things by the million. But that was before the clergy invented "the Higher Criticism" to disarm "infidelity." They know better now. The story of the Fall is false as a narrative. It is true as a "vivid pictorial representation of the origin and growth of sin in the human heart." All the literature of the world has failed to set forth anything "comparable to it in insight." Therefore it is "inspired."

How hollow this sounds when we recollect that the Hebrew story of the Fall was borrowed from the Persian mythology! How much hollower when we consider it as it stands, stripped of the veil of fancy and divested of the glamor of association! The "insight" of the inspired writer could only represent God as the landlord of an orchard, and man as a being with a taste for forbidden apples. The "philosopheme," as Dr. Farrar grandiosely styles it, is so absurd in its native nakedness that Rabbis and other divines have suspected a carnal mystery behind the apples, in order to give the "sin" of Adam and Eve a darker vein of sensuality.

Nor is this all. The very idea of a Fall is inconsistent with Evolution. The true Garden of Eden lies not behind us, but before us. The true Paradise is not the earth as God made it for man, but the earth as man will make it for himself. The Bible teaches the *descent* of man. Science teaches the *ascent* of man. And the two theories are the antipodes of each other, not only in physical history, but in every moral and spiritual implication.

With regard to the story of the tower of Babel, we must not regard it as an inspired account of the origin of the diversity of human language. That is what it appears to be upon the face of it. But philology has exploded this childish legend, and a new meaning must be read into it. According to Dr. Farrar, it is a "symbolic way of expressing the truth that God breaks up into separate nationalities the tyrannous organization of cruel despotisms." Now we venture to say that there is not a suggestion of this in the text. And the "truth" which Dr. Farrar reads into it so arbitrarily is a phenomenon of modern times. Nationality is a great force at present, but in ancient days the only power that could bind tribes together in one polity was a military despotism. From the point of view of evolution, both conquest and slavery were inevitable steps in the progress of civilization. It is really nothing against the ancient Jews, for instance, that they fought like devils and made slaves of their enemies. It was the fashion of the time. The mischief comes in when we are told that their proceedings were under the sanction and control of God.

Dr. Farrar next tackles the story of Balaam, which is "another theme for ignorant ridicule." It is astonishing how sublime these Bible wonders become in the light of the Higher Criticism. A talking ass sounds like an echo of the Arabian Nights. But the author himself never intended you to believe it. Dr. Farrar is quite sure of that. You must forget the ass, and fix your attention on Balaam. Then you perceive that the story is "rich in almost unrivalled elements of moral edification." That is to say, you perceive it if you borrow Dr. Farrar's spectacles. But if you look with your naked eyes you see that ass in the foreground of the picture, with outstretched neck and open jaws, holding forth to an astonished universe.

With regard to Joshua's supreme miracle, Dr. Farrar avows his unbelief. A battle ode got mistaken for actual history. "He who chooses," says Dr. Farrar, "may believe that the most fundamental laws of the universe were arrested to enable Joshua to slaughter a few more hundred fugitives; and he who chooses may believe that nothing of the kind even entered into the mind of the narrator." You pay your money and take your choice.

Digitized by Google

Shape the old wax nose as you please. Believe what you like, and disbelieve what you like—and swear the author disbelieved it too. This is a free country, especially for Christians.

Nor must the story of Jonah be taken literally. Regard the moral, and forget its fishy setting. Jesus Christ, indeed, referred to Jonah's sojourn in the "whale's belly" as typical of his own sojourn in the heart of the earth. But referring to a story is no proof of any belief in its truth. Not in the Bible. Jesus Christ also said, "Remember Lot's wife." But of course he did not believe the story literally. He used it for his own purpose. For the rest, he did not wish to unsettle men's minds by throwing doubt on such a time-honored narrative; besides, the time had not arrived to explain the chemical composition of rock salt.

Witchcraft is a more serious matter. The Bible plainly says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This text sealed the doom of millions of old women. It is the bloodiest text in all literature. The Jews believed in witchcraft, and the law against witches found its way into their sacred Scriptures. Sir Matthew Hale, a great English judge and a good man, sentenced witches to be burnt in 1665, and said that he made no doubt at all that there were witches, for "the Scriptures had affirmed so much." Wesley, a century later, said that to give up witchcraft was to give up the Bible. Dr. Farrar sets down these facts honestly. He is also eloquent in reprobation of the cruelty inflicted on millions of "witches" in the Middle Ages. But he denies that the Bible is responsible for those infamies. "Witches" in the Bible may not mean witches, but "nefarious impostors." Good old wax nose again! Besides, that ancient Jewish law was not binding upon Christians, and to make it so was "a gross misuse of the Bible." But how on earth could the Christians use it in any other way? The time came when men outgrew the superstition of witchcraft. Before that time they killed witches on Bible authority. Dr. Farrar himself, had he lived then, would have done the same. Living in a more enlightened age, he says that former Christians acted wrongly, and in fact diabolically. But what of the book which misled them? What of the book which, if it did not mislead them by design, harmonized so completely with their ignorant prejudices, and gave such a pious color to their unspeakable brutalities? Nor is this by any means the last word upon the subject. The witchcraft of the Old Testament has its counterpart in the demoniacal possession of the New Testament. Both are aspects of one and the same superstition. The Bible *is* responsible for the cruel slaughter of millions of alleged witches. It is also responsible for the prolonged treatment of lunatics as possessed. The methods of science are now adopted in civilized countries. Hysterical women are no longer tortured as witches. Lunatics are no longer chained and beaten as persons inhabited by devils. Kindness and common sense have taken the place of cruelty and superstition. This change was brought about, not through the Bible, but in spite of it. Sir Matthew Hale and John Wesley were at least honest. They were too sincere to deny the plain teaching of the Bible. Dr. Farrar represents a more enlightened, but a more hypocritical, form of Christianity. He sneers at "reconcilers" like Mr. Gladstone, who try to bolster up the Creation story as a scientific revelation. But is he not a "reconciler" himself in regard to miracles? And does he not play fast and loose with truth and honesty in his attempt to clear the Bible of its guilty responsibility in connection with that witch mania which is one of the darkest episodes in Christian history?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

We may bid farewell to Paul's doctrine of the Atonement. That belief is bound up with the belief in the Fall of Adam, and the Fall of Adam is now abandoned as a fact even by orthodox theologians, though they would fain substitute for it some lapse of the human race from a more perfect state, without any proof either of the more perfect state or of the lapse. As was said before, if there was no Fall, there was no need of an Atonement; if no need of an Atonement, there was no need of an Incarnation; and that whole cycle of dogma apparently falls to the ground.—*Goldwin Smith.*

SIXTY YEARS OF FREETHOUGHT.

(Concluded from page 403.)

CHARLES BRADLAUGH was elected M.P. for Northampton on April 2, 1880, polling 3,827 votes. This was the beginning of a six years' conflict for constitutional rights—so fierce that I doubt if any other man could have emerged triumphant even at the expense of his life. An outcry against an Atheist being allowed to sit in Parliament rose from every bigot, from Cardinal Manning downward. Every vested interest in England was arrayed against Bradlaugh. This is not the place to enter into details of the constitutional struggle,* ever memorable to all who took any part therein. Bradlaugh acted with judgment, determination, and unceasing vigilance. Every movement of their leader was seconded with zeal and devotion by his followers. He first asked to be allowed to affirm. A committee appointed to consider his claim reported against it. He then claimed to take the oath. Another committee reported against this, but recommended that he be allowed to affirm at his legal peril. How, for doing this, it was sought to ruin him by legal penalties; how he made Newdigate smart for bringing his action; how the Court of Appeal decided that none but Quakers, Moravians, and Separatists were entitled to affirm in Parliament; how, the seat vacated, he was returned again and again by his constituents; how petitions were got up for and against the Atheist, and many meetings throughout the country held in his favor, and one abortive meeting against him; and how he was excluded and violently ejected from Parliament, when it needed but a word from his faithful stalwarts to have hurled the whole House of Commons into the Thames—will ever be fresh in the minds of those who took part in that determined struggle. I must dwell only on one of the attempts to ruin him.

Events having forced Mr. Bradlaugh's organ, the *National Reformer*, to become political, Mr. Foote started the *Freethinker*, tentatively as a monthly, in May, 1881. It became a weekly in September, and with the New Year I became "sub." From the first this paper gave its thorough support to Mr. Bradlaugh; but the machinations of the bigots made it a serious embarrassment to him. Its policy of aggressive war on superstition and bigotry gave great offence. Our first number bore the imprint of the Freethought Publishing Company, with which Mr. Bradlaugh was avowedly connected. Yet he never had the slightest share in its production. The imprint of the number for Dec. 11, 1881, was that of W. J. Ramsey. The paper had been denounced at the Church Congress, cries of "blasphemy" had risen, and rumors of persecution were rife. Questions about it were asked in the House of Commons, and by July 11, 1882, Bradlaugh, Foote, and Ramsey were committed for trial on a charge of blasphemous libel. The paper never ceased, though our difficulties were many.† Mr. Bradlaugh got the case removed to the Queen's Bench Court, knowing a trial at the Old Bailey would be fatal.

The *Freethinker* continued its warfare and "Comic Bible Sketches" as before, and the Christmas number for 1882 gave eighteen illustrations of "A New Life of Christ." These, and an article of my own, "A Trial for Blasphemy," arraigning Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John at the Court of Common Sense, were the subject of a new indictment of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey, and Kemp. The case was heard March 1. The first jury disagreed, but the Roman Catholic, Judge North, determined to retry the case, illegally refused bail, and under his direction a second jury gave the required verdict of Guilty. Mr. Foote made two magnificent defences. In the first, despite unseemly interruption from the judge, he cited blasphemy from Mill, Clifford, Amberley, Arnold, Swinburne, Byron, Shelley, and the *War Cry*. In the second he adduced a list of abusive epithets employed by Christians to their opponents and to each other. Mr. Justice North sentenced him to a year's imprisonment. Mr. Foote bowed, and said with a smile: "I thank you, my lord; your sentence is worthy of your creed." Mr. Ramsey received nine, and Mr. Kemp three months'

* See *Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of his Life and Work, by his daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh.* (Bonner.)

† Of the number for July 23, 1882, only a very few copies were printed, and the matter was included in the issue for July 30.

Digitized by Google

imprisonment. The judge received a storm of hisses and cries of "Jeffries," which he never forgot. But the *Freethinker* was maintained.* The severity of the sentences led to strong but ineffectual protests, and to an agitation against the Blasphemy Laws, which Mr. Justice Stephen described as "ferocious," but which yet have to be repealed. Messrs. Foote and Ramsey were soon brought from Holloway to answer their original indictment before the Lord Chief Justice. Mr. Bradlaugh applied for, and obtained, a separate trial, and Sir Hardinge Giffard ruined his case by giving Messrs. Foote and Ramsey the opportunity of declaring that he was not in any way connected with the *Freethinker*, ensuring the verdict of "Not guilty." Their own trial (April 24) gave the opportunity of a third splendid public defence of Freethought, with the result of a disagreement of the jury that was equal to victory. The prisoners went back to Holloway rejoiced, though another concurrent sentence from the Lord Chief Justice would have much improved their position, removing them from the criminal to the civil side. Lord Coleridge said of Mr. Foote's writings: "He may be blasphemous, but he certainly is not licentious, in the ordinary sense of the word; and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind." His lordship laid down the law in the mildest terms then known, his charge being an indirect censure of the bigotry of Judge North, who had been rapidly removed from a criminal to a chancery court. Petitions signed by men like Herbert Spencer, Professors Huxley, and Tyndall, Dr. Tylor, Cotter Morison, Leslie Stephen, etc., were sent in, and a mass meeting was held at St. James's Hall; but Sir William Harcourt consulted "Justice" North, and would not release the "blasphemers."†

These events aided the circulation of literature. A Freethought Publishing Co. was formed, greatly by the aid of Mr. G. Anderson, a place in Fleet-street taken, and an International Library commenced, including Büchner's *Mind in Animals*, *The Student's Darwin*, Soury's *Jesus and the Gospels*, Bradlaugh's *Genesis*, Perot's *Man and God*, Mitchell's *Christian Mythology Unveiled*, etc. Many good *brochures*, too, were issued. In January, 1883, Mr. Foote started *Progress*, and Mrs. Besant *Our Corner*. *The Evolution of Christianity*, by C. Gill, cited by Mr. Foote on his trial, reached a second edition, and other heretical works were in demand. Gerald Massey had followed his erudite *Book of the Beginnings* by his yet more important *Natural Genesis*. Coke's *Creeds of the Day*, Conder's *Bible Folk-Lore*, Yorke's acute *Notes on Evolution and Christianity*, and Laing's cheap and excellent *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, showed the trend of thought, as well as the many accommodations issued from the clerical camp. Robert Taylor's witty *Devil's Pulpit* was re-issued, as was also the *Comic Life of Christ*, for which the "blasphemers" were sentenced. Thomson's *Satires and Profanities* were collected, *The Crimes of Christianity* began, Mr. Foote's collected *Arrows* and then *Flowers of Freethought*, and issued *Infidel Death-Beds*. Maudsley wrote his *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, J. C. Morison his able and eloquent indictment of Christianity entitled *The Service of Man*, and W. M. W. Call his refutation of teleology in *Final Causes*.

At the new Parliament, 1886, the Speaker, Mr. Peel, refused to allow any interference with Mr. Bradlaugh taking his seat, and it was left to himself to carry an Affirmation Bill in 1888. The severe pressure of Parliamentary duties compelled Mr. Bradlaugh to resign his office of president of the N. S. S., Feb. 16, '90, nominating Mr. Foote as his successor. Mrs. Besant slided off to Theosophy, and within a year the lion of Freethought was dead. The loss of Mr. Bradlaugh entailed many changes and new efforts, of which the results will have yet to be recorded. This it is safe to say, that though Freethought may temporarily labor in the trough of reactionary waves, the good old ship will emerge with colors flying. Literature is safe, and year by year the number of those who see the truth, and have the courage so show it, increases, while the slaves of ignorance, intolerance, corruption, and hypocrisy will diminish. Anthropology is superseding theology; the vain worship of God is being displaced by the fruitful service of man.

This is shown in the literature of the day. On the theological side all the popular books are works of accommodation, like those of Gore, Ryle, Driver, Cheyne, Sayce, and Farrar. These, however, merely temporise, and do not satisfy any thinker. The recent work of Professor Goldwin Smith, *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*, shows that Rationalism must go on to the complete rejection of the supernatural. The study of early beliefs and comparative religion is a great eye-opener, and since the publication of Tylor's *Primitive Culture* this has been going steadily on, contributed to by the labours of the Anthrological and Folk-Lore Societies, and such works as W. R. Smith's *Religion of the Semites*, the *Golden Bough*, and study of *Totemism*, by Mr. J. G. Frazer, the work of Count Goblet d'Alviella on the *Migration of Symbols* and the *Legend of Perseus*, by Mr. E. S. Hartland. Nor must I omit to mention the popularisation of science by Samuel Laing and Edward Clodd, whose *Pioneers of Evolution* has just reached a second edition, while Herbert Spencer's great synthetic system of evolutionary philosophy has recently been completed in ten volumes, which throw a flood of light on the true position of man in the universe.

If the growth of democracy has been the central fact of the century, this record reign has no less been remarkable for the spread of Freethought. Bibliolatry, Calvinism, and Puritanism have steadily declined. In the Establishment High Church attitudinarians and Broad Church latitudinarians have grown at the expense of the Low Church platitudinarians. Priests have become more sacerdotal, and laymen more free. After long struggle we have only recently obtained the Sunday opening of the national gallaries and museums, but the ministerial monopoly of the day of rest is over. John Bull is proverbially slow and inaccessible to new ideas. But his mind responds to the weight of facts. Science, investigation, and reason have undermined the old creeds. Freethought is slowly but surely taking the place of the narrow and illiberal sects. What we have now to contend against is the wealthy establishment of the Church, which alone maintains it now that its intellectual basis is gone. The time has come for a legal basis, and the endowment of Freethought advocacy, The President, whom I regard as Protector of the N.S.S. Commonwealth, has carefully elaborated a plan with this object. This gained, will mean the devotion of time, wealth, thought, and energy to the amelioration of the human lot on earth and the raising of the entire level of life. Our cause is a great one, consecrated by the efforts and sufferings of glorious heroes and martyrs. Freethinkers have stood in the vanguard of progress, fronting the fire of the enemy, and sheltering behind their backs all the feebler fry. They have taken the danger, the antipathy, and the odium, while behind them even the Protestant Church has advanced to some measure of freedom. The day is not now one for giants only, but for each one doing his little level best to leave the world better than he found it.

J. M. WHEELER.

* I venture to mention that sleepless overwork for the paper, and aiding in the second defence while Mr. Foote was in Newgate, caused my complete breakdown. Dr. Aveling readily took my place, for which Mr. J. Symes was very ready. Mr. Forder took charge of the shop. Afterwards, as I slowly recovered, Mr. W. P. Ball assisted most admirably on the paper.

† On these events see *Three Trials for Blasphemy* and *Prisoner for Blasphemy*, by G. W. Foote; also his *Reminiscences of Bradlaugh*.

PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

"COME now and let us reason together," said Jehovah. This is a very good motto, which should be adopted by all thinking men. Has it ever been adopted by the worshippers of Jehovah?

"Come and let us reason," said the Holy Inquisition; "the truth is on our side, and if you will speak slightly of the Holy Virgin, we shall put you in the embraces of the iron virgin. If you do not believe in the flames of hell, we shall convince you that the flames of this world are no fiction."

"Come and let us reason," said Calvin to Servetus. "If you will pray to the Son of the eternal Father, instead of praying to the eternal Son of the Father, I shall burn you at the stake."

"Come and let us reason," said the New Jersey preachers to Colonel Ingersoll. "If you dare to deny the inspiration of the Bible, we shall send a policeman to arrest you."

When the Christian Church was at the height of its power, brute force was the main "reason" upon which it depended for the demonstration of the truth of its doctrines.

CYRUS W. COOLRIDGE.

Digitized by Google

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

It is a fact, acknowledged by Christians themselves, that the basis of the orthodox faith is the alleged resurrection of Christ. St. Paul says: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." He stakes the reality of the whole of the Christian system upon this one event. He adds: "What advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." It would be exceedingly difficult to discover a truer specimen of real selfishness than is set forth in this advice. The resurrection of the dead is supposed to confer some personal advantage upon those who believe in it; therefore, if it be not a fact, life, according to the Apostle of the Gentiles, has no duties nor charms; in short, it is not worth having. What if the dead do not rise, have we no love for our kind? Would it not be our duty to strive to manifest conduct that would tend to promote the welfare of the human race? If death does end all, have we while living no sorrow to assuage, no hearts to gladden, no homes to make happy? Secularism says Yes, and that faith which teaches the contrary is barren of the purest incentive to human goodness.

But to urge that the truth, or otherwise, of Christianity depends upon the resurrection of Jesus is one of the greatest of theological fallacies. The good contained in the New Testament is equally useful, and the erroneous portions therein are quite as objectionable, irrespective of the question whether or not Christ rose from the dead. If he did, that would not prove that the whole of his conduct was such that we could profitably emulate, or that his teachings were of any practical value to us at the present day. A hundred resurrections would not make it true that poverty is a blessing, that non-resistance is a virtue, or that the neglect of the things of this world is wise. A "risen Jesus" would be no guarantee that he would be a useful reformer. St. Paul's contention makes the truth of a religion to rest, not on its intrinsic worth, but upon its theological sanctions, which is a most unsafe foundation. In this critical age all alleged truths should be self-evident, for, if they are not, the decision as to their veracity will depend upon individual opinions, which must necessarily vary, in consequence of the differences existing in the mental powers and the education of different persons. What would appear as a fact to a confiding believer in orthodoxy may bear a very opposite aspect to a critical thinker. It is particularly desirable that this should be remembered by those who wish to investigate thoroughly and impartially the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ.

Christians persistently urge that the verdict of reason and history is in favor of the Gospel teaching, that Christ was supernaturally raised a living man from the grave or tomb into which he had previously been consigned a lifeless corpse. There was a time when certain Christian disputants really sought to make capital out of the alleged testimony of the writer Phlegon, a Roman, who is said to have written the following, which was used for centuries as a corroboration of the resurrection doctrine: "In the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad there was an eclipse of the sun greater than any ever known before; and it was night at the sixth hour of the day, so that even the stars appeared, and there was a great earthquake in Bithynia that overthrew several houses in Nice." This forgery long held its ground, and was only discarded as fraudulent in the eighteenth century, even Dr. Clarke, in his *Evidences of Religion*, condescending so far as to use the passage "for what it was worth"—which is nothing. It is in reality a patent ecclesiastical forgery, and is now (as Gibbon says, in a note to the fifteenth chapter of the *Decline and Fall*) "wisely abandoned."

But what of the Gospels themselves and their affirmations? Ought we not, it may be asked, to look upon these in the light of historical documents, and to accept them as such, and receive their testimony as that of eye-witnesses of the extraordinary events they record? In reply to these interrogations, it need only be stated that there can be no greater mark of fallacious reasoning than to confound together all supposed historical narratives, and to estimate their authenticity by the same general rules. Yet in the early history of Christianity this kind of argument prevailed; but with the Renaissance there came the spirit of criticism, which has progressed so rapidly that among eminent scholars to-day it is commonly held as incontrovertible that there is no adequate evidence to prove that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear, or that their real authors are known.

Renan, in the Introduction to his *Life of Jesus* (p. 41), says: "In nearly all ancient histories, even in those which are much less legendary than these [the Gospels], the details leave room for infinite doubt. When we have two accounts of the same act, it is extremely rare that the two accounts agree. Is not this a reason, when we have but one, for imagining many perplexities? We may say that among the anecdotes, the speeches, the celebrated sayings reported by the historians, not one is rigorously authentic" (American edition). If this be the case with respect to events which are comparatively of lesser importance in the Gospel narratives, what shall be said respecting this resurrection story, which describes an event altogether unique and absolutely foreign to the experience of every living being? We are more or less familiar with death in a hundred varying forms and aspects, from that on the battle-field and in the mine to that by lightning, pestilence, old age, and decay. It is the common lot of all men and of all things. The grass withers and dies, the very rocks disintegrate and lose their special characteristics; organic life comes to an end, and the once active organisms (however disposed of, whether by cremation or by interment in the earth) become converted into their primal elements. Of this, universal, every-day experience assures us; but it has nothing affirmative to say respecting the re-vivifying of an organized body from which the life has once departed. Nevertheless, we are invited to believe that such an event occurred nearly two thousand years ago, in an obscure part of the world, and this claim is sought to be enforced on the bare assertion of four documents, which are confessedly not authentic (except to the unquestioning eye of faith), whose true authors are unknown, and the oldest manuscript of which does not go beyond the fourth century! Such "proofs," historical proofs, forsooth, would be ridiculed if urged in a court of law with respect to the ownership of a paltry rood of land, and shall we for a moment accept them in opposition to our sense and reason when the issues at stake are said to be so great and so momentous?

Believers in the resurrection are continually asking the following question: "If Christ did not rise from the dead, how are the origin and perpetuation of the belief that he did to be accounted for?" It is said that those who do not believe that Christ rose from the dead are bound to account for the belief, etc. Logically, we are not bound to do anything of the kind. Superstitions associated with other religions than Christianity have originated, and have been perpetuated; but do Christians hold themselves compelled to account for the rise and continuity of such superstitions? We think not. When Christians can explain the existence of, and the belief in, the religion of Mohammed, the system of Buddha, the so-called miracles of the Roman Catholic Church, the pretensions of Joseph Smith, and many other similar faiths, they will have discovered the foundation for the belief in their own pet doctrine of the Resurrection. In taking the negative position of the question, "Did Christ rise from the dead?" all that is logically incumbent upon us is, in the first place, to inquire if there are any historical facts to support the affirmative reply? and, secondly, to examine the "reasons" given to establish the theory that he did rise from the grave. Before, however, dealing with these points, we propose to state what appears to us to be some of the probable causes of the origin and perpetuation of the belief in the story of the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Charles Watts.

(To be continued.)

No philosophical speculation should begin with a fiction, and it is altogether a fiction to represent natural law (*i.e.*, the qualities of objects around us) as commands. No commands are issued, and none should be assumed. It is equally indulging in fiction to speak of observing and transgressing the said laws; of reaping the reward attendant on the first, and incurring the punishment appointed for the second. The truth involved in this verbiage is nothing more than that similar causes produce similar effects, and that it is a knowledge of these uniform successions which enables us to adjust our conduct to them so as to avoid evil and to secure good.—*Samuel Bailey, "Letters on the Philosophy of the Human Mind," third series, p. 73.*

Digitized by Google

WHEEL WORSHIP.*

(*Concluded from page 410.*†)

As a Wheeler, I have long been interested in the wheel symbol. My ancestors, too, came from a district near Long Compton, where Warwickshire borders Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, and they were both wheelwrights and priests of the rotatory rites of the Wrights and the Wheelers round the Great Rollwright Stones and the sacred elder-tree; probably the only spot in England where the fairies still perform their ring-dance on Midsummer Eve.‡ Of the importance of dancing in the history of evolution I have dealt in a chapter on "Religious Dances" in *Footsteps of the Past*. Mine, however, are but the speculations of a book student of customs, an observer only of children's games; while Mr. Simpson has been a wide traveller, recording notes on the wheel symbol and circular movements with pen and pencil from many lands. To understand ancient rites, we must go back to the primitive ideas and gesture language of early man. For this, as for understanding the mysteries of theology, it is necessary to become as a little child. I, therefore, speak as dogmatically as a preacher, with the warning that what I say is mere arm-chair hypothesis, if not pure conjecture from beginning to end.

Man evolved his hands by climbing, and the use of sticks and stones. His ideas came largely through his hands, as we may see in the beginnings of arithmetic by counting on the fingers. Probably from the heart being to the left, those survived who used that arm for a shield, while the right was used for tools or weapons, stones, stick, club, lance, or sword. At any rate, all nations are right-handed, and have the left lobe of the brain most developed. Hence the right hand becomes, in sign language, the Taker, the Doer, the male; the left hand, the Holder, the maintainer, the female. A right-hand gesture in war and hunting means "forward"; a left-hand, "back." To describe the motion of the sun, early man would dance or draw a circle in the sun's direction to the right, or an arc from east to west. To describe the moon he would dance or draw circling to the left. When writing was attained, the moon would be differentiated from the sun circle as a crescent.§ Man's first worship of the sun would be with right-handed movements. He might seek to influence it, or put himself in line with it by imitative movements or mimetic magic.‖ But with the moon, the feminine time-keeper, the movement would be contra-clockwise. Deeper than moon or sun-worship is fear of the dead, and the worship at tombs would have the left-hand gestures and movements, meaning "keep back; stay where you are." Thus the left-hand movements represent the lower strata of religious rites.

In the Moslem ceremony of the *Taw'af*, or the seven ceremonial circuits around the Kaaba, at Mecca, that building is kept to the left hand. This, and the Moslem crescent, suggest that moon-worship rather than sun-worship is at the foundation of the Semitic faith. The seven courses indicate this, being the division of the phases of the moon, which, as a time measurer, was more important than the sun, the month being known before the year. To nomadic pastoral people moon and star observation and worship is of importance, while with agriculturalists the sun asserts its supremacy. Ancient as are Aryan movements sunwise, going back to pre-Vedic times, the ceremonies of the dead are yet older, and these are contra-sunwise. The Jews at burial of males in Jerusalem perform the *hakafoth*, going round the corpse seven times from the right side towards the head; and a similar ceremony, which yet exists among the Irish peasantry, is known as "paying the rounds."

If, as I suggest, the movement to the left in funeral ceremonies be designed to keep the ghost back, it is curious that this is still kept up at the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. The pilgrims pray for the return of the Christ, or the Mahdi, but their action in circumambulating it with the left hand inside, says, "Keep back." And the prayer of the circuit is the deeper prayer. Despite Mr. Jevons, magic and prayer are closely allied in early man, and the praying-wheel is an existing proof. The first prayer is imitative action. Prostration, kneeling, and clasped hands still mean "I am at your mercy, a slave."

Sun charms to the right would come to have a joyous meaning, as in maypole dances. "Right" becomes the sign of dexterous work and straightforward conduct. Sinistral circuits, from association with night and death, acquire a sinister meaning, like left-handed compliments. Left-handed people, too, from their rarity would be considered uncanny. Every charm has its counter charm, and if movements sunwise were lucky because the right hand was more powerful, reverse movements would be unlucky. From notions of luck we have the idea of the wheel of fortune, and the use of the wheel as an amulet, of which Mr. Simpson gives illustrations.

In the witches' orgies they formed a circle face outwards, dancing wiederscheins—*i.e.*, the sinistral circuit—showing, perhaps, their connection with Hecate, or moon- and night-worship, as opposed to that of the sun and day,* though doubtless the idea of a counter-charm for ill-luck on enemies also crept in.

> Hech! sirs, but we had gran' fun
> Wi' the muckle black de'il in the chair,
> And the muckle Bible upside doon,
> A' ganging withershins roun' and roun',
> And backwards saying the prayer.

Witchcraft, black magic, and devil-worship, like the left-hand Tantra faith of the Hindus, take us back to an older cult.† The left hand circuit round the altar at the marriage of the Czarewitch is another, very different, illustration.

Our author, in his summary, observes:—

> "The circumambulation of sacred shrines, such as stûpas and temples, and also round holy persons and things, has been described as only another form of the circular motion having the same symbolism as the wheel. To go round in the opposite direction, or with the left hand to the centre, was the rule at death ceremonies; it was, at the same time, unlucky and productive of evil, being a similar notion to that which was held in this country regarding the same movement known as 'widdershins.'"

There are just two points which I think Mr. Simpson might have treated with advantage: first, the evidence of children's circular dances, giant's stride rotation round the pole, and games with hoops, balls, and marbles; second, the wheel of the stars around the pole.‡ In making a circle man thinks of a fixed centre and a moving circumference. This, star-gazers noticed, was the case with the gradual movement of the constellations, the smallest orbs "still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims," as "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

But I must pull up. This wheeler once on the wheel might become "a fair scorcher." Mr. Simpson, too, may complain that my own hobby-horse has ridden me almost out of sight of his *Buddhist Praying-Wheel*, which I must not conclude without commending both as the best book on the subject, and as being a most valuable contribution to the study of human evolution in religious rites and customs. The book is the result of much personal observation, for which, as a special artist of the *Illustrated London News*, Mr. Simpson had special opportunities and acquirements, as well as of the study of forty years. It has an excellent index, and the neat and artistic illustrations greatly aid the text. J. M. W.

---

* *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel*, by William Simpson, R.I., M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S., etc. (Macmillan.)

† At line thirty-seven, for "tilsa" read "tulsi."

‡ The King's Stone, alas, is sadly reduced by the Welsh and others taking chips as a charm to ward off the devil. "In Wales one of the most frequent punishments that fall upon those who transgress against the stone is the breaking down of the transgressor's wagon, and this belief still survives at Rowldrich. A ploughman informed me that one day a man who was driving along the road from Banbury swore to a friend that he would carry off a chip of the king's stone, 'though his wheel locked.' He chipped a piece from the stone, but when he tried to drive on he found that one wheel was locked in such a way that nothing he could do would make it go round again" (A. J. Evans, M.A., F.S.A., "The Rollright Stones and their Folk-Lore," in *Folk-Lore*, March, 1895). "At midnight the stones of the circle become men again for a moment, join hands, and dance round in the air" (*ibid.*).

§ Writing from right to left, as in Hebrew, was possibly sacred, and in its original form done by moon-worshippers with the left hand.

‖ See the chapter on "Sympathetic Magic" in *Footsteps of the Past*.

* See *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 103.

† The serpent-worshipping Indians of Arizona dance sinistrally.

‡ The late J. O'Neill, in his *Night of the Gods*, deals with polar worship, and in his second volume—alas, yet unpublished—had considered the question of the wheel and circular dances from that point of view.

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN must be a very subtle humorist. In a pastoral letter on the Queen's Jubilee he calls particular attention to the fact that during Her Majesty's reign antiquated restrictions and disabilities have given place to freedom of speech and action. Satan rebuking Sin was not more edifying than Cardinal Vaughan congratulating Englishmen on the extension of religious liberty. Has not this same Cardinal Vaughan boasted that the Catholic Church has never *spared the knife* in dealing with heretics? And was it not his predecessor, Cardinal Manning, who declared that England would be ruined in the sight of God if Charles Bradlaugh were allowed to enter Parliament?

Dean Farrar's sermon on the Jubilee referred to "the kind hand of our God upon us." This may be apparent in the happy lot of our luxurious royalty. But is it apparent in the lot of hundreds of thousands of half-starved wretches who jump at the chance of a Jubilee dinner? To eat enough once in a lifetime is a never-to-be-forgotten treat to these unfortunates. How much do *they* owe to the kind hand of God?

Dr. Farrar evidently places the British Empire above the Roman Empire. But is not this a little "previous"? The British Empire is as yet a thing of yesterday, while the Roman Empire lasted for centuries; and Gibbon says that the happiest period in the world's history was from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. During that period the Roman Empire was governed by a succession of the wisest and greatest rulers the world has ever seen. It is impossible to find their equals in the history of any Christian nations, or even in the history of all Christian nations together.

A great feature of the Jubilee show was the enclosing of Monsignor Cesare Sambucelti, the Envoy Extraordinary from the Pope, in the same carriage with the Chinese Ambassador. The crowd regarded them as a pair of played-out fossils.

The Russian Church was represented by the Archbishop of Finland. This ecclesiastic was met at Victoria Station by a crowd of ladies and persons of the clerical sex; and we read that he extended his hand to be kissed on every side as he made his way through the kneeling crowd to the reception-room. Such is Christianity in the nineteenth century!

The new Bishop of London took part in the Jubilee service, and was "glorious in an embroidered cope and a gold cap." An admirer in the gallery cried out "Bravo, Bishop of London," and the Bishop looked up with a radiant smile. It was so different from the old days, when the wardrobe of Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles would probably have fetched something under five shillings.

Mr. Hughes took part in the Jubilee service outside St. Paul's Cathedral. But he was less intent on worshipping God than in "very closely" watching the Queen. Mr. Hughes is familiar with God, and the Queen was a novelty. Of course he may have plenty of time to watch her in heaven; but then he may not. You never know, you know.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes mentions our matronly Queen Victoria in the same breath with Marcus Aurelius, Oliver Cromwell, and George Washington, and adds that she is "in some respects greatest of all." She has "grasped the divine conception of kingship"—that is, doing nothing at all. In the course of time, we hope, the payment will be proportionate.

Mr. Hughes is so lost in admiration of the Queen's political virtues, as an official endorser of Acts of Parliament, that he declares "it must be regarded as an astounding manifestation of the grace of God." This needs thinking over. Mr. Hughes is such a profound philosopher that all he says will bear long reflection. Meanwhile it is pleasant to be assured by so high an authority that "when the majority of the people have unmistakably and finally declared their will the Queen always accepts it.' Surely it is very good of the Queen to be so compliantly accommodating as to yield to the irresistible will of those who pay her salary. It is really "astounding"—with or without the grace of God.

"If the other rulers of the world were to walk in her footsteps," Mr. Hughes says, "the Millennium would immediately begin." Well, the Queen has been ruling, or rather reigning, for sixty years in England, and the millennium has not yet begun in this highly-favored country. There is a great gulf between pulpit rhetoric and plain matter of fact.

One thing is frankly admitted by Mr. Hughes—namely, that the Jubilee pageant was a middle-class celebration. The working classes were "conspicuously absent," and "the New Democracy was not there."

One Jubilee incident was laughably curious. The Fabian Society's Executive, including one gentleman who is a bitter enemy of the National Secular Society, voted money for the decoration of their office windows in the Strand. This was resented by the members, and the vote had to be rescinded.

"General" Booth is stated by the *Guardian* to have returned the ticket sent him for the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, and it was then given to Dr. Monroe Gibson, president of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches. According to the newspaper reports, however, a representative of the Salvation Army was present at the Jubilee Service. We fancy that the head of the Salvation Army was too shrewd to lose such a good advertisement; on the other hand, it wouldn't do for him to play second fiddle to anybody—for is he not God's special representative on earth, at least in his own esteem?

What this Jubilee business really means may be understood in the light of two facts. When the House of Commons waited on the Queen with a loyal address they were treated with gross disrespect. When they went to the Naval Review the Government could not afford to find them a ship to themselves. They were packed in the same boat with a lot of other sight-seers who paid so much a head for the trip. This shows what the monarchists and imperialists think of the House of Commons. And the worst of it is that the English people have not manliness enough to be angry at the affront to their representatives.

What a farce, after all, is the great art of destruction! While our unparalleled assembly of ironclads is riding off the Isle of Wight, Mr. Hudson Maxim prophesies that a torpedo cruiser will soon be constructed that will be able, by hurling the latest explosives to a distance of nine miles, to destroy the most magnificent fleet that even England could get together. And the cream of the joke is that this is a Christian country.

The Bishop of London's garden parties are among the most swell functions of the season. "Peter Lombard" says: "One feature which struck me on the first day remains as of old. A French window opens from the beautiful lawn into the Porteus Library, and the latter room is devoted for the day to tea, ices, etc. At first it was the only place set apart for refreshments, and consequently you saw a steady convergement of black coats from the lawn towards that window. And this procured for the meeting the name by which it was long known—viz., 'the beetle trap.' But since that day things have altered, first in the gathering of swarms of ladies, and secondly in the placing of refreshment tables outside."

The following opinion, that of a "great nerve specialist" from the United States now on a visit to our metropolis, is recorded in the *Hospital*, and is worth thinking over: "Your English women used to be quiet, comely, and restful to mind and eyes. But when I come to London now, I might almost as well be on Fifth-avenue, for your women are becoming haggard and sallow, jerky in their movements, incessant talkers, and in perpetual motion. They never seem satisfied unless they are using their faculties to the utmost—bicycling, rushing to theatres, shops, and parties; always seeking, seeking, apparently never finding what they seek, but going on like the restless waves of the sea. Looking at the surging crowd of restless women in London, I see before me whole generations of neurotics to come."

Lady Henry Somerset declared at the London Council of Women recently that it "is Atheistic for a woman to try to hide her limbs. Only an Atheist would do it. It is equivalent to saying that she is ashamed of that which the Lord has given her." Lady Somerset, like Anthony Comstock, is noted for her piety, but the two differ as to the propriety of showing "that which the Lord has given her." Comstock has publicly (though privately he is not shocked by nude figures) a great aversion for anything naked—even for the naked truth. How long is it since squeamishness and prudery have become Atheistic? How people do like to apply words, which in the popular mind imply reproach, to whatever they dislike, whether or not there is any justice or relevancy in the application of the words.—*Secular Thought.*

The Church is always behind the age. Women are eligible on Parish Councils; but the bishops have resolved that in Parish Church Councils, designed to give the laity an interest in Church affairs, and to make them contribute thereto, the seats are to be—like the sermons of some purists—"for men only." Paul said: "I suffer not a woman to speak in the church." His worthy successor, the Bishop of Lichfield, says women have no call to govern in the Church, though he deliciously adds: "I hope I fully appreciate

Digitized by Google

their ministrations in various other ways." It would be hard to beat this. Woman's place in the Church has ever been "at the feet of Jesus"—that is, of the priest.

Mrs. Ormiston Chant has been flying in the teeth of Paul by speaking in the Congregational Church, and adding to her offence by appearing in the pulpit bare-headed, in complete disregard of the Apostolic directions.

Noticing the work of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the *Leader* says: "The distribution of translated Bibles is a matter which has occasionally resulted in grave disaster. It is, in the opinion of the S.P.C.K., vastly important that Bibles should not be placed in the hands of the heathen unless accompanied with a full exposition and commentary. Illustrating the evil results which may follow, there is a sect of Maoris who have built up on the translated copies of the Bible, which accident had left in their hands, a religion the like of which exists nowhere else on the face of the earth."

The Rev. Secretary of the S.P.C.K. says that the natives in Luganda are so anxious to buy the Holy Word that the books had to be protected from them by the police. The explanation is that they regard books as gri-gris or charms, that will bring them luck. He says that last year 1,000 copies of *Helps to the Study of the Bible*, and 500 copies of a *Life of Mahomet* were disposed of in that country. Where selling the books is impossible, they are, of course, given away; but this course is not advisable unless compulsory, as the natives are apt to put no value on gifts.

Rev. Dr. Barrett, of Norwich has been making what the *Methodist Times* calls "some weighty observations" on the condition of Nonconformity. "If," he said, "they considered the increase of the population in this country, they must admit that Nonconformity was not as strong to-day, relatively, as twenty years ago. A good test was to be found in the number of sittings provided in chapels as compared with those provided by the Church of England. The progress made by the Church of England was astonishing, and Nonconformists were falling behind." Dr. Barrett prophesied that a better time was coming, but meanwhile the bad time remains. It is all very well to say that the richer members of Nonconformist bodies drift away to the State Church. No doubt this is true. But there is a graver malady behind. The truth is that Nonconformity has become faithless to its own principles. It has been signally worsted by the Church of England in the education struggle in consequence.

The Rev. Dr. Dowie, a faith-healer, and a foe to secret societies, who has been holding a series of all-day meetings and using the most extraordinary devices in order to attract attention, introduced into his pulpit a hideous hobby-horse with great goggle eyes and a lolling tongue, which delightful beast, he says, people have to straddle in their initiation into the order of Mystic Shriners.—*Progressive Thinker.*

How often we are told that Christianity proclaims that all believers are brethren. The practical illustrations which this doctrine has received have continued from the days of Constantine till now. The General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, which met recently at Charlotte, North Carolina, resolved that separate churches and separate synods should be established for negroes. Their white brethren admit the fraternity, but prefer to worship in separate buildings.

Mr. Stead announces—not through Julia, but through *Borderland*—that Mrs. Piper, the Boston mejum, relict of the late Peter Piper, Esq., had been chiefly "controlled by a French Doctor 'Phinuit,' and the spirit of a recently-deceased neighbor." These controls, who certainly used to tear the poor woman about horribly, have now been expelled, and their place has been taken by no less eminent a body of guides than those who used to control "M. A., Oxon"—*i.e.*, the poor maunderers of imbecile theology and water that the late Rev. Stanton Moses styled "Imperator."

Cheiro, the palmist, who has been puffed by Mrs. Besant into a lofty position in Bond-street, where he will read your palms or photograph your thoughts, must look out for his laurels. A Parisian occultist, named Garré, has invented a new science called scarpology, by which he deciphers the characters of people by the manner in which they wear out their boots. He holds that man's boots bear the impress given to them by the wearer. If that wearer climbed the steep and thorny way to heaven, or if, recking not his own rede, he trod the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, the nature of his journeyings left its mark upon the coverings of his extremities.

Dr. Garré has formed a fine collection of old boots illustrating his position. He claims that scarpology is as "exact" as phrenology or chiromancy. Broadly stated, the canons of the art seem to be somewhat as follows: If the soles and heels are worn down evenly, and there is no undue tendency to thinness in any part, Dr. Garré is able to assert that the wearer was a steady, respectable, methodical business man, of regular habits—a man of even temper, seldom or never stirred by passions. If it is a bottine that is thus evenly worn, it belonged to some chaste and unexpressive she of simple tastes and constant mind; one who is content to never wander from her own clean-swept hearth, and who would betray no emotion if an earthquake brought her choicest Worcester tea-set rattling from its shelves. Jealous husbands, who think that their wives' "tootsicums" have strayed from the paths of wifely duty, can have, it is said, their worst suspicions confirmed or dissipated by simply showing the scarpologist a pair of the suspected matron's bottines. Even scarpologists are but fallible, and a hasty judgment on a worn-out sole might cause some rash Othello to smother some innocent Desdemona, when perhaps the fault was due to some defective bit of leather.

The *Liverpool Courier* says that, at the Jubilee celebration at St. Nathaniel's, all the Sunday scholars, numbering over 1,300, on leaving, had a souvenir on cardboard of the coronation of the Queen with her hand on the Bible, *as she swore to defend the Reformed Protestant Religion with a large Diamond Jubilee bun.* This bun defence must account for the spread of Romanism in the Church.

The *English Churchman*, in noticing Cardinal Vaughan's pastoral letter on the Jubilee junketings, laments that "unhappily the leading men in the Church of England, instead of glorying in its Protestant character, seem only too ready to ignore it, and delight instead to array themselves in the borrowed plumes of Rome."

At the Anglican Church of St. Cuthbert's, Philbeach-gardens, on Corpus Christi day, the reserved sacrament was brought out and laid on the altar for adoration and genuflexion. Worship of the Host was also shown by carrying it in procession, before placing the wafer-god on the altar, and then kneeling down before it. "Father" Black, who officiated, pointed in his sermon to the Host on the altar, and said that Jesus was there at that moment in his godhead and humanity. This "Father" Black is the Anglican clergyman who has shown such anxiety to prevent the re-marriage of divorced persons, whether guilty or innocent.

In the Catholic rite imitated by our Romanisers, the priest blesses the eucharist, and after the pronouncement of his words, the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of Christ's body, blood, soul, and divinity. He then breaks Christ's body, blood, soul, and divinity and puts it into the chalice. In offering the sacrifice of the Mass, the priest, however, does not necessarily become an iconoclast or godbreaker. If he has no intention of breaking up God Almighty, why, then, God almighty isn't broken up; and if he has no intention to change the bread into God, then the bread doesn't become God. So much depends on good intentions.

Marlow Church was badly injured by the storm which followed the Jubilee. Two of the steeple pinnacles were blown off, one of them crashing through the roof while a service was being held. Many of the windows were blown in. One piece of glass fell and rested on an open Bible. No doubt the two pages of Holy Writ left open contained some good text about that dear old "Providence."

One of the Jubilee thanksgivers took his text from 1 Cor. xv. 57, which he reads as "thanks be unto God which giveth us Victoria," omitting the words "through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The *Church Times*, of course, finds the moral of the Jubilee in the union of Church and State. It says: "May this lesson, too, never be lost; may every member of the British empire recognise in all his ways, political or domestic, or civil, or military, or scientific, that the blessings of loyalty and fraternity depend for their origin and maintenance upon religion, and upon nothing else." Yes, and religion depends upon the priest, and the priest on his salary.

We have all made mirth of the farmer whose whole life was spent in buying land, to raise corn, to feed hogs, to get money to buy more land, to raise more corn, to fatten more swine, to get more money; and thus on from year to year in an endless round. Is not the life of the preacher a somewhat parallel one? Does he not labor in a similar circle, preaching an eternal hell in which he does not believe, to frighten sinners and convert them to his pretended belief, that they may join his church, to contribute money for his support, that he may frighten other sinners and convert them to his belief, that they may join his church and contribute more money, that he may preach more hell, and so

Digitized by Google

on in a continuous circle, through a useless life? That is the way it appears to—*The Progressive Thinker.*

A gentleman called F. Lackett, writes to us from East View, Thanet-road, Ramsgate. He is alarmed at the prospect of our immortal soul, and in all "love" sends us a friendly warning. He saw a copy of the *Freethinker* in a window, bought it, and read it; and hence his trouble. He says he is sure that we "would never publish another line" if we only knew how much we grieve real Christians and their Master. Well now, we have for many years been looking out for a real Christian—one who bears the marks that are specified in the last chapter of Mark, one who can drink poison and play with deadly serpents. Mr. Lackett may be the very person we are in quest of. We hope he will soon arrange for a public performance.

Our Ramsgate friend thinks that we are ignorant of the contents of the Bible. The dear innocent! He refers us to two texts, which declare that the Gospel is foolishness to the natural man. We quite agree with these texts. The Gospel *is* foolishness to every man possessed of his natural wits. He only appreciates it when he is born again, out of common sense into superstition.

The Rev. J. Lyne, "Father Ignatius, O.S.B., of Llanthony Abbey," seems to have made no progress since the days when he debated with Mr. Bradlaugh. He is reported in the *Herts Leader* as preaching at Bushey that "the existence of the Jews was a standing miracle and witness to the truth of the Gospel." The existence of a race who say that their Messiah did not come is a proof that he did come, and their denial of the truth of the gospels makes their veracity certain. After this we are not surprised to find Father Ignatius lament that all Churches were now permeated with Rationalism, which would culminate in Atheism—a sign of the approaching end of the age.

The *Athenæum* (June 26), noticing Mr. Conway's edition of *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, says of his *Age of Reason*: "His unbelief was not so uncompromising as his phrases, and if he had been a greater master in the art of putting things, he might have lived without reproach, and died without leaving a name to be denounced." This seems to us very poor criticism indeed. Paine's service was that he did make a stir and excite opposition by putting things plainly. He might have been as great a master in putting things as the *Athenæum* critic, only by wrapping his meaning up, so that those who run could not read, he would have left no name at all.

"Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" is one of the late Robert Louis Stevenson's finest efforts, and has had an extensive circulation. Mr. Andrew Lang says that when it was first published the public scarcely purchased a copy. Presently however, a long review appeared in the *Times*; then the clergy found it out, and *their* advertisement made its fortune. They have also puffed Marie Corelli's novels and Mr. Wilson Barrett's *Sign of the Cross*. Evidently, therefore, they did not value Stevenson from the point of view of good literature.

The *Berwick Advertiser* notes that "the *Freethinker* is very jubilant over the Sunday opening of Berwick Bandstand." Our northern contemperary appears to hope that this fact will serve as a warning to the whole neighborhood. What the *Freethinker* approves is, of course, extremely devilish.

The German Roman Catholic organ, *Germania*, says of Leo Taxil's hoax as to devil-worship: "Good comes, however, out of evil. Far too much of the so-called 'supernatural' is offered the Catholic reading public in Catholic publications. We do not object to the publication of miraculous influences that have been duly attested by the Church after investigation. But there is too ready a belief in supposed evidences of divine or diabolic interference in cases which have not been pronounced genuine by the clerical authorities." The *Kolnische Volks-Zeitung*, another Catholic organ, urges that "an end should be put to all the numerous stories which fantastic souls, addleheads, fake-converts, and conscienceless liars offer the public in the shape of revelations, secrets, and predictions." The legends of the saints are quite another matter. They are all gospel.

Straws tell which way the wind blows. Here is a specimen from the States, which indicates the decline of the black business in popularity. Of 388 seniors at Harvard college who have thus far replied to the questions in the class secretary's circular, 102 say they intend to study law, and thirty-five medicine or surgery, but not one theology. Fifty-two will teach, and sixty-four engage in business.

Oom Paul preached in the Dutch Reformed Church on what, for want of a better term, I will call "Rinderpest Sabbath." He told the congregation that many things in the country called for the divine displeasure. I quite agree. Johannes Stephanus, if asked for particulars, would probably reply: "Rinderpest, Reformers, cattle plague, and *Critic* cartoons!" My list would be slightly different. It would embrace a gentleman whose name begins with "K," but who is by no means "O K!"—*African Critic.*

"Peter Lombard" tells of a Warwickshire parish clerk whose invariable notice of a funeral to the rector is: "Please, your reverence, there's a party come as wishes to be buried."

We learn from the *Bristol Times and Mirror* that, in connection with the realization of a deceased lady's estate, three of the pews of the parish church of Clifton were offered for sale the other day. The purchase-money was £45, and the pews were as much personal property as the lady's wardrobe.

Who are the members of the Church of England Working Men's Federation at Liverpool? This formidable body had decided to memorialize the archbishops and bishops and members of the Pan-Anglican Synod against the rationalizing tendencies of the teachings of Dean Fremantle, Archdeacon Wilson, and Canons Wilberforce, Eyton, and Gore. Their teaching was denounced as dangerous to the faith, and opposed to the doctrines and formularies of the Church of England.

Miss Betham-Edwards, who has written many books on France, where she has long been a resident, writes most instructively in the *Daily News* on "Anglophobia in France." She says: "Sad it is, yet true, and certainly not new, that professors of Christian charity and brotherly love should be the first to stir up international animosities. Ultramontane abbé and Protestant pastor are here offenders. By help of the former, ex-Boulangists and the Colonial party have lately been preaching a veritable crusade against English Dissenters."

"Northumbria" has an article on missions in *Reynolds's Newspaper*. He asks: "How should we like a lot of strange Chinese women, of unknown intentions and doubtful morals, to invade our houses and secretly corrupt our wives and daughters? And would it be likely or not to provoke your British congregation into a riot if the Buddhist missionary men stalked into our churches during service and openly mocked at every symbol there held sacred, and attempted to dispute with the clergy in the very discharge of their office? And yet, if we were not so blinded with insular prejudice and self-conceit, we should see that these are precisely the things which our unwise, narrow-minded missionaries are doing in China and in India, as they are doing, to a more or less extent, all over the so-called 'heathen' world."

The Rev. J. H. Parry, vicar of Dulas, Herefordshire, has been remanded on a charge of shooting a laborer named John King. King went to the vicarage for money due; he was paid a shilling short, which he continued to demand, whereupon the man of God fetched a gun and shot King in the chest and arm.

They have a comic man as minister of a chapel near Oxford, and the advertisement he puts on his notice-board is called attention to in the *Oxford Times*. It is as under: "Missing.—Last Sunday, some people from chapel. Stolen.—Several hours from the Lord's day by a number of people of different ages, dressed in their Sunday clothes. Strayed.—A few children, believed to have gone in the direction of no Sunday school. Mislaid.—Some silver and copper coins on the bar of a public-house, the owner being in a state of excitement at the time. Wanted.—Several young people, when last seen walking up Sabbath Breaker's-lane, which leads to the city of 'no good.' Any person recovering the above shall receive their reward." The wicked smile and pass on; but the author, like all the best wits, is in dead earnest, and does not know how funny he is.

A church in Chicago was "dedicated to God" the other day. Great scheme that; it saves the owners of the church from paying taxes, as the tax-collector cannot find God.

A universal God ought to have revealed a universal religion. By what fatality are so many different religions found on earth? Which is the true one among the great number of those of which each one pretends to be the right one to the exclusion of all others? We have every reason to believe that not one of them enjoys this advantage. The divisions and the disputes about opinions are indubitable signs of the uncertainty and of the obscurity of the principles which they profess.—*Jean Meslier.*

The bigot is like the pupil of the eye—the more light you put upon it, the more it will contract.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, July 4, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Providence and the British Empire."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—July 11, Athenæum Hall, London; August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. PARTRIDGE, on behalf of the Birmingham Branch, tenders thanks to Mr. Foote for the two lectures delivered by Mr. Watts on June 15 and 16 under the Lecture Scheme.

T. MARTIN, for the Pontypridd Branch, thanks the friends at Porth for their kindness and hospitality last Sunday on the occasion of lectures in the Town Hall.

J. SUMNER.—G. Bedborough, 16, John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Subscription handed to Miss Vance.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—G. Brady (monthly subscription) 10s. *Per David Watt*:—David Watt, 1s.; John Millar, 1s.; S. Alexander, 1s.; J. Bryce, 1s.; A. Turner, 1s.; L. S. 1s.; A. McLelland, 1s.; J. Garven, 1s.; J. Terrier, 2s.; G. Colquhoun, 5s.; J. McLelland, 1s.; Fannie Garven, 1s.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—Your notice arrived too late to be of any use. The meeting takes place on July 1, and few of our readers will get this copy of the *Freethinker* before the evening of that day. Why not send earlier? We go to press on Wednesday.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for subscription and good wishes.

A. C. DAVIE.—Miss Vance has sent you a withdrawal form. Fill it in and post it, or deliver it yourself, to the schoolmaster. If he persists in illegally disregarding your notice, by not withdrawing your child from religious instruction, make a formal complaint to the School Board; and if you are still without redress, send us a careful statement of the whole case, and it shall be laid before the Education Department in London.

S. BURTON.—The Sunday Societies are pressing for an alteration of the law, and Lord Hobhouse has brought forward a Bill to that end. It provides that lectures and musical performances may be given on Sundays, with a charge for admission, if they are under the control of a Society, or other body of persons, for the public advantage, and not for pecuniary profit; and that no proceedings under the Lord's Day Act shall henceforth be taken without the assent of the Attorney-General. The best people in the country are in favor of this Bill, but bigotry is still very powerful, and we have small hope of Lord Hobhouse's success.

A. J. H.—Thanks. Mr. Wheeler can look up the volumes of the *People's Journal* at the British Museum.

C. K. L.—The Jubilee, with us, is now "out of date."

JAMES READ.—*Reynolds's* answer to a correspondent is probably accurate as far as England is concerned. Hospitals for the sick do not seem to have existed in this country before Christianity, but they existed in more civilized countries, such as India, Greece, and Rome. Nor did they come into England *with* Christianity. If the first effort in this direction was made in 1080, that is several centuries after the conversion of England. The answer in *Reynolds's* is certainly misleading.

STANLEY JONES.—You complained some time ago, by letter, that your lecturing engagements were not published in the *Freethinker*. We replied, by letter, that they were not published because you never took the trouble to send in your list. You have not sent it yet. And as your complaint seems to have been made elsewhere, we deem it advisable to print the explanation.

H. GARCKE.—Pleased to hear that you so much admire Mr. Watts's articles on the Jubilee Craze. Your suggestion that the articles should be reprinted as a pamphlet or leaflet for general distribution is perhaps a good one, but the Jubilee fever has nearly run its course now, and Mr. Watts does not feel able to undertake the republication.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Yarmouth Mercury—The New Age—Glasgow Weekly Herald—English Mechanic—Liverpool Courier—Herts Leader—Berwick Advertizer—Vegetarian—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Church Weekly—The New Age—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Firebrand—Morning Leader—Oxford Review—Yarmouth Independent—Two Worlds—Liberator—Humanity.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

***The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.**

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the sultry weather, Mr. Foote had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. He occupies the same platform again this evening (July 4), taking for his subject "Providence and the British Empire."

During his recent visit to Birmingham, Mr. Watts delivered two lectures in the district under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. One of them, at Handsworth, was "A Plea for Secular Education." It has since been reported at some length in the *Handsworth Herald*.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been invited to lecture at Plymouth during his annual holiday, between July 24 and August 15. To do this he will need to make other engagements in the west, say at Bristol and in South Wales. Perhaps the friends in those parts will communicate with him, with a view to making use of his services. We hear that Mr. Moss lectured to a large and enthusiastic open-air meeting at Tottenham on Sunday evening.

Mr. Conway writes to the *Athenæum* stating his belief that the portrait of Thomas Paine, painted by Romney in 1792, has at length been found. The portrait was painted for Dr. Thomas Cooper, of Manchester, an English Jacobin and admirer of Paine, who went to America in 1795, became President of South Carolina College, and died at Columbia May 11, 1840. Mr. Conway identifies the portrait with one of Paine, which belonged to a Mr. Matsell, an official of Brooklyn, and which was for many years known to a small circle of Free Inquirers there. It was, however, always ascribed to Jarvis. Mr. Conway is convinced that the tradition of the New York Freethinkers is erroneous, and that this portrait is the veritable Romney. It, however, differs somewhat from Sharpe's engraving of Romney's picture of Paine, published by Mr. Truelove. The picture has been placed in the National Portrait Gallery, Trafalgar-square, and the critics will doubtless soon decide whether it is Romney's work or not.

Mr. and Mrs. Conway are on their way back to America. There was a considerable gathering of Freethinkers at South-place Chapel on the occasion of his last discourse. We wish them health and prosperity.

Enlarged copies of the photograph of the N. S. S. delegates to Leicester, taken by a local friend at Longcliffe, can now be obtained, price eighteenpence, from Mr. Pinder at the Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, or from Mr. Forder.

The *University Magazine* for July opens with an indictment of "William the Cad," and the Prussian prosecutions for the crime of *lèse majesté*. Hugh Mortimer Cecil follows with an excellent article on "Atheism"—a term he thinks more philosophical and just than Agnosticism. "If, upon analysing a mathematical treatise, and tracing its conclusions to their source, you discover that the author has begun by defining an octagon as a six-sided figure, and has argued upon this basis throughout, you simply point out to him his fundamental error. You do not adopt the 'modest attitude of agnosticism,' and profess your willingness to suspend your judgment until further proof is forthcoming as to the number of sides an octagon may have." The Atheist holds that the fundamental propositions of Theism are self-contradictory, or unmeaning. We commend Mr. Cecil's paper to all professed "Agnostics." The other contents of the *University Magazine* include a paper on *International Ethics*, by J. M. Robertson; an account of popular sky-pilots, especially Dr. Parker, entitled "Boaneges as Merry Andrew," in which the writer refers to *The Atheist Shoemaker* as "that Wesleyan classic"; and a paper on "Relics of Sun-worship in Judaism and Christianity."

Mr. S. R. Thompson gives three lectures this Sunday in the Town Hall-square, Rochdale. Friends should make a point of attending to support him.

Humanity, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, opens its July number with a strong protest against the Jubilee fever, written we presume by Mr. H. S. Salt. "The whole ceremony," it is said, "has been an organized rally of the forces most opposed to humane progress. It has deliberately glorified the detestable spirit of imperialism and militarism, and has deliberately neglected all the higher and worthier instinct of the English-speaking race. It is

Digitized by Google

only fitting that such a design should be celebrated in such a manner—that imperialist and upholsterer between them should have made London hideous, and themselves contemptible, by the heartless and ostentatious vulgarity of their display."

We are glad to see the *World* denouncing as a fraud that "silly story" about the Queen presenting a Bible to an Indian chief, with the remark that "*This* is the secret of England's greatness." "It is the purest fiction," our contemporary says, "although for half a century it has been complacently related by thousands of preachers and school teachers." Yet this apocryphal story has got such a hold upon the general mind that the *Westminster Gazette* gravely asks whether the *World's* statement "is quite accurate."

The funeral of a workman in Japan costs from about three to five shillings. The coffin is supplied for twenty cents; for cremation seventy-five cents is paid; and the mourners cheer themselves with refreshments which cost about eleven cents, and sometimes go as high as twenty-five cents. Cremation at this rate in Europe would soon become fashionable.

Both the *Independent* and the *Mercury* of Yarmouth have been printing letters on "Christianity and Agnosticism"—which is evidently a controversy of interest. The latter paper inserts a very good letter from Mr. J. M. Headley.

"A. G. W." contributes to the Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen* of June 26 an excellent paper entitled "Sixty Years of Religious Progress. He says: "The battle between science and religion may be held to be at an end. The real religious struggle of the present and the future lies between Christianity and Secularism. The former refers every step taken to a definite conception of the proper order of the universe, governed by a divine ruler who bears a peculiar relation to mankind, through Jesus Christ. Secularism abandons any appeal to the supernatural, and bases its plans for the improvement of mankind entirely on the teachings of experience and cultivated reason."

"A. G. W." continues: "Recent history seems to show that as the dissolution of Christianity has proceeded, so Secularism, in one form or another, has developed and strengthened. Christianity, in losing its unity, is losing its strength. Preachers speak with uncertain voices, and each pulpit seems to have a different message. These signs of the times undoubtedly give cause for disquietude, but they imply an urgent need for the re-organization of the Christian forces to meet the modern enemy of Secularism."

THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE.

THIS is a Frenchman's version of the Fall of Adam and Eve: "Monsieur Adam, he vake up—he sees une belle demoiselle aslip in ze garden. Voila de la chance! 'Bon jour, Madame Iv.' Madame Iv, she vake; she hole her fan before to her face. Adam put on his eye-glass to admire ze tableaux, and zey make von promenade. Madame Iv, she feel hungry. She sees appel on ze arbre. Serpent se promene sur l'arbre—make one walk on ze tree. 'Monsieur le Serpent,' say Iv, 'vill vous not have ze bonté to peek some appel? j'ais faim.' 'Certainement, Madame Iv, charmé de vous voir.' 'Hola, mon ami, ar-r-retez, vous!' says Adam—'stop! stop que songez vous faire? Was madness is zees? You must not pick ze appel!' Ze snake, he take one pinch of schnuff, he say: 'Au, Monsieur Adam, do you not know how zere is nossing proheebet ze ladies? Madame Iv, permit me to offer you some of zeese fruit defendu—zeese forbidden fruit.' Iv, she make one courtesy—ze snake, he fill her parasol wiz ze appel. He says: 'Eritis sicut Deus. Monsieur Adam, he will eat ze appel, he will become like one Dieu; know ze good and ze evell—but you, Madame Iv, cannot become more of a goddess than you are now.' An' zat feenish Madame Iv."

Obituary.

IT is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Mr. Charles Pottage, son of Mr. C. D. Pottage, of the North West London Branch, at the early age of thirty-six. The deceased had been a great traveller in the Orient and the Antipodes, a sunstroke some years ago, in an eastern land, having undermined his constitution. Although he knew for some days before he passed away that recovery was impossible, yet he glided into his last sleep in the most peaceful calm. The writer conducted the service at his funeral at East Finchley Cemetery on Wednesday.—ROBERT FORDER.

BRIEF NOTES.

THE present is by no means the lecturing season. With the tremendous heat we have had of late, and the absurd excitement caused by the Jubilee craze, all indoor meetings have been for some time at a discount. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that in our parks numerous speakers, and in many instances some excellent music, are to be found on Sundays. These are attractions always appreciated by a large section of the British public. It is not surprising, therefore, that audiences in our halls are just now rather limited. As a set-off against this, it is encouraging to know that both in London and in the provinces great activity is manifested in the preparations for active propagandist work to be carried on during the coming winter. It is intended that the Executive of the N.S.S. will, at an early date, take into consideration the scheme of Mr. Hartmann for the improvement of the Society's financial position, which he presented to the Leicester Conference. Without committing myself at present to any particular details, I recognise in Mr. Hartmann's proposals the elements of an extended and successful propaganda. It has long occurred to me that we required a well-arranged and systematic plan whereby lectures could be regularly given by competent persons, not only in London, but throughout the country. In my opinion, if Mr. Hartmann's scheme is properly worked out, this useful work can be done.

The late Conference remitted to the Executive the task of putting Mr. Hartmann's scheme in a practicable shape, and I presume that will be one of our first duties. Each member of the Executive should deem it a personal duty to assist in bringing this enterprise to a successful issue. The labor should not be left to any one person, but should be officially done by the Society on a purely business basis. There has been too much of leaving the responsibility to one individual, and thereby imposing upon him more toil and care than he could possibly endure with any comfort to himself or profit to others. The result has been discontent, which was caused by the indifference of the many in refusing to take their share of the work to be done. To obviate this in the future, my suggestion is that those who were appointed by the Conference to carry on the operations of the N.S.S. should not be mere ciphers, but practical workers. We have quite a number of young, earnest men in our movement, who are able and willing to do both platform and Committee work, if they have only the opportunity. Let those who have the means to render pecuniary aid, but who have not time to assist in any other way, do what they can, and I feel assured that the results will be as encouraging to the workers as they will be serviceable to the great cause which we should all have at heart.

As no one else moved in the matter, Mr. Foote started his lecturing scheme, which has been admitted on all hands to have been a great success. Under its auspices, hundreds of lectures have been given, and numerous fresh places have been visited. The President has now expressed his willingness to allow others to continue the useful work, which, in my opinion, is a wise decision upon his part.

At my recent visit to Birmingham and its districts, I was pleased to note the increased activity there shown by the committee and the members of the local Branch. One and all appeared determined to do solid work, and their arrangements already matured for the coming season are admirable. On Sunday, June 13, I lectured to three capital audiences, and at the conclusion several ladies and gentlemen joined the Branch. I am much indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Armfield for their kind hospitality during the whole of Sunday. On the Tuesday and Wednesday, June 15 and 16, I spoke at Aston and Handsworth, under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. The meetings were not large, but strangers were present on each occasion. In the opinion of the local friends, those week-night gatherings, where the admission was free, in comparatively new places, did much good, for they were the means of imparting to strangers a knowledge of Secular principles. One interesting feature of my visit was a social gathering which Mr.

Digitized by Google

and Mrs. Hodgkins, members of the Branch, had arranged at their house. About twenty of the Secular friends sat down to an excellent supper, after which the evening was devoted to conversation, brief speeches, toasts, songs, and recitations. The principal topic was the success of the Secular Cause, and it was cheering to listen to the bright hopes expressed as to the future. Personally, I thank our host and hostess for their unremitting attention to the comforts of their guests, and also for giving me an opportunity of meeting so many old and new friends of the good old Cause.

From the Midlands I went to Liverpool, where I lectured on Sunday, June 20. The audiences were limited in consequence of the many processions and the military display going on throughout the town in connection with the Jubilee. I had some very interesting conversations with the members of the Branch, who are looking forward with cheerful anticipations to their work of next season. Mr. Hammond and Mr. Small presided at my meetings, and I was exceedingly pleased with the hearty reception afforded me.

Now the royal fever is subsiding, perhaps business will resume its normal condition, and people will begin to realize that there is something more dignified, and of far greater importance to the welfare of the nation, than the recent absurd shows which the Church and the aristocracy have recently imposed upon the people.

CHARLES WATTS.

SUNDAY WITH PRE-HISTORIC MAN.

IN spite of the threatening weather, a fair number assembled last Sunday to accompany Mr. J. M. Wheeler and Mr. Chilperic Edwards through the Pre-historic and Ethnographical departments of the British Museum. The "Drift" implements were first taken. These pear-shaped or oval fragments of worked flints were found throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa in gravels and drift deposits, laid down in geologically recent times by river action. This demonstrated that they were first fabricated at a period when the surface of the continents was very different to what it is now; for it was evident that they had been gradually washed into the river-beds by the action of "denudation" which is continually at work, and which tends to level the highest hills into the valleys. This action, however, is necessarily slow. Roman remains, found in this and other countries, show that two thousand years ago the level of the land was very much the same as to-day, the Roman roads and bridges being laid out in accordance with the present position of land and water. It was still more important to observe that the Pyramids, built five thousand years ago, stand upon what is still the land level; showing that no appreciable change had taken place during that period. In one part of the Nile Valley was a sandstone formation, which was so hard four thousand years ago that the Egyptian kings excavated their tombs in it; and yet geologists had dug into the walls of these tombs, and found flint implements embedded in the sandstone, proving that man existed in the Nile Valley before the very rocks of Egypt were formed. To show the enormous period necessary to sweep the drift implements into the present gravels, it was remarked that at the present rate of denudation it took 11,740 years to lower the Thames Valley one foot; but it had been proved that the flint implements had been washed down from land which was once one hundred and fifty or two hundred feet above the present level of the river. Mr. Flinders Petrie had lately shown that some of the flint implements found in the Nile must have been brought down a distance of one thousand five hundred feet to place them where they are found now. The British flint implements are found associated with the remains of long extinct animals, the best known of which were the mammoth elephants, whose large and dense bones had survived the action of the elements the longest. The first implement of the drift type, noticed by the learned, was a pear-shaped article shown in the case, which was found in Gray's Inn-lane in 1697 together with a mammoth's tooth. The savants of that day of course knew nothing of the mammoth; but they recognised the tooth as being like an elephant's, so they explained the find as the spearhead of an Ancient Briton who had killed a Roman elephant. Scattered through these same gravels were a number of fresh-water shells, some of which no longer live in England, though found elsewhere; but the most important was the *Cyrena Flumenalis*, which is now extinct throughout Europe, and found only in the Nile and the rivers of Asia, as far north as Cashmere. The presence of this shell showed that at the Drift period the climate of this country was very much warmer than at present. No remains of the Drift man had yet been discovered, but his tools are so abundant that it was evident he existed during an enormous period of time.

Cave man was next taken in hand. The climate had become arctic in character, and primitive man was glad to shelter himself in caves, where his flint and bone tools are found associated with the remains of reindeer and other animals he had slaughtered for food. His implements, however, were far superior to those of the Drift period; and as he made use of bone needles it is evident that he wore clothing of some kind. The most striking examples of his skill are the drawings of animals found scratched on bone, fine specimens of which have been exhumed in France and Germany; though England has only one to show at present, the drawing of a horse's head, which is in the Museum. One of the cases contained a large piece from the floor of a cavern, showing how the cave deposits are found. Mr. Edwards had brought with him a stalactite, and a piece of stalagmite, to illustrate the nature and formation of stalagmite, which has played such an important part in sealing up these deposits for the benefit of the student. The stalagmite is found overlaying the remains of cave man in deposits of such thickness that they must have taken at the very least 40,000 years in formation, the estimates of some geologists being twenty times this figure. The Cave Age was coincident with the Glacial period, when Europe, Asia, and North America were shrouded in vast masses of ice. The generally accepted dating of this period was by means of the astronomical theory of Dr. Croll, according to which the latest stage of the glacial period began 250,000 years ago, and finally passed away 80,000 years ago. American geologists, however, claim that their Ice Age persisted much longer, and only passed away 10,000 years ago, as proved by the retrocession of the Falls of Niagara. Greenland is still in the glacial stage. Cave man existed throughout this long period; and it is in the caves that we meet with the earliest known bones of man. These bones show that in the earlier periods of the Ice Age the men living here were of extremely low type, having ape-like features, with projecting eye-brows and no chin; while the bones of the legs showed that they could not walk perfectly upright. Towards the close of the Glacial period, however, the type had vastly improved, and is scarcely distinguishable from the European of the present day.

The Drift and Cave implements were both formed by chipping stone into some sort of useful shape; but the next department showed a distinct advance upon this paleolithic, or "Old Stone" type. The implements, though still of stone, are skilfully worked into the desired form, and then ground and polished. This period is known as the neolithic, or "New Stone" Age. The climate had reverted to a condition similar to what we find it to-day, and the animals of that time did not differ materially from those now found in Europe. With the polished stone tools man advanced from hunting and fishing to agriculture. Neolithic men lived together in stockaded villages, raised crops of grain, and had domesticated all our tame animals except the horse and the cat. The power of their kings was shown by the huge stone dolmens erected as tombs, once attributed to the Druids. The skeletons and remains of neolithic men showed them to be of the present European type. The New Stone Age must have endured some thousands of years.

At the end of the case dedicated to the stone tools there are moulds used for casting bronze weapons. The transfer from the age of stone to the age of bronze was the most important ever made by man. The beginning of the Bronze Age is still shrouded in mystery. We only know that at the beginning of Egyptian and Babylonian history, 7,000 or 8,000 years ago, bronze had long been in use. In Western Europe its use must have extended over many centuries, for we can trace gradual improvements in the shapes of the weapons. The last and most important tool evolved by the bronze men was the sword. One of the cases in the Museum was especially interesting to the Londoner, as it was devoted entirely to bronze weapons found in the Thames. We may say, with a fair approach to certainty, that the men of the Bronze Age were the immediate ancestors of the European nations of the present day, and spoke forms of the Aryan languages.

Passing across the Pre-historic Saloon brought us in front of the iron swords from the Swiss lake-dwellings, which inaugurated the early Iron Age. Iron tools were in use 4,000 years ago in Babylonia and Egypt; but the countries north of the Mediterranean received the metal much later. In Switzerland the Iron Age commenced about the fifth century B.C., because the iron weapons are always found associated with Greek and Etruscan coins of that period. In England the use of iron cannot be dated earlier than 300 B.C.; and in Denmark not till the reign of Augustus Cæsar. Behind the Swiss are the Keltic exhibits, consisting chiefly of specimens of the weapons with which the Ancient Britons were armed about the time of Julius Cæsar; and here, on the threshold of English history, we took our leave of pre-historic man.

Digitized by Google

The historical period is but an infinitesimal portion of the time that man has existed on the earth. We have to look back through the long vistas of the Bronze and Stone Ages, and the very lowest date we can give for the first appearance of man in Western Europe is at least 800,000 years ago.

Pausing before the bust of Henry Christy, Mr. J. M. Wheeler gave some particulars of the life of that man, to whom anthropology is so much indebted, and referred to the works of Dr. E. B. Tylor, who accompanied Mr. Christy to Mexico. In an adjacent case is a bronze medallion of the French Abbé, Boucher de Perthes, who first directed attention to the Drift implements; it being at that time strenuously denied, even by geologists, that man was contemporaneous with any extinct animals. The Abbé was always being asked how he could reconcile his discoveries with the Bible; but he only shrugged his shoulders, and said that he studied the matter as a man of science, and not as a theologian.

Passing into the Ethnographical Gallery, Mr. Wheeler pointed to the many wooden implements displayed, and maintained that, even before the Stone Age, there must have been an Age of Wood. He illustrated the stick evolving into the club, the boomerang, the battle-axe, and mace; the dart into the spear, arrow, crossbow, and rifle; and also directed attention to the evolution of musical instruments, the masks, etc., for ceremonial dances among modern savages, and the "bull-roarer" for warning females from the mysteries. There were the different ingenious devices for obtaining fire; and he recalled the care with which this useful element is maintained by savages, and even civilized peoples, telling a story of a Dartmoor housewife, who had a firm hope of a glorious hereafter because she had never once let her fire go out for fifty years. The "Messages" were also pointed out as important links in human culture, and showing methods of mnemonic writing that are only very recently being studied by scientific men.

After a very interesting excursion through the treasures of the Museum, the party separated, quite convinced that "The proper study of mankind is man."

A CURIOUS EPITAPH.

Collectors of epitaphs may note one on the tombstone of a Dr. Luck, who died in 1858 at East Franklin, Vermont. It reads:—

I have no fears, because I've got
No faith nor hope in Juggernaut;
Nor Jah, Pope, Lama, Boud, nor Zend,
Nor Bible systems without end;
Nor Alcoran, nor Mormon's views,
Nor any creeds that priests' dupes use;
Each class self-pure condemns the rest,
Enlightened minds the whole detest;
In strongest faith no virtue lies,
And unbelief no vice implies.
A bare opinion hurts no man;
Then prove it hurts a God who can.
To others do, to others give,
As you'd have done, or would receive.

Damnation *is* a New Testament doctrine, and has been held by all the great sections of Christianity. And to repudiate it is to repudiate Christianity. Indeed, puzzling as the Christian scheme is with hell-fire, it is ten times more so without it. What means the incarnation of the son of God? What means his suffering sacrificial death, if eternal damnation is a fable? The Atonement and this doctrine stand or fall together.—*J. Symes.*

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

"LORD, THINK OF THE LAMBS!"

The sun was hot and the box-trees drooped,
And the hills and the ranges hazed,
And the stones in the creek were afire with drought,
And the tin roofs crackled and blazed.
There was little grass on the river flats,
The dams were like shaking bogs,
When the parson came with a prayer for rain
To the station at Cedar Logs.

The parson came and the parson prayed,
And he patted his God on the head;
He spoke of famine and seven kine,
Of Egypt and waters red;
And the service closed with a little hymn
That was sung through the parson's nose,
And the boss got up with a visage grim,
And the congregation rose.

They followed him down to the wool-shed door,
And the parson walked behind;
"Mac" stopped, and he stood and he turned about
And he spoke from his inner mind.
He opened the door that was eight feet wide,
Let in the streaming sun;
He beckoned the parson to come beside,
And the parson heard and was dumb.

. . . . . .

"Do ye see yon flat beyont the crick?
Do ye smell the beastly scent
O' the rotting yows and the fetid cows?
Was this what yer Goddy meant
When He closed on Adam for breaking laws,
By 'sweat o' the brow and graft'?
Did He burn my draftin' yairds for fun
When he saw there'd be nocht to draft?

"Is it right for an 'evolution' man
To blether o' 'walls' and 'the weak'?
I'm strong; I've brains, and a level head;
I've toiled; I've sweated; *I*, weak!
Hear *me*, whiles I pray to my ain true God
For my land and my life and soul;
Then go and pray to your little Lord
To pluck me from hot hell-hole.

. . . . . .

"O God of the men that are men,
Look round on the land!
See the dryness and drouth and sore sorrow!
Stretch forth thy strong hand!
Look, Lord, at the sheep in the dams
Boggit deep in the mud, and their eyes
Taken alive by the crows!
Lord, think o' the lambs!

"Almighty! I've sinned, I've no sorrow;
I'd live just again as I've lived;
But please send thy rain on the morrow—
Or soon. Not for me. I'm broke as it is.
Consider thy beasties!

"Think o' the anguish of mothers
With no milk for their bairns!
Hear, Lord, the bleat of the mothers,
The woe of the dying;
Just one big cloud, God—you've so many—
To burst on the ranges!
Think of fresh grass, roaring gullies,
Think on the changes!

"O send rain ere the frost comes;
Be merciful, pitiful, kind;
Visit not the sins of such ones
As me on thy beasties.

"Tak' thy horse, God, and ride by the rivers,
Smell the stinks in the creek;
By scorched plains where hot sunlight shivers;
Mark fat crows on dead trees!
God, think of thy cattle!"

. . . . . .

The parson mounted his weary nag,
That was galled and raw on the back;
He spoke no word as he road away
Alone, down the dusty track.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* J. H. M. Abbott.

In all the history of the Caliphs there cannot be shown anything half so infamous as the Inquisition; not a single instance of an individual being burnt for his religious opinions, nor put to death for not embracing Islam.—*Godfrey Higgins.*

Digitized by Google

LESSONS FROM CALAMITIES.

On December 8, 1863, the great cathedral at Santiago, Chili, was destroyed by fire. With it were burned two thousand persons, mostly women, two-thirds of the entire congregation. It was the grandest holocaust of any age or country, and it occurred in the midst of divine service. The clergy ever labor to draw lessons in the interest of their creed from calamities. Their ambition is to show the instability of life, so they turn these heartrending accounts to practical use, as they did the recent burning of the Charity Bazaar in Paris. Never was a theatre burned and life lost without making the event a subject for declamation against the overwhelming sin of attending upon places of amusement. They have a lesson from the alleged founder of their faith to do so. When told that the Tower of Siloam had fallen and killed eighteen persons, he said: "Unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish"; as if repentance would save from such catastrophes, and that they occurred for lack of such repentance. The conclusion follows: When fires burn cathedrals, churches, and charity bazaars, unless you repent and avoid such places, you shall also perish and in like manner. Fear, cowardly fear, is the impelling motive for goodness, as inculcated by the great Teacher, and is still practised by his priestly representatives; and it is on that base emotion of the human soul the Church was built, and is still maintained.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE COST OF NATIONAL BLOOD-POISONING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In a recent issue of the *Freethinker* (May 31) I read an interesting notice of Humanitarian League publications, among which was a projected paper by Mr. Joseph Collinson on "What it Costs to be Vaccinated," which prompts me to offer a few remarks. Few taxpayers are aware of the enormous cost of public vaccination in this country, and what a fruitful source of revenue the reputed discovery of Jenner proves, directly and indirectly, to the medical profession. The cost of public vaccination in England and Wales consists of (1) vaccination fees and expenses paid out of the poor-rate, which, for the five years ending Lady Day, 1845, amounted to £104,718; 1850, £120,544; 1855, £179,175; 1860, £218,998; 1865, £257,089; 1870, £278,571; 1875, £447,364; 1880 £437,398; 1885, £463,380; 1890, £500,000—£3,008,237; (2) awards or bonuses in consideration of the excellence of the work done by the public vaccinators—work they have already been paid for doing, under charges No. 1. These awards are paid by an annual grant of Parliament, under section 5 of the Vaccination Act of 1867. They were first granted in 1868, and from that year to 1890 amounted to a total of £301,314. (3) Salaries and expenses of the vaccination staff of the Local Government Board; these, as shown by the Civil Service Estimates for the year ending March 31, 1887, are:—Chief medical officer, £1,200; assistant ditto, £1,000; two inspectors at £800 each, one ditto at £700, six ditto £500 to £600 each—£3,567 altogether; assistant vaccine inspector, £400; two vaccinators, £150 each and travelling expenses, amount not clearly defined, but probably over £1,000; annual total, £9,767. (4) The Government calf-lymph establishment for the manufacture of *bovine virus*, in Lamb's Conduit-street, founded in 1881; director, £400; assistant director, £300; vaccination clerk, £52; two attendants, £135; two servants, £130; purchase of lymph, ivory points, tubes, and other apparatus, etc., £900; cartage of manure, £13; total, £3,090.

The estimated annual cost of public vaccination is £123,000. The emoluments derived from vaccination serve to perpetuate the disgusting rite. Abolish them, and substitute a scientific system of personal and public sanitation, and small-pox and many other diseases would disappear from our midst. If vaccination were a prophylactic against variola, there would be some excuse for the expenditure, but none for its compulsory infliction. No honest medical practitioner pretends that this is the case; it is, therefore, a total and inexcusable waste of public money. I have omitted from this abstract the steady fees extracted from the public by the medical profession for the attempted cure of vaccinal diseases, also the enormous incomes derived from re-vaccination during small-pox epidemics, and panics created by the doctors, and for the treatment of post-vaccinal small-pox, the majority of the patients in small-pox hospitals and elsewhere having been vaccinated. It will be seen, however, by the foregoing figures that the medical enthusiasm for compulsory vaccination is not so entirely disinterested as its leading promoters have tried to make out.

Cordially thanking you for your courtesy,

James R. Williamson.

THOSE BOYS!

"I don't like Willie 'tall," the first youngster asserted, emphatically. "Why not?" he was asked. "'Cause every night he goes and blabs everything to God."

Sky-Pilot—"And how do you get on at Sunday-school, Billie?" Billie—"Pretty well; I've just learned about the whale swallowing Jonah." Pilot—"That's good." Billie—"Yes, sir; and next Sunday I'm going to begin to believe it."

"I don't see what's the use of me being vaccinated again," said Tommy, baring his arm reluctantly for the doctor. "The human body changes every seven years, Tommy," replied his mother. "You are eleven years old now. You were in your fourth year when you were vaccinated first, and it has run out." "Well, I was baptized when I was a baby. Has that run out, too?"

A sky-pilot promised a crown to any boy who should propound a riddle that he could not answer. One and another tried, and at last one boy asked: "Why am I like the Prince of Wales?" The man of God puzzled his wits in vain, and finally was compelled to admit that he did not know. "Why," said the boy, "it's because I'm waiting for the crown."

It's "don't you make a bit of noise,"
  And "don't go out of door";
And "don't you spread your stock of toys
  About the parlor floor";
And "don't you dare play in the dust";
  And "don't you tease the cat"
And "don't you get your clothing mussed";
  And "don't" do this and that.

It seems to me I've never found
  A thing I'd like to do
But what there's some one close around
  At's got a "don't" or two.
And Sunday—'at's the day 'at "don't",
  Is worst of all the seven.
Oh, goodness! but I hope there won't
  Be any "don'ts" in heaven!

PROFANE JOKES.

Jones, a professed religionist, had for years taunted Brown with his unorthodox doubtings. At a certain dinner, given by Jones, the host became obstreperously tipsy. Ladies were present, and after they had withdrawn Jones flung himself, with a lighted cigar, into a chair beside his friend. "Before I die, old chap," he announced, rather thick of tongue, "I'm determined to convert you." "As to the truth of one dogma," said Brown, "you've certainly done so." "Which is that?" mumbled Jones. "The elevation of the host."

The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston has been in existence almost as long as Boston itself. Once a year its members have been accustomed to go to church in a body and hear a sermon. Bishop Clarke, of Rhode Island, says that he was once called upon to deliver this discourse, and he took for his text Isaiah ix. 15: "The ancient and honorable, he is the head." Some surprise was expressed that so appropriate a text had never before been used in that connection, but the reason became apparent before many hours had passed. Next morning a newspaper, devoted to the extermination of anything touching upon military preparations, called the public attention to the fact that, though the preacher had only quoted the first part of the passage, his discourse had amply vindicated the truth of the last part of it. It ended by quoting the entire text: "The ancient and honorable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail."

"And now, little children," said the sky-pilot, "if you are good children, some day you may wear a golden crown." "Paw's got one on his tooth now," chirped the newest boy.

Men of genius are generally sadly careless of their own interests. Look at Jesus Christ! If he had kept the copyright of the Gospels, just think what a fortune it would have been for his heirs—that is, if he had written any gospels and produced any heirs.

What language did Balaam's donkey speak? It is conjectured he was either a He-brayist or spoke *Assyrian*.

What scripture authority have tailors, stonemasons, and barbers for claiming the Lord God as one of their craft? (1) Genesis iii. 21; (2) Exodus xxiv. 12; (3) Isaiah vii. 20.

Sky-pilot (examining Sunday-school)—"Why did they take Stephen outside the city to stone him?" Big Boy—"So they could get a better shy at him."

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Providence and the British Empire."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. Cohen; 7, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, J. Thurlow.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, A. Guest, "The Cross and the Crescent."

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, E. White.

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, H. P. Ward.

HARROW-ROAD (corner of Chippenham-road): 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Gospel of Evolution."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "A Crumbling Creed."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, H. P. Ward, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity?"

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, T. J. Thurlow; 7, W. J. Ramsey.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, H. P. Ward.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (70 Sevier-street, Baptist Mills): 7, Mary Paskey.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "Religion in Modern Literature."

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "An Incredible Creed"; 3, "God, Man, and the Bible"; 7, "Is Christianity, after all, the Safe Side?" The first two lectures will, weather permitting, be given near the Monolith.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, Stanley Jones, "Lord Salisbury Politician and Philosopher."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): S. R. Thompson—11, "True Liberty"; 3, "The Plagues of Egypt"; 6.30, "Roman Catholic or Atheist: Which?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 4, m., Camberwell; a and e., Peckham Rye. 11, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. 18, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park. 25, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park. August 1, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 4, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Kilburn. 11, m., Clerkenwell; a., Finsbury Park. 18, m. and a., New Brompton. 25, m., Wood Green; e., Tottenham. August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 22, m., Wood Green. 29, Tottenham.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—July 11, e., Hammersmith. 18, m., Hyde Park. August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 4, m., Mile End Waste; e., Edmonton. September 5, Limehouse.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, Camden-road, N.W.—July 4, Limehouse; e., Clerkenwell Green. 18, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 25, m., Mile End.

H. P. WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—July 4, m., Kingsland; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith. 11, m., Limehouse. 18, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 25, m., Camberwell Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, painless by gas, 5s.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series*, 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Series*, 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Just published, price Twopence,

Evolution & Christianity.

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

CHAPTERS:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3 Monkery; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

"THE EXTINCTION OF WAR, POVERTY, AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES." By A DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, author of *Elements of Social Science.* 157 pp., 6d., by post 8d. Just published. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. "The author writes with earnestness and power, and his treatise deserves to be attentively read."—*The Literary Guide.*

WANTED, AN ASSISTANT.—Principal duties packing small parcels and writing. Married man with not more than two children preferred. Must approve of the principles and objects of the Malthusian League. Beautiful country house, lawn and garden, and salary according to abilities. Apply, by letter only, giving full particulars, to "Neo-Malthusian," care of R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London.

Digitized by Google

COSTUME SKIRTS 10/6

COSTUME SKIRTS

10s. 6d. Each.

Send waist measure and length back and front.

These Costume Skirts are exceedingly well-made and lined throughout. They are all cut very full and in the latest fashionable shape. They hang very gracefully, and are guaranteed to give the utmost satisfaction.

Over 50 High-class Materials to choose from,

including Bruno Cloth, Plain, Figured, or Diagonal Serges, Habit Cloth, Wool Twills, Crepons, Alpacas, or Fancy Tweeds.

To ensure a rush of work for our New Hands in the Costume Department we make this Splendid Offer

Until JULY 15th ONLY.

With every 10s. 6d. Costume Skirt we send, *free of cost*, one of our Beautiful Crepon Blouses, which just now are all the rage.

SEND BY RETURN AND SECURE A GREAT BARGAIN.

10/6 COSTUME SKIRTS

THINK OF IT.

A New Dress to measure for the wife.

And a pair of first-class Trousers for yourself.

All for 21s. carriage paid.

Inches.	
Round Waist over Trousers	.....
Round Seat	.....
Inside Leg Seam	.....
Full Length of Trousers	.....
Round Thigh	.....
Round Knee	.....
Round Bottom	.....
Please say Lined or Unlined	.....
Side or Cross Pockets	.....
Fly or Full Fall	.....

250 odd lengths of High-class Fashionable Materials, which would make good 18s. trousers to measure.

We offer these to clear.

10s. 6d. per pair to measure, or **4** Trouser Lengths for **21s.**

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LECTURE,

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 28. SUNDAY, JULY 11, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE OLD WAX NOSE.

VI.—MORALS AND MANNERS.

DR. FARRAR takes the position that "the Bible is not homogeneous in its morality." There is a higher and a lower; and, to use the fine but paradoxical metaphor of Milton, within the lowest deep a lower deep still opens its dreadful abyss of crime and brutality. The same admission is made by Professor Bruce, of the Free Church of Scotland; but this gentleman is more subtle than Dr. Farrar, and tries to save the reputation of the Bible by a notable piece of casuistical special-pleading. He does not allow, though he does not expressly deny, that the Bible contains any immorality. What he does is to draw a distinction between high morality and low morality. Immorality is sinning against your conscience. High morality is acting right up to its noblest dictates. Low morality is conduct in honest conformity to the low standard of a conscience but half-enlightened. When the prophetess Deborah sings triumphantly over the infamous exploit of Jael, who invited the fugitive Sisera into her tent, and assassinated him while he slept in the confidence of her hospitality, we must not say that either of these precious females was guilty of immorality. They were simply carrying out a low morality. And the same applies to Deborah's exclamation: "To every man a damsel or two"—meaning that the Jewish soldiers slew their male enemies and dragged home a brace of maidens for themselves. Such conduct would be highly improper now, but it was all right then; at least it was as right as they knew; and we must not judge the actors by later ethical standards. So says Professor Bruce, and it would be true enough if the Bible were not put forward as a divine book, or if it ever reprehended the infamies of God's chosen people. But it does nothing of the kind; it mentions Jael and Deborah in terms of absolute approval.

Dr. Farrar severely denounces the Jewish wars of extermination in Palestine, regardless of the fact—which is as true as any other religious fact in the Bible—that these atrocities were expressly commanded by Jehovah. Divines have defended the massacre of the Midianites, for instance, and the appropriation of their unmarried women; but Dr. Farrar calls their arguments "miserable pleas," and adds that if such "guilty and horrible" doings were "recorded without blame," it only shows that "the moral views of the desert tribes on such subjects were in this respect very rudimentary." These desert tribes were the chosen people of God; their prophets spoke under divine inspiration; yet even Jeremiah, in denouncing Moab, cries: "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood." According to Dr. Farrar, this proves how "slow" was the "development of the religious consciousness of mankind." But how did it happen that the Jews, with all the advantage of special inspiration, were just as slow in this respect as any other nation in the world's history? What is the use of "inspiration" if it does not appreciably quicken the natural development of the human conscience?

Many of the Bible heroes are fit for a distinguished place in the Newgate Calendar. Dr. Farrar himself cannot stomach "some details" in the lives of Abraham, Jacob, Jephthah, and David. Still, he urges that "the use made of them in the sceptical propaganda is often illegitimate." These worthies were not "faultless." It is their "*general* faithfulness" which is "rightly held up to admiration as our example." Faithfulness to what? Simply to their own greed and ambition, first of all, and secondly to the dominance of their tribal god Jehovah, who by such instruments triumphed over his rival deities, and became at last the sole Lord God of Israel.

Dr. Farrar allows no palliating plea for the cursing Psalms. He cites a few of the very worst passages, black with hatred and red with blood, and asks: "Can the casuistry be anything but gross which would palm off such passages as the very utterance of God?" Moses was "a great lawgiver and a great prophet," but Dr. Farrar will not "defend the divinity of passages so morally indefensible" as that, for instance, which gives the slave-owner impunity in killing his slave, provided he does not slay him on the spot, but beats him so that he dies "in a day or two." Nor is there "divinity" in the order to the Jews to refrain from eating bad meat, but to sell it to the Gentiles. Neither is there "divinity" in the order (Deut. xxi. 10–14) to take a wife for a month on trial. These things are parts of an ostensibly divine code, but lawgivers and people were alike mistaken. Inspiration did not guide them aright, but somehow or other it enables Dr. Farrar to correct their blunders three thousand years afterwards; which is merely saying, after all, that inspiration does not pioneer but follow the march of human progress.

During the reign of David a dreadful incident occurred. There had been a three years' famine, and David "inquired of the Lord." The answer was, "Blood upon Saul and upon his house!" Seven of Saul's sons were hung up "unto the Lord," and the famine was stopped. Dr. Farrar tells of an intelligent artisan who got up at a meeting and asked "whether it was not meant to imply that God was pacified by the blood of innocent human victims?" He does not give the answer. It either means this or it means nothing at all. In the same way, the story of Jephthah, who offered his daughter as a burnt offering to the Lord, takes such an immolation for granted as a religious act of perfect propriety. Jephthah is mentioned as a hero of faith in the New Testament, and no hint is given that he acted wrongly in sacrificing his daughter on the altar of Jehovah.

We have said enough on this subject to give the reader a fair idea of Dr. Farrar's position. Let us now pass from Bible morals to Bible manners.

"The Bible," says Dr. Farrar, "is assailed on the ground that it contains coarse and unedifying stories." Take the story of Lot and his daughters, to say nothing of the abortive attempt on the angels in Sodom. Could anything be more repulsive? Is there any excuse for putting such abominable feculence into the hands of children? After a lot of talk about it, and about, Dr. Farrar makes the following sapient observation: "The story of Lot wears a very different complexion if we regard it as an exhibition of unknown traditions about the connection between the Israelites and the tribes of Moab and Ammon." But what does this mean? The Moabites and Ammonites, according to the Bible, were hereditary enemies of the Jews, and it was impossible to exterminate them. They were evidently near of kin to the chosen people. Now, if these two facts are put together, it is easy to see the purpose of this story of Lot and his daughters. The Jews traced their own descent, in a perfectly honorable way, from Abraham and his legitimate wife Sarah, who are doubtless legendary characters. On the other hand, they traced the descent of the Moabites and Ammonites, their cousins and enemies, through Lot and his two daughters, thus throwing the

Digitized by Google

aspersion of incest upon the cradle of both those races. This is the adequate and satisfactory explanation of the story. It is an exhibition of dirty and unscrupulous hatred; and, as such, it is a curious fragment of "the Word of God."

Take next what Dr. Farrar calls "the pathetic story of Hosea," the prophet who was ordered by God to marry a prostitute—not to use the more downright language of the English Bible. Dr. Farrar suggests that there is some doubt as to the meaning of the original. Hosea's wife may have turned out a baggage after the nuptials, instead of being one before. "It was the anguish caused by her infidelity," he says, "that first woke Hosea to the sense of Israel's infidelity to Jehovah." And read in the light of this "modern criticism" the story of Hosea is "in the highest degree pure and noble." How pretty! All that remains for Dr. Farrar to do is to explain away as equally "pure and noble," the imagery of Ezekiel in reference to Aholah and Aholibah. There is no reason why "modern criticism" in the hands of gentlemen like Dr. Farrar should not transform Priapus into a Sunday-school teacher.

Not only are there very gross stories in the Bible, many of which are too beastly to dwell upon, but its language is often gratuitously disgusting. And every scholar knows that the Hebrew text is sometimes far more "purple" than our English version. Dr. Farrar admits that if the "exact meaning" of certain passages were understood, they "could not be read without a blush." "Happily," he says, they are "disguised by the euphemism of translations." That is to say, the inspired Bible writers, or penmen of the Holy Ghost, as old divines called them, were often indecent and sometimes positively obscene. Dr. Farrar's explanation is, that "ancient and Eastern readers" were not easily shocked, and that our modern "sensibility" is of "recent growth." But this proves again that "inspiration" is in no sense the cause of progress.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

SURVIVALS OF EARLY IDEAS.*

APPENDED to a collection of Greek Folk-Poesy, translated by Lucy M. J. Garnett, the authoress of *Women in Turkey*, is an important essay on "The Survival of Paganism," by J. S. Stuart-Glennie, which is well worthy the attention of all interested in the problems of the rise and growth of culture and of religious belief. Mr. Stuart-Glennie, like some other students of sociology and of the history of human evolution, has been driven to folk-lore research for the solution, or some contribution to the solution, of the problems of the origin of progressive social organization and progressive philosophic thought. Hume had found the beginnings of religion in polytheism, Comte in fetishism, Tylor in animism, and Spencer in ghost-fear and ancestor-worship. But Mr. Glennie advocates what he calls zoönism, or, as he now better calls it, panzoism, the view which conceives all nature, inanimate objects no less than plants and animals, as having responsively sentient powers, whereof the limits of influence, and hence capacity of transformation, and being transformed not having been ascertained, are believed to be practically infinite.

Man's primitive conception of nature, according to Mr. Glennie, is that of a solidarity of sentient powers, influencing and being influenced, according to their different capacities, at any distance, and even to the extent of transforming and being transformed. Metamorphoses do not surprise the savage, who sees the skies constantly changing, observes the evolution of the bird from the egg, the fly from the grub, the frog from the tadpole, the plant from the seed, and notices the earth putting on a new garment with the change of seasons. Mr. Glennie then considers "panzoism" as the first stage of folk-culture. He thinks that if the stages of the embryo are a record of the stages of the physical evolution of the species, the stages of the individual should be a record of the stages of the mental evolution of mankind. When the nurse says, "Naughty chair to hurt baby—beat it," she puts herself in line with the intellectual capacity of the child. The next stage Mr. Glennie classes as the magical or magicianist, in which we have the conception that the events of nature are not only predictable, but controllable, by human power and special persons. In magic we have the beginnings of science and of religious ritual. Imitation of the successful is the great secret of success, and wearing the skins of animals or imitating their movements are held to be aids in the chase. In early magic, Mr. Glennie points out, we deal with influences supposed to be exerted through the non-isolation of bodies, through the evil eye, and through identity of blood. All these imply a conception of the solidarity of objects through their mutual influences. The first, including such superstitions as spirits not crossing running water, I should incline to assign to such people as the lake dwellers, or the existing tribes who build their huts on piles to preserve them from noxious animals or inimical tribes. The malign influence of the Evil Eye would be an explanation of disease and death following without direct violence, and duties of blood-avenging would be connected with stories of blood-influence.

Mr. Glennie terms his third stage the "supernal," in which objects—such as the sun, moon, and stars, etc., the oak and corn, the horse and cow, and persons of a higher race—impress themselves as possessed of superior powers. This supernalism may and does develop into supernaturalism. Mr. Glennie has an Euhemerist interpretation of the stories of supernatural beings. If, for instance, Matriarchal women were generally of a higher white race, stories of swan-maidens may be a mythical reminiscence of them; the gods of Samothrace may have been the first metallurgists, and an early dwarf race, possessed of what appeared magical powers, may have been the origin of stories of elves and fairies. The origin of the gods he finds, not in any notion of spirits, but in the actual conflict of higher and lower races. When the whites first appeared in America they were considered as gods. On the other hand, the Chinese regard non-celestials as foreign devils. In Mr. Glennie's view, the higher races breaking up the social conditions, and hence the morality, of the lower race were, with conscious or unconscious purpose, impelled, for their own preservation, and that of the new social economy which they introduced, to supplement natural by supernatural sanctions, in developing supernal into supernatural beings—Lords of other-world heavens and hells, gods who could be appeased only by the priests of the higher races. Instead of saying, with Petronius, that fear made the gods he would say it was the human gods who created fear, "and it was the higher races who, in their conflict with the lower, created the gods and elaborated the hells." Mr. Glennie, indeed, contends that fear was not specially developed and exploited till the establishment—at what is now an approximately dateable period—of the Hell-Religions of Civilization. But this seems to me questionable. Ignorant and savage people have many causes of fear in enemies, thunder, hailstorms, reptiles, disease, and spirits believed to be malevolent.

By Paganism, it should be understood, Mr. Glennie means not the classical religion of Greece and Rome, but the older conceptions of nature, and consequent customs and morality found among the *Pagani*, or Folk, unaffected by culture and the culture-religions. Traces of these stages are found in the folk stories, and Mr. Glennie points out that even to-day in Greece Christianity is a mere veneer. As the Rev. Mr. Tozer says: "The beliefs of the modern Greeks respecting death and the state of the dead, so far as we have the means of judging of them, are absolutely and entirely Pagan. In the numerous ballads which relate to these subjects there is not a trace of any features derived from Christian sources.....Some of the songs are intended for Christian festivals, others are dirges to be sung at funerals, and others relate to subjects akin to these. But in none of them does the belief in a resurrection or a future judgment make itself apparent."

The belief of early folk in the solidarity of nature, its mutual interdependence, action, and re-action, seems at bottom truer than the theistic belief in some exterior power who can operate upon it magically. Mr. Glennie says: "Notwithstanding the immense economic and political forces on the side of a discredited and uncredited Supernaturalism—the ultimate triumph of that Science, which is but the splendid verification of the primitive folk

* New Folk-Lore Researches. *Greek Folk-Poesy.* Annotated translations from the whole Cycle of Romaic Folk-Verse and Folk-Prose, by Lucy M. J. Garnett; edited with "Essays on The Science of Folk-Lore, Greek Folk-Speech, and The Survival of Paganism," by J. S. Stuart-Glennie, M.A. (D. Nutt, 270 Strand).

Digitized by Google

intuition of the Solidarity of Nature, appears as if it were in the drift of things." This view gives a new aspect to religion, which our author would define as "an ideal of conduct derived from some general conception of the environments of existence"—a definition which at once allows of an atheistic religion.

The mythological stories in these Greek folk tales are arranged as Zoönist, Magical, and Supernalist; the social stories as ante-Nuptial, Family, and Communal; and the historical legends as Byzantine, Ottoman, and Hellenic. Some of the incidents of these folk stories remind us of the *Arabian Nights*; others have their parallels in Kelpic Folk-lore. There is a Cinderella or Saddleslut, a tale which is almost world-wide, and one is like the popular Slavonic fairy tale of *The Three Citrons*, translated by W. W. Strickland in his *Segnius Irritant*.

The most interesting of the stories to a classical scholar will probably be that which was related to M. François Lenormant, by an old Greek priest at Eleusis. Here on the very spot of the ancient mysteries of Demeter was told the story of the mother's search for the stolen daughter, Persephone, with Hades converted into a Turkish Agha possessing magical powers. Another classical story, that of Ulysses and Polyphemus, is reproduced in the tale of "The Famous Dhrako, or the Quest of the Golden Wand." What is now certain is that the old classical conceptions of the gods must be accommodated to the wider knowledge of the early beliefs. It is certain, too, that Mr. Stuart Glennie's views are full of suggestion. What is wanting is that they should now be applied to the folk tales and remnants of folk culture in other lands.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

(Concluded from page 520.)

THE defenders of the story of the resurrection of Jesus urge that those who reject the theory that he did rise from the dead should be prepared to prove that his alleged death closed his career. Such a request, however, is as unfair as it is illogical. If it were asserted that Christ lived forty *years* without food, instead of forty *days*, as alleged in the gospel ascribed to St. Luke, surely it would not be expected that those who doubted the accuracy of the statement should attempt to prove he did nothing of the kind. The same may be said of his reported resurrection. What the Rev. James Cranbrook wrote as to the origin of Christianity has equal force in reference to the inception of the belief in the resurrection. His words are: "Whatever claims authority in this age must show that it has some substantial grounds for its claims. And this is especially true with regard to a system of beliefs like that of Christianity. For, in its claims to the miraculous, it comes into direct collision with the spirit of the age, and does violence to some of our strongest tendencies and convictions. It is surely, therefore, an absurdity to say that until we can account for the origin of Christianity by some other means—seeing it is established—we are bound to accept it as true, and its advocates are not bound to adduce any positive evidence in its support. I venture to lay it down as a canon of both logic and rhetoric, in opposition to the authority of Archbishop Whateley, that everyone who makes a positive affirmation is bound to furnish the reasons for such an affirmation before he demand the belief of others" (*The Founders of Christianity*, preface, pp. vii., viii.). So we contend as regards the alleged resurrection of Christ. The story relates what is contrary to the experience of the present age, and to all known laws of nature; therefore, it is the duty of those who assert its truth to prove their assertion. It is not for us, who reject its accuracy, to prove our negative position. Even Archbishop Whateley admits our contention when he grants that those who deny the divine origin of Christianity "are not, indeed, called on to prove that it actually did arise in this or that way, but to suggest (consistently with acknowledged facts) some probable way in which it may have arisen, reconcilable with all the circumstances of the case" (*Logic*, book iii., sec. 17). This is what we propose doing in reference to the origin and perpetuation of the belief in the story of the resurrection.

The first *probable* cause of the origination of the belief that Christ rose from the dead was the general notion which then prevailed, that other supposed saviors had risen from their graves. The belief in resurrections did not originate with, nor was it confined to, the followers of Christ. Krishna, the Hindoo savior; Adonis, in the honor of whom the Syrians held regular ceremonies, at which it is recorded that they sang:

> Trust, ye saints, your God restored;
> Trust ye—in your risen Lord;
> For the pains which he endured
> Our salvation have procured;

Osiris, the Egyptian savior; Hercules, and many other supposed saviors or prophets, are said to have risen from the dead. Professor Mahaffy, who was for some time the lecturer on ancient history in the University of Dublin, informs us that "the resurrection and reign over an eternal kingdom by an incarnate, mediating deity, born of a virgin, was a theological conception which pervaded the oldest religion of Egypt." Mr. Bonwick, in his *Egyptian Belief*, remarks: "It is astonishing to find that at least five thousand years ago men trusted an Osiris as the 'Risen Savior,' and confidently hoped to rise, as he arose, from the grave." Mons. Dupuis, in speaking of Mithras, the Persian savior, writes: "It is chiefly in the religion of Mithras.....that we find mostly these features of analogy with the death and resurrection of Christ." And the resurrection of Esculapius is thus foretold by Ovid:—

> Once, as the sacred infant she surveyed,
> The God was kindled in the raving maid;
> And thus she uttered her prophetic tale:
> "Hail, great Physician of the world! all hail!
> Hail, mighty infant, who, in years to come,
> Shall heal the nations and defraud the tomb!
> Swift be thy growth, thy triumphs unconfined;
> Make kingdoms thicker, and increase mankind.
> Thy daring art shall animate the dead,
> And draw the thunder on thy guilty head;
> Then shalt thou die, but from the dark abode
> Shall rise victorious, and be twice a god."[1]

Another probable cause of the belief in the resurrection of Jesus was that, according to the New Testament, a combination of circumstances then existed which was calculated to produce in some minds a faith that he would rise from the dead. Don Allen, an able American writer, in his work on *The Resurrection of Jesus*, says: "By Christ's own prediction they [Christ's disciples] were expecting him to arise. When the body disappeared through Pilate's stratagem they were led to believe that the resurrection had actually taken place. When the destruction of Jerusalem was brought about by a revolt of the Jews against the Roman power, the disciples naturally thought it was in accordance with Christ's predictions concerning the end of the world (Matthew xxiv. 3-51; Mark xiii. 4-37; Luke xxi. 6-36). This strengthened them in their delusion. They thought the signs of the times indicated the destruction of the world and the speedy coming of Christ, when they would be made governors in his kingdom (Matthew xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30). In this they were deceived as they were in reference to his resurrection. The persecutions that were meted out to the disciples—the natural results of attempting to combat established opinions—they mistook for another fulfilment of Christ's prophecy (Matthew xxiv. 9; Mark xiii. 13; Luke xxi. 12; John xvi. 2); hence the more they were persecuted the more they were confirmed in the delusion that Christ was speedily coming in power to set up his kingdom according to his prediction. The early Christians all expected a speedy return of Christ, and it is needless to add that they were all disappointed. When a person is laboring under a delusion it is very natural for him to bend facts and interpret circumstances in accordance with that delusion. His statements in reference to it are liable to be so warped that they need confirmation in order to be given full credence. So it is in reference to the unreasonable statements of the Apostles about seeing Jesus after he was raised. Their statements need confirmation in order to be believed" (pp. 116, 117).

Then, as Greg, in his book, *The Creed of Christendom*, points out, there were the three following special circumstances which would tend to the formation of the belief: "Mark informs us that, when the women went early to the sepulchre, they found it open, the body of Jesus gone, and someone in white garments who assured them that he was

[1] See *Bible Myths*, pp. 215-226.

Digitized by Google

risen. *This all the four narratives agree in—and they agree in nothing else.* The disappearance of the body, then, was certain; the information that Jesus was risen came from the women alone, who believed it because *they were told it*, and who were also the first to affirm that they had seen their Lord. In the excited state of mind in which all the disciples must have been at this time, were not these three unquestioned circumstances—that the body was gone; that a figure dressed in white told the women that their Lord was risen; and that the same women saw *someone whom they believed to be him*—amply sufficient to make a belief in his resurrection spread with the force and rapidity of a contagion ?" (p. 193).

Remembering that this doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus originated at a period when the notion that people arose from the dead was generally entertained, it is not difficult, we think, to understand how the belief was perpetuated. It must not be overlooked that those were not critical times like the present. Ignorance and credulity were the special features of those days, and it is in the midst of such conditions that the grossest forms of theological superstition originated and, for a time, flourished. It was under these very circumstances that the belief in miracles, the existence of a personal Devil, a material burning hell, purgatory, the efficacy of mass, and numerous other wild superstitions, took possession of the human mind. But with the acquirement of knowledge and the exercise of mental freedom such evils and erroneous notions have largely disappeared. The belief in the resurrection of Jesus was perpetuated purely through blind faith, and not as the result of critical investigation. Even St. Paul received the doctrine upon trust, "according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians xv. 3). He admits that he did not receive the Gospel "after man," neither was he taught it, but that it came "by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians i. 11, 12).

And it is by faith that the majority of professed Christians accept their religion to-day. How many of them study the alleged evidences of their system? Very few indeed. Even most of the Christian ministers never examine the credentials of the doctrines they preach. The fact is, Christianity owes its position to intellectual apathy and unquestioning adherence. Congregations are too prone to act upon the principle of opening their mouths and shutting their eyes and accepting whatever is submitted to them.

In our next article we will consider the historical reasons which are put forward in favor of the doctrine of the Resurrection. CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

EVIDENCE *v.* FAITH.

WHEN a Christian is asked for the evidence upon which he believes the doctrines, creeds, and more or less absurd narratives that he holds to be true, after going over the usual talk about the word of God and the infallible Bible, and pressed again for the evidence that either God or the Bible is reliably true, he comes down at last to the final argument: "Well, I have faith to believe in these things." My Christian friend H., who has been mourning over my unbelief for half-a-dozen years, says: "It is no use talking to you, because you have no faith. I have faith, and that is where I have the advantage of you." Now, the question is, in what does the advantage consist that he brags of? Or, more clearly stated, perhaps, what is the value of faith as evidence of anything?

Faith, then, is not evidence that your belief is true, but it is only evidence that you believe it. To make your faith of any value, it must still be founded upon evidence that justifies it. I have faith in my friend that I have known for many years; in his strict honor and integrity. That faith is based upon my knowledge of his character, gained by long observation and intercourse with him. I would trust my money or reputation in his keeping, but I may be deceived in him after all. Nevertheless, my faith in him is founded upon evidence—that is what I know of his trustworthiness. My faith in him is no evidence of the fact, but it is evidence of my belief only. The Christian believes in God—or says he does—without any evidence whatever except faith, forgetting that faith, to be of any value whatever, must have some evidence as a foundation.

The Christian feels deep down in his heart the insufficiency of faith to justify belief; as is evidenced by his attempts to argue (from nature) the necessity for a God. "Look at the universe," he says; "it could not make itself; there must have been some power that created it, and what but God could that power be?" The fallacy of this argument is, that it assumes the whole question. First, the existence of God, and, second, that the universe was created; neither of which has a particle of evidence to sustain it.

No doubt the universe, in its present form, had a beginning cause, because nothing happens without a cause; but it does not follow that that cause was God. Remember, we know nothing of God; we are creating him in our imagination, to account for the universe, which may have sprung from any other cause, of which we know nothing more than we do of God. Thus we come back to the starting point of faith without any evidence; and if there is any virtue in faith it might as well be applied to many other causes, all as fully established—that is, by imagination—as a god is. That matter exists we know by the evidence of our senses; and by the same evidence we know that it cannot be destroyed. All we can do is to change the form or forms in which we find it; but, whatever we do to it, not a particle of it is lost, not an atom is ever annihilated; then it logically ever existed, and a creator in that case is superfluity.

Then the same evidence of our senses tells us that this eternal, uncreated matter is constantly changing its forms by the action of power inherent in itself—the forces of light, heat, gravity, electricity, all forces as eternal as matter itself, and needing no creator; then the hypothesis of a god has no foundation in necessity, and the argument of Paley, and all the rest of the evidence-hunters with preconceived conclusions in their heads, fails, and there is nothing left to rely upon but faith, which, as has been said, is evidence of nothing but that they are bound to stick to the old belief, without any evidence, or in spite of abundance of evidence to the contrary.

But if faith in God is no evidence of his existence, what shall we say of the faith which Christians profess in the Bible as the infallible word of that unproved God? What is there in the books constituting the Bible that afford any foundation for the faith they pretend to have? Nothing whatever. Nobody knows who wrote them, nor when they were written. All we know is, that they have come down to us from an ignorant and vicious people, and that the books themselves show that the authors of them were as ignorant and vicious as the people by whom they were surrounded.

We know that all the proved, positive knowledge that man has acquired since the books were written has contradicted more or less of what is stated in them. We know especially that the scientific discoveries of the last three hundred years have absolutely proved beyond all dispute the falsity of the Bible statements, so that even the Christians have nothing to say—except that God did not mean exactly what his language expressed, and that his words must be translated so as to mean just the contrary of what the book says; or, in fact, that he meant to say just what science has discovered, after some thousand years of faith in the statements that he, or the writers of the books, actually did make.

We know that the highest intellect and the best scholarship of the world have, by a careful and thorough examination of the books themselves, so discredited their statements as to facts that faith in them is no longer possible but to those who think that by saying they have faith they can make a lie to be true.

We know that the most intelligent and best men among the Christian clergy have discarded all faith in Bible stories of miraculous interferences with the regular operation of the laws of nature, and that in all things evidence is to be credited before faith. Evidence, like a force of nature, carries conviction to every mind that is in a normally healthy condition and competent to think. Faith without evidence, or as opposed to evidence, is an acceptance of a theory or statement as true which, on its face, is so absurd that to every thinking mind it is untrue. It is, therefore, a stifling of the thinking faculty, a surrender of reason—man's highest faculty—to the domination of some other man who has a selfish motive for compelling belief in untruth, or in some theory that is unproved. He insists that it is not necessary for us to understand what he tells us

Digitized by Google

—we must accept it by faith; and for that faith he holds out to us promises of joys unspeakable—*after we are dead*—which he cannot show by any evidence his power to fulfil; or he threatens us with unspeakable pains and penalties if we do not take his word for it, which it is equally evident he has no power to inflict.

Such promises and threats can, of course, influence only weak and unthinking minds. The man who has a healthy brain, that marks him as above the ox or the idiot, knows that in religion, as in politics and business, all conclusions must depend upon evidence, and that faith cuts no figure—except among fools and those who cannot or dare not reason.

There is no occasion for faith in anything that can be investigated, or tested by our senses or reason. In all the affairs of the world—past, present, or future—nobody presumes to depend upon faith for direction. In religion alone—for lack of any evidence to support a belief in it—we are asked to stulify reason and accept as true such nonsense as nobody but a priest would have the cheek to propose to us.

Blind faith is the foundation of all religion. All the different religions that have risen and flourished in the world since the first dawn of history have been based alike upon faith without evidence. When Zoroaster formed the religion which his followers carried to India, he, under the same inspiration as the Hebrew and Christian writers of holy books, wrote the Zend Avesta, in which he announced the only true God, Ormuzd, the Lord of heaven and earth; and as he had no evidence to prove the existence of any such being, it became necessary to ordain and establish the doctrine of belief by faith as the highest virtue and the first duty of all mankind. This faith he enforced by promises of rewards and fears of punishment.

Along the same lines, developing the same nature of man, out of similar social conditions, were evolved the religions of Chaldea, India, Egypt, Palestine, and Christianity; each of these different religions, with its special god, unproved and unprovable, laboring under the same necessity of a reliance upon faith alone for credence, and all enforcing faith by the same promises of reward for belief, and the same pains and penalties for the want of it. And so man everywhere has travelled the same rocky road towards freedom and civilization.

The evolution of man from barbarism to civilization has been marked all along its course by the increase of knowledge and the consequent decline of faith. Professor Draper has characterized the different periods as "the age of faith, the age of inquiry, the age of knowledge, and the age of reason," culminating in the age of civilization, not yet perfected while faith survives, a lingering disease, to obstruct the progress of the world towards the highest moral and intellectual civilization of which it is capable. Meanwhile science drives the car of progress, and knowledge is king of the world. The clergy still hang back and try to block the wheels with their Holy Bible; but faith has been squeezed out of them by the weight of knowledge, and the car moves forward in its destined course to the regeneration of all mankind. As Huxley has said: "The dead myths of old religions and old superstitions lie along the track of science, like the strangled serpents around the cradle of Hercules." Each dead superstition is dead forever; no resurrection awaits the myth that has fallen before the mighty blow of victorious science.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*The Independent Pulpit.*

The priest, *as a priest*, as the mouthpiece of asserted divine wisdom, of sacerdotal authority, ever has been, is now, and always will be, the enemy of mankind, because the foe of movement, of change, of growth. Progress is born of variation, and the priest hates variation with an unappeasable and deadly hatred. The priest stereotypes the past, and swears there never shall be a new edition of man's thought.—*E. C. Walker.*

"*Dare* is not a word to use to Rome." It was the haughty defiance and self-deification of the Pontifical Power, as it had roused of old against emperors and kings, rebels in the cloisters and rebels in the courts, against the sceptre of Barbarossa as against the science of Abelard, of the power which refuses to see that this day is not as that, which denies that the dawn has shone because its fiat has gone forth for darkness to endure.—*Ouida.*

GOD'S EDUCATION; OR, THE BABEL BUILDING-ACT.

THE Lord made foreigners because—
Let truth, for once, be spoken—
He thought, not knowing nature's "Laws,"
That bricks could ne'er be broken.

The nations, but for God's mistakes,
Would understand each other,
And speak the tongue He taught to snakes
Before he taught our mother.

We all were meant one tongue to speak,
By Jah, the great Comedian;
Not Dutch nor Hebrew, Erse nor Greek,
But Snakish, or Ophidian.

Oft boys, o'er foreign verbs at school,
Are forced to shirk or stick work
Because Jehovah played the fool,
Through ignorance of brickwork.

He thought that bricks could heav'n attain,
In spite of gravitation;
He'd never heard of "stress" nor "strain,"
Nor technic education.

The world would soon be full of fears,
Exploding into panics,
If architects and engineers,
Like God, ne'er read Mechanics.

The ken of men is that of gods,
Wherever you may find them;
When builders knew but mud and hods,
Their gods were just behind them.

So, God no more a tow'r will dread,
Though higher far than Babel's;
He knows too much, for now He's read
Our engineering Tables.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

VICARIOUS ATONEMENT AND WOMEN.

CHRISTIANITY, or the system called by that name, has had a trial of more than 1,800 years, and yet what do we see? In this country alone a mournful procession of 65,562 tried and convicted criminals, 450,000 paupers, 58,482 raving maniacs, and 30,000 youthful criminals. Add to this the fact that we have in the neighborhood of 190,000 homeless vagrant girls, a large proportion of whom are of tender age—that these girls are bought and sold in the market, and passed on from city to city by their masters as chatels or objects of barter, and we may form something of an idea of the manner in which the system calling itself Christian is benefitting the world, and especially may we observe the way in which it is elevating and ennobling womanhood.

The doctrine of vicarious atonement, and that of the subjection of women, are doing their work thoroughly and well, and we have the result. For eighteen hundred years women have had the doctrine preached to them that, whatever be the natural tendency to vice, a certain belief—or, in other words, the "blood of Christ"—will cleanse from all sin. A very convenient doctrine, since it enables man to occupy the basement story of his nature and shift the results upon Almighty God. Be not deceived; that which ye sow, that also shall ye reap. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs from thistles.

Although women are slowly emerging from the degradation of the past, no fact is plainer than that their most formidable foe has been, and still is, the Christian Church. Indeed, its attitude towards women may be summed up in the clarion note sounded by the president of a leading theological seminary, who, with upturned eyes, and while smiting his sanctimonious breast, cries aloud: "My Bible commands the subjection of women forever."

ELIZA BURT GAMBLE.

—*Detroit Free Press.*

We hear too much of the necessity of protecting and rewarding literature, and we hear too little of the necessity of that freedom and boldness in the absence of which the most splendid literature is altogether worthless.—*H. T. Buckle*

The votaries of superstition are urged to enthusiasm in their work by fear of punishment and by hope of reward. Freethinkers must be impressed by the fact that they are necessary factors in the order of evolution.—*John Maddock*

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

Lord Hobhouse's Bill, as we expected, was defeated in the House of Lords; the majority against it being fifty to thirty-three. As far as the gilded chamber is concerned, that vile old Act of George III. will remain in operation for ever. The very language of its preamble is an insult to the people of England. It warns them against Sunday discussions on religion and politics, which are subjects above their intelligence. Bishop Porteus, who introduced the Act, plainly stated that all the common people had to do with the laws was to obey them. Times have altered, but the Act still exists, and the House of Lords also exists to block the way of reform.

Lord Hobhouse's bill was, of course, opposed by the occupants of the episcopal bench. The Bishop of Winchester talked hypocritically about Sunday labor—as if none were involved in keeping open thousands of gospel-shops and Sunday-schools. The Archbishop of Canterbury argued that if the Bill were passed the door would be opened for all sorts of entertainments; although, as a matter of fact, the Bill expressly guarded against such a possibility. The Archbishop of York took another line. He said that, if a Bill were introduced which simply provided that prosecutions should not be started without the sanction of some public authority, it would have the support of "a huge majority" of the House of Lords. That wintry old bigot, the Lord Chancellor, differed on this point from the Archbishop of York. He thought the state of the law was perfectly satisfactory; and so it is to those who want to keep the people ignorant, thoughtless, and brutal.

As the law now stands, any bigot who chooses to act as a common informer—and there are pious Societies for supplying them—may sue for penalties to the extent of two hundred pounds against any person or persons responsible for discussions or any sort of entertainment on a Sunday, if there is any kind of charge for admission. Lectures are not included, unless they are followed by discussion; but, in the Leeds case, it was held that the lecture was an "entertainment," because the lecturer sometimes made the audience laugh.

We have always held, as Mr. Bradlaugh did, that a Freethought lecture could be upheld as *not* an entertainment, its object being persuasion. But it would come under the law if discussion were to follow the lecture. Even then it would, in our opinion, be quite possible to win in the end if the bigots started a prosecution. But they have been chary of proceeding against Freethought lecturers. Mr. Foote successfully defied the Chief Constable of Hull a few years ago, and a little later he no less successfully defied the police authorities at Portsmouth. Mr. Foote's plan of campaign is one that he prefers to keep to himself until the occasion arises for fighting.

It is said that the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London, both of whom have recently visited St. Petersburg and Moscow, hope to carry the Pan-Anglican Synod in favor of an attempted re-union with the Greek Church, which would be a big rebuff to the Pope for his letter on the non-validity of Anglican orders.

In a field on the left, as you drive from Ramsgate to Minster, is a memorial of St. Augustine. It is about half a mile from the seashore. St. Augustine is said to have landed there. If he did he must have had long legs.

The Anglican Bishops, from all parts of the empire, have just held a religious celebration at St. Augustine's memorial. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people were present to see the show. The Archbishop of Canterbury wore his most gorgeous robes, which no doubt attracted the attention of all the crows in the neighborhood. We dare say the birds have had many a noisy discussion over this strange phenomenon.

The Catholics are crowing over all this as an acknowledgment that England owes its Christianity to Rome. They forget their own legends about these isles being visited by the Apostles, and how Joseph of Arimathea founded the Abbey of Glastonbury, and how St. Alban and St. Pancras worked miracles and were martyred. When the Italian Mission in England was really powerful, it drained as much wealth out of the country as possible, and the bulk of the people of England have not taken much stock in it since.

The Episcopal pilgrims went also to Canterbury, where they were followed on the seventh by the members of the Catholic Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, who prayed at the tomb of St. Thomas á Becket that the good old days might be restored when Church was superior to State.

Mr. John Kensit, the true-blue Protestant publisher, is not satisfied with opposing the enthronement of the Bishop of London. He visited a Lambeth church the other day, and created a scene by jumping up and challenging the preacher's theology. Mr. Kensit may find himself in prison one of these fine days; indeed, he seems anxious to take the place of "John the Baptist"—a gentleman who paid frequent visits to Holloway after religious disturbances in the city.

Joachim Kaspary has for many years been an open-air speaker in London. He preaches a special kind of religion which he calls Humanitarianism. That he is earnest and honest is beyond doubt. We are shocked, therefore, to learn from a Newcastle paper that he has been "run in" for "causing disorder" in Hyde Park. One witness said that his lecture was "horrible and shocking in the extreme." This means that Joachim Kaspary expressed himself freely on certain parts of the Bible which he considers contrary to justice. Simply this and nothing more. Mr. De Rutzen, the Marlborough-street magistrate, fined him £5 with the alternative of a month's imprisonment, for "rousing the ire of the people." We venture to describe the sentence, and the judgment, as infamous. Mr. De Rutzen appears to hold curious notions about an Englishman's right of free speech. Perhaps he is suffering from Jubilee fever.

The Archbishop of Finland, who represented the Russian Church at the Jubilee, has returned home, after foregathering with the Anglican Bishops at Canterbury. On leaving Canterbury for Dover, he held another pious reception on the station platform. Idiotic people knelt all around him, while he walked about, kissing men on the cheek and children on the forehead. Ladies were allowed to kiss his hands. We hope they were clean.

Our contributor who wrote on "God and the Queen," giving on the whole the palm to the feminine ruler as the one of most use, has received the support of Sergeant James Walker, who, in a Jubilee Hymn dedicated to the Queen, says:—

> May she be spared to us to be
> Our Sovereign and a Guide to Thee.

Thomas Carlyle said that God does nothing. Can it be that, like other well-paid sinecurists, he takes Her Majesty as Guide?

The Roman Catholic Bishops in Ireland are putting forward their proposal for a new University, which they hope will command the assent of both political parties in Great Britain. They propose that all the money voted by Parliament shall be spent on secular education, that the chairs of theology shall be endowed by Irish Catholics, that the governing majority shall include a majority of laymen, and that the Dublin Test Act of 1875 shall be modified in the sense of the Oxford and Cambridge Acts. This is all very well in its way, but it will not prevent the new University from becoming a Catholic institution. Trust the Bishops for that.

Mr. Francis, the magistrate at the South Western Police Court, had the case before him of a Wandsworth laborer, named Prindle, who was summoned for neglecting to send his deaf and dumb child to school. Being a Roman Catholic the father wanted his child sent to a Roman Catholic establishment at Boston Spa, in Yorkshire. This the School Board declined to do. He was offered the alternative, either to allow the child to be boarded out in a Roman Catholic family, or to let him live at home and attend one of the Board schools. But this did not suit his fastidious piety, especially as he had his Church behind him. What he wanted was definite Catholic instruction for his child. The case was argued before the magistrate, who reserved his decision, to which we look forward with considerable interest.

The Church Congress at Nottingham this year, it is said, was appropriately fixed to fall at the same date as the famous Goose Fair. The Goose Fair, however, is such a great institution that the black cacklers have deemed it advisable to defer their Congress until a week after the white ones have had their turn. This year, owing to the Lambeth Pan-Anglican Conference, there will be a special gathering of bishops, so that the ordinary black clerical goose will be little accounted of.

Canon Doyle, of Wexford, is a bold man. He asserts, without fear, that "cycling is utterly unfit for women." It is "unbecoming, indelicate, and dangerous." The boldness of the Canon does not stop at denunciation. He even has the intrepidity to excite others to a breach of the peace, and says: "Should any vile things in the shape of girls dare to exhibit themselves, let the roughs and corner-boys of the town chase them off the field, and give them a dip in

Digitized by Google

the pond below the bridge." If all the wheelwomen in Ireland took a trip to Wexford, the Canon might stand a chance of a dip in the pond below the bridge. His mouth, at any rate, would be none the worse for a good rinsing.

A contemporary says: "The compilers of 'The Woman's Bible' are confirmed in their impression that the Scriptures were written by men for men, by the discovery that there is no mention of what the Queen of Sheba wore on a momentous occasion"

M. l'abbé Bourcier, of Sevres, is a retired Catholic priest who preaches that Catholicism must return to the (supposed) primitive simplicity of the first century. One of his disciples, A. Philippot, curé of Plomeon (Aisne), has just been excommunicated, despite his protest that he is a Christian, and even a believer in the Trinity and the Catholic Church. The ultramontanes of Rome do not believe in any primitive simplicity. Nor do we.

The division of the Church into High Church, Low Church, and Broad Church—otherwise attitudinarians, platitudinarians, and latitudinarians—has receive the sanction of the Chancery of the Duchy of Lancaster. A lady had left a sum of money for the benefit of a clergyman of a certain town, of the Low Church. The bequest was disputed as too vague, but the Vice-Chancellor said there was a recognised distinction. The High Church's leading regard was for authority; the Low Church leaned to emotion; and the Broad Church leant to intellect and reason.

It seems that the foundation of the myth about the Queen giving a heathen the Bible with the laconic sentence, "This is the secret of England's greatness," is merely the fact that she sent a letter to Prince Sagbua, of Abbeokula, West Africa, and a copy of the Bible in Arabic and English. Her Majesty's private secretary says: "No such phrase was used." It was the happy inspiration of the publisher of a picture designed for the pious public.

Thomas Szajer, a Socialist deputy in the Austrian parliament, is doing eight months' hard labor, with a fast day every fortnight. The crime for which he is thus punished is "insulting" the Emperor. During the elections he said that the Emperor could not make war at his own pleasure, but must ask the Rothschilds, without whose money he was powerless. A man who could say such wicked things ought to have eight years instead of eight months, and nothing at all to eat instead of a fast every fortnight. They are far too merciful in Austria to men who have a perverse taste for free speech.

Freethinkers in England are liable to twelve months' imprisonment for insulting the religious feelings of Christians. Over in India the Christians are not so particular about the religious feelings of Hindus and Mohammedans. The result is that riots have occurred even in Calcutta. And all the wisdom of the British rulers can suggest is the muzzling of the native press; which is sitting on the safety valve at the risk of bursting the boiler.

The Duchess of Devonshire's fancy dress ball was a "swell" affair. One lady's costume is said to have cost seven hundred guineas. Myriads of people in London, at the same time, would have been glad to get a square meal. And they belong, for the most part, to the *working* classes. Oh yes! England is a highly civilized country, and we do well to jubilate over our magnificent progress.

Alfred Austin succeeded Alfred Tennyson as Poet Laureate. It was Alfred the Little after Alfred the Great. And the Yankees say so with considerable emphasis. Little Alfred's jubilee ode is cut to pieces in most of the United States papers. The *Washington Post*, for instance, says that even as a cuckoo he is fourth rate. It advises him to go over to America and get educated. For our part, we are quite agreeable. England would never miss him.

British bluejackets have hoisted the Union Jack on the Solomon Islands, the largest group in the Pacific, seven of which are from fifty to a hundred miles long, and from thirty to fifty miles wide. The interior is very mountainous, and the coasts are much indented, affording capital harbors. The inhabitants are said to be intelligent and clever, but traders described them as cruel and treacherous. Missionaries, however, have been at work among them for forty years; they are now thoroughly *tamed;* and the result is that their land has been appropriated by that great friend of the missionaries, Mr. John Bull. It is the old, old story! As a Maori chief said: "The missionaries come here and teach us to look up; and when we look down, all our land is gone."

Mr. W. T. Clifford, fourth officer of the Union steamship "Scot," jumped overboard and tried to rescue the suicidal Barney Barnato. It was a brave action, for a high sea was running at the time, and there is always danger in the mere attempt to save another person in such circumstances. Mr. Clifford has since been presented with a medal and a handsome testimonial in the shape of money. He is a gallant fellow, and we hope he will never sink into a millionaire. Very likely he believes, when he has time for such matters, that he has an immortal soul, and all that sort of thing; but he thought very little about it when he took a header into a big wave to help Barney Barnato.

California has been visited by a severe earthquake, which, we take it, is another illustration of what Mr. Gladstone calls the wonderful way in which Providence has fitted up the earth for man's habitation. San Francisco did not suffer greatly, but in some places every brick building suffered, and people rushed out of their houses in terror.

A far worse earthquake has occurred in Mexico. The town of Tehauntepec, containing fifteen thousand inhabitants, is entirely destroyed. Not a single building is left standing. The people are living in tents.

The cyclone in Essex is, we presume, another illustration of the singular ways of "Providence." Hailstones fell over an inch in diameter, and whole fields of corn, peas, beans, and fruit were almost utterly destroyed. Many farmers are probably ruined. One of them, at Kelvedon Hatch, was so upset that his relatives had to sit up two nights with him, and he has since been removed to the County Asylum.

Another instance of "Providence" was the wrecking of the train conveying delegates to the Convention of the San Francisco Christian Endeavor Society from Chicago. A few were killed, and over twenty injured.

The American expedition engaged in excavating the site of the ancient city of Nippur, in Babylonia, have recovered more than twenty-six thousand tablets, as well as numerous inscribed fragments of vases and stelæ. From it Professor Hilprecht, it is said, almost at the loss of his eyesight, has constructed a complete record of the primitive conflicts of Babylonia, extending back from the Elamite invasion, B.C. 2285, and the time of Ur-gur, B.C. 2800, to Sargon I., a thousand years earlier, and a yet earlier city beneath, probably 8000 B.C. These explorations show the priority of the keystone arch in Chaldea, and make it likely that architecture has gone both westwards, to India and China, and eastwards to Egypt and Greece from Chaldea. They seem, too, to confirm that the altar and temple have grown out of the tomb.

Herman Warszawaik left his own Jewish religion and tried to ingratiate himself among the Christians. He obtained the support of Dr. John Hall, the wealthy minister of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, and was set to work at the Sisyphus task of Christianising the Jews in that city. But his little game is now over. He has been expelled from the Church and denounced from the pulpit as an immoral person and a gambler. His wife stood up for him, and the ushers had to remove her from the "sacred edifice."

Dr. Miles Grant, an Adventist, of the State of Maine, finds in the Bible that the Turk is to be driven out of Europe *this year*. We rather guess there isn't time for the operation, unless Jesus Christ comes in person with a big army of able-bodied angels. Dr. Grant is of opinion that the Turk will retire to Palestine (of all places in the world!) and there fight his last great battle for the false prophet Mohammed. Any bookmaker would lay long odds against this prophecy being realized. No doubt, at the end of 1897, Dr. Grant will cast the horoscope afresh, and give us a new date, which will be just as certain as the old one.

Americans have been "all over the shop" in London during the Jubilee. They brought quick wits with them. They also brought money. In fact, the Washington *Star* says that, considering the amount they are spending in London, it is evident that "King George's plans for getting money out of this continent by a stamp act and a tea-tax were not only harsh but unnecessary."

The Rev. Fred Bell, once a popular preacher of Brooklyn, was arrested for fortune-telling the other day. He claims to be a Theosophist and gifted with occult powers. Irregularities of conduct caused his downfall from the pulpit.

Our New York Freethought contemporary, the *Truthseeker*, always gives some attention to the doings of the men of God. Here follow a few of the items from its last number.

"The Rev. Ernest Fridow, of Woodhaven, N.Y., was arrested last week for appropriating property belonging to his church.

Digitized by Google

"A homeless tramp who stole the umbrella of the Rev. W. K. Huntington, of Grace Church, this city, got a sentence of two-and-one-half years' imprisonment.

"The Rev. Larkin McAlester, a Methodist clergyman, of Sennett, in Oklahoma, stirred up a family quarrel, which resulted in a lawsuit. While the case was trying the reverend gentleman was rotten-egged by the populace.

"The Rev. Dr. MacArthur, the noisiest Baptist minister in New York, paid an unwitting tribute to materialistic science recently by saying that 'if we could get Jonah swallowed scientifically the people would be satisfied.'

"The Rev. D. W. H. Flint, of Metamora, Mich., interfered between Arthur Brownell and his wife, inducing the latter to institute divorce proceedings; and Brownell, who is a highly-respected citizen, horsewhipped him on the streets.

"The Rev. Berry Lawson, Methodist, well known in the vicinity of Barbourville, Ky., gave his fifteen-year-old boy a thrashing. The boy left home, and, returning with a shotgun, crept up behind his father, who was working in the cornfield, and blew his head from his shoulders.

"The Rev. Isaac Newton Phelps, Episcopalian, of Babylon, N.Y., alienated the affections of the wife of William D. Teesse, a lawyer, and was thrashed by her husband. The vestry has demanded the dominie's resignation, and the case between the couple whom he separated will be tried in court."

The editor of the Spiritist *Banner of Light* says: "One of the finest pieces of satire we have ever noticed can be found in the columns of a recent issue of the *Progressive Thinker*. It consists of a lengthy account of a materializing *séance*, sworn to by a score of sincere and highly intelligent Spiritualists. They affirmed that absolute test conditions prevailed, and that they saw several forms at a time 'materialized' before their very eyes. Not long after the publication of this affidavit the medium hastily departed from the city, taking with him no less than two thousand dollars of other people's money. Plenty of evidence was found to show that he had never produced one genuine manifestation in his life."

It is reported in the New York *Journal* that the bones of Christ Schlatter, who made such a sensation as a healer, in Colorado, in the winter of '95, have been found under a tree high up in the Sierra Madre, in New Mexico. Schlatter's story sounds like a tale of the Middle Ages. He pretended to no divinity, though he dressed his hair and beard after the fashion of the pictures of the Christ, and spoke of God as his father. Had he sought to do so, there is no question that he could have founded a sect that would have followed him, or been martyred for him, as the Messiah come to redeem the world again. He was invited to all the principal cities in the States, and fortunes offered to him. But he was a genuine fanatic, and went only where he thought his father called him.

Many thousands believed in him and his cures, and then he suddenly left Colorado. The faithful dreamed all manners of solution for his disappearance. Gravely a sect assembled and made the announcement that he had been translated to heaven in a chariot of fire, and there were those who put themselves forward as witnesses to this miracle. Other explanations as uncanny were advanced, and did not lack believers. Men fought for a splinter of the rough board sanctified by the print of his hob-nailed boots. He wandered away to desolate parts, and got in prison as a vagrant. When they found it was Schlatter, the divine healer, he was set free, but he appears to have perished from starvation when enduring a forty days' fast. A Bible, with his name, was found under his skull.

Professor J. E. B. Mayor, the President of the Vegetarian Society, thought fit, at the Vegetarian Jubilee meeting at Ramsgate, in his opening public address, to pitch into Mr. Salt for saying that the Jews were a flesh-eating people. This is the fact. Of course, in hot climates less meat is usually taken; but Leviticus xi. 3 says: "Whatever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts that shall ye eat." God Almighty had animals sacrificed every day in his temple, and Jesus Christ partook of passover lamb, multiplied fishes for food, and said in vision to his first apostle, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat."

The Rev. John Tucknell has started and become secretary of "the Bible League," of which W. H. Seagram, Esq., is President, and Lieutenant-Colonel Corry Smith treasurer. The Bible League describes itself as an Association of Christians of various denominations who, believing in the full inspiration of Holy Scripture, have banded themselves together to endeavor to counteract the injurious influences of modern criticism. The Bible League evidently emulates the zeal of Mrs. Partington's attempt to mop up the Atlantic.

The circular issued by the Bible League denounces the Rationalistic criticism which, while professing to reverence the Bible as inspired of God, yet regards its accounts of miracles as fables, its prophecies as predated history, its histories as contradictory and false, its authorship as largely "pseudepigraphical" (that is, fraudulent), and its inspiration as partial, unequal, and in some cases failing altogether. It admits that "the faith of many in the truthfulness of scripture has been shaken; great uncertainty has been excited as to what is, and what is not, from God; the authority of scripture over the consciences and conduct of men has been seriously undermined; the all but universal testimony of the most spiritually-minded Christians for 1,800 years has been condemned as superstitious and ignorant; even our Blessed Lord Himself, in the currency which He allowed to what is now termed to be fabulous, is convicted of possessing less knowledge than modern scholars, or being less loyal to truth; and an enormous growth of infidelity has occurred during the past forty years, unparalleled for more than a thousand years before."

What, then, is necessary to stay the progress of infidelity. The answer is ready: "You can join the League, and by your sympathies, your prayers, your personal influence, and your pecuniary support, strengthen the hands of those who, in this severe and difficult conflict, are contending earnestly for 'the faith once delivered to the saints.'" We wonder if the Bible League will succeed any better than the old defunct Bible Defence Association.

Joyful News wants to know what is the answer to the following question: "Supposing a drunkard is converted and begins to attend God's house, how would he feel if he found that the principal man at the chapel was a brewer or distiller?" How would he feel, we may add, if he found that the principal man at the chapel owned the very house in which he used to get drunk? Of course *we* are not going to answer. The question should be put to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who is likely to be elected President at the approaching Wesleyan Conference.

Lord Penrhyn has restored the Wicken Parish Church, Stony Stratford, at a cost of £2,000. Lord Penrhyn's quarrymen have been shut out from honest labor for nearly twelve months, and a thousand of them are preparing to leave Wales for Canada, where they are promised an opportunity of cultivating land without toiling for landlords. Christian piety is evidently consistent with the grossest social injustice.

Our beautiful licensing system creates enormous monopolies. The "Angel" public-house at Islington recently sold for £180,000. Probably it would sell for twice as much if they only kept a real Christian there—one who could turn water into wine or any other liquor in demand.

The *Church Weekly* is very bellicose about the attack on British missionaries in China. It says: "Remonstrances and diplomatic proceedings being of little avail in preventing these attacks, sterner measures will be necessary, and a few British gunboats must be sent into Chinese waters as near to the miscreants as possible." Our pious papers would willingly see a war for the sake of the missionaries who poke their noses and their religion where they know they are not wanted.

At the sale of the Ashburnham Library, the famous Mazarn, or first printed edition of the Bible, was knocked down to Mr. Quaritch for £4,000. The price would probably have bought up all the belongings of all the writers, among whom, of course, we do not class King David.

Brevities.

As natural fog obscures a landscape, so does supernatural mist obscure truth.

When supernatural fog is lifted, priestly religion disappears.

To a mind unclouded by superstition, the evidences of a deity and of an immortality are insufficient.

But absolute truths are not dependent on our beliefs or disbeliefs.

As regards a deity, the Christian religion reveals nothing new; neither did it bring immortality to light. Belief in that was prevalent long before.

On examination, little originality is to be found in Christianity; but it is an oppressive and a costly system.

Digitized by Google

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—July 11, Athenæum Hall, London; August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield. 10, Birmingham. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

C. WOODBURY (Washington).—Thanks for the batch of papers etc, Kind regards to your wife. We hope to see you both again, here or in your own land.

A. W. S.—Mr. Joseph Cowen's speech, which you kindly sent us, is an admirable piece of rhetoric. Some of its sentences, also, are wise, especially towards the conclusion.

L. HAWKINS.—Bentham's complete works run to a great many closely printed volumes. They can only be obtained second-hand. There is a volume of selections entitled *Benthamiana*, edited by John Hill Burton, the historian of Scotland, and author of that delightful volume *The Bookhunter*.

G. W. BLYTHE.—You will find evidence of the Hebrew story of the Fall having been derived from the Persian mythology in Mr. Foote's *Eve and the Apple*, one of his "Bible Romances," which can be obtained from Mr. Forder for 1d. It is impossible to give laborious proof of every statement in every article; besides, it is unnecessary when the statement is a commonplace. The Persian story of Meshia and Meshiane, the two first parents of mankind, who were placed in a beautiful garden, and forbidden to eat of the fruit of the tree Om, and were seduced by Ahriman. the principle of evil embodied as a serpent—is known to be older than the Hebrew story, which appears in the book of Genesis, but was evidently unknown to the Jews for many hundreds of years after the alleged time of Moses. There is no trace of it in the historical books.

H. MANN.—Not without merit, but the subject is one that requires more guarded treatment.

S. J. B., apropos of Thomas Shore's letter in our issue of June 27, calls attention to the fact that the newsagent who supplies him with the *Freethinker*—Smith, Cursitor-street, Chancery-lane—always exhibits a contents-sheet. He advises Freethinkers in the neighborhood to give this newsagent their custom. S. J. B. asks whether we could not publish a list of newsagents who sell this journal and display a bill. We have tried to get up such a list more than once, but with no very signal success. With respect to the Park Demonstrations, about which this correspondent enquires, we have to say that Mr. Foote contemplates arranging for a few more during the present summer.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Mr. Foote has booked the last Sunday in September for Birmingham. Mr. Taylor was wired to that effect, as requested.

J. H. FOSTER.—There is no such fund in existence now. Do you mean the Lecture Scheme?

J. ROBERTS.—We hope the Liverpool Branch's picnic will be a successful function. Let us know in due course what are your plans for the winter campaign.

F. LODGE.—(1) Pleased to receive your interesting letter, which is an encouragement to us in our battle against superstition. Your are quite right in saying that we shall not live to see the battle ended, but there is consolation in seeing the certain, if slow, decline of bigotry and prejudice. (2) In destroying supernaturalism we leave men free to live under the natural sanctions of morality. Personal, domestic, and social welfare depend upon a knowledge of nature's laws and the sentiment of fraternity.

MR. F. TODD, secretary of the West London Branch, 21 Abdale-road, Shepherd's Bush, thanks those readers of the *Freethinker* who have responded to his appeal on behalf of Mr. St. John. As further help is urgently needed, he trusts that those who intend to subscribe will do so as early as possible. Mr. St. John has slightly improved in health, and it is hoped that, with the aid of proper nursing and medical attention, he will soon recover and resume his work in the lecture-field.

F. J. BOORMAN.—See paragraph. Glad to see that the Chatham and New Brompton friends are active. All N. S. S. Branches should try to carry on open-air work during the summer.

W. FRENCH.—Many of the late Charles Bradlaugh's writings are still in print, and can be obtained at Mr. Forder's, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Apply to him for a catalogue, which he will send gratis.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—E. L., £1.

YOUNG STUDENT.—We advise you to read Greg's *Creed of Christendom* first. It gives a first-rate general view of the subject. Then read Giles's *Christian Records*, and, if possible, *Supernatural Religion*. The latter is in three volumes, and is pretty stiff reading, but it will repay you for your trouble. Then read Strauss's *Life of Christ*, translated by George Eliot. It is a masterpiece of critical analysis, going through the whole of the Gospel story, and showing its impossibility as history and its legendary and mythical character. Never mind the clerical cheap sneers at Strauss. Read him for yourself. What the clergy pooh-pooh is generally the most formidable to their creed and pretensions.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Freidenker—Anglo-Russian—Animals' Friend—Vegetarian Messenger—Literary Guide—Liberty—Freedom—Lucifer—Der Arme Teufel—De Dageraad—Secular Thought—Charleston News and Courier—New York Public Opinion—Daylight—Yarmouth Independent—People's Newspaper—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Sydney Bulletin—Zoophilist.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS Sunday evening, July 11, Mr. Charles Watts will lecture at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject, "Drawbacks of Christian England."

Mr. C. Cohen has been lecturing under Mr. Foote's Scheme at New Brompton, and his influence was so formidable that the followers of Mr. Waldron, a Christian Evidence lecturer, stormed the Freethought platform, so that Mr. Cohen had to be escorted under police protection to the railway station. Mr. Stanley Jones gave an open-air lecture there last Sunday morning, which was highly appreciated. Mr. Waldron took part in the discussion, and apologized for the disorderly conduct of his followers on the previous Friday. The local Freethinkers hope this gentleman will continue his labors, for the more he advocates Christianity the better it is for Secularism.

The London Union of Ethical Societies has convened a meeting at the Holborn Town Hall on Monday evening, July 19, to consider a proposal to substitute a scheme of Moral Teaching for the Religious Instruction which is now given in Board schools. It is thought that such a proposal will attract the electors more than the "negative" plan of sweeping out religion and leaving nothing but science, literature, and art. Whether this is a correct idea remains to be seen. Meanwhile, the proposal is worthy of serious consideration. Those who put it forward are as sick as we are of the existing "Compromise." The National Secular Society will be represented at the Holborn Town Hall meeting, by Mr. Foote for certain, and perhaps by other delegates.

Mr. F. N. Verinder represented the Mildmay Radical Club at the recent meeting of the so-called Progressives in the School Board Division of Finsbury, and moved the adoption of the principle of "secular education in our common schools." Mr. Verinder spoke as a Churchman, and demanded justice for citizens who were compelled to pay for religious instruction in schools while believing it to be useless and even mischievous. He was strenuously opposed by the Nonconformist delegates, some of whom threatened to retire from the Conference if "Secularism pure and simple" were made a part of the programme. Yet when Mr. Verinder's motion was defeated these same delegates appealed to its supporters to abide by the general decision. A Secularist delegate from a local Trade Union branch moved the deletion of all reference to "the Compromise as carried out since 1871." But this also was defeated. Thus the Nonconformist policy prevails, and the Secularists are expected to work for its success. They will be fools to do anything of the kind; moreover they will be traitors to their principles. The one great hope of Secularism lies in rescuing the children from priestcraft, and religious instruction in Board schools is the very worst form of priestcraft.

Signor Amilcare Cipriani, who was last Sunday elected deputy to the Italian Chamber for Forti, is well known both as a Freethinker and Socialist. He was one of the presidents at the Paris International Congress of Freethinkers in 1889.

The New England Spiritualists, who are at one with the Secularists in all their political demands, are arranging for their Annual Convention, which takes the form of a Camp Meeting, from August 1 to August 30, at Lake Pleasant, Massachusetts. They have boating, fishing, jaunts, and other entertainments, intermingled with lectures and discussions. Colonel Ingersoll will give them two Sunday

Digitized by Google

lectures during the month. The American Spiritualists cannot convert Ingersoll to their "soul" views, but they are very fond of him nevertheless.

A. H. Gerhard, the editor of *De Dageraad*, of Amsterdam, opens the July number of that publication with an article on the education question, in which he contends that the chief condition of all right thinking is having a wealth of ideas arising from study of facts systematically arranged. J. G. ten Bokkel follows with a study of mythology, distinguishing between myths and verifiable history, and showing that the Christ-saga is connected rather with the former than the latter. Bruno Wille, the German Freethinker, writes on "Religious Slavery." He has had some experience of it in Berlin. Under the title of "Dust and Ashes," an account is given of the cremation movement. In the "Universal Review" department there is a paper on "Anti-Theology and Socialism." The writer has evidently gone to some untrustworthy sources for a correct account of the position of things in England.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual picnic on July 18 at Thurstaston, Cheshire. Brakes will leave Woodside Ferry at 2.15. All friends intending to join the party should send in their names to Mr. J. Roberts (secretary), 99 Saxony-road, Liverpool, or Mr. L. Small, 60 Brook-road, Bootle, or Mr. J. Hammond, 26 Sandheys-street, Kirkdale, as soon as possible. We may add that a knife-and-fork tea will be provided at a reasonable charge.

Daylight, of Norwich, lives up to its name, and lets the sunshine stream upon shams in politics, religion, and social life. Our cathedral towns have usually so many remnants of the Dark Ages, that they might all do well to have a little *Daylight*.

Mr. Alfred Kitson treats the question, "Were the Gospels Divinely Inspired?" in the *Two Worlds* in a way calculated to shake the orthodox out of their time-crusted Bibliolatry.

Great Thoughts (July 10) gives a portrait of Frederic Harrison, the well-known Positivist, with the report of an interview with him by Raymond Blathwayt. Mr Blathwayt, being a Catholic, did not introduce controversial religion, but apparently confined the talk to the teaching of history and the characteristics of historians.

A paragraph, going the rounds, says that more than four-fifths of the people in London never enter a place of worship. Yet some people say that Freethought propaganda has been a failure.

The first American paper we take up after writing this, *Public Opinion*, of New York, cites the following: "A recent editorial in the *Watchman* deplores the steadily-declining attendance of children and young people upon the services of the Church." If this continues it will be the best sign of all, for the Church has been erected on the ignorance of children and the slavery of women.

The Humanitarian League has issued through W. Reeves, Fleet-street, an excellent "Plea for a Court of Criminal Appeal" by a writer who signs himself "Lex." The shape of the *brochure* is rather ungainly, but the contents should be mastered by every reformer The price is one penny.

IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?

THE mere existence of a desire in man to prolong his being, even if it were universal, can afford little assurance that the desire will be fulfilled. Of desires which will never be fulfilled man's whole estate is lamentably full. If to each of us his own little being is inexpressibly dear, so is its own little being to the insect, which nevertheless is crushed without remorse and without hope of a future existence.

It is sad that man should perish—and perish just when he has reached his prime. This seems like cruel wastefulness in nature. But is not nature full of waste? Butler rather philosophically finds an analogy to the waste of souls in the waste of seeds. He might have found one in the destruction of geological races, in the redundancy of animal life, which involves elimination by wholesale slaughter, in the multitude of children brought into the world only to die. The deaths of children, of which a large number appear inevitable, seem to present an insurmountable stumbling-block to any optimism which holds that nature can never be guilty of waste even in regard to the highest of her works. Waste there evidently is in nature, both animate and inanimate, and to an enormous extent, if our intelligence tells us true. The earth is full of waste places, as well as of blind agencies of destruction, such as earthquakes and floods; while her satellites appear to be nothing but waste.—*Professor Goldwin Smith.*

A RETORT ON THE SPIRITIST.

"You think of me as seeing no essential difference between mind and the material properties of the brain. As well might I think of you as seeing no essential difference between music and the material properties of the piano from which it is evoked. Because you assert that music is produced from the piano, do you, therefore, assert any kinship in nature between a piano-string and the aerial pulse it generates when struck? Or do you, therefore, assert an identity between such pulses and the relations among them which constitute cadences and harmonies? No more, then, do I, in asserting the dependence of mind on nervous structure, assert any kinship in nature between the matter of a nerve-cell and the actions that arise from it, or between these actions and those relations among them which constitute thought. Do you object to the parallel because the piano remains silent till touched, while the brain acts without external help? I reply that in either case the power is derived from without, and that the effect of the structure is simply that of transforming it. As the motion given to an automatic musical instrument passes through its specialized structure and comes out in the form of particular combinations of aerial pulses, simultaneous and successive; so the motion locked up in a man's food, added to that directly received through his senses, is transformed while passing through the nervous system into those combinations of nervous actions which, on their subjective faces, are thoughts and feelings.

"But this analogy is far too rude to convey a true conception. Not with sensible motion, even though it be that of the invisible air, has mind any direct kinship; but only with insensible motion of kinds inconceivably more subtle and immeasurably more rapid. Not to combined undulations of ponderable substance, however rare, is mind to be assimilated; but only to combined undulations of the all-pervading imponderable substance which we know of only by inference from their effects. The activities of this imponderable substance, though far simpler, and in that respect far lower, than the activities we call mind, are at the same time far higher than those we call mind in respect of their intensity, their velocity, their subtlety. What has been gained in adaptability has been lost in vivacity. Though mind brings into adjustment the apparatus by which certain ethereal undulations emanating from the sun are brought to a focus, yet mind cannot, like these concentrated undulations, dissipate the diamond placed in that focus. Though mind is capable of devising an electric telegraph, yet it remains wholly insensible to those slight molecular agitations on the other side of the earth which transform themselves into sensible motions on this side. And now that the rates and volitions of our ideas have been measured, we learn that, though thought is quick, light is many millions of times quicker.

"Your conception, O Spiritualist, is far too gross for me. I know not what may be the extent to which you have refined this creed which you inherit from aboriginal man. Disembodied spirit was conceived by your remote ancestors (as it is still conceived by various existing savages) as material enough to take part in battle, and even to be killed over again. Becoming less concrete and definite as knowledge increased, the idea of a ghost continued, till quite modern days, to be that of a being which could cause alarming noises and utter words. Even your quite recent ancestors, transparent as they supposed the substance of a ghost to be, nevertheless supposed it visible. Possibly you have still further purified their belief. But, whether you confess it or not, you cannot think of disembodied spirit without thinking of it as occupying a separate place in space—as having position and limits, and such materiality as is implied by limits. This idea, not commended to me by its genealogy, quite unsatisfactory in its nature and wholly unsupported by evidence, I cannot accept."—*Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Psychology," sec. 271.*

Logical consequences are the scarecrows of fools and the beacons of wise men. The only question which any wise man can ask himself is whether a doctrine is true or false. Consequences will take care of themselves.—*Huxley.*

God's excuse is that he does not exist.—*H. Beyle.*

Digitized by Google

SOME DEALINGS WITH DEITIES.

(A Report, interspersed with comments.)

At the meeting of the Folk-Lore Society at Albemarle-street, on June 29, W. Crooke, B.A.—author of a standard book on the popular religion and folk-lore of the northern provinces of India, in which he illustrates the evolution of the godlings in those parts—read a paper, which he entitled "The Binding of the God: A Study of Idolatry." Mr. Crooke stated that his residence among an idolatrous people in India induced a study of their customs and beliefs. He endorsed the view of the development of the idol from a rude wooden or stone fetish—such as those described by Pausanius as at Greek shrines—into the highest efforts of art. He then cited from an early Hindu ritual, describing the mantras, spells, and other ceremonies by which an idol was infused with divinity. The ritual followed the lines by which a temple was consecrated. It must be done by a holy person, or Brahman, who has mastered the Vedas. He invokes with spells the god set up, considering him, be it Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, or some other, as for the time the chief god, and the others as attendants. The god has to be placed firmly, "as the heavens are firm." It is bathed with curds and ghee, and any chinks are carefully filled up with sand, that evil spirits may not enter. The consecrated image is then bathed with butter and sesame, and touched with a golden stick dipped in honey—a mystical substance from bees who carry souls. With each verse of his spell the priest touches a part of the image set up—on his legs, body, arms, breast, and head—touching at the same time the like parts of his own body, and says, "Let the divine spirit enter." He then repeats the Gayatri: "Let us meditate that excellent glory of the divine Vivifier. May he enlighten our understanding"—a sacred verse equivalent to our Lord's Prayer; and finally says: "O God of Gods! thou art welcome, and should abide as long as the sun and heaven endure."

Mr. Crooke thought this ritual—which, by the way, in some particulars could be paralleled from Christian forms of consecration—had developed from a more savage one, which he had witnessed among the Dravidians, a race in India before the Aryans. Mr. Crooke had the chance to be present at the birth of a god. It happened in this way: He was trying a case of murder. A man had killed his child in order to make its ghost torment one of his tormenters, and Mr. C. had to look into the matter on the spot. The sudden appearance of sickness and disease had been ascribed to the spirit, and an *Oja*—a cunning man or exorcisor—was called in to lay the ghost. This more primitive priest rang a bell to summon the ghosts, of whom there are supposed to be a large number established as gods, and other godlings waiting for promotion. As the spirits were supposed to assemble, the *Oja*, or *Shaman*, worked himself into a state of afflatus, rolled on the ground, like Saul when among the prophets, then rose grasping at the spirits, suddenly seized some black sesame, which he gave his audience to understand was the spirit; this he put in a hole in a log, which was rapidly closed with clay and cow-dung. The spirit was thus enclosed in the log, which, if duly propitiated, might become propitious, and be regarded as a great deity. If, for instance, the disease declined, the reputation of the log-god would be established, and he would be rapidly promoted.

Before proceeding with Mr. Crooke's lecture, I here interject that it was pointed out that a parallel to the filling up the crevices is found in the Russian Greek Church when consecrated. The last plank of the altar is nailed to represent the nailing of Jesus, and then every tiny crack is filled up with white wax.

Mr. Crooke gave several illustrations of capturing the god. One which will come home to all Bible readers is the triumph of the Philistines at the taking of the ark of Jahveh—referred to, by the way, in Mr. Foote's Bible romance, *God in a Box*—and their consternation when the image of their god Dagon fell before the ark. The falling of a god was ominous of evil, and meant its deposition. In New Ireland the gods are set on an eminence, and if one falls over it is put aside; for it is held that if the gods cannot hold themselves erect they are no good to help others—a sound inference, which the reporter thinks worth the attention of theists of all kinds. Mr. Crooke gave illustrations of images which, being lent, conveyed their divine blessing to their possessors. He might have mentioned that in Italy the Bambino child-Christs are constantly on hire, for a consideration; while in Moscow the famous Virgin Bogie Mater, or Mother of God, can scarcely ever be seen at her residence in the Kremlin, because she is hired to go out to birthday parties, weddings, births, and other occasions. Gods were carried out in war to bring luck. The Egyptians carried their idols in processions; and so, too, adds the reporter, do the Catholics carry the consecrated Host, which contains the body, blood, soul, and divinity of God. In India the cars of Jagannatha and of other gods are carried from place to place, conveying their blessings wherever they go. The greatest precautions are taken that gods shall not be captured. Some are made deformed in the legs that they may not run away. [Is this why Greek figures of Christ are lame?] In Easter Island the gods are packed away in sacks, and the owner will only show as many toys as he has personally made, which he thinks he thus has complete power over. In Mexico Quexacotl was covered with blankets. The Dyaks seek to capture souls, and instruments used for that purpose by the Harvey Islanders may be seen in the ethnographical gallery of the British Museum. Mr. Crooke opposed the view of Mr. Jevons that it was no part of religion that gods could be constrained as by magic. There were abundant instances of gods being scolded and beaten. Some, as Herodotus relates, would aim their arrows at the gods, curse them, and fight the desert winds. He might have added that Portuguese sailors have been known to pitch the Virgin Mary overboard when she has proved of no avail against a storm. So at Naples the fisherwomen cry out to San Genario: "You yellow-faced rascal, we will pray to you no more if you do not let your blood melt" (see *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 31). Many gods were confined as prisoners, only brought out once a year or on state occasions. They were taboo, and dwelt in a holy of holies [like Jahveh, and it was death to touch his travelling-trunk]. They were exhibited only to the priests or initiated persons. Tiresias was deprived of sight because he had seen the goddess Athene. The temple was held to be the real dwelling-place of the god, and in India they were washed and dressed; their images, too [like those of Catholic saints], were believed to sweat, weep, brandish spears, or give other signs of real life. The paper gave illustrations of binding the god with fetters, willows, and chains. The Romans fettered the image of Saturnus as they concealed the real name of their city, lest power should be acquired over it. Even Aphrodite was sculptured with chains on her feet. Some of the gods in India were put in irons. Mr. Crooke mentioned many folk-tales of spirits shut up in bottles, like the bottle-imps and *le diable boiteux*, and of spirits induced to go into bags and jugs and there kept. He then referred to the passage in Homer relating that Ares was imprisoned in a vessel of bronze for thirteen months; but Miss Harrison, the author of a work on Greek Art and Mythology, who was present, thought this was rather a nature-myth allied to those of vegetative gods, bound down in autumn and loosened in spring.

Mr. Crooke's paper was certainly a remarkable one, throwing much light on the evolution of early deities and demons. It will be printed in full in *Folk-Lore*, and Mr. Crooke's views can then be judged by his own words, not by such a report as this, written mainly from memory, and with some of my own observations and opinions intermixed.

J. M. Wheeler.

EVOLUTION EXPOUNDED.

The *Churchman* relates an amusing story of a "learned" butler who expounded evolution to his associates:—

"Two or three mornings after the arrival of the new butler, the mistress of the house took the opportunity of asking the cook how she liked her new fellow-servant. The report was an excellent one. 'In fact, ma'am,' said the cook, 'the servants' hall is quite a different place now.' Not unnaturally, the mistress pressed for further particulars. 'Well, he talks so cleverly,' said the cook. 'Last night, for instance, he explained things to us for an hour and a half.' 'Explained things—what things?' said the mistress, now really interested. 'Well,' was the reply, 'he was telling us how we are all descended from Mr. Darwin!'"

The butler's idea of evolution was a little confused; but it was not further from the truth than some of the preachers' efforts years ago to state the theory before refuting it. Their common representation and standing joke was, "Darwin says your grandfather was a monkey." The servant-girl got the idea. Her employer, not wishing to be interrupted, said to her: "If anybody calls for me, do not say that I am at home. If they ask any question, give them an equivocal answer." In the evening, the gentleman asked whether anybody had called to see him. The reply was in the affirmative. "And what did you say?" "I gave him a kivecal answer," the maid replied. "He axed me if yer honor was at home; and I axed him if his grandfather was a monkey?"

B. F. U.

Numbers of savage peoples suppose that the soul continues to inhabit the body after death, though from time to time it makes excursions into the world of the living. It therefore requires a hole if it is to escape from an enclosure. For this reason it is that, at the death of a relative, the Hottentots, the Sanoyeds, the Siamese, the Fijians, and the Redskins make a hole in the hut to allow the passage of the deceased, but close it again immediately afterwards to prevent its coming back. The Iroquois make a small hole in every tomb, and expressly declare that it is to enable the soul to go out and come in [at its pleasure.—*Count Goblet d'Alviella, Hibbert Lectures.*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer's new book, *The Blight of Respectability*, is as refreshing, and will probably be to some as objectionable, as a thunder-shower in sultry weather. For Mr. Mortimer smashes down ruthlessly the smug conventionalities of Grundyism, and pelts unsparingly into shams, stupidities, and hypocrisies. But even a Grundyite must feel that the air is clearer afterwards and, for our part, we must say his book is capital reading, and that we have enjoyed the lashing strokes which he directs against the Philistines, who live a lie and then make a saintly ending.

* * *

Mr. Mortimer anatomizes the "respectables" of our time as Thackeray did the snobs of his. His diagnosis is keen, his descriptions plain, his satire severe, and his remedies drastic. He asks: "Would it not be an act of sheer defamation of character to describe Ben Jonson, Shakespeare, Dryden, Fielding, and Burns as 'respectable men'? No great man has ever been, or ever can be, of the respectabilities, for the simple reason that the great are not ordinary, and the ordinary alone are respectable." But Mr. Mortimer throughout attacks "respectability" from above, not from below. It is in the cause of a truer humanity, of simple human brotherhood, that he attacks the "gentility" which ever aspires to appear that which it is not, and loses the better estate of self-respect in worship of Mrs. Grundy. He would have boys taught the words of the knights in *Pericles*:—

> We are gentlemen,
> That neither in our hearts, nor outward eyes
> Envy the great, nor do the low despise.

The spirit of true human dignity is in this vigorous onslaught on respectability.

* * *

Mr. Bertram Dobell's catalogues of books (77 Charing Cross-road) always contain many interesting items. The July number gives both "Notes and Notices" and "Half Hours with Old Books," the latter being devoted to the work of Father Bridoul, who establishes the foundation of the Holy Eucharist upon the respect paid to the sacrament by various animals. Mr. Dobell reprints three of these appeals to credulity, relating how "a spider revenges the affront done to the Holy Sacrament." "Swine adore the Holy Sacrament," and "A whale, a fish of the greater kind, lent his back to say Masse upon on Easter Day."

* * *

The Rev. Dennis Hird, in his new book, *In Search of a Religion*, says: "Man had a religion thousands of years before the Jews existed, and the term, Mosaic Law, is a brilliant sacred pun, for it consists of several little bits taken from every race with whom the Jews came in contact."

* * *

It is expected that the biography of the late Professor Huxley, prepared by his son, Mr. Leonard Huxley, will be ready in the late autumn. Our readers may like to see a characteristic letter which Professor Huxley addressed to Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who pointed out to him a grave misrepresentation of his teaching made at a Theosophical Congress in America. The letter is as follows: "Hodeslea, Staveley-road, Eastbourne, July 17, 1894. Dear Sir,—There is an old motto—Scotch, I think—which runs: 'They say? What say they? Let them say!' If I had not guided myself by this principle, and never entered into controversy without a purpose totally distinct from personal reclamation, life would have been a much harder burden than it has proved. None the less, thanks to you for taking up the cudgels in my behalf. I am, yours faithfully, T. H. Huxley."

* * *

An English translation of Professor Ribot's book, *The Psychology of the Emotions*, is announced. The Professor's notable theory is, that all emotions are of an identical nature, in the sense that they are the effect, not the cause, of bodily changes.

* * *

The new edition of Sir John Evans's work on the ancient stone implements, weapons, and ornaments of Great Britain, necessitated by our increased knowledge of the palæolithic period, will be ready in the next few days. Some of the new illustrations have been borrowed from the publications of various learned societies, and many have been specially engraved.

* * *

Mr. Forder has issued a fresh shilling edition of *The People's Darwin*, a popular exposition of the principles of Evolution, by Dr. E. B. Aveling, which, under the title of *Darwin Made Easy*, has already had a large sale. The Darwinian theory is lucidly explained, and there is a long section on the Origin of Man, followed by another on Monkeys, Apes, and Men. The work admirably fills the purpose of making Darwin's views known to a popular audience.

It is announced that the Oxford University Press will publish a collection of "Logia," or Sayings of the Lord, reproduced from an odd leaf of a papyrus said to have been found on the edge of the Libyan desert by Mr. Bernard P. Grenfell, of Queen's College, and Mr. A. S. Hunt, of Magdalen College, Oxford. It is to be desired that the genuineness of the papyrus, which is said to be in very clear uncial Greek, in a remarkable state of preservation, should be submitted to experts, the more especially as this is now claimed to be the earliest Christian document, dating, possibly, from the second century. The sayings are detached, without context, and each begins with the words "Jesus saith." If this first fragment runs the gauntlet of criticism, we expect more papyri will soon be discovered, for this has hitherto been a missing link in Christian evidences; and since it has been pointed out that the records of the Merovingian Kings of France were kept on papyrus, the absence of Christian papyri has been "a long-felt want." In these things demand always begets supply. Supposing the document to be genuine, and to belong to the period alleged, it only serves to show the *lateness* of the Gospels; and the more this is demonstrated the worse it is for orthodox Christianity.

* * *

The July number of the *New Century Review* has a number of interesting contents. James Stanley Little opens with a polemic against the doctrine of the equality of black and white, entitled "The Enemies in South Africa." The Rev. Richard A. Armstrong, B.A., writes on "Authority in Religion," following much of the thought of Dr. Martineau in his book on that subject. People are transferring the seat of authority from the Church and the Book to the person of Christ; but when the question arises, What were his actual opinions the trouble begins. We should fancy a living Italian Pope would carry it against a dead Jew who believed in devils. "A Plea for the Codification of English Law" is made by J. Compton Rickett, M.P., Professor Maitland, F. Rowley Parker, and Dr. Blake Odgers. "The Present Position of the Vaccination Question" is dealt with by A. W. Hutton, M.A., who argues that, in the face of unvaccinated Leicester having a far lower death-rate per thousand in the small-pox epidemics than well-vaccinated Willenhall and Sheffield, it is idle to say that vaccination is an effective protection, or even as efficacious as mere sanitation. Mr. Hodder Williams writes with competence on "Current Continental Literature," and T. H. S. Escott, M.A., deals with the Guards and military novels concerning them, under the title of "Latter-Day Prætorians."

* * *

The Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology for May is an interesting number. Sir P. le Page Renouf continues his valuable translation of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. In an article on Champollion, however, he falls foul of Dr. Budge, of the British Museum, and devotes a somewhat spiteful footnote to him. The spectacle of a learned Catholic Christian taking every opportunity to disparage a rival Egyptologist is not edifying. Mr. F. Legge writes upon "A Coptic Spell of the Second Century," in which the exorcist invokes Jesus Christ, Jaho Sabaoth, and various heathen gods to unite in casting out the evil spirit. This spell throws a lurid light upon the ideas of the primitive Christians, and shows how little early Christianity in Egypt could be differentiated from the heathen superstitions surrounding it. Another important paper is that upon "The Date of the Siloam Inscriptions." Orthodox archæologists had put this down to Hezekiah (700 B.C.) without rhyme or reason; but the author, by an elaborate study of alphabets, shows clearly that it cannot be earlier than the time of Herod. A tabulated plate of Jewish alphabets brings the argument home at once. We cannot forget how the Society of Biblical Archæology refused the valuable paper of Dr. J. B. Mitchell on "Chrestos—a Religious Epithet: its Import and Influence"; but we are glad to note signs that the members may now be archæologists first.

* * *

The Roman Catholic *Tablet* calls the Rev. A. H. Craufurd's *Christian Instincts and Modern Doubt* "a book for infidels written by one not quite so far gone as themselves." Of Mr. Craufurd's declaration, that "for truth, *as* truth Romanism has never apparently had any very intense regard," the *Tablet* says: "We can but stand amazed at the impudence of the remark in the mouth of a man who is straining every formula and evading every claim of intellectual honesty in order to remain in the Established Church, while disbelieving its principal tenets."

* * *

The *Literary Guide* for July gives, in addition to the usual list of contents, two supplements—one Mr. Gould's "Plan of Moral Instruction," the other a lengthy lecture on Dr. Goldwin Smith's *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*. "Chats about Books" are continued this time with Mr. J. M. Robertson, who would have nothing to do with metaphysical bogies behind a curtain, for which some of our ethical culturists seem to have a sneaking veneration.

Digitized by Google

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTIANITY AND GOD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I sometimes take a copy of your paper, and although I quite agree with the majority of its utterances, it would appear that the tendency of the paper is to question the existence of a supervising deity, which I think is an error.

It does not, by any means, follow that, if a man should discard the Bible as being so full of obvious errors, it cannot be reliable on any point, that he should disbelieve the existence of a Lord of all space, and preserver of the universe.

Where we make a great mistake is in attributing to the deity many of the passions of man, such as love and hatred, and the Bible even tells us that man is in God's own image! The result of this is an incongruous jumble of ideas of religion which, when examined into, will be found to be little better than the mythology of the ancient Greeks, whose gods were invested with all the frailties of perishable human nature.

Now there are three *illimitables:* Jehovah, Space, and Time.

1. JEHOVAH.—He has neither form, size, or any special dwelling-place; because, like a magnetic power, felt but not seen, he controls and pervades the whole of space, and although so diffused he can without doubt concentrate his power at any point.

Here I may parenthetically observe that I am not a believer in the common notion of astronomers that masses of matter or gases (where did they come from?) roving in space, tumbled or solidified into shape, are by gravitation or attraction kept on in regular motion for ages without a controller. If gravitation and attraction alone could do this there would *never* have been any disorder. No satellite would be found turning the *opposite* way to others—for the forces must either join one direction or cause chaos; or, if equally balanced, a *complete* stoppage.

2. SPACE must evidently be illimitable. It is impossible to look into the heavens and name a spot where space can end. As to whether there is a limit to the weight of matter in space, we cannot decide; but there is evidently no termination to space so well described by our great poet Milton as: "A dark, illimitable ocean without bound; without dimension, where height, breadth, depth, and time and place are lost." If Jehovah pervades space and controls space, it follows that he is equally as great as space, and, therefore, without dimension. To give a form to the Almighty, or a special dwelling-place is, in my humble opinion, an absurdity altogether.

3. TIME also must necessarily be illimitable. It never had a beginning, and can never have an end, although there may be no account kept of it.

Jehovah is the greatest of the three illimitables, being a *sentient*, magnetic spirit controlling all space. Jehovah being so great, it is obvious how utterly insignificant we must be. It is the conceit of human nature to imagine that the conceit of human nature to imagine that this almighty, living, ethereal spirit is continually concerning himself about the small matters of our everyday lives. Fancy the diminutive old lady, who is supposed to govern the British Empire, giving him thanks (by deputy) for a quarter of an hour for having preserved her to reign sixty years; and yet we read even in the Bible that the nations of the earth are to him but as the small dust of the balance! The fact is Jehovah, exercising a general and beneficent control, has placed us upon the earth with everything for our comfort, if we do not abuse the use of these things, or rob one another. He asks nothing in return; although, of course, we should honor him by the greatest reverence and heartfelt thanks; but we cannot make any claims upon him to do any more for us than he has done, and still less expect future immortality.

It is obvious that, if the above ideas are correct, and the majority who trouble anything about the subject believed in them, the parsons' occupation would practically be gone; and therefore the great deception of heaven for some and hell for the rest is kept up by the ministers of religion, although possibly a few of them may actually believe what they teach. But, unfortunately, the great majority of human beings required some stimulus, either in the hope of reward or punishment, to do right by their fellow men. Therefore, although a vain hope, Christianity may have produced good results in the case of many individuals; but, on the whole, it has doubtless also encouraged an enormous amount of superstition and clerical persecution and swindling.—Yours truly, JOHN C. EDGLEY.

WOES OF THE RITUALISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, in writing to the *Echo* from Hexton Vicarage, shows the absurdity of Mr. Brinckman's denial that the creeds were given to the Church of England by Act of Parliament. Mr. Fillingham, as a clergyman of that Church, says an Act of Parliament was passed in 1559 to settle the Liturgy, and that the clergy should use those creeds. If Parliament chose to pass an Act enjoining a profession of belief in the Buddha, the clergy of the Church of England would have to teach that belief; but the clergy of the Church of England are members of a splendid Trade Organization. Almost without exception (the Rev. R. C. Fillingham being one of the few exceptions) the clergy "hang together." They all hold the doctrine that private judgment must be stamped out, and though a Church-of-Englander may cross over into the Papal fold and be made much of by the Church of England clergy, yet if he returns and proclaims himself a Protestant he is boycotted; nine out of ten of the clergy of the Church of England being either veiled or open apists of the Papists—and I have had some experience, as may be inferred from my advertisement in another part of this paper—but, as a matter of fact, the Ritualists, instead of having woes, are "in clover," the sweets of office being theirs. XAVIER FIELD.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE minister was to dinner, and the talk had turned to the Græco-Turkish war. "Greece has degenerated. Her glory has departed from her." He shook his head and sighed. "No" (it was the Board of Trade brother-in-law who took up the topic). "She doesn't fight like Hellas of old." Then everybody breathed hard, and the dominie turned the talk to the late floods.

Spending the winter as invalids at Aiken, S.C., the Hon. Thurlow Weed and Mr. Thomas C. Acton whiled away one Sabbath afternoon by attending a negro church. When they entered the primitive temple, the preacher, who was a pure African, was grappling, with all the fervor of his race, with the old, old subject of the fall of man. Sketching that day in the Garden, with its terrible results, he excoriated Adam in this fashion: "Now, brederen, when de Lord calls Adam to 'count, did he stan' up like a man, confess his sin, and ask forgiveness? He didn't do nuffin ob de sort, brederen, but he say: 'Lord, de woman dat Dou gubest me gub me for to eat.'" Pausing a moment, he repeated: "'De woman dat *Dou* gubest me gub me for to eat.'" Then again: "'De woman dat DOU gubest me gub me for to eat.' Dar, brederen, you see dat mean, skulkin' Adam was a-trying to sneak out of it by frowin' all de blame on de Lord hisself!"

Knicker—"We had to discharge our pastor because he mispronounced a word." Bocker—"For such a trifle?" Knicker—"Yes; he said the dear departed had gone to 'the undiscovered country from whose burn no traveller returns.'"

Street Evangelist—"I've been a thief; I've been a drunkard; I've starved my children; I killed my poor wife; I've been in prison for burglary; I—" Policeman (interrupting)—"Here, you come along to the police-station and report yourself."

A clergyman who had travelled much in the South told of Dr. Dashiel's reception in a large negro church down that way. The doctor was prominent throughout the whole church, so the pastor thought he was telling the truth when he introduced the stranger as follows: "Breddern and sisters, I now hab de honnah ob intrejucing to yoh de Rebberend Doctor Dashiel, who am de sounding brass and de tinkling cymbal ob de Metodist Church."

FAITH.

As to faith; if you want to show that a Christian has not faith in his own doctrine, state that doctrine in all its rawness. God created man weak, and made a devil to tempt him, knowing he would yield. He became angry at the result, and demanded a human sacrifice. He had either to damn all people eternally, or give his son over to the mob (the mob being his own product, in his infinite wisdom), and chose the latter plan, although it does not save one person in a hundred, and he knew it wouldn't from the start. How this offends the Christian!

Well, let him state it. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." How much better that sounds! But it will not bear analysis. God loved the world, yet the good Christian is told to hate the world, and yet to imitate God. He gave his son (an act of tyranny), as it is not likely the Son consented. "Might not perish"; yet there was no need of anybody perishing, except as he so willed, in his infinite wisdom. RINCTUM.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Drawbacks of Christian England."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "Lord Salisbury and Evolution."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. 381 Harrow-road, Paddington: July 12, at 9, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, S. Jones.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, A. B. Moss.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "The Case Against Christianity."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand).—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, J. Fagan.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Spread of Rationalism"; 3.30, R. Rosetti.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen; 7, W. J. Ramsey. July 14, at 8, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Lord Salisbury and Evolution."

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, Important business meeting.

OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board Schools): July 17, at 6, Important business meeting; 7, A lecture.

PONTYPRIDD (23 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' quarterly meeting; 5, Tea; 7, Musical and other recitals, etc. Members and friends should attend and ascertain arrangements for excursion on the 18th.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, S. M. Peacock, An address.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): Ernest Pack—11.30, "Religion and Science"; 6.30, "Force and Matter."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 11, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. 18, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park. 25, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park. August 1, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 11., m., Clerkenwell; a., Finsbury Park. 18, m. and a., New Brompton. 25, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton. August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 23, m., Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—July 11, e., Hammersmith. 18, m., Hyde Park. August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, Camden-road, N.W.—July 11, Northampton. 18, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 25, m., Mile End.

H. P. WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—July 11, m., Limehouse. 18, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 25, m., Camberwell Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

NEWSPAPERS FOR APRIL.—WANTED a sight of certain papers. Returnable if necessary.—XAVIER FIELD, Journalist (author: *Wrecked on the Roman Rocks*), *Woking News*, Chertsey-road, Woking, Surrey.

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 33, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell
No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C

Just published, cloth, price 2s. 6d. post free,

THE RATIONALIST'S MANUAL.

A Compendium of Theological and Biblical Criticism, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics. In two Parts. By ALETHEIA, M.D.

Contents.—Part I. CHRISTIANISM: ITS SUPERSTITIONS AND ORIGIN. The Supernatural—Revelation—The Teachings of Jesus not Original—Inspiration—Mistranslations of the Bible Text—Some Bible Legends—A Few Contradictions in the "Inspired Text"—The Christian Messiah; and Contemporary History—Events in the Life of Jesus; Miracles, etc.—Origin of the Bible—Prayer—Worship, Sacrifice, and Baptism—Heaven, Hell, Ghosts, and Bogies—Future Life—Christian Symbols; the Cross, etc.—Ancient Festivals, Sabbaths, etc.—Ancient Gods, Trinities, and Scriptures—Origin of Religion (Theology)—Origin of the Word "Christian"—The Fruits of Christianism——Part II. RATIONALISM: ITS PHILOSOPHY AND RULE OF LIFE. Rationalism—First Principles—Truths—Some Definitions—Knowledge, Belief, Faith, etc—The Cause of All—Life—Origin of Life—Evolution—Polarity—Ascent of Man—Death and Dissolution—Morality—The Universe—The Earth; Geological Epochs, etc.—The Solar System; Seasons, etc.—The Ancient Zodiac—Ethics and Customs of Social Life—Duty and Fault—Man's Moral Code—Rationalist Societies—Public Holidays and their Origin—Naming and Registration of Children—Marriage—Burial of the Dead—Freedom of Thought and Speech—Oaths, Affirmations, and Last Will—Index.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR. Price 6d., post free 7d.,

A RATIONALIST CATECHISM

Of subjects concerning Man—his Gods and Superstitions.

"Should be of interest to all; . . . gives in brief and concise shape a large number of the conclusions of rational science and criticism with regard to religion."—*Freethinker.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series*, 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Series*, 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

"THE EXTINCTION OF WAR, POVERTY, AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES." By A DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, author of *Elements of Social Science.* 157 pp., 6d., by post 8d. Just published. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. "The author writes with earnestness and power, and his treatise deserves to be attentively read."—*The Literary Guide.*

Digitized by Google

COSTUME SKIRTS 10/6

COSTUME SKIRTS

10s. 6d. Each.

Send waist measure and length back and front.

These Costume Skirts are exceedingly well-made and lined throughout. They are all cut very full and in the latest fashionable shape. They hang very gracefully, and are guaranteed to give the utmost satisfaction.

Over 50 High-class Materials to choose from,

including Bruno Cloth, Plain, Figured, or Diagonal Serges, Habit Cloth, Wool Twills, Crepons, Alpacas, or Fancy Tweeds.

To ensure a rush of work for our New Hands in the Costume Department we make this Splendid Offer

Until JULY 15th ONLY.

With every 10s. 6d. Costume Skirt we send, *free of cost*, one of our Beautiful Crepon Blouses, which just now are all the rage.

SEND BY RETURN AND SECURE A GREAT BARGAIN.

10/6 COSTUME SKIRTS

THINK OF IT.

A New Dress to measure for the wife.

And a pair of first-class Trousers for yourself.

All for 21s. carriage paid.

	Inches.
Round Waist over Trousers	
Round Seat	
Inside Leg Seam	
Full Length of Trousers	
Round Thigh	
Round Knee	
Round Bottom	
Please say Lined or Unlined	
Side or Cross Pockets	
Fly or Full Fall	

250 odd lengths of High-class Fashionable Materials, which would make good 18s. trousers to measure.

We offer these to clear.

10s. 6d. per pair to measure, or **4** Trouser Lengths for **21s.**

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 3d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE JULY NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Faith and Intellectual Advancement.
Sex in Religion.
The Blossoming of Hellenism.
A Freethought *Vade Mecum*.
The Blight of Respectability.
Mr. Morley on Machiavelli.
An Introduction to Philosophy.
Chats about Books. VII.—With Mr. J. M. Robertson.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings, Rationalism in the Magazines, etc.

Also two four-page Supplements—(1) A lecture by Mr. F. J. Gould on Professor Goldwin Smith's *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*; (2) "A Plan of Moral Instruction," designed to supersede the present method of religious instruction now practised in public elementary schools.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

CHAPTERS:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3 Monkery; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER

VOL. XVII.—No. 29. SUNDAY, JULY 18, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

LIGHT ON THE EASTWARD POSITION.

"And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like the noise of many waters; and the earth shined with his glory."—EZEKIEL xliii. 2.

"Lord, how mine eyes throw gazes to the east."—SHAKESPEARE, *Passionate Pilgrim*, xv.

MR. WILLIAM SIMPSON, the veteran architect, artist, archæologist, and author of *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel*, has been good enough to send me a copy of his paper on *The Orientation or Direction of Temples*, read before, and published by, the most eminent of English Masonic Lodges.* I find it a treasure-house of information bearing on the evolution of religious ideas. Mr. Simpson deals with the four quarters in the New World, in India, Burmah, Java, Siam, Cambodia, China, Mesopotamia and Egypt, in the Jewish System, the Christian Church, and in Ceremonies. He deals with the ideas and customs attached to the four cardinal points, and "the Kiblah principle"—that, viz., of worshipping in a particular direction. Throughout, his work, which is illustrated with many diagrams, is that of a perfect master-mason—plumbline accurate, and four-square to every wind that blows. I almost regret that pre-conceived ideas and exigencies of space compel me to go on more erratic lines in dealing with the subject.

When there was neither reading nor writing, signs played an important part in human affairs. Indeed, it may be said that man advanced to civilization by paying attention to signs. In any position thinking man recognises four quarters, a before and behind, a right and a left. The east as the place of the dawn, the starting-place of the heavenly fire-ball, the womb of day, is to early man what the north is to the magnetic needle. From it he derives all other directions. In Hebrew, *Kedem* (the east) means "in front" and "beginning." The four quarters, with their winds, messengers, angels, or spirits, play an important part in early cults. The number "four" is sacred to all the native American religions, and is the key of their symbolism. The cardinal points are identified with the four winds, who, in myths, are the four ancestors of the human race, and the four celestial rivers watering the earthly paradise. In drawing the four quarters, one makes at once the sign of the cross.†

Almost a primal idea in religion is the assimilation of man to the sun. The root is kept in Blanco White's famous sonnet, "To Night":—

If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

As the sun rose, passed over the heaven, and sank in the west, swallowed up in darkness to the north, to rise again in the east, so it was supposed that man's tomb might be but the womb of a re-birth. This was the core of the Egyptian faith. The Egyptian word for the right hand Amenti also means the west and the underworld. It is thus likely that the Egyptians in worshipping turned their backs to the north, or the place of darkness. They ferried their dead to the western bank of the Nile, on which are the pyramids, while the obelisks are on the east. In the Egyptian temple the left-hand chamber represents the east where the god triumphed, and the right the west where the god dies, where his bier was dressed and carried to the *mea* or place of conception. The Greek scholiast on Pindar tells us that they were wont to turn eastward when praying to the gods, but to the west when praying to dead heroes or demi-gods.

All old nations personified the four quarters, four winds, and four elements, earth, water, fire, and air, as guardian genii. Irenæus (iii. 11), the first Christian writer who mentions four gospels, says there can be neither more nor fewer than four pillars of the church, because there are four zones, four winds, and the cherubim are four-faced. In the old prayer,

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
Bless the bed that I lie on,

the evangelists take the place of the genii of the four quarters.* The man of Matthew, lion of Mark, the bull of Luke, and the eagle of John preserve the old signs. When Walt Whitman throws in Satan with Father, Son, and Ghost, in "Chanting the Square Deific," he is but reverting to the old quaternity. For the East is the Father, the South the Son and Mediator, the West the abode of the Ghost, and the North the black devil. No graves are found to the north of any old church. In some of our ancient churches over against the font and in the northern wall there is a devil's door. It is thrown open at every baptism for the escape of the fiend, and at all other seasons carefully closed.†

Ezekiel tells how at the north gate women set weeping for Tammuz—*i.e.*, the hidden Adonis, the spirit of vegetation in winter symbolized as the sun in the underworld, and therefore at the north on his journey from west to east. Cold winds coming from north, too, would make it associated with winter. But, says Zeke, or rather Jahveh says to him, there were "greater abominations." "And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five-and-twenty men‡ with their backs towards the temple of the Lord [*i.e.*, the holy of holies to the west] and their faces towards the east, and they worshipped the sun to the east" (Ezek. viii. 16). Ask any sky-pilot to explain why the infinite Deity should be wrath with people because they worshipped in a particular direction, and he will probably tell you it was because it was in opposition to the law against sun-worship (Deut. iv. 19). Ask him then why all Catholics and Ritualists bow in this very direction, and he may tell you that Christianity reversed the Jewish dispensation. That is, the immutable God turned the Jews westwards because the Pagans worshipped to the east, and then turned the Christians eastwards because the Jews worshipped to the west.§ Even Sir Charles Warren, who carefully studied the orientation of the Jerusalem joss-house, ran into some such rubbish as this. A slight study of early ideas might

* *The Orientation or Direction of Temples*, by William Simpson, R.I., M.R.A.S., F.R.G., Past-Master Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 20 ; published for the Q. C. Lodge by G. W. Speth, Bromley, Kent.

† This, as I have elsewhere pointed out, is the first step in the ancient Aryan rite of the Sraddha. If, to give the idea of motion, we place a line at right angles to each point, we have at once the mystic Swastika, a sign found in all lands.

* The Egyptians had four funereal genii, the sons of Osiris, and four amulets were placed on the dead; Tat, or Didit—the symbol of the four pillars of the earth and the emblem of stability—the Buckle, the Heart Vase, and the Head-Rest.

† In solar-worship the north is the abode of darkness; but in later polar-worship, as the point of stability round which the stars revolve, the northern heaven becomes the abode of the gods.

‡ Probably the four-and-twenty elders and the high priest, for this was the court of the priests.

§ Although the Jews worshipped to the west, they were particular to have their marriage beds run north and south. See *Al Kibla*, by William Asplin, p. 106, where will be found other curious particulars.

Digitized by Google

save some nonsense. Jahveh's ark and mercy seat was in the west, because that was the sacred place of the coffin. In turning to the sun they were turning their back on Jahveh. By looking for the rising sun every day they spoiled the effect of the arrangement by which the shekinah, or glory of the Lord, entered the sanctuary and fell on the jewels of the high priest at a predictable period of the year (see Josephus, *Antiq.*, iii. 8). Praying to the west was arranged so that the people might see the rays of the sun-god illumine his priest. Christianity took over many of the rites of Paganism.* The Eastward Position is one of the six points of Ritualist mummery, because it keeps up the old ideas of the altar as the seat of sacrifice, the "mass in masquerade" as the chief act, and of the sacerdotalist as the representative of deity.

The Rev. William Staunton, in his *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, tells us that in the early baptismal rite the candidates renounced the devil facing the west, and then turned to the east to make their covenant with Christ. He quotes Tertullian (*Contra Valen*, iii.): "The east was the figure of Christ, and therefore both churches and prayers were directed that way." St. Augustine, in treating of the Sermon on the Mount, ii. 17, says: "When we stand at our prayers we turn to the east, whence the heaven, or the light of heaven, arises." The Essenes and Therapeutæ, the monks who probably conveyed the Oriental Gnosis from east to west, worshipped at dawn, and prayed towards the rising sun (Philo, *Vit. Contemp.*: Josephus, *Wars*, ii. 85). In the Wisdom of Solomon, xvi. 28, we read: "We must prevent the sun to give thee thanks, and at the dayspring pray unto thee." The Apostolic Constitutions, ii. 57, enjoin: "Let the building be with its head to the east.....let all pray to God eastward, who ascended up to the heaven of heavens from the east." Durandus, Bishop of Mende [1239–96], in his *Symbolism of the Churches*, says (21): "The foundation must be so contrived that the head of the church may point due east—that is, to that point of the heavens wherein the sun rises at the equinoxes." Many churches, not being built due east, though, in the main, standing east and west, are supposed to have their direction determined by the place where the sun rises on the day of the saint to whom the church is dedicated. Needless to say, this theory will not always work. It is possible that the sun's rays were wanted to fall in some particular place at a particular season.

Tertullian, in his *Apologeticus* (16), says of the early Christians: "Some believe that the sun is our god. We shall be counted Persians, perhaps, though we do not worship the orb of day painted on a piece of linen cloth, having himself everywhere in his own disk. The idea no doubt originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer. But you also, under pretence of worshipping the heavenly bodies, move your lips in the direction of the sunrise." St. John Damascenus and Cassiodorus give us the mystic reasons which take us back to the old symbolism. They say that Christ on the cross [or the initiate on the *pastos*] turns his face to the west, so Christians turn east to see the face of the crucified Christ.† Later divines explain burial with the feet to the east, and face upwards, as being prepared to rise and meet the Sun of Righteousness, the dayspring from on high, who comes in the east with healing on his wings, as it says in Zech. xiv.: "His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east." But the initiate, the Osirified, went the whole course from west to east, from tomb to womb, from death to rebirth; so, as Guiderius says of the body of the supposed Fidele in *Cymbeline*, iv. 2:

> We must lay his head to the east;
> My father hath a reason for't.

The Jesuits, who strictly carry out the idea of dying to the world, in their chapels invariably have the entrance to the east, and the altar to the west. The priest, who represents both the sun and the dead man, takes his place on the west side of the altar, between himself and the people whom he faces in celebration. This is the ancient rite. In the more modern the celebrant stands between the altar and the people, facing the east like them, and exposing his golden back vestments to the worshippers. In Masonic Lodges, which are, or should be, oriented, the Worshipful Master stands for the sun in the east, that quarter being the seat of light and authority (though English initiates do repudiate the Grand Orient as Atheistic).

The Hindus worshipped the six quarters, including above and below. Gautama Buddha, however, gave this a fine moral significance. He said to a young man about to worship in these directions, that the true worship was in the practical duties of daily life to those around him: to his parents as the east quarter, his teachers as the south, wife and children as the west, companions as the north, dependants as the nadir, and spiritual teachers as the zenith. Here it will be noted that the east, the sun source, comes first, and the highest last. Gautama Buddha had the real secret of orientation. J. M. WHEELER.

* Walcott, in his *Sacred Archæology*, tells us that "Leo I. condemned the custom of the people at Rome, who used to stand on the upper steps in the Court of St. Peter's and bow to the rising sun, partly out of ignorance, and partly from a lingering Paganism." Yet Pope Virgilius, in ordering priests to celebrate towards the east, was but perpetuating a similar custom.

† Even F. Thompson, the latest Catholic poet, in his "Orient Ode," continues the simile:—

> Lo, of thy Magians I the least
> Haste with my gold, my incenses and myrrhs,
> To thy desired Epiphany, from the spiced
> Regions and odorous of Songs traded East.
> Thou, for the life of all that live,
> The victim daily born and sacrificed;
> To whom the pinion of this longing verse
> Beats but with fire which first thyself did give
> To thee, O Sun—or is't, perchance, to Christ?

THE OLD WAX NOSE.

VII.—Political and Social Progress.

"The Bible," says Dr. Farrar, "is inextricably mingled with all that is greatest in human history." This is a fair specimen of his roystering style. We presume he has contracted it through long years of preaching from the coward's castle of the pulpit, where a man can exaggerate as much as he pleases without the slightest fear of contradiction. Dr. Farrar does not say that the Bible is mixed up with *much* of the greatest in human history; no, it must be mixed up with *all* the greatest—which is a transparent falsehood and a no less transparent absurdity. What did Greece and Rome owe to the Bible? Absolutely nothing. There is no evidence that they were acquainted with any part of the Old Testament, and Greece had become a mere name before a line of the New Testament was written. Some of the greatest things in the world were done and said by the "heathen." Greek philosophy, Greek literature, Greek art, are imperishable. Roman jurisprudence and Roman government are the basis of every civilized polity. Plutarch's heroes are all Pagans, and let Dr. Farrar match them if he can in the history of Christendom.

Dr. Farrar calls the Bible "the statesman's manual," but he judiciously refrains from showing that statesmen ever act upon its teaching; indeed, he spends a great deal of time in showing that they ought *not* to act upon its teaching, unless they carefully avoid the obvious "letter" and allow themselves to be influenced by the recondite "spirit." For instance, it is perfectly clear that the Bible does not contain a single word against slavery; it is also perfectly clear to all who possess a tincture of scholarship that many of its references to slavery are fraudulently translated. "Servants obey your masters" really means "Slaves obey your owners." Moreover, the Bible contains precise regulations of slavery. God did not tell the Jews that holding slaves was infamous, that man could never have honest property in human flesh and blood. He allowed them to buy and sell Gentiles at their pleasure. He permitted them to enslave their own countrymen for a period of seven years, and in certain cases "for ever." Even in the New Testament we find St. Paul sending back a runaway slave to his master. True, he sent with the slave a touching letter to the slave-owner, but sending him back at all was giving a sanction to the institution. Dr. Farrar admits that American pulpits "rang with incessant Scriptural defences of slavery." He quotes from a Southern bishop, who described slavery as "a curse and a blight," yet declared it to be "recognised by the Bible," so that "every man has a right to his own slaves, provided they are not treated with unnecessary cruelty." Dr. Farrar

Digitized by Google

asks whether there was ever "a stranger utterance on the lips of a Christian bishop"? He calls this "distorting the Bible." But he does not prove the distortion. He calmly assumes it. He cannot deny the existence of all those slavery texts in the Bible. All he can do is to say that what was "relatively excusable" among the Jews is at present "execrable," and is now "absolutely and for ever wrong." Very good; but how was that discovered? Not by reading the Bible. The Jews read the Bible, the early Christians read the Bible, just as well as Dr. Farrar, but they did not find that it condemned slavery. Dr. Farrar lives in a later age, in the light of a higher civilization. He therefore *reads into* the Bible whatever it *ought to* contain as the word of God. He does not scruple to override explicit texts by more or less arbitrary deductions from vague maxims and ejaculations. He pretends that the "spirit" of the Bible in some way wrought the abolition of slavery. But every well-informed student is aware that the abolition of slavery depended upon economical conditions. We *outgrow* slavery by advancing beyond it in the process of industrial development, and when we *have* outgrown it we regard it with abhorrence. When the institution is in the way of being supplanted by a higher form of productive labor, the moral revolt against it begins, growing in strength and intensity as the economical change approaches its climax. It was natural that the anti-slavery movement in America should take place in the Northern States, where the conditions favorable to slavery did not exist as they did in the Southern States. We may be pardoned for supposing that if Dr. Farrar's lot had been cast in a Southern State he would have defended slavery as a Bible institution. He is preaching now after its abolition, when denunciation of it is cheap and easy, and is no particular credit to the preacher's religion. While slavery existed in America, it was at first justified by the Bible in all parts of the Union. Northern abolitionists at last found that the Bible did not teach slavery after all; but this did not alter the view of the Southern slaveholders and the Southern Churches. Here again we see the force of the Catholic taunt that Protestants can prove anything, and disprove anything, by appealing to texts in such a composite book as the Bible. Here again we also see that the Bible never *instigates* any step in the march of human improvement.

Dr. Farrar waxes eloquent, after his special fashion, over the glories of England in the age of Elizabeth. He attributes them all to the "open Bible," which was then placed in the hands of the people. Of course they had nothing to do with the new astronomy, the discovery of America, and the invention of printing! Such paltry causes as these cannot enter into competition with the might and majesty of the Bible! Still, we may venture to remind Dr. Farrar that these Englishmen of the Elizabethan age, with the "open Bible" in their hands, went and started the African slave trade. Evidently they did not read in it then, as Dr. Farrar does now, any condemnation of that horrible business. They worked it for all it was worth. England, with the "open Bible" in its hand, continued to do so for another two hundred years. One of the chief centres of the slave trade was the pious city of Bristol. It grew rich on the abominable traffic. Slavery has been abolished, but the old odor of piety still clings to the city of Bristol. Its merchants fattened on the slave trade with the "open Bible" in their hands. They now subscribe to missionary societies to convert the blacks, and they still stick to the "open Bible." It was good for upholding black slavery, and it is still good for upholding white slavery.

All that we have said about slavery applies in its degree to polygamy. Both institutions are sanctioned by the Bible, and the pleas of the "Higher Criticism" in relation to the one are just as hollow as they are in relation to the other.

We need not follow Dr. Farrar in his rhapsodical references to the various achievements of the Bible. We may remark, however, that his reference to Japan is singularly unhappy. That country *has* accepted the leading ideas of Western civilization, but it has *not* accepted Christianity. Nor is Dr. Farrar well advised in laying so much stress on the Pilgrim Fathers. He says that they had a preference for the "pure, unadulterated lessons of the Bible." Perhaps they had. But what were those lessons as illustrated by their actions? Certainly intolerance was one of them. They had no conception of religious liberty. "The Pilgrim Fathers," as Mr. Walter Besant remarks in his little book on *The Rise of the Empire*, "believed that everybody should think as they themselves thought. Had they achieved their own way, they would have sent Laud himself, and all who thought like him, across the ocean with the greatest alacrity." They also believed in witchcraft, probably because Dr. Farrar was not at hand to explain that the Bible did not mean what it said; and they tortured and burnt witches with remarkable gusto.

It would also be a waste of time to correct all Dr. Farrar's statements about the influence of the Bible in other directions. We will take a single illustration of his fantastical method. He tells us that the Bible "inspired the pictures of Fra Angelico and Raphael, the music of Handel and Mendelssohn." Perhaps he will tell us whether it inspired Raphael's picture of the Fornarina, and why it did not inspire the music of Beethoven and Wagner. Both those great composers, as a matter of fact, were Atheists.

Nothing could be more absurd than orthodox talk about the Bible "inspiring" great poets, artists, and musicians. Men of genius are inspired by nature. Their inspiration is born with them. It cannot be made; it can only be utilized. All religions have done is to employ the genius they could not create. Every religion has done this in turn. The genius was there always as a natural endowment. It existed before the world's religions, and it will outlive them.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

(Continued from page 436.)

In dealing with the alleged historical proofs of the resurrection of Jesus, it is astonishing to find how Christians have been deluded upon the subject. After a long and careful investigation, we allege that, apart from the New Testament, there is not the slightest historical evidence of a trustworthy character which can be adduced in favor of the theory that Christ arose from the dead. And even in the New Testament, as we shall presently see, the accounts are so indefinite and contradicting that no reliance can be placed upon them. It is only reasonable to expect, when improbable events are recorded, and we are asked to accept them as verities, that the clearest evidence in favor of their truth should be forthcoming. This is not the case with the reported resurrection of Jesus. The historians, who are said to have written upon extraordinary events about the time the resurrection is supposed to have happened, are silent in reference to it. But supposing contemporary writers had noticed the resurrection, that would not prove it really took place. It would have been far more likely that those writers were mistaken than that a man rose from the dead. The passage in Josephus referring to Christ is now admitted even by Christian writers to have been an interpolation or a forgery. If, however, we were to grant that Tacitus, Pliny, and others, did mention the Christians and their persecutions, that would not necessarily be an argument in favor of the doctrine of the resurrection. Many writers of our own time allude to professed Christians who have no faith in the story. The author of *The Jesus of History and Tradition Identified* aptly remarks: "The difficulty still unresolved is this: How such events as those recorded in the Gospels could have happened and escape the observation of the public at the time, and all notice at the hands of the historians of the period.....Now it is of this period the most wonderful events are related that have happened in the world since the (alleged) Mosaic age, and the account of them was first published in the *second century after their alleged occurrence*, when no living witnesses were alive to deny or affirm their reality" (pp. 162–3).

Moreover, we have no testimony of eye-witnesses; for, although it is stated in the New Testament that Jesus "was seen" after his death, it is nowhere alleged that any person said: "I saw him after his crucifixion alive in the flesh." When we come to examine St. Paul's "evidence," it will be seen that it is utterly valueless as proof of the resurrection. Don Allen, in his *An Agnostic's View of the Resurrection*, writes: "We have in the New Testament Scriptures an account of six Roman governors who heard the Gospel story, and who by their positions could have

Digitized by Google

arrived at the facts in reference to it. Three of them were of Jewish descent, and were supposed to be learned in the Jewish law. These, by their nationality, were supposed to believe in resurrections; but by the Gospel record it is evident that they did not believe this one. They were Herod Antipas (before whom Jesus was sent by Pilate), Herod Agrippa—who put to death James the Elder (Acts xii. 1, 2)—and Herod Agrippa II. (son of the latter, before whom Paul made his defence). Then we have Pilate, Felix, and Festus, who were Romans. We also have the whole Jewish Sanhedrim, which was supposed to be composed of the most learned men among the Jews. And what is the decision of all the above array of talent? Why, simply that the Gospel story of the resurrection is a myth, for none of them ever embraced the religion, or showed by their actions that they believed it. Then we come to the common people of that day. These were divided into three factions. One (the Apostles) believed it in the main, but some of them doubted (Matt. xxviii. 17; Mark xvi. 13). One, the great mass of the Jews, did not believe it at all, and the Romans, who were the third faction, did not care whether it was true or not. Practically, the two latter were against the story, and they were a hundredfold in the majority. Then, on a question in which reason and experience are with this majority, and with no more evidence than they possessed, are we compelled to believe that the majority were wrong and the minority right? What light have we got since that time that should cause us to reverse the decision of the great majority? Thus we find that men contemporary with the Gospel history, who by their education, ability, or positions should entitle their judgment to be respected, have decided against it. We also find that the great majority of the common people were against it, and if that was their verdict, how shall we at this late day, with no facilities for ascertaining the truth or falsity of it, reverse their decision?" (pp. 136–7–8).

It is said that the Church has always accepted the belief that Christ rose from the dead, and therefore this belief furnishes a strong proof of its reality. This, to say the least, is a curious specimen of reasoning. It implies that the continuity of a belief establishes its truth. But the history of the Christian Church itself shows the fallacy of such a contention. For centuries the Christian Church believed most tenaciously in witchcraft, in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, in miracles, in a hell of material fire, and in the existence of a personal Devil; yet some of the most learned defenders of the Church have now given up the belief in those tenets. The doctrine of the Trinity has long been accepted by the Church as an "undoubted fact," but the Unitarian and Theistic sections of professed Christians to-day reject it. The same may be said of the notions once firmly entertained in reference to the nature of Christ and his vicarious suffering, to original sin, eternal torments, and the possession of devils. The old belief upon all these subjects—notwithstanding that it was once the groundwork of orthodoxy—is now supplanted by a bold and outspoken scepticism. It is the subject of a belief, not its continuity, by which its truth and reasonableness should be judged.

As we have shown, the early Christians, without any critical examination, shared the then common opinion that bodily resurrections took place. They were told in the Bible that a man was "revived and stood on his feet" after having been put into the grave (2 Kings xiii. 21); that Lazarus was restored to life (John xi. 44); and that at Christ's death many who were dead came back to life (Matt. xxvii. 52). Now, the belief in such things having been once accepted, without any question, in an age of absolute faith and credulity, it is not surprising to learn that the same belief should be handed down to succeeding generations as a verity by the priests, whose interest it was to perpetuate any superstition that prevented free inquiry. Besides, in those days, to question the truth of the doctrines of the Church was to expose the questioner to the risk of torture and death.

But it is not true that Christians universally accepted the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus as a fact. We are told in the fifteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians that St. Paul especially addressed Christians who either doubted or denied it. And in verse thirty-six he politely (?) calls anyone a "fool" who believed in a physical resurrection. Moreover, ecclesiastical historians mention various sects of the early Christians who did not believe in it. Mosheim says that "the greatest part of the Gnostics denied that Christ was clothed with a *real* body, or that he suffered *really* for the sake of mankind the pains and sorrows which he is said to have sustained, in the sacred history" (*Ecclesiastical History*, cent. 1, chapter v.). We are also told that Cerinthus, who, it is alleged, was a contemporary of John the Evangelist, directly taught that, though Jesus was crucified, he did not rise from the dead, but will arise at the general resurrection at the Judgment Day. As far as we can reasonably judge, the matter stands thus: For many centuries there were two branches of the Christian Church existing concurrently with each other, the Paulites and the Rationalists, as they ought properly to be called, the latter being known by different names, as Cerinthians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Manicheans, etc. These all held that Jesus Christ, whatever was his true nature, did not rise from the dead. Abused though they were by the Paulites, or those who held, with Paul, that Jesus rose the third day from the dead, these so-called heretics testified to the reality of their convictions by suffering persecution, imprisonment, and in many instances death, as did Manes himself, who was literally flayed alive by Chosroes, the Persian tyrant. Orthodox believers assure us that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"; how is it, then, that they are enabled to differentiate between martyrs of orthodoxy and heresy, or to affirm, so contrary to the real facts of history, that from the first all Christians accepted undoubtingly the doctrine of the actual resurrection?

It is being constantly asked by Christian advocates, "What became of the body of Jesus?" Renan inquires: "Had his body been taken away, or did enthusiasm, always credulous, create afterwards the group of narratives by which it was sought to establish faith in the resurrection? In the absence of opposing documents, this can never be ascertained." It is true that we have no opposing documents; but, nevertheless, we have sufficient grounds for enabling us to arrive at a rational mode of explaining the origin and perpetuation of the extraordinary belief. There is no doubt that Mary Magdalene was an enthusiast. Such a person would not, probably, have been taken into their confidence by Joseph and Nicodemus, but her enthusiasm and exaltation were well calculated to render her the best possible means of disseminating a belief in the resurrection."

CHARLES WATTS.

(*To be concluded.*)

OLD AND NEW.

"I was a Radical in my day: be thou the same in thine! I turned my back upon the old tyrannies and heresies, and struck for the new liberties and beliefs. My liberty and belief are doubtless already tyranny and heresy to thine age; strike thou for the new."—THEODORE WINTHROP.

Long have the poets vaunted, in their lays,
Old times, old loves, old friendship, and old wine.
Why should the old monopolize all praise?
Then let the new claim mine.

Give me new times, bright with a prosperous cheer,
In place of old, tear-blotted, burdened days;
I hold a sunlit present far more dear,
And worthy of my praise.

When the old creeds are threadbare, and worn through,
And all too narrow for the broadening soul,
Give me the fine, firm texture of the new,
Fair, beautiful and whole!

—ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

Who makes the past a pattern for next year,
Turns no new leaf, but still the same thing reads;
Sees things he sees again, heard things doth hear,
And makes his life but like a pair of beads.

—DR. DONNE.

"*L'âge d'or: qu'une aveugle tradition a placé jusqu'ici dans le passé, est devant nous.*"—SAINT SIMON.

OLD age looks back on departed days as brighter and fairer than those that are. Then earth and sky were irradiated by the sunshine of youth and love; as Wordsworth says, "apparelled in celestial light."

The light that never was on sea and land,
The consecration and the poet's dream.

Since it was ever the elders who fashioned the beliefs of the past, small wonder that they pointed back to the good old times and legends of a golden age, ere sin and sorrow

Digitized by Google

and death entered into the world. We know it was never so. Death was in the world before man, and dragons tore each other in their slime ere ancestral Adam was conceived by the Semitic brain, which left him naked and unkempt, having to be clothed in skins by the rude sartorial capacity of his Creator. "Those were the days," ever said the elders, who appealed to the past because it gave them authority over the present. But when we look at the actual condition of the good old times, we know full well we should not care to change. And the further back we go, the more appalling is the prospect. Who would like to live in the good old Bible days of filth and blood and slavery and polygamy?

Our age, commonplace as it may seem to us, needs not to pale before the shadows of any past centuries. Inheriting the accumulations of the ages, it has added its quota, and will pass on to the future much that our grandparents knew not of. Evolution is becoming self-conscious. If it traces the footsteps of the savage past with shudders, it looks forward to the ideal future with hope. As the inferior races, and the inferior members of each race, are slowly, but surely, weeded out, our present highest civilization will appear but pitiable barbarity. Our religion in particular, with its prayers to alter the laws of the universe, and its conception of a deity put to death on this little planet, must appear but as remnants of insanity.

Some there are who dread the crumbling of the old beliefs. They fear that man's aspirations will dwindle when he no longer aspires for eternal bliss, and that without the fear of hell, "the bangman's whip," and the sanctions of religion, morality will decline. There need be no fear. The things which are worth retaining can take care of themselves. The gods, the bogies, the priests, and the humbugs must go. But the sentiments of human love and fraternity will remain—nay, deepen and widen—when emotion, love, and service are no longer wasted on irresponsive fetishes.

Man has not fallen from the angel, but risen from the ape. As Saint Simon said, "The age of gold, which a blind tradition has hitherto placed in the past, is before us." When man discards his fettering superstitions and devotes to this earth the time, wealth, and affection vainly bestowed on supernatural existences, human progress will go on at an accelerated pace. Keep children's minds free from clerical contamination, and they will grow up vigorous, self-reliant, and able to strike out improvements in human life which we, engrossed in fighting for elbow room and breathing space, can scarce conceive. Let the ghosts go. In the wondrous and wider field of reality is sufficient scope for all our energies.

> Oh! let us no longer, then, vainly lament
> Over scenes that are faded, and days that are spent;
> But by faith unforsaken, unawed by mischance,
> On hope's waving banner still fixed be our glance;
> And should fortune prove cruel and false to the last,
> Let us look to the future, and not to the past.

LUCIANUS.

CHRISTIANITY AND MEN OF SCIENCE.

THE *Sunday-school Times* says that it is "current in many circles that the leading investigators in the domain of natural science have been, and are, opponents of revealed religion and of Christianity; and this is regarded as a substantial argument in maintaining the proposition of an irrepressible conflict between exact science and Christian theology. A well-known German writer, Dr. E. Dennert, has recently published a *brochure* in which he claims, on the strength of statistics, that this current opinion is a delusion, and is contrary to facts."

Dr. Dennert says that he has asked "268 naturalist scientists and representatives of the medical profession for their religious standpoint."

Now, members of the medical profession are not necessarily "investigators in the domain of the natural sciences." Physicians are supposed to have some knowledge of science, especially of anatomy and physiology, but some of them have very little knowledge even of these sciences; and only one of a thousand of them, perhaps, is, or should be, classed among scientists. Another fact which should be noted here is, that medical practitioners and medical writers are, for obvious reasons, generally averse to the avowal of heterodox religious views. Rarely in an orthodox community does a physician put himself in opposition to the dominant religious sentiment. Many physicians, whose views are liberal, prefer to be regarded as holding to the popular faith. This is true also of many scientists, especially, as I know, of those who have college and university professorships, or who hold official positions, like State geologists.

It is not strange, therefore, that Dr. Dennert "could secure no information in the case of 24." He says that "227 turned out to be Theists," while "only 17 assumed an indifferent or irreligious attitude." *How many, if any, accepted Christianity*, is not stated. Yet the alleged object of the investigation was to show that between science and the Christian theology there is no conflict.

Dr. Dennert says that "only three out of the latest period are pronounced anti-Materialists—namely, Tyndall, Vogt, and Moleschott." Why not include Haeckel, Büchner, and Paul Bert? In what list does Dr. Dennert put the names of Darwin, the great naturalist; Huxley, the biologist; Spencer, the man of cyclopædic knowledge, versed in many sciences; Lewes, the physiologist and psychologist—all avowed Agnostics, all pronounced unbelievers in the Christian theology?

Dr. Dennert says that "a somewhat larger percentage were indifferent, but the great majority were believers in Theistic principles." Of the 227 remaining, we are told, "many were strictly churchly in their preferences; and of at least 90, or almost one-half, this can be said with absolute certainty." It seems that 90 (which is not "almost one-half," but only two-fifths of 227) were "strictly churchly in their preferences." Men may be "churchly" in their preferences, as many are, and yet have no belief in the Christian theology. Huxley was churchly in his preferences, as was Darwin. M. D. Conway, though not a Christian, nor a Theist even, is so churchly in his preferences that he is opposed to the disestablishment of the English Church. Much to the regret of many of his radical friends.

But the main question is, Of the "268 naturalist scientists and representatives of the medical profession," whose "religious standpoint" Dr. Dennert tried to ascertain, how many were found to be believers in the Christian theology? Was the number so small that the Doctor was ashamed to announce it, and did he give the number of real or nominal Theists, and of those who are "churchly in their preferences," in order to divert attention from the general unbelief in Christianity which prevails among men of science?

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

—*Secular Thought*

CHRISTIANITY AND DREAMS.

PEOPLE who now-a-days place any reliance in dreams are generally laughed at; still, we find the Bible—a book palmed on us by parsons as a revealed one—teaches that the most implicit trust can be placed in our imaginings during slumber.

An account is given in the fortieth chapter of Genesis of how Pharaoh imprisoned his butler and baker, and, while imprisoned, each one had a dream on the same night. Joseph, who had charge of the prisoners, interpreted their dreams, and they came to pass accordingly. Joseph boasted that interpretations of dreams belong to God; therefore, as he interpreted the dreams correctly, he must have been on very intimate terms with the "infinite deity." According to the two following chapters, Pharaoh and Joseph had dreams, and Joseph's interpretations were again correct.

According to the Bible, the all-wise and infinite God used to appear to people in their dreams, and give them important information. "But God came to Abimelech in a *dream* by night, and said to him: Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (Gen. xx. 3). And again, Jacob dreamt he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven. "And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said: I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed," etc. (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13). Heaven must have been pretty handy in those days. The parsons cannot now point out its locality so easily. We also read: "And

Digitized by Google

God came to Laban the Syrian in a *dream* by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad" (Gen. xxxi. 24). Very good of God, was it not, thus to warn Laban against having anything to do with that thorough villain, Jacob? Seeing that he knew Jacob's character so well, one can but wonder that he (God) made such a boon companion of him.

God himself informs us that he will appear in *dreams*, for he says: "I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a *vision*, and will speak unto him in a *dream*" (Numbers xii. 6). One feels as though he'd like the Lord God Almighty to appear to him in a dream, so as to get a good glimpse at his curious appearance. But, it seems, it is only those who have "a screw loose in the upper storey" who see God now-a-days. He doesn't appear to some men. It is only the insane who know so much about him. Poor Jesus knew a lot about him, and had every trust in him till his dying moments, when he found that God had forsaken him—or, in other words, that he had no real existence, or he could but have assisted Jesus in the hour of need.

Again we read: "In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a *dream* by night; and God said, Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings iii. 5). Solomon then made a request which the Lord immediately granted, and made him "the wisest of men." He must have also presented him with an enormous bump of amativeness, seeing that he had such a fondness for women! When poor Solomon had his hundreds of wives and concubines buzzing about him he must often have wished it were but a *dream*. But it seems to have been a sad reality, and turned the old king's brain, so that he rejected God Almighty, who had been so kind to him, and went and paid adoration to Ashtoreth and Milcom (*vide* 1 Kings xi. 4, 5). This fact shows plainly that the Lord was as much an idol as Ashtoreth and Milcom, or Solomon, the "wisest of men," could never have discarded him for them.

Matthew (i. 20) informs us that "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a *dream*, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." You see the Lord, the Holy Ghost, had not the courage to appear to Joseph in broad daylight and tell him how he had betrayed the young girl, so he sent an angel in a *dream!* Oh dear, what rot! And this is "Revealed Religion"!

Christians should be the last to laugh at those who place trust in dreams, for nearly all the most important events in connection with Christianity have no stronger foundation than dreams. No wonder, then, that people are beginning to recognise the fact that *Christianity itself is the wildest of dreams.*

T. J. PRICE.

HOLY BROTHERHOOD: A TALE OF TWO TWINS.

THERE once was a fellow named Isaac, you'll find
If you turn to the "first Book of Moses";
A member was he of a race of mankind
With some very conspicuous noses.

Unmarried was he when this story begins,
But his eyes on a fair damsel fixed he;
At forty was wed, and presented with twins
By his "better half," when he was sixty.

He really was one of the proudest of dads
As he gazed on his Jacob and Esau;
Though diff'rent as chalk is from cheese were the lads,
Or as diff'rent as "hand-saw" from "see-saw."

Young Jacob was last—though I've mentioned him first,
It is merely to rhyme this effusion;
Of brothers he proved to be one of the worst,
As you'll find ere I draw to conclusion.

A loafer was Jacob, and tied to the strings
Of the apron of Becky, his mater;
A hunter was Esau, with venison and things
He delighted the heart of his pater.

One day Mr. Esau worked hard in a field,
Till the man that is known as the "inner"
Most urgently warned him 'twas time that he *mealed*,
Then he started for home and for dinner.

Poor Esau was faint, and dead-beat, and "off-song,"
But on reaching the door of the cottage
He said to himself: "Now we shall not be long!"
For he scented the odor of pottage.

Half famished was he, one could see at a glance;
It was noted by Jacob the younger,
Who muttered: "Hullo! here's a capital chance
To make 'capital' out of his hunger."

For Jacob was "Godly"—and God, as we know,
Is exceedingly grasping and jealous;
We gather this fact from what Moses & Co.
In their God-inspired narratives tell us.

Said Esau to Jake: "I'm as hungry as six;
For the want of some victuals I'm dying."
Said Jake: "In this house there is nothing for 'nix,'
But there's soup to be had for the buying.

"This soup, my dear brother, 's so deucedly nice,
I must charge you a 'birthright' per basin;
I shouldn't advise you to kick at the price,
For you're 'kicking the bucket'—so hasten!

"Remember, although you are father's firstborn
And the heir to the whole of his riches,
My friend, God Almighty, has solemnly sworn
I shall stand in your boots and your breeches.'

Said Esau: "Come, pass me the pottage, you cad;
If my birthright you want, you can take it."
We're bound to admit that the bargain was bad,
But his hunger compelled him to make it.

For selling his birthright poor Esau was blamed,
Though 'twas God that ordained him to swop it;
But down in a region, which shall not be named,
If you question God's justice, you'll "cop it"!

ESS JAY BEE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is in a pessimistic mood. "England at home and abroad," he says, "has sunk lower than at any period of history since the dark days of Charles II." Evidently the Jubilee was a big mistake, in fact a wretched fraud. There ought to be a day of national humiliation, on which the Queen should wear sackcloth and Mr. Hughes (say) eat ashes.

Let us see what it really is that Mr. Hughes weeps over. "Armenia and Greece," he says, "are crushed." But how is England specially responsible for the woes of Armenia? The blue-books prove that Lord Salisbury was willing to take action, but other powers would not; and those other powers are just as Christian as we are.

And who is responsible for the crushing of Greece? Why Greece herself. She appealed to the sword, in spite of the Powers, and she would now be paying the penalty of extinction, if she were not protected by the very powers against whom she screamed and kicked like a wilful child. Not that *all* the blame falls upon Greece. Some of it falls upon the hundred members of Parliament who sent that foolish telegram to King George. And most of those gentlemen were Nonconformists. "Kick away, little one!" they cried, and they knew all the time that he was bound to get a dreadful spanking.

"Desperate efforts," says Mr. Hughes, "are being made to legalize vice in India." This is the second count in his indictment. He does not complain about the state of things in India under which millions of people are suffering from famine, thousands from plague, and other thousands from earthquake. These are God's doings, and he doeth all things well. Mr. Hughes is not indignant at the affronts offered to the religious and social susceptibilities of the natives, which have caused riots and the slaughter of hundreds in the streets of Calcutta. Like a true representative of the Nonconformist Conscience, he fixes his attention upon the one question of the treatment of diseased women about the military stations. This is a question which we cannot stop just now to discuss; but what a perverted imagination it is that makes this one question transcend all others, and overshadow even the whole politics and sociology of India!

After a fling at the South African Committee, which was appointed to inquire into what everybody knew beforehand, Mr. Hughes denounces the "apparently successful attempt" to give the bookmaker "legal immunity and judicial encouragement everywhere." But this is most intemperate language. Betting in itself is not a criminal act; there are, however, certain laws relating to it; and all the judges had to do in the recent appeal was to decide whether the indicted persons were or were not legally guilty. They had nothing to do with the ethics of gambling, and it is absurd to say that they gave it any sort of "encouragement."

Digitized by Google

Gambling is a vice which, for our own part, we discourage by not gambling. Mr. Hughes doesn't gamble either, we presume; but he is not satisfied with being virtuous himself; he wants to make other people virtuous, and he wants to do this by compulsion! But why is the compulsion necessary? That is a question which we invite him to consider. All the educational forces of this country are controlled by Christians; and, in addition, some fifty or sixty thousand ministers of religion are occupied in preaching to adults Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out. Yet the nation seems to be almost hopelessly corrupted by drink, prostitution, and gambling. Might it not lead to an improvement if Christianity cleared off the scene altogether, and left room for the employment of national and secular agencies?

The electors of London seem even more apathetic than usual about the School Board elections, which take place next November. Beyond a resolution by the Fabian Society to support only Socialists, and the Conference at Holborn Town Hall on Monday, the only party stirring is the Church party. The Voluntary Schools Defence Union have put out an appeal for their own schools, and also point out how far the Board schools may serve religion without being called to order by the Education Department. The forgery misnamed the Apostles' Creed is being introduced wherever possible into the Board schools, and the Nonconformists will find that their own want of principle has cut the ground from under their feet.

A Mrs. Mary Clay committed suicide at Orange, New Jersey, giving as her reason that she "could not attain that plane of life which Christian science demanded." "Christian science" pretends to operate on the body by the mind, and cure physical disorder by faith. Mrs. Clay, in despair at these methods, sought to solve her problems with a pistol.

Another woman shot herself in the head at Calvary Church, Fourth Avenue, New York, and now the ecclesiastical authorities are waiting for the return of Bishop Potter to decide if there shall be a reconsecration or only "a service of reconciliation with God," as was the case when Edward Easton shot himself in St. Paul's Cathedral.

The dislike of the Church to blood is very peculiar. The old temples used to run with the blood of slaughtered animals, and incense was perhaps first used to take away the smell. In the temple at Jerusalem a drain was made to the brook Kedron to carry off the refuse, for the interior of God's holy temple was like a shambles from continual slaughter. The notion of the church as a sanctuary supervened, and the Christian Church was so averse to the effusion of blood that heretics were burnt in order to avoid spilling the sacred fluid. It was the bloody frays of pilgrims to the shrine of St. Jago of Compostello which induced Pope Innocent III. to issue a decree ordering that any sacred building desecrated by the shedding of blood would require reconsecration, with, of course, new fees for the bishops.

The Roman ceremony of consecration has several peculiar items, inherited probably from pre-Christian faith, when temple and altar were but evolutions from a tomb. The episcopal consecrator must fast on the previous day. He must prepare the relics to be enclosed in the altar, and place them in a clean vessel with three grains of frankincense. A solemn vigil must be kept before the relics, to which nocturnes and matin-lauds are sung. For the consecration many things are necessary—holy chrism, a cup of ashes, another of salt, another of wine, another of oil, a spoon, a sprinkling-brush, a new wooden scraper for scraping the altar, towels "fresh from the loom" for wiping it, lime, sand, or brickdust for cementing in the relics and filling up all holes, on which compare Mr. Crooke's account of the Brahminical consecration of a deity in last week's *Freethinker*.

Twelve candles are lighted in a Roman church at consecration. Before entering it, the bishop sprinkles himself and all about him with holy water, then he dons his mitre and makes the first circuit of the church outside to the right, with the left hand inside. This, according to Mr. Wheeler's ideas in his article on "Wheel Worship," is a charm to keep away evil spirits. The bishop sprinkles the walls as he goes round. When he comes back to the door he prays and smites it above the threshold with his pastoral staff, saying, "The King of Glory shall come in." A ghostly voice—that of the verger inside—chants, "Who is the King of Glory?' and the Bishop replies, "The Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle." Then he goes round again widdershins, crossing himself and sprinkling as before, and smites the door a second time with the word and answer as before. The third circuit is made in the opposite direction, sunwise. With a properly oriented church, the consecrator personates the sun circling from the west through the underworld to the East and then triumphantly marching as through heaven from East to West. At the door again the Pontiff and all the clergy shout "Open," and at the sign of the cross the door opens and the Pontiff enters, saying, "Peace be to this house." A long ceremony, including three more circuits, takes place inside, two to the right and one to the left. The altar is also circumambulated with much incense and many crossings. It is evident that for the meaning of all this mummery we must go back to ideas long anterior to Christianity.

There is a very curious rite in the Gallican ceremony for the consecration of a new church. As soon as the bishop, after thrice knocking, is admitted into the building, an oblique cross is made from end to end on the floor with ashes, and the bishop draws in the ashes with his staff on one line the Greek letters of the alphabet, and on the other the Latin letters. All the antiquarians give up this custom as a mystery.

The Rabbis of Germany are cute enough to see that the Zionist movement will play into the hands of the anti-Semites. They have declared that the Zionists' endeavor to found a National Jewish State is disparaging to the Messianic prophecies of Judaism; that Judaism obliges its believers to serve the country they belong to with all devotion, and to foster its national interests with all their strength. The Rabbis are, therefore, summoning the Jews of Germany to keep aloof from Zionist tendencies, and by no means to attend the Zionist Congress to be held at Bâle at the end of August.

The Chief Rabbi of England has joined with the German Rabbis in throwing cold water on the Zionist scheme to set up a Jewish state in Palestine. At a meeting of the Anglo-Jewish Association on Sunday he said that, while he yielded to none in being a lover of Zion, he considered that the holding of the forthcoming Zionist conference was an egregious blunder. A Palestinian state would be absolutely mischievous, and contrary to Jewish principles and the teachings of the prophets and traditions.

The Bible in the public schools in West Virginia is now a question in the Supreme Court of that State, on mandamus proceedings against the Board of Education. Error dies hard, but the right will ultimately prevail. Why should the non-believer in the divinity of the Bible, whether Jew, Catholic, or Infidel, be compelled to pay taxes to support schools where they believe falsehoods are taught? And why should children be forced to attend school to be indoctrinated into what they are instructed at home is a false system of religion? The damnable practice of vaccination forced upon childhood, by which they are inoculated with all forms of deadly diseases which crop out a few years after, is horrible of itself; but the indoctrination of "believe or be damned" is infinitely worse, bearing its fruit on the gallows.—*Progressive Thinker.*

Kee Sam, of Melbourne, recently died, and went to be with Joss-Confucius in a better Flowery Land. It transpired at the inquest that Kee had been treated by a Chow physician, who gave him pills, each the size of a duck's egg. There were said to be forty different ingredients in the medicine, including blood, grasshoppers, ashes, bone-dust, clay, dates, honey, sawdust, and ground-up insects—which is very Chinese, and also very Christian. When one considers how beautiful the Christian says his heaven is, and the horrid messes he takes to prevent him going there, the spectacle of a Chinaman wrestling with a pill the size of a moderate ink-bottle isn't so absurd after all. The yellow man's heaven isn't so beautiful as the white man's, so he naturally takes a larger pill to keep out of it.

According to the *African Critic*, a local preacher at an East Rand church called upon Providence to "give wisdom unto our rulers—*if that is not too much to ask of Thee.*" Our contemporary fancies that the yarn has an ancient smell. We should think so! The best form of it, as might be expected, is Colonel Ingersoll's. "People," said the Colonel, "ask God to do all sorts of things; some of them clearly impossible. The other day, for instance, I heard the chaplain asking God to give Congress wisdom."

Parson Hosking, the teetotal lecturer who alleged that Maoriland pressmen were "the greatest liars out of Sheol," lately finished up a mission in the Hawke's Bay province with the statement that it was "the most immoral place in the country." The average sensational parson is much addicted to explaining exactly how immoral places are, while the ordinary person wonders helplessly at the vastness of his knowledge. It must take a deal of midnight marauding in the bye-ways where Portwine Annie and Painted Sarah wander abroad after dark, and much haunting of undress orgies, and a lot of stealthy lingering at back gates, and lurking in many alleys of many towns, to enable any parson to say truthfully and exactly which is the most immoral place in any country. A certain amount of immorality stalks abroad openly, but the bulk of it has

Digitized by Google

to be traced by getting personally on the roof of the wood-shed and looking through the window, or by whooping in the festive halls of Port-wine Annie and Painted Sarah, and playfully pulling down the back hair of these sirens. Therefore, the copious information possessed by some preachers is a suspicious and blushful subject.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

An English paper relates a North Sea horror. There were twin brothers; one a fisherman, the other working on a steamer. One night the steamer was run down and sunk with all on board. An hour or two later the other twin was helping to haul in the big net on his fishing-boat, and noticed in it something that looked like a very large fish with boots on. It was his brother. Providence had taken that way of breaking the news gently.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Christians are always talking about the primitive simplicity of the faith, but when stupid folk act according to the directions of St. James as to the treatment of the sick they are called Peculiar People, and severely censured by their fellow Christians. In the case of a child at Poplar an elder testified that he had "laid hands on the child in the name of the Lord," but did not suggest a warm bath. The Coroner asked: Would not that be your first thought if one of your own children had a fit? Witness: My first thought would be to call in an elder of the Church, according to the word of the Lord. If an elder was at a distance, he would lay hands on the child himself, and he admitted that he did not think a child was at a disadvantage in not having skilled attention.—The Coroner: Then you would let a child die?—Witness: Of course, when we have done what we are commanded to do in the word of the Lord, we leave it to the Lord. The peculiar elder is quite consistent from his own point of view. If an omnipotent deity has promised that the prayer of faith shall save the sick, it is logical to leave it to the Lord.

That veracious journal, the *Christian Herald*, relates a miracle concerning the evangelist, D. L. Moody:—"He engaged himself to a neighboring farmer to drive the cows to and from their pasture on the mountains. Once, when he was creeping under a heavy fence, it fell down and caught him, so that he could not get away. He says: 'I tried and tried, and I couldn't lift those awful heavy rails; then I halloed for help, but nobody came; and then I began to think I should have to die away up there upon the mountains all alone. But I happened to think that maybe God would help me, and so I asked Him; and after that I could lift the rails quite easy!'" Perhaps the prayer calmed his fluster.

A Christian writer in the *Forum* defends prayer, not as having an influence on an immutable deity, but for its "reflex action" on the person who prays. If this be the case, a prayer to Kwan-yin is just as good as one to the Virgin Mary, and one might as well address Mumbo Jumbo as Jehovah. When there are two in a boat in a storm, and one prays while the other "keeps her nose up to the waves," where does the reflex action come in?

Another "fish story" has been exposed in California. The papers reported that a Portuguese named Ciscado said, "May God strike me dead if I am the murderer!' and he thereupon toppled over and fell on the floor. Attorney Smith wrote to the sheriff at Hollister, where it was said to have occurred, enclosing a clipping. He received the following answer:—"The account as printed on enclosed slip is indeed a 'fish story.' The Portuguese was arrested for murder, told his story to the district attorney about 10 p.m., was locked up in jail, and found dead in his cell about one hour afterwards. An autopsy was held, and it was discovered that he died from heart disease. However, the excitement or fear due to his arrest doubtless brought about the result at that particular time, although the doctor said that he was liable to have died at any time from heart failure.—E. E. HOLBROOK (Sheriff)."

The Westphalian authorities take strict care of the people's morals. In Dülmen the Roman Catholic priest has forbidden his female parishioners to go to an amateur theatre, or to a ladies' swimming-bath. At the same town the priest, who fills the office of school inspector, has forbidden the youngest schoolgirls to wear short-sleeved dresses, because it is dangerous to morals. Probably he means priestly morals.

The United States Presbyterian men of God have drafted the following resolution to bring before the General Synod in October: "Inasmuch as God, for his own glory, and in goodwill to man, has expressly assigned subordination to woman, and restricted her sphere; and inasmuch as the standards of our church, conformably to the Scriptures, suffer not women to teach, but enjoin them to keep silence in the churches; and inasmuch as women have been permitted and even invited to occupy pulpits of sister denominations, and, in one of our own churches, have conducted religious exercises before promiscuous audiences; therefore, Resolved: That we grieve over this growing and portentous laxness, this bold disregard of the word of God, this infidel impugning of his wisdom and his benevolence." After this it is to be hoped that American women will recognise their subordinate sphere, and worship the men of God as the sole custodians of the keys of heaven.

The Pope is said to be bent on abolishing female voices from liturgical services. He is also said to approve of instrumental music, but to have a decided objection to the violin as sensual and profane. All this is very interesting to Catholics, no doubt; to other people it is of very small importance, being but a statement of one man's taste. The Pope is quite at liberty to dislike the violin, but the queen of instruments will not lose its position on that account. Pope or no Pope, people will still go to hear Joachim.

Louise Donaldson, in the *Church Times*, answers one of the men of God who objects to women on Church Councils by citing 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. She says that the most conservative of our bishops to-day would hesitate to close most of the Sunday schools in his diocese, as he would have to do if he, like St. Paul, "suffered not a woman to teach."

Christ Schweinfurth's heaven, near Rockford, Illinois, in which it is said he had a harem of angels and children born of the Holy Ghost, has burst up. It was run with the money of Mrs. Anderson, a wealthy widow lady, who has retired to another home near Lexington. Christ Teed (the Koreshan), Christ Prince Michael (the Messiah), Christ Huntsman (of the Lord's Farm, New Jersey), and Christ T. L. Harris (of the Brotherhood of the New Life) still carry on the business, chiefly by the aid of infatuated females. Christ Schlatter, the most popular Christ of all, has gone the way of all flesh; and Christ Harris, who is over seventy, has much disappointed his adorers by failing to rejuvenate himself by internal respiration.

The Rev. James Romine, pastor of the Baptist church in Jennings, Oklahoma, was tarred and feathered by members of his church. It is charged that he drove his wife from home when sick, and took in another woman, saying that his wife had tried to poison him.

The Pope has signified his approbation of the Catholic pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket by granting an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines to Ransomers attending and praying for the conversion of England.

Brotherhood, the organ of Christian Socialists, says anent the benefaction of Rockefeller to the Baptist Church: "The corporation of which Mr. Rockefeller is the head has employed arson, theft, bribery, and attempted murder in winning its predominant position as the richest, most powerful, and most unscrupulous combination of capitalists in the world. Its methods have engaged the attention of Congress, the Legislatures, the courts, the sheriffs, and the militia—the latter for its protection against the wrath of a despoiled people. Its path is strewn with the wrecks of homes, of little fortunes, of modest industries. It is a blight upon the nation, a menace to life and to morals. 'Pious at one end and explosive at the other,' as its most merciless investigator has described it, the Standard Oil Company, through its chief official, is well versed in the art of buying absolution with the wages of sin."

The men of God of Toronto, having lost the vote as to the running of tramcars on Sunday, now appeal to the elect to boycott the cars on other days. "Rule or ruin" is always the motto of the Church. The tactics of the Sabbatarian bigots did not succeed in godly Glasgow, nor is it likely they will prevail in the long run in Canada.

The editor of the *Indian Daily News*, of June 16, writes: "At a late hour last night we were compelled to stop all work and seek another press, in order to bring out even a four-page paper, as our premises were condemned by a surveyor as totally unfit for habitation; the rain added to our difficulties, which were already sufficiently great. When the formes were going to press one of them accidentally broke; hence the absence of the third page, the type of which now lies in Bentinck-street. We write," he remarks, "with a scorching sun blazing on our desk, and in momentary fear of a few hundred tons of masonry crashing in on us."

The Churches were asked last Sunday to deal with the question of kindness to animals. Only a very few did so. Christianity, as compared with Brahmanism, Buddhism, or even Mohammedanism, has always been lax in this respect. Pope Pius IX. laid it down as a theological error to suppose that man had duties to the animals. Paul said, "Doth God care for oxen?" It is satisfactory to know that the sentiment of humanity is extending, and, although the Queen has not yet prohibited the hunting of tame stags by Her Majesty's Buckhounds, the Church is beginning to see that it must take up the humanitarian program.

Digitized by Google

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Dr. Mortimer.—Thanks for the cuttings.

Some correspondence stands over till next week, in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

Pea.—We do not know of any cheap edition in two volumes of the works of Edgar Allen Poe. His poems can be had cheap enough, and Routledge, we believe, publishes a good selection from his prose at a small price. The complete editions run to several volumes, the cost of which is heavy for a working man's pocket.

Oscarius.—We don't believe that pious exhortations in the agony column of newspapers do the slightest good or the slightest harm. They are a waste of money, of course; but newspaper proprietors are not likely to see them in that light. We don't think Bible texts, selected by Freethinkers, would be inserted in the same column. If you think otherwise, why not try the experiment yourself—just for once?

W. Bradburn.—No doubt the visits to the British Museum, organized by Mr. Wheeler, do a great deal of good. Reports are published in the *Freethinker*, and you suggest printing them in pamphlet form; but we scarcely think it would pay.

E. S. H.—(1) If you read the story of Jephthah in the light of the customs of antiquity, you will not mistake its meaning. (2) Some of the so-called Apocryphal writings, such as Hermas, Barnabas, and Clement, were received as inspired scripture, and are bound up with the earliest MSS. (3) "Fault-finders" are not likely to be silenced.

T. Smith.—Lecky, in his *European Morals*, deals with the relation of Christianity to the Roman Empire, and strongly condemns the ascetic spirit of monkery; but we do not recollect the phrase you use.

G. Brady.—Thanks for subscription, which is acknowledged under the proper heading. Sorry to hear the fine weather has not reached you in the north. It is brilliant in the south.

J. Stanway, Col.-Sergt., C. Company, 1st V. B. North Stafford Regiment, thinks there must be, as we daresay there are, some Secularists among the soldiers at Aldershot. This correspondent goes into camp there, with other local volunteers, for a week commencing on August 1, and will be delighted to see any "saints" who may hunt him up and introduce themselves.

Anti-Christian.—We note your suggestion, though we cannot carry it out just at present. The rumor you refer to has not reached us. We hope it is not true.

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—J. R. Foster, 2s. 6d.; G. Brady (monthly subscription), 10s.

Papers Received.—Sydney Morning Herald—Daylight—Yarmouth Independent—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—The Highbury Quadrant—Pulpit—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Christian Herald—Echo—Secular Thought—Liberator—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Humanity—Newcastle Daily News—Intelligence.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

There was not time at the Conference for the detailed statement I intended to make with respect to my scheme of a Registered Society, by means of which property might be held and used for Secular purposes. Since then I have said something about this scheme in the *Freethinker*. A fuller statement was promised, but this must be postponed till after registration. When that is effected the Memorandum and Articles of Association will be printed in this journal, as well as in a separate form, accompanied by certain elucidations for the sake of those who are sometimes a little perplexed by technical documents.

I should have moved in this matter before, but I was at the end of my financial tether. I had spent money as well as time and thought on the maturing of this scheme, and I could do no more. Learning this in the course of a conversation, Mr. George Anderson advanced me the amount of the probable cost of registration. It was kind of him to do so, but kindness is no novelty on his part. The necessary steps are now being taken, and as soon as possible I shall make a further announcement.

In view of Mr. Hartmann's scheme for the financial reconstruction of the N. S. S., I do not intend to continue my Lecture Scheme. It has powerfully contributed towards keeping alive our propaganda during a trying and ticklish period. That period is now drawing to a close, and no one will be more pleased than myself to see the work carried on by the whole Society. Should the work languish, or even drop, hereafter, I shall resume my right of personal action. Meanwhile I think that Mr. Hartmann's scheme should have a fair chance; and, so far from crossing it, or in any way hindering it, I shall give it the full benefit of whatever influence I may possess.

Until the Treasurer's scheme gets into operation, I am entitled to ask that my Lecture Scheme shall not be forgotten. I do not intend to make any fresh contracts, but the party should enable me to carry out what is already undertaken. During the past two or three months the expenditure has been considerably in excess of the income; and the deficit, which is hard for one poor man to bear, is a trifle when spread over a larger number. There is only one prospective obligation. This summer, like the last, has seen Mr. Cohen very busy at the open-air lecturing work in London. I guaranteed him a living wage last summer, and kept the contract. The same guarantee is given this summer, and I am anxious to fulfil it. The collections yield a certain amount—about one half of what is requisite. The rest I have to make up. Now I think the London friends ought to subscribe towards the expense, and I ask them to do so immediately. Whatever they send me will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

And now for Mr. Hartmann's scheme, which is large and ambitious, and aims at covering, not only the ground worked under my Lecture Scheme, but a great deal more. At the last meeting of the Executive, held on Friday, July 9, I undertook to put the Treasurer's scheme before the readers of this journal, and afterwards to place it before a possibly wider public by means of a circular manifesto.

Mr. Hartmann rightly says that most of our difficulties are ultimately financial. He complains that the President has been allowed to take all the burden of raising funds for the Society, besides doing so much of its work gratuitously, and receiving a modicum of thanks at the finish. Mr. Hartmann calls upon the Society to raise an income adequate to its purposes, and sufficient to carry on its work of propaganda and organization in a creditable manner. He thinks that £1,500 a year could and should be raised. How he proposes to do it we shall see presently. Meanwhile we will pause to see what he proposes to do with the money.

Mr. Hartmann says that any man fit to be President, and expected to attend closely to the Society's business, ought to be paid for his services, particularly as it is important that his time and energies should be at the command of the organization. He thinks the President should receive, say, £250 a year, in return for which he should be required, in addition to his ordinary presidential duties, to lecture a certain number of Sundays for provincial, and perhaps metropolitan branches, free of all charge. A hard-and-fast line would be impossible, but there is room for a workable understanding.—Of course it must be understood that I am representing, or trying to represent, Mr. Hartmann's views, which he would explain himself if he had my command of English, or if the readers of this journal all understood German.

The Treasurer's scheme includes the present payment to Miss Vance as secretary, and the present rent of our central office. In addition, he proposes to engage three good lecturers at a regular salary, say of £150 a year,

Digitized by Google

besides travelling expenses. They would go where required, without being at the mercy of the weather or of local accidents. Of course this would mean the centralization of the lecture system, and a great many Secularists think the sooner that is done the better. The present system is simply a chaos.

Mr. Hartmann further proposes that an organizing secretary should be employed to go through the country, visiting Branches and calling upon persons who are known to be favorable to our movement. Such an officer, he thinks, would far more than earn his salary; would, in fact, help to feed all the rest of the organization.

This is a rough outline of the Treasurer's scheme. And now for the means of raising the £1,500 a year.

The Treasurer thinks we ought to have very few, if any, special appeals for money; and that adequate funds ought to be raised by definite annual subscriptions. These subscriptions might range from a hundred pounds to five shillings. One friend, perhaps more, might be found to subscribe £100. Two or three more might subscribe £50. Five or six might subscribe £20. Ten might subscribe £10, and perhaps twenty £5. There ought to be a hundred or two who would subscribe £1, and a larger number might subscribe 10s. or even 5s.

Mr. Hartmann does not preach without practising. He offers £50 for the first year himself.

What is wanted now is a list of friends of the Freethought movement who will promise an annual subscription of any amount from £100 (or even more) down to 5s. We need an immediate response. He gives twice who gives quickly. The money need not be sent in yet. We want the names and addresses of friends, with a statement of the amount they are prepared to give. Our next Executive Meeting takes place on the last Thursday in July. By that time I hope we shall have hundreds of answers to guide us in our decisions. It would be a grand thing to begin the winter with a large fund, a good and active organization, and a splendid prospect of rapid success.

G. W. FOOTE
(President).

Postscripts.—(1) It must not be understood that the Executive is pledged to all the details of Mr. Hartmann's scheme, which is subject to amendment. Ultimate decisions will necessarily depend very much upon the prospect of obtaining the requisite means. (2) Letters in answer to this appeal can be addressed to me, if preferred, or to the Treasurer or Secretary at the N. S. S. office, 376–377 Strand, London, W.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote, as President of the N. S. S., together with Messrs. C. Watts, S. Hartmann, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, and W. Heaford, will attend Monday evening's meeting, convened by the Ethical Union, at the Holborn Town Hall. Mr. Frederic Harrison presides. Delegates only will be admitted. The object is to discuss the possibility and advisability of appealing to the London electors in favor of a Moral Code instead of the Religious Code which obtains at present in the Board schools. A report of this meeting will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. C. Cohen occupies the platform at the Athenæum Hall this evening (July 18) and on the following Sunday. Mr. Cohen has not lectured in this part of London for seven or eight months. We hope he will have a good audience on both occasions.

Mr. Cohen is breaking some new ground by lecturing on Tuesday evenings at 8.30, at the corner of Salmon's Lane, Limehouse. East-end Freethinkers should attend and see he gets fair play.

Mr. W. Heaford recently delivered another lecture at Woodhouse, near Sheffield, under Mr. Foote's scheme. He had a large and orderly meeting, including several persons who were induced to take an interest in Secularism by his previous visit. The local Freethinkers are desirous of conducting a vigorous propaganda, and we hope they will find it possible.

Mr. Heaford addressed an open-air meeting at Sheffield, besides lecturing in the Hall of Science. His visit is sure to have done good. It is a great pity that our capable lecturers cannot be more generally employed in this way.

The New York *Truthseeker* prints a part of our report of the National Secular Society's Conference, giving *in extenso* the reference to the death of Mr. S. P. Putnam. A note is made of the re-election of Mr. Foote as President.

By the way, the *Truthseeker* mentions that President McKinley, in addressing Queen Victoria as "Great and Good Friend," employed exactly the same form as was used by ex-President Cleveland in addressing the Queen of the Sandwich Islands. "Divine right," our contemporary remarks, "produces an equality about as incongruous as anything known to Republican institutions."

We are glad to see that the Criminal Law and Prisons Department of the Humanitarian League is addressing the Home Secretary on the subject of Mr. Justice Day's sentence on a Salisbury boy, aged fourteen, for indecently assaulting a girl of about the same age. No serious harm seems to have been done, yet the judge sentenced this boy to eighteen months' hard labor! The Home Secretary ought to interfere and give that boy a chance in life. He will have precious little chance if he serves out that monstrous sentence.

Thanks to the public spirit of our veteran friend, Mr. E. Truelove, seconded by Dr. Furnivall, there is now a tablet at the oak tree on the southern slope of Primrose Hill. It states: "This oak tree was planted April 23, 1864, to commemorate the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth.' Samuel Phelps, who planted the tree, which was the workmen's memorial to the poet, expressed a hope that it might grow until like that spoken of by Shakespeare, "whose boughs were mossed with age, and high top bald with dry antiquity." The young tree is flourishing as well as the great actor could wish.

The *Daily Chronicle* announces the approaching publication of Dr. John P. Peter's account of the discoveries of the Pennsylvanian expedition to Babylon. "Dr. Peters," says the *Chronicle*, "discovered written records no fewer than 6,000 years old, which show that men in a high state of civilization, building cities, organizing States, conducting distant expeditions for conquest, ruling widely-extended countries, existed in Babylonia 2,000 years before the period assigned by Archbishop Usher's chronology for the creation of the world!" Our contemporary might have added that Archbishop Usher's chronology is the chronology of the Bible.

The *Metropolitan*, an illustrated magazine of New York, in its July number gives the first place to an article on Robert G. Ingersoll, by Adelaide Louise Samson, with reproductions of photographs of Ingersoll with his grandchildren, etc. Mrs. Samson says: "A volume of Shakespeare, Mr. Ingersoll's favorite text-book, is never out of reading distance. It is a treat to watch him lingeringly flutter the leaves, and to note the feeling in his voice as he reads a choice bit here and there." "The truly great," he remarks, reminiscently, "are the great thinkers—those who give the world new thoughts."

The Rev. L. Dixon, at the New York Academy of Music, took as his subject the doctrine of dogmatic infallibility, and he read a passage from Colonel Robert Ingersoll's latest book, in which the author touches upon that question. The quotation was loudly applauded. Said Dr. Dixon: "The old creed tinkers are dying out, or taking rear seats in all the churches. The modern missionary movement can have no other significance. Such vitality as is left in the churches finds expression in the saving of mankind. There is a decline of church life, and an increase in practical work. The growth of a new and mighty ministry gives evidence of a decline of orthodoxy and dogmatic infallibility."

Mr. Foote is not lecturing any more during July. He will resume platform work early in August. Meanwhile other business is engaging his attention.

To classify all the mental phenomena of animal life under the term "instinct," while reserving the term "reason" to designate a mental peculiarity distinctive of man, is to follow a similarly archaic method. First of all, instinct involves mental operation, and therefore implies consciousness. Next, instinct implies hereditary knowledge of the objects and relations with respect to which it is exercised; it may therefore operate in full perfection prior to any experience on the part of the individual. Lastly, instinct is always similarly manifested under similar circumstances by all the individuals of the same species.—"*Essays*" *by G. J. Romanes.*

Digitized by Google

ETHICS, CULTURE, AND RELIGION.

So little has religion dealt with morals that the Church, the bulwark of religion, has never laid much stress on morality. It has always been a side issue. Belief has always been considered of the greatest importance. Assent to some dogma, acknowledgment of some god—such are the demands which the Church has made. Righteousness has been emphasized but little. If a man but believe, the clergy have taught that this covers and includes morality.

Contrast the ages dominated by theology with our own sceptical times. To-day we see less crime, less misery, property safer, life and liberty more secure, and a spirit of fraternity growing in all men. True, we find religion prevalent, but divided into numerous sects, and exerting a lesser influence on fewer individuals. But in place of the almost universal spirit of credulity, we find an active, widespread, and growing spirit of scepticism. In place of the prevailing and deep-rooted ignorance we find knowledge more widely diffused than ever before, and science—splendid science—ever meeting the wants and the requirements of man. In other words, a new factor has been introduced which has usurped the reign of emotion—it is the *intellect*. Shall we ignore this new agency, as Mr. Kidd has done? Shall we say that it has played a subordinate part, when with it we find civilization, and without it barbarism? Shall we say that it has had little to do with progress? Mr. Lecky says: "The causes which most disturbed or accelerated the normal progress of society in antiquity were the appearance of great men; in modern times they have been the appearance of great inventions." Has religion ever stimulated invention? Well, a little. Her inventions are to be found in the dungeons of old castles, and in the vaults of ancient prisons. The thumbscrew, the rack, the iron maiden, and all the fiendish instruments of torture, are the inventions with which she has enriched mankind. They are the appliances which her influence created to control the conscience and to enslave the mind.

Again says Lecky: "Printing has secured the intellectual achievements of the past, and furnished a sure guarantee of future progress. Gunpowder and military machines have rendered the triumph of barbarians impossible. Steam has united nations in the closest bonds." But these inventions are products of the intellect, experiment, and investigation—not of religion, credulity, and faith. Many of our great inventions, many of our discoveries, many of our noble achievements, the Church has denounced and rejected as the work of the Devil. Does history bear witness that the intellect has been a minor agency in the civilization of the world?

The progress of our nineteenth century, which is now drawing to a close, has been almost miraculous. Invention follows invention; improvement, improvement; until there seems to be no end of them. The average man enjoys to-day luxuries in which formerly a monarch could not indulge. New forces have been discovered and marvellously applied. Wind, current, steam, and lightning have been harnessed and enslaved by man for man. Says John Fiske: "The progress made in locomotion from Nebuchadnezzar to Andrew Jackson's day is as nothing compared with what we have accomplished within the last fifty years." This wonderful improvement in methods of travel has joined continents, crossed seas and lands, and connected remote regions of the earth. Again, the telegraph and the telephone have established almost instant communication between the most widely separated points. The results of this advancement in communication and in locomotion are manifold; but, greatest of all, it has made nations acquainted with one another, and aroused sympathy among them, at the same time crushing out jealousy and partisanship and the spirit of war resulting therefrom. It has encouraged arbitration, so that now we can with good cause look forward to the time when war shall actually cease. The electric light flooding the streets of our great cities has rendered life and property secure, and accomplished more towards the elimination of crime than have the combined teachings of the clergy. Now what were formerly the darkest and most wretched corners of our cities are illuminated by a fairer and a thousand times more brilliant light than formerly the richest monarch could enjoy.

In olden time, when religion reigned, it was thought that pestilence and disease were caused by an angry deity. Thus the story of the "Iliad" is founded on the pestilence caused by the wrath of Apollo; and thus Æneas was compelled by a deadly and withering pestilence sent by the gods to vacate Crete; and so, too, even up to the time of the nineteenth century, although the roads were unpaved and undrained, and dead cats and dogs ornamented the public streets, and slaughter-houses and tanneries were allowed to thrive in thickly-populated districts, nevertheless the people never failed to send up incessant prayers and earnest appeals to heaven; and heaven sent no relief. Then, after thousands and thousands perished, after misery, after suffering, men finally came to their senses. They found that the air which we breathe is full of little germs of diseases; that these microbes, when they light in real filthy places, hatch into little insects, and increase and thrive; that these insects actually live upon us at our own expense, and that if we wish to live we must destroy these germs. And when they learned all this they cleaned the streets, banished slaughter-houses and tanneries to country districts, appointed health officers, established quarantines; and God did not trouble them with any more plagues. In place of prayers offered to an offended deity, we have hospitals, physicians, amd boards of health; in place of faith-cure, charms, and holy waters, we have the miracles of surgery and the science of medicine, to which we well might say:—

> Hail, great Physician of the world! All hail!
> Hail, mighty infant! who in years to come
> Shall heal the nations and defraud the tomb.

And, furthermore, with the decline and the extinction of cruelties and of persecutions, taught by the discoveries of evolution, we have learned that all animal life is related, that all men are brothers; and this great and natural revelation has resulted in a spirit of altruism never before excelled. All these benefits, and many more, can be traced to the awakened intellect. What remains for religion?

A. G. Osgood.

THE BIBLE AND WOMAN.

The story in Genesis plainly shows that it was not the original purpose of God to make any woman. He made Adam and the animals and all inanimate things, and said that he had completed his job, and had plainly carried out his original design, when he noticed that Adam needed what the Yankees call a "help" to this day, and the woman was made, not for any interest or consideration of her own, but purely for the benefit of man, and the woman was brought to the man exactly like the animals had been, and was presented to Adam in the same style, and for the same purpose, that the animals had been.

The Bible says that God breathed into Adam, and that Adam became a "living soul"; but there is no intimation that Eve had any more soul than any of the other animals that had been made for, and presented to, Adam.

It is carefully explained to us how old Adam lived, and how and when he died; but no allusion is made to the death of Eve, any more than to any other of the animal race.

From the fact that no mention is made of Eve having had a soul, it was once contended by the early Christian Church that women had no souls, and they were openly despised and abused by the most prominent of the early Church Fathers because they were a temptation to men to sin.

Never until Infidelity began to get in its civilizing influence upon Christianity did woman get to be regarded as she now is by all persons, except such as the Presbyterians in question, upon whom the debasing influence of the Christian religion is still active.

It took an Infidel like Robert Burns to say:—

> He tried on man his prentice han',
> And then he made the lassies, O.

No woman was allowed to write a line in the Bible, and there is no allusion in the whole Bible to any female angel; and while men are plainly said to have gone to heaven, there is not, in the whole Bible, any remotest intimation that any woman ever went to heaven.

The career of Cain, who was a murderer, is plainly given; but there is no mention at all that Adam and Eve ever had any daughter.

It is said of Ahab that he had seventy sons, but no mention is made of his having had any daughters.

The great heroes and exemplars of the Bible had harems of women just as the Turks do, and as the Mormons did until stopped by the Government.—*C. C. Moore, "Blue Grass Blade."*

Do not as the world does, but as you think it should do.

Digitized by Google

THE BISHOP'S COMPLAINT TO THE SYNOD.

[At the recent Riverina Anglican Synod the Bishop complained that £1,000 per annum had been offered him. He was now told he would not receive more than £500.]

THE gentle pastor, in his peaceful British parish, heard the call
That, from the under-world, came up for one to save. He oped his ears,
Raised his kindly eyes, and calmly murmured: "O Lord, what is the guerdon?"
And once again the wail came from under-sea full charged with fiscal import:
"Ten golden centuries of sovereigns shall be thine to guide our souls aright."
Humbly he rose and said: "Lord, I take on Thy Southern Cross. Forth I'll go
And face the untamed Kangaroos and other quadrupeds, and do my mightiest to win
Thine erring sons in that land where birds are mute and sin and infamy abounding."

He came, the courtly Bishop, and labored hard to teach his Riverina sons
The art of knocking down a cheque for glory of the Lord and His true servant,
Instead of honoring the custom of chronic inhibition of "blue ruin."
But, lo! those sinful ones were deaf to his good words, and turned not
From their way, nor ceased their playful course of wild, hilarious guzzle.
And a bank crash came, and the invested funds of the Established Church
Gave forth not more than half the promised stipend. And the goodly man
Was sore at heart, and filled with trials and tribulations thereanent.

And then he stood before the Synod and declaimed at the baseness of his trust
Being thus abused. And there, too, uprose a simple one, who said: "Oh, brother,
Why mockest thou at five hundred quid when many in this country homeless range,
And penniless as was our Master?" But quick his Lordship fixed him with a look,
And cried, in ringing tones, 'neath which the mild one quailed: "Stow thy gaff,
For now-a-days we bishops have to hustle for our grub." And the Synod
Smiled approvingly, and, having thus affirmed the principle, piously adjourned
For creature comforts—the only heavenly bliss upon this wicked, wicked planet.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* D. H.

BOOK CHAT.

THE fragment of papyrus containing a part of the Logia of the Lord discovered by Messrs. Greenfell and Hunt, at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt, has been published. Its contents are entirely in favor of its genuineness. One is of great interest, as proving the Egyptian and mythical character of the early Jesus saga. It runs thus, the gaps being due to obliterations in the document:—"Jesus saith, wherever there are . . . . and there is one . . . . alone, I am with him. Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and I am there." This important text at once takes us back to pre-Christian pantheistic ideas. The fragment may be connected with the Gospel of the Egyptians, which said that Christ would come "when two shall be one, and the male with the female neither male nor female." Next week we shall deal with these "Sayings of Jesus" at greater length.

* * *

This find, as we say, is genuine. But all are not so. Professor D. Kauffmann, in the *Beitrage zur Allgemeinen Zeitung* (Munich), calls attention to a document from Egypt describing a list of people entering Jerusalem on New Year's Day in the year 27. Of course the names of Jesus and some of the apostles are there, and the fortunate finder only wanted 20,000 marks for the document. Professor Kauffmann shows that that it is 1,000 years later than the finder pretends, and refers not to Jerusalem, but Cairo, being a list of taxes paid by the Jewish community there.

* * *

Mr. J. M. Robertson issues numbers ten and eleven of his *Papers for the People* (Forder, London; one penny each). They deal with the Population Question and Railway Nationalization, and are written with force and ability, though the tone is perhaps more urgent than persuasive. Mr. Robertson is rather too impatient with illogical people, who must be converted in some way if reforms are to be achieved, since they constitute the great majority of the population. On the other hand, it must be admitted that he generally advances strong arguments based upon adequate information. We hope the circulation of these pamphlets is sufficiently encouraging. They cover a wide range of subjects, and should do great service in the propaganda of Freethought and political and social progress.

* * *

The Church in the old days inculcated reverence by making folk prostrate themselves on their marrow-bones. In some old *Instructions for a Parish Priest* we read:—

No mon in churche stonde schal
Ny lene to pyler ny to wal,
But fayre on knees they schale hem sette,
Knelynge doun upon the flette.

* * *

Those who believe that this is the best of all possible worlds, and that in particular England has no cause save for jubilation in this record reign, should get *The White Slaves of England* (J. Bowden, 10 Henrietta-street, W.C.), and read the account which Mr. Sherard gives of the Alkali workers, nail makers, slipper makers, wool combers, white lead workers, and chain makers of Christian England. Mr. Sherard has doubtless gone to the most murderous trades, and probably selected some of the worst instances of those trades in illustration of the horrible white slavery bound up with our boasted industrial system. Mr. Sherard has an eye for the sensational, but he also has an eye for the fact. Some of his painful statements may be minimized, but the mass have the clear impress of truth, and compel the reader to echo Huxley's words: "That if all our knowledge and wealth are to make no difference in the extent and intensity of want, with its concomitant degradation, he would hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation."

* * *

A notable passage in this most painful book is where Mr. Sherard, after telling how many of the Bromsgrove nail makers, to earn a bare subsistence, have to work all night as well as day for several nights in the week, adds: "Yet, in spite of all these woes and worries, the Bromsgrove nailers are a contented, resigned, and God-fearing race. 'Ise thankful for what I gets,' said an old man to me. Another, at Sidemoor, said: 'I have never had my wages here, but when I get to heaven I shall get my reward, and my oppressor will get his. The workman is worthy of his hire, and I-I am living in the hopes of heaven.' The last sound I heard as I left Bromsgrove was the voice of a poor old woman, bowed, and almost blind, who was working at her forge. She was singing in an enthusiasm of hope and fervor, 'The Lord will provide.'"

* * *

Mr. Sherard notices the association of killing work with drink. He says: "A man who, by the nature of his work, is unable to eat anything, or to retain anything, must keep his energies alive with stimulants. It is deplorable, it is fatal; but it is so. Let Chadband, instead of deploring effect—drunkenness—rather join us in deploring causes—degradation and unnatural conditions of life. Let the temperance reformers legislate against the things which make for drunkenness, and do away with factories where, as Dr. Bellew of St. Helen's said, 'the men cannot work unless they are half drunk.'" But he does not notice that religion is as much an anodyne or stimulant as drink, and that the sky-pilot serves the purpose of the oppressor by preaching contentment on earth and compensation in heaven. Mr. Sherard's work is illustrated with graphic pictures by H. Piffard. Those who have had overmuch of our recent jubilation may do well to look at the seamy side of the picture, the horrible blots upon our civilization exhibited in *The White Slaves of England.*

* * *

Despite the old rhyme, "Please to remember the fifth of November, Gunpowder Treason and Plot," we could see reason why gunpowder treason should entirely be forgot. But Father Gerard, of the Society of Jesus, has willed it otherwise. Priests, of course, have no lineage, though noted for their nephews; and Father Gerard, of Farm-street, is understood to be a collateral descendant of the Father Gerard who swore the conspirators—Catesby, Percy, Winter, Wright, and Fawkes—to silence, after celebrating solemn mass in Fawkes's lodgings, Butcher's-row, behind St. Clement's Danes. Father Gerard the first sloped when he heard of a warrant against him, and last year Father Gerard the second issued a book suggesting that Catholics had nothing to do with the Gunpowder Plot, which was a device of the wicked Sir Robert Cecil, the first Earl of Salisbury, to damage the poor innocent Jesuits.

* * *

Now Dr. Samuel Rawson Gardiner comes behind Father

Digitized by Google

Gerald the second, and, in his just-issued *What Gunpowder Plot Was* (Longman's), simply pulverizes him. Dr. Gardiner produces the evidence from the State records, and he finds Father Gerard's case "absolutely worthless." Cecil had no occasion to plot for place, power, or popularity. He possessed them already. Father Gerard made difficulties where none existed, and in seeking to explode accepted history he has only succeeded in exposing Jesuit methods of dealing with history.

* * *

Of course, it should be said the Catholics were not all responsible for the conspirators, and that, as a body, they had great provocations, their priests being exiled and their religion suppressed, despite promises of toleration. It must be urged, too, that any confessions made by Guy Fawkes when under torture were valueless as evidence. But Father Gerard's attempt only suggested how difficult it is to elucidate the exact facts of history, which is a strange position for the priest of a religion claiming to be historical. In this case, however, Dr. Gardiner, at the Record Office, is able to cite original documents; while there are no original documents known in connection with the alleged history of Jesus Christ.

* * *

The *Daily News*, reviewing *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, by C. R. Beazley, says: "The chief interest of such a book is in the glimpses it gives us of the Dark Ages. Our reactionaries, who love darkness rather than light, are attempting to reverse the verdict which four centuries have agreed to pass on mediæval times, when science had become mere childish guesses and religion a decaying superstition. The early Christian geography was got from an ignorant study of the Bible. Moses made the Israelitish tabernacle from patterns shown him in the Mount, and it must therefore be a type of the earth. According to Cosmas, who wrote his *Christian Topography* in the time of Justinian, 'the fancy of a round world abolishes the kingdom of heaven and the future state, and makes of none effect the resurrection of Christ.'

* * *

"The believers in the Antipodes were only to be classed with Jews, Manichæans, Samatarians, and other heretics. The book of Genesis, with the true instinct of biblical science, tells us of the generation of the heaven and the earth—that is, obviously, says Cosmas, of everything contained in both. But the old wives' fable of the Antipodes would make the heaven surround and include the earth, and God's Word would have to be changed, 'These are the generations of the sky.' All Scripture, moreover, Cosmas contends, clinches the case against the Antipodes. 'For how, indeed, could rain be described as "falling" or "descending" in regions where it could only be said to "come up."' The flatness and immutability of the earth are founded, he says, on God's stability, and the heaven is stretched like a skin covering over our world, and glued to the edges of it at the horizon."

CORRESPONDENCE.

COWARDLY AGNOSTICISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Cowardice, which has so often taken refuge under the cloak of religion, now in a pretence to culture and reason, finds a more showy mantle in Agnosticism. The lily-livered Ethical Culturist sees that Christianity is not true, but will never undertake to say that it is false. He has a vast realm into which he always retires when any question arises which is likely to disturb the equanimity of Mrs. Grundy—the realm of human ignorance. He does not know whether on the other side of the moon there is a red dragon with blue wings, seven round-square crowns on a golden tail, and eyes before and behind; so he will undertake neither to affirm nor deny. He will talk with reverential awe of the Great Mystery of the Unknowable, and will go on in the same breath to proclaim the triumphs of enlightenment, which have, in fact, been won by Freethinkers, being also plainspeakers on the mysteries which form so fine a curtain for the humbugs. Dr. Sexton said: "Agnostic means ignoramus, or humbug." I suspect he was right.

PLAINSPEAKER.

MORAL INSTRUCTION CONFERENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Frederic Harrison has consented to preside at this Conference of delegates on the subject of Moral Instruction in the Board schools. It is not often we can enjoy the opportunity of a united meeting of Secularists, Positivists, Ethicals, Socialists, Radicals, etc., and I trust all societies who are in general sympathy with our Moral Instruction policy will send representatives. Delegates only will be admitted. We meet in the Board Room of the Holborn Town Hall, Monday, July 19, at 8 p.m. F. J. GOULD.

THE WOES OF THE RITUALISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Xavier Field says that "Mr. Fillingham shows the absurdity of Mr. Brinckman's denial that the Creeds were given to the Church of England by Act of Parliament." Perhaps Mr. Field will try and be fair enough to print my rejoinder to Mr. Fillingham, and leave your readers to judge for themselves in the matter. As for "nine out of ten of the clergy of the Church of England being either veiled or open apists of the Papist," such an assertion is an absurdity, which beats anything I ever perpetrated.

ARTHUR BRINCKMAN.

PROFANE JOKES.

DURING a trial a young lad who was called as a witness was asked if he knew the obligation of an oath, and where he would go if he told a lie. He said he supposed he should go where all the lawyers went.

"Well John," said a minister to one of his hearers, "I hope you hold family worship regularly?" "Aye, Sir," answered John, "in time o' year o'r." "In time o' year o'r! What do you mean?" "Ye ken, Sir, we canna see in winter." "But, John, you should buy candles." "Aye, Sir," replied John, "but in that case, I'm afraid, the cost would owergang the profit!"

An old negro was out in a field near Charleston when the earthquake came. At the first shock he was frightened almost to death, and as the earth began to shake and tremble he dropped down on his knees and prayed: "Oh, Lord! come and help dis poh nigger. Oh, Lord, come quick! come yourself! Don't sen' your son. Dis am no place for chillen!"

This story reminds us of the German, who, when told at a revival meeting that God had died for him, remarked: "Vot, de old man! I have always believed dat it vas one of de poys!"

A little boy, upon asking his mother how many Gods there were, was instantly answered by his younger brother: "Why, one, to be sure." But how do you know that?" inquired the other. "Because," he replied, "God fills every place, so there is no room for anyone else." This boy is cited by an orthodox paper as a genuine theologian. We fear he may turn out a Pantheist as bad as Schaeffer, who wrote:

God in my being is involved
As I in the divine;
I help to make His Being up
As much as He does mine.

Religious Evolution.

The philosophy of natural history in its most primitive form is universally the philosophy of animism—or the philosophy which ascribes to all living things the attributes of the human soul. This having been clearly noted, the next thing we have to observe is that, with advancing culture, such philosophy departs from its primitive realism. The souls of living things, although they still continue to be regarded as personal, cease to be fixed to any definite corporeal abodes; they are now something more than spirits incarnate; they begin to assume the nature of gods. The sundry forces and processes of nature having been severally relegated to the dominion of personal deities, plants, and animals, although still invested with innumerable superstitious ideas surviving from more primitive stages of thought, now take a place in the general system of things subordinate to the over-ruling gods. Animism thus becomes transformed into theology, and the natural history of observation gives place to the natural history of myth.—*G. J. Romanes.*

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Religion and Science."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?" 8.30. Quarterly meeting. July 17, at 9, Performance by Dramatic Class of *I've Written to Brown*.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones, "Lord Salisbury and Evolution."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, H. P. Ward, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, R. P. Edwards, "The Unknown God."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan; 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Unknown God."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, R. Rosetti.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "God and Man."

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, F. Haslam. July 20, at 8.30, C. Cohen.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; 7, F. Haslam. July 21, at 8, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. Cohen, "The Teachings of Jesus."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A. B. Moss, "If Jesus Christ Came to Chatham, what would he Find?"

OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board Schools): July 17, at 6, Important business meeting; 7, A lecture.

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' excursion to Snake Inn for Kinder Scout, Derbyshire. Meet at 9.15, corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets. Carriages will leave *punctually* at 9.30. Return fare, gentlemen 3s., ladies 2s. 9d.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Financial statement.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, A. B. Moss, "Two Revelations."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 18, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Athenæum Hall. 25, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park. August 1, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—July 18, m. and a., New Brompton. 25, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton. August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 22, m., Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—July 18, m., Hyde Park. August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, Camden-road, N.W.—July 18, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 25, m., Mile End.

H. P. WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—July 18, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 25, m., Camberwell, Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LECTURE.

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "*J. W.* Rendell," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK IN EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices pos. free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

Some Mistakes of Moses. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
Defence of Freethought. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
The Gods. 6d.
The Holy Bible. 6d.
Reply to Gladstone. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
Rome or Reason? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
Crimes against Criminals. 8d.
Oration on Walt Whitman. 8d.
Oration on Voltaire. 3d.
Abraham Lincoln. 3d.
Paine the Pioneer. 2d.
Humanity's Debt to Thomas Paine. 2d.
Ernest Renan and Jesus Christ. 2d.
True Religion. 2d.
The Three Philanthropists. 2d.
Love the Redeemer. 2d.
Is Suicide a Sin? 2d.
Last Words on Suicide. 2d
God and the State. 2d.
Why am I an Agnostic? Part I. 2d.
Why am I an Agnostic? Part II. 2d.
Faith and Fact. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
God and Man. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
The Dying Creed. 2d.
The Limits of Toleration A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
The Household of Faith. 2d.
Art and Morality. 2d.
Do I Blaspheme 2d.
The Clergy and Common Sense. 2d.
Social Salvation. 2d.
Marriage and Divorce. 2d.
Skulls. 2d.
The Great Mistake. 1d.
Live Topics. 1d.
Myth and Miracle. 1d.
Real Blasphemy. 1d.
Repairing the Idols. 1d.
Christ and Miracles. 1d.
Creeds & Spirituality. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular-Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

By CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

Chapters:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3, Monkery; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price Twopence,

Evolution & Christianity.

By C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series*, 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Series*, 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.
Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.
Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.
Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.
Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.
Atheism and Morality. 2d.
The Bible God. 2d.
Interview with the Devil. 2d.
The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.
Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.
Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.
Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.
What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.
Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.
The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.
Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.
The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.
Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.
Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.
Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GUINEA COSTUMES.



21/- **All Made to Measure.** 21/-

Patterns and Self-Measurement Form on Application.

100 HIGH-CLASS
COSTUME CLOTHS
to select from,
including all the Latest Designs and Colorings.

Every Garment cut to Customer's special measures by first-class cutters, and made up by none but experienced hands, working under the best conditions.

NO SLOP WORK. NO SWEATING.

All Goods carefully packed and sent Carriage Paid.

Complete Costume, 21s. Skirt only, 10s. 6d. Divided Skirts from any of the 100 Patterns, 6s., or 2 for 11s. 6d.



J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, Bradford.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

Mr. S. P. Putnam says:—

"*Flowers of Freethought* are good books to take along on a journey. They are like a friend with whom you can talk for a while, and then keep a golden silence. You can pluck a 'Flower of Freethought' here and there, and read according to your own sweet will. You are not obliged to read continuously. You do not have to tackle a whole volume. You have a hundred articles to pick from, on a wide variety of subjects, and in every article you will find the philosophy of Freethought keenly and lucidly expressed.....

"These are just the books to put into one's travelling bag. They are better than a summer novel, for, while equally entertaining, they are also profoundly and variously instructive."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING them. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C

Now Ready, Price Three Shillings,

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST.

ESSAYS ON HUMAN EVOLUTION.

BY J. M. WHEELER.

With an Introduction by G. W. FOOTE.

"The book is well done throughout."—*Weekly Times and Echo.*

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 30. SUNDAY, JULY 25, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE OLD WAX NOSE.

VIII.—INSPIRATION.

THE Higher Criticism, as expounded by Dr. Farrar, admits nearly all the Bible difficulties that have been advanced by "infidels." Let us recapitulate the most important. The Bible is hopelessly at variance with science. It sometimes contradicts well-established history. Many of its stories, taken literally, are obviously absurd. Some of the actions it records with apparent approval are wicked or disgusting. A good deal of its language sins against common decency. Several books were not written by the authors whose names they bear. Others are, and must for ever remain, anonymous. The dates of composition of the various books are not what has been generally supposed. Occasionally the true chronology differs from the received chronology by many centuries. To the great majority of readers the Bible has never been known, and never can be known, except in translations. No translation can possibly be perfect. Every translation of the Bible is known to contain grave and numerous errors. Even in the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts there are thousands of various readings. In some cases the text is uncertain, in some cases interpolated, and in others irrecoverably impaired. The vowel points by which Hebrew is now read are demonstrably a modern invention. Even the discourses of Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, are not reported with accuracy. The New Testament writers seldom quote from the Old Testament exactly, but generally rely upon the Greek translation called the Septuagint. Sometimes they quote passages which are not in Scripture at all. "Out of 288 passages quoted from the Old Testament in the New," says Dr. Farrar, "there are but 53 which agree accurately with the original Hebrew. In 76 the New Testament differs both from the Greek and the Hebrew; and in 99 the New Testament, the Greek, and the Hebrew are all variant."

On the face of it, then, the Bible is doomed. A book of which all these things can be said, without the slightest fear of contradiction, must sooner or later be dropped as the Word of God. It will be recognised as a human composition.

Meanwhile, those who live by the Bible, and are professionally interested in its "supremacy," as Dr. Farrar calls it, cast about for a means of giving it a fresh reputation. The old conception of it is fatally discredited; a new one may give it a fresh lease of life.

Evidently there is only one direction open to the theological trimmers. They must start another theory of inspiration—one that will conserve the "sacred" character of the Bible in spite of every difficulty that has been, or can be, discovered.

The Bible is no longer to be called *the* Word of God. Ruskin says, and Dr. Farrar seems to quote it approvingly, that "it is a grave heresy (or wilful source of division) to call any book, or collection of books, the Word of God." Ten pages later, however, we are told that the Bible, as a whole, *may* be spoken of as the Word of God, because it "contains words and messages of God to the human soul." This word "contains" is the magical spell by which Dr. Farrar seeks to dissipate all difficulties. He finds the expression in the Church Articles, in the Book of Homilies, and in the Shorter Catechism. But in order to see how illegitimate is Dr. Farrar's use of these authorities, let us take his extract from the last of them: "The Word of God which is *contained* in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is the only rule to direct us how we may enjoy and glorify Him." Is it not clear that the word "*contained*" is used here in its primary meaning? Did not the writers mean that the Word of God is included or comprehended in the Old and New Testament only, and is not to be found elsewhere? Would they not have been shocked to hear a clergyman of the Church of England say that some parts of the Bible were *not* the Word of God? If so, their use of the word "*contain*" lends no countenance to the use made of it by Dr. Farrar. And is it not a shallow trick upon our intelligence to argue that different persons, using the same word, necessarily mean the same thing? Words are the money of fools, as Hobbes said, but only the counters of wise men. We must get at the actual value of the thing which is symbolized. And the moment we do this, we see that Dr. Farrar's theory of the Word of God is *not* the same as that of the gentlemen who drew up the Shorter Catechism. They would indeed have laughed at his "contains," and excommunicated and imprisoned him, and perhaps burnt him at the stake. It is not by torturing one poor word ten thousand ways that such wide differences can be reconciled.

Passing by this ridiculous legerdemain, let us take Dr. Farrar's theory for what it is worth. The Bible *contains* the Word of God. But how are we to find it? What is the criterion by which we are to separate God's word from man's word? Dr. Farrar bids us use "the ordinary means of criticism and spiritual discernment." But such a vague generality is nothing but verbiage. What we want is the *criterion*. Now the nearest approach to it in all Dr. Farrar's pages is the following:—

> "Is it not a plain and simple rule that anything in the Bible which teaches, or is misinterpreted to teach, anything which is not in accordance with the love, the gentleness, the truthfulness of Christ's Gospel, is *not* God's word to us, however clearly it stands on the page of Scripture?'

This is at best a *negative* criterion; and, on close examination, it turns out to be no criterion at all. The criterion, to be valid, must be *external* to the book itself. Dr. Farrar's criterion is *internal*. He picks out one part of the Bible as the standard for judging all the rest. This is entirely arbitrary. Moreover, it would soon be found impossible in practice. Dr. Farrar's criterion may be "plain," but it is not so "simple," except in the uncomplimentary sense of the word. For "Christ's Gospel," by which the rest of the Bible is to be tried, is itself a very composite and self-contradictory thing. Further, if all that agrees with Christ's Gospel is the Word of God, is it not superfluous as being a mere repetition? Dr. Farrar would therefore bring the actual, valid Word of God within the compass of the Four Gospels; dismissing all the rest, like the Arabian Caliph who commanded a whole library to be burnt on the ground that if the books differed from the Koran they were pernicious, and if they agreed with it they were useless. Nor is this all. Dr. Farrar admits that the discourses of Jesus Christ are not reported with accuracy. Therefore, having made the Gospels the criterion of the Word of God in the rest of the Bible, he would be obliged to select some special passages as the criterion of the Word of God in the rest of the Gospels. This is what Shakespeare would call a world-without-end process.

Candidly, it seems to us that if the Bible *is* not the

Digitized by Google

Word of God, but only *contains* the Word of God—that is to say, if it is partly God's word and partly man's word—the clergy of all denominations should unite in publishing a Bible with the divine and human parts clearly specified by being printed in different types. And surely, if the Bible is in any sense inspired, it should be possible, by a new and final act of inspiration, to settle this distinction for ever.

Allowing the clergy to meditate this holy enterprise, we proceed to consider Dr. Farrar's theory of inspiration. Of course he discards the old theory of verbal dictation; indeed, he calls it "irreverent," because it attributes to God what modern men of intelligence and good manners would be ashamed to own. He even quarrels with the very term inspiration as "vague," and says it would be "a boon if some less ambiguous word could be adopted." Four theories, he says, have been entertained in the Christian Church. The first is the *mechanical* theory, which implies that the Holy Ghost dictated, and the inspired penmen were merely his amanuenses. The second is the *dynamic*, which recognises "the indefeasible guidance of the Holy Spirit." The third is that of *illumination*, which confines the divine guidance to matters of faith and doctrine. The fourth is that of *general* inspiration, which regards the Holy Spirit as influencing the writers in the same way as it influences "other noble and holy souls." This fourth theory is the one which Dr. Farrar himself affects. Every pure and sweet influence upon the human soul, he says, is a heavenly inspiration We owe to it "all that is best and greatest in philosophy, eloquence, and song." Haydn said of his grandest chorus in the "Creation":—"Not from me but from above it all has come!" "There is inspiration" says Dr. Farrar, "whenever the spirit of God makes itself heard in the heart of man." Apparently—for we can never be quite sure of Dr. Farrar—the only superiority of the Bible lies in the fact that "the voice of God" speaks to us "far more intensely" out of it than out of "any [other ?] form of human speech."

Such a theory of inspiration is too vague and universal. Sooner than give up inspiration altogether Dr. Farrar is prepared to share it all round. But is not proving too much as bad as proving too little? If the Bible is only inspired—where it *is* inspired—in the same sense as other books are inspired; if the difference is not one of kind, but simply of degree; then it is really idle to talk about its inspiration any longer.

The word *inspiration* loses all its original meaning. It becomes a poetical expression, implying nothing supernatural, but merely the exaltation of natural powers and faculties. God is then behind the Bible only as God is behind everything; and Christianity, ceasing to be a special revelation, becomes only a certain form of Theism.

This loose theory of *general* inspiration will doubtless serve the present turn of the clergy, who have to face a general and growing dissatisfaction with the Bible. But it cannot live very long in a scientific age. It will be found out in time, like all the Bible theories that preceded it. The first Protestant dogma was the infallibility of Scripture. That was exploded by modern science and textual criticism. Then came the dogma of plenary inspiration, which had a comparatively short-lived existence, as it was only the old dogma of infallibility in disguise. Next came the dogma of illumination, which may be said to have begun with Coleridge and ended with Maurice. Finally, we have the dogma of general inspiration, which began nowhere and ends nowhere, which means anything or nothing, and which is a sort of "heads we win, tails you lose" theory in the hands of the clever expounders of the Higher Criticism.

Behind the last, as well as the first, of all these theories of inspiration stands the fatal objection of Thomas Paine, that inspiration, to be real, must be personal. A man may be sure that God speaks to him, but how can he be sure that God has spoken to another man? He may think it possible or probable, but he can never be certain. What is revelation at first-hand, said Paine, is only hearsay at second-hand. Real inspiration, therefore, eventuates in mysticism. The inner light shines, the inner voice speaks. God holds personal communication with the individual soul. Each believer carries what the author of *Hudibras* calls "the dark lanthorn of the spirit," which "none see by but those who bear it."

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SAYINGS OF JESUS.*

THERE have been many important discoveries concerning early Christianity of late years. To mention only a few of the most notable, there was *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, unearthed by Bishop Bryennios at Constantinople in 1883, which had been quoted by Clement of Alexandria (Miscellanies, i. 20) as "Scripture." Then we had *The Revelation of Peter*, and the still more important *Gospel of Peter*, referred to by Origen and Eusebius, discovered in a grave in Upper Egypt in 1886—works which have run the gauntlet of criticism, the latter having a probably earlier and certainly less elaborate account of a crucifixion, in which "the Lord cried out, saying, My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me!" Then followed the providential discovery of the Diatessaron of Tatian the Syrian, a much more dubious document, for which we are indebted to the learning of Signor Ciasca, of the Vatican, who, unfortunately, gives it from the Arabic instead of the Syriac. Then was recovered the important *Apology of Aristides*, preserved in the history of Barlaam and Josaphat—a Buddhist story; and *Commentaries on John and Matthew*, attributed to Origen. The discovery by Mrs. Lewes of parts of a gospel at Mount Sinai, which declared that "Joseph begat Jesus," was thought to be the climax of heterodox discovery; but now Messrs. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, of the Egypt Exploration Fund, come forward with twenty-three boxes of papyri from Oxyrhynchus, including fragments of new sayings of Jesus, a translation of which they have just given to the world.

A word of criticism must first be passed upon the title. This is given as ΛΟΓΙΑ ΙΗΣΟΥ: Sayings of Our Lord. There is nothing about "Our Lord" in the fragment, and the words should not appear even on the cover. It may be said, indeed, that, although the fragment is of some interest and value, the same remark can hardly be applied to the comments of the editors, who show a natural tendency to assimilate the document to the canonical gospels. If their find had been The Sayings of Jabers, no one would have made much fuss about it.

The subject of date being of first importance, on this I cite their words:—

> "The document was found in a mound which produced a great number of papyri belonging to the first three centuries of our era, those in the immediate vicinity of our fragment belonging to the second and third centuries. This fact, together with the evidence of the handwriting, which has a characteristically Roman aspect, fixed with certainty 300 A.D. as the lowest limit for the date at which the papyrus was written. The general probabilities of the case, the presence of the usual contractions found in biblical MSS., and the fact that the papyrus was in book, not roll, form, put the first century out of the question, and make the first half of the second unlikely. The date, therefore, probably falls within the period 150-300 A.D."

On this I will only here say that those who have the most knowledge of palæography are the most diffident in assigning anything like exact dates to ancient writings. Finders, too usually suppose an antiquity higher than the evidence warrants. Evidence that the fragment is of high antiquity and complete independence of the Gospels is found in the document itself, which I will now briefly examine.

The first logion found on the fragment is, "And then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." This ending clearly is the same as Luke vi. 42, and if it stood alone might have been ascribed to a Gospel source. The second saying runs: "Jesus saith, Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God; and except ye keep the Sabbath ye shall not see the Father." This has no parallel in the Gospels, and the second clause breathes a far more Jewish spirit than the saying in Mark ii. 27, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The idea of renouncing the world is clear in the New Testament, but that of fasting to the world seems to bear impress of the doctrine of non-marriage found in the Gospel according to the Egyptians.

The third logion runs: "Jesus saith, I stood in the

* *Logia Iesou:* Sayings of Our Lord. From an Early Greek Papyrus. Discovered and edited, with Translation and Commentary, by Bernard P. Grenfell, M.A., and A. S. Hunt, M.A. With two plates. Published for the Egypt Exploration Fund by Henry Frowde, Amen-corner, London.

Digitized by Google

midst of the world, and in the flesh was I seen of them; and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men because they are blind in their heart." This recalls the passage of John, "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." But the question arises why, if John knew these words of Christ, he did not quote them verbally. That Jesus found all men drunken must surely have been said after the miracle at Cana in Galilee. The fourth logion is undecipherable, save a Greek word for "beggary," which is not found in the canonical gospels.

The fifth saying is by far the most important. It runs thus, the gaps indicating words obliterated: "Jesus saith, Wherever there are.....and there is one.....alone I am with him. *Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I.*" It has been suggested that the first gap may be filled with *athei*, so that it may read, "Wherever there are Atheists, and there is one believer alone, I am with him," and be thus brought in a line with Matthew xviii. 20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." But it is possible that the second blank may be filled with *atheos*, so that the blessed Savior may declare that where there is but one Atheist, there he is with him.

Some critics, aware that these sayings have fully better claims to be considered authentic than those in the Gospels, have already been gushing over the divine beauty and sublime profundity of the words I have italicized. The truth is, the pantheistic philosophy of the immanence of the same soul in all things is very early and widespread. It is found in the Hindu Upanishads. In the Bhagvat Gita the man-god Krishna proclaims himself the odor of the earth, the light of the flame, etc.

The *Pymander* of Hermes Trismegistus, which gives the Egyptian doctrine of about the Christian era, expressly lays it down that "from one Soul of the universe are all those souls which are in the world." "It is his essence to be pregnant, or great with all things." "This is he that is secret; this is he that is most manifest." "I am in heaven, in the earth, in the water, in the air; I am in living creatures, in plants, in the womb, everywhere." "For there is nothing which is not the image of God." "For there is nothing dead, that either hath been, or is, or shall be in the world."*

We may be pretty sure that no actual living sane man ever said: "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." If such an utterance was ever made, it was by a teacher in his symbolical and representative capacity; as a priestly personator of the sun-god or spirit of vegetative life might say, "This bread is my body, this wine my blood." No sane man would use such utterances literally, and this fragment corroborates the idea of a mystical gospel lying behind the so-called historical ones.

The sixth lection is: "Jesus saith, A prophet is not acceptable in his own country, neither doth a physician work cures upon them that know him." We have a parallel to the first clause in Luke iv. 24. The second shows a strong spirit of satire on the part of the Great Physician. I should think it was more true in his day than in this that physicians cured only those who knew them not. The seventh reads: "Jesus saith, A city built upon the top of a high hill, and stablished can neither fall nor be hid." This is certainly akin to Matt. v. 14, and to the parable of the wise man who built his house upon a rock. The eighth and last saying is nearly all obliterated, but the editors say: "The Logion appears to be new."

On the general question of the significance of these sayings I think the safest conclusion may be expressed in the words of the editors:—

> "Even if the prevailing judgment of these sayings should be that they were preserved in Gnostic circles, and themselves show some traces of the tendencies out of which Gnosticism developed, it does not follow that they are, therefore, inventions. And, whether free or not from Gnostic influences, the genuine ring of what is new in this fragment, and the primitive cast of the whole, are all in favor of its independence of our Gospels in their present shape."

I surmise that the fragment is the product of the monkish school of Therapeuts in Egypt who regarded their mythical head as "the Savior" Ιησου. In essence it may well be anterior to the Christian Church. The passage, "Except ye fast to the world, ye shall in nowise find the kingdom of God," seems to assimilate it to the Gospel of the Egyptians, one of those heretical compositions which are no longer extant, being either suppressed or allowed to fall into oblivion. This gospel enjoyed a reputation in the first and second centuries, for it is quoted by Clement of Rome, said to have been the companion of Paul referred to in Phil. iv. 3, and also by Clement of Alexandria, who, in his *Miscellanies* (bk. iii., chaps. 9 and 13), quotes considerably from it. It is said to have been used by the Encratites, who followed Jesus in discarding marriage, and the Sabellians, who regarded him as the one only God. Another gospel with which this fragment may have affinity is the Gospel of Eve, referred to by Epiphanius (Hæres xxvi. 2). It is to be hoped that in the other papyri, recently discovered by Professor Flinders Petrie and others, there will be found some serving to throw further light on the Sayings of Jesus, for these discoveries certainly tend to diminish the idolatry of the Gospels.

J. M. WHEELER.

* These quotations are taken from Dr. Everard's translation of *The Divine Pymander* (1650; reprinted 1884); but the student should consult the French translation by M. Louis Ménard, and read his *étude sur l'origine des livres Hermétiques*

THE STORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

(Concluded from page 452.)

OF course, the strongest proof (if we may use that term) that can be produced in favor of the theory of the resurrection is contained in the New Testament—in fact, apart from this source, as we have endeavored to show, there is really no trustworthy evidence at all. And the testimony there given, be it observed, is of such a doubtful nature that it would not be received to-day as evidence in any English court of law. This testimony is divided under three heads—namely, Jesus's alleged prediction of his resurrection, the Gospel narratives of the event, and St. Paul's references to it.

Christ's prediction is to be found in Matthew xii. 39, 40, and reads thus: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The time that Christ was to remain in the tomb is here stated with great clearness. Quite as plainly, however, the Gospel accounts show that the prediction was falsified, for, instead of being "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Jesus, at the very most, was not entombed more than two nights and one day. Besides, he was not in "the heart of the earth" at all, but in a sepulchre ("hewn out of a rock," Mark xv. 46) in Joseph's garden. Further, supposing the events occurred as related, the resurrection was no sign to the Scribes and Pharisees, for to them it is not stated that Christ presented himself after he had risen. He only appeared to his disciples and followers, and in such a manner that they were so sceptical as to his appearance that he had to reprove them for their unbelief; and when the apostles were told that Christ had left the tomb, they believed it not, but thought it "idle tales" (Luke xxiv. 11).

A curious feature in connection with this part of the subject is, that if the words ascribed to St. Matthew be true, what Christ said to his friends appears to have made little or no impression upon them. For instance, we read: "And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matthew xx. 17, 18, 19). One may naturally suppose that the persons to whom these words were uttered would have expected to have seen their Master alive on the third day. But evidently they did not, for when they were told that he had risen, they did not believe it (Mark xvi. 11). When he appeared to his disciples in Galilee "some doubted" (Matthew xxviii. 17), while others supposed him to be a spirit (Luke xxiv. 37). Even Mary Magdalene thought

Digitized by Google

he was the gardener (John xx. 15). The women, it appears, who probably were the special friends of Jesus, had no expectation that he would rise on the third day, for we read that they brought sweet spices and ointments that they might anoint his body (Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiii. 56). It is not reasonable that such a process would have been contemplated by anyone who thought to see the "risen Jesus" alive again in a few hours. How these incidents can be reconciled with the allegation, in other portions of the Gospels, that his resurrection was expected, we leave Christians to decide.

The accounts of this event, as given in the Gospels, are so contradictory that they are of no evidential value. The questions which the Gospels should answer are these: Who discovered that Christ had risen? At what time was the discovery made? What was seen and felt at the discovery? And who announced that the resurrection had occurred? The answers in the New Testament are so conflicting that the whole of them cannot be correct, and no evidence exists to prove that even one is true.

Let us see what the answers really amount to. Matthew states that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the sepulchre; Mark says that Salome accompanied the two women. Luke speaks of several women going there, and John mentions only Mary Magdalene. Matthew says that they went at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn; Mark says the Sabbath was past, at the rising of the sun; but John says that Mary went there while it was yet dark. Matthew mentions only one angel; Mark speaks of a young man; Luke says there were two men, who were afterwards called angels by the women; while John reports two angels. Matthew says that the angel was outside, sitting on the stone which he had rolled from the door; Mark says the young man was inside of the sepulchre; Luke tells us that the two men stood by them; but John declares that the two angels were sitting. According to Matthew, the two women met Jesus as they were returning from the sepulchre. Mark says that he was seen first by Mary Magdalene, but does not say how or where! John says that Mary Magdalene saw neither Jesus nor angels till her second visit to the sepulchre. But Luke will not admit that he was seen at all by her; for he says positively that the women saw him not, but his first appearance was made to Cleopas and another, on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Matthew says that when the two women saw him they held him by the feet; John says that Jesus would not be touched. According to Luke, it appears that Peter went by himself to the sepulchre, after the angels were gone, into which he only stooped down, and saw the clothes lying; but John says that another disciple ran with him, and they both went into the sepulchre before the angel came. Now, with all this manifest confusion and contradiction in their several reports, which and what are we to believe?

It is equally uncertain where Christ first met his disciples after his alleged resurrection. According to Matthew, it was by appointment at a mountain in Galilee; whereas Luke asserts that it was at Jerusalem, where the eleven were gathered together, and whence, after he had partaken of fish and honeycomb, Christ was carried up into heaven. It is true, against this supposition we read that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians xv. 50); and, if Matthew and Luke can be relied on, Jesus promised not to eat and drink any more till he reached his Father's kingdom. Besides these difficulties, we are at a loss to know who the "eleven gathered at Jerusalem" were. Thomas, says St. John, was not present; Judas had hung himself, and Matthias was not yet chosen.

The testimony of St. Paul is utterly worthless as proving the accuracy of the story of the resurrection. As we have already intimated, his belief in this event was based upon faith and tradition, not upon knowledge and investigation (Gal. i. 11, 12; 1 Cor. xv. 3). Moreover, his belief in the then speedy end of the world has proved to be wrong, which shows that he was by no means to be explicitly relied upon in his statements; while his reasoning in favor of the doctrine, as contained in 1 Corinthians xv., is fallacious in the extreme, opposed as it is to experience and the facts of science. This is too self-evident to require any comment. St. Paul says: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (verse 8). Here, then, it is supposed that we are confronted with real testimony. First, it must be observed that the alleged seeing of Jesus by Paul occurred in a vision. But what is a vision? It is, of course, something seen; but the word is used in the New Testament to convey the impression of a something, otherwise imperceptible to human eyesight, rendered visible by the exercise of some supernatural power or influence. It is differentiated from a dream, in so far as the latter is only a mental concept, or series of conceptions, engendered in a state of semi-somnolency. To understand the mental character of St. Paul, it will be well to refer to the incidents of his conversion. Outside the city of Damascus, Saul, the persecutor, was stricken to the ground by what some writers have termed a sun-stroke. This occurrence happened "about noon" (Acts xxii. 6), as he declared to the multitude after his arrest in Jerusalem, when the sun was on the meridian, and when it is dangerous in the extreme to travel in Oriental climes. By consulting neurological works it will be found that singing in the ears, imaginary voices, etc., are frequently the accompaniments of a sudden rush of blood to the head. In nearly all such cases there are visions; sights are beheld and sounds heard which have no other than an imaginary, subjective, or phantasmal reality. This explains what is called the "conversion of St. Paul"; but there still remains his claim to have seen Jesus subsequently, "when he was come again to Jerusalem, even while he prayed in the temple" (*ibid*, verse 17). The Apostle himself tells us that he "was in a trance" when Jesus appeared to him. Thus, Paul's personal testimony, of which so much capital has been made by apologists, is really of no more moment than that which refers to Christ having been seen by "above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. xv. 6), but of whom, however, we find absolutely no traces whatever either in narrative or tradition. As to his statement that Jesus was "seen of Cephas," if we turn to the Epistles of Peter, we find he is silent on the matter. Again, the "twelve" is a most unsatisfactory reference, since we have no possible means of arriving at the knowledge of either what they saw or did not see. Besides, it would be interesting to learn who the "twelve" were, as Judas was dead, and Matthias was not chosen till after the ascension (see Matthew xxvii. 3, 4, 5; also Acts i. 26); and as to the five hundred brethren, we have no evidence from them that they saw the risen Jesus, but we are told that even after the ascension the number of disciples was about "a hundred and twenty."

We have now, in six articles, noticed the principal recorded incidents associated with the alleged crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. There is much more to be said upon the reports of these events, but we have no further space at present to devote to the subjects. In our opinion, they are simply forms of ancient myths, and have no foundation in fact.

CHARLES WATTS.

HAS FREETHOUGHT DECLINED?

I DOUBT whether Mr. William Clarke, in his "Jubilee Review of Sixty Years of Religious Thought," in the *Daily Chronicle*, is quite clear in his mind about the decline of Atheism and Secularism among the working classes. At the same time, one can admit that there *may* have been such a rapid decline in the acceptance of Atheism and Secularism—I would prefer to say Freethought—as Mr. Clarke states there has been. But such a decline must not—admitting it for the moment just for the purpose of the argument—and does not, mean the rise of any other religion in the ranks of the working classes. If they have, as Mr. Clarke thinks, dropped the natural religion of Atheism on the one hand, and Secularism on the other, it cannot be shown, I believe, that they have picked up any supernatural belief in place of the natural ones which Mr. Clarke thinks they have relinquished.

My own view, which, as a Freethinker, I consider entitled to precedence as against Mr. Clarke's, on this subject is that the working classes do not, except at unusual crises (the most recent of which was the Bradlaugh Free Election crisis), concern themselves seriously about forms of faith either of the natural or supernatural order; in fact, they have not, as a rule, leisure, in England at any rate, for more than an occasional serious incursion into questions concerning religion. To paraphrase Borrow's Jasper Petulengro: "When not engaged in their occupations, they are engaged in their relaxations, and have no time to bother about religion." Nor is this attitude special

Digitized by Google

to the working classes. It is quite as characteristic of the two other classes, at least so far as the men are concerned; although, in their case, the indifference to religious questions is very often cloaked under an occasional, or even regular, attendance—*as a matter of social custom or from business motives*—at some place of worship. The working classes are more honest in this matter than the middle classes; while the third class approximates more closely—according to the late Randolph Churchill—to the working class in a frank indifference to religion all along the line.

Indeed, Mr. Clarke, in his summary, seems to me to mean his readers to infer that the reign of belief in the supernatural is about extinguished in England; that Freethought—or, as Mr. Clarke puts it, *free criticism without reference to any authority outside human reason*—is the prevalent mental attitude of most men who deign to give their attention to speculative beliefs at all. Nothing from the Atheistic or Secularist standpoint could be more sensible, more intelligent, than this general attitude of free criticism; whatever belief it leads to, whatever conclusion men may arrive at on any subject by a process of free criticism, is necessarily a Rationalistic one. It is not so much the end as the method employed which Freethinkers desiderate; for no man reaching a mental conclusion by a full use of his free reason can well have bigoted or bitter feelings against any other man whose different conclusions have yet been reached by an identical method. We cannot all agree in our conclusions, but there may be an universal agreement—or, at least, so many Freethinkers hold—as to method.

According to James Thomson, we are each one of us, by our nature, pre-elected, as it were, to some particular group of speculative thought, and that, therefore, proselytism is absurd and never succeeds; so, if one does sometimes write as though to persuade others, it is not from any thought that one will succeed, but from the promptings of one's nature.

Believing, as I do, that most Freethinkers, when pressed, hold a very similar view, notwithstanding their sometimes enthusiastic propagandism, I also believe that (assuming Mr. Clarke's summaries, headlined as "The Inner and Spiritual" and "The Decline of Dogma," to be correct in the main), Freethinkers are eminently gratified at the result of the last sixty years, so far as the widespread acceptance of their method of thinking—*i.e.*, of quite free criticism in every department of human thought and speculation—is concerned. Truth and fact invite criticism of the keenest—invite and welcome it joyfully. Only truth's opposite, or its alloy, fears and hates it.

After all, the most important matter to thoughtful men and women is not what this or that class thinks on any subject, but what the greatest men think in every branch of human thought. Surely it is the best intellects of our race who should ultimately lead us; and the best thought, just as in the case with the best art, cannot be made a question of majorities or classes. And the finest minds of our race have always, by example, encouraged the full and uncontrolled exercise of our reasoning faculties; and most of them in England have, from Spenser, the poet's poet, to Herbert Spencer of to-day, strenuously advocated the widest use of those faculties which we term critical, and which every man who really believes that he has "got the truth" cordially embraces. Only infidels to truth can fear the most thorough application of the freest possible criticism to their beliefs.

PAGANUS.

CURSING THE FIG-TREE.

Of all the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ this appears to me the least amiable. The casting of devils into two thousand pigs may be defended on the ground that the liberation of one or two men from a legion of devils was worth the sacrifice of pork and the injury to the pig-owner. But the cursing of a fig-tree for not having figs to supply hunger, "when the time of figs, was not yet," seems an act of wanton malevolence such as the low-caste Hindoos attribute to their godlings who are half deities and half demons.

The story as narrated by Mark says:—

> "And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon; and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered, and said unto it, 'No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever.' And his disciples heard it. And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, 'Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away.'"

Archbishop Trench, in noticing the circumstance of Jesus being hungry, says:—

> "There is something inexpressibly affecting in the idea, that He, who sustains the whole order of created beings, from the feeble insect that lives but a single day, to the immortal seraph that stands day and night in his presence, should, for our sakes, have endured hunger and thirst, and become familiar with want and wretchedness. There is something deeply touching in a humility thus perfect and generous, in the dignity and simplicity with which the Lord of Life 'bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.'"

We find neither humility nor dignity in the story, and simplicity only comes in the sense of stupidity in expecting figs when "the time of figs was not yet." There is an old-world air in this puerile petulance of cursing a tree for not producing fruit when the season for fruit had not arrived. which reminds us of a child striking an inanimate object that hurts him. If we believed in the literal truth of the story, we should take it as evidence of insanity, for, indeed, there is much in the story only to be accounted for by a want of mental balance. The appropriation of the ass and colt on the pretence that the Lord hath need of them, the high-handed scourging of money-changers, the threats of vengeance on the city, and the hell to which he consigned his opponents, combine with this story in giving some countenance to the views of those who said, "He hath a devil, and is mad."

Trench says:—

> "This miracle was, indeed, admirably calculated, not only to strengthen the faith of the disciples, but to awaken in their hearts a spirit of holy fear; nor is it less calculated to produce the same effects in all to whom the Gospel of Christ is given."

I should think so. The being who can curse a tree for not having fruit in springtime may indeed make one vessel for honor and another for destruction. He is comparable to Holy Willie's God:—

> O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
> Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
> Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell,
> A' for thy glory,
> And no for onie guid or ill
> They've done afore thee.

The story of God on earth cursing a tree for his own folly, and employing his almighty power for the purpose of wreaking vengeance on an immediate object, is so childish and repugnant to common sense that one might think even worshippers of the Christian fetish would find satisfaction in the thought that it may not be true. As Thomas Paine wrote of the story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram:

> All the consolation is,
> The Bible tells a lie.

This consolation is not open to the orthodox Christian; but it is one which the heterodox can accept as "a moral certainty." The story is not only a ridiculous legend; it is one of which we can trace the growth. In Luke we have no such miracle, but we have instead a *parable* (xiii. 6-9) of a fig-tree, which, if it bears no fruit, is to be cut down. This probably refers to the Jewish Church. But miracle-mongering Mark turns the parable into an actual event, and says: "In the morning, when they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up by the roots." Matthew "goes one better," and says: "Immediately [R. V.] the fig-tree withered away." The story caught on with the early Christians, for they were expecting the destruction of the world, which brought forth no fruit, they considered, from God. Happily, the man who could blast the fig-tree did not come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who knew not God, though he was continually expected by the first disciples, and is, indeed, represented as predicting the destruction of the world in the lifetime of his own generation.

UNCLE BEN.

> For the structure that we raise
> Time is with materials filled;
> Our to-days and yesterdays
> Are the blocks with which we build.

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

Our only "General" is an enterprising showman. He sends a message of loyal congratulation from the Salvationists to the Queen. Of course Her Majesty replied "from Windsor Castle to 'General' Booth," and the "General" read it out to his Army at the Crystal Palace amid enthusiastic cheers. Both "General" and Sovereign seem to know their book.

England is noted all over the world for three things—Bibles, beer-barrels, and Salvation Army drums. "General" Booth boasts that he follows the flag. He also boasts that his "Army" is subventioned in some parts of the Empire. Evidently he would like to have it subventioned everywhere. Successful religious sects soon get the itch for the money of the State.

The Nonconformists followed in the wake of the Churchmen and had a day at Windsor, where they presented congratulatory addresses to the Queen. On both sides there was much rejoicing over the extension of religious liberty; indeed, it almost appeared, from the loyal effusions and the royal replies, that religious liberty is about complete in England. And so it is if religious liberty means liberty among religionists. The Freethinker, however, is still a sort of outcast. He is liable to imprisonment for "blasphemy," and is denied the common rights of property which are enjoyed by all the religious sects. Amid all this jubilation the Freethinker raises his voice, and cries: "Thank you for nothing!"

The Nonconformist ministers who "deputated" at Windsor "had the honor" of kissing the Queen's hand. When they get to heaven they may "have the honor" of kissing Jehovah's feet, for that was the part of him which was seen by the seventy elders of Israel when they went up a certain mountain where he was taking a holiday. Another part of his anatomy was seen by Moses, but this is ticklish ground, and we had better avoid it.

Seriously, we are glad to learn the true secret of England's prosperity during the past sixty years. It is all explained now, and is as clear as daylight. The Nonconformist ministers, in their address to the Queen, reminded her that on her accession to the throne they—or rather the bodies they represented—had the "privilege of approaching" her, and on that occasion they prayed God to give her grace, wisdom, and strength for the benefit of her people. "We rejoice in recognising," they said, "that those prayers have been answered." And then they went on to speak of that sixty years of "unparalleled" progress in literature, art, science, and commerce.

There, now! That's perfectly plain. It clears up everything. All the progress of sixty years is due to the prayers offered up by the Nonconformist clergy in 1837. When we read and enjoy George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, we should not forget to thank the Nonconformist clergy. If they hadn't prayed, it would have made a terrible difference to our literature. When we admire the pictures of Leighton, Millais, Watts, and other artists, we ought to bless the Nonconformist clergy.

If they hadn t prayed, British art might have sunk to the level of a Saracen's Head, outside a country public-house. When we think of what we owe to the railway, the telegraph, the telephone, and all the wondrous applications of scientific discovery to the industrial arts, we should remember that our thanks for all these things are really due to the Nonconformist clergy. They conceived the happy idea of praying, in a wholesale way, for all these blessings in 1837. Hence we have them and enjoy them. God bless the Nonconformist clergy! And may he soon translate them from this miserable vale of tears to the beautiful land above.

Let us imagine a picture. A ship is wrecked off an iron-bound coast. There are women and children as well as men on board, and death stares them all in the face. But a lifeboat, manned by gallant fellows, most of whom drink and all swear, puts off to their rescue. As the lifeboat leaves a man of God stands on the beach and cries: "Go, brave men! pull your hardest! And I will remain here and pray." Away goes the lifeboat through the ravening waves, and brings back safely every soul on board the doomed ship. And then the man of God exclaims: "I saved them all: God answered my prayers."—That man of God is just like the Nonconformist clergy.

The Dean of Canterbury applied to the Corporation of the City of London for a grant towards the restoration of Canterbury Cathedral. The application was referred to the Coal, Corn, and Finance Committee. This looks curious, but we suppose it is all right. Dean Farrar doesn't want coal or corn, but the third article, finance, is more appropriate. That is the heading he wants to come under.

The Church Lads' Brigade, numbering about three thousand boys, was recently reviewed in Hyde Park by the Duke of Connaught. According to the *Daily News* report, the great object of the Brigade is to "turn out into the world strong, true, upright, Christian men." This is a very pretty excuse for making the boys play at soldiers. The real object, we take it, is to train the boys for a possible military life; and the "Christian" is just a little bit of pretence to cover the actual design.

According to an interesting article in the *Quarterly Review*, the Sultan of Turkey is a man of irreproachable morals. In the early part of his reign he shrank from allowing capital punishment to be inflicted under any circumstances. But as soon as he began to fear for his own life, he sent hundreds of men to a cruel and lingering death. A weak man in such a position is one of the greatest scourges. He would annihilate the human race sooner than suffer in his own person. Whereas a strong man like Cæsar or Cromwell, while he may take precautions, despises assassins too much to let them dictate his policy.

The Sultan is very pious, and one of his chief counsellors is a fanatical dervish named Aboul-Houda. He lives in the Sultan's palace, and they go through religious exercises together. "Strange stories," the reviewer says, "are told of incantations and the raising of spirits." It is the same old story. Religious fanaticism is at the bottom of so much of the vilest crime and cruelty in the world.

Lord Salisbury threw over the Duke of Devonshire, a member of his own Cabinet, in order to please the Bishops in the House of Lords. The wily Bishop of St. Asaph got the Archbishop of Canterbury to move the rejection of a Denbighshire Educational scheme, initiated under the Welsh Intermediate Educational Act, by a committee of the Denbighshire County Council, framed by the Charity Commissioners, revised by the Education Department, and sanctioned by the Lord President. Lord Salisbury sided with the Archbishop and talked about "piracy." This means that the rejected scheme would alienate £2,000 a year from the Church. But as the endowment in question was not left to the Church, but has been coolly appropriated by it, the "piracy" rather seems on the other side. It is amusing to watch the anxiety of ecclesiastics when there is any spoil at stake. They are all alive then.

The "Voluntary" school teachers have been holding a Conference at Birmingham, between six and seven hundred delegates being present from all parts of the country. The President, Mr. C. J. Addiscot, expressed his pleasure at knowing that, under the Education Act of 1896, about £1,000,000 a year would find its way to the managers of Voluntary schools; but the question arose, What would be done with the money? He ventured to say it was the Voluntary school teacher who bore the "intolerable strain," in the shape of ever-increasing classes and ever-decreasing salaries. A resolution was carried, after a heated discussion, to the effect that the local bodies should only provide the school buildings, and that the State should pay the cost of the "secular instruction." Some delegates declared that this was a deletion of the religious instruction, which led Mr. Yoxall, M.P., the secretary of the Teachers' Union, to say: "We are not here as parsons' men or priests' men"—at which there were loud cries of dissent from a noisy minority, one of whom cried, "Disgusting!" The resolution was carried by a very large majority, amidst "tumultuous cheering."

Ex-parson Diggle, who has had it pretty much his own way on the London School Board, appeals to the ratepayers to elect next November men who will support the policy of filling children's minds with religious rubbish, that they may grow up in reverential awe of such humbugs as Diggle.

The *Church Times*, however, is dissatisfied with Diggle. It demands that the teaching of the Board schools shall not only be religious and Christian, as Diggle contends, but that it shall be on the basis of the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed.

Bosdin T. Leech, Esq., writes from Timperley to the *Manchester Guardian*, pointing out the Bishop's misstatements as to School Board education. He adds that, at his parish church, he was compelled to listen to a shrieking denunciation of Board schools by an outside clergyman, the Vicar of Halton. It was one tissue of incorrect statements. "The result was that the means adopted to work on the congregation seemed to me so illegitimate that I declined to contribute. One statement given with thrilling effect was that 'at Birmingham, after six years of undenominational teaching, when the Bible was excluded, juvenile crime increased so alarmingly that the ratepayers

Digitized by Google

demanded a change back to religious teaching.'" Mr. Leech says: "I at once wrote to Birmingham, and got the police statistics, which showed exactly the reverse of what had been stated. From 1870 to 1873–4, while there was denominational teaching, juvenile crime increased from 1,085 to 1,627 cases; while during the six years of undenominational teaching it had decreased from 1,627 to 891." Mr. Leech probably agrees with Mr. Labouchere that the statements of the clergy, when sifted, are seldom found trustworthy.

The priests have been trying to push religious education in Italy by getting ecclesiastics appointed to teach religion. This project was forwarded in the Chamber by Signor Molmenti, who calls himself a Liberal, but who was energetically opposed by Signo Bovio, the well-known Freethinker. At present, in the six thousand Italian Communes there are three thousand ecclesiastical teachers and twenty-seven thousand lay teachers. The Italian schools are secular lay-schools, but religious instruction is given. It is not, however, obligatory. S. Gianturca, the Minister of Education, pointed out that when priests are employed as teachers they are not—practically speaking—amenable to punishment in case of transgression.

Roman Catholics about Saffron Hill, London, celebrated on Sunday last the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. A big procession started from St. Peter's Church, Hatton-garden, and all the traffic in the neighborhood had to be suspended. In the evening the public-houses were crowded, and sacks of "confetti" were dispersed. It was a sublime spectacle, calculated to enchant one with the grandeur of religion.

There can be no doubt as to the advance of Ritualism within the past generation. The Church Association, in their petition with regard to the ecclesiastical patronage of the Crown, pointed out that, of our thirty-four bishops, twenty were Ritualists, and not more than five Evangelicals; of whom Lord Salisbury had nominated thirteen Ritualists and but three Evangelicals, while clergymen with Romanizing tendencies were appointed to all the richest billets. The Low Church has sunk into low water indeed, and Lord Salisbury is certainly not likely to give her a lift.

The meeting of the Annual Grand Lodge of the Orange Institution, under Colonel Waring, M.P., reminds us of how much an order, that was boasted of as a bulwark of Protestantism, has become a mere appenage to Conservative processions. The conflict of Orange and Green in the north of Ireland only makes sensible people say: "A plague o' both your houses."

Two hundred dignitaries of the Pan-Anglican Church, including black and yellow and sea-green bishops, have been assembled in solemn and secret synod at Lambeth. They have kept their sittings strictly private, and the papers have not taken much notice even of their public proceedings. Our national Parliament even would not have much respect if it had to carry on its debates with closed doors. As for the right-reverend fathers-in-God, it is safe to say that when two or three are gathered together there is the Devil in the midst of them.

According to the *English Churchman*, a party of Anglican clergy have propounded the scheme of "admitting the Queen to the sacred order of Priestess." They can cite the ancient Egyptians, and even the apocryphal story of Pope Joan. The scheme, too, is expected to receive the enthusiastic support of the New Woman.

The Archbishop of Canterbury held a garden party at Lambeth Palace on July 19. The ladies' toilettes are said to have been ravishing, and the Turkish Ambassador was there in all his glory. What a change from that other garden party just before the crucifixion! Christianity has become a more profitable business since then.

There need be little doubt as to the extent of Christianity on the Gold Coast of Africa. In 1892 1,295,000 gallons of rum were imported there.

The Arabs have an old legend about the cat which relates how that animal was created to keep down the mice which swarmed in Noah's Ark and devoured the food of the other inhabitants. Russian peasants say that the furry coat of the cat was originally designed for the dog, but that nobler animal forfeited it by growing impatient at the slow distribution of gifts at the Creation, and therefore going over to the Evil One in the hopes of getting something better. Since then the dog has hated the cat, because he suspects her of having stolen his coat.

At her last reception Mdlle. Couedon the Parisian young lady who professes to be inspired by the angel Gabriel, predicted that England would shortly lose both India and Gibraltar at the same time. What a Devil of a fellow among the girls our old friend Gabriel has been. Was he the one who "inspired" Mary, the hair plaiter of Judea, some 2,000 years back?

The meteorologists of Greenwich do not endorse the old superstition about St. Swithin's Day. As a matter of recorded fact, it was found that in the year in which rain fell on July 15 the following forty days happened to be a trifle drier than when St. Swithin gave no rain. The old story about the removal of the saint's bones on the 15th, and the disastrous deluge of rain, which indicated the good man's post-mortem resentment, has been totally discredited. There is well-authenticated evidence that the removal was effected with much pomp and ceremony, and without a drop of rain.

Someone points out that Dunoon won't allow the Sunday steamer to call, but at the same time it booms Sunday coaches to Loch Eck.

This is a story they are telling of Dunoon on Sunday: Stranger—"There seems to be a Sunday law in this town!" Resident—"Yes, sir, yes; if you want to be shaved you will have to wait till to-morrow." Stranger—"Oh, I don't want to be shaved; I want to get a drink!" Resident—"Come with me."

A Scotch paper reports that in a young ladies' school, on the recent occurrence of a total eclipse of the sun, a still more effectual obscurance of the sun was ordered by the lady at the head of the house by having the blinds drawn down so as to prevent any idle breaking of the "Sabbath" by amateur observation of the phenomenon. Probably this was a unique example of "blind" obedience to the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue.

Christ Schlatter, recently deceased, still occupies some attention in American papers. It seems he has left a Book of Schlatter, which a Mr. Jarrett, with whom he stayed, is publishing. He read his Bible, a Catholic edition, considerably, and seemed to prefer the book of Daniel, which he expounded on many occasions. Next to Daniel, the prophecies of Ezekiel pleased him. He said to his hostess: "I told them that the head of the serpent lies in London, and that it has its coils around the world, and that nothing but the Creator himself can crush it. London is the modern Babylon, the Babylon mentioned in the Revelations. The Beast is the money power, no matter where found. Mammon worship is in the church as well as in State and society at large. The gold power is one combine."

Schlatter grew violent in his talks after a while. He paced the floor rapidly while pouring forth a torrent of words in an excited manner. "I will soon be away with Father alone. He would rather have me with the wild beasts than with human beasts. Then the time will come when they can spend the millions they have taken from the poor and unfortunate in trying to hunt me. But they can never find me. I shall go where Father takes me, but I must go alone. He often told me I must go to the Soudan, and that the 144,000 must be taken out of Egypt. At first I thought I had to cross the seas, but now I know different. Egypt is on this continent, and the 144,000 are reincarnated in the Western hemisphere." Christ Schlatter seems, like St. Paul, to have been born out of due time. He had the makings of a first-class prophet in the good old Bible days, when inspiration and insanity were all one.

Ezekiel is not a very savory prophet, and his sixteenth chapter is not readable in polite society. Yet, according to Jesse Salisbury's account of charms used in S.E. Worcestershire, "the repetition of Ezekiel xvi. 6 is a charm for bleeding at the nose, considered by many to be infallible."

In the case of the Rev. Edward Henry Parry, vicar of Dulas, who shot at a laborer named King, who claimed a shilling from him, the jury found that the accused was not in a proper mental condition to plead. He was ordered to be detained in the prison asylum.

Ex-convict and ex-monk Widdows gets a free advertisement in the papers for his preachings at the Church of Martin Luther, South Hackney.

According to the *Cleveland Leader* (Ohio), the Rev. James Hoskins, described as "a preacher of the Freethinker faith," has been arrested and fined in the Atalanta Police-court for speaking disrespectfully of Jesus Christ, whom he called a hypocrite, a liar, and a pretender. The fine was made a nominal one on the offender's promising to discontinue his sermons; at least the report says so, though we hope there is some mistake. In any case, it is evident that religious liberty is far from being secured in the United States. You mustn't give your opinion there too freely of Jesus Christ as an alleged historical character. You can say what you

Digitized by Google

please about Confucius and Socrates, but not about the Prophet of Nazareth.

The Church makes much fuss of the saints who were martyred in the days of auld lang syne. We are happy to think, for the sake of humanity, that the evidence of the early Christian martyrdoms is quite as dubious as that of the saints' miracles. Indeed, it is wondrous that God, who wrought so many miracles in their behalf, allowed them to be martyred at all. But the ways of Providence are not as those of men. The inspired prophets, who foresaw the destruction of Babylon, and even predicted when the world would end, never could tell when they would be run in themselves. But the Church takes precious little notice of the sinners who get martyred to-day. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was boomed in every pulpit because it only reflected on some slaveowners in the Southern States. But *The White Slaves of England* has a different reception, for it reflects on men of wealth and on our industrial system, to touch which is to lay hands on the sacred ark of the Lord.

The Rev. Mr. Beackim, the pastor of a negro church at O'Neill City, Nebraska, having gouged out one of his eyes, and in consequence nearly lost the sight of the other, is now urging his flock to imitate him in complying with the Savior's commands. He says the Almighty approves of men with one eye. A man is apt to see too much with both eyes, and to become a disbeliever.

Isaac Selby is announced to conduct an anti-infidel crusade in Great Britain during 1897, so the end of the world is not quite yet. He has the indispensable credential of having been converted from Freethought, though we do not remember his name in connection with the Freethought platform. He has also "debated with all the leading Secularist lecturers in Australia," including Joseph Symes, W. W. Collins, and Wallace Nelson. How he fared in the said debates is not stated. According to the announcement, he has addressed very large audiences in Melbourne. We doubt whether he will be quite as fortunate in the old country.

Mr. T. C. Collings, the Smoking Parson, who had to resign his curacy at Spitalfields for his Socialistic predilections, has been appointed to the curacy of St. James's, Upper Edmonton, to carry on a mission among working-men. He is said to have expressed a wish to meet an infidel in friendly debate. We daresay he can be accommodated.

The *Lancet*, noticing Sir R. Webster's statement that the sanitary objections to kissing the fetish-book have been exaggerated, says: "The danger of infection is a matter, not of opinion, but of fact, whether we regard the risk as conveyed by the book from mouth to mouth, or as a meditate form of contagion in cases of epidemics. In the epidemic of small-pox in Warrington some years ago a solicitor, fearing that he might be infected by a previous witness from an infected house, claimed to be sworn with uplifted hand, but was refused permission by the County-Court judge, who was ignorant that in doing so he was violating the law and depriving the witness of his just rights." It laments that so few claim the privilege, owing to a dislike to be singular and to give trouble. This applies equally to affirmation and swearing in the Scotch fashion. The *Lancet* says: "Apart from the question of infection, the English form of oath stands condemned as an uncleanly mode of adjuration; it has also been condemned by an eminent English judge as being wholly unintelligible to children, and, he might have added, to many adults."

Says the ever lively *Sydney Bulletin*: "At Melbourne Criminal Court, on May 17th, a little girl of seven years was a witness for the prosecution. Crown Prosecutor Walsh, Q.C., straightway put to this mite the theological question: 'What do you mean by taking an oath?' The mite replied: 'Kissing the Bible.' Then up spake Holroyd, J.: 'What is the Bible, my girl?' and the poor little mite began to cry. Again up spake the Judge: 'Don't they teach you these things in Sunday-school? And don't they teach you what the Bible is?' And the mite cried even more. As Bishops and Jews and Bradlaughs and lots of other folk have not yet answered the above questions, the putting of them to a seven-year-old girl savors of problem plays and insanity."

It is said that the Church Army is positively billed for Australia, after the Lambeth Conference this year. It will shake up the Salvationists a bit, though a palpable imitation—merely the thing washed, shaved, and put into clean linen.

A Towers Chinaman was recently asked in court: "What religion are you—Christian or pagan?" To which the guileless one responded: "Me blow out matchee." He was sworn immediately. Another gave his occupation thusly: "Me swear and chop wood." And they say the Chow has no humor.

A bitter t'othersider, per medium of a godless Westralian paper, proposes that a law be passed "to do without God for six months, and appoint John Forrest to the post." But, then, they've done it already—to a great extent, at least. The true Westralian really doesn't know for certain which is God and which is John Forrest.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

North Maoriland saintdom smells badly just now. A solid-looking financier, who is alleged to have got away with some thousands, and is now in gaol awaiting trial, was a shining light in the sinner-saving business, and led the choir regularly. It is not known whether there were women in the case. A young shopkeeper who has levanted was a Sunday-school teacher, and has left more than one female teacher with a heavy burden to bear. Not long ago two churchwardens successively occupied a pew in the same church, and got clear away with some thousands apiece. Soon afterwards the Presbyterians lost a shining legal light by a self-inflicted pistol shot—he had embezzled a little fortune. Only the goody-goody get the chance to do such things.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

It is said that the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England is going to be increased by a new Archbishop, and that the distinction will fall on the See of Liverpool.

Brann says: "Rev. Pearl Romine, erstwhile pastor of the First Baptist church of Jennings, Oklahoma, is not what might be called a pearl of great price; at least not at present, members of his congregation having presented him with an elegant coat of tar and feathers for trifling with the Seventh Commandment. Thus one by one does a wicked and perverse generation invade the prescriptive rights and time-honored prerogatives of the apostles of emotional religion."

Douglas Green, a New York Stock Exchange man, left his wife and fled to Europe with Mrs. Alice Snell McCrea, a divorced woman. All the parties were rich, so the matter was made much of in the newspapers. The curious part of the performance was that Mrs. McCrea insisted upon being married by a minister to Green before she would go to Europe with him. Evidently, in her opinion, it was not wrong for her to take her lover away from his legal wife, but it would have been wrong to live with him unless the colored minister who married them said she might. A purely religious conscience is an interesting thing to study.

The Pope is reported as having said to the American Catholic, Mr. Bourke Cochran: "I would gladly take to my bosom the whole world and embrace it in the holy Catholic faith, not for any benefit it could do me personally, but to advance the welfare of the men in this world." Thanks very much. Those who know what the papal embrace of the world meant would rather not.

Mr. Bourke Cochran, without the slightest fear of an indictment for blasphemy, compares Joachimo Pecci to Jesus Christ. He says: "After the mass, as he knelt down and prayed at the priedieu at the right of the altar, his face buried in his hands, that marvellous voice occasionally pronouncing a word, while a slight nervous quiver shook his body, one could not help thinking of that scene in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of the Passion. It was indeed easy to imagine that the slight figure in white, almost prostrate over the back of the priedieu, was sobbing over the sins of the world and asking God to be merciful in His judgment of sinners."

John Wanamaker, the millionaire merchant, was in Chicago a few weeks ago, and spoke with "Commander" Ballington Booth. John said "there was no remedy for the hard times but the Gospel of Christ." What is the Gospel of Christ according to the record? "Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor," said Jesus. When John does that there will be a wave of prosperity for a few of the poor; but John is not that kind of a Christian. The New York *World* proved a few years ago that he kept his shirt-making girls at work on starvation prices. "O ye hypocrites," said Jesus.—*Freethought Magazine.*

Thieves broke into St. John's Church, Heywood, the other night, and not only rifled the alms-box, but regaled themselves with the sacramental wine. They got clear away, and are still "wanted"; but we shudder to think of their awful condition with all that quantity of the blood of Christ inside them. Perhaps they have died of hyperæmia.

"Father" Ignatius, in a letter to the Humanitarian League, says that "from a Christian and humane standpoint" he should shudder to be in the company of a vivisector. This is creditable to his feelings, but not to his knowledge of the Bible. There is something very amusing in the way that Christians find a sanction for all good things in their own religion, often after the said good things have been promoted and made popular by disbelievers

Digitized by Google

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Thanks for copies of your letters to Sir Charles Warren and the Clerk of the Gillingham Council. See "Sugar Plums."

J. LAWLER.—Very likely, as you say, the time will come when Christians will claim that *they* gave us Sunday bands in the parks. We believe the bye-laws prohibit the sale of papers in the parks—those under the County Council as well as those under the Government. With respect to a list of newsagents who sell the *Freethinker*, the difficulty is in making it up.

J. ROBERTS.—We know nothing of the anti-infidel crusader, Isaac Selby, who is said to be visiting Great Britain from Australia. He ought to have come in time to figure in the Jubilee procession.

J. H. BAIN.—The information you seek lies scattered in many books. Some references will be found in Mr. Foote's pamphlet entitled *Will Christ Save Us?* Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* gives a great number of resolutions in favor of slavery passed by American Churches. We do not think this volume is now in print, but it can sometimes be met with second-hand.

G. JACOB.—We saw the statement in the London *Echo*, but we have since heard that it was the "Angel" at Victoria, not at Islington, which recently sold for £180,000.

S. ELLIS.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

G. W. B.—Will try to find room.

HARRY RICHARDSON, 69 Chalk Farm-road, Kentish Town, N.W., thanks all who were kind enough to send him literature for distribution, and will be glad to receive more for the same purpose.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—J. H. Bain, 1s.; M. Christopher, 10s. *Per R. Forder*:—T. T., 1s.; J. G. Findlay, 10s.; R, Allen, 4s.

GLASWEGIAN.—A most absurd series of statements, displaying characteristic inaccuracy. No such discussion took place at the N.S.S. Conference. Mr. Foote abides by the policy indicated in the Presidential Notes written after his re-election. He is perfectly indifferent to outside and ignorant opinion. The Freethought party is the only one he has or cares to reckon with. Slandering him may be an easy means of notoriety—for a brief while, but he is not foolish enough to heighten the advertisement. A leader of an unpopular and outlawed party must expect insults. Of course it requires patience to bear them, but that lesson is learnt once for all during a year's imprisonment for Freethought. When you have waited twelve months for a door to open, you can wait for most things afterwards.

T. BEAUCHAMP.—There is always a slackness during the summer. People cannot be expected to fill lecture halls during the dog days.

J. FRESHFIELD.—Mr. Foote may reprint his articles on Dean Farrar's book, but not without revision, and possibly much amplification.

R. AXELBY.—Better make it positive rather than contingent.

F. OSCAR.—Your promise noted with thanks. The names of your two friends will be welcome.

JOHN HUGHES.—Cheque received. Yours is a prompt response. Thanks also for your good wishes for the prosperity of the Treasurer's scheme. The whole party will be to blame if it fails.

J. G. DOBSON sends 10s. as his first annual subscription under the Treasurer's scheme, and hopes the N. S. S. will get all that it requires for its fight for human liberty.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Argus—Crescent—Glasgow Evening Times—New York Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Sydney Bulletin—Watford Observer—Bolton Times—Humanity—Chatham and Rochester News—L'Etoile Socialiste—Daylight—Watford Leader—Open Court—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Liberator—People's Newspaper—Modern Reflector—World's Advance Thought—Liberty.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

THE TREASURER'S SCHEME.

IN last week's *Freethinker* I explained at considerable length the scheme of financial reconstruction put forward by Mr. Hartmann, the National Secular Society's treasurer, who proposes to raise (if possible) an income of £1,500 a year by means of definite annual subscriptions from members and friends. What is now wanted is a list of names and addresses of persons who will promise to subscribe any sum during the present year, from five shillings up to a hundred pounds. Mr. Hartmann himself opens with a promise of £50 for the first year.

This week's *Freethinker* is practically made up on Tuesday, so there have been but a few days for the receipt of replies to last week's appeal. Mr. Munns, the Margate veteran, promises £5, and the veteran James Fulton, of Greenock, another £5. Mr. W. H. Harrap, £1; Mr. W. Davey, 5s.; J. G. Dobson, 10s.; John Hughes, £1 1s.; F. Oscar, 5s.; R Axelby, 5s.

During the next few days it is to be hoped that every Secularist will give this matter his serious consideration. Here is an opportunity for the party to "run" itself, as the Americans say; and I, who am accused of despotic designs, give it all possible support. I appeal to the Secular party to make a special effort for its own sake. Never before have we had a treasurer who has taken such an intelligent interest as Mr. Hartmann in the Society's affairs. All the money received will pass through his hands. I shall be happy to wash my own hands of all financial responsibility. And I conclude by saying that the party ought to have done something of this kind long ago.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. C. COHEN lectures again at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, this evening (July 25), his subject being "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value."

A "Moral Instruction School Board Election Conference" was held on Monday evening in the Board Room of the Holborn Town Hall. Delegates were present representing the Ethical Union, the National Secular Society, the London Trades Council, the Fabian Society, several branches of the Social Democratic Federation, the Battersea Labor League, and other advanced bodies in the metropolis. Mr. Frederic Harrison, who presided, delivered a very interesting speech in which he denounced the Compromise of 1871 as absurd and unjust, and denied that the Bible, with its irrational and inhuman elements, could be a proper text-book of morality in our public schools. Dr. Stanton Coit moved that the general policy expressed in the resolutions put forward by the Ethical Union should be made the basis of election work in each metropolitan division. He did not think it possible to put special candidates in the field at present, and therefore the work during the forthcoming School Board elections would have to be of a propagandist character. Mr. Foote said that the idea was a good one, of substituting natural moral instruction for supernatural religious teaching, if there were any feasibility about it; but that could only be decided by experiment, and it would be worth while to give the project an opportunity. The resolution was carried.

It was decided that an Executive Committee should be appointed to draw up a Manifesto to issue literature, collect funds, and appoint local committees. Unfortunately, a long and warm discussion took place on a technicality, which might easily have been ended in a few minutes by a little more tact; and it was ultimately decided that the Conference should adjourn for (say) ten days, with a view to seeing what other resolutions might be necessary. The Executive Committee will be appointed at the next meeting.

When that meeting takes place it is to be hoped that the delegates will keep to business, and not make propagandist speeches. They do not assemble to convert each other, but to decide plans of action on a common agreement. What is to be done, and how to do it, are the only questions at issue. All discussion beyond that only leads to discord and division.

In our advertisement columns will be found an appeal for the promotion of a Bazaar to raise funds to extend the accommodation at the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school. The object is a worthy one, and we hope it will meet with a good response.

Digitized by Google

For several years past the Secularists at New Brompton have held open-air meetings on the recreation-ground called Chatham Lines, and these meetings have always been very orderly, with the exception of a recent one, which was disturbed by a few foolish Christians, whose conduct is universally condemned. On Thursday evening, July 15, when Mr. Cohen went there to lecture, the Secularists were informed by Sergt.-Major Cox that Sir Charles Warren had ordered that the meeting should not be held. Mr. Boorman, the secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, has written a courteous letter to Sir Charles Warren, pointing out that permission is given to other bodies to hold meetings on the ground, and asking that the Secularists, who are also citizens, shall not be excluded. Sir Charles Warren is known to be a very fervent Christian, and his name is associated in London with "Bloody Sunday"; but we hope he will rise superior to the bigotry of denying Secularists the common rights of free speech.

The Liverpool Branch has arranged for a course of lectures by Mr. J. M. Robertson, two on each Sunday, from September 12 to October 3, inclusive. The subjects are attractive, and as the hall in which the lectures are to be delivered is of limited size, it is advisable that friends should obtain course tickets, which are being sold at three shillings, and can be had from Mr. J. Roberts, 99 Saxony-road.

The friends of Dr. Moncure D. Conway and Mrs. Conway will be pleased to hear that Mrs. Conway has been much benefitted by her voyage. Mr. Conway's place has been taken, until September, by Mr. Washington Sullivan, a convert from Catholicism; but it is doubtful if the arrangement will be permanent.

Mr. R. P. Edwards, 2 Leohead-road, W., a member of the West London Branch, who has frequently lectured with acceptance for his own Branch in Hyde Park, is willing to offer his services to other societies. We have not had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Edwards, but we hope soon to receive the report of those who have given him a trial.

The New York *Sun* tells how Boston Common is being secularized on Sunday. Formerly permits were only given for religious services. Now the man or society that wants to advocate the single-tax theory has just as good a chance to exhort as the one who preaches from a Bible text and urges his hearers to embrace religion. In fact, the Sunday afternoon stroller through this forum can hear preached all shades of religious and political views.

New York is straining to remove the hub of the universe from Boston into its own State. A school is to be founded near New York to be known as the School of Ethics and Psychology. A leading object is the teaching of Buddhism. The teachers will, unlike the missionaries of the Christian faith, take the vows of poverty, and never teach or preach for money. They have secured the services of Mr. H. Dharmapals, formerly of Ceylon, who was a delegate to the Parliament of Religions, representing the religion of Buddha. The Executive Council is composed of Dr. Jean du Buy, Secretary; Dr. Alfred Walton, Treasurer; Mrs. Elizabeth Matthews, Prof. Edward A. Spring, Countess M. de Canovarro, and Myron W. Phelps, with a large membership of earnest, thinking people, who, not in harmony with dogmatic theology, are willing to spend their time and money in searching out the truth.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, July 10, reprints Mr. J. M. Wheeler's article on "The Resurrection Mystery." It also has a notice of the death of Daniel Baker.

The Open Court, of Chicago, gives as a frontispiece to its July number a portrait of the German Freethinker, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. There is also an article on the Rev. J. M. Goeze and Lessing, giving an account of the controversy between the popular man of God and the poor *littérateur*. In Lessing's time Goeze was a famous pastor, who, as far as applause went, had all the best of it. Now he is almost forgotten, and the advocacy of the old traditional belief is becoming a laughing stock to the educated world. Professor Cornill begins an important series of papers on "The History of the People of Israel," and there is a well-illustrated article on "Eschatology in Christian Art," which helps to show the terrible character of Christian belief when it was living and growing.

Our readers will remember that when the Glasgow Sunday pleasure-steamer, *Victoria*, first went down the Clyde to Dunoon she landed her passengers on the pier, where they were kept prisoners until they broke a window in the gate-keeper's house and crawled through. To prevent a repetition of the "scandalous scene on the Sabbath," caused solely by the pietists, the Dunoon Commissioners built great gates of wood to prevent landing at the pier-head.

But they reckoned without Graeme Hunter and his host from Glasgow, who last Sunday stormed the pier and smashed the brand-new gates to smithereens. The townspeople were on the side of the invaders, and they received them with extravagant signs of delight, such as the beleaguered of Derry manifested towards Captain Kirke's men. The stout Argyleshire police were swept away like driftwood before a tidal wave, and a bloodless victory was scored for the Glaswegians. The Burgh Commissioners should now appoint a special day of fasting and humiliation.

"Atheos" contributes a good letter to the *Grimsby News* on the influence of Christianity on the world. It is pleasant to see newspapers giving both sides a fair hearing.

A first instalment of the correspondence between Renan and Berthelot, the great chemist, appears in the *Revue de Paris*. "It is as clear as daylight to me," says Renan in one of these letters, "that Christianity is dead, quite dead, and that no good can be done with it." Intellectual depression might for a time throw the masses back towards the old faith. "But," says Renan, "if I saw the whole world come back to Christianity, I would not believe in its vitality. The more I learn the better I can descry the elements of a new religion."

Ingersoll's grand lecture on Shakespeare, one of his very finest efforts, is now reprinted on this side of the Atlantic, and is on sale at Mr. Forder's. The Colonel is a close student of Shakespeare, and is never tired of reading his immortal dramas. His criticism is done lovingly, and with a poetic enthusiasm which befits the lofty subject. Every admirer of Ingersoll, who is also a reader of Shakespeare, will hasten to obtain a copy of this beautiful discourse.

SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS OF A SCOTCHMAN AND FREETHOUGHT.

My mother dying in childbed when I was four years of age, my father sent me to live with his parents in Glasgow. My grandfather had a lot of books, and read much; my grandmother said that he was deistical. My grandmother was a strong Christian of a Presbyterian sect—I think called the "Auld Lights." I attended church with her, and also Sunday-school. She taught me to read, and ere I was eight years of age she used to take me with her, when she went to take tea with a friend, that I might read a chapter out of the Bible ere they took tea—a common custom of religious fakirs of the time. I suspect she was proud of this (and me), for she sent me to school when I was about eight years for the purpose, she said, that I might learn the new pronunciation of words—"might' and "light," instead of "micht" and "licht," as she pronounced them; and I was put at once into the "Bible and Collection Class"—a proof of the attention she had given me. Here I remained for nine months.

My father, having married again, took me to Dundee to live with him. Before I left my grandmother I had strong doubts of the eternity of damnation. I could not reconcile it with either humanity or justice; but I dared not mention this to her, nor did it occur to me that anyone but myself had such doubts. At that time hell, with all its painted horrors, was openly and eloquently preached from pulpits; and the more eloquently and terrifically it was treated, the more the preacher was praised.

I loved my grandmother, though I doubted some of her fierce beliefs. One Sunday we were walking in the country, and I began to whistle. She said: "George, ye munna whistle on the Sabbath." I desisted, but reasoned thus: If I put my lips in a certain form and blow through them, there comes a whistle; if I put them in another form, there is no whistle—where is the good or evil? This was but infant logic; but the mind was of an inquiring order, preparing to reason on what it was told.

My grandfather died when I was ten to eleven years of age, and several chests full of books came to my father.

My stepmother was a Wesleyan, though not a strict one; but she caused me and her son by her first husband to attend a Wesleyan chapel.

My father called himself an "Independent," but I don't remember his going to church. On Sundays he was with his books, or teaching me arithmetic. He wrote out the multiplication table large, and posted it on the window-shutter so that I could see it at a glance.

I helped to empty the chests of my grandfather's books,

Digitized by Google

and came on a lot of weekly numbers of a serial—called, I think, the *Universalist*. There was a motto on each number, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." These were my sentiments. I read these numbers, and I was glad to find that there were others who didn't believe in the eternity of hell. This gave me great consolation, and nerved me to think on.

At this period, till I was about fourteen or fifteen, I was a praying Christian. Many a night did I fall asleep on my knees in bed saying my prayers. Other fellows went down on their knees on the floor, with their elbows on a chair, after they had partly stripped. I never could see anything in the particular position; and especially in winter time I found it more comfortable to get into bed first with my face on the pillow. And I can, after all those years, still recommend this as the most comfortable position for those who still pray. My prayers were always original. I thought it more respectful to God to pour out my thoughts in my own language than in those poetical ditties such as "This night I lay me down to sleep." But I soon began to get ashamed of my prayers. I sometimes thought myself impudent in asking God for this or that, as if I could instruct him or remind him, which made me think I was too egotistical. I had better live a good life and not trouble him. One fine summer evening I saw thousands of very minute flies fill the air near me. I looked at them swaying too and fro, and I thought: "Now, were all these worshipping, or praying to, me, would I think any more of them for it? No; I would think them foolish. Far better that they should enjoy their lives, and not mind me." And as I thought that those flies and I were much more a likeness of each other than was I to the Creator of the universe, my praying capacity decreased as my thinking capacity enlarged.

This took place about the time that Robert Owen had agitated thinkers by his *Essays on the Formation of Character*. These were condemned by religious folks—the same fraternity who later condemned the works of Charles Darwin. But the principles enunciated by Owen and Darwin now rule the world, and even those who still condemn the principles of Owen act on them, apparently without knowing it. Owen said that the human character is formed by the organization received at birth, acted on by the circumstances in which it is placed during life. And as these were thrust upon him, philosophically he was not to be praised or blamed for his actions.

I read those essays, and they were so convincing that I was bound to accept their conclusions. Branches were formed in several large towns, notably in Glasgow and Edinburgh, where lectures were given on Sunday mornings and evenings—I speak now only of Scotland. Discussion after the lectures was always allowed, and it was very interesting. Opponents often took a very absurd view of Owen's doctrine of "none praise and blame." I remember in Edinburgh an opponent stood up on the cushioned seat to deliver his speech. This was not allowed, and when an attendant asked him to come down he replied: "Oh, don't blame me, I cannot help it." To which the attendant replied: "Oh, I am not blaming you; and I cannot help getting you down off the seat, which is not allowed."

Sixty years ago "revival meetings" were common in country places after harvest. Young folks attended them for miles around. Burns gives a truthful account of them in his "Holy Fair." The sermons were of the most ferocious kind, the horrors of hell forming a dominant part. I have seen young women brought out of the churches fainting, and laid on the ground to recover.

The farther north you went in Scotland, where there were only villages, the more religious—that is, superstitious—the people were, and the more useless in time of need. I was in Dingwall, a good way north, lodging at a small inn. The captain of a vessel further north arrived in a cart very ill, on his way south to a doctor. He stopped, and was put to bed. The natives were afraid of him, would hardly go near him, wouldn't sit up with him. I did all night, and during the time had written a letter at his request to a relative. He died next day, and it was only by my remembering the address that I wrote that they were able to communicate with his friends. Nothing would prevent them, however, from holding a Wake over his dead body next night, and I went to bed, as I didn't see the good of it. The same custom exists in Ireland, and there it is a night of whisky-drinking, song-singing, carousing, and wild debauchery. Again a land of superstition. A quick-witted, superior people, were they not led, and their characters formed, by the teachings of their priests, who are held sacred by the people.

During the last sixty years I have had opportunities of observing the superstition of many lands; in our Great Britain and Ireland, in continental countries, and in Turkey. The superstitions vary, but the effect is the same on all peoples—a lessening of the power of man to understand nature and render it more beneficial, and an intense ferocity in all to injure those who are not of their particular religious fad.

The more religious man is, the more dirty he is. In Rome during the reign of the Popes, you could not study the magnificent ruins of the old Pagans without risking tramping in human filth. Since the government has been in secular hands all that has been swept away, and in the small towns of Italy men go round picking up human nastiness with small shovels, and carry it away in hampers on their backs. Your religious man thinks disease is a visitation from God; the secular man thinks most of it is caused by bad water, bad smells, and inferiorly-ventilated houses, overcrowding, and starvation.

The secular man improves inferior conditions, prevents overcrowding, makes proper drains, builds more wholesome houses, ventilates them to get better air into them. The religious man falls down on his knees and prays.

When an epidemic attacks a community, religious men flock to church, walk there in procession, perhaps carry lighted candles in broad daylight, sing and chant and pray. The secular man looks to nature for the cause, removes it, and the epidemic slackens and ceases. When Lord Palmerston received a Scottish deputation, asking him to appoint a day of humiliation and prayer to assuage the cholera, he told them to go home and clean and limewash their houses—a purely secular advice.

I have said that I gave up the eternity of hell doctrine; but, as I read and thought, I had to give up its very existence. I could find no place for it. It was all very well for our ignorant ancestors, who thought the world flat, to believe what they were told, that hell was down below and heaven was up above; but to us, who know that the world is a globe, turning round at such a rate that what is up at noon is down at midnight, there remains no up nor down. There is only space without limit, for that which would limit must itself stand in space. And as our most powerful telescopes tell us of nothing but stars, stars, stars, I had to abandon hell as a myth.

I had given up praying, but not reading. The few books I had I had to buy. Among them were Ferguson's *Astronomical Lectures*, Dick's *Sideral Heavens*, Combe's *Constitution of Man*, D'Holbach's *System of Nature*, *The Vestiges of Creation*, some books of poems, travels, and an occasional novel. As I never attended church nor prayer-meetings, I had a great advantage over religious folk.

I had the whole Sunday for my recreation and mental advancement. I had also a much greater advantage. The books I read were ever consistent with themselves; they didn't contradict nature's facts, and they spoke on matters which could be submitted to proof—all which gives a sound foundation to the mind to build upon; whereas the young mind that listens to religious dogmas hears of statements that are often contradictory, and of things that cannot be submitted to proof. So the mind gets confused, and becomes subject to every wave of doctrine. Nothing is too absurd but it can be swallowed by one or the other; hence the numerous creeds that have divided mankind.

It may be asked why I did not give up heaven by the reasonings on which I gave up hell. Well, I at once confess I was here illogical. But I stuck to a God and a heaven for a year or two after I abandoned hell—I suppose because there was something more loveable about it; and the effect of early training must be considered. Although I was a Materialist for years before I came to England, and saw nothing more holy on one day than another, I remember, when first I heard a band of music on board a steamboat on a sunny Sunday morn at Hampton Court, it gave me a momentary twinge, which in a second reacted into gladness, thinking how happy must be the people of merrie England in comparison with those who suffered the dolorous Sundays of my youth in Scotland.

G. ANDERSON.

(To be concluded.)

Digitized by Google

NEEDS EXPLANATION.

["Bishop Goe is only one of the ten thousand observers who sadly proclaim that never was Mammon more powerful. Virtue has increased in the land; has this particular evil diminished? Some day Bishop Goe may offer the explanation" (Melbourne *Argus*). But "some day" is an uncertain date, and meanwhile the world is most anxious to hear further on this subject from the one person who carries the key to the mystery in the pocket of his episcopal apron.]

Good Bishop Goe, explain
Why happens it that Mammon
Controls this world of gammon,
Since virtue *ought* to reign;
Good Bishop Goe, explain.

Each Sabbath-day each priest
Condemns our love of money;
And yet—how sadly funny!—
The Church has not decreased
This evil in the least.

The vulgar greed for gold
To *me* seems quite surprising;
For in your sermonizing
The creed that you uphold
Is just the Word of old.

You cry aloud in prayer
For God to make us "humble."
A faint "Amen" we mumble;
But dooce a bit we care,
As far as *I'm* aware.

Fat wages you receive,
Besides your private income,
And reckon it "fair dinkum,"
While many who believe
Must starve, unless they thieve.

Pale curates on your mat,
Obsequious as waiters,
Pay homage to your gaiters;
They carry you your hat,
And vanities like that.

And *you* would frown and snort,
Although you be so holy,
Were they less meek and lowly.
His Nibs at Bishopscourt
Is—well, not quite *their* sort.

The same respect for rank
Is common in the city,
Where bosses—more's the pity—
Look down upon a "crank"
Who's never robbed a bank.

A prelate, or a lord,
Or any person toney,
Thinks Virtue, which is "stony,'
Can very well afford
To be its own reward.

Though millionaires regard
Our wants without a shudder,
Their milch-cows have no udder
Whereat a struggling bard
Can take a pull. It's *'ard.*

Good Bishop Goe, explain
To us, this Easter season,
Why Mammon sways our reason.
Though Virtue *ought* to reign,
Good Bishop Goe explain.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* FITZ-SINNAH.

A Great Marvel.

That zealous Churchman, the Rev. Canon Venables, of the Church of England (in the article "Episcopacy," *Encyclopædia Britannica*), says: "An almost impenetrable cloud hangs over the closing years of the first and second century. .....How is this momentous change, without a counterpart in history, to be accounted for?.....The more we look into the circumstances, the more the marvel grows."

If the good Canon had examined what pretends to be an earlier history of those times, he would have found nothing but forged records, made by whom no one can know. The hiatus was accidentally left. Wait patiently a few years longer, and the Vatican Library, or a secret closet in some old monastery, will supply the coveted knowledge, just as almost the entire ecclesiastical literature has been found when it was most wanted. To point out any defect in Church history, and the "Almighty powers,' of which the Pope at Rome is the head, will supply the defect, as the "lamented" Joseph Smith had a new revelation whenever such a need was suggested to him by his apostles.

BOOK CHAT.

No one could be better entitled to give his *Mature Thought on Christianity* (Watts and Co.; 6d.) than Professor Francis William Newman, who is now in his ninety-third year. One does not expect at that age anything like virile antagonism. In his *Phases of Faith, Religion not History, What is Christianity without Christ? Christianity in its Cradle*, and *Life after Death*, Professor Newman has sufficiently stated his views. He does not appear to have essentially modified them. He is still a fervent Theist. He believes in a real Jesus, a veritable Jew, who appealed not to the Gentiles, and who, far from being divine, aimed at the princedom. He points out the evidence that the gospels are later than the destruction of Jerusalem, in that Paul knew nothing of the miracles wrought by the living Jesus, though he stayed fourteen days with Peter, and would have been a credulous listener. It is interesting to note that Professor Newman's latest production has as preface some lines entitled "My Greeting to the Coming Sex."

* * *

Those who wish to see what the young poet is thinking may do well to peruse *Hope's Brotherhood*, by William Platt. Its tendency may be judged by the fact that it is published at the *Clarion* office (72 Fleet-street, E.C.; 6d.), and its frankness and originality by its being dedicated, with three bars of choice music, "To my sweetheart, Cissie Willis, who inspired it." The thought of *Hope's Brotherhood* may not be clearly defined, but it has certainly flaming light and aspiration, love of nature and love of humanity. When the poet finds the universe—

> Boundless and timeless, still lacks time and space
> To echo out the grandeur and the grace
> Of that great utterance when the girl says, "I love you,"

we feel pretty sure he is in the first bloom of life when every draught of nature's air becomes the real sacrament of joy. We do not wish Mr. Platt to live to become ashamed of his juvenile verses. He has nothing to be ashamed of. He is evidently endowed with the poet's master-keys of sympathy and melodious expression. The writer of *Hope's Brotherhood* can evidently do something still better. He should be able to soar away from all suspicion of belonging to the erotic, neurotic, and tommy-rotic schools, and become himself an inspiration of love, trust, and high endeavor to others.

* * *

Besides the discoveries of Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt on the borders of the Libyan Desert, Professor Petrie's recent explorations in Egypt have also been wonderfully fruitful. The bulk of his collection is in two groups, separated by a gap of more than thirty centuries, the later documents being an enormous mass of papyri from the Roman city of Behnesa, west of the Nile, about one hundred miles south of Cairo; and the earlier a great variety of objects which throw a flood of light upon the habits of a people evidently in a high state of civilization, who occupied Lower Egypt centuries before Abraham, and almost as far back as the date assigned in the Bible chronology to the creation of the world. It will be long before the whole of the papyri are adequately examined; but there is no doubt they will largely add to our knowledge of ancient Egypt.

* * *

Peter Eckler, of 35 Fulton-street, New York, is issuing a handsomely-got-up "Library of Liberal Classics." The series include the works of Paine, Meslier, Volney, and Voltaire. A specimen volume of Voltaire's *Romances*, which is sent to us, gives "The Man of Forty Crowns" and "The Huron, or Pupil of Nature."

Obituary.

ONE of the old Owenite Socialists passed away on July 14 in the person of Mr. Thomas Riley, who for half a century carried on the business of newsagent and bookseller in Woolshops, Halifax. Mr. Riley had been connected with advanced movements from the days of Robert Owen and Charles Southwell downwards, and was for many years connected with the Halifax Secular Society. He was one of the founders of the Mechanics' Institute, and had reached the age of seventy-seven, respected by all who knew him.

There was a time when falsehood, fulminated from the pulpit, smote like a sword; but, the supply having greatly exceeded the demand, clerical misrepresentation has at last become almost an innocent amusement.—*Ingersoll.*

The Bible is the great cord with which the people are bound; cut this, and the mass will be able to appreciate facts instead of faith.—*C. Bradlaugh.*

Digitized by Google

CORRESPONDENCE.

AGNOSTICISM AND COWARDICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will "Plainspeaker" kindly define what he means by the term "Agnostic"? We shall then be able to discover whether we are among those whom he brands as cowards. For our own part, we do not accept anything we cannot prove to be true; but we do not reject unless we can prove to be false. Therefore, with regard to those things we cannot prove to be true or false we take an agnostic attitude—that is to say, we suspend our judgment, because we have no means at present of proving or disproving them. Is there anything cowardly in this?

This especially applies to religious systems, such as Christianity and Buddhism. We cannot prove or disprove their statements about heaven, hell, purgatory, Nirvana, Karma, re-incarnation, etc. However strong our objections to any or all of these, we cannot pass final judgment upon them without placing ourselves in a judgment seat we may be quite incapable of properly filling, and making our reason or our feeling a criterion for those of the rest of humanity—a course which, though it could not be accused of cowardice, would certainly savor of presumption. We would also mention that, to our mind, all Agnostics are necessarily Freethinkers, though all Freethinkers need not be Agnostics. All alike are outside the pale of religious systems, and get an equal share of the scorn and rage of offended orthodoxy. Why, then, should they waste their energies in throwing stones at each other?—Yours truly,

REX (B.A., Cantab).

SIR,—I feel bound to protest against the letter in last week's *Freethinker* headed "Cowardly Agnosticism." The letter is unjust in its unwarrantable epithets, and recklessly impolitic. "Cowardly" and "lily-livered" are among the most offensive expressions that men can fling at each other. A writer who has not the courage to sign his own name to his accusation should be exceedingly chary of applying such epithets to other people.

The ethical culturists that I have come across are honorable, gentlemanly, and very good-natured people, who do excellent work, and by no means deserve to be called hard names because they do not go so far as we do. They demolish Christianity in their own fashion, though they do not care to use such strong language as that in which "Plainspeaker" indulges. The Ethical party and the Secular party are identical in their aim. They are two wings of an army; and any form of quarrel between them is greatly to be regretted, as only calculated to hinder the progress of Rationalism.

As an Agnostic as well as an Atheist, I do not like to see such a heading as "Cowardly Agnosticism." It seems as much out of place in a Freethought journal as "Dastardly Secularism," or "Lily-livered Atheism," or "Infamous Freethought" would be. When "Plainspeaker" associates Agnosticism with "cowardice" and "pretence," and quotes, with at least partial approval and acceptance, Dr. Sexton's paltry insult that "Agnostic means ignoramus, or humbug," the abuse thus directed against Agnosticism is too much like fouling our own nest and playing into the enemy's hands to be at all agreeable to thoughtful Freethinkers. If we feel so much braver than our comrades of the ethical culture movement, let us spend our heroism and energy in attacking our common enemy, superstition, and not waste our strength in belaboring, or insulting, or even unnecessarily ridiculing or wounding, weaker brethren who are less aggressive and more constructive in temperament than we. If we treat them as "Plainspeaker" does, we must not be surprised if they avoid us as being too brutal and savage in our methods and language.

The Atheist, if he has a sound and cautious intellect, must adopt the Agnostic position, just as Bradlaugh and all logical Atheists have had to do. He cannot safely deny the existence of a something or other which is labelled with a meaningless word and defined in many conflicting ways, or alleged to be indefinable and beyond all human comprehension. If it is cowardly to take refuge in Agnosticism, then Bradlaugh and Huxley were cowards. I trust that this will enable "Plainspeaker" to see both the injustice and the imprudence of his accusations. Why, too, except for purposes of hasty rhetoric, he should place a "showy mantle" on the shoulders of Agnosticism—the modest confession of ignorance of the unknown—passes my comprehension.—Yours truly,

W. P. BALL.

Rev. Dr. Primrose (winding up a few remarks)—"Oh, my young friends, the Lord loves a cheerful giver." Little Johnnie (speaking up)—"Does he love you, sir?" Rev. Dr. Primrose—"I labor all I can to make him do so." Little Johnnie—"Then please put a few more berries on my plate."

PROFANE JOKES.

"THAT was a sensational prayer Dr. Gumms delivered the other Sunday. I wonder if he expected it to be answered." "Certainly; and so it was too. Why, nearly every paper in the country replied to it."

Mrs. Barber noticed that her daughter, Edith, did not say her prayers in the morning, and questioned her as to the cause. "Don't you want God to take care of you during the day as well as at night?" she asked Edie. "I think if God takes care of me at night, you might take care of me daytimes," was the quick response.

From the diocese of Canterbury; story vouched for by hearer. Protestant vicar's wife to lady friend—"Mr. —— [a neighboring priest] is dreadful; he wears a libretto." (She meant "biretta.")

Apropos of "providential escapes" from railway and other accidents, a story is told of the Bishop of London. A lady was narrating to his lordship how her aunt had escaped from a railway accident. "Five people in the same compartment were killed, and my aunt alone escaped; wasn't it *providential*?" "Humph!" said the Bishop, "as I don't know your aunt, I can't say."

"Brethren," said a well-known bishop the other day in the course of a sermon, "I beg you to take hold of your own heart and look it straight in the face."

This was not so bad as the curate who read that "Immediately the cock wept, and Peter went out and crew bitterly."

Eve—"Did you eat that apple, Adam?" Adam—"I'm sorry to say I did." Eve—"And I was going to make a pie with it!" Adam—"Then I'm glad I ate it."

THOSE BOYS.

"I SAY, Pa, wouldn't it be a bad job for God if the sky was to open and he was to fall through?"

"Ma, have I been a good boy to-day?" "Yes, Bobby." "Well, ma, let me go to bed like a man without saying my prayers."

Sky-Pilot—"Do you like to attend church along with your papa and mamma?" "Well, I guess I like it about as well as pa does."

Revivalist—"My dear boy, when that great day comes will you be found with the sheep or the goats?" "Blowed if I know; ma calls me her pet lamb, but pa calls me a kid; so I'll give it up."

Sky-Pilot—"Why did the shepherd in scripture leave the ninety-and-nine to look after one?' "Cos he were a tup."

"Now, dear boys, I have been telling you about the Blessed Savior. You have read your Bibles, and I want you all to tell me which Bible character you would most like to see when you get to heaven?" A general chorus rose for "Gerliar."

The Protection of Birds.

The Humanitarian League has just issued several new publications, one being a collection of letters recently contributed to the *Saturday Review* by Mr. Joseph Collinson, Sir Charles Dilke, M.P., W. H. Hudson, C.M.Z.S., and Mr. Ernest Bell, M.A. The correspondence deals with the question of protecting rare birds from the ruthless hands of the collector. Mr. Collinson points out that some of our most beautiful birds are in a fair way to become extinct for want of legal protection, in which Sir Charles Dilke agrees. One of the writers thinks there would be no difficulty in passing a law for their special protection all the year round.

Christian Bliss.

When the saints in glory shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are who are naturally in the same circumstances with themselves; when they shall see the smoke of their torment and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear the dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they in the meantime are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity—how they will rejoice!—*Rev. Jonathan Edwards.*

There is no learned man but will confess he hath much profited by reading controversies, his senses awakened, and his judgment sharpened. If, then, it be profitable for him to read, why should it not, at least, be tolerable for his adversary to write?—*Milton.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, T. Thurlow, "Religion in the Grip of Science."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, H. P. Ward.
EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss. "A Crumbling Creed."
FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, C. Cohen, "Foreign Missions."
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, Stanley Jones.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 8.30, Stanley Jones.
ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The March of Time."
KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, C. Cohen.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. July 27, at 8.30, C. Cohen.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack; 7, W. J. Ramsey. July 28, at 8, H. P. Ward. July 29, at 8, Mr. Westacott.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Religion and Morality."

COUNTRY

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall): 3, Monthly meeting of members.
OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board-Schools): July 31, at 6, J. Taylor, "Authenticity of the Scriptures."
PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Lecture or reading by a local gentleman.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 25, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park. August 1, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 25, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton. August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 22, m., Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, Camden-road, N.W.—July 25, m., Mile End.

H. P. WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—July 25, m., Camberwell, Station-road; a., Peckham Rye.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING them. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price Twopence,

Evolution & Christianity.

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

180 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices pos. free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Just published, cloth, price 2s. 6d. post free,

THE RATIONALIST'S MANUAL.

A Compendium of Theological and Biblical Criticism, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics. In two Parts. By ALETHEIA, M.D.

Contents.—Part I. CHRISTIANISM: ITS SUPERSTITIONS AND ORIGIN. The Supernatural—Revelation—The Teachings of Jesus not Original—Inspiration—Mistranslations of the Bible Text—Some Bible Legends—A Few Contradictions in the "Inspired Text"—The Christian Messiah; and Contemporary History—Events in the Life of Jesus; Miracles, etc.—Origin of the Bible—Prayer—Worship, Sacrifice, and Baptism—Heaven, Hell, Ghosts, and Bogies—Future Life—Christian Symbols; the Cross, etc.—Ancient Festivals, Sabbaths, etc.—Ancient Gods, Trinities, and Scriptures—Origin of Religion (Theology)—Origin of the Word "Christian"—The Fruits of Christianism——Part II. RATIONALISM: ITS PHILOSOPHY AND RULE OF LIFE. Rationalism—First Principles—Truths—Some Definitions—Knowledge, Belief, Faith, etc.—The Cause of All—Life—Origin of Life—Evolution—Polarity—Ascent of Man—Death and Dissolution—Morality—The Universe—The Earth; Geological Epochs, etc.—The Solar System; Seasons, etc.—The Ancient Zodiac—Ethics and Customs of Social Life—Duty and Fault—Man's Moral Code—Rationalist Societies—Public Holidays and their Origin—Naming and Registration of Children—Marriage—Burial of the Dead—Freedom of Thought and Speech—Oaths, Affirmations, and Last Will—Index.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR. Price 6d., post free 7d.,

A RATIONALIST CATECHISM

Of subjects concerning Man—his Gods and Superstitions.

"Should be of interest to all; . . . gives in brief and concise shape a large number of the conclusions of rational science and criticism with regard to religion."—*Freethinker.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price6d.paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

CHAPTERS:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3, Monkery; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus.'

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

"THE EXTINCTION OF WAR, POVERTY, AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES." By A DOCTOR OF MEDICINE, author of *Elements of Social Science*. 157 pp., 6d., by post 8d. Just published. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. "The author writes with earnestness and power, and his treatise deserves to be attentively read."—*The Literary Guide.*

Digitized by Google

GUINEA COSTUMES.



21/- **All Made to Measure.** 21/-

Patterns and Self-Measurement Form on Application.

100 HIGH-CLASS
COSTUME CLOTHS
to select from,
including all the Latest Designs and Colorings.

Every Garment cut to Customer's special measures by first-class cutters, and made up by none but experienced hands, working under the best conditions.

NO SLOP WORK. NO SWEATING.

All Goods carefully packed and sent Carriage Paid.

Complete Costume, 21s. Skirt only, 10s. 6d. Divided Skirts from any of the 100 Patterns, 6s., or 2 for 11s. 6d.



J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, Bradford.

Price 2d., by post 3d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE JULY NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Faith and Intellectual Advancement.
Sex in Religion.
The Blossoming of Hellenism.
A Freethought *Vade Mecum*.
The Blight of Respectability.
Mr. Morley on Machiavelli.
An Introduction to Philosophy.
Chats about Books. VII.—With Mr. J. M. Robertson.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings, Rationalism in the Magazines, etc.

Also two four-page Supplements—(1) A lecture by Mr. F. J. Gould on Professor Goldwin Smith's *Guesses at the Riddle of Existence*; (2) "A Plan of Moral Instruction," designed to supersede the present method of religious instruction now practised in public elementary schools.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.
The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.
Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason*.) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready, Price Three Shillings,

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST.

ESSAYS ON HUMAN EVOLUTION.

BY J. M. WHEELER.

With an Introduction by G. W. FOOTE.

"The book is well done throughout."—*Weekly Times and Echo.*

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER

VOL. XVII.—No. 31. SUNDAY, AUGUST 1, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BOOTH AND CALIBAN.

WILLIAM BOOTH, the sole proprietor and manager of the religious and trading organization known as the Salvation Army, recently held a celebration at the Crystal Palace, where he read out to his followers an obliging telegram he had received from the Queen. Henceforth he may fairly claim to be considered "respectable." At first he was regarded as a mountebank, then as a well-intentioned faddist, afterwards as one with a message for the "residuum," and still later as a kind of social savior deserving the moral and financial support of capitalists and the nobility. All that was lacking has now been secured. William Booth's "Army" has been acknowledged by royalty as a "safe" institution, and Her Majesty has addressed him by his darling designation of "General." Yes, the Jubilee, among other surprising things, has brought about the apotheosis of the commercial Wesley of the nineteenth century.

This is one side of the picture. Let us look at the other. The following is an extract from the London *Echo* of Tuesday, July 27 :—

> "At Penge to-day, Alfred Mong, a Salvationist, of Fortress-road, Kentish Town, was charged with cruelty to a horse. Defendant took part in the Salvation Army demonstration at the Crystal Palace last week, when he was found driving a horse with a sore back. Defendant was fined 15s."

Alfred Mong's devotion to Christianity in general, and to Salvationism in particular, is quite compatible with gross and deliberate cruelty to a helpless dumb animal. He gives so much thought to Jesus Christ and William Booth that he has none left for his own horse. Perhaps he had read Paul's brutal query, "Doth God care for oxen?" and thought that all non-human beings, perhaps all non-Salvationists, were outside the pale of consideration.

We are far from saying, or insinuating, that all Salvationists would act like Alfred Mong. But here is a man who ill-uses a poor horse while taking part in a Salvation Army demonstration. It is not an ordinary case of cruelty to animals. The circumstances give it a special significance, at least to a student of the relations between religion and morality.

The class of people that Booth caters for in the religious market are, generally speaking, what the evolutionist calls survivals. They belong to pre-civilized stages of human development. Their coarse texture is only accessible to savage forms of excitement; hence the crudity of their music, and the overwhelming predominance of the big drum in their bands. We have often stopped for a few minutes to listen to Salvationist exhorters, and we do not remember hearing a single sentence that was worth uttering.

Practically our view of the Salvation Army and its "General" is held by Mr. Edward Jenkins, whose *Pantalas* —a social study in the guise of fiction—has just been published by Messrs. Bentley. The book opens with the discovery by a half-fuddled vestryman, a sober policeman, and an enterprising newspaper reporter, of a new Caliban one foggy winter night in the streets of London. The creature lies prone in the gutter, his huge deformed body is covered with a miscellaneous collection of rags, no arms are distinguishable, and the only visible symptom of a leg is "a short, stumpy limb, with a foot at the end of it which resembled that of an elephant." His shock of tangled red hair, his low brow, his one blood-shot eye, and other interesting peculiarities, make him resemble "one of those monsters in the pictures of hell which the old artists used to paint to frighten sinners and cheer the spirits of the faithful." Finally, the Thing moves about with two crutches and a low small-wheeled trolley. The newspaper reporter recognises It as one of "the General's Submerged Tenth," and the policeman says "It's w'ere misery marries misery that you get the likes of him." Afterwards we learn that the new Caliban has a wife—who is not a Miranda—and a litter of young Calibans more or less resembling himself.

The reporter conveys Caliban to his newspaper office, gives him plenty to eat and especially to drink, and makes good copy out of him. London is soon hot with the news, and exhorters, philanthropists, and scheme-mongers flock to the court where the monster dwells with his brood and their dam. The Rev. Mr. Mildewe, a luxurious evangelical preacher, looks at Caliban shudderingly and says "It is a visitation of God." Mr. Maxim declares this to be humbug. Addressing the preacher, he says :—

> "You profess to know something about Him—at any rate, you are paid for finding out. You say He is good and just, and yet you charge Him with having created this terrible being in pursuance of an accumulating vengeance against a long line of progenitors. What kind of theology, I should like to know, is that to preach to people whom you desire to draw to the knowledge and love of an over-ruling Providence?"

Mr. Maxim continues his sceptical remarks—sneering at the Bible and its code of morals, and at the ignorant impudence of the clergy—until he raises the whole court against him and is obliged to decamp. All the sects unite against the common enemy, and drive him off the field. But when they try to agree upon a remedy for the ills of the new Caliban, which is to be found in a blending of the various shades of Christian faith, they soon quarrel with each other, and it becomes manifest that "pandenominationalism means pandemonium."

Presently the Holy Militia make a descent upon the court, and besiege the monster. This corybantic Christianity (Professor Huxley's phrase) seems to have borrowed its rites from "the fetish ceremonies of Dahomey," but it makes an impression upon Caliban and his family, and the whole lot are swept into the ranks.

The General of the Holy Militia appears upon the scene; his face, with its "hawk nose, eagle eyes, and firm-set mouth," evincing "extraordinary keenness and strength of character." He prepares a vast, fantastic scheme of social salvation for the likes of Caliban, which he declares to be "the grandest scheme of human redemption ever thought out since the Savior worked out his in the council of heaven." The General is going to start a big farm, rear rabbits and poultry, breed pigs, and make sausages by the mile. All that he wants is the cash, and that he proposes to get from "the benevolent and the wealthy."

Pantalas, the new Caliban, passes through the General's social mill. But somehow or other the success of the great venture is not equal to its founder's "colossal conceit." The submerged tenth are as numerous and miserable as ever. Most of those who are "rescued" drift back into the slough. Pantalas, his old woman, and his kids are turned out because they are unprofitable, and again we find him in his squalid court, where he dies of starvation.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Smith, a long-headed, benevolent man, who never believed in the General or his social scheme, brings food and brandy to poor Caliban; but it is too late. The monster dies almost in his arms. Turning to the General, who is just then visiting the court on a round of inspection, he tells him that he has failed; but the Chief of the Holy Militia replies that he is only just at the beginning of his experiment, and is "on the high road to success.' This is too much for Mr. Smith. He tells the General that his scheme was the offspring of conceit, that his altruism was pretentious egotism, that he wanted to get honor and glory for himself and his own sect, and that this sectarianism is the curse of modern philanthropy. Then the group of bystanders disperse, and Prelewski the Anarchist goes out last of all into the night, shrugging his shoulders, and muttering between his teeth—"Ah! zere ees bot one remedy for zees dam malady —*ze dynameet!*"

Mr. Smith's final words to the bystanders before they disperse may, we presume, be taken as an expression of Mr. Jenkins's own views:—

> "Until society agrees to sink its bigotries, its jealousies, its fads and conceits, in order to unite on the common purpose of redemption for this class, no practical solution will be found. The truest and noblest Socialism consists, not in the equalization of interests, which is an impossible dream, but in the harmonizing of ideas and efforts."

This is wise enough in its way, but it is like bespeaking the millennium. To hope that this temper of mind will soon prevail, in face of the egotism and mutual hatred of sects, is as wild a dream as that of the General of the Holy Militia. It is so easy to recognise social disease, so hard to prescribe remedies! Must we not rely, after all, on time and the progress of science and general enlightenment? Meanwhile some good is done by pointing out, as Mr. Jenkins does, that "spiritual" remedies will not cure a social malady.

G. W. FOOTE.

CALVIN'S GOD.

> O Thou, wha in the Heavens dost dwell,
> Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
> Sends ane to Heaven and ten to Hell
> A' for thy glory,
> And no for onie guid or ill
> They've done afore thee.
> —R. BURNS's *Holy Willie's Prayer.*

I SEE that the Rev. A. H. Craufurd, M.A., of Oxford, is reported as preaching in St. Bernard's Parish Church (Dr. Mathieson's), Edinburgh, and as using the following words, on Sunday, July 18: "Atheism was never likely to be accepted as the belief of men, but Calvin had done more to warp the religion of Jesus than a thousand Mr. Bradlaughs." This utterance in a Scotch church is surely a notable sign of the times. I do not propose to make any further comment on the first clause, which is of the nature of a prophecy, beyond the remark of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, that "Not one man in a thousand has either sufficient strength of mind or sufficient goodness of heart to be an Atheist."

To my mind, Calvin, so far from warping the religion of Jesus, drew from it the only consistent system. It seems to me, too, that the rejection of Calvinism logically leads to the rejection of every form of Theism. Few men ever studied the Bible more closely than did John Calvin, or expounded it with more pith and logic. Calvinism is simply the necessary deductions from belief in an Omnipotent Personal Deity, and these deductions are founded on the Bible.

Jahveh declares himself emphatically the author of all. "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things" (Isaiah xlv. 7). No words could more absolutely proclaim the divine responsibility. Again, he says: "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying: My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10). His will is the immutable decree of fate. "For the Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" Jesus is as emphatic. "No man," he is reported as saying, "can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John vi. 44). "Many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew xx. 16). Men are sharply divided into sheep and goats, and for the former is "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew xxv. 34). "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," says James in Acts xv. 18. Paul says: "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.....Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" This, and this alone, is consistent Theism. Calvinism is just Bibleism. It is the real, old, genuine faith—absolute dependence on God. Granted there is an Eternal, Almighty, and All-knowing Creator and Ruler of the Universe, what other attitude is logically possible? To such a being, man, his creature, must be infinitely less than microscopical creatures to us, for we cannot create, though we may destroy, them. It is Calvin's God or none. Calvinism has declined simply because consistent Theism has declined. Calvin's God is the only genuine article on the theological board.

It is true Calvinism is fatalism, but so is all Theism. Prayer from a finite being to an infinite one can hardly be anything but an impertinence. If there be such a Dread Sovereign, the unquestioning submission of Islam is the true attitude of his creatures. An extension of human life to all eternity can only be given by the unmerited grace of God. Before such a being self-abasement is the only devotion. There is no need of elaborate ritual or pomp of worship. The piping "kist o' whustles" can scarcely be supposed acceptable to such a being; and, indeed, one would think silence the one form of worship. We are

> But helpless pieces of the game he plays
> Upon this chequer-board of nights and days;
> Hither and thither moves, and cheques and slays,
> And, one by one, back in the closet lays.

The only trouble about Calvin's God is that it is extremely difficult or absolutely impossible to tell him from the Devil!

Calvinism holds its own where men are hardly wrought and unhappy. For, when one's utmost is done, and there remains but a sense of human impotence foiled by contact with fate, refuge is taken in the thought of a Higher Power. As human lot improves and self-reliance developes, Theism declines.

Calvinism is as clearly taught by the Church of England as by the Church of Scotland. Its Tenth Article reads: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will." The Thirteenth Article declares that "works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit are not acceptable to God"; and the Seventeenth Article elaborates the doctrine of Predestination and Election.

Calvinism, with its concomitant unquestioning submission, was taught in the Church as long as the congregations would stand it. But now it is discovered to warp the religion of Jesus worse than a thousand Bradlaughs—as though Bradlaugh ever warped the wonderful, and wonderfully mysterious, religion of Jesus, the sweet teacher who came not to send peace, but a sword; to set a man at variance with his father, and who said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Whosoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city."

Calvinism, with its legitimate doctrine, that men, and even babes, may be fore-ordained to unending torment, is horrible. But it is honest. It is genuine Christianity. But men like the Rev. A. H. Craufurd, M.A., sworn to believe in these very doctrines, and to uphold the creeds, confessions, and articles in which they are found, now repudiate Calvinism, and offer instead a treacle theology from which they have eliminated all the brimstone. I rejoice in it as a sign of the development of their hearts; but I do not think much

Digitized by Google

of their heads. I must tell them their honey-pot Deity is not to be found in nature. The God of Calvin may offend the heart of humanity; but the God of Craufurd can have no hold on its intellect. It is Calvin's God or none.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE DECLINE OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT is not here alleged that the outward profession of Christianity has declined to the extent it would have done if the dictates of sincerity and consistency had been faithfully obeyed. It requires more intellectual courage than at present we find among the masses to produce an open and general renunciation of the popular faith. Besides, business and pecuniary interests are so interwoven with the Christian profession that to frankly sacrifice the latter often means to damage the former. To a very large extent the apparent adherence to Christianity is based, not upon intellectual assent, but rather upon considerations of pounds, shillings, and pence. Still, it is an encouraging fact that the number of honest and avowed rejectors of the Christian religion is constantly increasing. Even the church attendance has considerably fallen off within the last few years, and but for such secular agencies as singing, music, etc., as are now employed in the "places of worship," the decrease would probably be more palpable than it is. Some important statistics have recently been published, showing the poor attendance at the London churches. A writer in the *Daily Mail*, dated April 8 of the current year, made a special observation of the numbers present in several of the City churches on one particular day, and the figures he supplies afford a curious revelation. Visiting ten of those sanctuaries without any definite principle of selection, but taking them as they came, he found the aggregate of persons ministered to on this particular Sunday morning to be 147. This is an average of fourteen and a fraction for each church. The cost to the State of ministering to these few "precious souls" amounted to the sum of £7,128 per annum, or about £48 10s. per head. The clerical incomes in two instances are over £2,000, while the majority range over £500.

The "Christian" *Daily Chronicle*, dated April 10, has the following editorial: "We publish in another page some startling figures about the City churches. It has long been common knowledge that the forty churches within the boundaries of the City's square mile of area were distinguished by two special features—the largeness of their incumbents' incomes and the smallness of their congregations. The Rev. H. W. Clarke, who has compiled these figures, set himself some six months ago to ascertain the facts. At intervals of a month he made four Sunday visits to every one of the City churches which are open on Sunday for divine worship. At each visit he counted the congregation; and he now, in an open letter to the present Bishop of London, gives us for each church the average attendance at morning and evening service, and other particulars gleaned in the course of his investigations. The figures are very eloquent. St. Alphage, London-wall, with an income of £925 a year, has an average attendance of four in the morning and six in the evening. St. Olave, Hart-street, averages thirty-four in the morning and twenty-seven in the evening. The income is £2,050 a year with a house, which the present incumbent, who resides in Kensington, has leased for £220 a year. We also have made a little calculation; and we find from Mr. Clarke's figures that a certain fifteen of these City churches have a united income of £9,933 a year, with rectories, vicarages, etc., as well, and that the average aggregate congregations of these fifteen churches number only 148 persons in the morning and 155 in the evening. That is an average income per church of £662 a year and house for an average attendance of about ten persons morning and evening." The gospel of "Blessed be ye poor" has a double significance in this case—the poverty of attendance and the salary received for preaching a "free salvation."

The "outward and visible signs" of the decline of Christianity are not confined to the churches. Not only have "fast days" and public appeals to "Providence" in cases of national calamities ceased, but "family prayers" have become almost a habit of the past. In the July number of the *Quiver* the question, "Is family prayer declining?" was freely discussed, and such representative men of the churches as the Archbishops of Armagh, the Bishops of Gloucester and of Ripon, Dean Farrar, Dr. Parker, and others, gave it as their opinion that this devotional custom is declining. Dr. Parker frankly stated: "In my opinion, it is almost extinct" (see *Christian World* for July 1). It has been discovered that the theological folly of prayer does not accord with the practical requirements of the age. "The one thing needful" is now found to be secular activity. As the late Mr. Samuel P. Putnam wrote:—

'Tis we must grasp the lighting,
And plough the rugged soil;
'Tis we must beat back suffering,
And plague and murder foil;
'Tis we must build the Paradise,
And bravely right the wrong:
The God above us faileth,
The god *within* is strong.

While the leading organs of the Press refrain from openly repudiating Christianity as being the lever of modern progress, it virtually acknowledges that the dominant factors of present personal and societarian advancement are secular. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph* of May 31 last attributes what success "The Young Men's Christian Association" has achieved to its adoption of secular means. It points out "how enormously life has been improved by the universal organization of clubs and societies; by the invention of new and salutary forms of exercise, from volunteering down to lawn-tennis, golf, and bicycling; and by that general and resolute recognition in the land of the high civic and national value of the education of the body, which has gone ahead of the very decided advances made in the education of the mind." And even the pious *Rock*, of May 28, in alluding to the late Jubilee craze, says: "In connection with these congratulations, we regret that, while all the secular press is ringing with—we had almost said boast of—the wonderful doings of the British race during the last sixty years, God is practically ignored, and in the speeches of our leading public men, as well as in the organs of the Press, there is little or nothing to indicate that England is not a nation of infidels."

Now, in these admissions of secular potency in modern life we see the evidence of the decline of the power of Christianity in the mundane affairs of human existence; and we hail with delight the triumph of those Freethought principles the carrying out of which we hold to be essential to the advancement of the nation. Before the scepticism of the last few decades the elements to which our present progressive state is justly attributed were unknown as active agencies. And it may be fairly asked, if these elements are claimed as being indigenous to Christianity, why were they not manifest in the ages of faith—days when Christianity was really believed, and, as far as it was possible, acted upon? The fact is, when the profession of the Christian religion was genuine, progress was comparatively unknown. The comforts of earth were sacrificed to the preparation for imaginary happiness in heaven, and the duties of man were made subordinate to the supposed will of God. Then it was that truth was tested by the Bible; but now that book is tested by truth, and found sadly wanting in the principal requirements of modern life. Then it was that reason was fettered by a narrow and exclusive faith; but now, by inquiring minds, all beliefs are measured by cultivated reason. Hence, as Dr. Chalmers is reported to have said: "As things stand at present, our creeds and confessions have become effete, and the Bible a dead letter; and that orthodoxy which was at one time the glory, by withering into the inert and lifeless, is now the shame and reproach of all our Churches." In those times, when the Christian profession was honest, reason was decried as a blind, fallacious guide; but now he who follows the advice of reason has, in the words of Scott, in his *Christian Life*, "a mind elevated above the reach of injury; that sits above the clouds in a calm, quiet ether, and, with a brave indifference, hears the rolling thunders grumble and burst under his feet." With such a marvellous and gratifying change as this, who can truthfully assert that our Freethought advocacy has been in vain?

It is not, however, in the *profession* of Christianity only that its decline is perceptible; its decay is equally obvious in the open rejection, by prominent leaders in the Church, of its principal doctrines. Father Ignatius has recently repeated the statement of Canon Gore, that Dean Fremantle who is paid £1,000 a year to preach Christianity,

Digitized by Google

denies "the whole idea of revelation." And in the *Christian World* of July 1 the "Father" is reported to have said: "The splendor of Anglicanism, as represented by the gorgeous ceremonial at St. Paul's on Jubilee Day, was dimmed by the fact that so many of the clergy were denying the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. And Nonconformity was just as bad.....I do not think there is a single Christian doctrine which they believe." Mr. Walter F. Adeney, M.A., in a special article in the same newspaper, dated June 17, relates many of the changes which have taken place in the churches during the last half century. He tells us that not only has Calvinism declined in the Free Churches, but that the conclusions arrived at in reference to the Bible, "in Oxford, Cambridge, and the Scotch Universities, would have startled our forefathers"; that "vagueness, hesitancy, or silence is often found where the preachers of old spoke with no uncertain voice"; and grave discussions have taken place upon eternal punishment and Christ, "the issue of which has been great caution in treating the whole subject"; and finally he says: "Many preachers seem scarcely to know how to expound the doctrine of the Atonement. If, as it may be feared is the case in some places, the Cross is no longer so prominent in the centre of the Gospel message, the change is to be deplored."

Thus the tide of mental progress rolls on, and the work of emancipating the human mind from the darkness of superstition continues—a fact that should encourage us to still toil with all our energies in the fight against theological domination and priestly interference, and in favor of moral dignity and intellectual freedom.

CHARLES WATTS.

SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS OF A SCOTCHMAN AND FREETHOUGHT.

(*Concluded from page 475.*)

AT that time the Freethought party had a number of very bright lecturers. Among them I may name Southwell, Holyoake, Jeffrey, Lloyd Jones, Cooper, and Mrs. Martin. There was no central organization as now. The Branches were each conducted on their own lines. I think the lecturers were paid thirty shillings a week, remaining about a year in one place, and interchanging with other Branches. Of England at that time I knew but little; but some, if not all, of the above lecturers, I believe, had been brought out in England.

Discussions were rife at that time. The clergy had not found out what stuff Freethinkers were made of, and probably did not know the weakness of their own case. They have learned since, and find it safer now to preach where they cannot be contradicted, and confine themselves to traducing Freethinkers.

In politics the Chartists were the most prominent fifty years ago; and I may note that, while many Chartists were not Freethinkers, most Freethinkers were Chartists. Here, again, we see the superiority of Freethought, for already the stronger points of the Charter are now the law of the land. We have for years had vote by ballot. We have not got universal suffrage, but we have got an immense extension of it; and practically we have got equal electoral districts. Nor have we got annual parliaments and payment of members; and query, Are either worth fighting about?

Many of the Chartists left their churches, built others of wood or iron, and political lecturers preached the Gospel to them on Sundays. I remember one Abram Duncan, of whom I knew a little, and I think it cost him some mental worry to preach Christ crucified. About that time we got Mrs. Martin to come from Edinburgh to Arbroath. She lectured on Prayer. I was her *chaperon*, and nailed up her many illustrations in the hall. She had a good audience, but next day the authorities seized her. Southwell rushed across from Edinburgh to defend her, but she was convicted and fined; and Southwell, to have out his vengeance and break new ground, billed the town and lectured, and was not molested. The authorities found they had caught a tartar, on whom they might have to spend a lot of money; so they left him severely alone.

At this time there was a Christian young men's society in Arbroath. Two Freethinkers and I joined it. We were three chums, about sixteen or seventeen years of age. The Society had a weekly meeting for discussion. On these nights we numbered about twenty to thirty, hiring a room in a coffee-house. For a short time our discussions were vigorous, for it was all the rest against us three. By-and-bye they flagged, and within a year, I think, we were all Freethinkers. The last night that I attended the momentous question was, "Whether an old maid or a young widow would make the better wife"—quite a secular subject.

About this time we had the mesmeric craze, which travelled from the *Zoist*, a monthly review, contributed to largely by Dr. Engledue. My two Arbroath chums and I had a go at it—one of them being very sensitive—and we were quite successful in producing the phenomena ascribed to it. I may mention a funny circumstance that occurred in relation thereto. I was sent to do some work at a paper-mill in Fifeshire, where I had frequently been before, and was well known. I talked of mesmerism, and they wanted to see it. About a paper-mill there are a lot of girls who sort the rags. I selected two, and we had an evening. The proprietor, hearing of it, would have me to exhibit it at his house. I did. A few evenings after he must exhibit it to a number of his friends, and he had the same girls. He got one into the sleep all right, but failed to get her out of it; instead of which, the girl went into hysterics, and the company were in desperation. He sent for me. I had never had such a case, and was loath to appear ignorant; so I thought deeply on my way to his house, and decided on my own course, which was to send her into the sleep again. I found the girl in bed, and a dozen people in the bedroom—she raving, and the women weeping. I ordered the company to leave, and shut the door; got her out of bed, and into an easy chair; made a few passes over her, got her into the sleep again, walked out leaving a woman with her, and was much thanked. They wanted me to bring her out at once; I thought better not. Better let the system rest awhile, when I got her restored without trouble. I was very anxious till the end, for I could not afford to show the ignorance I felt.

Another mesmeric scene I may mention. I was on board a ship bound for Constantinople; a boastful American was telling the company one evening all about mesmerism. I don't remember that I said anything, but he hit on me as a fitting subject. Would I let him try? I said I didn't mind. I presently closed my eyes, gave a long sigh, which I knew was the proper thing to do, and he said, "There now." He spoke to me. I gave him a ridiculous answer. He stuck a pin into my arm, but I was prepared for that, and the ladies shuddered and pitied me. And what would my poor wife say if she saw me? They insisted that I should be restored. This he easily did. I slowly opened my eyes, looked dazed to see so many of the passengers, and asked for a drink of water, which I knew to be the usual thing. So let no one tell me that there are no impostors in those spiritual and other *séances* which people pay to see.

Coming down to more modern times, Freethought has a much broader basis than it had up to the fifties. Then it was mostly anti-religious. Anti-religious it must always be, for all religions are but varied superstitions; but during thirty or forty years men of acknowledged eminence, both in books and magazines, have written as they dared not do before Freethought was popularized chiefly through working men, with a small sprinkling of the upper classes. We have had Combe's *Constitution of Man*, Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation*, Buckle's *History of Civilization*, and a host of great thinkers, such as Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer, who spoke and wrote for the upper classes mostly, and numerous Freethought lecturers, that I will take in the mass, who have spoken mostly to the working-classes; so that now Freethought permeates all classes of society. Most of it, however, not being outspoken; for Freethinkers are not so apt to outrage the feelings of their superstitious neighbors as these neighbors are to scandalize, and as far as they can persecute, any one who does not attend some conventicle. The days of physical persecution are past in this country.

We are no longer apt to be skinned alive, or burnt, or chopped to bits, as in past times; and it is consolation to know that we will be able to die with our skins on. But it is only because the claws and fangs of superstition have been drawn. The basis of all superstition is necessarily persecution. For what is it to gain the whole world and

Digitized by Google

lose your own soul? The religious man is acting quite in harmony with his belief if, by some persecution of the body in this life, he can save the soul from everlasting torment in an after life. Of course, we think that the whole doctrine is unphilosophical and absurd; but he thinks not, and considers that all unbelief is mere perversity.

Although much has already been done to liberate the mind of man from superstition, a great deal more requires to be done to free the garden of the mind from the noxious weeds of religious dogma. Consider that for every one-tenth of a Freethought lecturer there are a thousand priests. Thus the priests catch the virgin soil of humanity, and it is crammed with dogma from its mother's knees up through youth, its baptisms, confirmations, etc.; and it is only when the weeds have grown to maturity that Freethought steps in to plant the seeds of secular wisdom.

It is wonderful, indeed, that Freethought, so fettered, has been able to do so much; and the foregoing shows how necessary it is to go on doing more. Every year's progress will make it easier; but there should be no flagging or resting on our oars. The prosperity of the whole nation rests on our getting the minds of youth freed from the trammels of superstition. In Germany, France, and Belgium the children are not dosed at school, as English children are, with dogma. In the whole series of the school books of the French polytechnic there is not a word of dogma; all the information is secular. These nations are competing with us in the markets of the world, and they must turn out boys better prepared for that competition than English boys, whose intellects must be confused by the contrastory lessons that have been mixed up with their early training.

It is, therefore, a national question of the utmost importance that our youth should have a secular training. These nations put heavy duties on every article of manufacture from England before it enters their countries, so as to give their native manufacturers an advantage over us. We let their goods into our country free; hence the cheapness of all articles of food with us. Cheap bread, sugar, and other things are a benefit; but we must have the money to buy them, and we would not have that money if we were beaten out of the world's markets.

Superstition is dying a lingering death, it is true; but it is mixed up with so many doings of life—its bishops in Parliament, its thousands of churches, and vast revenues descending through many generations—that nothing short of a revolution can prevent it from largely influencing English life for many years to come.

It is the duty of every man who is himself free to try to free his neighbor, especially the young. A physical revolution will not do it. It must be a mental revolution. And this cannot be wrought in a day.

Our forefathers believed that our world was flat, and if one went too near the edge he might fall off. Now, science has proved that such a belief was only one of the nonsenses of religion; that our world is a revolving globe; that there is no up nor down; that the sky is around us everywhere; that no human being has ever left the earth, or ever can; that all that is on it is held to it by its own gravitating force; and that no particle of matter is lost, nor any created. Do as we will, all is but changes in pre-existing matter.

Geology has proved, and even the religious world have accepted it, that the Mosaic account of the creation of the world is the veriest nonsense; that, instead of its age being under seven thousand years, it has to be measured by millions of years; and research into the history of man has proved, from the monuments he has left in his tombs, that he was civilized—had built large cities that are now being exhumed, and their ruins prove the existence of civilized man anterior to the fabled history of Adam and his fall. All experience shows that man has not fallen, but that he has risen, and is rising, and that it is only by science that he has risen—not by religion, which has for thousands of years been the chief drag-chain, keeping back his improvement.

Science has proved that the locality of heaven or of hell cannot be found; even the residence of the gods cannot be discovered. Rather that matter is eternal than that it was ever created. Thus the occupation of the gods is gone.

Thousands of years before the dawn of science there were gods for every event—for war, for peace, for rain, and for sunshine. Of later years they have been reduced to three—in some countries to only one; and in those small numbers they are as mythical as they were when they were a multitude. Then what are they? Are they any more than a bogie set up by the priests, who live by preying on the credulity of man? Are we to support them and let them stuff into the minds of our children their hellish doctrines that have driven to madness so many thousands? For the love of mankind, say No. Keep your children from such mental pestilence. Support your lecturers, who expose their knavish tricks. Support your literature, that your youngsters may have something in their heads superior to what they can get from all the churches of every denomination, remembering always that this is a national question.

We have to compete with Continental nations in the goods we manufacture, and if we cannot sell cheaper than they foreign markets will be closed to us. We have to go to those countries for the bread we eat, our own country being too small to produce one half of what we require. For the corn and other foods we import we pay by the goods we export to them. Lessen that export, and we lessen our ability to live. When that time arrives the downfall of England is only a question of time.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

WERE THE GOSPELS LATIN?

THE analysis of the Gospels made by Drs. Abbot and Rushworth conclusively shows that in Mark lies embedded a document common to the Synoptics. This makes the Second Gospel of the first importance in considering the question of their origin. Now, in the subscription to the Gospel according to Mark in the Syriac Version it is stated that Mark wrote in the Latin language. This is the common opinion of the Oriental Churches. It was also the tradition of Venice, for there are shown fragments of a Latin gospel said to be written by Mark.

The earliest mention of Mark in Papias (*i.e.*, Eusebius—*i.e.*, those who wrote in that name) does not mention in what language it was written, though Matthew is said to have been written in Hebrew. "Eusebius" says, on the authority of Clement of Alexandria, that it was written in Rome. The first particular mention of Mark's language is by Ebedjesu and Eutychius, the former of whom says that Mark wrote in Latin at Rome, and the latter that "Peter, making use of the pen of Mark, wrote a gospel at Rome in the Roman language." Lardner tries to make out that by this he meant Greek—which is highly improbable. Cardinal Baronius says: "This Gospel was written at Rome, and for the use of the Romans; can we, then, suppose that it would be written in any other than the language of the place?" Marcus was a Roman, and there is no reason to suppose that, like Hudibras,

> he could speak Greek
> As naturally as pigs squeak.*

All the available evidence goes to show that the proto-evangelium, or foundation of the Gospels, first appeared in Latin. It has been pointed out that the word επιούσιον in Matthew vi. 11 is not Greek at all, but a manufactured word to represent the Latin *supersubstantialem*, this one word sufficing to show not only that the Greek is derived from the Latin, but that this occurred after the doctrine of supersubstantial bread was accepted in the Church. Mark explains Hebrew or Greek terms by Latin ones—thus, the widow's mite is *quadrantes* (xii. 42); the court, the *praetorium* (xv. 16); and the preparation, the *prosabbaton*. Many other terms used are but Latin words in Greek characters, as centurion, speculator, legion, sextarius, denarius, census, fragello, etc. Everyone knows that the received texts are in Greek; and Latin versions, like the Vulgate ascribed to Jerome, are from the Greek. But this in no way invalidates the evidence that the underlying gospel was originally in Latin. It may have happened that it suited the Church to represent its original documents as Greek, despite the evidence that Matthew wrote in Hebrew and Mark in Latin; or it may have happened that only Greek manuscripts were available when translations were made. Of course, this argument refers only to the originals of our Gospels. Matthew may have written Logia in Hebrew, and Jews in Egypt put the Λογια Ιησου in Greek, as in the recently-discovered papyrus.

LUCIAN WRIGHT.

* Even in Corinth, the Latin colony in Greece, they spoke Latin.

Digitized by Google

GOD INCOG.; OR, CHRIST ON HIS TRAVELS.

THE Christian God who fills the whole of space,
The loving God of "God-damn!" notoriety,
Set out from Ev'rywhere to find a place
Wherein to breed a God-and-man variety.

He found a place, a geographic slum,
Behind the wholesome highways of humanity—
A habitat of Oriental scum;
A moral swamp of ignorance and vanity.

Ignoring "Woman's Rights," as male-spooks should,
He coolly made a native's promised wife, it seems,
His mate, *pro tem.*, and then his Ma for good—
The only Ma he'd had in all his life, it seems

We're told that he, himself, himself begat—
The Son and Father of himself—suspiciously,
And came ashore a barb'rous Hebrew brat,
A contraband bambino, surreptitiously.

On earth he lived for three-and-thirty years,
And then for three-and-thirty hours in hell, they say;
And carried on, midst teething, wine, and tears,
His business as a Deity as well, they say.

When Christ had done his one-day's trip to hell,
He sailed aloft—as told in his biography—
Through cold and silence, whither none can tell—
'Tis thought to heaven; so, *vide* Uranography.

On sailing up, he saw, with wild surprise,
The far-receding Earth's revealed sphericity.
"A globe!" said he; "has Dad been telling lies?
He said 'twas flat! What nescience, or duplicity!"

He stared to see the Welkin all at rest,
And Earth, His Father's "Footstool," waltzing sprightfully;
Said He: "I'm blowed! I mean, of course, I'm blest!
The Pater, Ghost, and I have blundered frightfully!

"I taught that Earth was flat; 'tis round, I find;
So, now, lest people know it, and discredit me,
I'll raise up rogues who'll claim to know my mind;
Who'll gloss my blunders, wrest my words, and edit me!

"Since Earth's a planet, other planets may
Be blighted by ancestral sin frugivorous;
To these I'll suicidal visits pay,
And offer them my remedy carnivorous.

"Meanwhile, up, up we go to tell Papa
That Earth is not so flat as I've been told it is,
And hand the lock of hair from poor mama——
I wish this flight would end!—By Dad! how cold it is!"

. . . . . .

He may perhaps on other worlds have called
To boom his cleansing, healing, holy olio
That cured the blind, but cannot cure the bald;
That beat Old Nick, but cannot beat Sapolio.

Perhaps He's now bedev'lling pigs on Mars,
Or brewing drink for jovial Jovian peasantry;
Perhaps He's touring now around the stars,
Performing in His "Deicidal Pleasantry."

He must be wand'ring, fast asleep, or dead,
And still entombed—as mooted once by Paul, you know—
For Faith's a failure, maugre all he said—
That is, of course, if e'er he lived at all, you know.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

To say that the performance of the action is the result of man's free will is to say that he determines the cohesion of the psychical states which arouse the action; and as these psychical states constitute himself at the moment, this is to say that these psychical states determine their own cohesion, which is absurd. These cohesions have been determined by experiences—the greater part of them, constituting what we call his natural character, by the experiences of antecedent organisms, and the rest by his own experiences. The changes which at each moment take place in his consciousness are produced by this infinitude of previous experiences registered in his nervous structure, co-operating with the immediate impressions on his senses; the effects of these combined factors being in every sense qualified by the psychical state, general or local, of his organism.—*Herbert Spencer.*

ACID DROPS.

A VERY funny thing happened at that Crystal Palace celebration. There was a small conical tent on the platform, and everybody wondered what it was for. At the appropriate moment the tent was drawn up, like a big extinguisher, and the "General" himself was disclosed, wearing the Salvation red waistcoat and a polished silk hat. That is how the "General" made his appearance, and it was worthy of the fine old showman.

"General" Booth, after reading the Queen's telegram to him at the Crystal Palace celebration, exclaimed: "I am a general now; there is no dispute about that. No twopenny-ha'penny editor of a twopenny-ha'penny paper, no twopenny-ha'penny curate can object any longer to my being called general when I have been so addressed by the Queen herself." That settles it.

Rev. G. E. Thorn, of Lower Edmonton, was one of the Nonconformist ministers who presented an address to the Queen at Windsor. On his return it was announced to the congregation by handbills that their pastor would preach "all day" on the next Sabbath, in the dress in which he appeared before Her Majesty. This is one way of doing business, but we dare say the reverend gentleman would have attracted a bigger crowd if he had advertised that he would appear in the dress worn by David when he danced before the Ark.

We pointed out some time ago, in a series of special articles, that Christian morality was not superior to Mohammedan morality. M. Denais, in the *Nouvelle Revue*, while severe enough upon Abdul the Damned, says that the common Turks are a very humane people. Their kindness to animals puts most Christian countries to shame. A Turkish child will never destroy a bird's nest; on the contrary, Turks buy birds from Christian and Jew hawkers in order to liberate them. Stray dogs are fed and tended, instead of being killed. There is no room for a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Turkey.

Mark Twain's misfortunes have not damped his humor. Describing the Jubilee Show for American readers, he said: "It was a sort of allegorical suggestion of the Last Day, and some who live to see that day will probably recall this one, if they are not too much disturbed in mind at the time."

In Dean Farrar's article in the *Temple Magazine*, noticed in our "Book Chat," he gives a good illustration of the beauties of vicarious punishment. After mentioning the prolixity of Dr. Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln, he says: "One of my predecessors at St. Margaret's, the Syriac scholar, Canon Cureton, had a son at Westminster School, and whenever the Canon preached too long a sermon the boys used to thrash his son. When Dean Trench was informed of this he remarked with a deep sigh, 'Oh, how I wish that Canon Wordsworth also had a son at the school.'"

On the newly-discovered saying of Jesus, "Except ye keep the Sabbath ye shall not see God," the *Jewish Chronicle* remarks:—"Jesus did not attack the Sabbath. His contention was that in certain circumstances the Sabbath law might be broken. But any Rabbi would have said the same thing, the only difference being one of detail. The very phrase, 'The Sabbath is given to man, not man to the Sabbath,' is Jewish. It occurs in the Talmud and Midrash, and originated at least 150 years B.C. It will be curious to witness the efforts made by theologians to escape from the position which this new saying creates. Everyone knew that for centuries the Christian Church observed the Sabbath as the Jews did, on the seventh day. What effect this fresh discovery may have in strengthening the weak Sabbatarian movement in England is a problem easier to formulate than to solve."

Dr. Martineau wonders at the importance attached to the newly-discovered "Logia" of Jesus Christ. Its value, he says, is simply ecclesiastical, not religious. He adds that it confirms the "most probable judgment previously formed respecting the popular traditional materials out of which the Gospels were brought into their present form."

For our part, we have this to say about these new Sayings of Jesus. Suppose they had been just discovered, and the Jesus in question had never been heard of before. Suppose, that is to say, these were the utterances of an entirely unknown teacher. How much value would anybody find in them? We venture to say that they would be dismissed as in the last degree unimportant. Yet because the name of Jesus is attached to them they are lauded to the skies, and even beyond, as superhumanly profound and wonderful. Such is the force of prepossession.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Price Hughes is *not* the new Wesleyan president. The honor is carried off by Mr. Watkinson, a gentleman who has written a book to show the immorality of unbelief. Mr. Watkinson, according to the *Westminster Gazette*, has the great gift of silence. What a pity it cannot be extended to some other Methodist ministers!

Curious things are heard at some seaside places on Sundays. The "niggers" and other minstrels, and even the phrenologist, have to take a holiday, and the sands are given up to another class of performers, who fill up the time while the people are waiting for Monday. Of the singing of these performers but little is to be said. They are generally led by a lady who plays *pianissimo* on a small organ, and they usually sing gently and in slow time, as though they were afraid of offending the ears of "the one above." Of course this doesn't apply to the Salvationists. They make all the noise they can. It is one of their specialities. And when they thwack their big drum it is a signal for the discontinuance of all opposition within a mile.

But if there is nothing very noticeable about the singing of these Sunday sand-troupes, there is often something very noticeable about their preaching. For the most part it is calculated for Sunday-schools and the convalescent side of lunatic asylums. Now and then you get a rare specimen of the evangelical order. A correspondent of ours recently encountered one at Ramsgate. The preacher was extremely dull until he fell back upon personal reminiscences, and then he was extremely amusing. Years ago, he said, he was laid up helpless with rheumatic fever. He couldn't move himself in the slightest, not even a finger or a toe; and he had not slept a wink for three weeks. All his supplications to the Lord brought no relief, and at length he said to his wife: "Well, dear, the Lord isn't going to answer prayer. It is no use praying any more." But his wife said: "Don't give up; keep on praying." And at that very moment he heard a voice saying: "Put your arms under the clothes." He knew he couldn't do it, but he felt bound to try, and to his surprise his arms moved easily; and immediately they were under the clothes, his pain all vanished.

That was pretty tall, but the preacher capped it. Forgetting that prayer had restored his power of movement and banished his pain, he went on to explain the text about the Lord making the believer's bed in his sickness. "You know," the preacher said, "I couldn't move myself, not a bit. I had to be turned over in bed to get a little ease by change of position. Well, I felt somebody take hold of me and turn me over. I thought someone had come into the room to do it. I did not know it was the Lord. But I knew it when my wife told me that no one had come into the room, and that I was all alone. Well, the next time I was being turned over by the same hands, I was suddenly dropped back, and the pain I suffered was something dreadful. But when I came to think of it I recollected that a doubt crossed my mind as I was being turned over, and the Lord must have dropped me for that reason."

Our correspondent walked away at that point. He calculated that the preacher had reached the zenith. And as he walked away he felt that this evangelist, in the age of Darwinism, Board schools, railways, telegraphs, ocean steamers, and North-pole balloons, was as if a mastodon were to walk into a West-end garden party.

After all, however, it seems to us that there is still a large supply of the sort of intellect to which that sea-side evangelist appealed. So much of it, indeed, that if there were any weakening of the causes of progress, it would be quite adequate to wreck our civilization by an uprising of ignorant fanaticism.

A new American sect has arisen "way down old Virginy." They hold very similar views to the "Perfectionists" of Oneida Creek. They call themselves "Sanctificationiste," and are led by a man named Joseph Lynch and a woman known as Sadie Collins. These two were compelled to flee owing to threats by the friends and relatives of those they persuaded to adopt their peculiar views with regard to free-love, and "Sanctificationists" being without sin whatever they may do. The rest of the "Sanctificationists" propose holding a big camp-meeting in order to secure converts. The farmers of the vicinity have served notices on them that their proselytizing must stop. Many churches in the district have lost heavily in membership owing to this craze, which began at Chincoteague Island, and spread to the Valley of the Chowan River in North Carolina.

Like the "Perfectionists," the "Sanctificationists" point to the Bible as the sanction of their free-love doctrines. They point to the fact that all God's favorites had concubines, that God commanded Hosea in this matter. They quote Jesus as saying there is no marriage in heaven, but that "all mine are thine and thine are mine," and Paul as saying: "It remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none." The old wax nose can be used to support whatever doctrines you like.

St James's Parish Church, Heywood, has been struck by lightning, much to the alarm of the Sunday-school children. A God who does not take care of his own houses will hardly protect those of poor mortals.

The number of lives lost at sea by wreck or drowning from ships registered in the United Kingdom in 1896 amounted to 1,897.

An old woman named Foster died suddenly in a Sunderland mission chapel the other night. When kneeling to pray she fell forward and expired.

The *Bombay Gazette* vouches for the following incident in connection with the recent earthquake in India. The head babu at a certain place was asked what he did when he felt the earthquake, and he replied: "Well, sir, I ran into a room where my wife and old mother were, to find them so frightened that they could not run, so I commended them to God and ran outside myself."

Mr. Bigelow, writing in *Harper's Magazine* on South Africa, does not pay a high tribute to the missionaries. "Missionaries," he says, "have done some good in so far as they have taught the blacks to respect their marriage vows and occupy themselves with productive trades. But all that they have accomplished, from the days of Livingstone down to this year of Jubilee, is small indeed compared with the evangelizing effect of one locomotive."

Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, who has spent twenty-five years in India, where she has been an inspectress of girls' schools, expresses some opinions which are calculated to abate the pride of the pious and virtuous Briton who subscribes towards missionary societies in that great peninsula, with its nearly three hundred million of inhabitants. Interviewed by Mrs. Tooley in the *Humanitarian*, Mrs. Steel says that "marriages in India are singularly happy. There are fewer cases of unkindness and violence than in this country. The Hindu has a finer idea of marriage than we have." How strange this sounds when we recollect the loud talk in Christian England about the need of the Gospel to elevate the women of India.

Spain is in a wretched condition, and the Cuban trouble seems likely to complete her ruin. Mr. J. Foreman, in the *National Review*, says that the only chance for Spain lies in abandoning her old Colonial policy, the propagation of liberal secular education among the masses, and the abolition of priestcraft. "But," he sighs, "what prospect is there of such measures being adopted?"

An English missionary, Mr. Hall, has been expelled from Madagascar as an alleged political agitator. The French mean that island to be for Mary as well as for Christ.

While some Mormons were holding a convention in Fairfield County, South Carolina, local Christians set fire to their church and burnt it up. Citizens have subscribed to build the Latter-Day Saints a larger and handsomer structure than the one destroyed.

Mrs. A. C. Stacey, of Topeka, Kansas, went to San Francisco as a delegate to the Christian Endeavor Convention. Her husband went there to look for her, and found her with another man. Whence arises the first scandal reported from the convention.

Further testimony to the virtues of the missionized Kaffir! A correspondent, writing to the *African Critic* from Maritzburg on the question of the morality of the natives who have come under so-called Christian influences, is very pessimistic. His story is by no means a pleasant one, and would not be agreeable reading, say, at a mothers' meeting or an Exeter Hall demonstration.

A thief broke through and stole the contents of the poor box and some sacramental wine at St. James's, Heywood. He was caught by having so many threepenny pieces upon him, that diminutive coin being known as the Lord's offering.

Evidence was given at a Consistory Court held at Droitwich that the Rev. John Williamson had frequently been drunk at services at St. Andrew's Church, of which he is rector—at two funerals, a wedding, and a christening. A large number of witnesses were heard. Defendant, who was in an excited state, continually interrupted the witnesses, and was called to order. The Mayor of Droitwich, a surgeon, one of the prosecutors, spoke to the falling off in the church attendance, but said he had not seen defendant drunk until that day. Defendant was adjudged guilty on

Digitized by Google

all charges, and the Court adjourned for the Bishop to pronounce sentence. Defendant said he should appeal.

Twenty-six bodies of children of different ages, some of them in an advanced state of decomposition, and others which appeared to have been dead only a few months, have been found in the church of St. Peter at Seville.

Recently the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a lot of bishops and other clergy of the Church of England, held a religious celebration at Ebbsfleet in honor of the landing of Saint Augustine. Now, this saint was a Roman Catholic, and Cardinal Vaughan means to let the Anglicans know that it was a missionary of *his* Church who brought Christianity to England. Accordingly he has arranged for another celebration at Ebbsfleet on September 14, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Solemn High Mass will be performed, and the affair is to be made as "impressive" as possible—that is, to people who admire ecclesiastical millinery and tomfoolery. From the business point of view, Cardinal Vaughan will decidedly score against Archbishop Temple.

According to the report of a lecture by Mrs. Besant at Chicago, that lady is now a thought-reader and a passion-reader. She says she "is able to see the auras and thought-forms of everyone she comes into contact with." Thick black clouds in the aura indicate hatred and malice. Deep red flashes show anger, but crimson indicates love. Lurid red indicates animal passions, rust color avarice, lurid gray fear, gray-green deceit, and brow-green jealousy. Orange indicates ambition, and yellow intellectuality. Blue is the best aura to have. "It indicates religious feeling, and varies very much." We suppose Mrs. Besant has a blue aura, but we fail to see what use this information is to poor creatures who cannot discern any auras at all.

When spirits differ what mortal can decide? "Tien," the spirit-guide of Mr. Morse, emphatically denies reincarnation. The spirit-guides of Allan Kardec, the leading French Spiritist, as emphatically affirm reincarnation. Swedenborg's angel-guides asserted that Jesus was Jehovah. The guides of the Rev. Stanton Moses, of *Light*, said Jesus was a great man medium; while the *Two Worlds*, in its last number (July 23, p. 493), says that "the man Jesus was not the perfectly-wise and spiritually-immaculate being his worshippers would have us believe. We have no desire to extol or belittle him, but we do want the clear, calm, plain truth. If the Bible is true, its Jesus is a human being; if it is not true, he is a myth—but he is not a God, nor a perfect man." Some spirit-guides say there is a Devil, and others deny it. One does not seem to get much forrader by resorting to spirit-guides.

The Cape *Argus* reports a speech of President Kruger, who related how the hand of God had been visible in driving out the enemies of the Boers, whether black or white. A minister said to him it was wonderful. But, said Kruger, it was all the work of his General. The minister thought he meant Joubert. But, said the President, "his General was the Lord Jesus Christ," who, it seems, supplies his friends with arms and ammunition.

Another Scripture prophecy fulfilled! A thirteen-year-old boy is stirring up the people of Western Nebraska by his preaching. His name is John Edwin De Merritt, and he is said to be the youngest licensed preacher in the world. He still wears knee breeches, and when not preaching has all the desire of the average healthy and well-constructed boy for baseball, marbles, and other juvenile sport.—*The Nebraska Daily Herald.*

Verily "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," etc. Penny-in-the-slot machines date from a period long before the birth of Christ. There is one in existence which is a combination of jug and slot machine. It was used for the dispensation of holy water. A coin of the value of five drachmæ, dropped into the slot, opened a valve which allowed a few drops of the desired liquid to escape.—*Science Siftings.*

The Clericalist reaction, which is so powerful at the moment in Austria, is beginning to dictate measures to the Government. One day last week the meeting of the Graz Secular Society (Verein der Konfessionlos) was interrupted by the Commissary of Police, and the society is now ordered to dissolve itself. The cause of offence was a lecture given by Dr. Bruno Wille, of Berlin, upon "The Religion of Joy." Dr. Wille is a well-known disciple of the philosopher Nietzsche, the originator also of the Free Theatre in Berlin, and a great enthusiast for the plays of Ibsen and Hauptmann, which he has done much to popularize. In the foregoing week Dr. Wille had given three addresses at the Freethinkers' Congress in Vienna, whereupon loud complaints were made by the clergy and the reactionary politicians to Count Badeni. It was thought imprudent, however, to interfere with him in a city where the Socialist population is so numerous, and where the German element would have raised an angry protest. So they waited their opportunity until the foreign propagandist could be arrested in a provincial town.—*London Echo.*

Rev. Dr. Horton writes the fourth of a series of articles in the *Sunday Magazine* on "Answers to Prayer." Naturally he doesn't compete with that imaginative gentleman, Mr. Price Hughes, who prayed for a thousand pounds and got it to the very penny. Mr. Horton's answers to prayer are of a less startling character. He tells us, for instance, that a certain town council decided to close a music hall which was exercising a pernicious influence. Somehow or other the members who had threatened opposition caved in quite unexpectedly. Nobody could explain it, until it was found that some "good women" were holding a prayer meeting at the time and begging God to get the licence withdrawn! This should be a good hint to the Puritan party. Instead of taking political or municipal action, let them turn on their women to pray, and they are sure to win hands down.

Dr. T. E. Withington, in *Cornhill*, gives some curious cases of legal proceedings against animals. At Basle, in August, 1474, a cock was publicly burnt for the diabolical crime of laying an egg, which also was burnt lest it should produce a cockatrice—one of the strange animals in the Bible menagerie, a little fiery flying serpent hatched from a cock's egg.

As late as 1731 Franciscan friars in Brazil brought an action before their bishop against a plague of ants, and the bishop solemnly read out his judgment before the ant-holes. Modern Christians will laugh at this, but in the Middle Ages it was common to excommunicate animals. When the Church of Christ triumphs people are stupid enough for anything.

Fancy Jesus giving a "garden party," with a military band in attendance, ample refreshments in a tent, and the guests mainly the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jerusalem! Yet this is what the Archbishop of Canterbury, who claims Apostolic succession, has been doing during the week. The place glittered with diamonds, and shone with expensive costumes. It was crowded with landlords, monopolists, and titled persons. And the founder of this religion was a working man—a carpenter. When shall we have an end of this ghastly hypocrisy? The Anglican Church is Mr. Worldly Wiseman masquerading in the garb of holiness—a perfect blasphemy of religion.—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

One wonders there are any who fail to see through established religion. The Church has its share of the best lands, and the parson comes after, if not beside, the squire as the boss of the district. His ostensible function is to guide the people to heaven. His real function is to keep them in their lowly position on earth.

A Connecticut church takes up its collection by electricity. The parson touches a button when the proper moment arrives, and tiny cars run along each book board and return to a locked box at the end. The collections are lifted out after the service, and the folks who put in policemen's buttons can be very nearly identified by the arrangement.

According to the Grimsby *Daily Mail*, the vicar of Hornsea last Sunday stated that he had met a lady (an unbeliever) in Northumberland, and he had a very long talk with her. She had read, she said, all the books and literature on the subject she could obtain, and was a stronger unbeliever than she ever was. "Will you tell me," said the Rev. Mr. Little, "if you have ever given ten hours to sincere study of the other side of the question?" The lady at once admitted that she had not. We tell Mr. Little that his lady is an exceptional unbeliever. Most of them know the other side well, having both been reared in Christianity and studied its evidences. Many have become unbelievers by reading their Bibles and works on Christian evidences. If Christians would only read their own books and use their reason, the ranks of unbelievers would be largely recruited.

The *Daily Record*, of Stockton, California, sent to us by the kindness of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, gives prominence to "The Funeral of an Infidel." Mr. W. Freeman, who "died as he lived, a Materialist." He was cremated, and had prescribed a simple form of ceremony, which was followed to the letter. Nothing was done for effect, nor was any reference made to God in the entire services. Dr. Endicott delivered a short address, in which he referred to the good deeds, good life, and acts of the deceased, and praised him for his liberality and integrity. He stated that Mr. Freeman did not believe in a future, nor had he a ghost to hamper him.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 1, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "New Sayings of Jesus from an Old Egyptian Dust Bin."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. ALGER.—Always glad to receive such material.

DIGNIFIED.—We agree with you in a general way, but we feel sure you are mistaken in the particular case. The paragraph in the *Daily Mail* is evidently the work of an enemy. Mr. Cohen did not use "offensive language" at Chatham. The disturbance at his meeting was caused by a handful of orthodox rowdies, who have since been disowned by their co-religionists.

W. SUTHERLAND.—If you read Numbers v., you will see that "the Lord spake unto Moses," prescribing a disgusting ordeal. Would any missionary be justified in prescribing it? To those who believe in witchcraft is it not better to say at once, "There are no witches," than to speak as if they existed? Do you think missionaries justified in ordering the slaughter of idolaters as in Deuteronomy xiii. 6? Who told you that Scott recanted? Those who knew him say the statement is false.

LONDON LOUDON LADDIE.—Thanks for reference. It is best to send us marked papers where possible.

F. J. BOORMAN.—(1) We never thought you would receive an answer from Sir Charles Warren. We saw him at the Home Office, at the time of the Trafalgar Square "riots," and he impressed us as a bigoted, insolent martinet. He has a great reputation for piety, and probably thinks he is doing God a service in suppressing Secular meetings on Chatham Lines. (2) You say the Chatham Branch has decided to contribute one guinea annually to the Lecture Scheme. Mr. Foote has decided to drop *his* Lecture Scheme, for the present, and there is no other in the field. Do you mean the Treasurer's new scheme? This, if it succeeds, will cover pretty well all the ground. (3) Pleased to hear that your Branch has spent over £90 in special propagandist work during the past four years.

W. F.—"Money, O money, thy praises I sing," which you kindly send us, apparently as an original composition, is probably older than you are. We printed it as a tract some ten years ago, and it was ancient then. We receive several copies of it in manuscript in the course of a year, and shall doubtless continue to do so, in spite of the above facts having been stated again and again.

G. KERSLEY asks "Rex" and Mr. Ball to give some authority for their definitions of Agnosticism. "If," he adds, "the Ethical party and the Secular party are two wings of one army, how important it is that we should know precisely where each wing stands, and what it is doing?" Readers of the *Freethinker* must understand that the Editor is not in any way responsible for the opinions of his correspondents, whether they have their names printed or prefer to remain anonymous.

FRANCIS NEALE.—Article to hand. Shall appear in our next. Always much pleased to hear from you. Yes, there is a chaplain to Congress at Washington; his name is Milburn, and he is blind.

E. H. T.—(1) The governorship of Cyrenius is mentioned in Josephus. (2) Protestants were as bad persecutors as Catholics, only they never had quite the same chance.

F. W. SWAIN (Derby) promises to bring Mr. Hartmann's financial scheme before the local Branch, and feels certain a subscription will be raised.

J. B.—The report in *Justice* is farcical, though not surprising. Mr. Foote's speech at the Moral Instruction Conference is reported upside down, though he made his meaning perfectly clear to persons of ordinary intelligence and candor. It is amusing to hear that Mr. Foote spoke against Secular Education. Those who believe that are foolish enough to believe anything. Mr. Foote said that if candidates were not put forward on the Moral Instruction policy, it would be idle to make that policy a test at the next School Board elections. Even a Secular candidate might say: "That policy is not ripe, it is only just presented to the electors; I stand at present simply for the abolition of religious teaching"—and was it likely that the Secularists would pledge themselves not to support such a candidate? It is not true that Mr. Foote said a word in favor of the so-called Progressives. He is now, as he always has been, opposed to Church and Nonconformity alike. Moreover, he fought for Secular Education when some of his valiant critics were helping the cause of Bible-reading in Board schools.

SCOTCH LADDIE.—Your verse has merit, but it wants polish. Some of the lines do not scan. The same defect is apparent in the verse to which yours is an answer.

J. JOHNSTONE has read George Anderson's article with great interest, but he doesn't believe that wakes were ever held in Scotland.

T. DODSON, bookseller, Market Hall, Bury, asks us to let H. Bain know that he has a copy of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. We did not keep H. Bain's address, so we apprise him through this medium.

GEORGE ANDERSON calls our attention to a misprint in his communication in last week's *Freethinker*. With reference to Irish wakes he used the expression "mild debauchery," which got printed as "wild debauchery." "The two words," our correspondent says, "are so much alike, and my writing is not like type, that I see how the mistake arose."

TRUTH.—(1) Mr. Foote has repeatedly said that he never issues or accepts challenges. He is not a sportsman or a pugilist. Edwards, the black preacher, is dead. He often talked about "meeting Mr. Foote," but always backed down when the opportunity was presented. Can your Christian friend really suppose that a Secular advocate, who has debated with Dr. Harrison, Dr. Sexton, Dr. McCann, J. M. Logan, and W. T. Lee, was *afraid* to meet a West Indian negro, who did not possess their abilities or their advantages of education? (2) Pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* has counted for so much in your mental development.

D. T. SNOW.—No doubt a lot of good might be done by more frequent lectures at Swansea, Cardiff, and other places in South Wales. But the work cannot be carried on without funds. Let the Secular party provide the money asked for under Mr. Hartmann's scheme, and lecturing throughout the country will proceed with vigor.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Yarmouth Mercury—Daylight—Grimsby News—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—L'Etoile Socialiste—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Grimsby Daily Mail—Blackpool Gazette—Reynolds's Newspaper—Cape Argus—Literary Guide—University Magazine—Church Weekly—New York Public Opinion.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

***The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.**

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

THE TREASURER'S SCHEME.

THIS is a bad time of the year for pushing the N. S. S. Treasurer's scheme of financial reconstruction. Nevertheless the appeal must be continued now it is begun. My experience is that it takes people some time to appreciate a new thing, and longer to act in relation to it. We must therefore be patient.

The N. S. S. Executive was to have met on Thursday, July 29. I have, however, had the meeting postponed for a fortnight, in order that a larger number of letters may be submitted.

Let me repeat that what we want is a list of the names and addresses of persons who promise to subscribe anything from £100 down to 5s. annually towards the sum of £1,500 a year which Mr. Hartmann, the new N. S. S. treasurer, proposes to raise, with a view to carrying on our organization and propaganda efficiently.

Why does not the Secular party rouse itself? Hitherto almost everything has been left to the President, who has been beautifully criticized in consequence; Mr. A., who never gives anything, always wanting to know what has been done with Mr. B.'s money. This state of things ought not to continue. If it does, I shall have to reconsider my position.

During the week a few fresh promises have been received. Mr. J. J. Wyand, writing to the secretary, promises £5 annually. He hopes the valuable open-air work will be well supported, and thinks the President should be better paid than Mr. Hartmann suggests—which is generous on his part, but hardly feasible. Mr. E. Lawson promises another £5. Other promises sent to the secretary are: J. Thomas, 5s.; Hugh Thomas, 5s.; W. N. Franklin, 5s.; H. McGuinness 5s.; Mrs. McGuinness, 5s.; J. A. (Edinburgh), 10s. The last hopes that Edinburgh will not be forgotten when the scheme comes into operation.

Writing to me, a Leicestershire friend promises £2

Digitized by Google

annually. He has given most of his spare time to Socialism, but he recognises the necessity of maintaining Secularism. "Your fight is hard," he adds, "and sometimes made harder than it need be." Dr. Mortimer, Turriff, in far Aberdeenshire, promises £1 annually; Tom Beach another £1. Others are: W. Louis 5s., C. H. Gask 5s., D. T. Snow 5s., J. T. Lewis 5s., J. Williams 5s., W. Waymark 5s., J. Unsworth 5s., S. J. B. 5s., T. Dobson 5s.

We are not asking for the money at present, but for promises, so that we may see what are the scheme's prospects of success. Hundreds of these promises ought to come in during the next fortnight. They can be sent to me, or to the Secretary (Miss Vance), or Treasurer (Mr. Hartmann), at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C.

Mr. Hartmann himself promises £50 annually. I am surprised that no one has offered another £50. I know some Freethinkers who could give it easily. Why don't they?

G. W. FOOTE
(President, N. S. S.).

SUGAR PLUMS.

HAVING had a brief holiday, Mr. Foote is now resuming his platform work. This evening (August 1) he lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "New Sayings of Jesus from an old Egyptian Dust Bin." On the first Sunday in September, Mr. Foote re-opens the Manchester Secular Hall, which has been closed for repairs and decoration. Early in October he lectures and debates at Glasgow.

Mr. Cohen lectured again at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening on "Scepticism: Its Meaning and Value." Mr. A. J. Marriott, a West-end veteran, took the chair. Mr. Cohen's lecture was highly appreciated.

Mr. C. Cohen has just published through Mr. Forder an able pamphlet entitled *What is the Use of Prayer?* We hope it will have a wide circulation.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, in its issue for July 17, begins the publication of a Freethought novel entitled "A Man from Mars." It is by William McDonnell, of Lindsay, Ontario, author of *Exeter Hall* and *Heathers of the Heath*.

The August number of the *University Magazine and Free Review*, in "Musings after the Feast and Jubilee Charity," deals with various aspects of the late celebrations. The caustic criticism of "William the Cad" is continued. Geoffrey Mortimer's "Some Limitations of the Cultured" is, of course, well written. There is an interesting article on "Rural Life in Russia," and Edith Mote writes with spirit on "Natural Women." We should like to see the *University Magazine* give as much and as free criticism to religious as it does to social and political matters.

The controversy on "Christianity *v.* Agnosticism" is carried on with spirit in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. "N. M. X." contributes some thoughtful and interesting letters.

The *Literary Guide* says: "*Shakespeare*, by Colonel Ingersoll (R. Forder; 50 pp., 6d.), is one of the best addresses yet delivered by the distinguished American orator. It is in every sense a magnificent tribute to our national bard."

In the *Gazette and News* for Blackpool "Ariel" gives an article entitled "Why I am an Agnostic," being "The Opinions of Mr. X.," who is evidently able both to clearly state and defend his views. It is satisfactory to see the taboo on Freethought gradually breaking down in the press.

The Bradlaugh Club holds its annual excursion on Sunday, August 22. The party will go by train to Broxbourne, where Mr. Bradlaugh used to fish, and to Rhy House, by train from Liverpool-street and other stations on the G. E. R. The time and other arrangements will be announced later. The tickets are one-and-six for adults and ninepence for children. A generous friend of the movement has provided a hundred children's tickets for free distribution. Those who wish to join the party should communicate with the Club secretary.

The *Literary Guide* for August gives an account of the Rev. Dennis Hird's recent works, under the title of "Rationalism in Fiction." The lately-discovered Logia of Jesus are dealt with under the title of "The Gospel in the Dust," and Mr. Gladstone's New Gleanings are dealt with as "Out-of-Date Theology." Dr. Hommel's pretentious learning defending Hebrew tradition against modern criticism is amusingly taken off under the title of "The Ghost of Khammurabi."

The *Progressive Review*, of Chicago, is a Spiritist but non-Christian paper, whose position may be judged from the following extract: "The Church is 'tied back,' as the word 'religion' may be correctly rendered, to old, dead dogmas which the parent Church borrowed from paganism. It worships a God born of woman, like Bacchus and Apollo of the Greeks; it trembles at the name of Devil, a relic of Egyptian mythology, under the name of Typhon, the wicked brother of Osiris; its ambition is to escape the tortures of a fabled hell. Its false conception of God is at the base of the whole matter. Instead of adoring the Almighty Ruler of the universe, such as science reveals to humanity, they bow the knee to a hateful, jealous, repenting, vacillating, man-made demon, such as only a race of savages could invent."

"Atheos" and "Antipas" have been discussing Christianity and Secularism in the columns of the *Grimsby News*. "Antipas" is a believer of the good old type, and the controversy should be instructive as well as amusing.

The *Truthseeker*, of New York, in its number for July 17, gives a portrait and an appreciative account of Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism.

THE PRIESTLY TABOO.

THE "touchiness" of Roman Catholicism reveals itself absurdly in connection with a Melbourne amateur performance of a feeble comic opera—*Lelamine*, to wit. The local (R.C.) *Advocate* has "no hesitation in saying that *Lelamine* is a vile, demoralizing production, a slander on the Catholic priesthood, and an insult to Catholics generally. .....We could wish that there were no Catholics engaged in *Lelamine*, but that shame we are spared." To the average Protestant, who was unable to discover the drift of the poor little opera aforesaid, these ravings appear pitiable. They are easily explained, however. Among the more or less inaudible mummers in *Lelamine* was one who played a priest, and the priest was dimly understood to be an uncelibate sort of person, addicted to visiting a convent by a private subway, or something to that effect. In short, *Lelamine* was an "insult to Catholics" because it put forward, in a farcically exaggerated form, the suggestion that a Catholic priest *may* be quite as giddy as a Protestant parson who "carries on" with the sanctimonious girl adherents of his little church or chapel. And because one grotesque priest was here supposed to do exactly as hundreds of parsons have been convicted of doing, at one time or other, official Roman Catholicism gets its holy hair off. The *Lelamine* notice for a Melbourne weekly paper was written by an Irish-blooded representative of the ould faith, and the protest of this indignant critic sent the Catholic bawl rolling. Archbishop Carr, upon being appealed to, thought it "regrettable that the plot of any public opera should be based on incidents which had *no foundation in fact*, and which appeared to rely for their success on the *anticipated prejudices of certain of the audience* rather than on the merits of a plot." The celibate Archbishop took an even more foolish view of a trivial incident than his reverent "son," the Milesian pressman, had taken in the first instance. His Grace hinted that the giddy priest on the stage was a dirthy, heretical device for bringing an immaculate priesthood into ignorant contempt. Such utterances put the all-round unbeliever out of patience. An outsider, honestly convinced that all religious denominations claim too much holiness for their spiritual professors, naturally objects to being asked to swallow the R. C. claims without a grain or two of salt. Numerous stage satires on Protestant parson cant are founded on fact, and laughed at by Protestants accordingly. For instance, "Dr. Cantwell" and "Mawworm" in *The Hypocrite*. But the R.C. priest and the R.C. boarding-school for girls, or convent—they must be held absolutely sacred. Why, in the name of scandalous revelations, ancient and modern!—why is the priestly denial of human nature to escape ridicule?—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Digitized by Google

IN THE OPEN.

To those who are aware under what conditions Secularism is propagated in the metropolis, the importance of the open-air lecturing will be beyond question. In the provinces the halls usually form the chief strength of the movement, open-air lecturing being chiefly incidental, and having a secondary value; but here in London the positions are reversed, outdoor propaganda occupying the position of honor, and serving as the recruiting-ground for the indoor attendances.

This much is true of most reform movements in London, but it is specially true of Secularism. In the London parks and open spaces, thousands congregate Sunday after Sunday, anxious to hear, willing to be instructed; and although at times the harmony of the meetings is marred by interruptions from noisy followers of Jesus, wishful to publicly exhibit the strength of their lungs, the poverty of their brains, or the defects of their education, the conduct of the audiences usually leaves little to be desired. At any rate, here the people congregate, and, as Jesus said, "Wherever Christians are gathered together, there should the Freethought advocate be in the midst of them."* Recognising the importance of this branch of our propaganda, I have made it a rule to devote the fine summer months to the London open-air work, leaving the rest of the year to the provinces. Hitherto, although the work is far from easy—three lectures on Sunday at widely-different parts of London, besides week-night meetings, being my usual weekly dose—my policy has been fully justified by results. People who would never dream of entering a Secular hall stay to listen at an open-air gathering; and over and over again I have been informed by people that their first acquaintance with Freethought was due to their being a chance listener at one of my meetings. And even in the case of those who listen and remain unconverted, we may piously hope that what they hear exerts a chastening influence upon their religious beliefs.

Without at all limiting the number of lectures delivered, I have this year confined my attention to a rather smaller number of stations than usual, and of the work carried on at these I have the most encouraging reports to give. In the East-end of London I have visited three places—Victoria Park, Mile-end Waste, and Limehouse. At Victoria Park I delivered my first Freethought lecture—now nearly seven years ago—and since then I have given the place a fair share of my attention. I can remember when it required all the strength of the handful of supporters that were present to save the platform from destruction—two were actually demolished. To-day we have here a solid body of supporters large enough to check any outbreaks of that description. I notice, too, that many of those who seven years ago were strong opponents of Secularism are now quiet, well-behaved listeners, or even ardent supporters. The interruptions, which *will* occur at an outdoor meeting, are now confined to a mere handful of raw youths, hailing from a neighboring church club principally, whose conduct, powerless to disturb the meeting, affords it a little material for amusement. On the whole, I should say that Victoria Park is one of the best open-air stations in London, and if the N. S. S. could afford to keep a good man stationed in the East-end, an excellent organization might be worked up from the materials already at hand.

Having tried every other method—legitimate and illegitimate—to minimize the influence of our platform here, Christians recently tried what surrounding the Secular platform with rival meetings would do. As many as three religious meetings are sometimes held on as many sides of ours, with the sole result of splitting up the Christian audience into three groups.

The Limehouse and Mile-end platforms are managed by the East London Branch. Encouraged by the success of their Sunday morning meetings at Mile-end, the Branch arranged for others on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. The venture has been thoroughly successful. I lectured here every Wednesday evening in June, and found the audiences larger and more attentive on each occasion. Limehouse is a recently-opened station, and although a not very promising neighborhood, apparently, I was surprised to find the meetings here so successful that the only chance the Christian Evidencers possessed of getting a decent audience was to wait patiently until the Secular meeting had concluded. At each of these stations Mr. Loafer is indefatigable in his exertions as chairman, newsvendor, and general overseer of the meetings.

In the North of London I have lectured at Wood Green, Edmonton, and Ridley-road, Dalston. At each of these places the Freethought lecturer is pretty sure of a quiet and respectful hearing. Edmonton has always, during my experience, been a strong station, and, under the secretaryship of Mr. Harwood, the meetings continue to be both moral and financial successes. At Ridley-road Mr. Simons and two or three helpers have maintained the platform under somewhat discouraging conditions; and at Wood Green, ever since a band of roughs were brought together to break up the meetings, resulting in five free-fights in as many days, the opposition has practically died out.

Hyde Park, Kilburn, and Hammersmith in the west of London, and Camberwell and Peckham Rye in the south, complete the number of stations I have lectured at since my return from the provinces in May. At each place I find pretty much the same features—audiences growing in size, interest in Secularism increasing, and the opposition becoming weaker and more trivial. At many of my meetings I noticed among the audience several clergymen; but, usually, they seem to think discretion the better part of valor, and retire silently from the field.

The only place I have lectured at outside of London during the summer has been Chatham. This provided me with the one disturbance I have had this season. I was down for two meetings at the end of June. The first went off quietly enough; so did the second, until the opposition commenced. My opponent, a member of the Christian Evidence Society, was of the usual type—only more so. He was, indeed, the most kaleidoscopic ignoramus I have met for a long time. Some people present the same dead level of foolishness right through. Not so this man; a fresh absurdity flashed from each sentence; his history was something wonderful to hear, and his antics marvellous to behold. He was supported by a crowd of raw youths, silent when their champion chanced to blunder into something sensible, yelling their loudest on all other occasions. The meeting was carried through, however, although a goodly-sized crowd followed us to the station.

Following my usual custom whenever there is any bother, I at once made arrangements for a return visit. On July 14 and 15 I returned for two more lectures. The first meeting was quite orderly and very large—the largest ever held in New Brompton. On the 15th a new feature arose. When I went down to lecture I found a sergeant-major and a guard of soldiers there, with orders from the commanding officer, Sir Charles Warren, of "Bloody Sunday" fame, and noted also as a staunch defender of the Gospel, to prevent my meeting being held on that ground. As the land belonged to the War Department, and had thus all the privileges of private property in this connection, I did not see what could be done at the time except submit. I told the officer, however, that I should inquire into the matter, and if I found that I had any right to be there, he might depend upon my being down to hold a meeting in spite of what had been said.

So far as the meeting was concerned, the order made no difference whatever. I adjourned to the other side of the road, and spoke to an enormous audience, amid perfect quietness, for nearly an hour and a quarter. A quantity of literature was distributed, and I am informed that the general topic of the district has been the four meetings I addressed there.

On the whole, I may safely say that during the seven years I have been upon the platform I have never had a more successful season in London than the present one; and if the places I have visited are fair samples of those I have not, the Secular cause in London must be making considerable progress.

The maintenance of a vigorous open-air crusade is in every way essential to our movement. It is the hardest, the least showy, but, I believe, the most important branch of our propaganda. It requires an amount of tact, discrimination, and courage that only those who are engaged in the work can fully appreciate. We reach people by this method who could not well be reached by any other; and it would be difficult to calculate how much the free-and-easy propaganda carried on in the parks has contributed to that religious scepticism which is so characteristic a feature of the present day.

Nor are we the only ones that benefit by this kind of work. What does not such bodies as the Christian Want of Evidence Society owe to our activity? Their entire being—mildly parasitic at best, vilely scurrilous at worst—is dependent upon us for an existence. But for the N. S. S. the heavens would never have resounded to the soul-inspiring cry of "Where's yer 'orspitals"; nor would the earth have shaken beneath the thunderous eloquence of the C. E. advocates. Take away from these men the supposed immorality of Secularists and the imagined obscenity of Secular writings, and their entire stock-in-trade is gone. The sparkling wit, polished epigram, profound historical criticism, courteous conduct, and brilliant scientific knowledge displayed by the advocates of the C. E. S. would never have existed but for "Infidel" activity. The poor sleepy world would have gone on its way sublimely unconscious of the genius that lay undeveloped in its midst. But such a disaster was not to be. Secularism came, and at once the Lord raised up mighty men of intellect to defend his cause, and to smite hip and thigh the pygmies of Secularism that were assailing his sacred word. History received a new

* I find that in the Authorized Version this text runs somewhat differently; but probably a closer examination of the original, or the opportune discovery of an early manuscript by some *Christian* explorer, will prove the above rendering to be the more correct one.

Digitized by Google

rendering at their hands, and scientific doctrines an entirely original exposition. Professor 'Uxley and 'Erbert Spencer were shown to be devout Christians; whereas people had hitherto foolishly imagined them to be Agnostics, upon the bare authority of their written statements; while the extreme probability of a jackass having vocalized before Balaam received a living illustration from a score of Christian Evidence platforms Sunday after Sunday.

But, in spite of all, it gradually dawned upon people that an inspired creed that needs so much defending—and such defences!—must have something wrong about it somewhere. Like the old lady who understood everything in the *Pilgrim's Progress* with the exception of the notes, people found the apologies offered worse than the original article; with the result that, despite the enormous odds that Secularism has had to face in the past, and still has to fight against in the present, our platform is everywhere steadily gaining the support it deserves by the helpfulness and sanity of its teaching. C. COHEN.

AN AMULET.

THE JEW AND THE VICAR'S WIFE.

THE two men shook their dusty feet as they entered the house. They were received in a private parlor, which was filled with objects of art and devotion. Very blandly did the good wife of the vicar greet them, yet with business-like condescension.

The Jew, in a very few simple words, told the story of his sister's death and the loss of the amulet. He noted the peculiar value of the amulet, and added: "I entreat that you will return it to me; for to you it can only be a paltry trinket, and to us it is like a household god."

She looked at the Jew with evident emotion.

"I cannot tell you how it grieves me to hear you speak as if you attributed to any inanimate object the saving power which belongs to God alone," she said. "Think for a moment, only think, how dishonoring such a superstition is to the Creator."

"Madam!" said the Jew in utmost surprise.

"Consider how wrong such a superstition is," she said. "What virtue can there be in a stone, or a piece of metal, or an inscription? None. They are as dead and powerless as the idols of the heathen; and to put the faith in any such thing that we ought to put in God's providence is to dishonor him. It grieves me to think that you or any other intelligent man should bow down to idols."

"Madam," said the Jew again, "these things are as we think of them. You think one way, and I another."

"But you think wrongly. I would have you see your error, and turn from it. Can you believe in the Christian faith and yet—"

"I am a Jew," he said.

"A Jew!" she exclaimed. She began to preach against that creed also, entering into a long argument.

"It would seem, madam," said the Jew, after she had talked much, "that you desire greatly to set an erring world to rights again."

"And should we not all desire that?" she asked, unconscious of the irony. "For what else are we placed in the world but to pass on to others the light that God has entrusted to us?"

"I verily believe, madam," said he, seriously, "that you think exactly what you say, and that you desire greatly to do me good. But, putting these questions aside, will you tell me if you have this ornament which I venerate?"

"Yes, I have it."

"You took it from the breast of my sister when she lay dead upon the shore?"

"I unfastened it from her neck, and have kept it with the greatest care. It was an ornament which was quite unsuitable to your sister's station in life. I could not have allowed any of our poor women to see such a valuable stone on the neck of a girl like themselves in station; it would have given them false ideas, and I am careful to teach them simplicity in dress. In England we do not approve of people of your class wearing jewellery."

The curate put his arms on the table and bowed his head on his hands.

"Be that as it may," said the Jew, rising, "I will thank you if you will give me my property now and let me go."

"I cannot give it to you." She was a little flustered in her manner, but not much. "It would be against my conscience to give you what you would use profanely. Providence has placed it in my care, and I am responsible for its use. If I give it to you, it would be tempting you to sin."

He sat down again and looked at her with wonder in his soft brown eyes. "You have had the stone taken out," he said, "and set in a ring."

"Yes, and I have given it to my daughter, so that it is no longer mine to return to you. You must be aware that the marble cross stone I set up over your sister's grave cost me much more than the value of this stone. I am very much surprised that you should ask me to give it back. Surely any real feeling of gratitude for what I did for her would prompt you to be glad that you have something to give me in return." She paused, then harped again upon the other string. "But, under any circumstances, I could not feel justified in giving you anything that you would put to a bad use."

"That you have stolen my property does not make it yours to withhold, whatever may be your sentiments concerning it."

"Stolen! I do not understand you when you use such a word. Do you think it possible that I should steal? I took the chain from your sister's neck with the highest motives. Do not use such a word as 'stolen' in speaking to me."

"Truly, madam," he said, "you could almost persuade me that you are in the right, and that I insult you."

She looked at him stolidly, although evidently not without some inward apprehension. It was a piteous sight—the poor, distorted reasoning faculty grovelling as a slave to the selfish will.

"I cannot give you back the amethyst," she said, "for I have given it away; but if you will promise me never again to regard it as having any value as an amulet or talisman, I will give you the necklace, and I will pay you something to have another stone put in."—From "A Taint of Blood," in L. Dougall's *A Dozen Ways of Love* (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black).

DEATH OF MRS. HARRIET LAW.

FREETHINKERS, whose minds go back to the early days of Mr. Bradlaugh, will unite with me in regret at the somewhat sudden death of Mrs. Harriet T. Law, who expired at her residence, 7 Victoria-road, Peckham, on Monday, July 19, after a short illness. Mrs. Law was one of the bravest women who ever spoke from a Freethought platform, and in her day did efficient and honorable service for the cause. She was in her sixty-sixth year.

At the time of the Reform League, when I first heard Mrs. Law, she was as energetic in politics as in Freethought. Her enthusiasm and energy were unbounded. When the Hyde Park railings fell she was the very first to hold a meeting within the park and speak in defiance of Sir Richard Mayne. At the Agricultural Hall meetings her clear, ringing voice always commanded a large audience. She was essentially a woman of the people, with ready tongue, apt and homely illustrations, and vivid wit to turn the laugh against an opponent. Those who heard her debate with the Rev. Harry A. Long, of Glasgow, can never forget the pungency of her satire. Certainly he can never forget it, or how the audience were convulsed with continuous laughter. Mrs. Law was the liveliest debater it has ever been my good fortune to listen to. She was an advocate of women's rights, when their champions were comparatively few. I remember the dressing one pietist got who told her she would be better at home nursing children than to be lecturing against Christianity. She told him of the family she had brought up, and recommended him to go home and help his poor wife nurse the baby. So sharply did she whip him with her tongue that one pitied the poor male creature. In the days when Freethinkers had to fight for the mere right of being heard, the service of such a bold woman was invaluable. Mrs. Law was one of the small brave band of the Amazons of Freethought, and worthily takes her place beside Frances Wright, Emma Martin, and Ernestine Rose. With the last-named lady she tried to put some grit into the Conference of Liberal Thinkers called by Mr. Conway in 1878.

When G. H. Reddalls, who had started the *Secular Chronicle* in Birmingham, died in 1875, Mrs. Law came forward and carried on the paper with credit to the cause until 1879. Many of the leading Freethinkers contributed to the paper while under her management, but it was never a paying success. As with Mr. Bradlaugh, I always think of Mrs. Law rather as a speaker than as a writer, for in my young days the really able women lecturers were few. When Mrs. Besant became prominent on the Freethought platform, Mrs. Law gradually edged off. Personally I much regretted this; for, from the first time I met Mrs. Law, at Cleveland Hall, until the last time, which was at Mr. Bradlaugh's funeral at Woking, I recognised in her a woman who was true as steel. Although she gave up her advocacy, she in no wise changed her opinions; and Mr. Law, her partner in thought as well as in heart for so many years, informs me that during the last two days of her life she was reading with interest and satisfaction Mr. George Jacob Holyoake's pamphlet on *Secular Prospects in Death*, being the veteran leader's address at the grave of her friend, that brave and good Freethinker, Councillor Josiah Gimson, of Leicester. This was either a coincidence, or indicates that she felt her end to be near. Mrs. Law had no more liking for doctorcraft than for priestcraft, and used

Digitized by Google

to say that there was little to choose between the mystery-men of Æsculapius and the mystery-men of Christ. It was with difficulty she was persuaded to have a medical attendant. She died from failure of the heart's action. On the Thursday previous she was taken very unwell. She gradually improved up to the time of her death, being able to take her food, and go about the house, as usual. On Monday, at four o'clock in the afternoon, she went upstairs and fainted immediately on reaching the landing; she expired a few minutes later, without recovering consciousness. Perhaps it need hardly be said that she never wavered a hair's breadth from the convictions held for nearly forty years. The funeral took place at Forest Hill Cemetery on July 23, being, at her son's desire, entirely private and silent. The day before the ceremony, however, the daughters decided to say a verse each over the grave of their mother, knowing that this tribute, from the children whom she so dearly loved, would have been prized by her above all else. When the coffin had been lowered, and her favorite flower (mignonette) thrown into the grave, the following verses were repeated:—

Calmly, calmly lay her down,
  She hath fought the noble fight;
  She hath battled for the right,
She hath won th' unfading crown.

Kind and gentle was her soul,
  Yet it glowed with glorious might—
  Filling clouded minds with light,
Making wounded spirits whole.

Dying, she can never die;
  To the dust her dust we give,
  In our hearts her heart shall live—
Moving, guiding, working, aye!

Some further particulars of Mrs. Law's career and services to Freethought will appear in our next number.

J. M. Wheeler.

BOOK CHAT.

In the *Temple Magazine* Dean Farrar, writing on "Men I have Known," mentions Bishop Colenso, of whom he says: "I was grieved to see him universally treated as if he were a pariah." The Bishop's laundress, it appears, declined to wash for him any more, "because by doing so she lost customers"; and Dean Farrar tells how, one day, after preaching a sermon in a large West-end church, he was making his way, accompanied by his friend, through the crowd of worshippers, when he heard in audible and awe-struck whispers the words, "He's walking with Bishop Colenso!"

* * *

"He told me how once, seeing an English bishop at Euston Station, the bishop, to his great surprise, advanced most cordially to meet him, and gave him a warm shake of the hand, which Colenso as warmly returned. But, alas, the next moment the English prelate said, 'The Bishop of Calcutta, I believe?' (or some other see). 'No,' replied Colenso, 'the Bishop of Natal.' The effect, he said, was electrical. The English bishop almost rebounded with an 'Oh,' and left him with a much-alarmed and distant bow, as though after shaking hands with him he needed a purifying bath."

* * *

"Future times will remember Bishop Colenso with honor and gratitude, when the names of nineteen-twentieths of his accusers have been buried in merciful oblivion. They will remember how, almost alone among Colonial Bishops, he not only devoted nearly the whole of his years to the duties of his see until his death, but also, 'with intense, indefatigable labor,' mastered the Zulu language, produced a Zulu grammar and dictionary, translated into Zulu much of the Bible (correcting inconceivably frightful errors in some small previous attempts), and, in the cause of the oppressed, braving all hostile combinations, came home only to plead the wrongs of Langalibalde, and did his best to obtain justice for King Cetshwayo."

* * *

"In his (Colenso's) book on the Pentateuch he has referred to the fact that I had been asked to write the article on 'Deluge' for Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*. I wrote it, but took the views about the non-universality of the Deluge which most inquirers now hold. The editor and publishers, alarmed at this deviation from stereotyped opinion, postponed the insertion of the article, and in volume i. inserted 'Deluge: see Flood.' But even when they had got as far as 'Flood,' they had not made up their minds, and said, 'Flood: see Noah.' My article was consequently sacrificed; for 'Noah' had been already assigned to the present Bishop of Worcester. Yet, after all, Dr. Perowne (as he then was) came to much the same conclusion as myself, for he wrote 'that even the language used with regard to the Flood itself—strong as it undoubtedly is—does not oblige us to suppose that the Deluge was universal.'"

* * *

Miss Freer, the so-called clairvoyant who signs herself X, because her occult attainments are an unknown quantity, has, at the persuasion of that good man Stead, consented to publish her psychical experiences. It is said that Miss Freer, like Mr. Stead, is freer with her imagination than with her facts.

* * *

The late Sir John Bucknill was much noticed in the papers as the originator of the volunteer movement. He deserves remembrance also for his efforts on behalf of the better treatment of the insane. His book on *The Mad Folk of Shakespeare* is an interesting one.

* * *

It is noted in a postscript to Mr. F. S. Lowndes's *Bishops of the Day*, just published by Mr. Grant Richards, Henrietta-street, that a large number of the Anglican bishops followed secular professions before their ordination. Commissions in the army were held by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of St. Helena and Colchester. Eleven American bishops served in the Civil War in the States, mostly as combatants. Several bishops have been in actual practice as lawyers, and one has been a banker. This bishop is now supposed to have given up Mammon. If so, he is an exception among our fathers-in-God.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AGNOSTICISM AND COWARDICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I am sorry if I've trodden on the corns of "Rex" or W. P. Ball. It comes from my rude way of slinging adjectives. When I wrote "cowardly Agnosticism," I did not mean that all who call themselves Agnostics are cowards, but that there is a variety of Agnosticism of that description. I gave an illustration of one who refused to deny or affirm what I conceive to be palpable absurdities. When I wrote of lily-livered Ethical Culturists, I did not mean the term to absolutely cover the entire *genus*, but only a specific, well-marked, and painfully familiar variety, who see that Christianity is not true, but will not say it is false. Trimmers and cowards skulk round every camp. They always keep out of the fight, and come up for the spoil. The traitors are not those who point them out, but those who encourage them. "Rex" wants me to define an Agnostic. There I'm baffled. I do not know what a Christian is, but I know certain persons call themselves Christians. So others call themselves Agnostics, and seem proud of it. I always thought Agnostic meant *ignoramus*. I call myself an ignoramus, but I am not proud of it. Plainspeaker.

PROFANE JOKES.

A strong-minded and loquacious old lady was arguing strongly the other day for women's rights in the way of preaching, when an old deacon attempted to put her down by remarking that St. Paul once gave it as his opinion that women should remain silent in church. "Oh, did he?" retorted the old dame, sharply. "Well, that's where me and Paul differ; and if he were here I'd tell him the same to his very face."

A good cricket story is told of a certain bishop. He was batting in a local cricket-match when the bowler sent a ball very wide of the wicket. "Keep the ball in the parish!" cried the irascible prelate. The next ball sent down knocked his lordship's middle stump out. The bowler shouted, "I think that's somewhere about the diocese, my lud!"

A parish beadle was lately much exercised at the appearance of a strange old gentleman who, when the sermon was about to begin, took an ear-trumpet, in two parts, out of his pocket and began screwing them together. The beadle watched him until the process was completed, and then, going stealthily up, whispered: "Ye mauna play that here! If ye dae, I'll turn ye oot!"

An Irishman, on being asked why there was no record or trace of any of his race being found in Noah's Ark, replied that "all his countrymen at that time were very rich, and had boats of their own. And, besides, they would not sail with beasts, anyhow, as old Noah did."

The Sunday-school class was singing, "I want to be an angel." "Why don't you sing louder, Bobby?" asked the teacher. "I'm singing as loud as I feel," explained Bobby.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "New Sayings of Jesus from an Old Egyptian Dust Bin."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "Jesus, the Infidel."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Yarns."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, H. P. Ward, "Shall We Live After Death?"

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, A lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, Debate between Messrs. Macock and Guest on "Should Christ's Teachings be Adopted?"

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, H. P. Ward. August 4, at 8, C. Cohen.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, H. P. Ward, "The Faith that Failed."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. B. Thomson, M.G.S.B., "The New Education Bills: Governments by Priests and Parsons."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

OX HILL AND STANLEY (West Stanley Board Schools): July 31, at 6, J. Taylor, "Authenticity of the Scriptures."

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Social Growth." At 8, probable announcement of next excursion.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, D. R. Bowe, "The Industrial Outlook."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, W. Thompson, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 1, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 22, m., Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. TRURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 1, m., Wood Green; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 8, m., Limehouse; a., Peckham Rye. 15, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., Bradlaugh Club. 22, m., Mile End Waste; a., Harrow-road. 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 1, m., Limehouse; e., Clerkenwell Green. 15, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, Limehouse. 29, m., Mile End. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 12, m., Kingsland. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 26, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

SITUATION WANTED by Freethinker in any capacity. Many years' good character. W. COOKNEY, 24 St. John-street-road, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

NOW READY. Price Twopence,

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 2s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Flowers of Freethought. *First Series*, 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Series*, 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d. (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Ingersoll's Works.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.—Mistakes of Moses; Reply to Gladstone; Rome or Reason; Faith and Fact; God and Man; Dying Creed; The Ghosts; Great Mistake; Myth and Miracle; Real Blasphemy; and The Hope of the Future.

VOL. II.—Defence of Freethought; Why I am an Agnostic; Clergy and Common Sense; Do I Blaspheme? Marriage and Divorce; The Household of Faith; Limits of Toleration; Art and Morality; God and the State; Live Topics; Repairing the Idols; Truth of History; and Social Salvation.

VOL. III.—About the Holy Bible; Oration on the Gods; Walt Whitman; Paine the Pioneer; Humanity's Debt to Paine; Love the Redeemer; Religion of the Future; Breaking the Fetters; Difficulties of Belief; Is Suicide a Sin? Last Words on Suicide; and Christ and Miracles.

Cloth, gilt, 3s. 6d. each. Each vol. can be had separately.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERT'S "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GREAT SUMMER SALE.

21s. Parcel that contains £2 worth of Goods.

No. 1.—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color.
„ 2.—4 Trouser Lengths, wear guaranteed. Stripe, Check, or Mixture.
„ 3.—2 Full Dress Lengths, with linings and buttons complete.
„ 4.—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material.
„ 5.—1 Complete Costume to measure, and a Silver-mounted Umbrella.
„ 6.—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse.
„ 7.—50 yards of High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs.
„ 8.—11 yards Deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color.
„ 9.—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trouser length.
„ 10.—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trouser Length, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella.
„ 11.—1 pair of All Wool Blankets, 1 pair of large Sheets, 1 beautiful Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 pair of Curtains.
„ 12.—1 pair Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella.
„ 13.—15 yards Suiting for Boys' Suits. Very strong and durable.
„ 14.—30 yards Remnants for Children's Dresses. All good colors and quality.
„ 15.—2 pairs All Wool Blankets.
„ 16.—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 pair Stockings, 2 Skirts, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Silver mounted Umbrella, 1 Fur Necktie.
„ 17.—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella.
„ 18.—1 Youth's Suit to measure, chest over vest not to be more than 32 inches.
„ 19.—3 pairs Men's Trousers to measure, all different.
„ 20.—Parcel of goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during sale we are selling at about ½ ordinary price. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

Each Parcel sent Carriage Paid for 21s.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

By E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'welp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 32. SUNDAY, AUGUST 8, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PROVIDENCE AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

SIR WALTER BESANT is one of the few literary men with a handle to their names. Of course he is none the better for it, and perhaps none the worse. It may be that the knighthood has directed his attention to politics, or that the Jubilee fever suggested the profitableness of catering to an imperialist public. Anyhow, he has written a little eighteen-penny book on *The Rise of the Empire* (Marshall and Son: London), which is designed as an introduction to a series of cheap volumes on the History of India and the Colonies. As a matter of course, Sir Walter Besant tells his story in a very interesting manner. With the instinct of a novelist, he seizes upon points of living interest, and presents them in a free and flowing style.

The two most vulnerable parts of the British Empire are Ireland and India. "In the case of Ireland," Sir Walter Besant says, "there has been no extension of empire; there has been an extension of burden." The Irish people, after six hundred years of conquest, are "as anxious to shake off the English yoke as they were at the outset," and millions of the Irish race across the Atlantic "never cease abusing us, conspiring against us, embittering the Americans against us." Sir Walter Besant's business is neither to defend nor accuse in the matter of Ireland, but to state the facts.

Our Empire in India is not the work of the British Government. It was absolutely created by the East India Company. Imperial rule there dates from the time of the Mutiny. Since then, we are told, India has been quiet. Nevertheless, we venture to say that there have always been rumblings of discontent. The Union Jack floats over the great continent of India, and Sir Walter Besant says that this fact "should fill our hearts with pride and gratitude, and should cause us to do and to dare as our forefathers dared, when England was a little place with all her history to make." No doubt the English would fight desperately rather than give up India. But the "pride" involved in this attitude is chiefly a pride of race, the other side of which is disdain of races with a far older civilization. Nor is it clear that the possession of India is any real advantage to the people of England, as distinguished from certain classes in the Army and the Civil Service. It must be admitted that our Indian empire is an anomaly. As an historical legacy, we cannot wilfully throw it away, and abnegate our responsibilities; at the same time, every Englishman who believes in self-government must find it difficult to close his eyes to the ultimate right of India to freedom from the control of a Western power. Our policy in India should be to train the natives in self-government, so that when we do withdraw they may be capable of progress and self-protection. Meanwhile, let us not indulge in pharisaic hypocrisy. We did not go to India, and we have not remained there, for the good of the inhabitants, but for our own profit and aggrandizement.

Our colonies have been built up in a different way. They are a real extension of empire, though too often at the bitter expense, and even the annihilation, of the aborigines. Sir Walter Besant's rapid story of the rise of our colonies is in every way admirable. He gives an excellent account of the Elizabethan seamen and their doings in the far West; and he notes "not to their credit" that they "first engaged in the slave trade." Next comes an account of the various settlements in Virginia. One is astonished at the smallness of the "Virginia Company's" ships. Three that sailed from England in 1606 were the *Susan*, 100 tons; the *God-speed*, 40 tons; and the *Discovery*, 20 tons. In 1620 the *Mayflower* emigrants landed at Plymouth Harbor. The Pilgrim fathers fled from religious tyranny in England, and they established a religious tyranny of their own in New England. "You must not believe," Sir Walter Besant says, "that it was a land of religious liberty. The Pilgrim fathers believed that everybody should think as they themselves thought. Had they achieved their own way, they would have sent Laud himself, and all who thought like him, across the ocean with the greatest alacrity." Mrs. Hutchinson and her followers were expelled from Boston. A branch broke off under a minister named Thomas Hooker, founding towns in Connecticut. Another branch, under another minister, settled at New Haven. Religious differences caused the founding of settlements on Rhode Island and in New Hampshire. Roger Williams, who advocated complete religious liberty, was banished from Boston as a damnable heretic; and he and his friends settled at the head of Narragansett Bay.

The various settlements in America had English institutions. They had no peers and no bishops, but they had the democratic parts of our constitution. "The colonists," Sir Walter Besant says, "were practically republican long before the War of Independence." When they threw off the yoke of King George, they had no alternative but the establishment of an open Republic. Those who draw comparisons between Cromwell and Washington, as though the latter could have set up a monarchy, do not know what they are talking about.

The United States of America owe much to England, though nothing to the English government. Between 1853 and 1888 no less than 6,012,043 emigrants from the United Kingdom poured into the great Western Republic. Nearly half of these were English, two-fifths of them were Irish, and one-tenth Scotch. There is good reason, then, in the nature of things, why this country and the United States should be friendly, and if possible brotherly. A conflict between them would be a kind of civil war.

We have not time to follow Sir Walter Besant's account of our colonies in three continents—Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. It is only 130 years since the first Englishman set foot on the Australian shore. The survey of the coasts was not completed until the famous voyage of the *Beagle* in 1837–43. On board that ship was the great Charles Darwin, slowly maturing for his mighty achievement in the realm of science. How new it all is! Our "Empire," after all, is a thing of yesterday. We need not pride ourselves too much till we see what we make of it.

The Anglo-Saxon race is spread over a very large portion of the globe. Our colonies represent every kind of climate that exists. Sir Walter Besant would help to people them by sending them our unemployed. Hitherto, he says, our statesmen have done nothing for the Empire. He says it is time they began.

The Englishman is a trader, and Sir Walter Besant believes in the civilizing powers of Trade.

> This it is which opens up the world. Trade first induces men to break bread with each other rather than break each other's heads. Trade it is which widens boundaries, removes hedges, and fills up ditches; trade creates new wants, and imparts new ideas; trade it i which makes it possible for men to understand th

Digitized by Google

> they have common wants, and must act in common to satisfy those wants; trade creates and fosters the virtues of loyalty, brotherhood, and discipline; trade it is which stimulates the study and the practice of the arts; trade is the founder and father of enterprise, invention, science, travel, and exploration.

Sir Walter Besant maintains that the Englishman of to-day is essentially the Englishman of King Alfred's days. He draws a large picture of this Englishman, as fond of fighting and open-air exercises, a big eater and drinker, restless, and full of enterprise. But he is intensely practical, little of an idealist, and governed by sentiment rather than reason. He is profoundly religious, but averse to priest-craft; tender and chivalrous to women, and fond of children. "He sits at home," Sir Walter Besant says, "with his wife and children, and desires no other society" —we presume, not even the public-house.

"The race," Sir Walter Besant says, "has been singularly favored by fortune or by providence." This is on page one. On page ninety-two "fortune" is dropped, and Providence reigns alone with a capital P. To our mind, this is somewhat blasphemous. Englishmen should avoid imitating the Jews and fancying themselves the chosen people. Other nations have contributed their quota to the world's civilization. Englishmen have not done everything. What we have done is not miraculous. "Providence" is not the explanation of our good fortune. The Straits of Dover are a better key to the mystery. Had our country been, not an island, but an extension of the continent of Europe, how different would our history have been! This is a little land, with an immense seaboard, inhabited by a fusion of races, and crammed with coal and iron. We got the start in industrialism, and this, coupled with our geographical position, gave us our commerce and maritime power. The matter is clear enough to natural eyesight, but some people must have a dash of mystery in everything.

G. W. FOOTE.

LIBERAL HIGH CHURCH THEOLOGY.

In the current number of the *New Century Review* the Rev. Samuel Holmes writes on "Liberal High Church Theology and Professor Goldwin Smith." Mr. Holmes is himself one of those liberal theologians who fancy they can hold with the Church hare and at the same time run with the hounds of Free Inquiry. Perhaps it would be more true, if less polite, to say that he is one who, having a billet in the Church, is ready to adapt his belief to the requirements of modern thought in any way that does not involve the resignation of that position. The substance of the Rev. Samuel Holmes's answer to Professor Goldwin Smith is that in reality Bibliolatry, the belief in Bible inerrancy, is not "Christianity's millstone," for the simple reason that "influential members of the most popular party in the Church of England" have got rid of it. It is true that Dr. Pusey, the founder of the High Church party, would have been astonished and dismayed by the admissions of *Lux Mundi*; but it is none less certain that, as High Churchism has climbed to the top, so Broad Churchism has spread about its roots. Mr. Holmes says: "Every lover of truth will rejoice that candid scholarship and staunch Churchmanship are to be found side by side; that many of those who adopt the same Church principles as the writers of *Lux Mundi* are prepared to discuss with perfectly open minds the contentions of literary and scientific criticism." How far these questions are likely to be discussed with perfectly open minds by those whose livings are in the Church is a question upon which some others besides Professor Goldwin Smith may have a slight difference of opinion with the Rev. Samuel Holmes. That gentleman gives us little opportunity of testing the point in his own case. He does not make clear his own position in relation even to the inerrancy of the Bible. Canon Liddon, the leading light of the High Church party, emphatically denounced all who refused to ascribe the Pentateuch to Moses, and Daniel to its traditional author of that name; but Mr. Holmes shows us that, under the pressure of external opinion, a change has been going on within the Church itself. The younger generation cannot accept and preach the doctrine of their fathers. In 1861 Dr. Pusey denounced the "heathenism" of Colenso; but, as Mr. Holmes points out, views on the Old Testament indistinguishable on points of criticism from those of Colenso were admitted in the *Lux Mundi* to be true, and are now being largely adopted.

Mr. Holmes says:—

> "As to the existence of legendary matter in the Scriptures, many of the younger clergy admit it more or less, and are thankful to know that such an essay as that of Dr. Bonney could be read at a Church Congress. Such deliverances as his secure to them a certain freedom, if not of speech, yet of belief. But I venture to protest against the word 'millstone,' as liable to mislead. For it should be thoroughly understood that the belief in the inerrancy of the Bible is now rejected by large numbers of eminent Christian teachers, who, when occasion demands, freely express their opinions, finding—and that is all that can be asked for—perfect toleration."

This, after all, only means that the Church has found that it cannot afford to kick out the most intelligent of its men, and, to me, I confess it indicates a paltering with truth rather than either candid scholarship or staunch Churchmanship; and I must regretfully say that the impression is confirmed by what Mr. Holmes himself has to say on the doctrine of Inspiration. This shall be stated in his own words:—

> "In truth, the doctrine of Inspiration is only one phase of the old problem which meets us in Free-will. As long as we admit the existence of a God in the world, and at the same time believe in the freedom of man's will, the amount of help and guidance given by God to man will always be a question of the greatest perplexity. But if there does exist a Supreme Being, the Creator and Sustainer of the world, is it going beyond the bounds of rational belief to say that His guidance in spiritual matters can be discerned in the history of the Jews and of the early Christian Church?'

I must tell Mr. Holmes plainly that it seems to me that in raising the metaphysical question of free-will—in going to the common assumptions of Theism, and in referring to the history of the Jews and of the early Christian Church—he is but trying to carry us back to some realm of perplexity when the pretences of his Church cannot so easily be seen to be false. The plain question is, On what grounds does the Church say that its teachings are inspired any more than, say, the laws of England or the axioms of Euclid?

Mr. Holmes says: "While admitting that our predecessors were mistaken as to the kind of knowledge to which inspiration extended, they were right in believing in the divine guidance of the religious teachers of the Jews. The existence of that divine guidance is the important point; in that we too believe as well as they; therefore we still use the word 'inspiration.'" In other words, on points where the doctrine of inspiration could be tested—such as the time of the creation, the making of woman, etc. —the doctrine has broken down; but it is still upheld in quarters where the information of those who have not studied comparative religion and the evolution of beliefs is scanty. But what solitary fact can Mr. Holmes adduce to show that the Jews were any more divinely guided than the Egyptians or any other nation?

Mr. Holmes tells us that the Liberal High Churchman "takes the authority of Christ as paramount on moral and spiritual matters, and remembers that He on one occasion unmistakably said that the utterance of one of His disciples was inspired. 'Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.'" If Peter was inspired when he said Jesus was the Christ, was Christ himself inspired when he said "Moses wrote of me," when he rebuked devils, and when he said that there were those standing around him who should not taste of death until they saw him coming in his kingdom? Mr. Holmes, in citing particular utterances, forgets his own admission, that the books have come down through erring men, who, of course, have had the opportunity of manipulating the texts. In giving up literal inspiration he is letting out the waters without perceiving whither they will carry him.

Mr. Holmes gives us little idea of what Liberal High Church theology stands for. But it is difficult to resist the impression that it represents the endeavor of parasites to accommodate themselves to a new position—to seek, on the one hand, to hold their own over the populace by a display of sacerdotal rites, and, on the other, to appear as if in line with the knowledge of the intelligent and cultured community.

J. M. WHEELER.

Freedom is the aim of morality.—*Professor Steinthal.*

Digitized by Google

RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH.

ONE great distinction between Freethinkers and most professed Christians consists in the fact that the former have always vindicated the right of free speech, while the latter have done their best either to limit or to prohibit the utterances of those who differed from them. The history of the Christian Church is a painful record of persistent persecution of heretics by the alleged followers of Jesus. It commenced almost as soon as the Christians possessed sufficient power to enforce their will, and it has not ceased yet. "The Church," remarks Draper, "set herself forth as the depository and arbiter of knowledge; she was ever ready to resort to the civil power to compel obedience to her decisions..... She became a stumbling-block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for more than a thousand years" (*Conflict between Religion and Science*, p. 52). History teems with narratives of persecutions practised by believers in Christianity upon those who could not share their views of the faith. For proof of this the reader is referred to Buckle's *History of Civilization*, Earl Russell's *History of the Christian Religion*, Howitt's *History of Priestcraft*, Ferguson's *Penalties of Greatness*, and Dick's *Philosophy of Religion*. From these pages it will be seen that the persecuting spirit has always been a striking feature of Christian propaganda. Fortunately, the evil has been considerably checked through the persistent advocacy of Freethought principles, although, as we shall presently see, it is not yet entirely eradicated.

It is urged by Christian exponents that, when the members of their faith interfere with free speech, they do so in spite of the teachings of their religion. This is not so; but, even if it were, it would only show that their faith fails to induce them to abstain from doing wrong. We gladly admit that in some professors of Christianity humanity is more powerful than theology; hence such persons grant to others that freedom which they justly claim for themselves. There are others, however, in the fold whose love of justice is subordinate to their religious fanaticism. And these very people persecute unbelievers when and where they have the power. In fact, many of such persons think their conduct is justified by such teachings of the New Testament as the following. Christ, on sending his disciples upon a preaching expedition, said (Matthew x.): "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city shake off the dust of your feet." This, we are informed by Oriental writers, was a mode in the East of showing hatred towards those against whom the dust was shaken. The punishment threatened those who refused the administrations of the disciples is most severe, for "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city" (verses 14 and 15). This accords with the gloomy and revengeful announcement (2 Thess. i.): "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." St. Paul exclaims (Gal. i.): "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." He also says (1 Tim. vi. 3–5): "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.....he is proud, knowing nothing.....From such withdraw thyself." "Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. i. 20). In these passages persecution and punishment are clearly taught for disbelief. What stimulant did even Christ give to think freely when he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me;.....if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"? Is there any incentive to impartial investigation in the gloomy words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"? Once establish among mankind the erroneous notion that truth is confined to one particular channel, and that those who do not go in that direction are to be cast forth as a "withered branch," and then the impossibility of unfettered thought will immediately be apparent. Put a man to examine a subject, and tell him that, regardless of evidence, he must arrive at one conclusion or be damned, the pursuit of truth is then made a hypocritical farce rather than a noble and useful reality.

When Christians foolishly and incorrectly taunt the Secularists with making but "slow progress," it is apparently overlooked that we are handicapped in our advocacy, and subject to obstacles which Christians have not to encounter. An instance of this has recently occurred at New Brompton, where Secularist lecturers have been denied the right of free speech. The particulars of this act of bigotry have already appeared in the *Freethinker*, but we again refer to the subject in consequence of reading in that very pious paper, the *Rock*, dated July 23, the following editorial note: "We should be the last to commend any exhibition of personal violence to those who insult our most holy faith, as neither good order nor our own cause will be served by taking the law into our own hands. But it is certainly interesting to find that an ordinary working-class crowd can be stirred to such indignation as was the case at Chatham the other day by the profanities of an infidel lecturer, and satisfactory to learn from the sequel that authorities can act so firmly as has Major-General Sir Charles Warren, commanding the Thames District, who has given instructions that Secularist speakers are not to be allowed to address meetings on Chatham Lines. .....Sir Charles's action is the outcome of a recent disturbance, when a crowd (among whom were several soldiers) assumed a threatening attitude towards a Secularist lecturer who had spoken in very offensive terms of the Christian religion."

The *Rock* here displays a fine specimen of that veiled hypocrisy, theological conceit, and orthodox impertinence for which certain Christian writers and speakers are noted. The pious editor says he would be the last "to commend," etc.; but yet he finds it "certainly interesting" to know that the crowd acted as they did. That is, he would not recommend an outrage, but he was glad all the same that it was perpetrated. This is orthodox consistency with a vengeance. It is wearing the mask of peace, while rejoicing at social warfare. Where does the doctrine of "love your enemies" come in here? Talk of "insult [to] our most holy faith"! Why, no Secularist lecturer ever uses so many insulting epithets towards any faith as the *Rock* does towards the Roman Catholic religion. In the very issue which contains the above editorial note we read such choice phrases as these: "The blood-stained history of Romanism"; they (the Catholics) are "heretics," "seducers," "wolves in sheep's clothing"; and we further read: "It is our duty to oppose every effort they may make to obtain influence or power in our public life; to hold up every entrance to public positions of authority from them, seeing that if they gain these they would then be able to put into practice the intolerance and persecution they can only now (thank God) talk about." Is not this an insult to the "holy faith" of the Roman Catholic? We opine that he would think so. Judging from the gross insults which the *Rock* is continually heaping upon the Church of Rome, it is fortunate for its members that the editor and his sanctified friends have not the power to persecute as Protestants once did. Are not the following words, which are ascribed to Christ, appropriate here: "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye" (Luke vi. 42)?

What does the *Rock* mean when it writes of "the profanities of an infidel lecturer," and of his speaking "in very offensive terms of the Christian religion"? A Secularist is not an "infidel," but an honest and sincere disbeliever in the shams and hypocrisy which are called orthodox Christianity. If we accept the editor's dictum, he is an "infidel" to the "most holy faith" of the Catholics, towards which he, week after week, indulges in "profanities" and "offensive terms" of an exceedingly undignified kind. The bitter feeling which he displays towards Secularists, and the reckless charges that he makes against them, remind us of the pertinent rebuke which the late Professor Huxley gave his orthodox calumniators. He said that he noticed the charges brought against him, "merely to illustrate the great truth, forced on me by long experience, that it is only from those who enjoy the blessings of a firm hold of the Christian faith that such manifestations of meekness, patience, and charity are to be expected" (*Controverted Questions*, p. 484). To read how

Digitized by Google

the self-satisfied Christian genius of the *Rock* assumes that his idea of religion is the true one, and far superior to all others, would be amusing but that it may possibly tend to perpetuate an intellectual fraud among the ignorant and credulous believers in his bigoted and antiquated theology.

On the action of Sir Charles Warren in giving orders to prevent the Secularists from speaking on the recreation grounds called the Chatham Lines, we abstain, for the time being, from further comment. The present writer is engaged to speak on the forbidden ground on Sunday morning, August 15; and we hope in the meantime that some amicable arrangement will be arrived at. Free speech is so dear to us, and its rights have been so bravely defended by the Secular party, that we shall not allow it to be assailed without doing our best to maintain its force, and to protect it from any unjust interference.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

I.—THE STORY OF THE BAPTIST.

IT has been fully shown, in a former series of articles, that we do not possess the testimony of a single individual to the actual occurrence of any of the events related in the Gospels, and that the narratives related in those books represent merely what was believed among the Christians about the middle of the second century. It has also been shown that those narratives, wherever they have been tested, are found to be fictitious. I will now examine, at more length, some of the most important of these narratives, so as to place the fact beyond doubt that the latter conclusion is, in every case, the only one possible.

The earliest written Gospel, as far as we are able to judge, was that "according to the Hebrews." This Gospel, like our second Synoptic, contained no account of the birth of Christ, but commenced with the preaching of John the Baptist. The opening paragraph in the copy possessed by Epiphanus read as follows:—

> "It came to pass in the days of Herod, king of Judea, that *John came baptizing* with a *baptism of repentance* in the river Jordan.....and *all went out to him.*"

The earliest of the canonical Gospels—that "according to" Mark—also commences with the preaching of the Baptist, and, omitting an added quotation from Isaiah, reads:—

> "*John came, who baptized*.....and preached the *baptism of repentance* unto remission of sins. And *there went out unto him all* the country of Judea, and *all* they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan confessing their sins" (i. 4, 5).

Here, by a comparison of the two passages, we are able to see how the original narrative was amplified and improved.

Coming now to the account of the imprisonment and death of John, we find that the compilers of the First and Second Gospels introduce the subject in a somewhat remarkable manner. Thus, Matthew says (xiv. 1, 2):—

> ".....at that season Herod the tetrarch *heard the report* concerning Jesus, and he said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead."

Mark, following precisely the same method, says (vi. 14):—

> "King Herod *heard thereof*.....and he said, John the Baptist is risen from the dead."

It would be fruitless to stop to inquire how the Gospel writers knew what Herod had *heard*, more especially since Jesus never once visited any of the cities or villages in Galilee (with the single exception of Capernaum), and could not, therefore, have gained any notoriety at all. Matthew, however, makes use of the error into which Herod is said to have fallen as an introduction to the story of the arrest and death of the Baptist, and goes on to say:—

> "*For* Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife."

Strangely enough, Mark also makes this supposed mistake of Herod the introduction to his story of the arrest and imprisonment of the Baptist. He says:—

> "*For* Herod himself had sent forth, and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife."

Turning again to Matthew, that compiler, having stated that Herod had cast John into prison, proceeds to give the tetrarch's reason for doing so, which ought logically to have been given first. He says:—

> "*For* John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."

Mark also, by a wonderful coincidence, follows the same plan:—

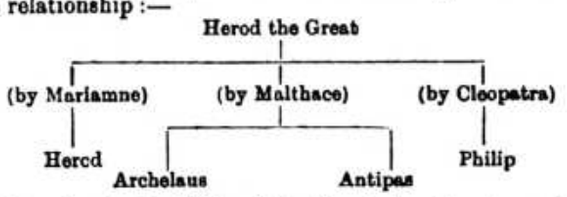
> "*For* John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

Both evangelists, in fact, commence to tell the story backwards. In both accounts the narrative of John's imprisonment and death is related merely as an explanation of Herod's reason for believing Jesus to be the Baptist. The phraseology, too, is in many parts identical. The explanation of this peculiar way of introducing the story is, of course, obvious. The two compilers took their accounts from copies of the same document. The third Synoptist, Luke, was also acquainted with this document (ix. 7–9; iii. 19, 20); but he does not adhere to it so closely as the other two.

The story, as told by the first two evangelists, is that Herod had taken to himself Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and, being reproved for so doing by the Baptist, he had cast that pious meddler into prison. Then, later on, to use the words of Matthew, "when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith: Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist.....And Herod sent and beheaded John in prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (xiv. 3–11).

There is in this story just a small grain of truth. It is true that Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, placed the Baptist in confinement, and subsequently caused him to be put to death; but the stories of John rebuking Antipas on account of marrying Herodias, of the dancing before him, of the oath, of the demand for the Baptist's head, and John's immediate execution in consequence—these are pure fables.

In the first place, Antipas did not take his brother Philip's wife. He *did*, however, induce Herodias, the wife of his half-brother Herod, to leave her husband and live with him. This Herod was named after his father, Herod the Great, and was *not* called "Herod Philip," as gospel reconcilers frequently assert. The following table shows the relationship:—



After the death of Herod the Great, the kingdom which had been governed by that king was divided between his sons Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip; the first taking Judea and Samaria, the second Galilee and Perea, and the third Trachonitis and Gaulonitis. The eldest son, Herod, having been disinherited by his father, had nothing. Herodias, the wife of the latter, was inordinately ambitious, and readily agreed to the proposal of Antipas (who had also assumed the title "Herod"). She, however, made it a condition that that tetrarch should put away his lawful wife before she came to him. But this wife, who was the daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia Petrea, having discovered the perfidious compact, fled to her father, and the latter immediately advanced with an army against his faithless son-in-law. In an engagement which ensued Herod Antipas was defeated. Upon this event Josephus remarks (*Antiq.*, xviii., v. 2):—

> "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John that was called the Baptist.....For Herod, fearing lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion.....thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause.....Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death."

Here the Baptist is only mentioned incidentally to account for the Tetrarch's defeat; he had been dead some years

Digitized by Google

when this battle was fought, and could therefore have had no knowledge of Herod's proposal to Herodias.

According to Luke's Gospel (iii. 1), John the Baptist commenced preaching and baptizing in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (viz., A D. 28), and shortly afterwards was cast into prison. His public ministry, then, can only be counted by weeks or months. It was, in fact, not until after his arrest that Jesus is represented as commencing his own ministry in Galilee. The date of this arrest cannot, therefore, be placed later than A.D. 29. Now, in this year, and for several years after, Herodias was living with her lawful husband, Herod, and her daughter Salome (whom the Gospel writer has confounded with Herodias herself) was at this time the wife of Philip, the half-brother of Antipas, who was sometimes called "Herod Philip." The concocter of the Gospel story was evidently not aware that the "damsel" whom he represents as dancing before "Herod" was a great lady, the wife of Philip the tetrarch, whose actions were not under the control of her mother, and who would not be likely to demean herself by acting the part of a common dancing girl before an assembly of half-intoxicated men—even had her husband permitted such an exhibition.

The date of the war between Antipas and Aretas is fixed by two events. It occurred not long after the death of Philip the tetrarch, and a short time before Pontius Pilate was sent to Rome to answer charges made against him by the Jews. The first took place in "the twentieth year of Tiberius Cæsar"—viz., in A.D. 33–34; the second in A.D. 36. The flight of the wife of Antipas and the battle with Aretas took place, therefore, in or about the year 35—six years after the arrest and imprisonment of John the Baptist. In other words, John had been dead five or six years when Herodias left her husband to live with Antipas. Thus, the story of that baptizer rebuking "Herod" is proved to be an impudent fabrication.

Again, the castle in which the Baptist was confined was in the southern part of Perea, to the East of the Dead Sea, and seventy or eighty miles distant from the nearest part of Galilee in which "Herod" is stated to have been feasting. It would, then, have been utterly impossible for Antipas to have sent soldiers to behead John and bring back his head in a charger during the progress of the feast, as narrated in the Gospel story.

The two Gospel accounts of the Baptist were derived, as already stated, from an earlier document, whose writer is unknown. All we can say with any certainty of the original fabricator of the story is that he was eminently qualified for his task, and was as great at lying as he was doubtless pious.

ABRACADABRA.

THE SPEAKER AT PRAYERS.

THERE are numerous antiquated formalities in the procedure of Parliament which are so harmlessly absurd that no one need be disturbed by their continuance. A good-humored toleration, for the sake of the Strangers' Gallery, involves no sacrifice of principle. Most of the eccentricities have a history, and, while they serve to amuse Transatlantic and other visitors, they offer no impediment to the progress of business.

Of one formality, however—the daily opening of the two Houses with prayer—it is difficult to speak with equal patience. Why and how it should have been suffered to continue so long will probably be one of the prize-puzzles of some future generation. It will be dimly understood why bishops, as bishops, were permitted to sit in the House of Lords. Everything connected with that House is rotten. But it will be hopelessly beyond the comprehension of some other century how the Commons could have endured in their own Chamber such an objectionable relic of priestly domination as these Church of England prayers. Truly, we are a conservative nation—conservative of everything, indiscriminately; of the good and the bad, of the picturesque and the absurd.

So slow is the world in shedding its "old clo'" that probably some time will elapse before people will be brought to see the incongruity and uselessness of the present grotesque preface to practical legislation. When they *do* see it, the quiet laughter of the few of to-day will find its echo in a universal roar. The farcical appeal for help and guidance to an obviously deaf, or indifferent, or immutable Deity will be discontinued, and it will then be made apparent, even to the pious, that legislation has suffered no loss. For the present, superstition is so tenacious of existence and so widely extended that even our American cousins, who have freely divested themselves of most of their "old clo'," still retain this rag in their Senate.

In our House of Commons the devotional exercise has, at any rate, the merit of absorbing but little time. While the members are standing uncovered Canon Wilberforce reads prayers, which do not occupy more than five minutes. Generally the attendance of members is larger than might be expected; but the secret is, the bulk of the rank and file often attend prayers simply to secure seats. In the House of Lords, where prayers are usually read by the junior bishop, the formality is equally expeditious. It is not, however, the time occupied, but the thing done, that we have to consider; and, as in ordinary life much mischief may be wrought in a minute, so in Parliamentary procedure a very important principle may be sacrificed in the twinkling of an eye.

Prayers in the House cannot be said to be necessary, even from the Christian point of view. The Christian men who constitute the bulk of the London County Council find themselves equal to a great deal of work without any sanctimonious prelude. They initiate and carry out big schemes without the aid of a chaplain or a stereotyped appeal to the Savior. They do not call upon the Holy Ghost to take part in their calculations when levying a rate; they make no attempt to strike up a five minutes' connection between the Throne of Grace and Spring-gardens; and appear to go more in fear of the daily press than of the displeasure of Jahveh. Imagine the provincial astonishment that would be excited if the mayor of a borough felt it necessary to call upon the town clerk to read the Lord's Prayer prior to the presentation of the sewage report!

Parliament—let it pride itself as it may upon its achievements—does not, after all, effect so much practical good in one session as the County Councils and Town Councils and School Boards and Boards of Guardians and other local authorities throughout the country are doing every day. And why it alone should be timorous in entering upon its duties without a preliminary worrying of the Maker of all things—who presumably has other worlds to attend to as well as this, and cannot be expected to be always throwing in his vote and influence at St. Stephen's—is really beyond the comprehension of the unsophisticated mind.

If there were any perceptible result from these "prayers, prayers, idle prayers," the formality might be forgiven. But no one pretends that the gabbled jargon to a Mumbo Jumbo—known to some of the members, but absolutely unknown to others—has any appreciable effect on the tone, temper, speeches, or votes of the Legislature. Has it influenced a solitary division? Has it softened the asperity, or prevented the prevarication, or checked the chicanery, of Ministry or Opposition? Has it stopped an hon. member putting the question of which he has given notice, or a Secretary of State giving the reply he has prepared? Assuredly not. In plain terms, the thing is an empty, meaningless ceremony, perfunctorily performed, absolutely devoid of interest, and having about as much practical effect as that wonderful proclamation against vice and immorality read by the Clerk of Arraigns at the opening of Assize.

If there are hon. members who sincerely believe that they receive guidance from on High as well as from the party Whips, why do they not pray for it in their closets, or in the smoke-room of the House—though not too near to Mr. Labouchere—or anywhere else that affords facilities for a private entreaty to heaven? Then other hon. members would be spared the nausea of finding the orders of the day eternally preceded by "prayers." It will be said, of course, that members to whom prayers are distasteful need not enter the House while they are proceeding. True, and the same might be said if the Speaker opened the House with a comic song or a "nigger" breakdown.

The indifference with which members generally treat the sacerdotal imposition is exemplified in the Select Committees as well as in the House itself. Should there be a sitting before four o'clock, the members' door of each Committee-room is abruptly thrust open, and a gilt-badged official bawls in: "The Speaker at Prayers!" The members turn their heads unconcernedly, and proceed with their business. Very different, however, is the effect when

Digitized by Google

similarly comes the warning cry, "Division!" and a question of moment is afoot. Prayers may be missed, but a vote on an important matter—never!

In its origin and continuance, the practice is based upon the constitutional assumption that Christianity is a part of the law, and consequently should be associated with the law-making. But as the Christianity in this case happens to mean Church of Englandism, the proceeding—in view of the *personnel* of the Assembly and the varied religious and non-religious opinions the representatives hold—is a clerical imposition to which all may object. Why should not the very considerable contingent of Irish Catholic representatives, who are forced to come to Westminster, insist that an intercessional prayer should be put up on their behalf to the Virgin Mary?

Nonconformists might succeed, if they tried, in removing from the Senate this survival of State ecclesiasticism, and that other survival which is even worse—the administering of the oath to witnesses before the Committees. But, alas, the majority of Dissenters are themselves too thickly tarred with the theological brush to actively resent the infliction. Nevertheless, it must strike them at times that the whole atmosphere of the House is inimical to a proper devotional spirit, and that the ruthless dragging of sacred things into an arena where, at best, they are treated with cold toleration, partakes somewhat of sacrilege and desecration. To the reverential believer it must seem that here, at any rate, the office of prayers would be more "honored in the breach than the observance."

On all grounds, therefore, one would like to hail the advent of a modern Cromwell who should order, not the taking away of a harmless bauble to be afterwards replaced, but the final removal of these remnants of sacerdotal sway.

FRANCIS NEALE.

MRS. HARRIET LAW.

THE late Mrs. Harriet Law, whose valiant work for Freethought deserves to be kept in remembrance, was born on November 5, 1831, at Ongar, a village in Essex bordering on Epping Forest. Her maiden name was Frost. She was descended from flourishing farmers on both sides, and was one of a numerous family. Her father's favorite companion, she spent a large part of her early childhood in accompanying him wherever he went about the farm. She was essentially a child of nature, disliked being indoors, would be up early in the morning, and make a meal of fruit picked from the trees. Love of fresh air and sunshine never left her. Occasionally she had fits of brooding, and would remain alone for hours in the hay-loft, perusing and pondering over her *Pilgrim's Progress* and Young's *Night Thoughts*. When the children were growing up, the father fell into misfortune through selling his farm and business of refreshment contractor, and not re-investing to advantage. The family came to London. She took a house entirely on her own responsibility and opened a school. By this means she supported herself and assisted her parents. This help she continued in one form and another until the end of their days. Her father always declared that whatever Harriet did was right. She spoke of her mother as being of a most sweet and refined nature. She was a devout Christian, was baptized by Dr. Angus when about twenty years of age, at College Chapel, Bethnal Green, became a Sunday-school teacher, refused to eat hot dinner on Sunday, or to have her bed made on that day. Her first attempt at public speaking was in Mile End-road; she saw someone addressing a crowd, and stopped to listen. It was a Secularist making a warm attack upon Christianity. When he had finished she opposed him in a state of great excitement, then hurried away, frightened at what she had done. Soon after she went to the Secular Hall, Philpott-street, Commercial-road, with the intention of converting the Infidel. Here she first met Bradlaugh, G. J. Holyoake, Charles Southwell, etc. These she opposed in turn, but always found that her creed had somewhat wasted at each encounter, until there was nothing left of it. She used to leave the hall saying to herself, "I shan't defend *that* doctrine any more!" Her first heterodox remark was made to her minister, who remonstrated with her for speaking in public, quoting Paul's well-known injunction, that a woman's voice should not be heard in the church. She considerably startled him by replying, "Well, and what of that?" Mr. Edward Law, son of Mr. William Law, of Newton Abbott, attended the same hall. It was probably sympathy in a common cause that drew them together. They married while still Christians on January 11, 1855. There were four children, one son and three daughters. Two or three years after, when every trace of the theology that had been so real to her had disappeared, she adopted lecturing as a profession. The three requisites of a Freethought lecturer at that time were a strong arm, a powerful voice, and a never-failing courage. These she possessed in an eminent degree. At her return from each lecturing tour she would regale her family with accounts of the "glorious fights" she had had with the Christians, how the latter had tried to drive them from the halls, by putting out the gas, sprinkling cayenne pepper about the floors, making thrusts at them with chairs, calling in the police; how she had saved herself from being lynched by passing through the mob in a top-hat and coat, borrowed from one of her male companions, the gentle Christians crying out all the time, "Where is she?' Of course, no one knew. She hardly knew herself; the transformation was so complete.

Her intense enthusiasm, high spirits, and fearless utterance of all she believed drew round her large numbers of most devoted comrades, whom she inspired to brave all with her in the interests of free speech. She was as proud of her bruises as other women were of their jewels.

At the death of Mr. G. H. Reddalls, of Birmingham, at the latter end of the year 1875, she purchased the plant and goodwill of his paper, the *Secular Chronicle*, and kept it in existence for three years. Although it never reached paying-point—she losing about £1,000 over the venture—it did meet with some measure of success, sufficient to indicate that, had she been an editor instead of an orator, it would have become one of the permanent possessions of the Freethought party. Her best work was done in periods of great excitement; it was when other people lost their heads that hers became most cool. She had the greatest admiration for John Stuart Mill, whom she knew very well, and spoke for him during his electioneering campaign when candidate for Parliament at Westminster.

Nothing like justice can be done to a character such as hers without some knowledge of her private life. She suffered from an excess of sympathy. Everyone's sorrow was her sorrow. One time she would be pleading—and successfully—for an erring daughter to be received back into her home; another time keeping roof over wife and children while the husband was in hospital; then lending a few pounds to give a man a new start in life; next paying out the broker for a family in distress; then being security for a small loan; and so on, and so on, throughout her whole life giving up her valuable time to such work, and bringing herself into pecuniary embarrassment. Her own needs were easily satisfied; her tastes were of the simplest. To put up at a miner's cottage was as pleasing to her as at the Grand Hotel; a little plain food, and plainer clothes, sufficed. In spite of her busy life, her children were never forgotten. When leaving London for a tour in the North her instruction to the housekeeper would be: "See to the children; if they are well and happy when I return, I will overlook all else." Nothing would keep her from them when they were ill; she would cease to be a lecturer, and become a first-class nurse. A few months since she remarked that there were two things she had striven all her life to do for her children—one was to keep them out of the hands of the doctor; and the other, out of the hands of the parson. Another remark of hers in connection with her children was that she would rather leave them with a sound, healthy constitution than with a thousand a year.

ACID DROPS.

LORD SALISBURY has no very high opinion of the Christians of Crete. With regard to them and the Mohammedans, he evidently thinks it is six on one side and half-a-dozen on the other. "If it were possible," he says, "to dig a ditch across the island, with the Christians on one side and the Moslems on the other, I think we should arrive at a satisfactory solution."

The King of Siam, now on a visit to England, is said to be handsome, accomplished, intelligent, and liberal. According to the *Daily News*, he maintains religious liberty in his dominions. Catholic and Protestant missionaries are allowed to proselytize at their pleasure, only they are forbidden to practise their business in the Palace. Some time ago a deputation of missionaries waited upon him, and said they were anxious to convert him and his people to the Christian faith. They told him it was well known that the people of Christian lands are much happier than those who inhabit heathen countries. The polite monarch replied with a smile: "I think the Czar of Russia is not so happy as the King of Siam."

During the King of Siam's visit to Singapore he was persuaded to go to the English cathedral. On arriving at the cathedral grounds, he found a number of Chinese coolies sitting outside in the broiling sun pulling the huge punkahs to keep the worshippers cool. Whereupon the King of Siam refused to enter the church. "If you Christians," he said,

Digitized by Google

"can't worship your God without keeping a number of heathen toiling in the sun, I have seen enough of your church service outside the walls.'

A female inmate of Lambeth Workhouse refused to attend church on Sunday. For this offence against somebody—probably the parson—she was put for one meal on bread and water. On the matter being reported to the Guardians, Mrs. Despard asked whether it was not persecution. The chairman replied that discipline had to be maintained, and that if one were allowed to stay away from church the whole place would become disorganized. Mr. Redman added that if no punishment were allowed they would have to shut the church and sack the parsons. "And a good thing too," said Mr. Cochran. Eventually the matter was referred to a committee for consideration and report.

Raymond Hadley, of Church-street, Islington, is a baker six days a week, and a howler on the seventh. In the latter occupation he is generally assisted by George Humphry Knight, who is nothing all the other days of the week. These men frequent the highway in Finsbury Park on Sundays, and their religion is very noisy. As they refused to go to a spot where no obstruction would be caused to the traffic, they were arrested on Sunday last, and appeared at North London next day. Mr. Cluer said to the men: "I want an assurance that you will not go to this place again." Hadley: "When the spirit of God tells me to preach, I must preach." Mr. Cluer: "But the spirit of God does not lead you to any particular lamp-post." Knight: "If it led me to the top of a lamp-post, I would preach from it." Mr. Cluer: "If it did, you would be dealt with according to law." Knight: "You want us to obey the police and disobey God." Mr. Cluer: "Do you give me the assurance I ask." Knight: "I shall give no assurance." Mr. Cluer fined each prisoner forty shillings or fourteen days. Knight said he hoped no one would pay the fine for him. He burns to be a martyr for Christ and obstruction.

Mr. Cluer, one of our newest London magistrates, is a most accommodating gentleman. In his court the other day a Chinaman, who was a Buddhist, wanted to take the oath by blowing out a lighted candle. Mr. Cluer had no candle handy, but asked whether a wax vesta would do instead, and was producing one from his pocket when he was informed that it must be a candle or nothing. Superstitionists always stickle for the regulation ceremony.

William Hayes Ward, in the *New York Herald*, in giving an account of the "New Religion" which will probably soon appear in the East, says that "the Japanese are pretty well satisfied with their morality as compared with that of Christian nations." We should think so.

The bishops have at last closed their secret Pan Anglican Conference, in which it is understood that the question of how to regain Church control of education has been one of the chief topics of discussion, a subsidiary place having been given to the proposals for reunion with the Greek Church, on which a memorial was presented by Mr. Athelstan Riley. The reunion would be an apt mating of a living barbarism with a fossil one.

The ecclesiastical officers of the Church of England appear to have very easy terms of leave of absence and furlough. They have travelling allowances besides stipends, in the case of a bishop less only by 500 rupees a month, out of £5,000 a year for the provision of a substitute. Even a chaplain gets one year's furlough after three of service. This is why we see so many "returned empties" in England.

The Dean of Winchester, speaking of the Christian Church as a whole, says, in a volume entitled *Lombard Street in Lent*, published by Mr. Elliot Stock: "The Church is continually falling—I care not who may be staggered at such a word as that—is it not true? Everyone who, in the light of our present day, tests the whole history of Christianity is filled with an awful sense that there is something that has gone quite wrong; that there is something in Christianity which has not met the difficulties, which has not overcome evils, which has not moved with the times, which has often failed to raise mankind to a higher level."

The *Christian Commonwealth*, commenting on the above, admits that "every real student of history is constrained mournfully to assent to this conclusion." This admission that there is something wrong somewhere may suggest that the foundations are insecure.

Gas exploded in the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary, at Pompeii, New York, recently. The priest's eyes were put out, and two of his assistants will probably die.

The clergy do not always behave themselves in South Africa; although the cloth in England, I am told, is always a guarantee of good faith—more or less. Anyway, the people of Roodepoort want to hear from a parson named Williams, who formerly dispensed religion at the local English church, and has recently dispensed with it. He was some time ago presented with £16 to part pay his passage home; but he pocketed the cash and stayed on, waiting for something to turn up. That something took the shape of a cheque-book belonging to an insurance agent, whose office he had occasion to visit on church-subscription business. A few forgeries enabled him to pay his creditors (with bogus paper) and clear off with a comfortable little remembrancer of the credulity of the Roodepoort flock. His fresh field and pasture new is not yet known.—*African Critic.*

The United States Senate has been much exercised by the question whether Bibles shall have a tariff, like other books, or enter the States duty free. By a bare majority of four, it was resolved that God's holy word must pay duty.

A Syracuse priest tried to pass through the Custom House two richly-ornamented crosses, brought from Jerusalem, without paying duty on them. They are valued at $500. The Customs' officers decided that the crosses were dutiable, and the priest has appealed to the authorities at Washington.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

Mr. Harry Payne, who sings in the choir of the Presbyterian Church at Southold, Long Island, has been reported to the elders. The young lady organist detected him in the act of reading Paine's *Age of Reason* while the pastor was delivering the sermon. Interviewed by a reporter, Mr. Payne asserted that *The Age of Reason* was a great book.

A man, believed to be the Rev. Francis Hermans, who is supposed to have killed Miss Henrietta Clawson at Salt Lake City, in September, 1895, and who, the police believe, has committed half-a-dozen other murders, is in jail at Pembroke, Ontario. He was officiating as lay reader in an Episcopal church at the time of his arrest.

The Young Men's Christian Association has a tent on the State ground at Peekskill, N.Y., where the Twenty-second regiment is camping. During a thunderstorm, July 11, lightning struck the tent and killed a corporal, who sat at a table writing. No other tent was struck. This is the first death that has occurred at the State camp.

Mr. Symes, writing in the *Liberator* on the living burials in Russia, says:—It is almost safe to guess that those Russian fanatics take their stand upon certain Bible texts; and there are texts which may readily be turned to account by them. What is the meaning of "buried with him by baptism" (Rom. vi. 4); "in baptism" (Col. ii. 12); "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. ii. 20); "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh" (Gal. v. 24); "If we be dead with Christ" (Rom. vi. 8)? It is impossible to say what the monkish writers of this mystic rubbish meant by it; but fanatics need not look further for incitement to such crimes as those which mark the history of the Russian Beguines. Indeed, we may easily gather from the New Testament that one distinguishing trait of the leading characters was a recklessness with regard to life, that they encouraged each other to "lay down their lives," and to go cheerfully to death. The distance between this and the actual sacrifice of each other for religious reasons is extremely short, and persons who give themselves up unreservedly to the leading of the New Testament may be expected to develop most religious crimes, as was actually the case in the early Churches.

I am conquered. Prayer has been proved to avail. True, all the prayers in Australia cannot alter the weather, cannot cure the drought, cannot make Christ or his bag of tricks attractive, cannot set a broken leg or save a drowning man; no, but in California there has been a prize fight, and the wife of one of the combatants prayed that her husband might win! And, to the astonishment and disgust of most people, he *did* win. "God" may turn a deaf ear to the cry of distress, to the prayers of those who are starving, drowning, burning; but a prize-fight is quite another thing. "God" has evidently not forgotten his own experiences in the ring, and the milling Jacob and he gave each other. So, when this wife told him her husband was going to have a pugilistic encounter with a better man than himself, he resolved to help him. After that, who can doubt the efficacy of prayer?—*J. Symes, in "Liberator."*

Following what he supposed was the wish of his "Savior," Reuben Beachum finds himself blind. Here is a press dispatch telling how it was done: *O'Neill, Nebraska.*—"If thine eye be single," read Reuben Beachum from the sixth chapter of Matthew, "then shall thy whole body be filled with light." Beachum is a colored farmer and preacher near O'Neill, and a religious monomaniac. He didn't fully understand the passage in question, but thought he did, and, on

Digitized by Google

the theory that the Lord approved of one-eyed men, thrust a penknife into his right optic to reduce the number in accordance with the supposed requirement of holy writ. He lost the eye. Inflammation set in, and the other is likely to go too. Beachum thinks he has done the Lord's will, and says he will gladly pass the rest of his days in darkness if the burden is laid upon him. Beachum can also quote "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out," as a sanction of self-mutilation.

The case of Shaw *v.* Shaw was the petition of Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw for a divorce on the ground of the cruelty and adultery of her husband, Mr. Arthur Shaw, who was stated to be a Wesleyan preacher. There were charges of adultery with three or four women. The petitioner said that her husband had treated her badly. On several occasions he had struck her, and once he threw her down and knocked her against the wall. The servant who in 1893 went into petitioner's service, at which time she was fourteen-and-half years old, said that the respondent seduced her; while another said that at the age of fifteen, two days after she went into respondent's service, he seduced her. His lordship, in granting a decree *nisi*, said that it was "a very bad case."

In Ireland, so an Irishman informs me, the drummers on the g-l-lorious Twelfth beat the drums with canes. The rebound is quicker than if sticks were used, and as each time the drum is struck a Romanist soul goes to the bottom-most depths of Hades—well, now you can understand the use of canes.—*Liverpool Post.*

Sir Charles Warren has not condescended to reply to the civil and respectful letter addressed to him by the secretary of the Chatham Branch of the National Secular Society. Meanwhile the lying report is being circulated through the press that the Secularists are forbidden to hold meetings on Chatham Lines in consequence of the violence of one of their speakers. The speaker was Mr. Cohen, and he was guilty of no violence. A row was deliberately kicked up by a handful of ill-bred Christians, for whose conduct an apology was offered by the Christian Evidence representative. Such is the paltry excuse behind which Sir Charles Warren shelters his own bigotry. A few Christians wilfully create a disturbance, and the Secularists are punished for it by being warned off a place which is open to all the rest of the public.

Mr. Charles Watts, at the end of his article in this week's *Freethinker*, displays a commendable spirit in relation to this matter; but we believe he will find himself helpless. Chatham Lines belongs to the War Office, and Sir Charles Warren has all the rights of a private proprietor, just as the Crown has absolute rights over Trafalgar-square, which is Crown property. We understand that there is a good meeting-ground just outsite the Lines, and Mr. Watts will doubtless speak there on August 15. He is too old and experienced to run his head against brick walls.

The following advertisement is from a Welsh weekly paper: "Wanted, a Medical Assistant, qualified, Welsh, and a Methodist (no Churchman need apply). One that can deliver lectures on temperance, and would preach on Sundays free. Must be truly religious; in fact, attend all meetings in connection with the sacred cause of Methodism, and wear the orthodox silk hat.—Apply 'Physician.'" This reads like a joke, but it may be deadly earnest. You cannot bottom the solemnity of a solemn Methodist. He is impervious to ridicule.

According to the *Woking News*, there is an awkward problem at Byfleet. A man in the village, of weak intellect, is fond of attending the church services. Of course, there is nothing remarkable in that. But he is so dirty that people cannot sit near him, and the churchwardens have complained to the Guardians. One of these gentlemen suggested that the offensive church attendant should be induced to take a bath; but it may be found easier to take him to the water than to make him wash. Something, however, must be done, or the parson will soon have a congregation of one.

President Faure is going to visit Russia, and F. Volkhovsky says, in *Free Russia*, that the head of the French Republic will find no Republicans in St. Petersburg or Moscow. They are all in Siberia.

The *London Journal* of June 3, 1721, informs us that "accounts from Madrid mention that at a tribunal of the Inquisition lately held there they passed sentence upon eighteen persons. Four women were convicted with witchcraft, and the rest with Judaism. One man and one woman were burnt alive for persisting in their opinion, but two men and four women had 'the extraordinary favor' of being first strangled and afterwards burnt."

If the standing armies of Europe only were marched in rows of five, and at the rate of three miles an hour, it would take nine-and-a-half days before every man could have passed any given point. We fancy we hear the lingering trills of the shepherds' song of old: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace." This peace, we presume, like the place of God, passes all understanding. Amen. And Amen yet again.

The beer-drinking powers of our old English ancestors were astounding; the canons of St. Paul's received thirty gallons each as their weekly allowance.

An American paper says that, if the angels of heaven are like those in the church memorial windows, it must be hard to tell heaven from a nightmare.

Two rival American orders are seeking recruits among pious ladies in England. The one is entitled "The King's Daughters," and the other "The Daughters of the King." When will America send us "Daughters of the Republic"?

The High Church writer of a tract entitled *The Duty of English Priests to the Breviary*, in which he seeks to persuade the clergy to recite the Breviary instead of the Morning and Evening Prayer, has withdrawn the tract, having been warned that the position is legally untenable, and that those who Romanize in this direction will find themselves in conflict with the law.

When "Rev. George Stewart, of N.S. Wales," assured the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland the other day that horse-racing is the cancer of Australia, he forgot to mention that it only affects six days a week, and that the cancer of the seventh is the Calvinistic hypocrisy which seeks to make the Sabbath a hell-upon-earth. Look at the Melbourne Sunday!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

J. K. Jerome would abolish tintinabulation on the Lord's Day. He says: "Church bells may have been necessary in the days before clocks; but do the Church authorities think that a man hears the church bells, and then suddenly decides to go to church? They are unnecessary remnants of the early days of Christianity. They ought to have been abolished with Smithfield fires and other religious follies."

"Peter Lombard," in the *Church Times*, says of Shelley: "Had he lived a few years longer, I believe he would have done as Wordsworth did—turned Tory and High Churchman." Does the worthy Canon really believe this, or is it necessary to add, when giving a good word to a great poet? Who can tell? Shelley might have had an attack of brain-softening if he lived long enough. But he did not.

The so-called Spanish anarchists who have been deported to England are by no means "the refuse of Barcelona." One of them is a professor and a writer of comedies; another is a journalist and publisher. According to the Liverpool *Courier*, many of them had "a noble carriage and a handsome appearance." All of them appear to be Freethinkers, who have incurred the hatred of the Catholics.

The Birkenhead police seem to have nothing better to do than to worry the poorer class of tradesmen who sell milk or sweetstuff on the day when the Lord began his six days' labor. The Lord's Day in Birkenhead must be devoted solely to the church or the public-house.

Mr. Hall Caine's new book is entitled *The Christian*. The first edition, in six-shilling form, is to be published on August 9. We are informed by the literary press, no doubt under high inspiration, that this edition runs to 50,000 copies, and will put £6,000 in the author's pocket. He does much better out of Christianity than Jesus Christ did. Judas would never have ratted if he had carried Mr. Hall Caine's purse.

Mr. Nisbet remarks in "Our Handbook" in the *Referee*, anent the prosecution of fortune-tellers: "Where are you to draw the line? I stopped the other Sunday to hear a street preacher holding forth upon the certainties of hell-fire unless certain simple precautions, which he indicated, were taken to avoid it. Was this a 'prediction' within the meaning of the Act, and, if not, why not, seeing that the hat was afterwards sent round in order that those might contribute who thought the preacher's cheerful intelligence worth paying for?"

The philosopher takes refuge in a "perhaps," and will not be driven to say things are certain which wise men cannot agree about. The man of science is supreme in his own domain, and will not allow theologians to interfere with his conclusions. Society, in its actual life, has long been Atheistic.—*J. A. Froude.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 8, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Who Was Moses? an Answer to the King of Siam's Question."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 8, Failsworth; 15, New Brompton. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. ROBERTS (Liverpool) sends us extracts from the local newspapers containing accounts of the landing and reception of the Spanish Anarchists. According to their own account, these deported "suspects" are guilty of nothing but being Freethinkers. They say that opposition to Catholicism is a crime in Spain. At the same time they admit having been friendly with the men who threw the bombs at Barcelona. Mr. Roberts had a long talk with some of them, and he says that they belong to a high type of human nature. Some of the stories they tell of their tortures in prison are simply horrible. One is of a nature that cannot easily be printed. We venture to suggest that if any one of the "suspects" has suffered this torture, he should satisfy a committee of Englishmen of the fact. If it can be established, it will damn the Spanish Government in the eyes of civilized people. But there ought to be positive proof, and it should be forthcoming.

MR. FOOTE does not write a "Special" for this week's *Freethinker*. It seems useless just at present, in the height of the holiday season, to press Mr. Hartmann's scheme for the financial reorganization of the N. S. S. upon the attention of the Secular party. The matter will be taken up again very shortly. Meanwhile promises to any amount, from £100 to 5*s*., can be sent in to Mr. Foote, or to Mr. Hartmann (treasurer), or Miss Vance (secretary), at the N. S. S. office, 377 Strand, W.C.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks. We missed seeing the *Telegraph* leaderette.

T. J. HEAD promises 5*s*. annually under Mr. Hartmann's scheme, and wishes it "complete success."

E. GOTTHEIL will subscribe 10*s*. annually under Mr. Hartmann's scheme.

C. CATTELL thoroughly approves Mr. Hartmann's scheme for reorganizing the N. S. S. finances, and will subscribe 5*s*. a year.

J. H. BAIN, promising 5*s*. annually, regrets that the Secular party is so slow in "catching on" to Mr. Hartmann's scheme, which he says is one of "magnitude and nobility." He wants to know whether Secularists really intend to meet the forces of reaction.

F. BROOKE.—Ask your Christian friend for the evidence. Charles Bradlaugh never took out his watch and gave God Almighty five minutes to strike him dead. The story existed before Bradlaugh was born. The other allegation is a filthy lie. We will not soil our pages by reproducing it. If these are your Christian "friends," the sooner you make them *strangers* the better.

DIGNIFIED.—Glad to note that you now see the Secularists were not to blame at Chatham.

G. JACOB.—The statement respecting the "Angel" did appear in the *Echo*. Of that we are positive, though we did not keep the number, which must have been dated within ten days of our first paragraph. It was a publican who told us that it was not the "Angel" at Islington, but the other "Angel." We know nothing of either place, and the figure in our paragraph was merely incidental.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Animal's Friend—Two Worlds—Freidenker—Ourselves—Fur Unsere Jugend—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—Echo—Sydney Bulletin—Progressive Thinker—Free Russia—Chatham Observer—Woking News—The New Order—Referee—Humanity—Secular Thought—Birkenhead News—To-Day—Liberty—Zion's Watchtower—Grimsby News—People's Newspaper.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10*s*. 6*d*.; Half Year, 5*s*. 3*d*.; Three Months, 2*s*. 8*d*.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1*s*. 6*d*.; every succeeding ten words, 6*d*. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4*s*. 6*d*.; half column, £1 2*s*. 6*d*.; column, £2 5*s*. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A VERY fair audience, in spite of the tropical weather assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The New Sayings of Christ." Mr. Marriott occupied the chair. This evening (August 8) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same paltform, taking for his subject "Who Was Moses? an Answer to the King of Siam's Question." The dusky monarch put this question last Monday while waiting in what is called the Moses room at the House of Lords, and does not appear to have got a satisfactory reply.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at Failsworth, near Manchester, this Sunday (August 8), afternoon and evening. We hope friends will rally in force from the surrounding districts.

The adjourned meeting of the Moral Instruction Conference was held at St. Martin's Town Hall on Wednesday evening, July 28. The attendance was not as large as on the previous occasion. The first business was the election of an Executive Committee of fifteen. Mr. Foote's proposal was adopted, that each of the nine groups represented should nominate one member, and the other six be elected personally by the whole Conference. The nine thus nominated included Mr. Charles Watts as representing the National Secular Society. When the other six came to be elected it was apparent that the Ethical party and the Socialists—both of whom, and particularly the latter, were very much over represented—were bent on packing the Committee with their own nominees. With the exception of Mr. Watts, not a single person is definitely on the Committee who is not either an Ethicist or a Socialist. Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen were not elected. The Socialists just held their hands down when a name belonging to the National Secular Society was read from the chair, and held them up for nearly everyone else. A few of the Ethicists, including Dr. Coit and Mr. Gould, acted more fairly and sensibly; but the majority acted just like the Socialists. The result was a triumph of sectarianism; but it will not help the Moral Instruction movement outside the Conference. The Socialists showed, before the meeting broke up, that their real interests lay in quite a different direction. One of them, in fact, after trying to introduce the free maintenance question, spoke of "this Moral Instruction affair" quite contemptuously. It remains to be seen whether a Committee thus composed can do much good, or even hold together.

A manifesto has to be issued, and a series of questions to School Board candidates drawn up. Both will involve considerable difficulty in view of the composition of the Committee. Nor is there a clear, definite, and general view of the scope of the Committee's functions. In short, there is ample room for misunderstanding and difference, not to say discord.

Before the Conference broke up Mr. Cohen asked the pertinent question: "Are we to understand that the business of the Committee is simply to impress upon candidates and electors the importance of substituting non-theological moral teaching for religious instruction?" The chairman and some members of the Conference replied with a dubious "Yes." But it was evident that other members were of a different opinion.

Dr. Coit moved, and it was carried, that the Committee should take steps to call another and wider Conference some time this year, with a view to forming a permanent organization, whose operations should be extended all over the kingdom. Should this motion be carried into effect, there will be an opportunity of rectifying the blunders of this initial movement.

There are two great parties first to be considered in the education struggle—Church and Nonconformity. The only serious third party consists of those who are opposed to religious teaching altogether, and the working strength of that party lies in those who want to destroy theology. Some may attach most immediate importance to what is called the "negative" side, and others to what is called the "positive" side. But that is only a difference of attitude, founded perhaps on a difference of temperament. The fact remains, when all is said and done, that the primary bond of this minor third party in the education struggle is opposition to the orthodoxy based upon the Bible; and it is only those who mean business in that direction, without collateral or ulterior designs, who can give any real force to the policy of supplanting religious teaching by moral instruction.

Mr. Justice Collins has put a fresh nail, and a very big and firm one, in the coffin of the Lord's Day Observance Act. Mr. Jeffreys Williams brought an action to recover a

Digitized by Google

penalty against Mr. George Wright, printer and publisher of the *Times*, for advertising a Sunday concert in the Queen's Hall. Mr. Williams, who affirmed instead of taking the oath, stated that, so far from being a Sabbatarian, he had no religious belief. His object was to expose the Act. He attended the concert and heard a song there which made him laugh. It was undeniably an entertainment, and money was taken at the doors. Dr. Parry was called to prove that there was no levity in the performance, and Mr. Wright said he had no control over the advertisements in the *Times*. Mr. Justice Collins, however, passed over these points. He non-suited the plaintiff on the ground that he had failed to prove that there were no free seats at the concert.

The *Daily News*, in a leaderette on this action, points out that Mr. Justice Collins's decision seems to indicate "an easy way out of an obsolete and vexatious statute." So long as *some* free seats are provided, though others are charged for, it appears that the new interpretation of the Act is complied with. The House of Lords, at the instigation of the Bishops, threw out Lord Hobhouse's Bill; but the worthy judge, who has a liberal reputation, points out a way of relief, which the *Daily News* hopes (as we do) will be widely adopted.

Freethinkers all over the kingdom should make a special note of this case. It should be of great assistance to our party in obtaining the use of public halls for Sunday lectures.

Mr. F. J. Boorman, the enthusiastic secretary of the Chatham Secular Society, replies, in the *Rochester and Chatham Standard*, to several writers on "The Errors of Atheism." He manages, in brief compass, to clear away a deal of misrepresentation.

Our esteemed Freethought contemporary, the *Truthseeker*, of New York, prints "Further Notes on the Jubilee," in its issue dated July 24. The printer has omitted to state that all those fifteen paragraphs are taken from the *Freethinker*. Probably the name of that journal got dropped out in the make-up of the page. Mr. Macdonald, the editor of the *Truthseeker*, is far above reprinting from other papers without acknowledgment. He can write very interesting paragraphs himself, and his brother George has a very pretty turn of the pen in his weekly "Observations."

The Bradlaugh Club's excursion, announced in our last issue, leaves Liverpool-street at 9.10 a.m. on Sunday, August 22, Bethnal Green at 9.15, and Dalston Lane at 9 21, for Rye House and Broxbourne.

INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

(From the Preface to H. Taber's "Faith and Fact.")

FOR many years the pulpit has been losing influence, and the sacred calling no longer offers a career to young men of talent and ambition.

When people believed in "special providence" they also believed that preachers had great influence with God. They were regarded as celestial obbyists, and they were respected and feared because of their supposed power.

Now, no one who has the capacity to think believes in special providence. Of course there are some pious imbeciles who think that pestilence and famine, cyclone and earthquake, flood and fire, are the weapons of God, the tools of his trade; and that with these weapons, these tools, he kills and starves, rends and devours, drowns and burns, countless thousands of the human race.

If God governs this world, if he builds and destroys, if back of every event is his will, then he is neither good nor wise. He is ignorant and malicious.

A few days ago, in Paris, men and women had gathered together in the name of Charity. The building in which they were assembled took fire, and many of these men and women perished in the flames.

A French priest called this horror an act of God.

Is it not strange that Christians speak of their God as an assassin? How can they love and worship this monster who murders his children?

Intelligence seems to be leaving the orthodox Church. The great divines are growing smaller, weaker, day by day. Since the death of Henry Ward Beecher no man of genius has stood in an orthodox pulpit. The ministers of intelligence are found in the liberal Churches, where they are allowed to express their thoughts and preserve their manhood. Some of these preachers keep their faces towards the East, and sincerely welcome the light, while their orthodox brethren stand with their backs to the sunrise and worship the sunset of the day before.

During these years of change, of decay and growth, the author of this book looked and listened, became familiar with the questions raised, the arguments offered, and the results obtained. For his work a better man could not have been found. He has no prejudice, no hatred. He is by nature candid, conservative, kind, and just. He does not attack persons. He knows the difference between exchanging epithets and thoughts. He gives the facts as they appear to him, and draws the logical conclusions. He charges and proves that Christianity has not always been the friend of morality, of civil liberty, of wives and mothers, of free thought and honest speech. He shows that intolerance is its nature, that it always has and always will persecute to the extent of its power, and that Christianity will always despise the doubter.

Yet we know that doubt must inhabit every finite mind. We know that doubt is as natural as hope, and that man is no more responsible for his doubts than for the beating of his heart. Every human being, who knows the nature of evidence, the limitations of the mind, must have "doubts" about gods and devils, about heavens and hells, and must know that there is not the slightest evidence tending to show that gods and devils ever existed.

God is guess.

An undesigned designer, an uncaused cause, is as incomprehensible to the human mind as a circle without a diameter.

The dogma of the Trinity multiplies the difficulty by three.

Theologians do not, and cannot, believe that the authority to govern comes from the consent of the governed. They regard God as the monarch, and themselves as his agents. They always have been the enemies of liberty.

They claim to have a revelation from their God, a revelation that is the rightful master of reason. As long as they believe this, they must be the enemies of mental freedom. They do not ask man to think, but command him to obey.

If the claims of the theologians are admitted, the Church becomes the ruler of the world, and to support and obey priests will be the business of mankind. All these theologians claim to have a revelation from their God, and yet they cannot agree as to what the revelation reveals. The other day, looking from my window at the bay of New York, I saw many vessels going in many directions, and yet all were moved by the same wind. The direction in which they were going did not depend on the direction of the breeze, but the set of the sails. In this way the same Bible furnishes creeds for all the Christian sects. But what would we say if the captains of the boats I saw should each swear that his boat was the only one that moved in the same direction the wind was blowing?

Christianity, with its ignorant and jealous God, its loving and revengeful Christ, its childish legends, its grotesque miracles, its "fall of man," its atonement, its salvation by faith, its heaven for stupidity, and its hell for genius, does not and cannot satisfy the free brain and the good heart. ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

"St. John's" Assistance Fund.

The Committee who are organizing the fund for Mr. J. H. Saint report that the Freethought party have already responded moderately well to their appeal, although several friends have not yet replied. The accounts for the month of July have been duly audited, and Mr. Saint has been placed under the care of Dr. T. R. Allinson, in his Hygienic Hospital. Grants have been made weekly, and will be continued as long as funds permit. Collecting cards will be forwarded to any friend applying for same, and individual donations will be acknowledged by return of post. The Secretary is Mr. F. Todd, 21 Abdale-road, Shepherds Bush, London, W.

Are there not enough known facts to teach our children that would interest and benefit them? Cannot children be brought together on Sunday and have a good time, and be taught truth and sense, instead of lies and nonsense? Is there anything more important for us to do than to provide a place for our children where their minds will be free from such detrimental environments? Have we not too long been permitting priest and preacher to bend the twig?—*Katie Kehm Smith.*

Digitized by Google

MODERN SCIENCE AND "THE IMPOSSIBLE."

It is really surprising what nonsense the "reconcilers," in their efforts—which reveal all the pitiful desperation of impotence—to bolster up the decaying remnants of ancient mythology, are at times capable of giving forth. I read quite recently in one of the evening newspapers an article on the new telegraphy without wires, written by a reverend gentleman not altogether unknown in the world of political and religious controversy. He went so far as to say that this wonderful discovery would administer "another sharp lesson to the clever people who are so fond of the word *impossible*, and who have been assuring us that modern science is going to knock on the head all our old 'superstitions.'" I will not do the good pastor the injustice of presuming for one moment that he is unacquainted with the method of criticism used against the old superstitions by so many of the leading modern scientists and philosophers; and, bearing this in mind, I must confess to a profound astonishment that he should so far "give himself away"—if I may be permitted to use the vulgarism—while trying to throw dust into the eyes of his readers. Applied to a large body of opinion which prevailed, say, a hundred years ago, such criticism would not have been out of place; applied to modern times, it is undoubtedly incorrect—indeed, it could not be more so.

Throughout the greater portion of the present century the *à priori* method of criticism has been, to all intents and purposes, obsolete. It was doomed to extinction from the first. The modern scientist is the last person in the world to deny the possibility of *anything* in nature outside the realm of pure mathematics. He recognises that it would be a piece of presumption on his part to do so. Why? For one reason, because he is not egotistical enough to disacknowledge the immensity of his ignorance; and for another, because he has no means of disproving the possibility or conceivability of some particular suggestion or recorded tradition. Such Biblical stories as the miraculous birth of Christ, the turning of water into wine, and the dead coming to life again, are not asserted to be impossibilities, contrary though they are to every scrap of scientific observation. To the religionist who says that these remarkable occurrences were brought about by "the hand of God"—that is to say, by supernatural means—the scientific Agnostic (and, I think I may add, the vast majority of those who prefer to call themselves Atheists) answers that he knows nothing whatsoever about any supernatural powers, that he is absolutely unaware of any means by which he may obtain that knowledge, and that there is not the faintest evidence to lead him to surmise for a moment that such forces are behind the palpably existing universe; but at the same time he will not positively deny their existence. It is absurd to dogmatize concerning infinity, which we not only know nothing about, but which is unknowable. So also is the scientific attitude towards the conjectural assertion that the universe has a Creator, a Being who rules and directs its every atom, but whose origin and personality, if the word may be used, are inscrutable. On the authority of Tyndall (Lecture before British Association at Belfast in 1874) we have it that, so far as the eye of science has ranged through nature, no intrusion of purely *creative* power into any series of phenomena has ever been observed; and the assumption of such a power to account for special phenomena, though often made, has always proved a failure. But further than that, the idea that the universe was created by an agency external to itself is completely inconceivable, and there are many things which, even though conceivable, are absolutely unbelievable. Tyndall said that, as he could jump over a small hillock, he could, in imagination, *conceive* a man jumping over Mount Blanc. This "external agency," or God, is, with blind illogic, asserted by Theists to be self-existent, an "uncaused cause"! This idea is, if possible, even more hopelessly inconceivable than the previous one. Why, then, should there be any attempt to postulate on the great problem of life and origin, which, the more scientists have racked their brains over, has become to them more and more conclusively inscrutable. On these matters we must, if we wish to be really honest, confess ourselves Agnostic; affirming nothing, but refusing to give credence to any of the many foundationless attempts at explanation. This is the attitude of all that is best in modern science and philosophy.

Coming back, however, to the main point under consideration in this short paper, and bearing in mind the scientific tenet that nothing outside the realm of pure mathematics is positively denounced as impossible, it is well to inquire on what ground all traditional "miracles," and supernatural stories seriously told us as genuine facts are rejected as unworthy of the belief of sensible men. The great and fundamental principle of modern criticism, worthy the name, is to be found in the words of Locke: "We should in all cases proportion our beliefs to the evidence." When Charles Darwin was asked on one occasion, shortly before his death, by two distinguished scientific visitors to his house, his reason for having given up Christianity, he replied: "Because there is no evidence in support of it." That he thought it opposed to science and scientific knowledge his own works prove. Take the want of evidence by itself. Nobody knows, for instance, who were the authors of the Gospels, nor when or where those books were written. Their contents, supernatural and otherwise, have not received the slightest corroboration worthy of the name. Such flimsy evidence as this would not be accepted by any "profane" historian, and a scientist would treat it with contempt. "I do not know any body of scientific men," says Huxley (oh! that we had more such lofty minds and courageous hearts!), "who could be got to listen without the strongest expressions of disgusted repudiation to the exposition of a pretended scientific discovery, which had no better evidence to show for itself than the story of the devils entering a herd of swine, or of the fig tree that was blasted for bearing no figs when 'it was not the season of figs'.....scientific ethics can and does declare that the profession of belief in such events, on the evidence of documents of unknown date and of unknown authorship, is immoral." Then what evidence is there that such a person as Abraham ever existed? or Moses? or Pharaoh? It is rather significant that there has never yet been found in any part of Egypt a single monument alluding to a Pharaoh or any of the ten plagues. No objection can be brought against this method of criticism, for there is no adequate reason whatsoever to induce us to criticise the Bible in any different spirit to that in which we criticise historical or scientific matters. "Everything rests upon evidence" has been the watchword of some of the noblest and greatest British intellects of the century—Mill, Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, Herbert Spencer, etc.—who, in their herculean researches after truth, have been compelled to reject the old superstitions.

It is extremely doubtful whether a single disbeliever in the various "faiths" will feel any shock whatsoever in this latest discovery in electrical science; on the contrary, none will welcome it more sincerely. It has never been the heterodox who have feared the march of knowledge. As Ernest Haeckel says, "the enormous daily progress of natural science is irresistibly destroying the roots of all Church dogmas"; and as the wonderful possibilities of nature become greater and greater in the eyes of science, so also does its antagonism towards revealed religion become more and more uncompromising. It is the method of nature which science has to disclose, and it is the application of science alone by which we can hope for further light.

CHARLES STIRRUP.

Jehovah to Moses.

From an eternity of idleness
I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth
From nothing; rested, and created man:
I placed him in a paradise, and there
Planted the tree of evil, so that he
Might eat and perish, and my soul procure
Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn,
Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth,
All misery to my fame. The race of men,
Chosen to my honor, with impunity
May sate the lusts I planted in their heart.
Here I command thee hence to lead them on,
Until, with harden'd feet, their conquering troops
Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood,
And make my name be dreaded through the land.
Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe
Shall be the doom of their eternal souls,
With every soul on this ungrateful earth,
Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong—even all
Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
(Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.

—*P. B. Shelley.*

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR OF THOMAS COOPER, M.D.

As eminently deserving of your space, permit me to present your readers with this sketch of a sturdy, independent, and notable character, all of which qualities seem well borne out in the likeness I have seen of him—a fine, benevolent face and noble head. The following memoir is remarkable in that it is a generous and graceful, if at times halting, testimony to an avowed Freethinker—an Atheist possibly—by a most pious, orthodox Christian. And in the circumstance it is needless to observe how honorable to the latter. In adapting the rather prolix article for your columns, I have omitted considerable of less concern, but have been careful to retain just enough to indicate the character and the prejudices of the then environments, and the author's point of view. *The History of the South Carolina College, from its Incorporation, December 19, 1801, to 1857*, containing this memoir, was written and first published by Professor Maximilian La Borde, M.D. (born June 3, 1801) of that institution, in 1857—just eighteen years after Dr. Cooper's death. The College is the leading State *quasi*-secular educational institution situated in Columbia, the capital of the State. It is still hampered in its possibilities for the best work by the same conservative influences—the pressure of churchly surveillance and the consuming jealousy of the denominational colleges. Almost applicable to-day is one of Dr. La Borde's apostrophes, p. 132: "All hail to the year 1824! It was a year of quiet. [They had had some students' troubles].....It is wanting very much *in events*. There are no stirring incidents.....It is a smooth sea without gale enough to disturb the surface. Prayers and recitations, and recitations and prayers, and the weekly examination of the monitor's bills—these make up pretty much the year's history." I may note further as significant that as late as April 15, last, the college library having for years halted at its 30,000 volumes, the news is telegraphed that "President Woodrow has just bought 200 books for library.....over one-half consists of essays on literature by best English authors. But every class is represented, *except perhaps science*; there is a little of latest humor, latest fiction, essays, criticism." How these orthodox, who avow they "have the truth," fear science, the truth-teller! Rev. Dr. Woodrow is the celebrated "Christian evolutionist" mentioned on pp. 84 and 316 of vol. i. of Dr. White's *Warfare of Science with Theology*. Connected with the College off and on since 1857, its president last four years, he now retires, a Professor Woodward of the faculty succeeding. In view of the notoriety Dr. Woodrow at one time achieved, it might not be amiss to close these introductory remarks with a citation from his recent and final baccalaureate sermon, preached, as was his custom, to the graduating class, on "The Word of God." I give this up to-date, profound gem! As for those who would claim the Bible *contains* the Word of God, he will have none of it, as that would involve vulgar reason, a poor authority. "On the other hand, I say that the Bible *is* God's word, meaning thereby that *every word and syllable* in the Bible, *as first written*, from beginning to end, comes from God, as is asserted and claimed in the extracts from it which I read you, and, *therefore*, is absolutely true; and that the office of reason is not to sit in judgment upon what is found there, but solely to seek to learn what is the true meaning of every part. And, further, that the Church is equally powerless with reason to decide that *anything* found in the Bible is no part of the word of God. [Italics mine].....The Supreme Judge.....in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but *the Holy Spirit* speaking in the Scripture." It should also be of interest—and particularly to Dr. White—to know, as the orating "scientist" asserted in concluding: "I have now done what I could to set forth what I believe, and for *more than fifty years* believed, to be *the true* doctrine respecting the Bible, and what I have been *publicly teaching* for more than fifty years.....All parts of this doctrine trend towards the one point—the setting forth of the Word itself, under *the guidance and enlightening power of the Holy Ghost*." This in a *secular* college that a Dr. Cooper once presided over!

I will trespass no further on your kind patience, and now give Dr. La Borde's memoir of Dr. Cooper.

LOUIS LEVINE.

Charleston, S.C., July 11.

MEMOIR.

I propose to present Dr. Cooper more distinctly to my readers. To this notice he is eminently entitled, and I shall endeavor to bring to the discussion a spirit of entire candor and impartiality.

He was born in London, England, October 22, 1759. He was educated at Oxford. Having taken a position in reference to French politics, and published a pamphlet in reply to Burke, he left England under a threat of prosecution, and took up his residence in Northumberland, Pennsylvania [U.S.A.], where he met his friend Dr. Priestley. Upon his arrival among us, he found the country in a state of high political excitement, and, taking part in it, he was tried for a libel under the sedition law, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of four hundred dollars. In 1806 he was appointed one of the judges of the Pennsylvania Common Pleas Districts, from which office he was removed by Governor Snyder in 1811, at the request of the Legislature. He held successively the Professorship of Chemistry at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa., and of Chemistry and Mineralogy in the University of Pennsylvania. December 13, 1819, he was elected to fill for one year the Chair of Chemistry in the South Carolina College, made vacant by the death of Professor Smith. On December 15, 1820, he was elected President *pro tempore*, and December 1, 1821, was permanently elected. December 3, 1834, his resignation was requested, and he was disconnected with the College. His last days were spent in editing and publishing *The Statutes of the State*—a labor which was assigned him by the General Assembly. He died at Columbia, May 11, 1839.....No man of his time was more generally known to the people of the State. Of an eager, restless spirit, always anxious to take part in everything of moment which was passing around him; of resolute and determined cast of character, with great vigor of understanding, combined with varied learning, it was impossible that such a man should not be known to his contemporaries, and leave behind him fixed and positive impressions.....What is the peculiar nature of his genius? I will be understood when I say that his understanding was strong and vigorous. He had great acuteness, and his perceptions were clear and well defined. He had wonderful facility in taking hold of the thoughts of others and appropriating them to his own purposes. His mind had great activity, was always on the search, and nothing of value which was thrown out by others escaped him. But it was not blind obedience; he subjected it to the crucible of his own reason, to the test of personal experiment. He had in largest measure the element of independence, and in the end his opinions were his own. It is true that on many subjects he differed from those around him, and that he entertained opinions entirely opposed to the settled convictions of the community where his lot was cast.....He had a marvellous *capacity*, and his enthusiasm in the cause of learning knew no bounds..... His genius was eminently practical—*utilitarian*. He looked upon man very much as an animal, and believed that the framework of society was designed to provide for his physical wants and necessities. As in man he saw nothing but the animal, so in the objects of knowledge he saw nothing but external nature; of man in his higher nature, as a being of immortal powers, with aspirations reaching into a never-ending futurity, he had no just conception. For those pursuits, then, which are not immediately connected with the bodily wants he had no taste. On the contrary, he denied to them all claim to attention. He thought that all time devoted to them was just so much thrown away. His mind was objective. For metaphysical and ethical investigations he had a perfect contempt. In his report to the Board of Trustees (April, 1823) he remarks, in reference to a proposition made at a previous meeting, that he should teach metaphysics, "that he professes himself qualified and competent to teach metaphysics, having devoted much more time to that very unsatisfactory study than most men; so much so as to be fully persuaded that it is not worth the time required to be bestowed upon it." He proposes to substitute a course of political economy for it. It is a matter of history that a committee was appointed, at his suggestion, to report on the propriety of abolishing the study altogether. And so, likewise, he had no sympathy in ethical inquiries. He estimated everything by its temporal value.....His mind was defective in the genuine philosophic element; he was no great generalizer. He abounded in facts, and the use which he made of them proved that he was an acute rather than a great thinker. Compared with his friend Priestley, I would remark that they were very similar, though Cooper was decidedly inferior. The name of one is linked for ever with the science of chemistry, while the other has left nothing behind him.

That his acquirements were varied and extensive cannot be questioned. His mind had ranged pretty well over the broad surface of thought and knowledge, and had gathered something at every step.....He was a great reader, had a fine memory, and forgot little that was worth remembering. He was not entirely ignorant of anything which might become the topic of discussion in the circle of educated gentlemen. He was a man of *information*, rather than of *learning*.....There is, no doubt, force in the remark that he may have failed in reaching the highest excellence in any one department of knowledge, because his attention was divided among so many. This is certainly fatal to success with most minds.....Priestley and Franklin, more kindred spirits, have, in the midst of most distracted pursuits, secured immortality. Dr. Cooper's largest attainments were in chemistry and the cognate sciences, law, medicine, and political philosophy. His principal publications are: a *Translation of the Institutes of Justinian*, his *Translation of Broussais*, his *Medical Jurisprudence*, *The Emporium of Arts and Sciences*, and his *Lectures on the*

Digitized by Google

Elements of Political Economy. Besides these, I may mention his elaborate *Essay on the Pentateuch*, and any number of pamphlets, religious and political.....His *Essay on the Pentateuch* has long since had the flimsy veil of its false learning and inconclusive reasoning torn from it, and stands exposed in all its deformity [this *naive* statement may be read with a smile to-day].....His contributions to the *Southern Review* are worthy of mention; and as they exhibit him to great advantage, I give the articles by name: in 1st vol., Principles on Agriculture, Gall on the Functions of the Brain, Begin's Therapeutics; in 3rd vol., Higgin's Celtic Druids, Modern Gastronomy; in 4th vol., Higgin's Celtic Druids; in 5th, Bentham on Judicial Evidence; in 6th, Agrarian and Education Systems, Geology and Pentateuch, Social Life of England and France; in 7th, Operations of Poisons; in 8th, United States Bank, Distribution of Wealth.

(To be concluded.)

SABBATH LOVE-SONGS.

(Before Mr. Justice COLLINS.)

IN the case of Williams *v.* Wright, Mr. Jeffreys Williams sued Mr. George Edward Wright, printer and publisher of the *Times*, to recover a penalty of £50 for an alleged offence under the Lord's Day Observance Act. Defendant denied the alleged offence.

The plaintiff appeared in person, while Mr. C. A. Russell, Q.C., and Mr. Bankes represented the defendant.

The plaintiff, who refused to be sworn, on the ground that he had no religious belief, said, before he gave his evidence, he wished to state that he did not approve of the Act under which he was suing, because he was in favor of the utmost liberty being enjoyed by everyone, and agreed that halls should be open on Sundays for lectures and other purposes. Having affirmed, he gave evidence to the effect that on Saturday, March 20, he saw an advertisement in the *Times* that a concert would be given on the following evening at the Queen's Hall. On Sunday evening he went to the Queen's Hall and purchased a ticket for the concert at the box-office, for which he paid a shilling. By means of this ticket he entered the hall and listened to a portion of the concert. He heard a humorous love-song which made him laugh. It seemed to him to be an ordinary entertainment, similar to those which were given on week-days, and therefore it came within the Lord's Day Observance Act. Under Section 3 of that Act the defendant was liable to a penalty of £50 for having published an advertisement relating to the entertainment.

Mr. Russell, on behalf of the defendant, submitted that the concert was not an entertainment or amusement within the meaning of the statute, and that, as the statute was a penal one, the plaintiff must show that the defendant had a guilty mind.

Dr. Parry gave evidence to the effect that the compositions specified in the advertisement were free from any possible accusation of levity, or of exercising any influence on the hearer other than that which was wholesome and elevating. Similar works were performed in the musical festivals at the great cathedrals. In cross-examination, witness said that the compositions were known conventionally as secular.

Mr. G. E. Wright, the defendant, stated that he had no control over the advertisements which appeared in the *Times*.

Mr. Justice Collins held that the plaintiff had failed to prove that there were no free seats at the concert, and gave judgment for the defendant, with costs.

—*Daily Telegraph*, July 29.

Clear Thought Necessary.

Clear thinking is quite as important as correct living; and the man who helps to make men think aright thereby helps to advance not only intellectual, but moral progress, and to augment the sum of human happiness. He, on the contrary, however unexceptionable his conduct and pure his motives, who helps to befog, mystify, and confuse the minds of men by his shallow, dreamy thought, is quite as much the enemy of moral as of intellectual advancement. Slovenliness in thought is certain, in the long run, to result in slovenliness in morals. Thought cannot be divorced from conduct, even though the thought, true or erroneous, of one generation shows itself most conspicuously in the conduct of succeeding generations. A teacher of error may be sincere; but his sincerity in no way severs the connection between cause and effect, and therefore in no way diminishes the results of the error. Indeed, intellectual error is dangerous and harmful in proportion to the sincerity of its adherents, upon which its growth depends.—*B. F. Underwood.*

WHEN?

WHEN have Infidels founded Inquisitions to torture men into belief?

When has Infidelity afflicted mankind with twelve centuries of woe, most fitly described as "The Dark Ages"?

When has Infidelity carried on religious wars like the "Crusades"?

When has Infidelity slaughtered fifty million people as Mother Church has?

When have Infidels murdered the teachers of our race, as Christianity did Hypatia, Bruno, Vanini, Servetus, and many others?

When have Infidels vented their spite upon the dead by digging up and burning their bodies?

When have Infidels begun, on St. Bartholomew's Day, and massacred seventy thousand of their fellow-men in one week?

When have Infidels persecuted the Jews?

When have Infidels sold "Indulgences"?

When have Infidels set up the worship of bones, hairs, and rusty nails, "wood for the true cross," and other relics?

When have Infidels decried the use of anæsthetics in obstetrical cases as "an impious attempt to escape the curse" denounced against all women in Genesis iii. 16?

When have Infidels burned holes in Quakers' tongues, and dragged old, bedridden women from their couches, and hung them, as witches, on the evidence of little children?

When have Infidels opposed comforts and refinements, such as the introduction of stoves, carpets, chandeliers, violins, and organs in churches?

When has any Freethinker ever characterized fire, marine, and life insurance, and the setting up of lightning rods, as "challenges to God Almighty"?—*Torch of Reason.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A SIGNAL ANSWER TO PRAYER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the Free Library of Newington (South London) is a volume called *Present Day Tracts*, published by the Religious Tract Society. One of the Tracts is on the efficacy of prayer. In the preface to the volume appears the following pious supplication: "May God abundantly bless this volume, and cause it to fulfil in some measure its great purpose." God has, indeed, abundantly blessed the volume, so far as this Library is concerned; for, though the book has appeared in the catalogue for three years past, not a single individual has sought to borrow it until the other day. And then it was asked for by the undersigned, who has since found in its contents abundant confirmation of his Freethinking views. On the other hand, Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*—not commended to the blessing of God—seems to have been in demand. X.

PROFANE JOKES.

IT was a church gathering, and they had met to say farewell to a missionary and his wife. A layman was asked to pray, and he began in this wise: "O Lord, who carest both for man and beast, take care, we beseech thee, of our dear brother and his wife."

"This," declared the young man, airily, "I am certain, is at the least my three hundredth time on earth." "It's very funny you don't know any more, then," said the old man, who had listened to his Theosophical harangue.

Bobby—"Maw, I read of a man to-day who was one hundred and seventy years old." Mother—"Oh, what a lie!" Bobby—"Well, mamma, it was in the Bible."

Elsie was greatly perturbed by the discovery that her brothers had set traps to catch birds. Questioned as to what she had done in the matter, she replied: 'I prayed that the traps might not catch the birds." "Anything else?" "Yes," she said; "I then prayed that God would prevent the birds getting into the traps, and"—as if to illustrate the doctrine of faith and works—"I went and kicked the traps all to pieces."

So far as our daily life and conduct are concerned, Christianity is an extinct creed, even its own priests assuming tacitly that as a religion for daily use it is preposterous and impossible. With the words of Jesus Christ for ever in our mouths, we go about the world protesting, by the sign of the Sword, that the Cross is only a figure of speech, or, to put it more correctly, a sword-handle.—*Robert Buchanan.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30. G. W. Foote, "Who Was Moses?"

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "Philosophers in Parliament."

East London Branch (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, E. Pack.

West London Branch N.S.S. 381 Harrow-road, Paddington: August 9, at 9, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 8.15 and 7, H. P. Ward.

Edmonton (Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen.

Finsbury Park (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 8.15, R. Rosetti, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

Hammersmith (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, R. P. Edwards, "Did the Christ of the Gospels Exist?"

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 8.30, J. Fagan.

Islington (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A lecture.

Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, J. Fagan.

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford.

Limehouse (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, C. Cohen. August 10, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, H. P. Ward; 7, E. Pack. August 11, at 8.30, C. Cohen. 12, at 8, Mr. Westacott.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 8.15, C. Cohen.

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Philosophers in Parliament."

COUNTRY.

Failsworth Secular Sunday-school (Pole-lane): C. Watts—2.30, "The Drawbacks of Christianity"; 6.30, "Sin and Secular Salvation."

Pontypridd (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members and friends meet at 1.30, corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets, and will leave at 1.45 for Wharncliffe side—Mr. Ewing's. Tea at 5.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Rochdale (Town Hall Square): S. R. Thompson—11, "Whence and Whither?" 3, "A Few of God's Favorites"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 8, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 8, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 22, a., Peckham Rye. 22, m., Wood Green. 29, Edmonton.

J. Fagan, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—August 8, a., Harrow; e., Kilburn. September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. Thurlow, 850 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. Percy Ward, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 8, m., Limehouse; e., Peckham Rye. 15, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., Bradlaugh Club. 22, m., Mile End Waste; a., Harrow-road. 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. Pack, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 15, m., Camberwell; a. Peckham Rye. 22, Limehouse. 29, m., Mile End. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 12, m., Kingsland. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 26, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. Foote. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

Chapters:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3 Monkery; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51.* Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

Beware of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

Look for Autograph Registered Trade Mark

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 3d. Quinine Cough Powder, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. Baldwin, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'welp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Just published, cloth, price 2s. 6d. post free,

THE RATIONALIST'S MANUAL.

Compendium of Theological and Biblical Criticism, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics. In two Parts. By ALETHEIA, M.D.

Contents.—Part I. CHRISTIANISM: ITS SUPERSTITIONS AND ORIGIN. The Supernatural—Revelation—The Teachings of Jesus not Original—Inspiration—Mistranslations of the Bible Text—Some Bible Legends—A Few Contradictions in the "Inspired Text"—The Christian Messiah; and Contemporary History—Events in the Life of Jesus; Miracles, etc.—Origin of the Bible—Prayer—Worship, Sacrifice, and Baptism—Heaven, Hell, Ghosts, and Bogies—Future Life—Christian Symbols; the Cross, etc.—Ancient Festivals, Sabbaths, etc.—Ancient Gods, Trinities, and Scriptures—Origin of Religion (Theology)—Origin of the Word "Christian"—The Fruits of Christianism——Part II. RATIONALISM: ITS PHILOSOPHY AND RULE OF LIFE. Rationalism—First Principles—Truths—Some Definitions—Knowledge, Belief, Faith, etc.—The Cause of All—Life—Origin of Life—Evolution—Polarity—Ascent of Man—Death and Dissolution—Morality—The Universe—The Earth; Geological Epochs, etc.—The Solar System; Seasons, etc.—The Ancient Zodiac—Ethics and Customs of Social Life—Duty and Fault—Man's Moral Code—Rationalist Societies—Public Holidays and their Origin—Naming and Registration of Children—Marriage—Burial of the Dead—Freedom of Thought and Speech—Oaths, Affirmations, and Last Will—Index.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR. Price 6d., post free 7d.,

A RATIONALIST CATECHISM

Of subjects concerning Man—his Gods and Superstitions.

"Should be of interest to all; . . . gives in brief and concise shape a large number of the conclusions of rational science and criticism with regard to religion."—*Freethinker.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GREAT SUMMER SALE.

21s. Parcel that contains £2 worth of Goods.

No. 1.—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color.
„ 2.—4 Trouser Lengths, wear guaranteed. Stripe, Check, or Mixture.
„ 3.—2 Full Dress Lengths, with linings and buttons complete.
„ 4.—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material.
„ 5.—1 Complete Costume to measure, and a Silver-mounted Umbrella.
„ 6.—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse.
„ 7.—50 yards of High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs.
„ 8.—11 yards Deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color.
„ 9.—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trouser length.
„ 10.—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trouser Length, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella.
„ 11.—1 pair of All Wool Blankets, 1 pair of large Sheets, 1 beautiful Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 pair of Curtains.
„ 12.—1 pair Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella.
„ 13.—15 yards Suiting for Boys' Suits. Very strong and durable.
„ 14.—30 yards Remnants for Children's Dresses. All good colors and quality.
„ 15.—2 pairs All Wool Blankets.
„ 16.—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 pair Stockings, 2 Skirts, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Silver mounted Umbrella, 1 Fur Necktie.
„ 17.—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella.
„ 18.—1 Youth's Suit to measure, chest over vest not to be more than 32 inches.
„ 19.—3 pairs Men's Trousers to measure, all different.
„ 20.—Parcel of goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during sale we are selling at about ½ ordinary price. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

Each Parcel sent Carriage Paid for 21s.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE AUGUST NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Rationalism in Fiction.
The Gospel in the Dust.
Out-of-date Theology.
The Cross and the Crescent.
Mrs. Besant's New Book.
The Ghost of Khammurabi.
A First-Century Manifesto.
Moral Instruction in France.
Arguing for Immortality.
Random Jottings.
Our Library Shelves.—Ruskin's *Time and Tide.*
A Public School for the Unorthodox.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).

*** Copies of the July issue, containing two important Supplements, may be still had, price 2d., by post 3d.

London : Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 33. SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

ANARCHY AND ASSASSINATION.

ANY person who stands at Ludgate Circus and watches the traffic for five minutes can see for himself how Anarchy would work out in practice. Vehicles would be driven into each other, and there would be a deadlock and infinite swearing. Even if ninety-nine in every hundred drivers were mild, peaceful, and philosophical—which is surely a very liberal assumption—the hundredth cantankerous driver would play the devil with all their voluntary arrangements. At present his reins are seized by a stalwart and implacable policeman. Three or four quiet but determined gentlemen in blue enable everybody to get through, and attend to his business with the minimum of friction and delay.

Human affairs cannot be conducted without some sort of regulation, and regulation means authority, and authority means force. Whoever denies this is a closet theorist. It is idle to argue with him. One cannot always be discussing the elementary principles of common sense.

At the same time, it must be admitted that the necessity for some regulation does not involve the necessity of unlimited regulation. It is a false saying, that you cannot have too much of a good thing. You can have too much of it in eating and drinking, and too much of it in every other department of life. Government is indispensable, but it may exceed its proper functions, and meddle with matters which are best left to the individual.

Thomas Paine said that government is a necessary evil, and if an Anarchist takes the adjective with the substantive, I for one have no kind of quarrel with him. Minimise it, if you please, but do not run amuck against it as a bull rushes at a red rag.

Freedom is necessary as well as government. But as you may have too much government *of* the individual, so you may have too much freedom *by* the individual. We are entitled to just as much freedom as will go all round. Equal freedom for all is the fair and rational measure. Another man's freedom becomes aggression the moment it interferes with my freedom. This involves the necessity of a common understanding. It also involves the necessity of a power to enforce it upon the recalcitrant.

The centre of our astronomical system is the sun. It exercises an attractive power, which is absolutely coercive, on every one of its planets. But if that power were the only one, all the planets would shoot into the sun. They do not suffer this catastrophe because each planet has its own independent momentum. And the result of the two forces, the centripetal and the centrifugal, is that the sun governs in the centre, and every planet moves in its own regular orbit. This is far better than shooting into the sun, or rushing straight through infinite space.

Nature is a co-operation of forces. Her simplicity is ultimate and theoretical. In practice there is unity in diversity. So it is in human society. One man thinks much of one principle, and one man much of another. But life is not governed by one principle, it is governed by many; and wisdom lies in the balance. This idea is at the bottom of Newman's observation, that principles may be strained until they snap. Men of judgment know this, though fools and fanatics may treat it with contempt

Herbert Spencer defines life as the continuous adjustment of internal to external conditions. Adjustment is everything. The many principles that govern social life have to be adjusted to each other. The extreme State Socialist gets hold of one principle and tries to make it universal. We may call him the centripetalist. The extreme Anarchist gets hold of another principle, and tries to make that universal. We may call him the centrifugalist. Both are right, and both are wrong. Between them lies the golden mean of practical statesmanship. Every generation has to make its own adjustments between the social and the individual principles. The principles are imperishable; it is their adjustments that vary from age to age.

A man whose mind dwells exclusively on one idea becomes a monomaniac. His mental powers may be ever so great, and his character ever so high and pure, but both become perverted. He is self-hypnotised. He is under suggestion. And in time he ceases to be a responsible agent.

An Anarchist broods over the ills and wrongs of society, he thinks every day and all day long of the wickedness of government, he singles out one person as symbolising the object of his hatred, and he becomes an assassin. He is not selfish, he is not maglignant; he is simply insane.

Nothing could be sillier than the idea that any good can come of assassination in a civilized or even a semi-civilized country. A handful of men cannot wage successful war against millions. Kill one czar, and you make room for another. That is all. The supply never fails. Kill one president in a republic, or one premier in a constitutional monarchy, and you create a vacancy which is filled immediately. Government, if it were absolutely wicked and utterly unjustifiable, cannot be suppressed in that way. What violence does is to invite reprisals. Nor is this a matter of reasonable surprise. It is idle to talk as though an Anarchist assassin were an angel of justice, and those who hang him were murderers. Those who appeal to the sword must expect cuts. It is ridiculous to whine when you feel the edge of your enemy's weapon.

Reprisals are never likely to be very humane, and they are apt to be very sweeping. Some one throws a bomb into a Catholic procession at Barcelona and kills a dozen working-class men and women, besides injuring a much larger number. Thereupon the authorities seize four or five hundred objectionable persons and clap them in prison.

Some of those prisoners have been shot, some sent to penal servitude, and some deported. A large contingent of the last are now in England. They are appealing to the English people for sympathy and support. Some of

Digitized by Google

them allege that while in prison they were infamously tortured. If this be true, the Spanish Government should be denounced by the civilised world. But *is* it true? This point should be settled by evidence. The Spanish refugees should prove their case to the satisfaction of an English committee. Then we shall know what to do.

Some of the refugees say they are victimised because they are Freethinkers. This is a point which I mean to investigate. I believe the National Secular Society will not hesitate to help men who are persecuted for Freethought. But we cannot help to make the running for an extreme political group. We do not believe in violence, and we detest assassination.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SACRED TREE.*

THE further we delve into the early strata of human belief, the more we notice what a deep and lasting influence was made by the death of vegetation in winter and its revival in spring. This, as I have argued before, is the true mystery of the resurrection.† Early man was probably arboreal in his habits, as most boys are fond of climbing. The tree would be a place of safety—often a provider of food—and its spirit thus differentiated from those that were inimical. As Mr. Grant Allen has pointed out, from the custom of leaving seeds at the graves of the dead, the plants springing therefrom would be regarded as embodying the spirits of the dead, and thus tree and plant-worship would range itself alongside ancestor-worship. Whatever theory we assume, certain it is that in ancient times tree-worship was widespread.

The general conclusion which Bötticher gives as the result of his elaborate researches on tree-worship among the Greeks is that the adoration of trees was both the earliest form of ritual and the last to disappear before the spread of Christianity; it existed long before the erection of temples and statues to the gods, flourished side by side with them, and persisted long after they had disappeared. Dr. E. B. Tylor, with greater caution, concludes that direct and absolute tree-worship may lie very wide and deep in the history of religion; but that, apart from this, "there is a wide range of animistic conceptions connected with tree and forest-worship. The tree may be the spirits' perch, or shelter, or favorite haunt; or may serve as a scaffold or altar, where offerings can be set out for some spiritual being; or its shelter may be a place of worship set apart by nature—of some tribes the only temple, of many tribes, perhaps, the earliest; or, lastly, it may be merely a sacred object patronized by, or associated with, or symbolizing some, divinity."

To understand ancient faiths it is necessary to remember how largely, in the absence of reading and writing, ideas were conveyed through the medium of signs. The tree was the evident symbol of life, carried on year after year, passing over the winter of death. As the sun was the daily sign and the moon the monthly sign of resurrection, so was the tree the annual symbol of continuity and survival.

Mrs. Philpot follows Mr. J. G. Frazer and Herr Mannhardt in considering Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, Attis, and Dionysus as originally tree gods, and that the ritual connected with their worship was symbolical of the annual death and revival of vegetation. This brings them in line with the Christian mythos; for assuredly the shifting celebration of Easter does not commemorate the death and resurrection of any actual Jerusalem ghost, but is a nature festival, determined by a conjunction of moon and sun. Our authoress says:—

> "It is quite probable that in very early times the human representative of the spirit of vegetation was actually sacrificed, in order that the divine spirit incarnate in him might be transferred in unabated vigor to his successor, just as the old May-pole was destroyed and a new one set up in its place. Herein was typified the annual death and resurrection of the spirit of vegetation, a conception which has given rise to many celebrations, not always free from bloodshed, in different parts of the world. The rites by which, in Egypt and Western Asia, the death and resurrection of Osiris, Adonis, Tammuz, Attis, and Dionysus were solemnized find their parallels, not only in the barbarous usages once current in Mexico, but also in certain spring and summer celebrations of the peasants of Europe."

In her first chapter Mrs. Philpot mentions the evidence of tree and ashera worship found in the Bible, concerning which I have written in *Bible Studies* in connection with Phallic worship among the Jews. In ancient ritual the sacred object was spoken of and treated as the god himself; the god inhabited the tree or stone not as a man inhabits his house, but as his soul is supposed to inhabit his body. It was natural that the god, or the teacher symbolizing the god, should say with Jesus in the newly-discovered Logia, "Raise the stone and you will find me, cleave the wood and there am I." Mrs. Philpot says: "In Babylonia the sacred tree was no doubt closely associated with Istar, the divine mother, who was originally not a Semitic but an Accadian goddess, and whose cult, together with that of her bridegroom Tammuz, was introduced into Chaldea from Eridu, a city which flourished on the shores of the Persian Gulf between 3000 and 4000 B.C." Mrs. Philpot might have mentioned that Rim-Sin, a king of Babylonia, about B.C. 2300, named after the moon god, calls himself "King of the holy tree of Eridu."

But the conception of trees as divine and supernatural is found among all Semites. Our authoress says: "There is no country in the world where the tree was ever more evidently worshipped than it was in ancient Palestine. Among the Canaanites every altar to the god had its sacred tree beside it, and when the Israelites established local sanctuaries under their influence they set up their altar under a green tree, and planted beside it as its indispensable accompaniment an *ashera*, which was either a living tree or a tree-like post, and not a 'grove,' as rendered in the Authorized Version. This *ashera* was worshipped as a sacred symbol of the deity. Originally it appears to have been associated with Ashtoreth or Astarte, the Syrian Istar, the revolting character of whose worship perhaps explains the excessive bitterness of the Biblical denunciations. But the *ashera* was also erected by the altars of other gods, and in pre-prophetic days even beside that of Jehovah himself, whence it may be concluded that in early times tree-worship had such a vogue in Canaan that the sacred tree or the pole, its surrogate, had come to be viewed as a *general* symbol of deity." To Moses Jehovah was "He that dwelt in the bush" (Deut. xxxiii. 16). Probably the conception of fire as springing from wood gave a new modification of the idea of deity.

Sacred trees are mixed up with the Jewish legends of the Fall of Man. Many conventional representations of the tree of life as a symbol of fertility are to be found on Assyrian sculptures, and in an Egyptian text of the pyramid of Pepi I., inscribed about B.C. 3500, and probably in substance still older, we read that the deceased goes to the great lake, round which the gods sit, and that they give him to eat of the tree of life, upon which they themselves do live.

From the conception of the tree as sacred, spreading its roots down into the underworld, and raising its boughs to heaven, and being itself the abode of spirits, came its consultation as an oracle, as with the famous oak of Zeus at Dodona. Jahveh spoke to Moses out of the burning bush. W. Robertson Smith, in his *Religion of the Semites*, mentions the famous holy tree near Shechem called the tree of the soothsayers in Judges ix. 37; and the tree or trees of the revealer in Genesis xii. 6 and Deuteronomy xi. 30 must have been the seat of a Canaanite tree oracle. The prophetess Deborah gave her responses under a palm near Bethel; and David, when he inquired of the Lord as to the right moment for attacking the Philistines, received the signal in "the sound of a gong in the tops of the mulberry trees (2 Sam. v. 24). Hosea (iv. 12) rebukes the people who ask counsel at their stock, and their staff declareth unto them." Stories of divining rods have come down to our own day, and rhabdomancy is still believed in by many.

According to Mr. Farnell, the chief gods of the Greeks were originally deities of vegetation. Hera in Thespiæ was a branch of a tree; in Samos, anything made of wood; at Argos, a long wooden pillar. Artemis was a piece of unhewn wood; Tertullian calls the Attic Pallas *crucis stipes*, tree of the cross. Zeus, besides being the oak-god of Dodona, was worshipped in Attica as a god of agriculture,

* *The Sacred Tree; or, The Tree in Religion and Myth.* By Mrs. J. H. Philpot. (London: Macmillan & Co.; 1897.)

† *Freethinker*, April 18, 1897.

Digitized by Google

and honored with cereal offerings. No sanctuary of Apollo was complete without the laurel, with whose leaves the poets are still crowned as an emblem of their immortality. Brides still wear the orange-blossom and the myrtle sacred to Aphrodite.

Ovid, in his Metamorphoses, has many legends of persons turning into plants and trees. Such stories can be found in our own country. A legend current in Cornwall tells how, after the loss of her lover, Iseult died broken-hearted, and was buried in the same church with Tristram, but, by the king's decree, at some distance from him. Soon ivy sprang from either grave, and each branch grew until it met and clasped its fellow at the vaulted roof. A similar idea is met in the old ballad of Fair Margaret and Sweet William:—

> Margaret was buried in the lower chancel,
> And William in the higher;
> Out of her breast there sprang a rose,
> And out of his a briar.
> They grew till they grew into the church top,
> And then they could grow no higher;
> And there they tyed in a true lover's knot,
> Which made all the people admire.

In many places in England, where trees grow out of graves, legends are attached, and in more than one a convincing proof of Theism is therein found. Some wicked Atheist has expressed a desire that, if there is a God, a tree may grow out of his or her heart; and the thing has accordingly happened, to the satisfaction of believers, if not of the dead person. Many, too, are the legends of the life of a person or a family being bound up with a tree. There is, or was so recently as 1885, when General Gordon noticed it, an old tree in Jerusalem, opposite Cook's office and protected by the Sultan's firman, which the Arabs consider will fall when the Sultan's rule ends. "It lost," said General Gordon, "a large limb during the Turco-Russian War, and is now [1885] in a decayed state."

In the centre of Europe, covered as it once was with dense forest, the veneration of the tree tinctured the religious usages of the early inhabitants. Worship had its abode in the "grove," and the earliest efforts of the Christian missionaries were directed towards the destruction of these venerated woods, or their consecration by the erection within them of a Christian edifice. In the springing arches of the solemn and gloomy Gothic cathedral may still be traced the influence of the forest. In our own islands the oak-tree played a prominent part in Druidical worship. Old ceremonies survived in symbolism long after their origin had been forgotten. Henry VIII. used to resort to the woods with a richly-apparelled retinue in order "to fetche May." Stubbes and his fellow Puritans attacked the worship of the may-pole (see May-Day Customs in *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 180). Mrs. Philpot says that in Devon and Cornwall there still exist people who believe that oaks are inhabited by elves—

> Fairy elves, whose midnight revels,
> By a forest side or fountain,
> Some belated peasant sees.

It is not yet quite an obsolete custom to turn the coat for luck when passing through elf-haunted groves. The wassailing of orchards still survives in some out-of-the-way districts and the carrying of the wassail bob, or bunch of holly and evergreens. We still decorate our houses with these at Christmas, and as Mrs. Philpot observes, "Indeed the Christmas tree may be said to recapitulate the whole story of tree worship—the May tree, the harvest tree, the Greek *eiresione* [harvest bush], the tree as the symbol and embodiment of deity; and last, but not least, the universe tree, bearing the lights of heaven for its fruit, and covering the world with its branches."

J. M. WHEELER.

Suppose a thousand babes to start together "along the bridge or causeway of life." The length of that bridge shall represent the maximum duration of life, and our cohort shall march slowly across it, completing the journey in something perhaps over the hundred years. No!—not the cohort completing the journey, the veriest remnant of the thousand who started together! At each step Death (as a marksman with a certain skewness of aim and a certain precision of weapon) takes his aim, and, one by one, individuals fall out of the ranks—terribly many in infancy, many in childhood, fewer in youth, more again in middle age, but many more still in old age.—*Karl Pearson.*

THE EDUCATIONAL FIGHT.

THE election for the London School Board is to take place in November, and it is desirable that all friends of secular education should practically recognise their duty in that conflict. No subject can be of greater importance than the training of the young, and yet considerable indifference is being manifested by many of those who profess to be opposed to the introduction of theology into our Board schools. The evils which have arisen from the inferior instruction hitherto given to children are admitted by the very persons who are apathetic in their efforts to provide a better system of general education. There is no doubt that the Churches have completely failed to establish a proper educational system, and that the failure has been caused principally by what is termed the "religious difficulty." It is, therefore, the duty of Secularists, Freethinkers, and all others who wish that the rising generation should be rescued from the influence of theology and priestly interference, to at once take a determined and active part in the preparation for the coming conflict with the clerical obstructionists. There should be no "compromise," but a clear and open encounter between the advocates of a purely secular education and those whose aim it is to ally with it the absurdities of theology.

That the fight which is to be won in November will be desperate is evident, from the present tactics of the Church party. Mr. Diggle has recently issued a manifesto, in which he lays down as the first consideration that no form of instruction is worthy of the name of education unless it rests upon religious faith, influencing character by religious motives, and regulating and restraining conduct by religious sanctions. Mr. Evelyn Cecil, who represents the clericals on the London School Board, wrote to the Dean of St. Paul's to ask if he would feel disposed officially to take a guiding part in the coming fight. If so, did it commend itself to his approval to require that the Christian instruction imparted in the Board schools should be given on the basis of the Bible, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed? According to the *Christian World* (July 8th), Dean Gregory replied thus: "I shall be very glad if the candidates of the Moderate Party agree to accept your suggestion, and I will certainly do the little I can to forward its reception, and to assist those candidates who pledge themselves to support it."

Here Mr. Diggle puts forth an appeal based upon the assumption that religion is indispensable to the formation of good characters, and that all education is useless in which this is ignored. A greater fallacy it would be impossible to conceive. It is ethical culture, and a faithful compliance with its teachings, that really mould and regulate human character, and that inspire noble and upright deeds. The *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* of June 20th, 1896, states that "in the town of Warrington, for many years, there was only one school where there was no religious education, and that the British Schools, People's College. For twenty-five years that has been one of the leading elementary schools in England. At this school the education was good, and, as no religion was taught, it was felt all could meet on the common ground of secular education. If anyone desires proof that the after-welfare of a child is not dependent on religious instruction in elementary schools, let him search the doings in after-life of the scholars of this school. When people talk as they do about the necessity for religious education in day schools, they are often saying what they know to be untrue." In America the State of Maine exemplifies the wide sphere for moral influence open to the teacher when direct religious instruction is excluded. Its School Code contains this inclusive paragraph: "The presidents, professors, and tutors of colleges, the preceptors and teachers of academies, and all other instructors of youth in public and private institutions, shall use their best endeavors to impress on the minds of the children and youth committed to their care and instruction the principles of morality and justice, and a sacred regard for truth, love of country, humanity, and a universal benevolence; sobriety, industry, and frugality; chastity, moderation, and temperance." What religious school could give a better and more useful education than that which is here said to have been imparted under the secular plan? If one can be found, let it be named.

It is quite plain, from Mr. Cecil's questions to the Dean

Digitized by Google

of St. Paul's and that gentleman's reply, that the one object of the Christians in the coming fight will be to increase their opportunities for forcing their theological notions upon the children. To base any instruction upon the supposed "Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed" is only to perpetuate a superstition, and to teach as truth that which is only a theological conjecture. Besides, there is nothing either in the Prayer or in the Creed that would improve a child in the knowledge of the mundane affairs of life—which should be the object of school instruction. As to the Bible being the foundation of children's education, a more unstable basis could not be selected. We object to its being a text-book in schools for the following reasons:—(1) There is no general agreement as to what constitutes the Bible; (2) there is no unanimity as to what doctrines are taught in the book; (3) it has not yet been settled what parts are historical and what parts are allegorical; (4) it can be so manipulated by teachers as to favor their own peculiar views of religion; and (5) because it contains much that is cruel, obscene, and immoral. Where is the ethical lesson to be derived from such stories as those of Lot and his daughters, David and his adultery, Jacob and his wives, Judah and Ruth? What effect would the following passages have upon the religious youth in whom the appetite for strong drinks was hereditary? "Thou shalt bestow thy money for whatever thy soul lusteth after—wine or strong drink" (Deut. xiv. 26); "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more" (Prov. xxxi. 6, 7). It may be said that only the good portions of the Bible are to be read. If so, these (or precepts equally as useful) can be had from other books unaccompanied by what is very objectionable.

The manner in which the potentates of the Church are utilizing the Act recently passed in favor of so-called Voluntary schools shows how resolved the theologians are to make schools the training ground for religious purposes. The Archbishop of Canterbury has emphatically declared: "The Act for the first time gave them a very potent voice indeed, and where the associations were well worked he had no doubt that they would become very powerful bodies, and that it would be found that strong associations of Church schools all over the country would have a very powerful effect upon both Houses of Parliament." And he stated it "would be distinctly better that the associations should be associations of Church schools." Lord Cranborne has also said they might depend upon it that the educational question was not yet settled; that they were only at the beginning of what was to be a very bitter and prolonged controversy, and it was because he saw in the Voluntary Schools Act the machinery by which they would be better able to fight a bitter battle against the enemy that he accepted it. Here the theological cat is let out of the bag, and we are face to face with the kind of opposition that has to be dealt with by the friends of secular education. Briefly, the one point to be considered in the coming fight will be: Shall the education given in our public schools be purely secular, or shall it be marred with the teaching of a theology which is as absurd as it is incomprehensible?

We plead for a thorough system of true education, void of all religious training. We base our plea upon the following grounds:—(1) Schools are intended to train children so that they will endeavor to live useful lives and become good citizens. (2) It has been proved that religion is not necessary to the achievement of this object; therefore, considering that there are so many different forms of religion, its inculcation (where it is thought desirable) should be confined to the home circle and to what are called "places of worship." (3) As there are many thousands of citizens who do not believe in supernatural religion, it is unjust to compel such persons to render financial aid in propagating that in which they have no faith. (4) The education of the young should comprise practical truths relating to human duties, without being encumbered with those theological speculations which stultify the intellect and create false notions of the object of existence. (5) Children should be taught to be truthful, because lying tends to destroy that confidence which experience has shown to be necessary to the production and maintenance of the stability of society; to be honest, because theft may deprive persons of their just possessions, and evoke anger and enmity between man and man; to be kind and loving, inasmuch as the absence of these virtues frequently causes regrets and mental suffering, which interfere with the happiness of life; and, finally, to be just, because injustice produces discontent, misery, and disorder throughout society.

Religious teaching has had a full and fair trial, and it has failed to secure the required educational results; therefore it is time that a better system of instruction should be put in force. Let us all bear these facts in mind during the coming fight for a reformed School Board. Our resolve should be to give our earnest support and hearty co-operation to those who are pledged to resist all theological encroachments, and to do their best to provide a secular and rational education for the rising generation.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

II.—THE GENEALOGIES.

IN recording the life of Jesus of Nazareth, two of the evangelists deemed it necessary to give a genealogy, in order to show that that great personage was descended from the Hebrew king, David. We have thus two distinct and independent pedigrees of Christ, and are free to accept or reject either, or both. Matthew (chap. i.) gives the descent from Abraham and David down to Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus; Luke (chap. iii.) commences with Joseph the Carpenter, and traces the lineage up to David, and thence to Adam.

From Abraham to David the two pedigrees agree; but from David to Christ there are only three names that are common to the two. These are: Salathiel, Zerubbabel, and Joseph the husband of Mary. Matthew's genealogy ends as follows:—

> "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ."

Luke's genealogy begins:—

> "And Jesus himself.....being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli," &c.

Thus, at the very commencement, the two genealogies differ, and are divergent for five hundred years. They do not come together again until the time of the Exile, when they meet in Zerubbabel and Salathiel; they then diverge again, and only meet in David. The portions of the two pedigrees between David and Abraham, and Abraham and Adam, are superfluous. Every Jew knew that David, as well as the old nation, was descended from Abraham and Adam; while the Gentiles, who were unacquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures, did not know Abraham or David from Adam.

Each of the genealogies is given as that of Joseph the Carpenter; yet, strange to say, that favored individual is in one of them stated to be the son of Jacob, and in the other the son of Heli; then Jacob is the son of one person, and Heli of another. Hence, in these two genealogies we have the pedigrees of two different persons, only one of which can by any possibility be that of Joseph the Carpenter. Of course, various attempts at reconcilement are made by Christian commentators and apologists. It is said that Joseph was really the son of Jacob; but, his father being dead, he had been adopted by Heli, or his mother had married Heli, and so he was reckoned the legal son of the latter. It is said, again, that the second genealogy is that of Mary, who is asserted to have been the daughter of Heli, and that Joseph, the son-in-law, is accounted Heli's son. All such statements, it is scarcely necessary to say, are apologetic assumptions; there is not a tittle of evidence to support any of them.

Matthew, at the end of his genealogy, says (i. 17):—

> "So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon until Christ fourteen generations."

Now, according to the Old Testament, the number of generations between David and the Captivity is *eighteen*, and not fourteen, as Matthew states; also the number of generations from the Exile to Christ is only thirteen. To make the second period one of fourteen generations the writer has omitted the names Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, and Jehoiakim; while to make the third period one of fourteen generations he has inserted "Jehoiachin," the last

Digitized by Google

of the second period, and has counted him again. This freedom in dealing with Old Testament names will be immediately recognised as a mark of inspiration; for no secular historian would dare to take such liberties with names believed to be historical.

Matthew's inspired arrangement of the names leads to fresh marks of inspiration. Thus, he says (i. 11):—

"And Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brethren.'

Now, according to 2 Kings xxiv. 6, Jehoiachin or Jeconiah was not the son of Josiah, but of Jehoiakim, whom the writer has omitted.

Matthew says, again, in his genealogy (i. 12):—

"Jeconiah begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud."

According to this, Salathiel was the son of *Jeconiah*, and Jesus was descended from Zerubbabel's son *Abiud*. Bearing these inspired statements in mind, we turn to Luke's genealogy (iii. 27), and find this portion of Christ's lineage given as follows:—

"Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Salathiel, the son of Neri."

Here, according to Luke, Salathiel was the son of *Neri*, and Jesus was descended from Zerubbabel's son *Rhesa*. It is, of course, quite possible that Zerubbabel may have had sons named Abiud and Rhesa, but it is scarcely conceivable that Jesus could have been descended from *both*. In 1 Chronicles iii. 19, 20, is given a list of the names of Zerubbabel's sons; but, as might be expected, neither Abiud nor Rhesa is found among them. Here, then, we have evidently another mark of inspiration.

There still remains the question of the paternity of Salathiel. Matthew says this personage was the son of Jeconiah; Luke says he was the son of Neri. Both statements, of course, spring from inspiration. Hence, unless we wish to be branded as "infidels," we are bound to believe that Salathiel, like Joseph the Carpenter, enjoyed the high distinction of having two fathers.

Let us now examine the two genealogies from the time of Zerubbabel to that of the birth of Christ—a period of 544 years.

Matthew.	Luke.
Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel
|	Rhesa
Abiud	Joanan
|	Joda
Eliakim	Josech
|	Semein
Azor	Mattathias
|	Maath
Sadoc	Naggai
|	Esli
Achim	Nahum
|	Amos
Eliud	Mattathias
|	Joseph
Eleazor	Jannai
|	Melchi
Matthan	Levi
|	Matthat
Jacob	Heli
|	|
Joseph	Joseph

During this epoch, according to Matthew, there were 11 generations; but, according to Luke, there were 20 generations. Zerubbabel, of course, lived after his son was born, and may have lived until long after the birth of his grandson. If, however, we divide the 544 years by 11 in one case, and 20 in the other, we shall get, in each of the genealogies, the average age of the father at the time the son who follows him was born. This, in Matthew's genealogy, is 49½ years; in Luke's it is 27 years.

Now, the duration of life was not greater in those days than in the present. Let us take, for example, all the kings of Judah whose ages are recorded, omitting only those who were assassinated or slain in battle. They were: David 70 years, Rehoboam 58, Jehoshaphat 60, Jehoram 40, Uzziah 68, Ahaz 36, Hezekiah 54, and Manasseh 67. The united ages of these eight kings amount to 453 years, which gives an average of a little over 56½ years to each.

The average duration of life, then, being under sixty years, it would be ridiculous to suppose that the ancestors of Christ, for eleven successive generations, either were not married, or had no children, until they were nearly fifty years of age; and that, on an average, their marriages and their burials were separated only by about half-a-dozen years. Yet this is what we must believe if we accept Matthew's genealogy. Clearly, then, this pedigree is a fabrication; that is to say, a document written under the aberrant influence of inspiration—the two terms I take to be synonymous.

In Luke's genealogy the average age of the father at the period of his son's birth is much nearer the mark; but we require some information as to the source of the pedigree. It has been shown, when dealing with the Preface to the Third Gospel, that Luke was not contemporary with the Apostles and first promulgators of the gospel, but lived some generations later; that in his day all the "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" had long been dead; that Jerusalem had been taken, its temple destroyed, and the Jewish nation scattered throughout the Roman empire. Where did Luke get the names which figure in his genealogy? While the temple stood, some records, chiefly connected with the priests and those who had filled the office of high priest, might be consulted; but these did not embrace the genealogies of the whole nation, and certainly did not include the pedigree of such an obscure man as the Carpenter. Where, after the destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the Jews, did Luke find the genealogy of a poor Jewish artisan who had lived nearly a century before his own day? To this there can be but one answer. The earlier names given in the document were copied from the Old Testament (Luke used the Greek Septuagint), and those between Zerubbabel and Christ were simply fabricated. There was no authentic source open to Luke from which the genealogy he gives could have been compiled. It is also to be noted that Mark, the earliest of the four canonical Gospels, contains no pedigree of Christ.

Again, assuming the genealogies to be correct, they are valueless; for even were it shown beyond all doubt that Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, was a lineal descendant of David, this fact could have no bearing on the lineage of Christ, since, according to the Gospel narratives, Jesus was not begotten by the Carpenter, but by the Holy Ghost (Matthew i. 28). Christ's descent from David must, therefore, be looked for on his mother's side; and, as a matter of fact, this Davidic descent was asserted of Mary, without any attempts to prove it by spurious genealogical tables, in the Gospel used by Justin (A.D. 150), as well as in the Protevangelium.

But, if we credit Luke's account, it would seem that even this poor distinction cannot be affirmed of Mary. That evangelist tells us (i. 5) that the priest Zachariah "had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth," and that this Elizabeth was the *cousin* of Christ's mother, Mary (i. 36)—which relationship our English Revisers, for obvious reasons, have altered into "kinswoman." Now, it is not at all likely that Elizabeth—herself the daughter of a priest, and of the tribe of Levi—should have a cousin or near relative of the tribe of Judah. In any case, we have no evidence as to the lineage of Mary, and, consequently, no evidence of the lineal descent of Christ from David or from anyone else. The genealogies which have been fabricated for this purpose are of no value whatever.

ABRACADABRA.

THE LEE SHORE.

SOME chapters back one Bulkington was spoken of—a tall, new-landed mariner, encountered in New Bedford at the inn.

When, on that shivering winter's night, the *Pequod* thrust her vindictive bows into the cold malicious waves, who should I see standing at her helm but Bulkington! I looked with sympathetic awe and fearfulness upon the man who, in mid-winter, just landed from a four years' dangerous voyage, could so unrestingly push off again for still another tempestuous term. The land seemed scorching to his feet. Wonderfullest things are ever the unmentionable: deep memories yield no epitaphs: this six-inch chapter is the stoneless grave of Bulkington. Let me only say that it fared with him as with the storm-tossed ship, that miserably drives along the leeward land. The port would fain give succor; the port is pitiful: in the port are safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities. But in that gale the port, the land, is that ship's direst jeopardy. She must

Digitized by Google

fly all hospitality; one touch of land, though it but graze the keel, would make her shudder through and through. With all her might she crowds all sail off shore; in so doing, fights against the very winds that fain would blow her homeward; seeks all the lashed sea's landlessness again; for refuge's sake forlornly rushing into peril—her only friend, her bitterest foe!

Know ye now Bulkington? Glimpses do ye seem to see of that mortally intolerable truth: that all deep earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore.

But as in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as the Almighty—so better it is to perish in that howling infinite than be ingloriously dashed upon the lee, even if that were safety! For worm-like, then, oh! who would, craven, crawl to land? Terrors of the terrible! Is all this agony so vain? Take heart, take heart, O Bulkington! Bear thee grimly, demi-god! Up from the spray of thy ocean-perishing—straight up, leaps thy apotheosis!

—*Herman Melville, "The Whale," vol. i., chap. xxiii; 1851.*

ACID DROPS.

The Lambeth Conference was a big affair. Bishops attended from all parts of the world. There were even two black bishops in this gathering. All their deliberations were private, but the world is favored with the result. It takes the shape of an Encyclical Letter, which is published with other matter relating to the Conference by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge.

"Intemperance," the bishops say, "still continues to be one of the chief hindrances to religion in the great mass of the people." One would think that "infidels" were all drunkards, whereas most of the lushingtons are professed Christians, who abominate the very name of Freethinker. We also beg to remind the bishops that the Bible contains several texts in favor of hard drinking. This is an aspect of the question of intemperance to which they should give their earliest attention—that is, if they have a spark of common honesty among them.

After some talk about "purity," in which Christians are not conspicuous, the bishops discourse about the sanctity of marriage and the frequency and facility of divorce. These episcopal moralists do not like the idea of legal courts sundering those whom God (that is to say, the clergy) has joined together. They want to see couples like Lord and Lady Russell tied up like a brace of cats on a garden railing. And all in the interests of sanctity and purity.

The bishops are extremely vague on industrial problems. What they suggest as a remedy for social maladies is "the principle of the brotherhood of man." Was there ever such idle and ridiculous cant? Where is the brotherhood of man when a bishop lives in a palace, and enjoys an income of thousands a year, while multitudes of his "dearly-beloved brethren" pig together in filthy little rooms amid semi-starvation? Why don't the bishops begin to practise "the principle of the brotherhood of man" themselves? All they do is to recommend it to other people. They are little patent medicine vendors who never swallow their own mixture.

What the bishops say about the Bible is extremely funny. They stand up for "the critical study of the Bible by competent scholars"—not, of course, by the unwashed, illiterate mob. They say there is danger in refusing to face questions that may be raised on the authority or genuineness of any part of the Scriptures. But, on the other hand, inquiry has its dangers. It must be "protected by the guard of reverence, confidence, and patience." That is to say, we presume, the student must have reverence enough to admire what he should detest, confidence enough to believe what he knows to be false, and patience enough to sin perpetually against his intellect and conscience.

On the whole, the mountain of the Lambeth Conference has labored and brought forth a mouse in the shape of a platitudinous encyclical letter, which will do neither harm nor good, and will doubtless soon find its way to the butter shops.

The *Times* says that the resolutions come to by the Pan-Anglican Synod are "disappointingly vague." How otherwise could 200 bishops agree on 63 different propositions? The Lambeth Fathers-in-God plaintively acknowledge "there are differences of opinion among us." They are not bold enough now-a-days to put forth the views of their leaders as the dictates of the Holy Ghost.

One result of the Synod is that the Russian Church is sending over a deputation of four to follow the movement of English ecclesiastical literature and instruct Anglicans as to the principles and doctrines of the Greek Orthodox Church. An alliance with a semi-barbarous Oriental form of Christianity is a poor rebuff to the Pope for his refusing to admit the validity of Anglican Orders.

The *Church Times* complains of the way in which the Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Church in all parts of the world has systematically snubbed the press. At the festival of Glastonbury, too, the public were only admitted to the grounds on payment of three shillings. Thousands were kept out by this high tariff, and the *Church Times* says: "It is the old story of the exclusiveness of official Anglicanism, uncareful of the masses, and caring only for the big purses."

The Italian organ-grinders, ice-vendors, and waiters in London send a lot of money to their relatives at home. Some little while since they were popping in and out of the post-offices all day long making anxious inquiries. What was the matter with them? Why, they had heard grave rumors about the validity of Anglican orders, and they were therefore anxious not to run undue risks in buying the paper money of the British Post-Office.

The Pope is making a big effort to counteract the falling-off in the matter of Peter's Pence. There has been a great diminution in France, in consequence, it is said, of the Pope's coquetting with the Republic, which annoys the wealthy and aristocratic classes. Matters are reported to be getting serious. The Papacy cannot go on without money, and plenty of it; and the faithful are being called upon to shell out more freely, or to go to the devil.

Eleven hundred French pilgrims, said to be mostly working men, were recently received by the Pope at St. Peter's. His Holiness counselled them to obey the bishops and clergy, and to respect their masters. Why, certainly!

The Court of Pope Leo XIII., we are told, comprises one thousand persons. There are twenty valets, one hundred and twenty house prelates, one hundred and seventy privy chamberlains, six chamberlains, three hundred extra-honorary chamberlains, one hundred and thirty supernumerary chamberlains, thirty officers of the noble guard and sixty guardsmen, fourteen officers of the Swiss guard and palace guard, seven honorary chaplains, twenty private secretaries, ten stewards and masters of the horse, and sixty doorkeepers. This is not bad. The old Jewish firm of Jehovah, Son, and Co. seems looking up—in Italy at least. To have an agent in Europe living in such style shows that the world is still troubled with a fine collection of fools. Freethought has yet much to do before it cleanses this Augean asinine stable.

Cardinal Vaughan is still keeping up the myth of the Prisoner of the Vatican, oblivious of the fact that the Pope is welcome to go wherever he pleases, and the more welcome should he please to go far away from Rome. Said the Cardinal, when preaching at St. Anne's Roman Catholic Church, Spitalfields: "As St. Peter, when he was in prison, was the object of the prayers of the Church, so was his successor, Leo, the object of those prayers to-day. The spirit of the Church was the same from the earliest days, and what happened to Peter was happening to the head of the Church now in another way." Truly in another way, for Pecci is one of the most wealthy and powerful potentates in the world, despite his pretended imprisonment.

Father Stack, of Glasgow, at the Catholic Young Men's Societies' Conference, read a paper entitled "Dangerous Literature." Most modern literature, he found, was in this category, and "stood in urgent need of being controlled and guided." He said the modern writer was usually an Agnostic. If he recognised a god, that god must limit himself to a policy of non-intervention. He might figure as an object of abstract reverence to, he must not expect to govern mankind. "In the light literature of the day irreligion and immorality absolutely run riot." Father Stack, like the rest of his tribe, wilfully associates and seeks to confound two totally different things. No more convincing proof that morality and religion are not identical could be possible than the history of his own Church.

It is curious that the only work singled out by name by Father Stack as an example of dangerous literature was *The Sorrows of Satan*, the authoress of which is a fervent Catholic.

Digitized by Google

Body-snatching is not yet extinct among the pious. When the late Rev. Mr. Still, curate of East Clevedon, was dying, his wife was distracted, and a maidservant, who was a Roman Catholic, sent for a Franciscan monk from a neighboring priory. The result was that the dying and unconscious man received the last rites of the Catholic Communion, and the man of God was, moreover, buried with Roman rites with all possible dispatch. His name will go to swell the list of converts. The *Church Times*, which is responsible for giving these facts, says: "We think there is sufficiently clear evidence of a very great scandal having been perpetrated in the name of religion."

The Vegetarian Society was started September 30, 1847. It thus celebrates its Jubilee this year, and in the August number of the *Vegetarian Messenger* Mr. W. E. A. Axon gives an interesting account of its progress. In fifty years the Society has had only five presidents. Mr. Simpson died at the age of forty-seven, Mr. Harvey at the age of eighty-three, and Mr. Haughton at the age of seventy-eight. Professor Newman survives in his ninety-third year, and Professor Mayor at seventy-two shows a power of work which most younger men must envy. The Vegetarian Society has no connection with the Vegetarian Federal Union, which has just issued a new rule that "The general meetings of the Union shall be commenced by five minutes' silence for meditation and prayer."

The *Daily News* gave a splendid puff preliminary to Mr. Hall Caine's novel, *The Christian*, in the form of an interview. Mr. Caine was good enough to say that his novel had been "a colossal undertaking," which is more than Shakespeare would have permitted himself to say of *Hamlet*. It was with feelings of "real gratitude" that Mr. Caine wrote "Thank God" on the last page of his manuscript. Are we to assume, then, that he felt himself under divine inspiration? And, if so, was the writing of *The Christian* a long canter before the still more colossal *Life of Christ* which the novelist has long had in contemplation?

We are glad to see novelists tackling the Life of Christ. It emphasizes the romantic character of the Gospel narratives.

Mr. Caine told the interviewer that Tolstoi sympathized with his object, which was to show "that it is impossible for a man to live the life of Christ in Christian society as it is organized to-day." Well, there is nothing new in that; and Mr. Caine is as far from living the life of Christ as any of the people he censures. "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor" was Christ's counsel of perfection. We have yet to learn that Mr. Caine is distributing in this way the £6,000 he nets from the first edition of *The Christian*.

Captain Frederick Webb, of the barge *Victoria*, was drowned through the overturning of his craft while taking part in a race on Sunday in the mouth of the Thames. The inquest was held at sleepy Minster, and the coroner remarked that, while his court was not a court of morals, he could not help expressing his regret that barge owners should desecrate Sunday by racing. However, the verdict was "Accidentally drowned." The jury did not feel equal to bringing it in as "the act of God."

At St. Jonquaire, in the province of Quebec, Canada, the Catholic church was struck by lightning while filled by a large congregation of devout worshippers, one man being instantly killed, several persons severely injured, the altar overturned, the priest prostrated, and the edifice badly wrecked.

At a Charter's Towers (N.Q.) Wesleyan picnic, after kiss-in-the-ring and all the other moral chapel games had been exhausted, the choir-boys and choir-girls started dancing. Their horrified shepherd commanded them to desist, but, Belial possessing their limbs and consciences, they only danced the faster and the more numerously. With a yours-sins-be-upon-your-own-heads gesture, the shepherd decamped, washing his hands of the ungodly business. On the following Sunday not a choir-unit of the young 'uns turned up to open their throats. When the shepherd concernedly made inquiries he was met with the Cousin-Jack ultimatum: "No dancing, no singing." The matter is under perturbed consideration. It recalls the old blackfellow's decision at an aboriginal mission-station, when the supply of Gospel-rum was shut off at the fount—"No more plurry rum, no more plurry hallelooyah!"

Scripture drama catches on. When may we expect a scripture-pantomime? The Flood would give plenty of scope for spectacular effects; and a procession of the animals entering the Ark would certainly bring down the house. Incidental music ready to hand: "The animals went in two by two," etc., etc.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Christianity must be progressing in Equatorial Africa, as the bishop of that extensive region, an individual yelept Tugwell, states that gin now forms the staple means of exchange between the natives over a considerable portion of that territory, his bishopric!

"Lo, he himself hath said it,
And it's greatly to his credit,
For he is a Christian man!"

Sunday night Church meetings are being agitated against by a citizen in a Kansas town. He says that the services don't save as many people as the heat and the bugs cause to be damned.

A White Cap band is operating in Randolph and Lawrence counties, Arkansas, in the interest of public morality. They took a widow from her house, suspecting her of unchastity, and whipped her to death. They tied a man and his wife to a tree and whipped them because they did not send their children to Sunday-school. If the White Cap moralists don't soon go to heaven, they will make that locality a hell. It is astonishing what fanatics will do for what they call religion and morality.

The beacon erected on High Down, Freshwater, in memory of Tennyson, has been unveiled by the Dean of Westminster. The Archbishop of Canterbury read a special form of prayer, and another reverend gentleman made a short speech. It was quite a parsons' holiday. These gentlemen lay their hands on everything. They forget Tennyson's sneer at their "know-all creed," and his fierce attack on their doctrine of everlasting hell.

On and Off Duty, a paper devoted to police interests, under the heading of "A Good Testimony" prints the statement, by a head of the Police Force in an American city, that the "police business would be wrecked" if men lost the idea of divine guidance. This is probably true in a sense which was not intended, for criminals are notoriously superstitious. If superstition diminished, there would be less crime and less business for the police.

"The Chief of Police at St. Louis," we are also informed, "once emphatically declared that a man who does not believe in God ought not to be in the Police Force." Is this on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief?

A correspondent writes to us as follows, with respect to Francis Neale's article in last week's *Freethinker*: "Some time ago I heard Mr. Harry Furniss give a lecture, accompanied by limelight views, on the Humors of Parliament. After telling his audience that it was a custom in the House of Commons for a member to leave his hat on the particular seat he wished for his own use during the sitting, Mr. Furniss threw upon the screen a picture which was from a photograph of the House during prayer-time. It showed about half-a-dozen pious members devotionally engaged amid seats occupied by scores of members' hats. Mr. Furniss called the picture 'The Hattitude of the House of Commons during Prayer.' How the owners of the top hats were spending their time while God's blessing was asked on the business of the day must be left to the imagination. No doubt a certain refreshment bar could a tale unfold."

Says the *Sydney Bulletin*: "Chainey, the long-haired individual panegyrist of Walt Whitman, and traverser of the whole gamut of belief and unbelief from rabid orthodoxy to Theosophy (through Atheism), who visited Victoria in the boom times as a Spiritualist, had, at latest, settled down into the ranks of the 'Christian Scientists,' or 'Mental Healing' people, who are now exploiting Australia."

A refreshing scene occurred at one of the sittings of the High Court of the Ancient Order of Foresters in the Agricultural Hall, Norwich. Brother Abbott, of Sheffield, opposed the resolution congratulating the Queen upon her Diamond Jubilee. He said that he was opposed to monarchy altogether, and that many present agreed with him, if they only had the courage to confess it. There were cries of "Shame!" and the closure was applied to stop the discussion. The vote was then carried by a large majority amid cheers, which, however, were mingled with groans.

Intense excitement has been caused at the village of Talence, near Bordeaux, by the reported apparition of the Virgin Mary in an old vineyard on the road to Suzon. Large crowds assemble at nightfall at the spot for a sight of the apparition, which is stated to emerge from a luminous cloud and gradually shape itself into the form of the Virgin. The people then fall on their knees and pray to the vision. A proposal has already been made to erect a church on the spot. Wicked, unbelieving Protestants, who credit such stories, when told of a far-off past, say the whole thing is a lie, invented expressly to bring grist to the opposition mill. Well, well, it may be so. But, having no experience of miracles ourselves, it would be foolish to decide. Let the truculent rascals fight out the matter among themselves.

Digitized by Google

A once famous American train-robber, who has now been incarcerated for twenty-one years, is anxious, it appears, to be liberated, and for a most extraordinary reason. Before he took to evil courses he had been a theological student, and he is now pleading urgently for his release in order, so he says, that he may become a preacher. The man's plea is perfectly reasonable. The two trades are identical. The train-robber says "Hands up" while he makes magic passes over people's pockets; the parson, too, cries "Hands up," and—well, we know the result. Curious, is it not, that between two such apparently different trades there should exist so close an affinity?

The Rev. F. W. Sandford seems to be a genuine believer. He is reported as saying: "Lots of people are sent to insane asylums every year who are not crazy, but only possessed of devils. It requires only the grace of God to drive them out. We have just the same power to do so as Christ had, if we only have faith." With faith enough Mr. Sandford should be able to drive the Devil out of the world entirely. But that would spoil the Devil-dodging business.

The Rev. C. M. Arthur, pastor of the Congregational Church in Weston, Conn., has just been expelled therefrom on account of conduct unbecoming in a Christian minister.

The Rev. Washington Craft, a Primitive Baptist minister recently on trial at Paintsville, Ky., confessed to the murder of two men.

Recent statistics show that the total number of theological students in Germany has diminished very rapidly of late years. In 1890 the number in the various universities was 4,527, while in 1896 it was 2,956. At Berlin, where the most famous professors are usually to be found, the decline is nearly fifty per cent. This has been attributed by some to the very meagre salaries paid by the State. But it does not appear that these have been lessened during the last five or six years. Perhaps there is another reason. Theology and theologians are declining in public estimation.

The Wesleyan Methodists have made a significant move in offering valuable prizes for the most successful essays which shall account for the leakage from Methodism, and suggest the most effective methods for stopping the leak. Between the Church and the Salvation Army the Methodists are as between the devil and the deep sea. The Church absorbs all who desire respectability, and the Army those who desire enthusiasm and excitement. Between them the Methodists multiply their pews only to see their occupants diminish.

Talmage is wrath, and expresses himself after the fashion of the old prophets in a letter which he sends to the *New York World*. He says: "I denounce the lying scoundrel who started the report that I am dissatisfied with my Washington church, and that I shall not return to it. That evil report was born in the very malice of hell, and is one of a hundred falsehoods manufactured about me during the last thirty years." This is the true godly tone of sweet reasonableness usually affected by the pious when suffering from trodden corns.

The Egyptians believed in four souls. It is curious that Miss Kingsley found a similar notion among the Calabar negroes. They have the being that survives death, the shadow on the bush, the dream-soul and the bush-soul. The bush-soul is detachable from the body, but if damaged or killed in its wanderings the body suffers the same fate. The soul that survives death is liable to reincarnation either in a lower or higher form. The dream-soul is the particular care of witches who lay traps for it and return it to the owner on payment. Let not the Christians laugh at giving a witch food to get back one's dream-soul. Does not this Christian nation spend some twenty millions yearly on those who pretend to save our souls after we are dead?

The vicar of Lancaster distrains for his tithes. A recent sale resulted in the attendance of a large concourse of anti-tithepayers, and, except in two cases, no genuine sales were effected. A meeting was subsequently held, at which the vicar's action was strongly denounced.

The foundations of Dane Bridge Parish Church, Northwich, have given way owing to brine-pumping. It is usually lack of salt which makes the church give way.

The steeple of St. Enoch's well-known church in Glasgow has been struck by lightning. Happily no one was hurt, but numerous deaths from lightning are reported from other parts, as well as from the extremely hot weather.

Said Skobeleff, the great Russian soldier, to a friend who was looking with him on some 20,000 Russian soldiers: 'You will hardly believe," said Skobeleff, "that perhaps half these men believe that the Tsar is a blood-relation of God. Their constant formula is: 'I believe in God in heaven and in the Tsar on earth.'"

The little village of Oberammergau will hold its next passion play in the summer of 1900, and the committee of management, and peasants as well, who look forward to a rare harvest on such occasions, are much troubled at the unfortunate coincidence that has fixed the Paris exhibition for the same date. They are afraid that this new conflict between the Church and the world will end disastrously for the profits of the Church. So they have sent a petition to the Prince Regent of Bavaria asking him to authorize a change of date for the passion play to the summer of 1899 or 1901. The Bavarian papers are up in arms at what they call the rapacious spirit of the "Oberammergeier," while the *Poste Catholique* of Augsburg declares that there is, on the contrary, every reason for the play to take place in 1900, for "these religious solemnities would form a valuable antidote against the frivolous amusements of the modern Babylon." Paris lies not so very far from the direct route to Oberammergau. English people will, no doubt, try a few days in "The Modern Babylon" first, and take their antidote in the religious play at Oberammergau afterwards. At all events, there is no danger of the passion play being neglected, whenever it takes place.—*Westminster Gazette.*

Considering that "Providence" controls the affairs of this world, they are an awfully curious mixture. Quite recently a London baker, named George Fuller, residing at 113 Bentham-road, South Hackney, was summoned to attend on a coroner's jury. That same evening he went to his bedroom and blew his brains out, and the next morning his body was lying beside the corpses in the dead-house.

Appleton's Popular Science Monthly gives the bill for the refreshments at the ordination of a clergyman at Beverly Mass in 1785. Among the items are 30 bowles punch before they went to meeting, £3; 10 bottles of wine before they went to meeting, £1 10s.; 44 bowles punch while at dinner, £4 8s.; 18 bottles of wine, £2 14s.; 8 bowles brandy, £1 2s.; cherry rum, £1 10s. The same article says: "The North American Indians were, on the whole, unaccustomed to alcoholic beverages before the arrival of the white man."

In Gordon Hake's *Memoirs of Eighty Years* it is mentioned that in the family church of the Hampdens in Buckinghamshire there was always a table in the high family pew on Sunday morning with wine glasses and a bottle of port, with which the friends regaled themselves during the dreary church service, which they attended as an example to the village folk.

It is high time the Sultan were coerced a little more effectively. We are, therefore, delighted to hear that the Admirals of the European Powers of Crete decided, with the approval of their Governments, to send the Turkish fleet to the bottom if it had the impudence to enter Canea Bay.

The Catholics are lifting up their heads in England. Pilgrimages and flaunting processions are quite the order of the day. Within the ruins of the chapel at Hastings Castle there is supposed to be a shrine of St. Mary, Star of the Sea—which, by the way, was one name of the Egyptian virgin mother Isis, and also of the Pagan Venus, who was anything but a virgin. Two hundred priests, acolytes, and thurifers went in procession to this shrine; and men and women pilgrims paraded the streets of Hastings with banners, singing hymns and saying the rosary. This was the first Catholic procession in Hastings since the Reformation. It will, probably, not be the last.

The Presbytery of Utah, apprehensive lest some of the Christian Endeavorers on their way to or from the convention at San Francisco should be deceived by Mormon advices into the belief that Mormonism is, after all, but a style of Christianity, issued a circular, giving ten reasons why Christians cannot fellowship the Mormon Church. The fact is stated that the Mormons now have 2,300 elders doing aggressive missionary work in all the States. Many young people have unwittingly been led into Mormon errors, and few, it is said, are ever delivered from the influence of the system when once under its sway, even when all its deceptions are freely exposed.

It is estimated that 200,000 persons are homeless through the floods in different parts of Germany. Several have gone out of their minds in consequence of the disaster which has overtaken them.

The history of man is neither a revelation from God nor a nature-process, but a human work.—*Dr. Tobler.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 15, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Mr. Hall Caine's new novel, *The Christian*."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 15, New Brompton. September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, London. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

G. W. BLYTHE.—(1) The tortures referred to were said to have been inflicted on parts of the body that are not usually mentioned in public journals. (2) The prosecutor who elicited Mr. Justice Collins's judgment plainly stated that his object was to expose the Sunday laws. This was stated in the *Freethinker*, and we do not understand your surprise. (3) The secular power meant the civil power as distinct from the ecclesiastical power.

MARSHALL.—The discussion is not worth reopening.

R. WALKER.—We agree with you as to the great merit of Ingersoll's lecture on Shakespeare. It is very eloquent and beautiful. Freethinkers should lend a copy of it to their Christian friends. They are sure to admire it, if they are fit to do so, and they may be tempted to read Ingersoll's other lectures, and thus come under his influence as a Freethought propagandist.

W. LAMB.—We do not quite understand your question. The size of the human skeleton, and therefore its weight, varies a great deal even in persons of the same stature.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—G. R. (per E. Truelove) £1.—Although this scheme is dropped for the present, Mr. Foote is carrying out the contract he made with Mr. C. Cohen, who is devoting himself during the summer to open-air lecturing work in London. This is a serious matter for Mr. Foote to carry through by himself. It is hardly to the credit of so many who speak highly of Mr. Cohen's work that they contribute nothing towards its expenses. After this reminder they can hardly plead ignorance of the facts.

H. P. WARD.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

POLICEMAN.—Your name is safe enough with us. See paragraph.

J. R. WHITELL (Hull).—Mr. Forder does not publish the three works you want by Rousseau, but could doubtless obtain them for you. English translations of the *Confessions* are common, but not of the other two. All are easily procurable in French.

G. JACOB.—Sorry we cannot add to our reply. Why not write to the *Echo*, from which we took the fact and figures?

H. NICHOLSON.—Mr. Foote sent you an answer by post as requested. The coroner acted illegally in not allowing you to affirm. You have a *right* to do so under the Oaths Act. Unfortunately it is not easy to bring these jacks-in-office to book. One way is open, but it requires care. When the jury is impanelled, and there are no further cases, it is clear that the person who has not been allowed to affirm cannot be wanted as a juryman; and it is only as a juryman or a witness that he is under the coroner's control. He should therefore walk out of court, and if anyone interferes with him the matter might be tried by an action for assault.

F. F. CLARKE (Aberdeen).—The previous letter you refer to never reached us. Please send us fuller particulars if you desire a paragraph.

G. CRUDDAS.—Thanks for your letter, which was too late to be dealt with in our last issue. A letter reached us from Mr. Nicholson the next day. We understand that he is going to expose the coroner's bigotry in the local press. Neither of you furnishes us with proper particulars for an "Acid Drop"—such as, the nature of the inquest, where it was held, and the coroner's name. These details are necessary to produce a proper impression on the reader.

E. D. H. DALY.—We regret to hear of your illness, and hope you are now thoroughly recovered. Thanks for your promise *re* Treasurer's scheme.

F. COLLINS, promising 10s. annually under Mr. Hartmann's scheme, earnestly hopes that every Freethinker will make "a special effort on this occasion."

B. WATERHOUSE, subscribing £1 under the Treasurer's scheme, suggests that one person in each town should be appointed to call upon known Secularists for subscriptions. He himself offers to canvas within a radius of fifteen miles round Ashford.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Chatham and Rochester Observer—Isle of Man Times—Secular Thought—Newcastle Daily News—Firebrand—Lucifer—L'Etrile Socialiste—Zoophilist—Two Worlds—Animal's Friend—Vegetarian—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Liberator—East London Observer—Sydney Bulletin—Islington Gazette—Islamic World—Crescent.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

***The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.**

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when he lectured on "Who was Moses? A Reply to the King of Siam's Question." Mr. Bater took the chair, and the lecture appeared to be highly relished; at any rate, there was a great deal of laughter and much applause. This evening (August 15) Mr. Foote discourses again from the same platform, taking for his subject "Mr. Hall Caine's new novel, *The Christian*." The hero of this book is a clergyman, who tries to follow Jesus Christ and comes to grief in the attempt. Mr. Caine represents the modern school of undogmatic, sentimental, and, as some people would say, jelly-fish Christianity. Mr. Foote's criticism of *The Christian* should be interesting to others as well as Freethinkers. It is to be hoped that Secularists will endeavor to bring some of their more orthodox friends to the lecture.

Mr. Foote lectures at Manchester on Sunday, September 5, opening the Secular Hall, which has been closed for repairs and decoration. It is Mr. Foote's intention to arrange some country lecture tours this side of Christmas, and branches that wish for a visit from him should communicate at once.

As this is the holiday season, it is useless to press with any vehemence the financial reorganization scheme put forward by Mr. Hartmann, the National Secular Society's treasurer, and remitted by the Annual Conference to the Executive. Briefly, the immediate object under this scheme is to obtain a list of members and friends of the Society who promise to contribute an annual donation of any amount from £100 to 5s. Mr. Hartmann himself heads the list with a promise of £50, and various other promises have already been acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

It is pointed out by a Manchester friend that one point has not been made sufficiently clear. Promises are not absolutely binding, even morally, for more than one year. What is wanted is a good start. A member may say: "Well, I'll give such an amount now to afford the scheme a trial; whether I repeat the donation, or increase or diminish it, will depend upon the result." And this, of course, is a reasonable frame of mind. Be it understood, then, that promises only apply absolutely to the first year. It is only for the first year that Mr. Hartmann promises his £50.

Mr. Foote has received the following fresh promises:—E. D. H. Daly, £2; W. W. Roberts, 10s.; J. Hayes, 5s.; G. R., £1; F. Collins, 10s. Mr. R. Forder has received the following promises:—J. Barks, 5s.; A. Hurren (quarterly), 2s. 6d. The following have been sent to Miss E. M. Vance, secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., those marked *(p)* being paid:—F. W. Donaldson, 10s. 6d. *(p)*; W. H. Spivey, 10s. *(p)*; W. Lamb, £1 *(p)*; T. Ollerenshaw, 10s. *(p)*; A. G. Lye, 10s.; W. Muir, 5s.; B. Waterhouse, £1; C. Heaton, 5s.; S. Graham, 5s.; Cardiff Branch (per W. Jones), £1 15s.; F. T. Brookes, 5s.; T. Gorbell, 10s.; A. C. Byrom, 10s.; F. Theobalds, 5s.

Further promises, and there ought to be hundreds of them, should be sent either to Mr. Foote, or to the N. S. S. secretary or treasurer at 376-7 Strand. After the holidays, say in another fortnight, the matter will be pressed more decisively on the attention of the Secular party.

Mr. Charles Watts had two large and appreciative audiences last Sunday at Failsworth. In the afternoon the hall was comfortably filled, and at night it was crowded. Friends were present from Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, and other surrounding districts. Before the afternoon lecture Mr. Watts named a sweet and fine-looking boy, Vincent Collinge, whose parents had travelled ten miles to have the ceremony performed. In the evening Mr. Watts referred to the death of Mrs. Harriet Law, and spoke in the highest terms of her ability and her services to the Freethought cause.

Mr. Watts expresses his delight at the progress that has been made by the Failsworth Secular Society; also at the

Digitized by Google

excellent music and singing on Sunday last. A band of seventeen members played really in a first-class style, and over fifty children sang Secular hymns charmingly. The entire execution was a musical treat, and reflected great credit upon all concerned.

To-day, Sunday, August 15, Mr. Watts lectures twice in New Brompton; in the morning at the "corner of the Lines," and in the evening in the Secular Hall.

The *Chatham and Rochester Observer* gives a pretty full report of an excellent lecture by W. B. Thompson, of the Gillingham School Board, delivered at the New Brompton Secular Hall, on "The New Education Bills; Government by Priests and Parsons." Mr. Thompson pointed out the inequitable provision for necessitous Board schools, as compared with that given to voluntary schools, and, in conclusion, declared that religion must be taken from the elementary school teachers and relegated to the hands of the parsons.

Mr. George Anderson has placed another large supply of tracts at the disposal of Miss E. M. Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C. They are for free distribution in London, and country Branches can be supplied at the rate of eighteenpence per thousand.

Secular Thought, the only Secular paper in Canada, was founded at Toronto by Mr. Charles Watts, and when he returned to England it fell into the hands of Mr. J. S. Ellis, who has maintained it ever since, though often with great difficulty. That the paper does not pay its way is proved by the fact that it has a "Sustaining Fund," which is fairly well supported. We do not suppose it ever will pay its way until the Freethought movement is organized in Canada. At present it seems in a state of almost absolute chaos. Of course, this is a strong reason for maintaining *Secular Thought*, for without it the Canadian Secularists would have no means whatever of inter-communication. Mr. Ellis has our sympathy in his arduous undertaking.

The last number of *Secular Thought* to hand contains a reprint of Mr. Foote's article on Jubilee prayers, and another of a Sunday visit to the British Museum under the guidance of Messrs. Wheeler and Edwards.

Mr. E. R. Cox, a local paper says, has been causing a stir by his Secularist lectures at Porth, and circulars have been distributed among the various Nonconformist churches asking them to appoint delegates to form an "Anti-Infidel Movement." We wish this movement success, for it will help to keep alive controversy, and Secularism always gains by that. Meanwhile we are pleased to note that Mr. Cox is to hold a two nights' debate with the Rev. Mon Evans in Porth Town Hall.

The splendid Tate gallery of pictures, now the property of the nation and located at Millbank, will be open on Sunday, from two to six p.m., for the first time on August 22.

The bronze statue of Darwin, unveiled at his native place, Shrewsbury, is the work of Mr. Horace Montford, of that town. It reminds one of Boehm's fine marble statue on the staircase of the Natural History Department of the British Museum at South Kensington, where, by the way, the recent rearrangement of animals tells more than ever in favor of Darwinism.

Mr. Clement Shorter has unearthed a hitherto unpublished poem by Emily Bronte, who was the strongest spirit of that gifted family. The following three verses show how superior she was to the narrow creed of the Church to which she nominally belonged:—

The sun is near meridian height,
And my sun sinks in endless night;
But if that night bring only sleep,
Then I shall rest, while thou wilt weep.

And say not that my early tomb
Will give me to a darker doom;
Shall these long agonizing years
Be punished by eternal tears?

No; *that*, I feel, can never be;
A god of *hate* could hardly bear
To watch through all eternity
His own creation's dread despair!

Fitzgerald's splendid rendering of Omar Khayyam—

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell;
And, by-and-bye, my Soul returned to me,
And answered: "I myself am Heaven and Hell"—

seems to have some affinity with this verse by Emily Bronte:—

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can centre both the worlds of Heaven and Hell.

Henry R. Wright has a good letter in the *East London Observer*, citing the behavior of the Oxford House people at the Secularist meetings in Victoria Park, where the Christian mob yell like curs, as an instance of how naturally Christianity and persecution go together.

Among representatives at the German Freethinkers Congress, held at Vienna, were the veteran Professor Ludwig Buchner, of Darmstadt; H. Gerling, of Cologne; Heberlein, of Solingen; Wutschel, of Vienna; Scholt, of Mannheim; Dr. Gleisner, of Munich; and Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi, of Stuttgart. The next congress is fixed for Wiesbaden.

The oldest university in the world is located at Fez, Morocco, and was founded by Fatimah, a Mohammedan woman, who was progressive enough to provide that both Christians and Mohammedans should have equal advantages there for gaining an education. At this time it is said to be the centre of Mohammedan theology, and that 1,000 students, half on scholarships from all parts of the Mohammedan world, are in constant attendance. It is the grossest ignorance or dishonesty that credits all the learning in the world to Christians. Paul did not suffer a woman to teach. Women were to learn at home of their husbands; but here, in what is generally known as barbarian Morocco, a woman established long ages ago an institution of learning, which is reflecting its wholesome influence on modern times.—*Progressive Thinker.*

THEY'VE GONE TO BE WITH JESUS.

A HEARTLESS wretch was Swindleton, but pious as you please;
He ruined many a household with his bogus companies.
Folks trusted him, for in the church he was a shining light;
Their trust was rash, for with their cash he vanished out of sight.

But he's gone to be with Jesus,
He's joined the heavenly throng;
He's strumming away on a golden harp,
And singing a sacred song.
He died last week, and started for
Jerusalem the New;
He's gone to be with the Lord J.C.,
And a jolly good riddance too!

Bill Guzzleton believed in Christ, who "lushed" a wedding mob;
In brandy, whiskey, rum, and gin he squandered every "bob";
He soaked himself with spirits, till at length his "spirit" fled,
And in the "House" his widowed spouse now lives on paupers' bread.

But he's gone to be with Jesus,
And all the live-long day
He's swilling himself with the wine, no doubt
That "cheers" Almighty J.
He's joined the thirsty Noah,
And the rest of Jahveh's crew;
He's left this earth for an angel's berth,
And a jolly good riddance too!

The other day Joe Slaughterman, a sanguinary wretch,
Inside the walls of Newgate Gaol was strung up by Jack Ketch.
But Joe was quite prepared to die when he the scaffold trod;
Three weeks they gave the worthless knave to "make his peace" with God.

So he's gone to be with Jesus;
He'd a "sure and certain hope"
When the priest and the hangman gave him a lift
With a sure and certain rope.
He wasn't fit for this old earth,
They jerked him to the "new";
He's gone to rest on his Savior's "chest,"
And a jolly good riddance too!

ESS JAY BEE.

Any practice recommended to him which either serves no purpose in life, or offers the strongest violence to his natural inclinations; that practice he will the more readily embrace, on account of those very circumstances, which should make him absolutely reject it. It seems the more purely religious, because it proceeds from no mixture of any other motive or consideration. And if, for its sake, he sacrifices much of his ease and quiet, his claim of merit appears still to rise upon him, in proportion to the zeal and devotion which he discovers.—*David Hume.*

Digitized by Google

MEMOIR OF THOMAS COOPER, M.D.

(Concluded from page 509.)

It may be I have placed too low an estimate upon the intellect and attainments of Dr. Cooper. His style was bold, sententious, dogmatic, but clear, simple, and perspicuous. Never was the axiom truer than in his case that "the style is the man."……At the period of Dr. Cooper's election to the Chair of Chemistry in the South Carolina College the science was in comparative infancy, and had attracted but little attention in this country. He brought to the Chair a knowledge of it as it then existed, and soon elevated it to a rank and popularity not surpassed by any other department in the college. The secret of his success is easily told. Never, perhaps, was there a better lecturer, a finer teacher. He had the enviable gift of telling well and impressively all that he knew. The stores of his mind, as we have seen, were ample and varied, and he had the happy talent of bringing them all to bear, when needed, upon the subject under discussion. His own personal experience had been large and peculiar. He had mingled intimately with the most remarkable men of the old and the new world, and had been an eye-witness of some of the most stirring and interesting events recorded in history. He knew Fox and Pitt and Sheridan and Erskine and Burke, and would tell of the impression made upon him when he witnessed those mighty efforts which have shed such glory upon the authors and their country. With Watt he had gone to Paris during the French Revolution, and had been closeted with Robespierre, Petion, and other members of the Jacobin Club. Coming to America in 1792, he made the acquaintance of the great men of the Revolution, and, throwing himself actively in the cause of Jeffersonian democracy, was admitted to terms of intimacy with its leaders. He turned all his knowledge to account. With wonderful art he could weave a dinner with Priestley, a glass of wine with Robespierre, a supper with the Brissotins, or a race for the Convention against the Duke of Orleans, into a lecture upon asbestos, soda, or magnesia. His reading and intercourse with men had furnished him with a fund of anecdote, and this he dealt out on all proper occasions with the best effect. He knew, as a teacher, that for success the *attention* of the pupil must be secured, and that, owing to the nature of the subject, it is sometimes necessary to resort to extraordinary expedients for this purpose. Here he showed wonderful resources; and it may be said, without much fear of contradiction, that the less attractive the topic, the more apt was the lecturer to impress himself upon his hearers. There were in his teachings no parade, no affectation; but the great truths of science were uttered with childlike simplicity. His industry and enthusiasm were unsurpassed, and he ever brought to his task his highest powers and noblest energies. He had his prejudices of education, but he loved knowledge for its own sake, and engaged honestly in the pursuit.

Such was Dr. Cooper as a teacher; and had he been content with a professorship, he might have reposed in peace and quiet. In an evil hour he accepted the presidency, and then his troubles began……The fact that he was elected only by a majority of one attests that he had not a cordial support, and that it was regarded as a doubtful experiment. But in what was he wanting? Why did he fail? It was not owing to his want of science and learning; his intellectual qualifications must be conceded in the fullest sense. ……He loved excitement, and would participate in it wherever it was to be found. He was a partizan with more than usual bitterness. In the political controversies of the day he would act a part, and in South Carolina made himself obvious to a large number by it. Persons would believe, and would say, that he was brought here not to shape the politics of the State, not to encourage and foment dissensions among her public men, but to build up and establish the milder reign of science and of letters. But this was not all. There is an interest dearer than political interest, dear as that is; and this was not safe from his intrusion. I mean the religious. He had his own opinions. He had drunk deep at the fountain of infidelity; he had sympathized with the sneering *savans* of Paris, and sat at the feet of the most sceptical philosophers of England. If there were any feeling of his nature stronger than all the rest, it was the feeling of opposition to the Christian religion. He believed it to be a fraud and imposture; an artful contrivance to cheat fools and scare little children and old women. He came among a people where the universal faith was the faith of Christianity, and he proposed to subvert their altars, and to interfere with their worship. I have already said that he was bold and restless. On this delicate question, as well as others, he must define his position. He must tell the people who had honored him with their confidence that their God was an idol, and their religion a superstition. In every way he strove to impress his opinions. He had no concealment; he was known as the great adversary of the Church. On all occasions he treated its pretensions with contempt. Its great author was but an imperfect man, who was to be judged by the same rules with which we judge other moral reformers; and the priesthood had no other than a self-conferred authority, and were banded together for the promotion of selfish ends and temporal advantages. [Clear-sighted Dr. Cooper.] All knew that these were his views. He made them known in the social circle, in his intercourse with the young men, and in various publications which he issued from time to time. Under such circumstances, what must be the impressions made by his ministrations in the college pulpit?……He read the Bible, whose authority he openly denied, and prayed to a God in whom he did not believe, with less of reverence than he would discuss the theory of phlogiston, or the hypothesis of the igneous formation of the earth. He was now president of the College, and clothed with a most important and responsible trust. The youth of the State were before him, and he was to mould their opinions and fashion their character. It was not only the right, but the duty, of the people, whose children they were, to look into the matter. It was their part to protect them against the influence of a false and soul-destroying philosophy; a species of Pyrrhonism, a refined and subtle dialectics, which removed all the foundations of belief, and spread over the mind the dark and chilling cloud of doubt and uncertainty. The House of Representatives very properly then demanded an investigation……The charges and specifications which were reported by the committee were amply sustained. All that I have said of Dr. Cooper was proved by reference to his known publications, and by the testimony of living witnesses. It is honorable, however, to the Board that it was reluctant to make the sacrifice……There was nothing rash, nothing precipitate. No fanatical zeal, no blind enthusiasm, urged them forward. All was calm and deliberate. He was allowed every opportunity for defence, and his long and elaborate replies are placed on record. The charges were dismissed; this was the crowning act of kindness and charity. But the public were not satisfied, and he was finally disconnected.

I have thus endeavored to account for the failure of Dr. Cooper's administration. At other times, and in other communities, he might have succeeded; but it was impossible here. He loved the College, and was flattered by his position. He labored honestly and industriously for what he conceived to be its best interests. Nor did he labor in vain. He gave the first great impulse to the cause of physical science in our State, and it was he who first made known to our people the names of Watt, of Cavendish, of Black, of Scheele, of Davy, of Lavoisier, and of Priestley. Owing to his peculiar views [!], his suggestions on the subject of educational reform have no very great value. But his soul was in the subject, and his reports to the Board abound in them. It was a cherished notion with him to make education the cheapest of all commodities; to scatter the rich treasure amid all the ranks and classes of society. The State has a College, and he thought it beneath its dignity to charge for admission to its privileges. He remarks in one of his reports that he desires to place it on record among their documents that his full and deliberate persuasion is that a *Free College* is as necessary as a *Free School*, and that the exaction of tuition money for education cannot be defended either on the ground of justice or expediency. In this he exhibits a liberal and catholic spirit, and signalizes his sincere devotion to the sacred cause of letters.

In the last place, to speak of Dr. Cooper as a man; of his private and social relations. He was remarkable for his personal virtue. His integrity was never called in question. He was open, frank, and free from all dissimulation. He made no *mere professions*. Whether of men or measures, he said what he thought, and was never chargeable with insincerity. As may be inferred from what has already been recorded of him, the tone of his nature was strong and decided. I am guilty of no inconsistency when I say that he loved the truth; he never embraced error as error, falsehood for the sake of falsehood, though he suffered frequent imposition. In his social relations he was most agreeable. He would throw off the dogmatism of the teacher, and be like other men. He was a fine table companion, and few acted their parts on such occasions with like effect. In addition to his literary stories, his fund of incident, anecdote, and story constituted a vast treasure-house, from which he would draw to illustrate every possible topic of conversation. A Boswell could have found in his table-talk much that was entertaining and instructive, and worthy of preservation. He was punctilious in the discharge of the duties of the citizen, and set a high value upon such privileges. He was kind as a neighbor, and in his intercourse with men was free from selfishness. As a husband, a father, a master, he was without fault. What more shall I add? Death has set its seal upon him, and, while his virtues should be remembered, let his faults be forgiven. Bad is the heart which could now indulge a feeling of malignity; rather let us find excuses and palliations for his opinions and his conduct, and examine ourselves to see whether we did not judge him, while living, with too great severity. How honorable to the memory of the elder Scaliger, who was the bitter antagonist of Erasmus, that he mourned with tears because the latter

Digitized by Google

was snatched away from him before a reconciliation was effected!

I have exhausted my art: the portrait is as complete as I can make it.

WHY I DESPISE CHRIST.

In the first place, we will assume that "all scripture *is written* by inspiration"—that is, that the authors, writing under the actuating influence of the Holy Ghost, have communicated to mankind whatever God wished should be known; therefore, the historical portion must be considered as a truthful record of events which actually took place. From this standpoint we cannot help seeing how inconsistent it must have been with God's honor and holiness to be begotten, as his own Son, and born under such disreputable and suspicious circumstances. Would it not have been infinitely better for Christ to have come into the world in the same miraculous manner as he is supposed to have left it, in full vigorous manhood, rather than to have come as an ordinary child through the mediumship of an earthly mother, and altogether independent of any earthly father? It ought also to have been universally made known who this divine child was, so that every word and deed of this rejuvenated God might have been faithfully recorded and jealously preserved for an exemplary guide to future rising generations.

At the age of twelve years this child Jesus, like the clever Josephus, evinced an astonishing degree of wisdom before the doctors in the temple; but the only sample of it recorded is an impertinently vulgar remark to his anxious but gentle mother. For twenty years this erudite prodigy labored mutely in a carpenter's workshop, never exhibiting one vestige of the omniscience he possessed, or of that grandiloquence wherein "he spake as never man spake."

His band of twelve chosen men was composed mainly of illiterate fishermen, one of whom he described as "a devil," and for three years these thirteen men with several women, one at least of easy virtue, tramped about the country, through Samaria to Judea and back to Galilee, living at the expense of industrial people of charitable disposition, sleeping out of doors at nights, and leading a life of abject vagrancy. His chief doctrine seems clearly to have been that people ought to spend their time in praying to their heavenly father for daily consignments of food, clothing, and shelter; rather than to be providently occupied in ploughing, sowing, reaping, garnering, threshing, grinding, and baking; or in spinning, weaving, and making clothes; or in quarrying stone, hewing wood, making bricks, and building houses.

"Labor not for the meat that *perisheth*," he would say; ut when he and his twelve boon companions and a few weaker vessels, weary, unwashed, and ravenously hungry, visited Lazarus and his sisters, they required very little pressing to clear the board of the *perishables* which the humane Martha had so lavishly spread. Where was his omniscience when he anticipated figs from a tree before they had grown? Where was his gentleness when, in his puerile fury, he cursed and blasted a tree for not having figs on at a wrong time of the year? What a pitiful exhibition he made of his political ignorance, when he implied that all money belonged to those whose image and superscription it bore. What a divine bigot he must have been to damn people for unbelief.

This great shining "light of the world" ought to have known that thoughts and beliefs are due to uncontrollable circumstances, such as sufficiency or deficiency of evidence or probability, etc., and that they are as purely involuntary as the respirations of the lungs or the pulsations of the heart. When he was wallowing and wailing in the garden of Gethsemane, while his sturdy and vigilant followers were all asleep on the ground, he displayed the most despicable cowardice in wanting to abandon the crucifixion business, showing that he cared nothing for the billions of fallen mortals it was to redeem. There are a great many more reasons why I cannot be a Christite, and, to use the words of the veracious John, "the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

P. W. Baldwin.

Good Robert Owen and Children.

He was the first publicist among us who looked with royal eyes upon children. He regarded grown persons as proprietors of the world, bound to extend the rights of hospitality to all visitors. He considered little children as little guests, to be welcomed with gentle courtesy and tenderness, to be offered knowledge and love, and charmed with song and flowers, so that they might be glad and proud that they had come into a world which gave them happiness, and only asked from them goodness.—*G. J. Holyoake, "Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life," vol i., p. 127.*

HIS LATEST POEM.

Mr. Editor,—The following is a little poem written by a brother of William Cullen Bryant. He is an intelligent Agnostic, as his lines indicate. I have been intimately acquainted with him for nearly forty years, he having settled in this (Bureau) County over fifty years ago. He has always been prominent in business and in politics, and is an outspoken Liberal.

I would be glad to have you publish his latest, and which may be his last, poem. He is the last of his family, having outlived his wife, and even all of his children.

M. B. Dewey.

CLOSE TO NINETY.

BY JOHN HOWARD BRYANT.

Here now I stand, upon life's outer verge;
Close at my feet an ocean wide and deep,
Dark, sullen, silent, and without a surge,
Where earth's past myriads lie in dreamless sleep.
'Tis here I stand, without a thrill of fear,
In loneliness allied to the sublime;
The broken links of love that bound me here
Lie scattered on this treacherous shoal of time.
But still I cling to the friends who yet remain,
Still love the glorious scenes that round me lie;
Striving to stay the waste of years in vain,
As swifter yet the winged moments fly.
Idly I seek the future to explore;
I partly know what is, but nought that is before,

—*Boston Investigator.*

Obituary.

A notable figure has passed away in the person of the veteran Samuel Laing, who died at his residence, Rockhill, Sydenham Hill, in his eighty-sixth year. Mr. Laing was born at Edinburgh in 1812. His father, Samuel Laing, of Orkney, was a distinguished economist and writer of travels. Educated at Cambridge, Samuel Laing, junr., took his degree at the age of twenty, and was called to the bar at thirty. At forty he became M.P. for Kirkwall. He was secretary of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, and it was mainly through him that the public got Parliamentary trains with their penny per mile fares. He also helped to repeal the duty on advertisements in newspapers. In 1860 he became Financial Secretary for India. A confirmed Agnostic, Samuel Laing did much to popularize science, and to show its incompatibility with dogmatic theology. His best-known work was *Modern Science and Modern Thought*. His *Human Origins* is well worth reading, though not so careful as the expositions of Mr. Clodd. In *A Modern Zoroastrian* he gives the doctrine of polarity, and his *Problems of the Future* deals with important questions in a clear and direct manner. Mr. Laing's long life was one of secular usefulness, and he earned the respect of all lovers of their kind. A year or two ago Mr. Laing was presented with an address in Orkney, and gave some interesting reminiscences of his career at home and abroad. Here is one passage from it bearing on his scientific and religious ideas: "It struck me very much in your address, emanating as it doubtless does from educated Scotchmen of various creeds and denominations, that you agree in commending the 'frank outspokenness' of my writings on scientific and religious subjects. Three centuries ago I should have been burnt, and one century ago boycotted, for such opinions, and now they are rather a bond of union among men of all shades of religious beliefs who delight to dwell in unity with brothers, who agree with them in the fundamental principle of trying to lead upright lives and do some good in their generation." That Mr. Laing was able to speak in this strain in the Farthest North was a remarkable tribute to his own popularity, no less than to the liberal-mindedness of those among whom he spent a number of pleasant years.

Perception and Reason.

Reasoning is the same intellectual process as perception, with this difference: that perception is inferential respecting objects *present*, and reasoning is inferential respecting objects *absent*. In the laxity of current language, sensations and perceptions are almost convertible terms; but, if we rigorously separate from our perceptions all those elements not actually given in the momentary sensation, it will be evident that perception is distinguished from sensation by the addition of certain inferences, as when we perceive a substance to be hard, square, odorous, sweet, etc., although we do not actually touch, smell, or taste the object. What is this process of inference? It is a presentation before the consciousness of something which has been formerly observed in conjunction with the object, and is therefore supposed to be now actually present in fact, although not present in sensation.—*G. H. Lewes, in "History of Philosophy."*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

The Deadly 73°: A Business Tragedy in Two Hemispheres (Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.; 1s.), is an exposure of the doings of the Standard Oil Trust, bossed by the pious John D. Rockefeller, "the richest Baptist on earth," renowned for his religious benefactions and his unscrupulous building up of a monopoly. The author, who has evidently studied his subject with great care, and who writes with a vivid pen which makes every detail interesting, contends that one great source of the Rockefeller millions is that the low flash point permitted in this country enables the Trust to flood Europe with refuse oils, which are prohibited in three-fourths of the American States, and which are mainly responsible for the long series of lamp explosions and fires in oilshops. The flash point of 73° is shown, on the authority of men like Lord Kelvin and Sir H. Roscoe, to be an unsafe one; and that used for the Government lighthouses and the Liverpool Docks is 120°. The exhibition of how far a powerful corporation can suppress and pervert evidence is wonderfully suggestive of how the great ecclesiastical corporation may have acted when all power was in its hands, and all learning at its command.

* * *

Two volumes will be issued by the Humanitarian League in the autumn—viz., (1) *Humanitarian Essays*, a selection from the League's pamphlets during the last three years, dealing with hospital reform, war, vaccination, capital punishment, sweating, and humane diet, and edited by Mr. H. S. Salt, which will form the third and concluding volume of *Cruelties of Civilization*; and (2) *Humane Science Lectures*, the series of addresses given last winter at St. Martin's Town Hall, W.C., by Edward Carpenter, Prince Kropotkin, the Rev. Douglas Morrison, Chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, Professor Thomson of Edinburgh University, and Dr. Milne Bramwell. A new series of pamphlets will be commenced in November, differing altogether from the first in size and form. No. 1 of these will probably be on the subject of the Game Laws.

* * *

H. P. Blavatsky has published her *Posthumous Memoirs* through Jos. M. Wade, Boston, Mass. They purport to be dictated by her spirit to a typewriter. She says Sinnett and others "have lived off my personality as crows would feed off any element which their taste accepted." Of Mrs. Besant she says: "Poor Annie, fallen in the opinion of her friends, accused by her enemies of insanities, and being under dominion of Buddhist black magicians, she now can understand a small tithe of the dreadful injury which skilful calumny will work. From the plane of a respected leader of thought she has fallen to that of a victim of William Q. Judge, and not only has her own injury to account for, but that of those who followed her, as the blind are led by others equally blind." The author of these *Posthumous Memoirs* evidently knows a deal about the Theosophical movement.

* * *

Mr. Zangwill's book, *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, will appear in September. It is a group of stories, and in each of these there figures a celebrated Jew.

* * *

The Roxburghe Press have recently issued a volume entitled *Lord Bolingbroke*, being excerpts from the political works of Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, with a few biographical details of the author, by that Victorian Jacobite, the Hon. Stuart Erskine. Some selections from Bolingbroke's criticisms of religion would be also well worth making.

* * *

Science et Religion—par Malvert—is a very successful popular explanation of Christian myths (Paris: Société d'éditions scientifiques, 4 Rue Antoine-Dubois), which has reached its eleventh thousand. Chapter i. deals with the Trinity and its analogies in India and elsewhere. Chapter ii. is on sun-worship, traced through many cults to Christianism. Chapter iii. deals with the Cross, which is connected with the Swastika and the worship of fire. Chapter iv. treats of the gospel, dealing first with the predicted Messiah, and next with gospel morality, which is compared with that found in Buddhism and in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Chapter v.—"Le Culte"—deals with the festivals, rites, sacrament, prayers, and processions of the Church, showing their connection with Pagan beliefs and customs. Chapter vi. is on the saints, whose connections with heathen deities are traced. Incidentally, the author treats of stone and phallic worship, and gives some amusing particulars of Christian relics. The last chapter is on science, whose services to humanity are contrasted with those of religion. The work is illustrated with over eighty engravings, representing medals, statues, ornaments, symbols from the Musée Guimet, and other sources. It is written in an interesting and popular style, and must be a powerful aid to the well-established cause of Rationalism in France.

The critic of the *Athenæum* (August 7), noticing the new sayings of Jesus, thinks that possibly the assertion, "Lift the stone and there you will find me, cleave the wood and I am there," may refer to the assertion of Josephus, that roots and stones were employed to cure diseases. This seems far-fetched. A reference to stone- and tree-worship is at least as plausible.

* * *

Mr. F. P. Badham, in a letter to the same journal, gives the verse as, "Where men are impious and godless, and there is one believer, *let him live alone*. I am with him. Lift a stone and you shall find me, cleave the wood and I am there." This, he says, is radically different from the only analogous passage in the New Testament. In Matthew xviii. 20 the leading idea is the blessedness of association, whereas here it is the blessedness of solitude. It, like the other logia, gives the idea of spiritual discernment that, by some particular course of action, we shall see and "find" Christ. He paraphrases it as meaning, "If thy home is godless, go forth and find me in the stocks and stones of the desert." Mr. Badham thinks "no other source than the Egyptian Gospel seems possible."

* * *

Mr. F. C. Burkett has been fortunate enough to discover at the Genezah, attached to the so-called synagogue of Ezra the Scribe in Cairo, what he believes to be a portion of the manuscript of Aquila's Greek translation of the Old Testament. The portion contains about sixteen verses of 2 Kings xxiii. It is a palimpsest, the upper writing being some Hebrew liturgy, while Aquila's work is written in bold Egyptian Greek uncials, like those of the sixth century. The name of Jahveh is curiously written in old Hebrew letters, like those of the Siloam inscription.

* * *

A new edition of Lester F. Ward's important work on *Dynamic Sociology*, as based upon statical sociology and less complex sciences, has been issued by D. Appleton & Co., 772 Fifth-avenue, New York.

PROFANE JOKES.

Parson (to Bullocky)—"Why, my good man, do you use such shocking language when addressing those poor horned beasts?" Bullocky—"It's all very fine for you to talk, mister; you've only *one* devil to drive, I've got fourteen!"

Young Solomons—"Father, take me to see the 'Sign of the Cross.'" Old Man—"Arch! I wouldn't spend tuppence on the play!" Young Solomons—"But, father, they torture the Christians in this piece." Old Man—"Vell, dot is another matter."

"Methuselah must have felt very old." "Tut! If he'd run up against some of our modern young men he'd have felt like a child."

A Sunday school teacher, at the close of an address on Creation, which he was sure he had kept within the comprehension of the least intelligent scholars, smilingly invited questions. A tiny boy, with a white, eager face and large brow, at once held up his hand. "Please, sir, why was Adam never a baby?" The superintendent coughed in some doubt as to what answer to give, but a little girl of nine, the eldest of several brothers and sisters, came promptly to his aid. "Please, sir," she said, smartly, "there was nobody to nurse him."

Preacher—"The meek shall inherit the earth." Scoffer—"Yes, the graveyards are full of them."

Failsworth Secular Sunday School.

The annual services in connection with this school took place on Sunday, August 7, Mr. Charles Watts delivering two addresses: "The Drawbacks of Christianity" being the subject of the afternoon lecture, and "Sin and Secular Salvation" that of the evening. Notwithstanding the heavy rains during the early afternoon, the first lecture was well attended, while at night the school was crowded, Mr. Watts's addresses meeting with a very hearty reception in both instances.

During the afternoon the very interesting ceremony of introducing and naming a child to the cause of Secularism was performed by Mr. Watts, the child being Vincent Collinge, the son of Frederick and Martha Collinge, of Droylsden.

Hymns and choruses were rendered by the School choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band, and conducted by Mr. Alfred Warren.

The services were successful in every way, numerically and financially.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Hall Caine's new novel, *The Christian*."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 8 15 and 7, A lecture.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, B. Calvert, "Science, the Savior of Man."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R station): 7, C. Cohen.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen; 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Common-sense View of the Bible."

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11 30, A lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, E. Calvert, "The March of Time."

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. August 17, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Stanley Jones; 7, E. Pack. August 18, at 8.30, C. Cohen. 19, at 8, Mr. Westacott.

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Bible and the Monuments"; 7, Conrad Goodrich, "Theatres Full, Churches Empty."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Woman."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, C. Watts, "Sin and Secular Salvation."

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Musical and other recitals, etc.; 8, Announcement as to postponed excursion, through rain, to Wharncliffe side.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Business meeting; 7.30, D. R. Bow, "The Industrial Outlook."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, C. Watts, "The Drawbacks of Christianity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 15, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith. 18, Mile End. 22, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; e., Peckham Rye. 25, Mile End. 29, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Peckham Rye. September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. MOSS 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 22, m., Wood Green; e., Peckham Rye. 29, Edmonton.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 15, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., Bradlaugh Club. 22, m., Mile End Waste; a., Harrow-road. 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 15, m., Camberwell; a. Peckham Rye. 22, Limehouse. 29, m., Mile End. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 12, m., Kingsland. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 26, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason*.) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin; Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERT'S "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s 6d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GRAND CLEARING LINE.

630
LADIES' MACKINTOSHES

Warranted thoroughly Waterproof and Odorless. Sizes, length at back 54, 56, 58, and 60 inches. Very latest style, and every garment well finished.

Colors: Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Slate, and Grey. To fit persons up to 36 inch Bust.

Price Carriage Paid. 12/6 Worth nearly double. | **1 Copy of G. W. Foote's "Flowers of Freethought," value 2s. 6d., will be presented to each customer.**

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 34. SUNDAY, AUGUST 22, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. HALL CAINE'S "CHRISTIAN."

The Christian: A Story. By HALL CAINE. (London: William Heinemann.)

THREE popular novelists have from time to time been reported as engaged on Lives of Christ. If they were to co-operate, the subject would be in appropriate hands. The fictionists who wrote the biography of Jesus some sixteen hundred years ago lived in the infancy of their profession. Time has brought with it many improvements, and it would be well if their work were rewritten and brought up to date. Nor need there be any dread of a lack of inspiration, for each of the aforesaid three gentlemen has a high sense of his "mission," and is looked upon as oracular by his own set of devotees.

One of these three pious novelists is Mr. Hall Caine, the author of several romances which have been praised highly, not to speak it profanely, by all sorts of critics, from Mr. Gladstone downwards—or upwards, according to preference. Every now and then a meteor flashes across the sky and nearly eclipses the steady stars. And in literature we hear every year or two that the book of the century has just been published. When a man looks into it who has read the really great books of the world, he smiles with a certain contemptuous compassion, and says to himself: "Bottomless is the conceit, ill taste, and weak judgment of professional and anonymous reviewers; and measureless is the craft of literary log-rolling."

For my own part, I must make the frank confession that I have never read any of Mr. Hall Caine's books but the one I am going to criticise. The extracts in the advertisements from his chorus of flattering reviewers gave me "a scunner"—to use an expressive Scotticism which has no exact equivalent in English. One of these unknown and know-all gentlemen, writing in a leading north-country journal, places a certain novel of Mr. Caine's "distinctly ahead of all the fictional literature of our time." Well, I have read *The Christian* carefully, and I can only conclude that this exuberant reviewer is vastly mistaken, or else that Mr. Caine has miraculously degenerated. His work is not in the same street with that of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. He does not understand human nature as they do. His characters are moved about vigorously, but they are lay figures, and not real men and women. They simulate life admirably, but after all they are only puppets. It is merely the penny novelette carried to the highest degree of amplification and intensity. A page of *Tom Jones*, a page of *Richard Feverel*, a page of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, is more than worth a thousand tons of such writing.

Mr. Caine's style is what Matthew Arnold would have called *Daily Telegraphese*. It might be envied by newspaper reporters. There is vigor of a sort, and graphical power of a sort; but no subtlety, no *finesse*, and no distinction. You never come across an exquisite felicity, or indeed any felicity at all. I cannot imagine a reader copying out a passage or a sentence of this book. Of course it may be said that I am fastidious and exacting; but should I not be in the face of such pretensions? Side by side with this book, as a corrective, I have read over again a volume of Flaubert's *Correspondance*. There you have the artist, the master of a great style, who lends a magic to his thoughts by his beauty and accuracy of expression. Without this you may have books, but you cannot have literature. One reads a letter of Flaubert's as one sips chartreuse; one reads pages of Mr. Caine's as one swallows lager beer.

It is Mr. Caine's own opinion that *The Christian* is "a colossal undertaking." He gave this opinion to a *Daily News* interviewer, a few days before publication. Mr. Caine actually spent several days and nights in London to familiarize himself more or less with the scenes he intended to describe; and he appears to think that this is quite a gratuitous trouble on the part of a novelist. He also says of his book that "it was actually written and re-written three times." This is rather enigmatic, but life is not long enough to puzzle out its meaning. As for the proofs, they have been "read by not less than twenty different persons, each a specialist in some walk of life, as divergent as, for instance, Albert Chevalier and Father Adderley." Mr. Caine is also good enough to inform us that he wrote his novel in bed in the mornings, or late at night in the arm-chair in his study. But he omitted to specify the parts that were written in these respective times and positions, and we are therefore unable to tell when his genius is at its apogee. All these details may be interesting to "the general," as Hamlet calls them, but their publication shows that Mr. Caine takes himself with a seriousness that o'erleaps itself and falls into comicality. When he states that at the end of his manuscript he wrote the words "Thank God," it probably did not occur to him that the same exclamation might spring from the lips of some of his readers.

Mr. Caine is a man with a mission; a sort of Hebrew prophet or Christian apostle, born out of due season, and living luxuriously in a fine house on the Isle of Man, instead of fasting in the desert or being chased from city to city with the fire of martyrdom at the end of the flight. His colossal undertaking is not a mere romance to tickle the imagination of idle readers. Its object is to show that "it is impossible for a man to live the life of Christ in Christian society as it is organized to-day." The interviewer was unkind enough to suggest that this had been pointed out before. Mr. Caine admitted that it had, but he replied: "No message is new entirely, but shall one be silent on that account?" Certainly not, especially when there is plenty of popularity and money in preaching.

Mr. Gladstone's inevitable advertisement comes as an endorsement of Mr. Caine's mission. "I cannot," he says, "but regard with warm respect and admiration the conduct of one holding your position as an admired and accepted novelist, who stakes himself, so to speak, on so bold a protestation on behalf of the things which are unseen as against those which are seen, and are so terribly effective in chaining us down to the level of our earthly existence."

Let us examine this testimonial; bearing in mind, by the way, that Mr. Gladstone gave a similar one to that worthless play, *The Sign of the Cross*, which is spectacular melodrama at the best, and at the worst a vicious pandering to the lowest instincts of Christian bigotry.

How does Mr. Caine "stake himself" in this instance? According to the preliminary puffings, he is to net six thousand pounds by the first English edition. How many thousands of men would "stake" themselves for the same consideration! There is no "staking" in the matter. Christian sentimentalism, which supersedes Christian dogma, is widely prevalent in the English-speaking world. Nothing else could account for the success of Mr. Wilson Barrett's drama, or the vogue of books like those of the late Professor Drummond. Intellectually speaking, Christianity has long been dead. It lies floating many a rood,

Digitized by Google

like a huge dead whale, out of which many "missioned" gentlemen are carving blubber. Mr. Caine is one of these, and he knows there is a good market for the commodity.

And what is the real value of Mr. Caine's "bold protestation"? What danger does he incur? Does not the danger lie all on the other side? Is the protestation really "bold"? Unless Mr. Caine is merely a literary adventurer, we are to conclude that he is a Christian himself, and that his ideal of Christianity is John Storm, the hero of this novel, who denounces worldly Church dignitaries to their faces, gives up wealth and earthly prospects, and spends himself in what is called rescue-work in the London slums, nursing abandoned babies, and standing up for the female victims of male profligacy. Very well, if this is Mr. Caine's ideal Christianity, let him follow it. That would be a bold protestation, and we should honor his courage, whatever we might think of his intelligence. But one fails to see the "boldness" of picturing this high ideal amid personal comfort and rural beauties, with several thousand pounds as reward when the picture is ready for public exhibition. Mr. Caine may reply that he is an artist. Very good then; let him drop this cant about his message and his mission, and desist from sending to the press these testimonials to his astonishing bravery.

We now turn to the novel itself, which must ultimately stand or fall on its own merits. And let us first take its *technique*. Mr. Albert Chevalier has revised the Cockneyisms, so they are presumably accurate; though, after all, a slip in London dialect is far more trivial than a falsity in human character. Who cares that Shakespeare makes a clock strike in one of his Roman plays? It is an anachronism, of course; but Shakespeare would have smiled sarcastically at the painful scholar who fastened on that blot. Truth to nature, not mere truth to philology and archæology, is the great thing for the artist. Now I am bound to say that Mr. Hall Caine does not stand this test in *The Christian*. His hero, John Storm, is represented as a fine fellow, with a good figure, grand eyes, and a grander character; but in act and speech he is a monomaniacal fanatic. At one point of his Christian career he visits the girl he loves with the purpose of killing her body to save her soul. At another point he gravely proposes to marry her, and go out to take the place of Father Damien among the South Sea lepers, where they are to live together as brother and sister, until they die of the frightful malady. The case is one of pathology, and John Storm's proper place is a comfortable asylum.

Glory Quaile, the heroine, comes from the Isle of Man. So does the hero. Mr. Caine's island seems to breed special types of humanity. Glory is very beautiful, and very bright and intelligent—until she talks and writes, when she is insufferably shallow-smart and egotistical. At the age of eighteen she leaves the three-legged island with a rich supply of Cockney slang and some choice Americanisms. On the voyage from Douglas to Liverpool she asks John Storm if he would like to talk of love, and while they discourse on this fascinating theme there comes "a wonderful light into his splendid eyes," as she tells her grandfather. In her next letter she uses expressions such as "like blazes," and speaks of a patient in the hospital as "an old hippopotamus of a German musician." Shortly after she thinks it must be great fun to "be a barmaid, and have the gentlemen wink at you, and be laughing back at them." She goes to a ball with another nurse at the hospital, and comes home in a hansom at three in the morning! which shows how Mr. Caine has studied hospital life. In a month or so she goes with the same other nurse to the bachelor chambers of two rich "swells," where she puts on man's clothes and gives a little performance; all which she communicates in slangy language to her aunt. "I want to become great and glorious," she says in the same letter, "I could do it too—I know I could. I have got it in me, I am sure I have." In a very short time this young lady becomes a music-hall star, and her name is blazoned all over the metropolis. Mr. Caine's profound studies have led him to think that a music-hall star is made in a few months; that a schoolgirl, almost, can rush into sudden and brilliant notoriety. Dear, dear! What was Mr. Chevalier doing when he let this pass uncensured? Did he wink to himself and say, "That's not my affair: let Caine revise that rot himself"?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

RELIGION AND CRIME.

"In fact, religion has much less influence on morals—at least, on that portion of morals which falls under the jurisdiction of the police—than we are in the habit of believing, and our confidence in the ethical benefits derived from Christian teaching is unfortunately not justified by facts."—H. C. LEA, *History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences*, vol. ii., p. 431; 1896.

No objection to Freethought is more common than the assertion that its adoption will withdraw the restraints upon crime. How simply standing for truth, instead of for hypocrisy, can effect this is never clearly made out; but, most people having been trained to suppose that religion and right conduct are inseparable, it is taken for granted that any departure from the one must be attended by disastrous consequence to the other. This despite the evidence that some of the noblest-minded men and women—such as Bentham, the two Mills, Grote, Darwin, Clifford, Huxley, "George Eliot," and Harriet Martineau—have been entirely free from religion.

Now, I contend that men and women become Freethinkers, not because they have less concern for the well-being of society, but because they have more. In devoting themselves to the actual needed service of mankind, instead of to the worship of a god who cannot need our praises, they have reached a higher platform than that called religious. Crime and religion, in fact, are both atavistic, being the survival of earlier and more savage states in the midst of civilized life. This is the conclusion to which anthropologists are being forced by a study of the facts.

Garofalo, in his profound study, *La Criminalite*, points out that usually brigands and assassins are devoted to the virgin and the saints. He says, too (p. 162): "*Des dames très croyantes peuvent passeur toute leur vie dans l'adultère, et a l'église pleurer agenouillées au pied de la croix. Car la luxure est un péché mortel, comme le haine et la colère, mais la bénédiction d'un prêtre peut également les absoudre tous.*" Absolution can wipe out all sins. Ferri, in *La Sociologie Criminelle* (p. 240), is of the same opinion as to the influence of religion. He says: "The common psychological illusion, that the religious sentiment can by itself be a preventive of crime, must be renounced. It happens, on the contrary, that the immense majority of criminals are sincere believers." The following table, showing the proportion of murders to every 100,000 inhabitants, is suggestive:—Italy, 12.67; Spain, 8.59; Austria, 3.11; Belgium, 2.52; France, 2.13; Ireland, 1.93; Germany, 1.14; England, 1.08; Scotland, 0.94.

Joly, in *La France Criminelle*, gives affirmative evidence. He points out (p. 274) that Lozére is the department which gives the highest percentage of criminals, and yet where the people are especially religious. There is a popular saying in the vicinage: "*Lozéreen! le chapelet d'une main, le couteau de l'autre.*" The rosary in one hand and the knife in the other is a good description of many of the most pious people of southern Europe.

Mr. Henry Havelock Ellis, in his excellent study of *The Criminal*, says (p. 156): "In all countries religion or superstition is closely related with crime. The Sansya dacoits, in the Highlands of Central India, would spill a little liquor on the ground before starting on an expedition, in order to propitiate Devi." Among 200 Italian murderers Ferri did not find one who was irreligious. "A Russian peasant," remarks Mr. Kennan, "may be a highway robber or a murderer, but he continues, nevertheless, to cross himself and say his prayers." Dostoieffsky also notes the religious ardor with which the convicts gave candles and gifts to the Church. All those who live by unlawful methods, said Cassanova, "confide in the help of God." Naples is the worst city in Europe for crimes against the person. It is also the most religious city in Europe. "No other city," observes Garofalo, "can boast of such frequent processions; no other, perhaps, is so zealous an observer of the practices of the Church. But, unfortunately, as an illustrious historian [Sismondi], speaking of the Italians of his day, wrote: 'The murderer, still stained with the blood he has just shed, devoutly fasts, even while he is meditating a fresh assassination; the prostitute places the image of the Virgin near her bed, and recites her rosary devoutly before it; the priest, convicted of perjury, is never inadvertently guilty of drinking a glass of water before mass.'" Those words of Sismondi's, Garofalo adds, "are as true to-day as when they were written."

Digitized by Google

Lombroso found 248 tattooed prisoners, out of 2,480, bearing religious symbols; while the slang of criminals witnesses to a faith in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in the Church. Mr. H. H. Ellis says (p. 159): "It seems extremely rare to find intelligent irreligious men in prison. The sublime criminals whom we meet with in Elizabethan dramas, arguing haughtily concerning divine things and performing unheard-of atrocities, are not found in our prisons. Freethinkers are rarely found."

In the sixteenth century, says Mr. Lea, Bishop Guevara felt obliged to admit that the morality of the Spanish Moors was higher than that of the Christians. It is the same to-day where the rival faiths of Christianity and Islam are brought into competition. In Algeria the arrests for all offences of European foreigners average 111 per annum for every 10,000; of Frenchmen, 71; of Arabs, only 34.

Still more striking are the carefully-kept statistics of India, where the dense population and dire poverty might seem to form a breeding ground for crime, but where there are far fewer offences against either person or property, relative to the population, than in any Christian country. India has scarce one-fifth of the crime of England, the least being among the adherents of Brahmanism, and the most among the adherents of Christianity. But even here this comparative immunity is attributed by those best able to judge, not to the tenets of Brahmanism, but to the caste system under which every individual is a member of a body, exercising close supervision over his every act, and inflicting penalties for transgression, culminating in expulsion, which destroys his career for life.

A comparison between Judaism and Christianity is not flattering to the latter. Jews have far fewer criminals in proportion than either Protestants or Catholics. Even in the matter of legitimate births they stand ahead. In Vienna the proportion of illegitimate to legitimate births among the Jews is only between a third and a fourth of that among the Catholics; in Prussia it is between a third and a half of that among Christians. And the Jews are the nearest to Secularists among all the religionists. In Liverpool, and other towns of mixed Catholic and Protestant population, it is found that a larger proportion of criminal offences takes place among the Catholics, the most strictly religious portion of the population. Facts, then, do not countenance the theory that the rejection of religion removes any of the real restraints upon crime.

As human nature is constituted, imminent temporal earthly penalties will always outweigh, and have a more restraining influencing than, contingent post-mortem ones, which may be averted by timely repentance, for

> While the lamp holds out to burn
> The vilest sinner may return.

Religion veils the natural consequences of wrong-doing, and promises immunity to sinners because Jesus paid for all. It very rarely happens that a criminal condemned to death fails to avail himself of the ministrations of the chaplain. Convicts at their last hour usually die as piously as any christom child. This is the error of religion. It provides a safe conduct to glory for the murderer, and none for the victim. It substitutes a confession at death for right conduct in life, and confounds ceremonial observances with real duties.

The attitude of religion to crime is either one of denunciation, or of wiping out offences by confession and absolution, or by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Secularism has no such easy method. It teaches that all actions must have their consequences. It looks rather to prevention than punishment. Much crime arises from social conditions, which may be improved. The Secularist trusts rather in the school than in the prison. Instead of teaching children from a barbarous book, full of records of bloodshed, lust, and all forms of criminality, it would inculcate practical knowledge of what tends to social well-being in our own day—in short, give to every child the sound physical, mental, and moral training that constitutes true education.

J. M. WHEELER.

Every one who looks back and compares his early impressions respecting states of things in his own society, with the impressions he now has, will see how erroneous were the beliefs once so decided, and how probable it is that even his revised beliefs are but partially true.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Time destroys the speculations of man, but it confirms the judgments of Nature.—*Cicero.*

"THE LORD'S PRAYER."

THE subject of prayer constitutes one of the most prominent doctrines taught by professed Christians. They regard it as not only a source of consolation, but as the means of securing material assistance from God through Christ. It is true that the absolute reliance which was once placed upon "supplications to heaven" is not now so general as it was, experience having shown that help in daily life can be obtained only by secular effort. Even eminent Christian writers have deemed it necessary to put an arbitrary interpretation upon the objects of prayer. With many of them it is not an act of supplication, but an emotional gratification. They allege that the change, which prayer is intended to produce, is not in God, but in those who indulge in the devotional exercise. This is the position taken by Dr. Blair, Lord Kames, and Dr. Leechman, who was for years the Principal of Glasgow College. More recently Dr. Newman Hall has adopted the same view in his popular book, *The Lord's Prayer*, a third edition of which he has recently issued. Most "advanced Christians" to-day profess to regard prayer in a similar light.

Dr. Newman Hall considers that God knows the thoughts of men before they pray; but, says the Doctor, God "desires also to know our wishes from ourselves. An earthly parent may know many of the child's desires and griefs, but likes to hear them from the child's own lips; and the habit of telling them cultivates filial affection. In prayer we are not instructing God, but communing with him." But there is no analogy in the two cases. We have personal knowledge of "an earthly parent," while in respect to God one can only have belief. Moreover, human parents, if they are good, will comply with a child's wish, if by so doing his happiness and well-being are increased. This cannot be said in reference to the supplications to God. For many cases have come under our own observation where sincere believers in prayer have made appeals to God, in which their comfort, health, and life were concerned; and yet no answer was given.

It would be interesting to know where Dr. Newman Hall learnt what God's "desires" are upon the subject. According to the Bible, prayers mean much more than that for which the Doctor contends. It is there stated that prayers influenced God and made him change his conduct. For instance, he tells Abimelech that Abraham shall pray for him, and thereby save his life (Gen. xx. 7). Moses is reported to have "cried unto the Lord because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh. And the Lord did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died" (Exodus viii. 12 and 13). Again, when the Lord was displeased at certain people complaining, "his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them"; but "when Moses prayed unto the Lord the fire was quenched" (Numbers xi. 1 and 2). Hannah found herself childless, and she prayed to become a mother, and her request was granted, for "she bare a son," saying, "Because I have asked him of the Lord" (1 Samuel i. 10 and 20). The same doctrine is taught in the New Testament, where we are informed that Elias prayed that it might not rain, and no rain fell for three years and a half. Then he prayed for rain, and it came (James v. 17 and 18). Those who are afflicted are told to pray, and "the prayer of faith shall save the sick" (*ibid*, 13 and 15). If a man lack wisdom, he is told to "ask of God," and "it shall be given him" (James 1. 5). Christ distinctly says that whatever men pray for that shall they receive, and what they ask him to do he will do it (Mark xi. 24; John xiv. 13). It is clear, therefore, that, according to the Bible, prayer is supposed to influence the conduct of God, which to our mind is a false and pernicious doctrine. Kant was about right when he said, "He who has made great moral progress ceases to pray."

But we are not so much concerned in this article with prayer in general as we are with the nature and value of what is termed the "Lord's Prayer." It is claimed to be a model production upon the part of Christ, surpassing in "beauty of expression, simplicity of purpose, and dignity of request" all other prayers, both ancient and modern. We do not share this extravagant laudation. In the first place, it is exceedingly doubtful if Jesus ever uttered the prayer at all. Professor Huxley gives some potent reasons for holding the opinion, "that there is the gravest reason for doubting whether the so-called 'Lord's Prayer' was

Digitized by Google

ever prayed by Jesus" (*Controverted Questions*, p. 415). He notices the fact that the oldest of the four Gospels (that ascribed to St. Mark) does not contain the prayer. Having given other reasons in favor of his position, he states that he thinks "the Gospel evidence in general, as to the sayings of Jesus, to be of questionable value" (*ibid*, 489).

There is, however, ample evidence to justify the opinion that the Prayer did not originate with Jesus. Evan Powell Meredith, in *The Prophet of Nazareth*, writes: "The model prayer, called the *Lord's Prayer*, with which Jesus furnished his followers, he evidently borrowed from Jewish literature. The few instances of verbal difference between it and the following translation of a part of the Jewish Euchologues, made by a *reverend and pious Christian*, may be the result of a little alteration effected by time, either in the Christian or the Jewish prayer, or even in both; or may have arisen either from Jesus's imperfect recollection of the Jewish prayer, or from the imperfect manner in which his repetition of it was reported by the Evangelists. The principal difference, however, is caused by Jesus's omission of several words found in the Jewish prayer, which would indicate that he knew it but imperfectly. But even now, at this distant time, when each has undergone a translation from a dead language, they are so much alike that they furnish ample internal evidence of their identity. The Jewish prayer runs thus: '*Our Father, which art in heaven*, be gracious to us, O Lord our God; *hallowed be thy name*, and let the remembrance of thee be glorified *in heaven* above, and *upon earth* here below. Let *thy kingdom* reign over us, now and for ever. The holy men of old said, remit and *forgive* unto all men whatsoever they have done against me. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from* the *evil* thing. *For thine is the kingdom*, and thou shalt reign in *glory, for ever* and for evermore' (*The Works of the Rev. John Gregorie*, p. 168; London, 1685). All the expressions italicized in the foregoing prayer will be found in the following: 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen' (Matthew vi. 9-13; Luke xi. 2-4). Well might Basnage (*Hist. des Juifs*, tom. vi., p. 374) say that the Jews had an ancient prayer called the *Kadish*, precisely like Jesus's prayer; and Wetstein remarked that 'it is a curious fact that the Lord's Prayer may be reconstructed almost verbatim out of the Talmud'" (p. 426).

But, apart from the gratification which this Prayer is said to afford the emotional believer, of what value is it in our daily life? It has two radical defects—namely, its inefficacy and its vicious incentive to the performance of good acts. For centuries the appeal to God, "Thy will be done on earth," has been made by thousands of earnest and trusty believers; but can it be said, with truth, that "God's will" governs the world to-day? We think not. If, however, it does, then, to say the least, God's government is capable of great improvement. Thousands of broken-hearted and starving supplicants have each morning exclaimed, "Give us this day our daily bread," but no bread has come, and the poor suffering believers have had to depend upon the generosity of man rather than upon any help from God. And, in too many instances, no assistance has come at all; while the victims of a "divinely-governed" world have died cruel and premature deaths. So much for the alleged efficacy of the "Lord's Prayer."

In this Prayer we are told to ask God to "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." This is theological nonsense. As a rule, there is no forgiveness between debtor and creditor. People who are honest, and have the means, pay what they owe; therefore there is nothing to forgive. Christ tells us that, if we forgive others, God will forgive us; but if we refuse to do so, God will follow our example. Thus, if we fail to perform a good act, God will do likewise. According to this teaching, God is destitute of generosity, and is placed upon a level with an inferior type of human beings.

CHARLES WATTS.

Man has developed from the brute through the action of purely natural mechanical laws.—*Professor George Gerland, "Anthropologische Beiträge," p. 21.*

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

III.—THE DATE OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

IN reading the Gospel narratives of the Nativity, the first matter that calls for our attention is the date at which the illustrious personage therein mentioned is said to have been born. This, like the genealogies, is one of the few subjects in which the two Synoptists, Matthew and Luke, do not take their information from copies of the same document. Let us see, then, what these inspired historians have to say upon the matter.

Commencing with Matthew, we find that that veracious evangelist says that the great teacher, Jesus, was born "in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king"; that is, some time during the reign of Herod the Great. Now, this notorious king reigned for thirty-four years, from what is called B.C. 37 to B.C. 3. But Matthew does not say whether the supernatural event which he records occurred in the beginning, end, or middle of the reign. His inspiration did not extend so far as this. We have, therefore, to find out the date, as near as we can, from the narrative.

First, then, we are told that when certain "wise men," who had been following a star for some unnamed period, came to Jerusalem, Herod "learned of them carefully *what time the star appeared.*" Here it is clearly implied that the birth coincided with the appearance of the star. Next, when the Magi did not return to the king, as commanded, it is said that Herod "sent forth and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem.....from *two years old* and under, *according to the time which he had carefully learned of the wise men.*" Here it is plainly implied that at the time of this alleged massacre the child Jesus was nearly, if not quite, two years old. Lastly, we are told that Joseph, who had fled to Egypt on the eve of the massacre, remained in that country for some unstated period, and did not return until after the death of Herod. The latter event took place, as stated, in the year 3 B.C. If we reckon this sojourn in Egypt as of only one year's duration (and there is nothing in Matthew's account against our making it ten years), then the birth of Christ, according to Matthew, cannot be placed *later* than B.C. 6, though it may have occurred many years prior to that date.

Neither Mark nor John has anything to say respecting the time of Christ's birth; Luke alone has the courage to do so, and that evangelist, guided by inspiration, has, without knowing it, contrived to give three different periods as the date of this wonderful event, thus contradicting not only Matthew, but himself. These it is my duty to now briefly notice.

1. The events related in the first chapter of Luke's Gospel—the story of Zachariah in the temple, of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary announcing the birth of Jesus, and Mary's visit to Elizabeth—are stated to have occurred "in the days of Herod, king of Judea" (i. 5). Hence, the birth, which soon followed, is implied to have taken place in the reign of Herod the Great. This indefinite date will agree with that indirectly given by Matthew—that is, if we choose to make it; for, since only the reign is mentioned, the birth can be placed in any of the thirty-four years of that reign, including those which are excluded by Matthew—viz., B.C. 5 to B.C. 3.

2. Luke says (iii. 1) that John the Baptist began to preach "in the fifteenth year of Tiberias Cæsar" (viz., in A.D. 28), and that some time later Jesus also appeared as a teacher. This would be in A.D. 29. Luke further says, according to the Authorized Version (iii. 23), that at this time Jesus "began to be about thirty years of age." This reading our Revisers have altered (for a reason which will presently be seen) into "was *about* thirty years of age."

According to these texts, Christ was, in A.D. 29, either *about* thirty years of age, or had only just entered upon his thirtieth year. Which of these is correct? To decide this point I turn to Irenæus, who, in speaking of Christ's age, has quoted this verse. That worthy father says (*Her.*, ii. 22):—

> "For thus Luke, who has mentioned his years, *has expressed it*, 'Now Jesus was, as it were, beginning to be thirty years old' when he came to receive baptism."

Taking this as the reading in the time of Irenæus, it is stated, then, according to Luke, that Jesus was, in A.D. 29, either nearly thirty years of age, or just thirty years of age; he must therefore have been born in B.C. 1—two

Digitized by Google

years after the death of Herod the Great, and four or five years subsequent to the time indirectly mentioned by Matthew. Here we have a sample of the results produced by inspiration.

3. In narrating the birth of Christ, in his second chapter, Luke states that, in consequence of a decree of Cæsar Augustus, that "all the inhabited earth" should be enrolled or taxed, Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and that while there Jesus was born. He also says (ii. 2):—

> "This taxing was *first* made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria."

The word "first," in this passage, is an interpolation; there was but one taxing. Our English Revisers have, however, made the passage read as follows:—

> "This was *the first enrolment* made when Quirinus was governor of Syria."

Here, it will be seen, the meaning is entirely changed. According to the latter reading, there were at least two enrolments; whereas, as a matter of history, there was but one. This census, enrolment, or taxing was made immediately after the deposition of Archelaus, who had reigned nine years. It was commenced in A.D. 6, and was completed A.D. 7. Quirinus, who, at that time, had just been appointed governor of Syria, received orders to come into Judea and superintend it, and he did so. It was not made throughout "all the inhabited earth," as Luke states, but was confined to the southern portion of Palestine. This enrolment was a matter of too much importance to be omitted by Josephus. That historian says (*Antiq.*, xviii., i. 1):—

> "Moreover, Cyrenius came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance, and to dispose of Archelaus's money; but the Jews, although at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did leave off any further opposition to it by the persuasion of Joazer, who was the son of Boethus, and high priest."

Josephus, also, when dealing with other matters, thus fixes the date:—

> "When Cyrenius had now disposed of Archelaus's money, and when the taxings were come to a conclusion, which were made in the 37th year of Cæsar's victory over Antony at Actium, he deprived Joazer of the high priesthood," etc.

The engagement at Actium took place B.C. 31; the taxings, therefore, began to be taken in A.D. 6, as before.

Luke, following the Protevangelium, makes Joseph go from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled, because that individual was said to be descended from David, and because David had lived at Bethlehem. This is supremely ridiculous. In the first place, the census was taken from house to house, and the enrolments were made solely for the purpose of taxation. It was not a question of lineage, but of residence within certain provinces which were about to be taxed. In the next place, this taxing applied only to those living within the territory which had been governed by Archelaus, and which had now become a Roman province—viz., Judea and Samaria. Dwellers in Galilee, including Joseph and Mary, were not affected by it. Joseph, if he resided in the northern province, as Luke asserts, would pay his taxes to the collectors of Antipas, the tetrarch. There was no reason for him to go to Bethlehem at all. We have thus in this story a clear proof of fabrication—or inspiration, whichever term may be preferred.

This last account, it will be seen, is a flat contradiction both of Matthew and of Luke himself. According to Matthew, Jesus was born at some unstated time during the long reign of Herod the Great, and not later than B.C. 6. According to Luke, the Savior came into the world at three different periods—viz., (1) "In the days of Herod, king of Judea"—*i.e.*, any time between B.C. 37 and B.C. 3; (2) in B.C. 1, two years after Herod's death; (3) in A.D. 6 or 7, nine or ten years after the death of Herod. It will thus be seen that there is a difference of twelve or thirteen years between the dates given by Matthew and Luke. Here we have another sample of the results derived from inspiration.

Looking now at these four divergent accounts, it would seem a perfectly hopeless task to attempt to reconcile them. But, difficult though the task may be, the attempt is made—by Bible commentators and Christian Evidence mongers. With these gentry no contradiction is so great that it cannot by the exercise of a little ingenuity be satisfactorily explained away. The first step is to call the contradictions and discrepancies which have been pointed out "Infidel Objections"; the next is to turn and twist the narratives about until they are made to mean anything the reconcilers please.

Thus, the first date given by Luke—"in the days of Herod the king"—agrees exactly with that named by Matthew. Next, Luke's second date also coincides with that given by Matthew; for Christ was born, according to Matthew, in the year before Herod's death, B.C. 4—that evangelist says nothing to the contrary—and Luke says that Jesus was, in A.D. 29, "about" thirty years of age; that is to say, Christ was really thirty-three, and was therefore born B.C. 4. Could any profane historians agree better? Lastly, there were two enrolments by Quirinus, one in the reign of Herod the Great, and the other ten years after that king's death; Jesus was of course born during the first enrolment. Does not Luke say, according to the Revised Version, "This was the first enrolment"? These assertions are certainly ingenious; but, it is scarcely necessary to say, there is not the smallest authority for any of them. A somewhat less unscrupulous attempt at reconcilement is that made by Dr. Zumpt, of Berlin, who imagines he has discovered reasons for believing that Quirinus was governor of Syria between B.C. 1 and A.D. 1, as well as from A.D. 6 to A.D. 11; but the only thing lacking to prove the claim is evidence of the first governorship; of this there is not a scrap. Further, even were this claim fully established, there would still be needed evidence of an enrolment at the earlier date—which there is not. Lack of evidence, however, appears to be a small matter to Christian apologists. Dean Farrar, for instance, says of this matter (*Witness of History to Christ*, page 77):

> "The taxing in the time of Cyrenius had long been branded as a flagrant and damaging anachronism, till the industry of Zumpt *demonstrated* that it was an historical datum, implied, *though not recorded*, by other historians."

Luke's statement respecting Cyrenius remains "a flagrant and damaging anachronism" still, and even the "industry" of Zumpt has not been able to place an enrolment by Quirinus either in B.C. 1 or—what is more to the point—in the reign of Herod the Great.

That there was but one enrolment or taxing in the reign of the Emperor Augustus is, however, perfectly clear. This was when Quirinus came into Judea for that purpose in A.D. 6, as related by Josephus. The mere fact of the general opposition to this taxing, and of the insurrection of Judas of Galilee in consequence of its enforcement, prove beyond a doubt that it was something new. Josephus, also, several times refers to this taxing, and never to any other. He says, for example (*Antiq.*, xx. v. 2):

> "And, besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt *when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews*, as we have shown in a foregoing book" (see also *War*, vii. viii. 1).

But even Luke himself was acquainted with but one enrolment; for he makes one of his characters in the Acts say (v. 37):—

> "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of *the* enrolment, and drew many people after him."

There is no first or second enrolment here; the reference, as in Josephus, is to a memorable event in Jewish history that happened but once.

The result, then, of our examination of the Gospel accounts respecting the date of Christ's birth is to show beyond all possibility of doubt that in this matter, as in the case of the genealogies, we are not dealing with history, but with clumsily-concocted fables. ABRACADABRA.

If we could only see in one view the torrents of hypocrisy and cruelty, the lies, the slaughter, the violation of every obligation of humanity, which have flowed from this source—the doctrine that honest disbelief is a moral offence—along the course of the history of Christian nations, our worst imaginations of hell would pale beside the vision.—*Huxley.*

The idea of certain supernatural gifts being conferred upon certain men is the common error of the most advanced races as well as the most degraded people of antiquity.—*Renan.*

Digitized by Google

INGERSOLL ON SCIENCE AND SENTIMENT IN MARRIAGE.

Do I believe that science will do away with sentiment as a basis of love and marriage?

It was thought at one time by many that science would do away with poetry—that it was the enemy of the imagination. We know now that is not true. We know that science goes hand in hand with the imagination. We know that it is in the highest degree poetic, and that the old ideas, once considered so beautiful, are flat and stale. Compare Kepler's laws with the old Greek idea that the planets were boosted or pushed by angels. The more we know, the more beauty, the more poetry we find. Ignorance is not the mother of the poetic or artistic.

So some people imagine that science will do away with sentiment. In my judgment, science will not only increase sentiment, but sense.

A person will be attracted to another for a thousand reasons, and what person is attracted to another may, and in some degree will, depend upon the intellectual, artistic, and ethical development of each.

The handsomest girl in Zululand might not be attractive to Herbert Spencer, and the fairest girl in England might not be able to hasten the pulse of a Choctaw brave. This does not prove that there is any lack of sentiment. Men are influenced according to their capacity, their temperament, their knowledge.

Some men fall in love with a small waist, an arched instep, or curly hair, without the slightest regard to mind or muscle. This we call sentiment.

Now, educate such men, develop their brains, enlarge their intellectual horizon, teach them something of the laws of health, and then they may fall in love with women because they are developed grandly in body and mind. The sentiment is still there—still controls; but back of the sentiment is science.

Sentiment can never be destroyed, and love will forever rule the human race.

Thousands, millions of people fear that science will destroy not only poetry, not only sentiment, but religion. This fear is idiotic. Science will destroy superstition, but it will not injure true religion. Science is the foundation of real religion. Science teaches us the consequences of actions, the rights and duties of all. Without science there can be no real religion.

Only those who live on the labor of the ignorant are the enemies of science. Real love and real religion are in no danger from science. The more we know, the safer all good things are.

Do I think that the marriage of the sickly and diseased ought to be prevented by law?

I have not much confidence in law—in law that I know cannot be carried out. The poor, the sickly, the diseased, as long as they are ignorant, will marry and help fill the world with wretchedness and want.

We must rely on education instead of legislation.

We must teach the consequences of actions. We must show the sickly and diseased what their children must be. We must preach the gospel of the body. I believe the time will come when the public thought will be so great and grand that it will be looked upon as infamous to perpetuate disease—to leave a legacy of agony.

I believe the time will come when men will refuse to fill the future with consumption and insanity. Yes, we will study ourselves. We will understand the conditions of health, and then we will say: "We are under obligation to put the flags of health in the cheeks of our children."

Even if I should get to heaven and have a harp, I know that I could not bear to see my descendants still on the earth, diseased, deformed, crazed—all suffering the penalties of my ignorance. Let us have more science and more sentiment—more knowledge and more conscience—more liberty and more love.

The inclination to sink into the slumber of dogma is so natural to every generation that the most uncompromising critical intellect must without intermission stand upon the watch against it.—*Otto Pfleiderer.*

Think of the energy that has been wasted trying to prove ancient lies to be divine truths.—*Torch of Reason.*

All that man is he owes to others.—*D. G. Brinton.*

ACID DROPS.

Royal personages get a ridiculous amount of attention in the newspapers. Columns have been printed about the nonsensical duel between Prince Henry of Orleans (French) and the Count of Turin (Italian). These two young gentlemen fought for half an hour; one got scratched on the hand, and the other on the stomach. Prince Henry, with the scratch on his abdomen, goes to bed; and the Count of Turin, with the scratch on his fist, is the hero of the hour at Rome.

"The secret of England's greatness" story is pretty well on its last legs, though we dare say it will hobble and stagger along for a good while yet in the lowest religious circles. Some recent letters in the *Daily News* put it plainly on record that the Queen never did give a barbarous chief a copy of the Bible with the words above quoted, and that the actuality of the incident was denied by her secretary, the late Sir Henry Ponsonby. Even the *Sunday Companion* can only say that the story has "some foundation in fact"—the said foundation being an alleged letter by the Earl of Chichester, written as far back as 1844 to Prince Sagbua. That is to say, the story being exploded, its circulators try to give it a fresh start in another form, by means of fresh allegations, which cannot, at this time of day, be either proved or disproved.

At the unveiling of Darwin's statue, at his native town of Shrewsbury, the local bishop had the effrontery to cite the saying of the Bishop of Hereford, that Darwin was "ordained one of the doorkeepers of the vast temple of the universe, who pointed out to us new vistas, every one of them leading up to the throne of God." Darwin himself was not conscious of any such position. But what a change has come over the clericals since they denounced Darwinism as one of the devices of Satan.

A gentleman called D. Balsillie, writing in Mr. A. E. Fletcher's *New Age*, has a curious way of reconciling Christianity and Evolution. The central truth of the Christian religion, he says, is self-sacrifice; and is there not self-sacrifice in Natural Selection, under which the unfit perish that the fittest may survive and perpetuate the race? But what a confusion is here! Self-sacrifice is one thing, and being sacrificed is quite another. The latter is the lot of the unfit in the struggle for existence. They are never consulted at any point of the process. They are pitchforked into life, knocked about in it, and kicked out of it. And at the finish a Christian gentleman says to them: "My dear unfortunate friends, you have all been sacrificed for the good of the race, and every one of you is a proof of the wisdom and goodness of God." Really such logic is enough to drive a teetotaler to drink.

The women on the Italian frontier are very pious in their devotions to the sanctuary of the Madonna della Salute, near Belluna. The Customs' officers noticed that nearly every adult woman had a child in her arms. On returning across the frontier, the poor mothers had their innocents torn from their arms. Instead of fighting in defence of their little ones, they ran off and left their babes behind them. When the innocents were anatomized, they were discovered to be bundles of sugar, coffee, and other excisable articles.

At a Thanksgiving Service held in connection with the Jubilee by the Australian Council of Churches, the Rev. J. Berry said: "It was a cause of thanksgiving that they had now done justice to Jews, Roman Catholics, and Freethinkers." Mr. Charles Rose sends an excellent letter to the *Adelaide Advertiser*. He shows that, so far from this being the case, Freethinkers are still most unjustly treated. As the law stands all legacies left for the diffusion of opinion adverse to Christianity can be confiscated. Is this justice? asks Mr. Rose. Why should any Freethought Society be debarred from holding property with full legal security? During the last seven years many thousands of pounds had in this way been lost to the National Secular Society of the United Kingdom. Until this state of things is altered let us hear no more of justice having been done to Freethinkers.

Even the *Hull Catholic Herald* speaks of the Blasphemy Laws as the English Inquisition. It says: "As to the essence of the thing, there is an Inquisition in England still—a statement which may surprise many Englishmen, but which is nevertheless true. There are laws known in the country as Blasphemy Laws, and they are not obsolete instruments either, as Mr. Bradlaugh found to his cost. In truth, in essence these laws are exactly what Protestants reprehend as having existed in other countries hundreds of years ago."

The *Hull Catholic Herald* continues: "A man in England may not think what he pleases about England's system of religion, and express his thought; for if he think something that is contrary to the Blasphemy Laws, and if he give

Digitized by Google

utterance to his opinions, then he is liable by the statute now current in England to be laid by the heels as a common prisoner, and haled to durance vile for having 'said what he pleased' about England's religious system." This from a Catholic source drops a hint that, should Catholicism ever be restored in England, the continuance of Blasphemy Laws by Protestants would form a good excuse for the Inquisition.

Mark Twain gets in a Jubilee sarcasm at the expense of England. After observing that her estate covers a fourth part of the habitable globe, with four hundred millions of population, the American humorist says: "And I perceive now that the English are mentioned in the Bible—'Blessed are the Meek, for they shall inherit the earth.'"

Mark Twain's sarcasm is at the expense of Jesus Christ too. It shows the absurdity of the Sermon on the Mount after nearly two thousand years' experience.

"I want everyone to know," said Madame Canovas beside the dead man's bier, "that I forgive the assassin of my husband." It would have been a sublime utterance if the assassin's fate were in her hands.

Mr. Frederick Wicks has settled the hash of another haunted house, and gives an account of it in the *Times*. The house is at Esher, and previous to his entering it was a picture of "desolation, ruin, and damp." After a time the vague rumors which had been current took shape, and circumstantial stories went about of a "little white-haired lady" who dodged about the attic "knocking, bumping, scratching, and wailing." Mr. Wicks' son undertook to sleep in the haunted room, where he heard all the sounds which had caused several servants to leave the place. A local carpenter was called in to investigate the mystery, and it was discovered that four bats were nesting above the ceiling, having found their way in through a hole in the roof. The bats were banished, the hole was closed up, and the house is no longer haunted. And thus ends another ghost story.

"One or two sober-minded investigators," says Mr. Wicks, "are more likely to produce satisfactory results than thirty seekers after the phenomenal." This is a hit, a palpable hit, at the Psychical Research people.

The Rev. Beauchamp Stannus, of Arrow Rectory, Alcester, is a perfect theological Rip Van Winkle. He wants to know how it is, if the Bible be not inspired, that its "about fifty writers" never contradict each other. We beg to tell the reverend gentleman that we have published forty pages of *Bible Contradictions*, not as exhaustive, but as samples from bulk.

After a lot of loose talk about the Bible, which might have done very well fifty years ago, the Rev. Beauchamp Stannus delivers himself of the sapient observation that "None are so keen in finding difficulties in Scripture as they who have no desire that the Bible should not be found true." We will not stop to discuss this. What we wish to say is, that a difficulty is a difficulty, whatever the motives of its discoverer; and the business of the clergy is to face the difficulty, not to run away shouting that the discoverer is a bad man.

This reverend Rip Van Winkle says that our laws are wise, just, and righteous only so far as they are founded on the Bible. Well now, the Bible orders the killing of witches; and if Mr. Stannus will just kill one in his own neighborhood, he will afterwards be hung by the neck till he is dead.

In Australia, as in America, the pious party are attempting to get God into the constitution. The *Sydney Bulletin* hits the situation with a cartoon better than any words. The recognition of Deity is the thin edge inserted into Parliamentary Government of a long log upheld by the men of God. Its thick end is labelled "Sectarianism," and is being driven home by the Church Militant. Another sketch pictures the Devil asking "Leader" Lyne, who proposes amending the Commonwealth Bill by duly acknowledging God: "And where do *I* come in?"

Dunoon Pier is still closed to the Sunday excursionists from Glasgow. It is also reported that the farmers in the Rosneath district will not supply milk on the blessed Sabbath. Jehovah ought to have given these Scotch bigots a special breed of cows, warranted to yield milk six days a week instead of seven.

The worthy magistrates of Yarmouth have decided that oysters on Sunday are not "refreshment" within the meaning of the Act. This brings them under that enlightened piece of legislation known as the Sabbath Observance Act, by which the pious reign of Charles II. is commemorated. Those who have found refreshment in oysters will think that the Yarmouth magistrates deserve to live on cockles for the rest of their days.

Your oyster, it seems, if not "refreshment" within the meaning of the Act, hath yet memory enough to refresh himself. An oyster breeder at Courselles-sur-Mer was observed to keep a great number of the bivalves on a slope where, as the tide ebbed, they were left dry for a certain time twice a day. On being asked why he did this, he replied that the oysters were being "educated" before being sent to Paris, and taught to economize water in their shells. Oysters immediately from the water are said to open on the road and arrive at their destination dried out, dead, and spoiled. If they are first placed where they are alternately under water and high and dry, they realize in a few days that they will experience discomfort if they open under the latter conditions. When they learn to wisely retain the liquid they are sufficiently advanced to pass examinations in Paris.

The Rev. A. St. Leger Westall, of St. Savior's, Croydon, has resigned, and been received into the Roman Catholic church by the Jesuit Fathers of Farm-street. The wealthy Lady Roper is also said to have been roped in by the Jesuits.

Miss Edith Howard Hodges, another wealthy lady, has also been received into the R. C. Church by Father Gallway, S.J., at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm-street. The Jesuits do not seek to convert the poor of this world. They can go to purgatory headlong if they like. They look after people with landed property. One Marquis of Bute is worth all the Salvation Army have got.

The Attorney-General recently stated that Roman Catholic processions with priests wearing their vestments were illegal in England under Act 10, Geo. IV., 7; but the priests continue to treat the law as obsolete.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet* jeers the Church of England Bishops for meeting and doing nothing. It says: "Private judgment runs riot on vital doctrines in the Anglican Church, and yet no authoritative voice has spoken. The reason surely is not far to seek. All sensitiveness to dogmatic truth must have been lost by a system which cannot repudiate that which is ruinous to it. There seems to be no authority, either collective or individual. The bishops have talked of unity, but the only remedy they have for the division that exists seems to be in the cultivation of fresh differences." The Anglicans may reply that when the Roman bishops met they decreed the immaculate conception of the Virgin and the infallibility of the Pope. At least the Lambeth Conference did not perpetrate any such nonsense as this.

One of the statements made by the Lambeth Fathers-in-God was that "the conversion of the Jews is much hindered by the severe persecutions to which Jewish converts are often exposed from their own people." Mr. Oswald J. Simon has written a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in which he declares that the statement "is absolutely false," and calls upon his Grace publicly to withdraw it; which of course his Grace has not done. Mr. Simon tells the Primate his own experience with Christian converts. He says he is intimately acquainted with the work of the "London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews," and has had conversations with their converts in Palestine Place. Every youth whom he saw admitted that he only resided at the institution and went through the form of baptism for want of a better means of subsistence, and offered to return to the synagogue in consideration of a similar maintenance. Mr. Simon's answer was significant: "I told them that they had been bribed to call themselves Christians, but that I, as a Jew, declined to bribe them back again." The fact is, the alleged conversion of Jews is mainly a swindle, and to cover up the fact of their palpable non-success the right reverend Fathers-in-God have resorted to lying.

Says the *British Review*: "A Mohammedan converted is usually a Mohammedan spoiled, and the Jew is so rarely converted to the Church of England that it hardly seems worth while to keep an expensive missionary machinery for his benefit."

The Roman Catholic priests in the Durham mining villages where Irish Catholics abound have, it appears, for years made arrangements with certain coalowners whereby portions of the wages of every Roman Catholic man and boy are deducted and handed over to the priests. Mr. H. Snell says he has in his possession pay tickets with the item "Priest" printed on them. The system is a monstrous one, whether it be in violation of the Truck Act or not, and this question will, we trust, be speedily tested.

Despite the opposition of the Rabbis and the well-off

Digitized by Google

Jewish magnates, Zionism, including the project of a purchase of Palestine for the formation of a Jewish State, has excited great interest among the poorer classes of the chosen race. The Conference on the 28th at Basle, called by Dr. Theodore Herzl, is likely to increase the interest. Dr. Herzl's schemes are rather Socialistic than religious. The State is to be a vast co-operative company, a seven-hour labor day introduced from the beginning, payment to be made in rations. Ministers of religion are to have no part in the direction of the State, but to be kept to their spiritual work. This, the Rabbis say, is not in accordance with the prophets. Whether the Jews will ever set up a State in Palestine or not, they have purchased a considerable estate in Essex at Benfleet, where a colony are going to settle. It is questionable whether they intend it for agriculture, or to develop a new town as a holiday resort for the Jews of East London.

The *Echo* of August 14 has an article entitled "Darius the Mede Identified," in which the cylinder of Cyrus, now in the British Museum, is cited as showing that the Darius the Median spoken of in Daniel v. 31 must have been identical with Gobryas the governor. But even this is not clear, for Gobryas was only governor under Cyrus. The writer in the *Echo* forgets to mention that Daniel was written some four hundred years after these events, and may have confused Cyrus of the first siege of Babylon with Darius Hystapes of the second. Anyway, profane history knows nothing of Darius the Median.

We have done away with purchase in the Army, but it is as rife as ever in the Church Militant. It is just as much a matter of £ s. d. who comes into the parish to look after my soul or yours as it ever was; the result, of course, being the total indifference of the Reverend Demas to the souls or bodies of those who cannot help him to some return on his investment.—*Weekly Times and Echo.*

The colored Rev. A. Jones, from Petersburg, Virginia, went to Chicago, recently, with the reputation of having predicted the Charleston earthquake, the Johnstown flood, the St. Louis cyclone, and many other great disasters. His meetings in Friendship Baptist Church, in West Lake-street, were well attended, and the colored people had much faith in him when he predicted that the earth would come to an end at three o'clock on June 3. Since that day rolled by his reputation has declined, but the faithful few declare "It's coming yet for all that."

According to the *New York Journal*, a new Messiah has arisen out of the woods of Northern Maine, who, after fighting the devil in the wilderness for, it is said, twenty-five years, has emerged to preach the gospel. His name is Mediator Trustum H. Brown. He is armed with a manuscript Bible a foot thick. He has written this book since his seclusion. He affirms that he has a distinctly revealed mission to be the new mediator between man and God. In the Northern Maine settlements he has been healing the sick, casting out devils, explaining away knotty theological points, singing new psalms he has composed, and performing some singular tricks that he calls "miracles."

The *Church Times*, in an article on "The New Anti-Christ," signals out Mr. E. Sidney Hartland's *Legend of Perseus* for attack. It says: "The implicit argument of men like Mr. Hartland is as dangerous as that of Hume and Voltaire." It cites what Mr. Hartland has to say on "The Supernatural Birth," and says: "Nor is the necessity of grappling with this new method of attack diminished by the fact that the older, coarser weapons, the bludgeon and blunderbuss of Tom Paine, Voltaire, and Charles Bradlaugh, are now exchanged for the delicate rapier and the polished revolver, wielded with punctilious politeness and according to the strict rules of the duello." Mr. E. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, which is called *History of Evolution*, is also attacked for teaching that the history of Christianity is the history of an arrested growth.

The *Spectator*, in an article on "Dread of the Supernatural," says: "On the whole, we should say that more people have been frightened out of their wits by what they believed to be supernatural phenomena than by accidents involving great risk to life." If people really believed in devils and hell, the statistics of insanity would be vastly larger than they are.

Coleridge said he found on inquiry, when a preacher, that four-fifths of his congregation went to hear him preach from a sense of duty to the other fifth. The other fifth went from habit.

The Rev. W. W. Elley, pastor at North Manchester, Indiana, got engaged to three young ladies at the same time. The consequence has been that he has had to resign and leave North Manchester, and the ladies are also left lamenting.

The following items of clerical intelligence are all from the *Truthseeker*, New York, of August 7: "The Rev. A. C. Davis, Methodist, left Billings, Mont., to escape tar and feathers. It transpired that he had been guilty of an unnatural crime.

"The Rev. Kenneth Duncan, of San Francisco, is a fugitive from justice. He stole $80 from John Axtell, a restaurant keeper, and fled.

"The Rev. S. P. Parker, Baptist, of Ottumwa, Ia., has eloped with the wife of the cashier of the bank at Eddyville, leaving a wife and two children.

"Deacon Patterson was killed in the pulpit of the Dexter Avenue Colored Baptist church, of Montgomery, Ala., July 28, during a row over charges of immorality against the pastor.

"The *Times*, of Wamego, Kan., describes the career of a Methodist minister known as the Rev. G. Wynne Richmond, and under numerous aliases. He is a seducer and a swindler.

"The Rev. George Barnaby, of the Christian Church, Anaconda, Mont., is accused of immorality by his wife, who says she picked him up out of the gutter when he was a gambler and boozer, and a divorce suit has ensued.

"An evangelist named Warner attempted the seduction of Mrs. Perry, a farmer's wife living near Oakland, Mich., recently, and was horsewhipped by the husband. Confessing his guilt, Warner was allowed to leave the vicinity.

"A warrant was issued in Rochester, N.Y., last Friday, for the arrest of the Rev. John M. Fitzgerald, a Catholic priest, charged with swindling and extortion. Fitzgerald is already under conviction of burning a schoolhouse at Charlotte.

"The Rev. Leondias Brown, Methodist, of St. Paul, Minn., was arrested in his church, recently, on the charge of forcibly ravishing a fourteen-year-old girl. He was admitted to bail, but disappeared during the trial, and it is inferred that he has fled to avoid conviction and punishment.

"The Rev. Gilbert F. Williams, of Christ Church, Washington, suddenly abandoned his pulpit a short time ago, and vanished from the sight of his congregation. Miss Denham, a member of the choir, and a strenuous church worker, has a young infant, of which the Rev. Mr. Gilbert is the father."

When murderer Butler was caught, there was much nervousness among the sects, not one of which desired him to claim it as his own. In a word, none of the sects, which are supposed to rejoice in the repentance of sinners, wanted the Glenbrook butcher to pray in its yard. Mr. Butler seems to have at last selected a ghostly comforter. He says he is a Wesleyan.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Church religion was revealed in a new and interesting light at a Melbourne inquest the other day. Hear the seven-year-old son of deceased: "Mrs. Blank told her husband there was poison in the box, and she intended to take it. He said, 'Well, take it.' She emptied the contents of the box into her mouth, and then threw the box itself into the fire. Next, she drank some milk from a jug, and became sick. During this time Blank was sitting in the kitchen. He saw Mrs. Blank take the poison, but did not see her vomiting. He put on his hat and coat, and, having kissed witness and the second child, *went to church.*"—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The good people of Beaconsfield-street, Blyth, petitioned the Urban Council against allowing a chapel to be built in their street. They alleged that it would obstruct the light, create noise, and deteriorate property.

It is well known (in Christian countries) that Christians monopolize all the virtues on this planet, including charity. It is curious, however, that the King of Siam spent a lot of time beside the children's beds in the Edinburgh Infirmary. "I am so fond of little children," he said, "and I have hospitals for them in my country." Facts like this are carefully kept back by the missionaries. These gentlemen's salaries depend on the "heathen" being painted as black as hell.

There are no secret springs, no occult forces, in the historic development of culture. Whatever seems hidden or mysterious is so only because our knowledge of the facts is imperfect. No magic and no miracle has aided man in his long conflict with the material forces around him. No ghost has come from the grave, no God from on high, to help him in the bitter struggle.—*Daniel Garrison Brinton, in "An Ethnologist's View of History."*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 22, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W, at 7.30, "God and the Devil."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

G. F. DUPLAY.—Why not read our article carefully before criticising it? We did not say that Anarchists were insane. What we said was that a particular Anarchist who brooded over the ills of society, picked out a single politician as symbolising them, and then killed him; this man, we said, was insane. "Blood draws blood," you say yourself, in your concluding sentence. Precisely so. That is what *we* said. On this point, therefore, we agree; and this point is all-important.

G. R.'s promised subscription to the N. S. S. Treasurer's scheme was acknowledged in error as £1. It should have been £2, and another £2 should have been acknowledged as promised by E. Truelove.

LOVER OF TRUTH.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. A. HOPKINS.—Anarchism does not seem to teach you good manners. We do not expect that every one of our articles will entirely please everyone of our readers.

GYMNAST.—Never mind what the *Saturday Review* says about Cromwell. Form your own judgment on the facts, which you appear to be studying. Carlyle's book is indispensable. By the time you have finished it you will have the best key to work with. Dr. Gardiner's new volume is entitled *Cromwell's Place in History*. The writer is a sober critic and an accurate and painstaking chronicler. He is now writing a full *History of the Commonwealth*, two volumes of which have appeared. Another book you would do well to read, if you can obtain it, is the Cromwell volume in Forster's *English Statesmen*. It was written before Carlyle's *Cromwell*, but is a capital piece of work, although needing revision, as Forster afterwards admitted, in the light of the great Lord Protector's letters and speeches. Mr. Foote would much like to write on Cromwell again, but he has no time for it at present.

OLD BRADLAUGHITE.—The statement *re* Northampton is—to put it mildly—inaccurate. Mr. Foote has not sent lecturers there under his Scheme at all. What he did was to supplement, out of his Fund, the trifling amount that was paid at Northampton to a few of the N. S. S. lecturers. In addition to this, he visited Northampton himself to start the work, and delivered two Sunday lectures, taking the bare surplus after the payment of all expenses. This surplus amounted to twelve shillings, which just paid for his railway ticket.

J. LEES SUMNER (Birmingham).—Mr. Partridge has sent us your £1 towards the Treasurer's Scheme. Thanks.

E. PINDER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

LE DIABLE.—No letter was enclosed with the postal orders. Kindly say whether both orders were for the same object—that on the printed slip attached to one of them. We fancy so, but we want to be sure.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Wellington Journal—Shrewsbury News—Anglo-Russian—Daylight—Liberty—Lucifer—Blyth News—Echo—Freethought Magazine—Catholic News—Hull Catholic Herald—Two Worlds—Adelaide Advertiser—Progressive Thinker—Animal's Friend—Torch of Reason—New York Public Opinion—Liberator—East London Observer.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

A Christian who is not ready and willing to be martyrized is not a Christian; a Catholic who does not accept the Inquisition, or who discusses the syllabus, is not a Catholic; a Freethinker who consents to a religious marriage in order to obtain the young girl he loves, or who allows himself to be buried by the Church in order not to vex his family, is not a Freethinker; those are mere amateurs, mere "supers" in the great human tragedy.—*Alexander Dumas fils.*

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an excellent audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on Hall Caine's new novel, *The Christian*. Mr. White occupied the chair. This evening (Aug. 22) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, taking for his subject "God and the Devil."

Mr. Charles Watts had a most successful day last Sunday at New Brompton. In the morning he spoke at the "Corner of the Lines" to a very large and attentive audience. There was not the slightest hostility manifested. There were three representatives of the Christian Evidence Society present, but they offered no opposition. Mr. Swan presided, and made an excellent and judicious speech in opening the proceedings. In the evening Mr. Watts lectured in the Secular Hall, which was filled by an enthusiastic audience. Mr. Thompson made a first-class chairman. Friends mustered in good force from surrounding districts. One party came from Maidstone, a distance of ten miles. Mr. Watts informs us that he was much pleased with his visit to New Brompton.

The National Secular Society's Treasurer's Scheme of financial reorganization is still before the Secular party, although we do not mean to press it during the holiday season. We shall throw our energy into the appeal during September. Meanwhile, we hope that all who have read what has already appeared on the subject in the *Freethinker* will ask themselves what they can afford to promise for the first year. Freethinkers who do nothing to help Freethought might just as well be Christians.

The Birmingham Branch sends us the following resolution, passed at a members' meeting last Sunday: "That this Branch of the N. S. S. heartily approves the Treasurer's Scheme, and promises the same its best support, with the hope that it will be taken up and earnestly supported by the Society at large."

Mr. J. Partridge, secretary of the Birmingham Branch, sends us the following list of promises for the first year from various members:—J. H. R., 10s. 6d.; Dr. T. Bulloms, £1 1s.; W. H. Wood, £1 1s.; J. P., £1 1s.; J. Sumner, 10s. 6d.; C. H. Cattell, 5s.; R. Meredith, 5s.; W. T. Pitt, £1 1s.; S. Armfield, £1 1s.; J. Terry, £1 1s.; Lees Sumner, £1; R. Taylor, 10s. 6d.; B. A. Millichamp, 5s.—This is a total of £9 12s. 6d, and probably other promises will be obtained. If other branches will imitate the Birmingham example, it will be a good thing for the Scheme, and for the work which the Scheme is designed to promote.

Mr. George Anderson writes that he has waited to see what the Branches would do in the matter of the Treasurer's Scheme before promising his own donation. He says that he has subscribed a good deal during many years, and he is afraid that too many Freethinkers who don't subscribe at all, or very little, are more fond of enjoyment and personal fads than of promoting Freethought. Mr. Anderson points out that Glasgow and Edinburgh, fifty years ago, had each a paid lecturer. He would like to have a list of towns which, in whole or in part, support a lecturer now. We do not know of one. All our lecturers travel about from one place to another. Mr. Anderson is willing to continue supporting the cause if other Secularists will do their share. Well, we hope they will. And we also hope that enough of them will do so at once to justify Mr. Anderson, who has a large heart as well as a shrewd head, in promising a handsome subscription for the first year.

We have received the following further promises towards the Treasurer's Scheme:—G. Dixon, £2 (this for certain, and perhaps more). *Per Mr. Forder*:—Dr. Walker, £2; F. H., 5s.

Mr. Hartmann himself, who started the subscription list with a promise of £50 for the first year, wishes us to announce that he will make it £75 on condition that five more offer a similar amount by the first of October. We could name five Secularists who might easily vie with Mr. Hartmann in this generous enterprise.

Mr. Cohen will not lecture at Peckham Rye on August 22 and 29, as announced. He finds that all meetings there must, according to the regulations, close at 7 o'clock. Mr. Cohen will lecture instead in Victoria Park each evening at 6.30.

The Bradlaugh Club goes on excursion to-day (Aug. 22) to Broxbourne and Rye House. There are ample facilities for "feeding" in the neighborhood. Early application should be made by those desiring free children's tickets. The train times have already been given, though one blunder occurred, Dalston Lane Station (9.21) being printed

Digitized by Google

for Hackney Downs. Stewards, wearing green, white, and red rosettes, will be in attendance at Liverpool-street and Hackney Downs stations with tickets to sell to those who are not already provided.

To-Day has a strong article on the decadence of Christianity, *apropos* of Mr. Hall Caine's novel. Mr. Jerome points out that Christianity is just a prosperous social organization. "A man," he says, "cannot hope to succeed in society or trade or public life without Christianity. A Bradlaugh or a Paine becomes an outcast." Christianity has been captured by Mammon. "Christianity," Mr. Jerome concludes, "may number its millions in theory; in practice, they are counted by thousands, and the millions increase while the thousands diminish. The passive acceptance of Christianity is the worst thing about it. It has become fashionable to profess; it has become vulgar to practise it."

The *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives in its Aug us number a reprint of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on the Gods. There is also a good article by D. K. Tenney on the claim that Jesus is a perfect human example.

The fine building erected on the site of the old Millbank Prison, and given with his collection of pictures to the nation by Sir Henry Tate, is now open to the public this and succeeding Sundays. It deserves to be visited by all lovers of art. The building is handsome and well situated, facing the Thames. One painting alone is worth a journey—Sir L. Fildes's noble picture of "The Doctor," quite inadequately known by the popular engraving. This picture preaches a better sermon than any to be heard in the church, and there are many others, among them Calderon's Elizabeth of Hungary making her Act of Renunciation in a state of nudity before the altar and crucifix with a draped figure, about which the Catholics made a fuss when it was first exhibited at the Royal Academy.

The number for August 14 of that capital literary journal, the *Glasgow Weekly Citizen*, now in its fiftieth volume, has an article on the Encyclical letter from Lambeth, pointing out the limitations which the Church desires to put on free inquiry. There is also a good paper on the School and the Bible by "A. G. W," who commends Mr. Gould's plan of moral instruction, but points out that the first thing is to make the public realize the unsatisfactory character of the present scheme of religious teaching.

Professor Huxley's life is being written by his son, Mr. Leonard Huxley, who is a master at Charterhouse School, and resides at Godalming. The task, which is nearly completed, has been an arduous one, owing to the wide range of subjects dealt with by the great Evolutionist. It is expected that the book will be published in a few months.

NEOLOGIA OF JESUS THE CHRIST, UP TO DATE.

(Communicated to Charles Kroll Laporte by the Holy Ghost.)

1. In the midst of life we are in debt.
2. Resist evil with all your might.
3. The meek shall inherit the workhouse.
4. The land is the landlords' (plural), and the fulness thereof.
5. Avoid writing the truth, for it will get you into trouble.
6. Pay tribute to Cæsar, for the reigning monarch is always the best.
7. Take heed of the morrow, and put your money in the saving's bank.
8. Woe to millionaires, for they are the scourge of mankind!
9. Without any will men and sparrows fall.
10. Help yourselves on earth, for God is too busy in heaven.
11. Do not give *all* you have to the poor, for they will surely become rich, and forget you in the hour of need.
12. Blessed are the big bullies, for they shall inherit the earth.
13. If a man smite thee on the right cheek, give him a black eye *à l'Anglaise*.
14. Love not your neighbor, but his wife.
15. Beware of false prophets *à la* Baxter.
16. Forgive neither debts nor trespasses, but sue in a court of law.
17. Ye *can* serve two masters—God and Mammon; God on the Sabbath day, Mammon on week days.
18. Beget few children; they cause much trouble and expense.
19. Beware of very religious folks.
20. "*On n'est jamais trahi que par les siens.*" A delicate allusion to his betrayer. I think he meant: "Beware of a cashier, *à la* Judas, who will sell you when the exchequer is empty."

CAPTAIN NOAH.

When the windows of heaven were opened
And the founts of the deep were let go,
When fathoms were reckoned by millions
And the tops of the mountains sank low,
The Father of Seamen went groping
His way over land and o'er sea,
With ballast of rock, and a cargo of stock,
In an ark of the gopher-wood tree.
And he was a seaman—a genuine seaman—
A sailor and ship-builder too;
For his tree-decker ship he had built for the trip,
So, Noah, here's looking to you!

The voyage was long, and the weather
Was hard on a man of his age
(Six centuries old and a trifle
When he locked the last beast in its cage);
But he stuck to the job like a good 'un,
With Japhet and Shem as his mates,
While Ham they all took as the nigger to cook,
And to wash the ship's company's plates.
All hands were good seamen—the first of all seamen—
A rattling good deep-water crew,
And he kept them at work with no chance of a shirk,
So, Noah, here's looking to you!

Though he'd no wire rigging, or patents,
Or compass, or sextant, or chart,
He made his landfall (with no pilot)
By pluck and by firmness of heart.
Then he reckoned he'd finished his contract
When he landed the stock without harm,
So he gave the sea best, and he took out his rest
On a snug little vineyard and farm.
Well, he was a seaman—a deep-water seaman—
And to him our gratitude's due,
For we wouldn't be here if he'd shown any fear;
So, Noah, here's looking to you!

—*Sydney Bulletin.* I. P.

The Miracle at Cana.

When nothing was known of the constitution of wine or water, except that they were both fluids, it was comparatively easy to accept the statement that such a conversion really took place. But now we know that water consists of oxygen and hydrogen combined in a certain simple proportion, and of these and nothing else; while wine contains, in addition, nitrogen, carbon, and other elements combined in very complicated proportions. If the water was not really changed into wine, but only seemed to be so, it was a mere juggling trick, such as the Wizard of the North can show us any day for a shilling. But if it was really changed, something must have been created out of nothing to supply the elements which were not in the original water, and were not put into it from without.—*S. Laing, "Modern Science and Modern Thought."*

The Tomb of Eve.

The tomb of Mother Eve is located by Moslems outside the walls of Jeddah. She is supposed to lie, like a Moslem, fronting the Kaabah, with her feet northwards, her head southwards, and her right cheek propped by her hand. The length of her grave is such that she must have borne out the legend that she was the tallest as well as the first of women. Sir R. Burton says: "I could not help remarking to the boy Mohammed that, if our first parent measured a hundred paces from head to waist, and eighty from waist to heel, she must have presented much the appearance of a duck. To this the youth replied flippantly that he thanked his stars the Mother was under ground, otherwise that men would lose their senses with fright."

"When you say your prayers, Georgie, ask God to make you a better boy. You have been very naughty to-day." The youngster put up his petitions in the usual form, and then, before closing with "Amen," added: "And, please, God, make me a good boy." He paused a second, and, to the consternation of his mother, concluded with unabated gravity: "Nevertheless, not my will, O Lord, but thine, be done!" The mother knew not what to say, and wisely said nothing.

"Mamma, will heaven be just like church all the time?" "I hope so, dear," said her mother. "Well, I shan't say my prayers any more; I'd rather go to the other place."

Digitized by Google

A FASHIONABLE CLERGYMAN.

EVERYONE who is anyone has heard of the Hon. and Rev. Augustine Allsobs, rector of All Saints, at the rising watering-place of Fastport. The Hon. and Rev. A. Allsobs is a scion of the Malingerer magnates, who have contributed so many distinguished names to the annals of the peerage and the divorce court. He is, in consequence, most highly respected by all who do not know him. The Hon. Augustine early in life gave great promise of being, *par excellence*, the fool in a family of rogues. That apparent disqualification was of course discounted by educating him for the Church. At Eton he was neither renowned for his studies, his cricket, his rowing, nor his beagle-hunting; but he was noted for the amount of pocket-money wheedled from a fond mamma, and spent in vicious, but not convivial, pleasures. At Cambridge his conduct was brought to the attention of the proctors, but winked at on account of his family. He was "plucked," of course. That was of no consequence, as the family had several livings at its disposal. The Hon. Augustine had no other objection to the Thirty-nine Articles than that they were too few for his Gargantuan palate; and Bishop Soderanbee had no scruples in ordaining and endowing him with as much of the Holy Ghost as would ooze out of his own fat fingers at one attempt. The Hon. Augustine accordingly took a curacy under his uncle, the Hon. and Rev. Ignatius Malingerer, rector of Bogo-cum Marsh. They had only one notion in theology between them. Both were decidedly High Church—nothing low about their family, you know. Augustine accordingly laid himself out for hearing the confessions of the juvenile village maidens, who were found decidedly to prefer the ministration of his venerable-looking uncle, the Hon. and Rev. Ignatius; while Augustine received the confidences and the worked slippers of the unjuvenile village virgins, verging from the ages of thirty-five to double those summers and winters. None the less, scandals arose, and it was found necessary for our young curate to take a trip to the Continent and study the wickedness of "infidel France." This he investigated so thoroughly that he was able to dilate upon it for the rest of his natural life. When a few children, known by the natal name of Bogo, had been provided for, an incumbency was found at Parva Magna, and a wealthy widow undertook to go through the marriage service with Augustine. She, poor woman, having no happiness in her home, was soon glad to devote her attention to Dorcas meetings, held with a view to providing Matabili maidens with chemisettes. She pined for want of the society of her hero; for Augustine was her hero—till she found out his secret habits, and then she sickened and died. Allsobs found Parva Magna too slow, and exchanged for Fastport, where he soon attracted attention by the gorgeousness of his vestments and his insistence on a display of ritual.

Allsobs knows little about theology, though his friends say he has mastered the idea that "days" in Genesis mean "long periods"; as when he borrows money it is always for a few "days," which prove to be of true Mosaic dimensions. He thinks it "a beastly shame" that he has never had the preferment due to his talents, his family, and his popularity with the females. He swears he should become a "silk apron" or "pinafore," as he expresses it, better than the Bishop of Rumtifoo; but his ecclesiastical superiors say the idea of advancing Allsobs would be too ridiculous. He has absolutely no brains. Allsobs buys his sermons by the gross, and reads them to his congregation, as he might to a field of cabbage-stalks. But the dear man's sermons are highly esteemed. He is so well bred and well connected, you know.

Allsobs, now a widower, is still the darling of the ladies. They dote on him all the more because he regards them but little, and his tastes are said to be of the decadent order. He keeps a cabinet full of slippers which his devotees have worked for him, and the height of his humor is displayed in having a number placed around his billiard-room to serve as spittoons.

Allsobs' vanity, as he grows older, tends to the sacerdotal variety. He prides himself on being highly connected, both on earth and in heaven. He is sure that, if God thinks twice before damning any person of quality, he has reserved snug quarters for himself as one of his elect ministers. This belief is very excusable. Providence has dropped him and his relatives into such pleasant places all their lives on earth that an almighty Uncle or supreme Grandfather could scarcely have done more for them. It would be a sad rebuff, and nothing less than a beastly shame, if the expectations thus held out do not receive post-mortem fulfilment.

When he comes to his latter end, he will doubtless, like Addison, send for his aristocratic friends to come and see how a Christian can die. A deity who should tell him, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise, Lazarus, evil things, but now he is comforted and thou tormented," would, it is to be feared, terribly shock the tender nerves of poor Allsobs.

UNCLE BEN.

A FEW PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. LAW.

IT was in the winter of 1864 that Mrs. Law first lectured in Newcastle. She was then in her prime, and the effect she produced was a lasting one. She had a good voice, which she well knew how to use, being at times sweetly pathetic, while on other occasions it overwhelmed an unfair opponent with indignant scorn. Mrs. Law was always logical and painstaking as a debater. She put her points naturally and without strain, and after her first visit to Newcastle she was regarded with admiration by all the Secular party and many of her Christian hearers. The ultra-school, on the other hand, simply detested her, and no lie was black enough to satisfy some of them. Joseph Barker was in some measure the cause of this. He had quarrelled with Charles Bradlaugh and left the *Reformer*. Drifting back to his first home among the Methodists, he left along the road he travelled a train of vituperation and innuendo, which it was the pleasure of his orthodox friends to gather up and throw at any Freethought advocate as authentic and undeniable fact.

Very different is the treatment received by Freethought advocates now compared with thirty years ago, and even then it was not so bad as it had been in Emma Martin's day. I have seen the platform at Newcastle fairly besieged by half-a-dozen zealots, who vied with each other which should be first to attack the lady, and who all preferred slander to argument, working up the feelings of the audience to white heat.

It was no uncommon thing to have rooms closed against the Freethought party in those days. The Lecture Room, Nelson-street, was on one occasion so closed; but the party secured a much larger room (the Tyne Concert Hall), on condition that no charge be made at the doors. The result was a series of enormous but most disorderly meetings, many going because it was free, who would have regarded it as a deadly sin to pay towards the expenses of the lectures.

At Bedlington the vicar threatened the owner of the only available hall with the loss of her licence (she was a widow, and the hall was attached to an inn), and Mrs. Law was consequently locked out. But she lectured on the Market Cross, with the result of increasing her audiences; and the vicar, on leaving his church, had to make his way through a crowd such as he had never before seen in his parish.

Mrs. Law was seldom treated to personal violence after her first visit to any place, the rare good humor with which she received the "opposition," and her ready tongue, frequently turning the tide in her favor; and those who before regarded her with hatred not infrequently became her best friends, and even those who failed to be brought to her way of thinking could not help admiring the "plucky little lady."

The Whitehaven incident was a case in point. Mrs. Law had been lecturing in Whitehaven. During her first visit nothing unusual occurred; but Barker visited the place, and left a lot of rubbish in his wake. Mrs. Law was requested to reply to him. A mob surrounded the hall, armed with brickbats, clubs, and weapons of various descriptions. Her friends formed a bodyguard, and protected her as best they could into a cab. Her head was severely cut, and the cab windows smashed.

On the second night Mrs. Law appeared, undaunted, in the hall with a large surface of her head covered with diachylon plaster. For three or four hours she faced the storm of angry people, and she did not get away from the hall until the early hours of the morning. On the third occasion she faced the audience, and was allowed to proceed with her lecture—she had lived down her foes.

On another occasion Mrs. Law was announced to follow Joseph at Windy Nook, a village a few miles south of Newcastle. She travelled in a small waggonette, and in passing through one of the contiguous hamlets the vehicle was suddenly surrounded by a mob of infuriated women armed with all the tin utensils available. With these musical instruments they set up a terrible row; but noise soon gave place to violence. Boys began to throw stones on the outskirts of the demonstration. One stone was thrown with deadly precision. A friend sitting immediately behind Mrs. Law held his hand between the intended victim's head and the coming missile; it cut through the palm; had it struck her on the head, the result must have been serious. Notwithstanding, Mrs. Law wished to stop when she saw the leader of the assailants become deadly pale. They were ascending a steep hill, and she was afraid the poor woman was going to die of heart disease. But the driver pushed on, and at the hall door Mrs. Law stood up in the waggonette, thanked the escort for the kind reception, and emptied her pocket of all the copper coin she happened to have about her. The effect was simply marvellous, and she delivered the lecture without the least sign of opposition; and many of her principal supporters in after years in Windy Nook had been members of that "Tin-pot Band."

Another event which took place in the North of England

Digitized by Google

was her meeting with Barker at Bebside. Mr. Barker was announced to lecture in the chapel there, and discussion was, for a wonder, "invited." Possibly this would not have been the case had the promoters of the meeting expected any serious opposition. But as soon as the intrepid lady heard of it she resolved to seize the opportunity and beard him in his stronghold. After the lecture she rose in the pew, where she had been through his discourse, and essayed a reply. The lecturer immediately rose and announced that discussion would be limited to question and answer. Mrs. Law protested that this was a breach of the terms of the bill. He retorted that unless she sat down he would send for a policeman and have her "quietly removed." A shout of astonishment and indignation greeted this declaration, many of the audience having journeyed from Blyth, Bedlington, etc., in the hope of witnessing an encounter in which the Christian champion would triumph over the "detested infidel." While the noise was at its height an official of the chapel entered the pew and attempted to eject the obnoxious interrupter, but he was not permitted to touch her. Every time he put forth his hand to lay hold of her, her companion in the pew brought the edge of his hand sharply down on the thick of the arm of the representative of Christian freedom, causing it to fall helpless by his side. Two policemen were sent for, but they refused to interfere, as the lady was obviously only claiming a right under the terms of Mr. Barker's placards. The result was a lively debate, which went on for some time, until the Barker party found the gas metre and put the place in darkness.

The Anti-Missionary Meeting at Manchester gave Mrs. Law an opportunity to show the sterling grit of her character, and do a grand stroke of work in the interest of peace and just dealing with a foreign nation, who only wished to live on terms of amity with us.

In 1868 there was every prospect that we were about to drift into another missionary war with China. At the instance of the Foreign Affairs Association a town's meeting had been called by the mayor; it was shown from the blue-books that the whole of the circumstances which had led up to the situation had been greatly exaggerated, and that the deadlock arose from the Chinese resisting a series of mendacious claims for damages which the missionaries had never sustained. The Rev. Mr. Vasey (at one time President of the Methodist F.C. Assembly) attempted a defence of the missionaries, and Mrs. Law replied to him. When she rose there was a most extraordinary demonstration of hostility on the part of a large body of Methodists who had come prepared to support the claims of the missionaries. Mrs. Law stood unmoved before the infuriated host. Meanwhile the Mayor (Dr. Gregson) said that for the first time in his life he was ashamed of his townsmen, who refused a lady the right to address a public meeting. This appeal of the Mayor's told; Mrs. Law got her chance, and, in comparative quiet, she fairly extinguished any effect Mr. Vasey's speech had produced. Facts, argument, and denunciation were used with such effect that the audience was taken by surprise, the missionary party thoroughly routed, the facts which were disclosed at the meeting became national property, owing to the attention directed to the manner in which what at one time promised to become a riot had been overcome, and the country heard no more of gunboats for the propagation of the gospel in China. This was the last attempt to so use the forces of war for that purpose in the Far East.

Mrs. Law was a little woman, but there were occasions when she appeared to tower over the heads of everyone in her company. She was on one occasion lecturing in Felling. Having business in the outskirts of Gateshead, I walked down the road to the village, and, entering the Co-operative Hall, took a seat at the back of the meeting. Sitting in front of me was a cadaverous, ill-throven young man of the Sunday-school variety. He was entertaining those around him with a picture of the lecturer's private life, her disreputable relations with the individual whom she called her husband, and the abject wretchedness of the half-dozen children whom she had brought into the world, to play barefooted in the Whitechapel gutters, while she paraded the country, destroying people's faith in God for a lecture fee, which it was well known she spent in dissipation. At the conclusion of the lecture I invited the graphic painter to give the whole audience the benefit of his knowledge. At first he made no sign, but, on being pressed, he made a rambling statement about persons who disbelieved in religion being unable to marry. "That was not what the gentleman said in the hearing of several people at this end of the hall," I explained, and again challenged him to repeat his vile slanders. He was silent, so it devolved upon me to give the meeting an outline of his remarks. Mrs. Law rose in her dignity to reply. She thrashed him until his limp and bloodless body seemed to sink into his boots. In the process she was more than grand—she was sublime. Everyone present, even Christians, shared in the spirit her vindication had evoked, and in the end the young man slunk out of the room; and I don't believe any one was sorry for him, except the lady he had attempted to injure with his serpent's tongue. N.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Report of Executive meeting, held at the Society's offices, 377 Strand, on August 12; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were present: Messrs. E. Bater, C. Cohen, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, M. Loafer, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, C. Mascal, S. Jones, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, and the secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Cash statement received.

Mr. Foote gave a report of the Conference called by the Union of Ethical Societies, whose desire it was to introduce a system of non-theological moral instruction into the Board schools. One of the N. S. S. delegates, Mr. Charles Watts, had been elected to serve on the Executive Committee.

The secretary read a communication from the Spanish Atrocities Committee, inviting the N. S. S. to participate in its meetings. A long discussion ensued, in which Messrs. Bater, Watts, Cohen, Heaford, Gorniot, and the President took part. Mr. J. M. Wheeler had interviewed some of the recent arrivals in London, and expressed himself as being convinced of their Secular views. Finally, the President explained the position of the party, and departed from his usual custom by moving the following resolution, Mr. Cohen seconding: "That the N. S. S. Executive appoint three delegates to assist in the protest against the infliction of torture on Spanish prisoners; but that the said delegates be instructed to retire from the Atrocities Committee, and from all participation in the movement, if they find the protest is not humanitarian, but political, or is made to subserve the interests of any political or social group." The resolution was carried with one dissentient (Mr. Bater).

Messrs. G. W. Foote, C. Cohen, and R. Forder were elected as delegates, and it was resolved that a special meeting should be held on Friday, August 28, to receive the report of the delegates.

The Treasurer and Secretary reported the amount of promises received up to date in relation to Mr. Hartmann's scheme, and Mr. Hartmann made a few suggestions as to the way in which he would wish the scheme to be carried out. It was then proposed that a sub-committee be elected, and names were suggested; but, in consequence of the absence of some of the gentlemen proposed, it was resolved to postpone such election until the next meeting.

Mr. J. M. Wheeler then referred to the death of Mrs. Harriet Law, and the following resolution was passed unanimously: "That this Executive offers its condolence and sympathy with the family of Mrs. Harriet Law in their bereavement, and expresses its strong sense of appreciation of her brave services to the cause of Freethought in the days when struggles were severe and workers few."

A cheque was ordered to be drawn for office and other expenses, and the meeting adjourned.

Edith M. Vance *(Secretary)*.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The minor prophet Amos, in the sixth verse of his third chapter, asks: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?' implying that the Lord does all the evil in a city. Upon asking a question on this of a minister, he said it referred to physical, not to moral, evil. It seems to me, however, that the word "evil" has this double meaning, just because physical and moral evil are inextricably conjoined. If I break my leg and lose my temper and my situation, and am unable to support my family, all the consequences arising from the calamity lie at the door of the author of the physical evil. If God be Omnipotent, he must be responsible for everything. This is clearly expressed in the major prophet Isaiah, Jehovah declaring in the seventh verse of his forty-fifth chapter: "I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." Here the antithesis with peace leaves no room for the clerical cavil that moral evil is not intended. Why, then, is the author of sin supposed to punish it perpetually? Shinto.

The Jacobin Convention of 1793-4 may serve as a measure to show how mild are the most ferocious of human beings when compared to an exasperated priesthood. By the September massacre, the fusillade at Lyons, by the drownings on the Loire, five thousand men and women suffered a comparatively easy death. Multiply the five thousand by ten, and you do not reach the number of those who met their death in France alone in August and September, 1572. Fifty thousand more were killed in the Netherlands under Charles the Fifth. The age was not cruel until the Church made it so.—*J. A. Froude.*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

A NUMBER of earless donkeys, mostly on the other side of the herring pond, have amused themselves with scribbling reams of trash to prove that the author of *Hamlet* was also the author of Bacon's translation of the Psalms. The perverted ingenuity brought to bear on this thesis is simply astounding. Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, who has hitherto held the cake for his cryptogram, may perhaps now pass it over to Mr. Isaac Hull Platt, who suggests that the Shakespeare plays are "signed by Francis Bacon," because in the word *honorificabilitudinatatibus*, used by Costard in *Love's Labour Lost*, v. 1, one may find an anagram of Francis Bacon. And then Mrs. Quickly says: "Hang hog is Latten for bacon, I warrant you." When the carrier in *Henry IV.* says, "I have a gammon of bacon," he means that Francis Lord Verulam is gammoning us!

* * *

Under the title of *The Extinction of War, Poverty, and Infectious Diseases*, a Doctor of Medicine, the author of *The Elements of Social Science*, has published essays on "Home Rule and Federation," "Can War be Suppressed?" "State Remedies for Poverty," and "The Extinction of Infectious Diseases" (London: E. Truelove, 17 Alexandra-road, N.; R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; 6d.). No open mind can mistake the worthy humanitarian aim of these essays. That on Home Rule and Federation appears to have been written some time ago, when Mr. Parnell still directed the Irish party. Incidentally the author discusses the functions of government and a federal system for the leading nations of Europe as a step to the federation of mankind. He advocates the Federal Union of France and England as tending powerfully to promote peace, and to solve the problems of government in every part of the world. The brief essay on "Can War be Suppressed?" also suggests a general reduction of armaments, a confederation of States with international tribunal and international armies. "State Remedies for Poverty" (which also, we believe, we have read before) deals with the regulation of wages, hours of work, and size of families—proposals of most controversial character. "The Extinction of Infectious Diseases" is also a subject bristling with difficulties—difficulties which should be faced and surmounted by those having the welfare of humanity at heart, as the author evidently has. The price of the work places it within the reach of all interested in these most important problems.

* * *

It is curious that, while a Doctor of Medicine is proposing a tax on large families in England, M. Blowitz, the well-known Paris correspondent of the *Times*, proposes a family tax as a panacea for the ills of France. But the family tax is designed to place the burden of those with many children upon those with few, and has a special clause providing dowries for twins.

* * *

A Lonely God is the title of a new reprint of one of Mr. Coulson Kernahan's "Strange Sins" series. The study suggests that man need fear no loneliness in life or death, since "on the shadowless, shining peaks of Eternity God sits lonely forever." Mr. Kernahan makes us contemplate the horrible picture of the ancient of days, whose creatures are infinitely removed and can never be his companions, till we really begin to wish that he would provide his masculine poor old bachelor deity with a wife and a thriving family of juvenile godlings. "A Suicide" and "A Lost Soul" are fitly bound up in the same little volume with *A Lonely God*. Mr. Kernahan is not exactly a Jean Paul the Unique, but he has a Richterian vividness of phantasy picture-painting, and, as his stories appear intended to subserve the interests of the pulpit, we do not wonder at their popularity in pious quarters. If Mr. Kernahan would discipline his intellect, he might do better work for humanity than presenting it with the nightmare of *A Lonely God*.

* * *

Spurgeon is to have four volumes to his life. This may prove an effectual burial of the man under a big monument.

* * *

Vol. i. of an important book on recent exploration of Babylon has just been published by Messrs. Putnam. It is entitled *Nippur, and Adventures on the Euphrates*, and is written by J. P. Peters, director of the expedition. Dr. Peters says that the Temple of Bel at Nippur was to Babylonia very much what the temple of Jerusalem was to the Jews.

* * *

Mr. J. M. Robertson issues a Jubilee counterblast in the shape of a penny pamphlet—the twelfth of his "Papers for the People"—entitled *Why Preserve the Monarchy?* (London: Forder). Of course, it is ably written, and puts the case against Monarchy in a forcible manner. We hope it will be widely circulated. Mr. Robertson concludes by asking for a fresh Republican movement in England. At present, we are afraid, he will ask in vain. We are going through a period of reaction, and opportunities may be seized when they occur, but can hardly be created.

* * *

We have published from time to time many good profane jokes from children, some of them having been sent to us by parents and guardians. Professor Sully, in his *Children's Ways*, has a good one which must be added to our collection. It was a boy of eight who put it thus to a "distinguished biologist": "Mr. ——, Mr. ——, if God wanted me to be good, and I wouldn't be good, who would win?" The answer of the biologist is not given. Another girl, a little girl whose grandfather had just died, prayed God would mind and shut the door, "because grandpa can't stand the draught."

CORRESPONDENCE.

DID CHRIST GO TO HELL?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I used to recite in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell." I could never find clear authority for this in Scripture, though Peter says he preached to some spirits in prison. Jesus himself is represented as saying to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43); but the exact situation of Paradise I have no more been able to determine than that of the Garden of Eden. Jesus, however, laid it down that "whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire" (Matthew v. 22). Yet he ran this danger himself in stigmatizing the scribes and pharisees as "ye fools and blind" (Matthew xxiii. 17). What I want to know is, if he descended into hell, how can we be sure he ever got out again?

BIBLE STUDENT.

THOSE KIDS.

ON the way he inquired: "Mamma, does God make shunks?" "Why, yes, Eddie; I suppose he does," was the hesitating answer. Eddie, after a moment's thought: "Well, if he got a good sniff of one once, I'll bet he'd never make another."

"Remember, Bobby," said his mother, "when you are about to do something you know to be wrong, that although I may not see you there is one who does." "Who do you mean?" inquired Bobby, anxiously. "God." "Oh," said Bobby, with a look of intense relief, "I thought you meant pa."

There is a teacher in the St. Paul public schools who will hereafter be very careful about asking her pupils scriptural conundrums. She said to them the other day: "Noah had three sons—Japhet, Ham, and Shem. Who was their father?" The children, suspecting a catch, replied variously. One answered Ham, another Japhet, and a third Shem. Finally a precocious little boy shut them all up by inquiring: "Who did Noah suspect?"

A story was told by Judge W. M. Weaver, of Greensboro', illustrative of the strict construction children sometimes put upon remarks from the pulpit. The judge's little granddaughter, Margie Burke, recently received a large doll as a present. She was delighted with the gift, and named the doll "Gesie," after the donor. Measles broke out in the community, and the little one said her Gesie had the measles too. On the Sabbath the little one went with her uncle to church, the two taking a seat directly in front of and near to the pulpit. The preacher warmed to his theme, and spoke with much earnestness. At last, pointing with his index finger and looking straight towards the little girl, he asked impressively, "How stands it with you and Jesus?" Quick as thought she answered in a clear voice, heard throughout the house: "I am very well, I thank you; but Gesie's got the measles!"

Country minister (to little boy fishing)—"Sonny, do you know that in fishing on Sunday you are breaking one of God's commandments?" Little boy—"Yes, sir, 'Remember the Sabbath day an' keep it holy.' Oh, I don't go to Sunday-school for nothin', mister."

A little boy in New England was questioned as to whether he had ever stolen any grapes. "Yes," he replied, "but I don't mind if only God and my brother see me, for God can't tell mamma if he wants to, and I know Ralph won't.'

A cabin-boy on board a ship, the captain of which was a very religious man, was called up to be whipped for some misdemeanor. Little Jack went crying and trembling to the captain. "Kind sir," said he, "will you wait till I say my prayers?" Yes," was the stern reply. "Well, then," replied little Jack, looking up and smiling triumphantly, "I'll say them when I get ashore!"

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God and the Devil."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Excursion to Broxbourne and Rye House. Liverpool-street 9.10 a.m., Bethnal Green 9.15. G.E.R. Return from Rye House at 7.20 p.m.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss.
Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 3.15, A. B. Moss.
Clerkenwell Green (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, Stanley Jones.
Edmonton (Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford.
Finsbury Park (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, A. Guest, "What is the Use of Prayer?"
Hammersmith (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, R. Rosetti.
Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. Rosetti; 3.30, H. P. Ward.
Islington (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A lecture.
Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.
Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): Excursion to Broxbourne and Rye House. From Hackney Downs at 9.21 a.m. G.E.R.
Limehouse (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, C. Cohen. August 24, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.
Mile End Waste: 11.30, H. P. Ward; 7, E. Pack. August 25, at 8.30, C. Cohen. 26, at 8, Mr. Westacott.
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.
Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. Heaford, "God, Man, and the Bible."

COUNTRY.

Pontypridd (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited. August 25 and 26, in the Town Hall, Porth, two debates between Mr. J. W. Cox and the Rev. Mon Evans—subjects: "Is the God of Creation the God of the Bible?" and "Has Christianity Benefited the World?"

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Postponed excursion to Wharncliffe side (Mr. Ewing's). Members and friends meet at 1.30 corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets, and will leave at 1.45. Tea at 5.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 22, m., Limehouse; a., Victoria Park; e., Victoria Park. 25, Mile End. 29, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Victoria Park. September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 22, m., Station-road, Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 29, Edmonton.

J. Fagan, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. Thurlow, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. Percy Ward, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 22, m., Mile End Waste; a., Harrow-road. 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. Pack, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 22, m., Limehouse; e., Mile End. 29, m. and e., Mile End. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 7, e., Limehouse. 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. Foote. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason*.) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

Chairman—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

Beware of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

Look for Autograph Registered Trade Mark

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

In *Red* Ink on each Box, without which None are Genuine

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 8d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 8d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;
Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VII. now ready. 6d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, O.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

GRAND CLEARING LINE.

630
LADIES' MACKINTOSHES

Warranted thoroughly Waterproof and Odorless. Sizes, length at back 54, 56, 58, and 60 inches. Very latest style, and every garment well finished.

Colors: Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Slate, and Grey. To fit persons up to 36 inch Bust.

Price Carriage Paid. 12/6 Worth nearly double. | **1 Copy of G. W. Foote's "Flowers of Freethought," value 2s. 6d., will be presented to each customer.**

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE AUGUST NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Rationalism in Fiction.
The Gospel in the Dust.
Out-of-date Theology.
The Cross and the Crescent.
Mrs. Besant's New Book.
The Ghost of Khammurabi.
A First-Century Manifesto.
Moral Instruction in France.
Arguing for Immortality.
Random Jottings.
Our Library Shelves.—Ruskin's *Time and Tide.*
A Public School for the Unorthodox.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).

*** Copies of the July issue, containing two important Supplements, may be still had, price 2d., by post 3d.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 35. SUNDAY, AUGUST 29, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE TRAFALGAR-SQUARE MEETING.

THE *Freethinker* is not a political paper, but all its readers know by this time that I am neither an Anarchist nor a Socialist; indeed, I have sometimes been insulted by both parties for not belonging to them. Quite recently I have written in these columns on Anarchy and Assassination, pointing out the absurdity of supposing that government can be dispensed with in human affairs, and denouncing the folly and wickedness of murder as a method of political action. My own public, so to speak, are acquainted with my position; and I need not be disconcerted by the misrepresentations of the Tory press in respect to my participation in the Trafalgar-square protest against the atrocities inflicted on political prisoners in Spain.

I may say here, once for all, that while I call myself a Secularist, for convenience, I am not fond of wearing any other ticket. I hope I belong to the party of common sense. I have always mistrusted cut-and-dried schemes for reaching the millennium. If I am anything in politics and sociology, I am a meliorist. I believe that the only way in which we can serve the future is to serve the present. Posterity will take its own course, and we must take ours, day by day and year by year, according to our lights and opportunities.

Two principles, however, I have always been steadfast in. I love freedom, and I detest cruelty. Liberty and love will reform the world sooner than any other agencies; and, without them, all other agencies will only leave us slavish and embased.

When I heard, therefore, of the wholesale arrest of "suspected" persons in Barcelona, and of the alleged cruelties they had suffered in prison, I felt it was a matter for serious inquiry. I have satisfied myself of the general truth of the allegation of torture. In the case of Francisco Gana there is no room for doubt. His story is confirmed by medical testimony. It is enough to make one's blood boil to hear his account of the tortures inflicted upon himself, and also upon several of his fellow prisoners. They are not only horrible, but obscene. They display a bestial ingenuity which reminds us that Spain is the classic land of the Holy Inquisition.

Even the Tory *Daily Mail*, which called for the prohibition of the Trafalgar-square meeting, is obliged to admit the reality of these facts. "There is little reason to doubt," it said on Monday, "that Spanish prisoners suspected of complicity in outrage have been abominably tortured."

This "complicity in outrage" is meant as a palliating qualification. But what is the truth? I have satisfied myself that only a small proportion of these Spanish prisoners were even theoretical Anarchists. Of the twenty-eight deported to England, as far as I can ascertain, only four or five are Anarchists. The others are Freethinkers, Anti-Catholics, Socialists, Freemasons, Trade Unionists, and Radicals. The fact is, the Spanish Government seized upon the bomb-throwing fifteen months ago as a pretext for arresting on "suspicion" no less than five hundred advanced citizens. The person who threw the bomb has not been discovered, any more than we have discovered the miscreant who left that bomb in a carriage on the Underground Railway. We did not arrest five hundred persons on "suspicion," but they do things differently in Spain, where freedom is a name without any reality.

Gana himself, who was so vilely tortured, is not an Anarchist. He was a Freemason, which made him obnoxious to the Catholics, and a Trade Unionist, which made him obnoxious to the classes who are in power.

How could the National Secular Society's Executive refuse to help these exiles, or to participate in the protest against the injustice and cruelty to which they had been subjected? It was resolved that we should join the Spanish Atrocities Committee, consisting of representatives of all shades of advanced and humane opinion. Our representatives (Mr. Forder, Mr. Cohen, and myself) helped to frame the resolution which was carried at Trafalgar-square. That resolution had no taint of Anarchy or any other sectionalism, and I give it here in full, so that my readers may judge for themselves:—

> "Seeing that it has been proved by incontestable evidence, and acknowledged by the British and Continental press, that the most barbarous tortures, recalling those of the Middle Ages, have been inflicted by the Spanish Government on prisoners arrested wholesale on mere suspicion, and some of whom so tortured were never even brought to trial;
>
> "Seeing, also, that the Spanish Government treats with callous disdain all representations addressed to it on this subject;
>
> "Seeing, further, that the Spanish Government has deported twenty-eight of these prisoners to England;
>
> "This meeting of English men and women feels that it has a right on every ground to record its public protest against these detestable outrages on the common humanity of the civilized world."

I had the honor of moving that resolution in Trafalgar-square on Sunday afternoon, and my colleague, Mr. Cohen, had the honor of supporting it. The newspapers were good enough to speak in praise of our speeches. Certainly, like the genial and brave chairman, Mr. Pete Curran, we kept to the point. We spoke as men, not as politicians; as citizens of the world, not as members of a party. Some of the speakers were less careful. Mr. Turner thought it a matter of importance to proclaim that he was an Anarchist, and Dr. Aveling went out of his way to talk bombastic nonsense about the assassination of Canovas. On the whole, however, it was kept clear that the object of the meeting was purely humanitarian. Such also was the attitude of the huge crowd which filled the Square, and could not have numbered less than fifteen thousand—one newspaper putting it as high as twenty-five thousand. A forest of hands supported the resolution. About fifty hands were held up against it, including those of a small gang of rowdies who tried most fruitlessly to break up the meeting by singing "God Save the Queen"—as though *she* could be in favor of tyranny and torture.

A collection was made on behalf of the Spanish exiles, and many persons flung copper and silver coins on the plinth of the Nelson Monument, where the speakers were standing. This incident is described in characteristic fashion by a leader writer in the Tory *Sun*, who represented the speakers as "fighting and biting and scratching each other in their eagerness to make sure of the nimble pence, each for his own pocket." This writer has to earn his living by writing such stuff. But what self-contempt he must feel! I do not hate him. I pity him. He knows, as I do, that the money was picked up by the collectors and carefully counted, and that every penny of it will be devoted to the relief of the Spanish exiles.

The Spanish Atrocities Committee has been maintaining these exiles and trying to find them work. A few of them have been sent to South America to join their wives, who have been deported there by the Spanish Government,

Digitized by Google

which is base enough to war against women. "Philanthropists" are giving nothing, and funds are urgently needed. The N. S. S. Executive has asked me to open for one week, or two at the outside, a subscription in the *Freethinker*, heading the list with its own donation of two guineas. My own donation of half-a-guinea comes next. All I receive will be handed to Mr. Hartmann, the N. S. S. treasurer, who will pay it over to the Committee as our Society's contribution.

Nearly all these Spanish exiles are Freethinkers. This is a fact which I ask my readers to remember.

Now that I have explained the matter to my own public, as I said, I am indifferent to outside opinion. One must do one's duty and defy misrepresentation. Charles Bradlaugh was misrepresented all his life. Why then should I, his humble successor, complain? Let the Tory papers call me a Socialist, an Anarchist, or whatever they please. I have other work to do in the world than to answer their falsehoods. G. W. FOOTE.

DEFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

We have recently heard much of "progressive Christianity," the idea of which, however, is, in our opinion, very absurd, inasmuch as, if this faith has progressed, it is necessarily more advanced now than it was at a former period. In that case, it was not originally a perfect system, and therefore not an emanation from a perfect being. Moreover, if Christianity has in the process of time improved, why may not its improvement still go on? But if these constant changes take place, at what juncture in its development does the true religion appear? The early Christians thought that in their faith they had a perfect and complete revelation from God; but if the progressive theory be correct, the faith as it "was once delivered to the saints" was exceedingly incomplete, which entirely does away with the truth of the assumption of its "divine" nature. Herein lies one of the defects of orthodox Christianity; it is so vague, incoherent, and indecisive that it has been "all things to all men." It is a mistake to suppose that, from its inception to the present time, Christianity has been regarded by its professors as presenting one uniform faith. Its nature has varied, not only in different countries, but also in the beliefs of the many sects termed Christian. There are marked differences between the beliefs of the Catholic and the Protestant Churches, as there are also between the teachings of the Church of England and those of Dissenting congregations.

So striking are these divergencies that the Rev. Dr. Irons, in his book, *The Bible and its Interpreters*, writes: "We may mention Wesley, Gill, and Whistan as examples. They were all pure and upright men, and learned men too. They all honestly found their systems in the existing English Bibles. One was an Armenian and a believer in the sinlessness of true Christians. One was a Supra-Lapsarian, Calvinist, and a Baptist. The third was an Arian.....It cannot be said that the differences between such men are even comparatively small. The first would have thought the doctrine of absolute predestination held by the second to be incredibly blasphemous, and he has left that on record. The second would think the first to be utterly a 'carnal' and self-deceived man. The third would be regarded by the first and second as a denier of the foundations of Christianity. Yet a man of patient and earnest character might at any time persuade himself, on apparent Scripture grounds, to embrace either of these three views of revealed truth—that is, in plain words, be either Freewiller, Fatalist, or Arian—or Baptist, with either of these three peculiarities superadded" (pp. 76 and 77). The Doctor further adds: "It might be easy even to show that what is now popularly thought to be in some respects the true and only meaning of the great doctrines of Christianity had no existence at all in the earliest days" (*ibid*, *p.* 79).

The position taken and the arguments advanced by the rev. gentleman have been more than justified, since he published his book, by such writers as Dean Farrar, Dean Fremantle, Canon Driver, Lyman Abbott, and many other "advanced Christians,' whose representations of Christianity would have been deemed "rank heresy" by their predecessors. This defective aspect of the Christian faith is so palpable that it is difficult to say what its professors, to be consistent, should really believe. By some it is deemed necessary, in order to be considered a Christian, to believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, in the story of the fall of man, and his redemption through the death of Christ; that unbelievers will be punished in a future state of existence; in the efficacy of the prayer of supplication; and in the doctrines of Baptism, Election, and Predestination. Now, while the majority of orthodox professors allege their belief in these tenets, they are discarded by the rapidly-increasing section of "progressive" Christians. But even among these the subject of belief is vague and indefinite. It is true these "reformed" religionists tell us that we should believe in the Bible; but, be it remembered, not in the whole of it, only in certain parts. As to what those parts are, each person is left to decide for himself. Further, we are assured that "belief in Christ" is the basis of all sects of Christians. The question, however, arises, What is meant by "belief in Christ"? Is he to be regarded as God or man? Or is he to be thought a combination of the two? Must it be supposed that he desired to secure the salvation of those who believe in him by his conduct in life, or through his alleged sufferings at death? In short, should he be revered as a "divine being," or simply appreciated as an advanced reformer of his day? It is not enough to proclaim, "Believe in Jesus"; all who consider that he lived no doubt entertain that belief in some degree; the point to be made clear is, What is the nature and extent of that belief? And this is just the question upon which Christians themselves are not agreed.

Those persons who have at all studied impartially the early history of Christianity must be aware that the faith which Christ is credited with preaching, and what is called Christianity to-day, are entirely different. According to the records of ecclesiastical history, the Christian faith was altered and modified shortly after the period when *it* is said that Christ died. Paul was much nearer being a philosopher than Jesus, hence his (St. Paul's) Christianity differed widely from his Master's. The character of Christ was submissive and servile; Paul's was defiant and pugnacious. We could no more conceive Christ fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus than we could suppose Paul submitting without protest or resistance to those insults and indignities which are alleged to have been heaped upon Christ. Neither could we for one moment imagine Paul advising his disciples, when anyone smote them on one cheek, to offer them the other. Paul introduced by his personal character a certain amount of boldness and energy into the Christian propaganda, and by the character of his mind he largely modified the Christian system. In fact, each successive age has left its impress upon Christianity. No system was ever less rigid and more plastic. Persons of the most contrary dispositions and the most opposite natures have been its great illustrators, expounders, and living representatives. It has found room for all temperaments: the ascetic and the luxurious enjoyer of life; the man of action and the man of contemplation; the monk and the king; the philanthropist and the destroyer of his race; the iconoclastic hater of all ceremonies and the superstitious devotee. But this heterogeneous family is by no means the result of any all-embracing comprehensiveness in the system of Christ, but rather the effects of a theology characterized alike by its indefinite, incomplete, and undecisive principles. Until, therefore, Christians can prove to us that their principles are capable of producing uniformity of character; until it can be shown that the principles as taught in the New Testament are compatible with progress and human advancement; until the course said to have been pursued by Christ when on earth is adopted by his professed followers of to-day, and made to harmonize with reason and humanity, it cannot be truthfully said that Christianity is capable of furnishing a code of morals by which all succeeding generations shall be governed, and to which the great intellects of the world will finally succumb.

There are many other defects in the Christian system which render it inharmonious with the properly disciplined intellect of our time, and which mar its force as an element of the mundane progress of the human race. For instance, it has failed to inspire consistency upon the part of its professors. They preach that "all men are brethren," while they give their practical support to the perpetuation of a system that divides, to a humiliating and unjust

Digitized by Google

extent, both politically and socially, the rich from the poor. They preach the advantages of poverty, yet they are continually striving to accumulate riches. They condemn the pleasures of the world and the habit of gambling, while they resort to both, even in their religious propaganda. This was really admitted at the recent Annual Conference of the Yorkshire Evangelical Union, held at York. Speaking at that gathering, Dr. Hughes-Games said: "The rich lived in the enjoyment of luxury, absorbed in self-aggrandizement and self-gratification. Men hastened to get rich. No longer content with the ordinary means, they gambled and speculated, and this gambling spirit pervaded all classes and both sexes. Then there was intense love of pleasure. Men and women longed after pleasures of all kinds, and never seemed satisfied. Even for church purposes and religious objects it was very difficult and almost impossible to raise money, unless pleasure was in some way associated with it. Thus bazaars, concerts, oratorios, and balls were employed because Christian people would not respond to the appeals made to them. Even in religious services the desire for sensuous pleasure was an element that had largely to be taken into account" (*Rock*, July 9, 1897).

The same inconsistent conduct is manifested by Christains in adopting the old Puritan spirit without emulating its devotion. This is shown in their attempts to deprive the people of a free Sunday. The bishops mustered in force in the House of Lords to reject Lord Hobhouse's Bill, which had for its object a more rational use of the Sunday than at present obtains; and yet the very bishops are silent when operatic music is played at Windsor Castle on the "Lord's Day," or when the aristocracy have their Sunday receptions. They prate about their "Gospel of Peace," while they applaud a Jubilee craze, with its naval review, and the exhibition of the fighting power of England, to which is attributed the security of the nation. Christ and his gospel count for nothing in the "greatness" of England. And yet we are constantly being told of the influence of Christianity upon our national progress. It is quite time such shams were exposed and ended, and that, instead of the people being further deluded by such false pretensions as orthodox Christians set forth, we inculcated honesty of conviction and fidelity to sound practical principles, born of active intellectuality and moral force, which are the promoters of peace, liberty, and justice, upon which the true salvation of the nation depends.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE DOOM OF SPAIN.

"Who can positively say why the Spanish nation, so dominant at one time, has been distanced in the race? The awakening of the nations of Europe from the dark ages is a still more perplexing problem. At that early period, as Mr. Galton has remarked, almost all the men of a gentle nature, those given to meditation or culture of the mind, had no refuge except in the bosom of a Church which demanded celibacy; and this could hardly fail to have had a deteriorating influence on each successive generation. During this same period the Holy Inquisition selected with extreme care the finest and boldest men in order to burn or imprison them. In Spain alone some of the best men—those who doubted and questioned, and without doubting there can be no progress—were eliminated during three centuries at the rate of a thousand a year."—CHARLES DARWIN, *Descent of Man*, part i., chap. v.

IN his careful style, Darwin states the two-fold way in which the Christian religion, as exhibited in its greatest Church, has inflicted incalculable evil upon humanity. It first drained some of the most refined and cultured, in an age of barbarism, from recruiting their race. Then it eliminated all who showed strong tendency to vary from the orthodox standard. The actual data of the martyrdom and imprisonment of heretics in Spain, between 1471 and 1771, are 32,000 burnt, 17,000 burnt in effigy (they mostly died in prison or escaped from Spain), and 291,000 condemned to various terms of imprisonment. Mr. Francis Galton, who gives the figures, says, in his work on *Hereditary Genius*: "It is impossible that any nation could stand a policy like this, without paying a heavy penalty in the deterioration of its breed, as has notably been the result in the formation of the superstitious, unintelligent Spanish race of the present day."

Four hundred years ago Spain stood at the pinnacle of nations. Its Moslem-founded universities had been the first and the finest in Europe. It had discovered a New World. Its dominions extended from Mexico to Malacca, and it had great soldiers who were also men of mind, like Bernal Diaz, Lope de Vega, Hurtado de Mendoza, Calderon, and Cervantes. But even then its priest-led rulers pursued the short-sighted policy of lopping off the heads of its tallest citizens. It drove out not only the alien Moors, but the native Moriscoes, who maintained a fine strain of Oriental art and culture in Granada. Its Inquisition relentlessly persecuted the Jews, who had aided its commerce, medicine, and learning. Under Torquemada, the confessor to Isabella, in one year two hundred and eighty were burned in the city of Seville alone; seventy nine were condemned to perpetual imprisonment; seventeen thousand suffered milder terms. In the following year not less than two thousand were burned.* In March, 1492, every Jew unbaptized by July was ordered to leave the kingdom. Probably over three hundred thousand were thus banished, many to terrible sufferings and death. The Inquisition maintained against all heretics the policy pursued towards the Moors and the Jews. In the fact that Spain has fallen from its high estate some may see "the hand of God in history." For my part, I trace but the natural consequences of its own acts.

And this short sighted and cruel policy, which is as absurd as it is atrocious, is still pursued by pre-eminently Christian Spain. Only last year some wretch at Barcelona threw a bomb at a religious procession. It must have been the work of some madman, or one provoked by the police. For no priest was injured; the procession was over when it was thrown, and only a drummer boy and some of the populace were injured. The panic was made the occasion for seizing over five hundred citizens; known Republicans, leading Freemasons, the heads of Trade Unions, the writers on Radical papers, Socialists, and philosophical Anarchists, all in any way obnoxious to the civil or ecclesiastical authorities, were arrested. Immediately before this the Government had demanded 200,000 men to be sent to Cuba, and the humanitarians of Spain had made a protest. The bomb was an opportune one for the Government, for it secured its tottering seat by enabling it to bag those it regarded as dangerous enemies. All were branded as Anarchists, a term of odium which is as recklessly employed as was "Atheist" in former days. Five were shot, many imprisoned for life, others detained without trial, and tortured to extract proofs of conspiracy. At length public attention was drawn to these uncivilized proceedings, and the Government graciously liberated those against whom there was no evidence, and who could pay, or find friends to pay, their passage to another country. Only those were set free who had been convicted of no crime. And now these men are visited with odium for Golli's crime, in which they can have had no share; and again two hundred more are arrested and cast in the Spanish prisons.

There are crimes real, and priest-made crimes. In Spain it is a crime to read a book unauthorized by the priest; a deadly crime to marry without his blessing, and to bring up children without his baptism. All who act thus are criminals in the eyes of the priest. But humanity has another voice. The worst enemies of morality are they who obscure its natural foundations by inventing a multiplicity of pseudo-crimes. A child made to regard Sunday amusement as equally sinful with cruelty to animals is in a fit state to have its morals easily overturned. I have heard of an inscription written for a certain charitable institution:—

> This hospital a pious person built,
> But first he made the poor wherewith to fill't.

A similar inscription might serve for the prisons of Spain, and of many another country.

The man who throws a bomb anywhere is a real criminal. He is invading the lives, to say nothing of the rights and liberties, of others. Let the person aimed at be ever such a tyrant, in constituting himself judge, jury, and executioner the assassin or tyrannicide becomes a criminal, whose sole excuse is that he must be insane to so constitute himself. But righteous indignation at murder should not be vented on the innocent. And the Spanish exiles are not assassins, but victims. In this I write that which I know. I have seen them and examined the evidence so

* *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 160.

Digitized by Google

far as I am able. I have seen that one, at least, has been terribly tortured. They are certainly not the scum of the earth, not criminals, but intelligent men, with the conscience which comes from intelligence, the very men who in propitious circumstances might help to redeem their country.

When Louis XIV., instigated by his priestly advisers, commenced the persecution of Protestants in France, he made a step towards the Revolution, and decisively benefitted our country while injuring his own. Mr. Samuel Smiles, in his work on the Huguenots, has clearly shown that to them we owe very many of our industrial arts, and much of the most valuable life-blood of our race. To Freethinkers it should be necessary to mention but one name —that of Harriet Martineau. Had I lived four centuries ago, I would rather have been with the stigmatized few who raised their voice against the expulsion of the Jews; had I lived two centuries ago, I should, I trust, have sided with, and if possible helped, the Huguenots; and now I would at least say my little word for the outlawed Radicals, Freethinkers, Socialists, and Anarchists of Spain. It is easy to over-estimate or under-estimate contemporary events, but history has decidedly set its mark on the character of the policy of Christian Spain.

Freedom of opinion cannot thus be stamped out forever. In Mexico, Cuba, and South America are a race of Spaniards, republican, freethinking, and cosmopolitan in sympathy. That New Spain is reacting, and will react, on the old country. So with Germany. The Emperor may repress Socialism, deprive Freethinking professors of their chairs, and imprison all advanced speakers for *lèse Majesty*; but in America a new Germany is growing, which will surely make its influence felt on the Fatherland. It is folly to sit on the safety-valve. In the Macchiavellian phrase, it is worse than a crime—it is a blunder. The crimes and stupidities of Anarchists are often pointed out. I am not one to defend them. Rather let me emphasize the fact that the bomb-thrower at Barcelona was the occasion of the wholesale imprisonment of hundreds of innocent men and women, and that Golli, by his assassination of Canovas, gave excuse for the fresh *razzia*. But who shall write of the crimes and stupidities of Governments? It would need the pen of a Swift and the patience of a Mommsen.

J. M. Wheeler.

DEAD JAHVEH.

Kent: Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.
Edgar: He is gone indeed.
Kent: The wonder is that he endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

—*King Lear*, Act v., scene 3.

Poor Jahveh! Like the mad King Lear, the old Jewish God is "gone indeed." Is not his death recorded in the chronicles of the Higher Criticism? The rack of a tough world has proved too much for him. The wonder is he survived so long.

Some there are that say he is not dead; that he has only suffered a kind of "sea change into something rich and strange." And they paint a shadowy picture of a great Principle or indefinable Power. But that is another god altogether. That is not the Jahveh or Jehovah—the God of our old idolatry—of our Sunday-school days—of our boyhood's catechism over which we were wont to groan. *He* lies down "full fathom five," with a dead weight of modern knowledge round his neck. If there was any change in him—or in our conception of him—it must surely have been such as overtook poor Bottom. For Jahveh has indeed been "translated." He has been translated and revised, and dispassionately tried in the light of present-day intelligence and scholarship. If he has not altogether appeared as Bottom did upon his transformation, it is because there were, in his natural aspect, too many dark and tragic features.

Not only is Jahveh dead—dead as a door-nail—but he is succeeded by another deity—an up-to-date deity, one specially furnished in a new and improved form to meet modern requirements. As Jahveh was a jealous God, and of a warlike spirit, we may be sure that, if he were alive, nothing in the world would prevent him "going for" the metaphysical nonentity which has been put in his place. When we remember how mightily anxious he was that "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and in what daily fear he went that some other god would oust him from his throne, we can in a measure understand how grievously this modern usurpation must "vex his ghost"—if a ghost of him is left, which I beg leave to doubt.

But then, was he not always angry with something or somebody? It was a mad kind of anger, too, because mostly engendered by the results of his own ineptitude and folly. And herein we have a parallel to the character of King Lear. As the mad monarch gave all that he had to his daughters, so Jahveh showered blessings on his chosen people. In each case base ingratitude followed. Lear *might*, but Jahveh *must*, have expected as much. Therefore, while we may forgive in some measure the outbursts of Lear, Jahveh's angry disappointment and chagrin, leading to the deluge of the world, is absolutely inexplicable and indefensible. Many points of similarity occur between the ravings of Lear and the passionate fulminations and impotent fury of Jahveh. One's sympathy, however, as far as it is excited at all, must be entirely bestowed on the mad king. He did not—if Jahveh did—create and order things from the beginning of the world with a complete knowledge of what would happen.

As Lear's unfilial daughters set to work to reduce the number of the poor old king's attendant knights, so in these latter days Jahveh's quondam friends have undertaken the task of gradually reducing the bulk of the Jew God's "revelation." The authority of one book after another has been swept away until it has become generally understood that in the Old Testament, at least, there is no inspired revelation at all. It seems, therefore, time indeed that Jahveh joined the other dead gods of history. "He but usurped his life," and during the past half century has simply "crawled toward death."

In Mr. F. Frankfort Moore's remarkable novel, *Phyllis of Philistia*, there are various striking allusions to Jahveh as the world now knows him, and to Jahveh's special friends whom no one now-a-days would care to know. A fashionable Rationalist clergyman, the Rev. George Holland, writes a book in which the favorites of the Jewish God are severely but justly handled. For this, Phyllis breaks off her engagement with the rev. gentleman. Phyllis says: "I could not marry an Atheist, however sincere he might be." "An Atheist!" exclaims Lady Earlscourt; "Mr. Holland is not an Atheist. On the contrary, he actually believes that there are two gods: one worshipped of the Jews long ago, the other by us now-a-days."

Undoubtedly Jahveh has been superseded, and it may be truly said of any Christian believer who would still present him as the model of divine perfection: "He hates him [Jahveh] who would upon the rack of this tough world stretch him out longer."

These references to Shakespeare suggest the reproduction of a very pertinent inquiry in the before-mentioned novel: "Why," asks the Rev. Mr. Holland, "should not Shakespeare be sung in the churches—Shakespeare's divine poetry—instead of the nonsense rhymes that people call hymns?"

Francis Neale.

PLEASING GOD.

Looking into a Sunday school not long since, while the superintendent was addressing the school, I heard once more the old chestnut that I had heard a thousand times before: "Children, strive always to please God." And each little, innocent simpleton looked as though that was the proper thing to do, having been told it so often that it had become in their unthinking minds, not a lesson to be thought about, but a phrase, a flower of speech, an old story to be sung, a part of the ceremony to be performed, and the duty was done when they had piously listened to it.

It is a favorite phrase, and we hear it everywhere, from the Salvation Army hobo in the gutter, in his grotesque uniform of red and blue, to the bishop at the altar in his flowing white gown. "Live so as to please God." What does it mean, and how are we to please God? If God is infinite in wisdom, in goodness, and in power, he must be abundantly able to please himself; why should he care whether we please him or not? Nobody knows what will please him but himself, and he won't tell us, but hides

Digitized by Google

himself away up above the stars beyond the scope of our most powerful telescopes; whether over Texas, or in the directly contrary direction over China, we never can know. It is true the ministers and priests undertake to tell us what will please him, but can we rely upon what they tell us when it is palpably evident that all they tell us is just what will please themselves? Then they will say, There is the Bible; that will tell you how to please God. Will it? I propose in this article to show that the Bible is as unreliable as the ministers and priests are, and that the rules laid down by the Bible cannot be trusted to please any reasonable God. But the Bible God is not reasonable; on the contrary, he is so changeable and capricous that no man can tell what is likely to please him. The priests have been obliged to invent excuses for him; to account for his capricious conduct by saying that "his ways are not as our ways"; for that reason we can never know how to take him when he violates all rules of reason and common sense, nor know whether any conduct of ours will please him or not.

He even cheats his own priests, and puts a lying spirit into their mouths, as he did in the case of Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 22). Ahab was anxious to please God, so much so that he kept four hundred priests to tell him how to do it. God had a grudge against him, notwithstanding his piety, and wanted to get him killed; so he put a lying spirit into all these four hundred priests to put him up to go to war against Ramoth Gilead, where God had arranged matters so that he should be killed. And he was killed for no reason at all but trusting the priests and trying to please God.

That lying spirit has stuck to the priests from that day to this; it won't do to take their word for what will please God. The Bible is God's word, of course—the priests tell us so; but this little story about Ahab, and the conspiracy of God and the priests against him, shows that it won't do to believe any of them, nor the Bible either.

In old times, when God was only a wooden image, or a brass one, or some other metal set up before the eyes of the people, it was just the same as now. God did not speak, nor give any other indication of what would please him; but he had a crowd of priests around him, who told the people that he liked the smell of burning flesh and blood, and to please him they must bring their sacrifices, which, of course, went to the benefit of the priests. And when the people were sufficiently submissive they went still further; and if they found a fellow who didn't believe in their right to speak for God, nor in their knowledge of what would please him, then God required a human sacrifice; and the heretic was burned on the altar under the nose of God, thus pleasing him, or at least pleasing the priests, which amounted to the same thing; they got rid of a dangerous enemy, and taught the people the danger of free thinking, or at least free talking.

After a while the people became a little civilized, and too sharp to be fooled with the wooden or brazen image, and the hocus-pocus performance before him. When science had demonstrated that these gods could do them neither good nor harm, and faith in the priests was growing faint, then it became necessary to yield a little to the scientific spirit of the age, and save the power and influence of the priesthood, by giving up the wooden and brass gods and setting up invisible gods, so far off up in the sky that they could not be examined by the laity, and proved to be as harmless and helpless as the wooden ones.

But these invisible, or, more properly, non-existent, gods were to have all the powers and appetites that had formerly been ascribed to the old visible gods, and the priests were still to be their agents to tell us what they said, and what we want to do to please them, as well as what they would do to us if we did not please them.

So the old racket was still worked, and ignorant people, anxious to know how to please the gods, sought the priests, and were instructed to obey them and bring their sacrifices—in money by this time—and they would see that the gods got the benefit of them. But they never produced any receipts to show that the promise had been fulfilled. Their dupes must have faith in their word, or else the gods would not be pleased.

As time went on and knowledge increased, the gods began to die out. In the most enlightened parts of the earth they are all dead but one, and he seems to be in declining health. We have ecclesiastical authority for saying that two-thirds of the people of Europe and America don't care whether they please him or not. Many of them are willing to go to church—if it is a fashionable one, and the upholstery is fine and comfortable; but they have no "living faith" in what the priest tells them. The music must be first-class, but nobody troubles themselves about the sermon. A brass band has been introduced in some churches as an attraction; and Talmages, in New York, employed the most famous cornet player of that city, for a while, in imitation of the ram's horns of the Jews that blew down the walls of Jericho; but the horn of Levy even does not seem to make any impression upon the walls of the modern Jericho.

If God's ways were like our ways, it might readily be supposed that no better way could be devised to please him than to treat him to the splendid intonation, technic, and expression of Levy's cornet playing; but when we remember that he is a "being without body, parts, or passions," it is difficult to conceive how he could be pleased with music that, having no ears, he could not hear. The same difficulty applies to the prayers that are recommended by the priests as a performance likely to please him. Being located a long way above the atmosphere, and all sound being but vibrations of that medium, of course no sound can ever reach him where there was no air to convey it, even if he has ears. Evidently he cannot be pleased by any sounds, and the attempt to please him by appealing to the sense of hearing might as well be given up.

As he has no organs of sight, he cannot be pleased by our kneeling before him; and even such a performance as King David's, when he pulled off his trousers and danced around the ark of the covenant, must have been of no effect as a means of communicating pleasure to God, even supposing he had an appreciation of the ridiculous. Again, the astronomers tell us that no object is so small or so distant that no parallax can be drawn from it and measured, or is perceptible to sight. (A parallax is the angle formed by two lines drawn from the opposite sides of an object, and converging to a point in the eye of the observer.) If the object is so distant that no perceptible parallax can be drawn, then the object cannot be expected to convey any idea of what it is, or what it is doing. If God had eyes as big as the Lick telescope, he could not derive either pleasure or pain from anything that we might do. What is the use, then, of trying to please God? We have no communication with him, and so far as we know he will never know that we are trying to please him; neither can we know whether he is pleased or not.

We can safely and profitably lay aside all cares and fears about God. He has never done anything to disturb the peace of the world, nor of families, whatever the Gospels may have said about him; and he never will. A God without body, parts, or passions can be nothing but an idea, a principle, or method of action, which we term the laws of nature, and which priests have personified and made into a bugaboo to frighten fools with. We speak of the principle upon which the mechanical forces act, the lever, the pully, the inclined plane, the screw, etc.; but who but a knave or fool would think of personifying such principles, giving the masculine name, and speaking of them as he, him, and his? But that is just what the priests have done for the mechanical principle upon which the universe works, and they persistently exhort us to try always to please that mechanical principle—which mean only to please them.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

It need not be disputed that religious institutions have been a necessary accompaniment—often a useful one—of human progress. But the question for us is, not what was the value of religion when man was a savage, who thought one big "god" hurled thunderbolts from his residence in the clouds, and that another dwelt in an ocean cave to send the devastating hurricane and earthquake, but what is its value to-day, when men have learned, at all events partially, to control the powers they once thought were supernatural, and have replaced their former ignorant reliance upon "superior powers" by self-dependence and an intelligent belief in the universal reign of law? We venture the firm opinion that not only has religion ceased to have any useful moral effect, but that all dogmatic religious beliefs are radically opposed to true morality, and stand in the way of all progress.—*J. Spencer Ellis.*

Digitized by Google

SUNLESS SEAS OF SOLID STONE.

When thoughtful people try to fit
The growth of grass and tree
With common sense and "Holy Writ,"
They find they don't agree.

But ante-solar grass and trees
The folk can well admit
Who "swallow" *ante*-solar *seas*:
The Bible-ites, to wit.

The old Creation tale was told
Within a sultry zone
By folk who didn't know that cold
Turns water into stone.

Without the sun, no rain, nor lake,
Nor stream could ever be;
It is his mighty rays that make
The dew-drop, sap, and sea.

The thought of *pre*-sun rain or sea
Would all our knowledge mock;
Sans Sol, the sea like stone would be,
And adamantine rock.

When winter's truant, furtive, sun
His sidelong glances throws,
The frigid streamlets cease to run;
The rill no longer flows.

Before the sun was made, we're told,
Jehovah made the seas;
Apparently, before the cold
Had learned the way to freeze.

To-day the cold will freeze the seas
When *feebly* shines the sun;
But Bible seas refused to freeze
Though sunshine there was *none!*

G. L. Mackenzie.

ACID DROPS.

Emperor William stands level with God Almighty in Germany. One is protected by the law of blasphemy, and the other by the law of sedition. It is a positive crime in Germany to say anything disrespectful of the Emperor. Critics were prosecuted for hinting that his musical compositions were not quite worthy of Beethoven. Any person who said he was not exactly as wise as Solomon, or as handsome as Apollo, would soon have leisure to think it over again in a government hotel. Even talk in private circles is not privileged. A young Silesian engineer has just been sent to prison for six months for a remark he made in the domestic circle about the little-great William. His mother-in-law reported him to the authorities! Emperor William should invite that lady to the next court ball.

Dr. Stanton Coit, the Ethical Culturist, has been put forward as one of the School Board candidates for West Lambeth. Speaking on Clapham-common last Sunday, the *Chronicle* reports him as saying this: "Rather than permit on the one hand the introduction of creeds and catechisms, or on the other consent to the utter exclusion of the Bible and religious teaching, he would let the Compromise stand until the teachers were qualified to give instruction in those great moral principles which make good citizens, and which should be the foundation of all good government." If this is a correct report, and if such is the spirit of the Ethical Culturists, we do not see how the Secularists are to continue working with them on the recently-formed Committee of Moral Instruction. The Secularists are against religious teaching in Board schools *first of all*, and they will not abandon that opposition for the mere sake of co-operating with the Ethical Culturists.

Russia is a land of strange sects. A report comes of a new one founded by Alexander Panjaschko. Its central idea is the devilishness of the body. The Panjaschkovtzi never wash, never shave, never cut their nails, and never change their clothes, nor do they ever clean their houses, and the food they eat is scarcely fit for dogs. Their morality seems to be on a par with their habits. A considerable number of them are said to exist in the province of Saratov.

Angiolillo, the assassin of Canovas, died with a courage worthy of a better cause. He declined the attentions of the priests with firmness, though with courtesy. They wanted to help him make his peace with God, and he said that he could do all that himself; besides, he did not believe in the existence of God. The doctor could not detect any change in his pulse. What a pity that such courage and steadfastness were not turned to a better account!

The King of Siam (according to the *Westminster Gazette*) has been invited to place himself at the head of the reformed Buddhist movement, which was started some years ago in Ceylon. One part of the program of this movement is the training of missionaries to spread Buddhism throughout the world. A great central college is, if possible, to be established in India. It is hoped that a reunion will be brought about of all the Buddhist sects. If this can be achieved, there will be a new power in the East. Significantly enough, there is also a revival of the old aggressive spirit in the Mohammedan world. If the devotees of Brahmanism should also be united, Christianity will find itself face to face with three powerful religions, and will probably meet with much trouble.

Miss Kingsley, who, we believe, is a daughter of the Rev. C. Kingsley, bears testimony to the baleful effects of Christian civilization on the natives of West Africa. In her *Travels* she urges upon those at home "the importance of combining technical instruction in their mission teaching, which, by instilling into the African mind ideas of discipline and providing him with manual occupation, will save him from those relapses which are now the reproach of missionary effort and the curse and degradation of the African."

An Englishman in the Philippines gave this testimony as to the doings of the Spanish authorities there. He said: "In an old dungeon in the fortress of Manila some hundred people were thrown in one night. There was scarcely room for thirty. The miserable wretches were up to their knees in filthy and putrid mud. Next morning fifty-nine corpses were taken out. I am told the Spaniards are actually nailing the natives' hands up to the walls and flagellating them, applying the thumbscrew, etc." Spain prides itself upon being a Christian country. It is Christian, and, moreover, it provides a valuable lesson as to what Christianity was, and is, apart from secular influences of civilization.

Mr. A. Pigeon, in the *Crescent*, bears testimony that the so-called Spanish Anarchists are men of refinement and education, who would in this country be considered as mild, but rather unpractical, Liberals.

The *British Weekly* records that Protestants are met with intolerance in Spain. The church of the Irish Presbyterian Mission College at Puerto, Santa Maria, near Cadiz, has been closed by order of the authorities, the pastor being reminded that "there was no religious liberty in Spain."

In last week's *Echo* Mr. W. Hudson inquired what were the marks of the true Church as revealed in the New Testament. He was immediately answered by Mr. G. L. Mackenzie and H. Reilly, both of whom pointed him to Christ's last words as recorded in Mark xvi. 17, 18: "And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Nothing more could be required than that all claiming to be Christians should be submitted to Christ's own tests.

"Christ's true disciples all may know
By signs like some of these;
They cast out demons as they go,
And conquer all disease.

"They take up deadly serpents oft,
Without the least alarm,
And drink the poison lethic draught
Secure from death or harm."

The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, the Radical rector of Hexton, says: "The fact is, the ordinary clergyman thinks Liberalism means disendowment, and, as he considers the cash-box more than Christianity, he won't have anything to do with it." Mr. Fillingham seems to understand the gentlemen of his own cloth.

The average salary of a Presbyterian minister in the United States, according to the *Interior*, is "but little, if anything, more than that of a mechanic." His ability, however, is vastly less, and his use infinitesimal in comparison.

The American *Congregationalist*, in a recent issue, comments on the illusory character and uncertain value of church statistics. Of 5,482 churches in its own connection 2,148 have less than forty members each, and many have less than ten. President McLean, of the Pacific Theological Seminary, is quoted as saying that in California "there are

Digitized by Google

one hundred churches too many; and, if they should die off, it would be the best thing for the kingdom of God."

Divinity Doctor Witherspoon, of Louisville Theological Seminary, says, in the *Homiletic Review*, that the statistics of church attendance in the United States are "simply appalling." This despite the fact that the churches are run as social clubs, and made attractive with orchestras, prima donnas, sensational sermons, and pulpit harlequinade.

The Rev. Mace Coleman killed Professor Pattersea at Montgomery, Alabama, on the 28th ult., at the Baptist Congress there in session.

Edward Hext, alias McFarlane, of Chesham, is doing three months' hard labor for stealing jewellery and money from a public-house where he had been given a night's lodging because he said he was penniless. During the night of the prisoner's arrest he aroused the police by praying loudly in his cell. He asked God to put it into the hearts of the magistrates to give him another chance. His prayer was heard. Five previous convictions were brought against him, and the magistrates gave him a whole quarter to continue the second part of his prayer—namely, that God would enable him to turn over a new leaf. Probably it is not what he really wanted; but that is a matter between himself and "the one above."

The attention of subscribers to the Hospital Sunday Fund should be drawn to a case reported in the *Daily Mail* of August 18. It appears that a young woman known to Mr. W. Sowerbutts, of the London City Mission, as a poor and very worthy applicant wanted a wooden leg, her old one being perfectly useless after ten years of hard wear. Being without means of obtaining a new one, she was sent first to the Mansion House, and thence directed to the office of the Hospital Sunday Fund. They gave her a form which must be signed by the minister of the church to which the applicant belongs. The poor girl attended no church or chapel, and has in consequence to remain without a leg. We know that Freethinkers in the parks and elsewhere have subscribed to this fund, and have had occasion before now, in connection with the question of the employment of nurses, to recommend that subscriptions shall rather be given to the Hospital Saturday Fund, which is more open to popular control. A powerful leverage is given to the clergy by making the distribution of public charity depend on their goodwill.

Arthur William Brown, an inmate of one of General Booth's shelters at King's Cross, has been sentenced to three days' imprisonment for stealing and selling waste-paper. It came out in the evidence that the prisoner had to draw about a barrow all day collecting waste-paper for the Army, and could bring in as much as nine shillings' worth a day. For this work he received his bed and food, which he said was not fit to eat, and the magnificent sum of sixpence a week. This is what General Booth calls elevating the residuum and finding work for the unemployed. If it were done by a private employer, it would be called sweating. But circumstances, especially religious ones, alter cases.

"Blood and Fire" is General Booth's trade mark and the motto of the Salvation Army, and one would think that his soldiers were well used to both items. But when a false alarm of "Fire!" was raised at the Congress Hall, Clapton, on Sunday evening, there was a wild rush for the doors. Several persons were injured, and many were carried away in a fainting condition.

Mr. Shiel, the magistrate at Westminster Police-court, seems to be quite fanatical in his love of the compulsory vaccination laws. Frederic Longman being summoned for refusing to have his child vaccinated, a medical certificate was produced that the child was unfit for the operation. As the certificate was obtained, very naturally, after the summons, Mr. Shiel said that he should fine the defendant £1 and 2s. costs, or fourteen days' hard labor in default. He adhered to this decision, although told that the child was in a dying condition; indeed, the child actually died while the case was proceeding, and is now beyond the reach of vaccination officers and magistrates. Such acts of "authority" breed anarchy and contempt and hatred of the laws.

The *Sydney Bulletin* says of the Australian production of the "Sign of the Cross": "The attendance at any time is largely composed of brethren who have found salvation. The typical brother, shedding his oily beam upon this beautiful play, is a droll study in self-gratulation. He bangs his cold, damp paws together, and beats the carpet with his redeemed feet, when the patriarchal Christian (A.D. 64) says, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand,' for there is much Y.M.C.A. comfort in the thought that the Kingdom must certainly have arrived and got to a high state of perfection during the past 1833 years. And, again, when the giddy Pagans (A.D. 64) complain that their modern waltz-melody stands no chance against the *fin-de-siècle* hymn tune of early Christianity, the d.c. pietist revels in the Pagan's discomfiture. He refers to the musical 'fight between Pluto and Christus' as a noble dramatic conception, quite forgetting for the moment, that Messrs. Moody and Sankey, likewise General Booth, bemoan the Devil's luck in capturing all the best tunes. And again, the brother aforesaid demonstrates with his four limbs upon hearing from the wicked stage that Pontius Pilate found no evil in the Nazarene. At this point the enthusiast is apt to glance triumphantly around the theatre, as though he would like to know whether Infidelity can find anything to say after *that*."

Another writer in the same paper remarks: "The dialogue of 'The Sign of the Cross' is bald, recalling Sheridan on the purple patches of Richard Cumberland: 'lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize.' An actor's play. The bites in Barrett's sentences are plundered from Holy Writ, except one from Carlyle: 'What is Life? A gleam of Time between two eternities.' Whereupon the amphitheatre gives the conveyancer a round of plaudits."

The vicar of Marylebone put a lot of Ritualistic trumpery into his church, in opposition to the wishes of his parishioners. Many do the same. But this vicar forgot to get a faculty from the Bishop of London for his innovations. His churchwardens petitioned against him, and a side aisle of St. Paul's Cathedral was devoted to hearing the proceedings, much to the amusement of visitors to the Cathedral.

By the way, we wonder that the objectors to the reredos at St. Paul's do not lift their voices against the new cartoon, which is quite a secular representation of a text which may be claimed as Atheistic—that in Ecclesiastes which says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

The Rev. Thomas Needham, of New Brunswick New Jersey, has caused a sensation by asserting that "there are no female angels in heaven; they are all men, and will be a mighty army." Of course he has scripture for it. All the angels mentioned in the Bible are masculine; moreover, their advent among the daughters of men was often followed by an increase of the population.

The *Sunday World*, of New York, solicited the views of many theologians on this knotty point. The Rev. T. Douglas, of the West Fifty-first-street Presbyterian Church, says that in the hereafter we shall recognise each other, "but not as male and female." He wisely refrains from explaining this. The Rev. J. M. Henderson, pastor of Bethel Methodist Church, knows all about it. He says: "There is no such thing as sex in the spiritual world, either here or hereafter." But Mr. Ballington Booth will have none of it. He knows that his "own mother is in heaven," and believes women are wanted in the celestial choir.

Some time ago the Rev. G. D. Haughton, B.A., published a book entitled *Sex in the World to Come*, in which he contended that sexual distinctions would be retained. Swedenborg, in his profound work on *The Delights of Wisdom Relating to Conjugial Love, and the Pleasures of Insanity Relating to Scortatory Love*, goes a deal further, and contends that not only are men males and women females after death, but that love of the sex remains and marriages are contracted.

Joseph E. Cardon, an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day-Saints, writes to the *Boston Investigator* an article headed "God is in Form like Man." He cites Jesus as saying that "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and shows from the old book that men are made after the similitude of God (Jas. iii. 9). Adam walked and conversed with God. The Lord talked and ate with Abraham, who also washed his feet (Gen. xxxii. 24-29). Jacob saw him face to face (Gen. xxxii. 29, 30). Moses talked with him as one man talks with another (Ex. xxxiii. 11); and he also saw his back parts. He promised to speak with Moses mouth to mouth (Num. xii. 8). We are told in the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy that he has a hand and an arm. The Psalm (cxxxix. 16) tells us he has eyes, and Isaiah (xxx. 27) says he has lips and a tongue. John describes his head, hair, and eyes (Rev. i. 14).

Elder Cardon concludes that "God not only possesses a body and parts, but flesh, bones, and sinews, and all the attributes, organs, senses, and affections of a perfect man." This is the Mormon doctrine, and the saints have a hymn:—

> The God that others worship is not the God for me,
> He has no parts nor passions, and cannot hear or see;
> But I've a God who has a heart to feel and eyes to see—
> O that's the God, O that's the God, O that's the God for me.

Digitized by Google

A scene occurred at St. Peter's Roman Catholic church at Blackburn last Sunday. Father Upan, the curate, was preaching when Father Kirwin, the rector, violently rang the sanctuary bell, and compelled him to stop. After some high words with the rector the curate resumed his sermon, but after a few minutes the rector peremptorily ordered him to retire. It was explained by Father Kirwin that he stopped the sermon because his curate would not bow his head at the mention of the holy name, and the congregation dispersed amid great excitement.

The unco' guid have come near having more deaths at their doors. The steamship Victoria, being unable to use the pier at Dunoon to land her passengers on Sunday, was sending them ashore in boats. One of the boats capsized, and its ten occupants were thrown into the water. They were rescued with much difficulty, one of them passing right under the steamer. The passengers then demanded to be landed on the pier, and, the steamer coming alongside, they went for the entrance, and burst it open with the aid of a wheelbarrow. The police were there, but offered no resistance.

The Jews have suffered such Christian treatment in Russia, Austria, and Roumania that it is no wonder they desire to set up a State of their own, where they will be at liberty to develop their lives in their own fashion. But it is very doubtful if they will carry out Zionism in Palestine. The present Sultan will not resign what is as much holy ground to the Moslem as to the Jew. Moreover, the country is too sterile to support a large population.

Despite the taboo put on the Zionist Congress at Bale, there is no doubt the project of a Jewish State has excited such hopes in the poorer ones of the chosen race that it will not be allowed to drop until definite efforts have been made for its realization.

As late as the time of William III., when money was needed to prosecute the war with France, it was seriously proposed to exact, under the semblance of taxation, a hundred thousand pounds from the Jews. This proposition, says Macaulay, "was at first favorably received by the House, but difficulties arose. The Jews presented a petition in which they declared that they could not afford to pay such a sum, and that they would rather leave the kingdom than stay there to be ruined." After some discussion the Jew-tax was abandoned.

At a Conference of the Church Missionaries of Ceylon the European missionaries had a breakfast at the Mission House together, while the native ones were sent to breakfast at the house of a native schoolmaster. Commenting on this, the *Buddhist*, of Colombo, Ceylon (July 30), says that the day of Christian missionaries doing any good is past. It remarks: "We are fully aware that neither the good men of Europe, who contribute largely for the support of Eastern missions, nor the pious and liberal-minded clergy, know the proceedings and methods of their agents here. If they know them, we are certain that many of the English missionaries here, who are driving about in stylish turnouts, and living in fashionable bungalows, with servants *ad lib*, and who feel it a shame to be seen seated with a brother native clergyman, will not be kept here a day longer than they can help."

Jones has just returned from a visit to the Holy Land. He says he should never have thought, if he had not been forewarned, that God would have chosen such a sterile, stoney, and verminous country as his birthplace and residence. Even Western enterprise has not yet made the roads decent. The chief industry is preying on pilgrims; the leading manufacture, "objects of piety." Fancy the smile with which Jews carve crosses out of bogus "wood from the Mount of Olives" to sell to Christian travellers.

The birthplace of the second person of the Trinity is, as Justin Martyr said it was, a cave, known as the Grotto of the Nativity. That there may be no doubt about the spot, it has a Latin inscription: *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.* The romance is rather spoilt by the dirty and evil-smelling priests who are always in attendance to explain things and take the cash. Among things explained are, that a white marble slab represents the cradle of the Savior, and that an aperture represents a spring which God caused to flow from the rock for the use of the Holy Family, and which was stopped when they departed for Egypt. It seems a pity God doesn't provide water and soap for the priests.

You can see for a little extra payment the very spot where Joseph met the angel who explained things to him. Another coin will show you the tomb where are buried all the innocents massacred by Herod (Jones believed this), and close by are the tombs of the holy saints Eusebius, Eustochia, Jerome, and other pie'ists who studied and prayed in the caves of Bethlehem. One of the most holy of these caves is called the Milk Grotto, because the B.V.M., in offering lacteal nourishment to her juvenile divinity, spilled some drops from her at once virginal and maternal bosom. Ever since a chip of stone from the rock (price three dollars) is a sure cure for milk stoppage. Surely such a cave is worth going to see.

Jones says that the dirtiest chapel of all in Palestine—and that is saying a bold word—is the chapel at the Shepherds' Grotto, where the angels announced the supernatural birth to the shepherds. Whole generations of pastoral keepers seem to have left their effluvia there. The conclusion Jones has come to from his inspection of the Holy Land is that the inhabitants must all have originally been troglodytes living in caves. Stoning, he thinks, must have been their principal diversion, as stoning to death was certainly their form of punishment.

On the Mount of Olives they still show the marks of the footprints of Jesus when he ascended from this earth to some of the other planets. Jones inquired how it happened that, if the body of the Lord was so light that he could levitate aloft, his feet were so heavy as to leave such infernal kicks behind him. He was told that St. Jerome, in the fourth century, certified to the footprints, and therewith expressed himself perfectly content. Jones says that the only native of Palestine for whom he has any esteem is the ass. It was the only one that did not continually cry for "backsheesh." But he found one sufficient. He did not try riding into Jerusalem on two.

Dr. St. George Mivart, the Catholic naturalist, says in *Francisan Annals* that "not less than twenty thousand human lives are annually lost by serpent bites in India." He does not state how he reconciles the fact with an ever-watching Providence.

As a matter of fact, religious superstition is largely responsible for the excessive mortality from snake bites. The natives regard all kinds of serpents with reverential awe, which makes them antagonize efforts for their destruction.

Godless scoffers in the bush are again reminded by the drought that, previous to the advent of priests, parsons, gospel-shops, and Salvation Army, rains were abundant (comparatively), dandry spells of infrequent occurrence. The moral whereof whoso runs may read.

Bishop Meyers, of Melbourne (bishop of Nat. Kinsman's church—own make), has been lecturing on "Drunken Parsons I have Met." He tells of one minister who was so tight that he went to sleep in the middle of his own sermon. Bishop Meyers shouldn't jump to conclusions. We have often seen good teetotalers fall asleep in the middle of a sermon—why should the parson always escape the influence?—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Canon Pennington tells in the *Guardian* how he, as a diocesan inspector of schools, "always asked the children, chiefly the children of Nonconformists," questions bearing on denominational religious instruction. He says, in so many words: "We are training the children of Nonconformists to be children of the Church." This is exactly so, and is likely to remain so till Nonconformists come to see that the school is the place for secular instruction only.

"Give us this day our daily bread," Jesus Christ taught all Christians to pray. That was nearly two thousand years ago, and now comes Mr. T. P. O'Connor, who asks, in the *Daily Telegraph*, whether daily bread is a good thing. He inclines to believe, with the late Mr. Isaac Holden, M.P., that bread is not the proper staff of life, and that our consumption of it tends to diminish our longevity. Mr. O'Connor will have to reckon with his Savior—that is, if he has one.

If a Rabbi should happen to die in Jerusalem at a time when the rain which annually fills the cisterns has been long in coming, and much anxiety has arisen in consequence, a piece of the dead man's shroud is cut off, dipped in water, and placed in his hand, so that he may not forget to pray for rain when he reaches the other side.—*Lucy M. J. Garnett, "Women of Turkey," vol. ii., p. 69.*

Josephus is careful not to tell that the Jews had no smith in Israel (1 Sam. xiii. 19). If at a later period no Israelite could obtain a spear or sword except Saul and Jonathan, how could the Israelites have gone out of Egypt an armed host? (Ex. xiii. 18; xiv. 8).—*S. F. Dunlap, "The Ghebers of Hebron," p. 244.*

Every tyrant has been of the opinion frankly expressed by Napoleon: "Priests are the most splendid gifts which Heaven can make to a Government."—*J. S. Stuart Glennie, Introduction to the "Women of Turkey."*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, August 29, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "God's Prison."
September 5, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.
October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society. November 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

S. HARTMANN, N. S. S. treasurer, as we are going to press, acknowledges a cheque for £2 towards the new Scheme, from the veteran A. Tripp, of Brighton.

J. A. FLEMING.—Nothing of the sort intended. We have no room at present for more on the subject.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Canon Taylor's articles on the failure of missions appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for, we think, October, 1887.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—National Secular Society's Executive, £2 2s.; G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d; J. M. Wheeler, 5s.

MR. E. COPLAND, the writer of the sketch of Mrs. Law (p 540), points out that the sentence, "The Anti Missionary Meeting at Manchester," ought to read "The Anti-Missionary *War* Meeting at *Newcastle*."

THOMAS MACLEISH.—Many thanks for your prompt reply to our inquiry. The fact that Dr. McDonald, of Glasgow, who certifies to the torture-marks on Francisco Gana, is a strong Conservative and Churchman is one of extreme importance.

POLICEMAN.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Kindly send us what you refer to if it appears.

G. W. BLYTHE.—There has of late been great pressure upon our space, and we fear there would be very little interest now in the subject you refer to.

J. RALSTON (Motherwell) has arranged with a newsagent to exhibit a *Freethinker* contents-sheet; the newsagent taking in a good supply of the paper, and friends undertaking to pay for any unsold copies. This correspondent hopes to see Mr. Foote at Motherwell shortly.

DR. HENRY SMITH writes:—"I remarked to a priest that of late I had felt a great desire to do more good, to be a better man, and to write more perfectly and in a better style. This feeling, I said, had taken a strong hold on my mind. He quietly remarked, 'It is a symptom of a diseased liver.'"

R. JOSLIN.—The tract is so silly that we do not know how to criticise it. How can one discuss with an idiot, or comment upon his drivellings?

J. K.—You have perhaps overlooked our condition, that letters must be accompanied by the full name and address of the writers. This is a universal press rule. Of course your name and address can be withheld from publication, but should be sent in as a guarantee of good faith.

H. LEES SUMNER (Birmingham) writes:—"When on a little holiday a week since, I read your *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. Anyone who wants a fillip to his Freethought should read it. I am sorry to hear it is out of print. The remarkably brave and able way in which you defended yourself, and the noble cause of free speech, is beyond all praise." We have for some time thought of abridging this book and publishing it at a smaller price, for the sake of those who have entered the Secular party since 1884, the year of our liberation from Holloway Gaol.

J. CUFF.—Thanks for the subscription (acknowledged elsewhere) and your good wishes.

G. F. DUPLAY.—You do not really answer anything we said. With most of your letter we are very much in agreement.

F. W. SWAIN.—Mr. Foote will try to offer you a date if you can obtain a suitable hall. Thanks for the list of subscribers to the Treasurer's Scheme.

P. D.—Mirabaud's (D'Holbach's) *System of Nature* is powerfully written, though somewhat diffuse and declamatory. An English translation is still published by Mr. Truelove, and can be obtained at Mr. Forder's, price 2s. 6d.

J. FISH (Chester).—Mr. Foote will be happy to pay your Branch a visit when he is delivering Sunday lectures in the neighborhood —perhaps in October or November. He will write to you when a date can be offered.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; J. Barry, 5s. This Scheme is suspended while an opportunity is given to the larger Treasurer's Scheme. At the same time, Mr. Foote is carrying out his engagement with Mr. C. Cohen till the end of August, and this involves an expenditure which ought not to fall upon him alone.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Sorry to hear you have been unwell.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Vegetarian Review—Daily Mail—Northern Daily Telegraph—Isle of Man Times—Surrey Comet—Blue Grass Blade—Liberty—Lucifer—New York Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Two Worlds—L'Etoile Socialiste—Progressive Thinker.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a fine audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, including many ladies in tasteful summer costumes, and several American visitors. The lecture was on "God and the Devil," and was freely punctuated with laughter and applause. Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (August 29), taking for his subject "God's Prison."

Mr. Chainey, of the *Boston Investigator*, was in Mr. Foote's audience on Sunday evening. He is an extremely pleasant young man, with a very good head and a modest, engaging demeanor—so different from the typical Yankee of British imagination. Mr. Chainey spent an hour at Mr. Foote's house after the lecture. He sailed for Boston on Thursday. We congratulate editor Mendum on having such a bright young colleague.

One attraction England will always have for the best Americans. It contains the graves of so many of the mighty dead in the world of literature. Mr. Chainey spoke reverentially of his visit to the grave of George Eliot at Highgate.

The *Chatham and Rochester Observer* of Saturday last gives a very fair report of Mr. Watts's recent lecture at New Brompton. It says: "A large audience was attracted to hear this eloquent speaker."

The same journal gives a graphic account of the annual "outing" of the children and their parents belonging to the Chatham Secular Sunday-school, which, we are pleased to hear, is in a flourishing condition.

Mr. A. B. Moss's annual holiday is over, and he has resumed work. On Sunday morning he lectured out of doors at Camberwell, and in the afternoon at Peckham, both meetings being large and appreciative. Mr. Moss is now making up his winter list of engagements.

The holidays are getting over, and the days are shortening. Next week's *Freethinker* will therefore contain a more thorough presentation of the Treasurer's Scheme for the financial reorganization of the National Secular Society. At the last meeting of the Executive a special sub-committee was appointed to attend to the promotion of this Scheme, and to report upon details as early as possible.

Next week we shall print a complete list of the promises up to date, so as to show exactly how the Scheme stands in this respect. Meanwhile we have to make some fresh acknowledgments. Mr. J. W. Gott promises 10s. annually. Writing to Mr. Hartmann, he says that there are half-a-dozen sympathizers in Bradford alone whom a collecting secretary might call upon with advantage. John Cuff promises £1 (paid); Alert, 5s.; J. Ralston and brother (Motherwell), 10s. each. James Stanway promises 10s., and hopes to increase it before the end of the year. Mr. Partridge sends another Birmingham promise, J. C. Bridges, 10s. 6d. Mr. Swain sends the following promises from the Derby Branch:—W. H. Whitney, 10s.; G. Harper, 5s; F. W. Swain, 5s.; J. Brownsword, 5s.; T. Newton, 5s.; J. Brooks, 5s.; H. McGuinness, 5s.; T. Gorbell, 5s. Mr. Fish sends three promises from Chester:—J. Edwards, 5s.; Todd, 5s.; Fish, 5s.

Joseph Kimberley (Bermondsey) says he thought of promising 5s., but then he thought "that is only a penny a week," so he resolved to forego a certain amount of tobacco, and put the price of it on his subscription. He promises 15s. himself, and has induced three of his shopmates to promise a donation—F. Simons, 10s.; Luke Brooker, 10s.; James Boorman, 10s. These are all working men, and how many more could imitate their example!

"Pickup," in his "Screapins" in the *Workington Star*, calls attention to the preaching on the Pier and Freethought

Digitized by Google

opposition. He says in Cumberland dialect: "T' preacher gat off a varra gud lectur, an' he gat a varra gud hearin' anaw, bit wen he had finisht a man at hed bin takkin' aw in started a opposishun lectur fra a Freethinker's point o' view, an' t' way 'at he hannelt t' furst chap's sarmon meade me think 'at he had bin at t' same gemm befoar. He was varra gentlemanly; neah hard wurds was spokken, an' thear was as gud order as if it hed bin in a church. Thear was neah organ nor music—only t' music o' t' watter—bit thear was plenty o' fresh air, an' them 'at wanted a smeuk cud hev yan, and thear was neah collecksbun. Which o' t' chaps hed t' best on it Ah's nut prepared ta say, for Ah niver argy on politics or religin, bit them at taks an interest in these things shud gaa an judge for thersels."

The *University Magazine* for September opens with a trenchant criticism of John Morley's Romanes' Lecture on Macchiavelli, by J. M. Robertson. In "The Story of the Fall: Its True Significance," by H. O. Newland, that writer thinks it has more than a phallic significance, having reference to different races. We rather distrust the researches of M. Plongeon, who is quoted. E. H. Parker has a notable article on "Infanticide in China." G. Delaney writes on "The Birth of the Soul," and Ebenezer H. discusses "Is the Rationalist a Debtor to Christianity?"

The following passage in the opening address of Sir John Evans at the meeting of the British Association at Toronto is worth remembering: "When we remember that the date of the commencement of the Neolithic, or Surface-Stone Period, is still shrouded in the mist of a dim antiquity, and that prior to that commencement the River-Drift Period had long come to an end; and when we further take into account the almost inconceivable ages that even under the most favorable conditions the excavation of wide and deep valleys by river action implies, the remoteness of the date at which the Palæolithic Period had its beginning almost transcends our powers of imagination." How pitiful does this make the story of human descent from Adam and Eve.

Sir John Evans believes that Britain was inhabited during the Palæolithic period, but he does not claim for our island home, which in the dim ages of the past was not an island, but part of the continent, that it was the place in which the civilization of the Palæolithic period originated. He points to the discovery in other countries and continents of implements so identical in form and character with the British specimens that they might have been manufactured by the same hands. It is safe to say that, had this address been delivered a generation ago, it would have provoked a urious outcry from the orthodox. To-day they are anxious for peace at any price, so long as they may have the teaching of the children.

The annual excursion of the Birmingham Branch took place on Sunday last. There was a good muster of friends, who journeyed by rail to Worcester, and thence, by special steamer, for a trip up the Severn. A most enjoyable day was spent among the beautiful scenery of the river. After tea short addresses were delivered by Messrs. Taylor, Ridgway, and Armfield, and a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. W. T. Pitt (treasurer) for his labors in organizing the outing.

The Plymouth Branch desires us to announce that Mr. E. P. Luke, who has recently returned from Australia and India, will deliver a series of anti-theological lectures in the Co-operative Hall, beginning to-day (Aug. 29), when his subject will be "Christian and Secular Salvation."

During the four hours that the Tate Gallery was open on Sunday afternoon there were 3,643 visitors. According to the *Daily News*, they were largely drawn from the working-class population of the district. Still, we suppose the clergy will go on saying that the working-classes don't really want these institutions open on Sunday.

The secretary of the Sunday Society points out that, as the taxpayers support the Galleries and Museums, payment is really made for these institutions being kept open on Sundays, and they are legally "disorderly houses." Surely the opening of the Tate Gallery will be the last nail in the coffin of that obnoxious Act of George III. The following list of the number of visitors to the different institutions ought to be enough to dispose of the old argument that the people do not want Sunday entertainments:—National Gallery of British Arts, 3,643; National Gallery, 1,899; British Museum, 1,121; Natural History Museum, 1,345; South Kensington Museum, 2,106; Bethnal Green Museum, 1,389; National Portrait Gallery, exceeding 600.

At the Co-operators' Festival at the Crystal Palace the veteran, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, was presented with a fine oil portrait of himself, painted by the German, von Kamptz, an officer now in exile for offending against the Emperor. Mr. Holyoake gave the portrait to the Labor Association. The *Times* of August 20 devoted half a column to the proceedings.

The *Star* estimated the Trafalgar-square crowd as between twenty and thirty thousand. "Mr. Foote, the Secularist leader," it said, "lent an academic touch to the discussion by a fine appeal based on the celebrated declaration of Mirabeau's," about treating men like brutes till they become wild beasts.

The *Morning Advertiser*, in its long report of the Trafalgar-square Demonstration, said: "It must be confessed that Mr. Foote, the Secularist leader, elevated the tone of the gathering by an appeal to the higher principles of human liberty." Of Mr. Cohen it says that his "diction was almost philosophic," and his "apostrophes to liberty were almost Baconian in their clearness."

The *Daily News* said that "the thoughtful face of Mr. G. W. Foote could not fail to bind attention." The *Star* referred to Mr. Cohen as "an intellectual-looking young Jew."

The *Westminster Gazette* says that "sympathizers with the tortured Spaniards were a little unlucky" in the time they chose for their demonstration; nevertheless, "they carried their resolution and talked a good deal of sense." "Mr. Foote's aphorism," it adds, "that if governments treated their citizens like wild beasts, it was not surprising if some behaved like wild beasts, could hardly be improved, as a comment on a great deal of Continental Anarchy."

The *Daily Chronicle* regards the fact of Mr. Foote's moving the resolution as disproving "the allegation that the meeting was an Anarchist one."

The *Daily Mail* gravely states that Mr. Foote "read the report of a doctor as to the injuries of Francisco Gana, caused by instruments of torture in the prison of Montjuich. It is, to say the least, outspoken, and Mr. Foote suppressed nothing." There is not a word of truth in this statement. Mr. Foote did nothing of the kind. All he said was that he had written to Glasgow for information as to Dr. McDonald, who had certified as to Gana's injuries, and that Dr. McDonald was a practitioner of thirty years' standing, a Conservative, and a Churchman.

It is said that some of the Trafalgar-square speakers were molested on leaving. Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen walked off together quietly. It is to be presumed that the little gang of disturbers made a rush for one or two of the speakers who were injudicious enough to walk that way.

The Toronto clergy were busy last Sunday preaching to as many members of the British Association as cared to attend church. Many members preferred a trip to Niagara. Lord Kelvin, whose piety is vaunted by Christian advocates, went with a select party to the Muskoka district, which is often called the paradise of Canada, and is a far better one than that described in the book of Revelation.

Judging by the number and appearance of its publications, the vegetarian cause must be having wealthy support. The *Vegetarian Review* is a capitally-got-up magazine. The number before us is well printed, and has a history of the vegetarian movement by C. Forward, and a good review of *Forecasts of the Coming Century* by H. S. Salt, illustrated with portraits of Edward Carpenter, Dr. A. Russel Wallace, and G. Bernard Shaw.

Religious Indulgences.

The popes persevered in treating indulgences as purely a matter of money, unconditioned by repentance or confession. Clement VII., in 1524, when removing the suspension of the cruzada in Spain, recites the bulls of Julius II. and Leo X. as granting *plenissimam indulgentiam* to all who would pay the sum required for the prosecution of the war against the infidel, or for the fabric of St. Peter's. Clement, moreover, when prescribing the conditions for his Jubilee of 1525, makes no mention of contrition or confession—the only conditions are the customary visits to the churches. It is the same with the plenaries granted by him in 1530 to members of confraternities formed to aid the Inquisition in extirpating heresy; and a still more cynical disregard even of appearances is manifest by an extension of privileges in 1565 after the Council of Trent by Pius IV. to the Hospital of St. Lazarus, for he offers a plenary remission and indulgence *a culpa et a pœna* of all sins to those who, at death, shall bequeath a legacy to it, without any conditions of contrition or confession.—*H. C. Lea, "A History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences," vol. iii., p. 78.*

Digitized by Google

MR. HALL CAINE'S "CHRISTIAN."

II.

GLORY QUAYLE is loved by another man as well as by John Storm. This inamorato bears the terrible name of Francis Horatio Nelson Drake. Of course he moves in high society, and of course he is clever and handsome. His love of Glory Quayle is represented as really high and pure, and eventually he makes her an offer of marriage. Yet he takes her to the Derby, in company with the *roué* Lord Robert Ure and a battered dove named Batty Bellman, who calls one man "balmy" and another a "cough-drop." And when the race is over, and the champagne flows freely, Drake toasts her as "the loveliest, liveliest, leeriest, little woman in the world." What an epithet is *leeriest!* Fancy a man applying it publicly, or even privately for that matter, to a woman for whom he has the smallest shred of respect, or even the faintest spark of honest affection! But the cream of the joke is that the glorious Glory Quayle hides her face coquettishly in the midst of "a merry laugh."

Mr. Caine evidently thinks that such manners are absolutely fashionable among the stars of the music-hall and theatrical professions. Speaking of the music-hall, John Storm—who delivers what Mr. Caine described to the interviewer as his "message"—declares: "It is impossible for a girl to live long in an atmosphere like that and be a good woman." This dictum is also extended to the theatre. Glory is to play the part of a wicked woman at a theatre specially taken for her by Drake and Lord Robert Ure, and the rehearsal overwhelms her with confusion. "How was she to play this evil woman? The poison went to the bone, and to get into the skin of such a creature a good woman would have to dispossess herself of her very soul." According to which peculiar theory of histrionics, a woman who plays Lady Macbeth is graduating for a murderess, and a woman who plays Cleopatra is graduating for a prodigal wanton!

Lord Robert asks the stormy John, who detests the theatre as well as the music-hall, what is "amiss with the profession"—and adds: "Some of the best men in the world have belonged to it, I think." Whereupon the stormy John exclaims: "Tell me the name of one of them, since the world began, who ever lived an active Christian life." Passing by the absurd chronology of the query, it may be remarked that it is hardly the business of actors to compete with the clergy, who are numerous enough, in all conscience, for their particular business. What would happen if actors filled pulpits on Sunday? Would it not involve the neglect of a host of regular practitioners? Might not some of the most fashionable preachers find a difficulty in filling their establishments? Let each stick to his own trade, or chaos will come again.

John Storm follows this up with a more general query. "Tell me," he says, "how many of them have done anything in real life, anything for the world, for humanity." Well, it all depends on what you mean. Actors are not exactly famous for drafting the girls of Piccadilly to the strawberry beds of Essex, as General Booth proposed to do, though his success in this line is not colossal. But if it be the function of tragedy, as Aristotle declared, to purify the soul by terror and pity, many an actor, with a great dramatist behind him, has preached a more potent sermon than ever came from the mouth of a pulpiteer.

Absurdities, indeed, are thickly sown in this book. Mr. Caine understands London as well as he understands the theatrical profession. Reading him you might imagine, if you did not know better, that our metropolis is almost exclusively peopled by thieves, profligates, drunkards, and harlots; whereas in London, as elsewhere, there is froth at the top and dregs at the bottom, but plenty of good liquor between. Mr. Caine depicts London as the Circe of cities, the Judas betraying with a kiss, the great serpent crushing millions in its folds—in short, as "the wickedest city in the world," which expression, we believe, is borrowed from that accurate person, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. It may be true that a hundred thousand people in London "live in constant want," and the fact is sad enough; but consider its vast population of nearly six millions. It may also be true that "not one million cross the threshold of church or chapel," but that is no great calamity. It might even be an improvement if the one million who do go to church or chapel went somewhere else.

Mr. Caine threatens to write a novel on the great drink question. If he keeps his word it is to be hoped that he will try to understand what he is writing about. He certainly does not understand it here. John Storm takes Glory Quayle through the alleys and courts of Westminster, and talks to her in this fashion:—

> "What's the use of saying to these people, 'Don't drink; don't steal'? They'll answer, 'If you lived in these slums you would drink too.' But we'll show them that we can live here and do neither—that will be true preaching."

Here is philosophy with a vengeance! A gaol chaplain leads the life of a prisoner just as much as a parson who pitches his tent (but who does it?) in alleys and courts leads the life of the slums. He is in it, perhaps, but not of it. He has been brought up elsewhere; he has other occupations than those of the real slum-dweller; he moves more or less, all the time, in more refined society; and when he is hipped with work and want of fresh air he takes a long and agreeable holiday. *His* keeping sober and honest is no proof that the slums do not necessarily breed drunkards and thieves.

And now let us take the two monstrous absurdities at the end of this book. John Storm's uncle, the Earl of Erin, is Prime Minister. He is early described as "secretly a sceptic, if not openly a derider of spiritual things." At the very end he speaks of "the inscrutable power which rules over life," and feels "an ever-deepening sadness, an ever-increasing sense of our impotence to diminish the infinite sorrow of the world." Yet this same gentleman resigns office because he perceives the necessity, in the interest of true religion and true civilization, of an absolute divorce between Church and State. A younger statesman must fight this battle, and the old Prime Minister ends by saying, "God grant that he may be a Christian man, and God speed and bless him." This is Mr. Caine's own sentiment, and he forgot the ridiculousness of putting it into the mouth of such a character. But this is not all. Mr. Caine tells us in his proem that "The period of the story is the last quarter of the nineteenth century"—and one is constrained to ask, Why this gratuitous precision when the story abounds with absurdly unhistorical incidents?

The Prime Minister's resignation, however, pales beside the account of a kind of Second Advent craze which seizes upon London. John Storm, having given up the idea of marrying Glory Quayle, goes about dressed as a monk, followed by a big bloodhound. He is the talk of the great city. Crowds flock to hear him denounce its wickedness. People say he is "the most Christ-like man" they ever knew. They discover that he is thirty-three years of age, and was born on the twenty-fifth of December. They also find that he bears a resemblance to the traditional portrait of Jesus Christ. The madness progresses until London is filled with a panic terror. God is going to destroy the city for its iniquities; some say by fire, and some by a flood; and the date fixed is the next Derby day. There is a run upon the banks, businesses are sold and partnerships dissolved, and myriads of people camp out at Hampstead, Highgate, and Blackheath. But of course it all ends in a fizzle.

We will not accuse Mr. Caine of going into the blood-and-thunder business wantonly. We will assume that he thinks this episode within the bounds of probability. But in that case, how well he knows London! Prophet Baxter has been working the Second Advent oracle for all it is worth, and what difference has it made in the value of stocks and house-property? London has never been diverted a hair's-breadth from its ordinary line of business and pleasure. Mr. Caine is simply putting the spirit of the Middle Ages into this *fin-de-siècle* metropolis. What he relates as taking place in London could not take place even at Douglas; not, at least, in the summer season, whatever might be possible in the winter, when the pious natives are waiting for the next spoliation of the Egyptians.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

POSTSCRIPT.—Mr. T. P. O'Connor, taking up the cudgels on behalf of Mr. Caine, complains that "to turn an interview into material for slashing a book is, in my judgment, neither good taste, good sense, nor good feeling." I dissent from this. Mr. Caine knew that he was being interviewed for publication. What he said to the interviewer was meant for the public, and is public property.

Digitized by Google

A FASHIONABLE METHODIST.

Mr Evan Ap Rhys Evans is an energetic Welshman, who in his early years tended sheep in the vales of Llanflechllan. The lad, however, had a consuming vanity, which raised his soul above wool. He preferred *hwyl*—the Welsh term for divine pulpit fervor—as more profitable, and set himself to acquire the hwyl by speaking at experience and class meetings, and exclaiming *diolch* or "praise" at *diwigiadau* revivals. Of course, his parents determined to make him a minister, and he soon acquired all that was necessary for the Welsh Methodist pulpit. Presently he followed the Morgans and the Welsh milk business to London, finding a Methodist chapel in the southern suburbs. But this enlarged sphere was soon too restricted for his vast vanity and activity.

Mr. Evan Ap Rhys Evans reminds one of the mythical steamboat, whose whistle was bigger than its boiler. He found out as a babe that if he shouted long enough he would receive some attention, and that if he shouted to the right people he would get more lollipops than spanks. He accordingly determined that as soon as he had a chance he would let off his steam amid the well-to-do folks, where he is now a forward and a fashionable Methodist.

Mr. E. A. Evans says that life in the East-end slums of London is not for him. He has taken up the more difficult and profitable task of converting the aristocracy. He knows there are an immense number who crave only to be legitimately amused on Sunday. Like General Booth, he is a good caterer, and provides an entertainment which claims to be pious. There is an orchestra, vying with that of Moore and Burgess. Of course, like Booth, he is too vulgar for the upper classes, who rarely look in, even once in a way, to see what it is like. But in the shopkeeping and well-to-do servant class he finds a *clientèle* of regular attendants, while all sorts and conditions go occasionally to hear the band, as they would to any other show or recreation.

Mr. E. A. Evans goes round the country and gathers up a deal of the root of all evil by picturing the heathen state of Piccadilly. He has been ten years tinkering at the social evil there, and it is as rotten as ever. It would never do for God to kill the Devil all at once, or his minister's occupation would be gone. The work costs £12,000 a year to keep going, and the Wesleyan Church looks rather askance on a draining of its provincial sinews of war to carry on a mission of which the result is seen mainly in a flourish of trumpets. To reconcile them somewhat, Mr. Evan Ap Rhys Evans has established a lively and spiritual paper, and, by putting himself in evidence everywhere, has forced his name to be a household word in all the Methodist camp. But he is little liked outside his own circle. His noble aim is to get hold of the wealthy, to whom life is a bore, and induce them to take some interest in life by seeing him dispense their filthy lucre. To attract these people he dresses like a Church of England swell, and affects the manners of the West-end fop. It is all in the cause of the Lord, like his famous romance entitled *The Infidel Cord Wainer;* and he has suffered for it by losing the confidence of the stricter Methodists, and having his claims for the presidency of the Conference long deferred.

Uncle Ben.

ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF THOMAS PAINE.

A little before leaving for America, Mr. Moncure D. Conway, the esteemed author of the best *Life of Thomas Paine*, wrote a letter to the *Athenæum*, in which he put forward a claim of having discovered the portrait of Paine painted by Romney. In America, whence the portrait came, the painting had long been ascribed to Jarvis. Mr. Conway left the painting with the curators of the National Portrait Gallery, Trafalgar-square, where it may be seen upon application, for it is not, and probably will not be, put in the collection. Upon seeing the portrait, which is accompanied by Sharp's engraving from Romney's picture, my mind was at once made up. It is certainly not by George Romney. No critic, who will compare it with Romney's masterly portrait of himself in the same Gallery, or with any of his portraits, can be in doubt upon the point. I said nothing save to a friend, but asked the opinion of the curators. The answer was decisive: "The painting is not by Romney, and is a very bad *replica*." Moreover, the artist has taken liberties of alteration from the engraving, or the picture, which William Sharp certainly would not have done.

Mr. Conway's letter to the *Athenæum* is reprinted in the August number of the *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago, and it has been boomed in many of the American papers that Mr. Conway has found the Romney portrait. That gentleman is not responsible for this. In placing the picture where it is he has done everything possible to clear the matter up, and in taking so much trouble in connection therewith he has added to the debt which all admirers of Paine must feel they owe to him. But it is right and necessary that our American friends should know that the valuable Romney portrait is not found, and is still probably in their country. It was certainly taken there in 1795 by Dr. Thomas Cooper, of Manchester, afterwards President of South Carolina College, of whom my friend, Mr. Louis Levine, of Charleston, has recently supplied some particulars in the *Freethinker*. It was painted for him, and I doubt not was among his greatest treasures, which, having been a lawyer, he probably carefully provided for by will. Dr. Cooper died at Columbia, May 11, 1840. What became of his effects I do not know; but this I know—that the search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia, and not from New York, whence the Jarvis portrait was produced. And the search is worth making. A portrait of Paine by Romney deserves a hunt for a hundred years. Its mere monetary value must be at least one thousand guineas, while, from the point of view of art and history, the worth of a portrait of so great a man by so great an artist is inestimable.

J. M. Wheeler.

(American papers please copy.)

Bogus and Real Hells.

The abolition of future hells is a necessary step towards the abolition of those which exist on earth. The irrational and inhuman theories of future punishment so long prevalent in Christendom have reacted upon the rationality and the humanity of those who accepted them, and are largely responsible for the coarse moral fibre, the brutality, and the bloodthirstiness of the modern world. While the God tortures hopelessly the wicked and the weak, why should the worshipper not butcher his enemies, and take pleasure in tormenting the dumb creatures, or hunt down the weak among men and ruthlessly trample them under foot? While the idea of an avenging torture-chamber exists, so long will Christendom continue to ignore the precepts of its Christ, and to imitate its grim idol. The belief that the Divine Being acquiesces in the endless existence of sin and suffering, the removal of which is for him also an impossibility, has dried the fountains not of human pity alone, but of human energy, and made us supine and helpless in the presence of the problems of poverty, and vice, and fraud. From age to age this foul dogma of despair has paralyzed the heart of mercy and the arm of hope, and turned the whole Church of Christ into contented or helpless witnesses of the human hells of slumdom, brothel-dom, and drinkdom.—*W. Walsh.*

Obituary.

It is with great regret that we have to record the sudden death of Mr. William Westwell, of Manchester. Mr. Westwell was a friend of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and for years he has been a close friend of Mr. Foote, who frequently stayed at his house and often enjoyed his hospitality at the Isle of Man. When Mr. Foote lectured on Douglas Head in defiance of the authorities, a few years ago, Mr. Westwell supported him loyally, and would have spent any amount of money sooner than see him defeated. He was a man of the world and little given to sentiment, but deep down in his heart was the steadfast memory of the beautiful young wife he lost so many years ago. Both his sons died before him, one being drowned in the West Indies only last year. Mr. Westwell's death took place suddenly at Douglas on Friday night, August 20. An obituary notice appeared in the next day's *Isle of Man Times*, mentioning his Atheism, but also praising his probity. Early in life Mr. Westwell failed in business, but he afterwards paid his old creditors in full, with five per cent. interest. He was a man of strict veracity and integrity. We pay our sad tribute of profound respect over his open grave.

It is with profound regret that I record the death, after a long and painful illness, of Mr. J. H. Saint, who was well known, both in London and the provinces, as a lecturer under the name of St. John. Although only twenty-five years of age, the deceased had lectured for nearly ten years, and bade fair to rank as one of the best of our outdoor lecturers. He was quite aware that his disease would ultimately prove fatal, and awaited death with a calmness and cheerfulness that was remarkable. I was with him a few hours before he died, and can testify to the contempt which he felt to the last for all supernatural ideas. Great sympathy is expressed for his widowed mother and her young family in their bereavement, as prior to his illness he was their main support. He was interred in Hammersmith Cemetery; the Secular Burial Service, which was used at his request, being read by Mr. Stanley Jones.—F. Todd (*Hon. Sec., West London Branch, N. S. S.*).

He that is not open to conviction is not qualified for discussion.—*Whately.*

Digitized by Google

WHY I ADMIRE JESUS.

(*Thoughts on reading an Article by F. W. Baldwin, "Why I Despise Jesus."*)

JESUS dared to think and act for himself, and to associate with whom he chose. I admire him for this.

I admire Jesus because he was good, and he taught others to be good. Because he taught us to love one another, and he loved little children. Because he taught men that deeds, not words, constituted righteousness. Because he taught good works and went about doing good. Because he visited the poor, and was not ashamed to mix with the people, and to speak kindly to the sinner.

I admire Jesus because he taught a pure religion. He taught people to make friends with their enemies, and not go to law. I admire him because he taught that Heaven must be *within* us; and he taught that this heaven was a child-like love and goodness to all men. He taught that virtue is its own reward. He taught that our aim should be to do good.

I admire Jesus because he advised people not to judge others nor *despise* others, but to remove the mote from our own eye before we attempt to take it out of our brother's eye. It would be well for many if they did this.

I admire Jesus because he taught the lesson of the Good Samaritan. I admire Jesus because he said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." I admire Jesus because he taught the best of those teachings which had been taught by all great minds of all ages. He taught that men will be known by their deeds, and not by their professions. I admire Jesus because his teachings are the teachings of the human mind. They may not have been new, they may not have been originated by Jesus; but Jesus taught them—that is enough for me. I admire Jesus for the good he did, and for the good words he spoke. Jesus was essentially a good man. He had a strong feeling of abhorrence of all wrong-doing. He had a gentle, loving nature. Hypocrisy, sham, and cant he hated. The profession of religion or morality was not enough for him. I admire him as man, but do not believe he was God. It is the good in men we should admire and remember; the evil, if we see any, we should condemn and forget.

HENRY SMITH.

THE RELIGIOUS LIE.

HISTORICAL investigations have revealed to us the origin and growth of the Bible; we know that by this name we designate a collection of writings, as radically unlike in origin, character and contents as if the *Nibelungen Lied*, Mirabeau's speeches, Heine's love poems, and a Manual of Zoology had been printed and mixed up promiscuously, and then bound into one volume. We find collected in this book the superstitious beliefs of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine, with indistinct echoes of Indian and Persian fables, mistaken imitations of Egyptian theories and customs; historical chronicles, as dry as they are unreliable, and miscellaneous poems, amatory, human, and Jewish-national, which are rarely distinguished by beauties of the highest order, but frequently by superfluity of expression, coarseness, bad taste, and genuine Oriental sensuality. As a literary monument the Bible is of much later origin than the *Vedas;* as a work of literary value it is surpassed by everything written in the last two thousand years by authors even of the second rank, and to compare it seriously with the productions of Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, or Goethe would require a fanaticised mind that had entirely lost its power of judgment. Its conception of the universe is childish, and its morality revolting, as revealed in the malicious vengeance attributed to God in the Old Testament and in the New, the parable of the laborers of the eleventh hour, and the episodes of Mary Magdalene and the woman taken in adultery.

And yet men, cultivated and capable of forming a just estimate, pretend to reverence this ancient work; they refuse to allow it to be discussed and criticised like any other production of the human intellect; they formed societies, and place enormous sums at their disposal to print millions of copies of it, which they distribute all over the world; and they pretend to be edified and inspired when they read in it.....

More revolting and insufferable even than the lie of religion as acted by the individual is the same lie of religion as acted by the community. The individual citizen, although he belongs ostensibly to some established religion and takes part in its ceremonies, often makes no secret of his disbelief in its superstitions, and refuses to be convinced that a certain form of words, repeated in concert by the congregation, will suspend or alter the laws of nature, that the Devil is driven out of a child when sprinkled by holy water, or that the chanting and speech of a man in a black or white robe beside a corpse will open the gates of Paradise to the soul of the dead man.....

As private citizens, we assert that we do not believe in the existence of God, that the God of the established religions is the outgrowth of childish and undeveloped minds; but, as members of the body politic, we declare any one holding such views to be guilty of blasphemy before the law, and incapable of holding office. And this notwithstanding the fact that no scientific or rational proof has been offered in evidence of the reality of God; that even the most enthusiastic theologian can produce no testimony to prove the existence of God that approaches, in clearness and convincing force, to that offered by the archæologian and geologist to prove the antiquity of the earth and its inhabitants, or by the astronomer to convince us of the revolution of the earth around the sun.....

MAX NORDAU.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

"Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"
—AMOS iii. 6.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In last week's *Freethinker* (August 22) I notice some remarks upon Amos. "Shinto's" clerical adviser had evidently forgotten his Hebrew, or he would not have been so positive in asserting that the prophet referred to physical evil instead of moral evil. The word employed by Amos is רצה, which undoubtedly means moral wickedness, and it is frequently translated "wickedness" in the English Bible. Taking two texts at random—1 Kings i. 52 and Job xx. 12—we find רצה in both, with the same pointing and the same grammatical form as in Amos, and both translated "wickedness" in the English version.

"Shinto" cites a verse from Isaiah in this connection, which is perfectly legitimate, for the word used there is רצ, which is practically another way of spelling רצה; and this word רצ is also frequently rendered "wickedness" in the English Bible.

The text in Amos is purposely ambiguous in the English translation; but it seems hardly possible to cavil at the evident meaning of the Hebrew prophet.

CHILPERIC.

PROFANE JOKES.

SOME years ago a clergyman was preaching to a large audience in a wild part of Yorkshire, and announced for his text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." He had scarcely read the words when an old fellow stood up and said, "I tell you folks that's a lie! I know his father well. He lives fifteen miles from Scarborough, in an old tumble-down shanty, and there ain't but one room in the house."

"Bobby," cautioned his mother, "the bishop is to dine with us to-day, and you must be very quiet at table. I want him to think that you are a good little boy." Much impressed, Bobby ate his dinner in silence until his plate needed replenishing. "Pa," he said devoutly, "will you give me some more beans, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?"

"What are the Blenkinsopp girls in mourning for?" "Their parrot." "In mourning for a parrot! Why, it's a positive sacrilege." "Oh, but this one could repeat the Lord's prayer, you know."

A story is told of a Sunday-school teacher in a certain backwoods settlement in a neigboring county, which is worth publishing. She had a new class of young scholars the parents of whom had neglected to give them any instruction in their catechism. Going to the first boy in the class, she asked him who made him. He did not know. She told him God, and urged him to remember it. Of the next boy she asked who was the oldest man. He did not know, nd the teacher told him Methuselah. So she went on down the class, asking each a question and giving them the answer. While she was thus engaged the first boy went to the bucket after some water. The teacher returned to the head of the class, and, not knowing that anyone was absent, she asked the first boy who made him. Without hesitation the boy quickly replied, "Methuselah!" "No," exclaimed the teacher in astonishment, "God made you!" "No, he didn't," persisted the urchin, with confidence; "the boy God made is gone after water." The teacher gave up that class.

In Spain the Church, aided by the Inquisition, has always been strong enough to punish sceptical writers and prevent, not, indeed, the existence, but the promulgation of sceptical opinions. By this means, the spirit of doubt being quenched, knowledge has for several centuries remained almost stationary; and civilization, which is the fruit of knowledge, has also been stationary.—*H. T. Buckle, "History of Civilization in England," General Introduction, chapter vii.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God's Prison."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "An Historical Review of the Old Testament."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, Debate between Samuel Habe and H. P. Ward.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Reason and the Bible."

EDMONTON (Angel road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Heaven Above and Hell Beneath."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, H. Snell, "What is Secularism?"

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, W. Heaford.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, C. Cohen; 3.30, A lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Sixty Years of Freethought."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, H. Snell.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, T. J. Thurlow. August 31, at 8.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack; 7, E. Pack. September 1, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Sorrows of Satan."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL (14 Woodborough-street, Stapleton-road): 7, Important Committee meeting.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay-street): 7, E. P. Luke, "Christian and Secular Salvation."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Discussion on "Labour Problems."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3.15, A. Marshall, "The Laws of Nature."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—August 29, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Victoria Park. September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—August 29, m., Wood Green; e., Edmonton. September 5, m. and a., Hyde Park; 12, Clerkenwell.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—August 29, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—August 29, m. and e., Mile End Waste. September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 7, e., Limehouse. 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

A Crusade Against Sex-Enslavement.

No. 2, Now Ready, contains:—

The Mutability of Love, by Orford Northcote.
Our Soldiers in India, by Miss Wardlaw Best.
Sexual Freedom and Economics, by Sagittarius.
Go to the Butterfly, thou Slave, by John Badcock, jun.
Etc., Etc.

Price Twopence.

Published by the Legitimation League, 16 John-street, Bedford-row, W.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin; Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s; painless by gas, 5s.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store street, Bedford-square, W.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

ON SUNDAY MORNING LAST, at 18 Morville-street, Bow, Mrs. Amelia Clogg (the wife of William Sim Clogg, House Decorator) safely delivered of a son. "Here endeth the fourth lesson!"

Digitized by Google

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERTS "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality]
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendell," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GREAT SUMMER SALE.

21s. Parcels that contain £2 worth of Goods. Each parcel sent Carriage Paid for 21s.

1.—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color. **2.**—4 Trouser Lengths, wear guaranteed; Stripe, Check, or Mixture. **3.**—2 Full Dress Lengths, with linings and buttons complete. **4.**—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material. **5.**—1 Complete Costume to measure, and a Silver-mounted Umbrella. **6.**—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse. **7.**—50 yards of High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs. **8.**—11 yards Deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color. **9.**—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trouser length. **10.**—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trouser Length, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella. **11.**—1 pair of All Wool Blankets, 1 pair of large Sheets, 1 beautiful Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 pair of Curtains. **12.**—1 pair Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella. **13.**—15 yards Suiting for Boys' Suits—very strong and durable. **14.**—30 yards of Remnants for Children's Dresses—all good colors and quality. **15.**—2 pairs All Wool Blankets. **16.**—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 pairs Stockings, 2 Skirts, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Silver-mounted Umbrella, 1 Fur Necktie. **17.**—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella. **18.**—1 Youth's Suit to measure, chest over vest not to be more than 32 inches. **19.**—3 pairs Men's Trousers to measure, all different. **20.**—Parcel of goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during sale we are selling at about half ordinary prices. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

GRAND CLEARING LINE.

630 Ladies' Mackintoshes.

Warranted thoroughly Waterproof and Odorless. Sizes, length at back, 54, 56, 58, and 60 inches. Very latest style, and every garment well finished. Colors: Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Slate, and Grey. To fit persons up to 36 inch Bust.

Price Carriage Paid. 12/6 Worth nearly double.

1 Copy of G. W. Foote's "Flowers of Freethought," value 2s. 6d., will be presented to each customer.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Just published, cloth, price 2s. 6d. post free,

THE RATIONALIST'S MANUAL.

A Compendium of Theological and Biblical Criticism, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics. In two Parts. By ALETHEIA, M.D.

Contents.—Part I. CHRISTIANISM: ITS SUPERSTITIONS AND ORIGIN. The Supernatural—Revelation—The Teachings of Jesus not Original—Inspiration—Mistranslations of the Bible Text—Some Bible Legends—A Few Contradictions in the "Inspired Text"—The Christian Messiah; and Contemporary History—Events in the Life of Jesus; Miracles, etc.—Origin of the Bible—Prayer—Worship, Sacrifice, and Baptism—Heaven, Hell, Ghosts, and Bogies—Future Life—Christian Symbols; the Cross, etc.—Ancient Festivals, Sabbaths, etc.—Ancient Gods, Trinities, and Scriptures—Origin of Religion (Theology)—Origin of the Word "Christian"—The Fruits of Christianism——Part II. RATIONALISM: ITS PHILOSOPHY AND RULE OF LIFE. Rationalism—First Principles—Truths—Some Definitions—Knowledge, Belief, Faith, etc—The Cause of All—Life—Origin of Life—Evolution—Polarity—Ascent of Man—Death and Dissolution—Morality—The Universe—The Earth; Geological Epochs, etc.—The Solar System; Seasons, etc.—The Ancient Zodiac—Ethics and Customs of Social Life—Duty and Fault—Man's Moral Code—Rationalist Societies—Public Holidays and their Origin—Naming and Registration of Children—Marriage—Burial of the Dead—Freedom of Thought and Speech—Oaths, Affirmations, and Last Will—Index.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR. Price 6d., post free 7d.,

A RATIONALIST CATECHISM

Of subjects concerning Man—his Gods and Superstitions.

"Should be of interest to all; . . . gives in brief and concise shape a large number of the conclusions of rational science and criticism with regard to religion."—*Freethinker.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 36. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

JEWS AND ZIONISM.

BURKE said with truth that you cannot draw up an indictment against a whole nation. It is equally true that praise or blame of an entire people must be taken with many deductions. Most races are so fused that any off-hand characterization is pretty sure to be misleading. But in the case of the Jews there are two circumstances connected with their past history which have powerfully contributed to give them marked, though, as I should argue, not irradicable, characteristics. Firstly, under the spell of their Law, ascribed to Moses but apparently unknown to Solomon, they have steadfastly refused to intermarry with Gentiles. Secondly, they have endured such cruel persecutions at the hands of Christians through so many ages that a large proportion of the perennial fool-crop have been weeded out. Only those have survived who have been fitted to do so by superior brains and superior vitality. On the other hand must be set down the fact that, dwelling in all lands, they are subject to the modifying influence of varying surroundings, so that what is true of the English Jew is by no means necessarily true of the Russian or of the Oriental Jew.

The Jew everywhere is largely what centuries of Christian love have made him.

> By the torture prolonged from age to age,
> By the infamy—Israel's heritage,
> By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
> By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
> By the branding tool, the bloody whip,
> And the summons to Christian fellowsh'p.

The mass of Continental Jews still know what persecution is. Their bond of common race and religion is the only thing which enables them to hold together. It is small wonder, then, that the project of establishing a Jewish state, where the children of Israel may develop their lives without external constraint, has excited hopes among the poor and oppressed of Abraham's descendants. This makes the recent Congress on Zionism at Bâle a notable feature in the history of the race, the more remarkable since the conference was denounced by the leading Rabbis in each country. In this the Rabbis have less regard to the practical difficulties of the scheme than to the fact that it offers them no particular opportunities of leadership. Themselves in fairly comfortable circumstances, it may be questioned if they are quite as anxious as they ought to be for the fulfilment of the prophecies.

Dr. Herzl put forward among the reasons for his scheme the fact that the Jews will not really assimilate with the nations among whom they live. No doubt this is largely so everywhere, and especially on the Continent, where for the most part they still live in a state of repression and disability. Surrounded by an unsympathetic, if not hostile, Christian community, it could not well be otherwise. But where Jews are not only granted the rights of citizens, but are treated as fellow men, they have little desire to return to Zion. Could they surmount the difficulties in the way of inducing the Sultan to sell or forego his claim upon Palestine, which is as much holy to the Moslem as to the Jew, it would still be only the refuse of Israel who would migrate there. The rest would, as Rothschild said, apply for the post of ambassadors to other countries. What probably will be done is that a considerable sum will be raised (if not the ten millions asked for), sufficient to buy an extensive tract of territory, whereon principally the lower class of Russian Jews will settle. Of the results of their colonizing efforts the future will have to speak.

Every country has the Jews it deserves to have. The Russian Jew is usually a bad specimen, just because Christian oppression has made him so. He is now looking forward to Zion. The persecuted Jew is the orthodox, bigoted Jew. Spinoza, greatest of Jews, long since pointed out that persecution tended to make his race conservative and tribal, while this very tribalism in turn made them hated. The Jew who is treated as a man and a brother is, as may be seen in France, England, and America, in a fair way to become a Freethinker. To him Zionism and Messianic hopes are alike ideals of the past, while to the genuine orthodox Jew the Zionism of Dr. Herzl is defective, because it looks rather to the social and political side of Judaism than to its religious element. It is noteworthy that the Congress should have chosen the well-known Freethinker, Dr. Max Nordau, to be its co-president along with Dr. Herzl. The orthodox Jew, so Rabbi Adler informs us, still expects the advent of a Messiah, but what that Messiah is going to do for them is not so certain, though a return to the Promised Land to make Zion the centre of the religious world is certainly a prominent item.

The orthodox Jew looks forward to the days when Messiah—no reformer, but a veritable King—shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the spherical earth, and shall make them one nation in the sterile land upon the mountains of Israel. Then "the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," for Messiah shall sit upon the throne of brigand David, and that throne shall be established for ever. "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying: We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name" (Isaiah iv. 7). But the time for a harem is not yet, for the blessed prophet Zechariah (xiv. 4) gives a physical sign. "The Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." When that great day arrives, the Jews can safely go back to Jerusalem with the sure and certain hope of a glorious seraglio. Meantime they are likely to find their account in trading among the Gentiles.

The cultured Jew is of a quite different stamp. He has departed, not only from Rabbinism, but from Mosaism itself. He would never think, for instance, that death was the proper penalty for gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Numbers xv. 32–36). Indeed, Mr. Claude Montefiore, in his *Hibbert Lectures*, goes as far as Bishop Colenso in denying the Mosaic authorship of the law. The decently-treated Jew becomes the enlightened Jew, and he is practically a Secularist. He has found that in the long history of the sufferings of his race the only salvation has come from self-reliance. He aims at making his paradise in this world, and he usually succeeds fairly well. With him the Messianic delusion is nearly extinct, and Zionism is considered, on purely humanitarian grounds, on the same level with Baron Hirsch's scheme of a Jewish colony in the Argentine Republic. It is the enlightened, the Freethinking Jew who will really be the salvation of his race. To his brother who looks forward to supernatural supervision he may say, in the words of Amos (v. 18): "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!

Digitized by Google

To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." There is a better mission for the Jew than that of setting up a separate kingdom in Palestine. It is that of infusing Jewish ideals into a circle far beyond the limits of Judaism. J. M. WHEELER.

MR. HALL CAINE'S "CHRISTIAN."

III.

MR. CAINE'S book is primarily a polemic. His theory of fiction, according to the "Author's Note" at the end of the volume, is that the artist should "present a thought in the form of a story." I will not stop to discuss whether this is a true theory of fiction, and whether it can be justified by an appeal to the highest examples of that art. It is Mr. Caine's theory, and in its light he must be understood and judged. What then is the "thought" of this novel? It is clearly indicated in the title, which is not *John Storm*, but *The Christian*. This is how Mr. Caine's intention is read by Mr. Gladstone in the eulogistic letter already referred to. Any other reading of it turns at least half the book into pretentious clap-trap. Mr. Caine presents John Storm as a true Christian, who shatters himself against a Christian society which is so organized as to make it impossible for a man to live the life of Christ. This, indeed, is avowed in his statements to the *Daily News* interviewer.

In carrying out this object Mr. Caine denies that he "intended to paint anybody's portrait." To do this would be "to wrong" his theory of fiction. But is the disclaimer true in the case of Canon Wealthy, of All Saints', Belgravia? He is a preacher of great parts and much eloquence, who in the course of the story rises to be an Archdeacon. As is crudely indicated by his name, he is rich (for a cleric) and fond of luxury. His apartments are "sumptuous" enough to disgust John Storm, who becomes one of his curates. His sermons are literary as well as eloquent, containing "many references to great writers, painters, and musicians." The first of his sermons that John Storm listens to includes a panegyric on Michael Angelo and a quotation from Browning, and ends with "a passage from Dante in the original." Now we have Mr. Caine's word for it that this is not a portrait, but it will be surprising if many readers do not exclaim, "Dean Farrar or the Devil!"

Canon Wealthy assists in the expulsion of a pretty hospital nurse who is in a certain "condition," through her intimacy with Lord Robert Ure. Of course it is all the man's fault in the eyes of John Storm, though Polly confesses afterwards to her own share in the transaction. "To tell you the truth," she says, "I was as much to blame as he was. I wanted to escape from the drudgery of the hospital, and I knew he would take me when the time came." John Storm preaches the young lord a stiff sermon, the burden of which is, "Why don't you marry the girl?" But his lordship does not see the matter in that light. He takes a house for Polly at St. John's Wood. This is a terrible take-down for poor John, who resigns his curacy, and denounces Canon Wealthy as the worst prostitute in London, for, if a woman sells her body, he sells his soul, by shielding the man and treading on the woman. Of course our sympathies are all with John Storm in this business; but he must have been very green, nevertheless, not to know that the Polly-and-Robert incident was anything but novel, and very ready to go straight off and join the Society of the Holy Gethsemane, an Anglican monkish establishment in Bishopsgate. A man will never reform the world by flying at it, or out of it, on every provocation. John Storm, indeed, acts too much like Jesus Christ did in Jerusalem, whipping dove-sellers, over-turning money-changers' tables, and calling quieter religionists very ill names. If that is how a Christian should go through the world, the fewer real Christians we have the better. Give such people power, and they would soon be imitating the performances of a Torquemada, all in the interest of righteousness and sound belief.

John Storm begins as a "Christian Socialist," and ends as a madman; and some will say it was a perfectly natural progression. Leaving his father, Lord Storm, and resisting the advice of his uncle, Lord Erin, the Prime Minister, he takes a curacy under Canon Wealthy, and acts as chaplain to a hospital. What with his disillusionment there, and the frivolous conduct of Glory Quayle, who seems to be as fond of the men as poor Polly Love, although less recklessly, John Storm is driven into the Gethsemane Brotherhood, where he serves a painful apprenticeship to the life of vowed poverty and chastity. But he is haunted by the vision of Glory Quayle, and at length he leaves the Brotherhood to find her. To his horror and dismay she has become a music-hall artist, and a star of the first magnitude. He tries in vain to persuade her to leave the profession. Then he obtains money from his good-natured uncle, and starts a Christian Mission in Soho, beginning with street-processions of three, consisting of himself dressed in a cassock, a converted waiter carrying a little harmonium, and a converted pawnbroker carrying the banner. He sets up a refuge for fallen women and a home for abandoned children—all very good in its way, but having as much effect on the great social problems of city life as the waltzing of a flea produces on the pachydermatous elephant. It does not occur to John Storm, the Christian—nor indeed to Mr. Caine, his creator—that behind all social evils there are material and economical as well as moral and personal causes. He does not see that the purification of cities is chiefly to be effected by sanitation, municipal improvements, the multiplication of open spaces, the extension of education, the increase of wages and the shortening of the hours of labor through trade organization, and the opening of fresh avenues for the employment of women, so that absolute economical dependence may not force them into premature marriage or into the slough of prostitution. It is to the credit of the working-classes that they have always looked askance at clerical rescue work as bearing no real promise of social regeneration. The upper and middle classes patronise such agencies, and John Storm (that is to say, Mr. Caine) looks at the matter from their point of view, though probably with a most unconscious bias.

In the midst of this, Glory Quayle leaves the music-hall stage and goes back to the Isle of Man, following the advice of "the Christian" John Storm. But she is dragged back to London again by its irresistible fascination for one of her temperament. This time she is to figure as an actress on the boards of a regular theatre. She is now John Storm's *fiancée*, and they make love in the usual fashion of second-rate novelists, who have a special language for this pastime. "My love," "my life," "my soul," they exclaim to each other. But the human love in John Storm is mixed up with so much of the "Christ-like" that, on hearing of the death of Father Damien, he seriously proposes to marry Glory Quayle (for he doesn't want any one else to have her) and take her out with him to the South Sea lepers. By this time he has come to the conclusion that "The lusts of the flesh were the most deadly sins, absolute chastity the most pleasing to God of all virtues." Accordingly, he proposes to Glory that, while they go out as husband and wife, they shall live together as brother and sister. "For the sake of those poor doomed beings cut off from earthly love," he says, "we'll love each other as the angels love." Glory does not find the prospect alluring. She loves John profoundly, but her love is natural and healthy; and, not feeling equal to the lofty enterprise of sistering it among the lepers, she bids him a passionate adieu.

John Storm, however, does not go out to the South Seas. He does not leave London. After all it holds Glory Quayle. He finds the Church incapable of reformation, his "woman movement" in Soho is only "another dream," and on receiving Glory's letter of refusal to be the sister-bride of a second Father Damien he rushes back to the Gethsemane Brotherhood, where the Father receives him with great joy. "John Storm," we are told, "was standing with bowed head. He had made the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and surrendered his life to God."

This time, however, he does not live in one of the Brotherhood cells. As vicar of a Westminster parish, he resumes his old work among the poor. Always accompanied by the bloodhound, he attracts universal attention. It is believed that he has the gifts of prophecy and faith-healing. Finally, he becomes the centre of the craze about the impending destruction of London. He goes to Epsom to preach there on the Derby day, which, according to the popular superstition, is to be the day of doom. Glory Quayle happens to be there too, in not very reputable

Digitized by Google

company. John Storm sees her, and the thought enters his head that he must slay her body to save her soul. He conceives this to be a divine mission. Accordingly he goes to Glory's house and waits for her in the drawing-room. She does not return till very late, and a scene ensues which is far and away the most powerful piece of writing in the book. Glory fights for her life with a woman's weapons. She conquers her would-be slayer by tenderness. He tells her to say her prayers, for God has sent him to kill her. But with her arm round his neck, and her lips inviting his, the homicidal maniac is conquered; and as John Storm creeps like a thief through the streets of London in the dark hours before the dawn, he says to himself, "I thought it was God's voice—it was the devil's."

Mr. Caine is now face to face with a problem which might well tax the resources of a greater intellect than his. What is he to do then? How escape from the terrible difficulty? Easily enough. Death is always at the beck and call of distressed novelists, and Mr. Caine gets rid of John Storm and the difficulty together.

This is done very clumsily. John Storm is wanted by the police: in the first place, for endangering the peace through the craze about the destruction of London; in the second place, for complicity in manslaughter, because one of his followers knocked down and mortally injured a soldier who "insulted the name of the Father." After appearing before the magistrates he is "committed for sedition," with the probability of being brought up again on the charge of complicity in manslaughter. All this is ridiculous enough. It is an outrage on law and common sense.

John Storm, being liberated on bail, is set upon by a lot of roughs, including the converted pawnbroker, who leave him with a mortal wound on the back of the head; from which it appears that the "Christ-like" method of converting sinners is just as successful as that of the orthodox machinery.

Glory Quayle now appears for the last time upon the scene. She has left the theatre for ever, and taken up John Storm's deserted refuge-work at Westminster; and now, by the Archbishop's licence, she marries him on his death-bed, the last words of this book being a passage from the Church of England marriage service, ending with that pious and consolatory word "Amen!"

Surely this is a very cheap and easy device. Moreover, it seems to be borrowed from the sublime Christian drama of Mr. Wilson Barrett. Just as Marcus takes Mercia's hand in his, and goes forth to martyrdom with the glad assurance that she will be his bride in heaven, so John Storm and Glory Quayle are "united for all eternity." Mr. Barrett and Mr. Caine may know their New Testament thoroughly, but they forget the saying of Jesus Christ about the absence of marriage in kingdom-come, where all are "as the angels of God"—that is, without distinction of sex.

After the "happy" death of John Storm, whose life has been a great failure, Glory Quayle—or rather Glory Storm—is left to carry on his "glorious work" to a triumphant success, which is more easily achieved in imagination than in reality.

Mr. Caine does not leave the reader without finally emphasizing the Christ-like life of John Storm. On the death of this Christian hero, a London journalist of Jewish extraction contributes an article to an evening paper, which makes "a deep impression." The following extract will show its quality:—

> "The unhappy man who has been miserably murdered in the slums of Westminster was a follower of Jesus, if ever there lived one, and, whosoever the actual persons may be who are guilty of his death, the true culprit is the Christian nation which has inflicted mockeries and insults on everybody who has dared to stand alone under the ensign of Christ. Let us not be led away by sneers. This man, whatever his errors, his weaknesses, his self-delusions, and his many human failings, was a Christian. He was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity as hardly any one since Jesus has ever been."

Here, then, is the one definite merit which Mr. Caine is able to assign his Christian hero. *He was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity*—and the greatest in this line since Jesus Christ!

One stares in astonishment at the ignorance and impudence of this tribute. I invite Mr. Caine to specify in what way Jesus Christ himself was the prophet of woman in relation to humanity. I do not want sentimental inferences, but plain evidence from the Gospels. Where the Founder of Christianity is silent, I do not need Mr. Caine's explanations. I have access to a nearer and more authoritative oracle—the apostle Paul, in whose writings I find the subjection of woman to man taught most explicitly and with tremendous emphasis.

As for the John Storms, the Hall Caines, and all other incarnations of the spirit of Jesus Christ, I beg to tell them that they merely come in at the eleventh hour, and usurp the credit which belongs to those who bore the heat and burden of the day, besides doing their best, or rather their worst, to spoil the cause with their pious sentimentalities. What were these modern Jesus Christs doing when John Stuart Mill published his great essay on *The Subjection of Women*? Sneering at him as an infidel! And that was less than thirty years ago. It is needless to ask what they were doing when Shelley, the Atheist, was singing his passionate plea for woman's emancipation.

Preach! Preach! Preach! That is the Christian method, the method of John Storm, the method of Hall Caine. But eighteen centuries of this performance is enough to prove its futility. It is not in this way that woman's relation to humanity will be determined. Mill brought head as well as heart to the discussion of this problem. He knew that the first requisite was justice, and that justice depended on conditions. He did not waste his time in railing at the inevitable evils of wrong conditions. He proposed the substitution of right conditions. And whether he was right or wrong in detail, he was at least on the right road; whereas these gentlemen who come in when the battle is half won, with their "Christ-like" platitudes, are a certain element of confusion and a possible cause of disaster.

If, however, one desires to see the "woman problem" dealt with in fiction, one may turn to George Meredith and Thomas Hardy, in whose works intellect and imagination go hand in hand with knowledge and art. Thomas Hardy does not preach in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, any more than he calls that work "colossal." The same may be said of *Jude the Obscure*. But the lessons are there all the same, only they have to be extracted by the reader for himself, as he must extract the lessons that Shakespeare imparts in the still greater *Macbeth*, *Othello*, or *King Lear*. Nor does George Meredith preach in the magnificent later works which he has devoted to the sexual problem, from *Diana of the Crossways* to *The Amazing Marriage*. Certain characters, with certain ideas, in certain circumstances, move along logically, the mirror being held up to nature all the while. And at the finish the reader has learnt precisely what he is fit to learn, just as if he had gazed upon a great picture, or listened to a great piece of music.

Compared with the work of such masters, that of Mr. Hall Caine is crude and meretricious. But, in spite of the popularity of his books, this fact will not surprise those who know what intellectual, as distinct from emotional, vitality is left in the Christian religion. Minds of the calibre of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy are not to be imposed upon. The victims of Christianity in its hysterical decadence may, however, be easily found among temperaments like that of Mr. Hall Caine; unless, indeed, this gentleman is not carried away as much as is supposed, but is merely exploiting the fashionable religious taste of the hour by the coarsest flattery. G. W. FOOTE.

PROVIDENCE: OLD AND NEW.

It has been truly said that the supposed supernatural of one age becomes the natural of another. This really means that the reliance which was once placed upon a God is now bestowed on science. Such a transfer is a marked indication of increased faith in natural forces, and it is also a striking proof of a corresponding decrease of the influence of theology upon human conduct. Despite the many frantic efforts that are now being made to perpetuate old and to start new delusions, this is, no doubt, a practical, matter-of-fact age. It is a period of intellectual unrest, a desire to know more and more of the great secrets that have hitherto remained hidden in the womb of nature. People are no longer content, as their predecessors were, to rely upon something of which they know nothing. Hence

Digitized by Google

as the late Professor Huxley once remarked, "every new discovery in science pushes the supernatural further from us by enlarging the boundary of human knowledge."

The old idea of Providence was that of a Divine superintendence, a manifestation of care by a Supreme Being over the lives and actions of men. Thus, Milton wrote: "The world was all before them, where to chose their place of rest, and Providence their guide." The new idea means that Providence implies prudence, foresight, the dependence upon natural resources for the prevention and remedying of the evils of existence. The former is the theological view, and the latter is the rational. Dr. Watts, we are told, once exclaimed:—

"Diseases are thy servants, Lord;
They come at thy command."

Secularists consider that this notion was a delusion, inasmuch as disease is the parent of pain and misery, and that it comes too often in consequence of neglect of obedience to natural law, or imperfect physical conditions. The "Peculiar People" depend upon their "Divine Providence" to cure disease, and premature death is often the result of their folly. Secularists rely upon the lessons of science to ward off disease and to limit its ravages, and for their secular prudence they are rewarded by a prolongation of life. "No human pursuits make any material progress until science is brought to bear upon them.....Look at the transformation which has gone on around us since the laws of gravitation, electricity, magnetism, and the expansive power of heat have become known to us. It has altered the whole state of existence—one might say, the whole face of the globe. We owe this to science, and to science alone" (Prince Albert's speech, 1855).

Orthodox Christians profess to put their trust in God, having, if they are consistent, confidence in such Bible promises as the following: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm xxx. 3, 4); "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24); "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" (James v. 14, 15). In "God's Word" it is stated that the prayers of Elisha raised to life a child who had died through certain injuries he had received (2 Kings iv.), and that the supplications of Peter restored the dead Dorcas to life (Acts ix. 36-40). Secularists have no faith in such "idle tales," believing as they do that the prayer of supplication, notwithstanding Christ's statement to the contrary, is a snare and a delusion. Human energy is the lever that ensures all progress, and secures for mankind the means of gratifying their natural needs, and of supplying an anodyne for the pain and woes of life.

The old Providence was an active factor in the doings recorded in the Bible. He led the Jews for forty years in the wilderness (Deuteronomy viii. 2); he secured for his people dry land in the midst of the sea (Exodus x. 19); he guided them "by day in a pillar of cloud," and "by night in a pillar of fire" (Exodus xiii. 21); he made the sun and moon stand still "until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies" (Joshua x. 13); he sent his spirit upon Samson, and "he rent a young lion as he would a kid"; and under the same providential influence this same Samson "went down to Askelon and slew thirty men of them," and took their spoil or apparel (Judges xiv. 6, 19). Under the tender care of the Christian Providence both the Jews and the Egyptians were made to endure the severest trials, and to bear the keenest cruelties during the Jewish captivity. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus iv. 21; vii. 13), and then inflicted upon him and the people punishments for sin which this Providence was responsible for. The Jews were his special favorites. He was their ruler and guide, and they were a curse to all with whom they came in contact. From the day in which, it is said, Miriam celebrated their safe passage through the Red Sea, to the time when it is alleged that the sun was darkened at the crucifixion, they were disturbers of the public peace and the destroyers of human life. Moses, their providential leader, according to the Bible, carried on the most reckless, cruel, and unjust wars at the bidding of his God, whose immoral conduct was as glaring as his government was delusive.

The theological idea of Providence is as palpable in the New as it is in the Old Testament. Reliance upon the supernatural dominated the whole life of Christ, although, just previous to his death, faith in God's protection seems to have forsaken him. While belief in "Special Providence," based upon the notion of "Divine government," has within the last few years rapidly declined, it was for centuries tenaciously adhered to by the various Christian sects. On October 18, 1853, the Rev. Newman Hall preached an official sermon, in which he said: "With us prayer is not a mere decent, comely ceremony, but the actual presentation of petitions to an omnipotent and gracious Prince, who has promised that, in answer to our requests, he will bestow inestimable blessings upon us, and manifest himself to us as he does not unto the world" (Holyoake and Grant Debate, p. 122). Fortunately for the welfare of the race, this delusion is not extensively entertained in this practical and scientific age. Experience has shown us that Bonaparte was right when he said, "Providence is on the side of the largest batallions"; and the advice of Cromwell contained a secular lesson—namely, that if you "trust in God" you should "keep your powder dry."

Secular providence consists in relying upon science and its application; in learning the facts of existence, and applying them to our needs. We agree with Huxley that "the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature." Let those who attempt to depreciate science ponder over the following words of one of the greatest thinkers of our time: "To ask the question which more immediately concerns our argument—whether science is substantially true?—is much like asking whether the sun gives light. And it is because they are conscious how undeniably valid are most of its propositions that the theological party regard science with so much secret alarm. They know that during the two thousand years of its growth some of its large divisions—mathematics, physics, astronomy—have been subject to the rigorous criticisms of successive generations; and have, notwithstanding, become evermore firmly established. They know that, *unlike* many of their own doctrines, which were once *universally* received, but have age by age been more frequently called in question, the doctrines of science, at first confined to a few scattered inquirers, have been slowly growing into general acceptance, and are now in great part admitted as beyond dispute. They know that men of science throughout the world subject each other's results to the most searching examination, and that error is mercilessly exposed and rejected as soon as discovered; and, finally, they know that still more conclusive testimony is to be found in the daily verification of scientific predictions, and in the never-ceasing triumphs of those arts which science guides" (Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, pp. 15, 16).

CHARLES WATTS.

FASHIONABLE HERESY.

A NOTABLE novel of recent times is Mr. F. Frankfort Moore's *Phyllis of Philistia* (Hutchinson & Co., Paternoster-row). It is not exactly a Freethought novel, though it abounds in Freethought views. Oddly enough, they are allotted for expression to a clergyman of the Established Church. But, by whomsoever presented, they are not only intrinsically very sensible, but are most effectively advanced. No unprejudiced reader could withhold his acquiescence in their pertinency and truth. The impression conveyed is that, if there were more thinkers of the Rev. George Holland's type in church pulpits, the Establishment might hold on a little longer to life. But, alas for the Church, the plain-speaking of that imaginary but typical cleric is, perforce, represented as being too strong for the ecclesiastical taste. Consequently Mr. Holland finds it necessary eventually to relinquish orders, and to establish a Rationalist Church of his own. Obviously, in such cases the manly course is to "come out." To remain, with the vain idea of effecting vital reforms within, involves too many sacrifices of self-respect—too many irksome restraints upon the utterance of truth. The effective lever is to be applied from without.

This Freethinking cleric portrayed by Mr. Moore may certainly claim some amount of sympathy, for he suffers

Digitized by Google

both in love and war—the latter with his bishop. Phyllis breaks off her engagement with him on account of his heterodox opinions. That, however, is not much of a loss to him. She is but a fashionable miss of vacant mind, with merely what is commonly, though not very gallantly, called "a woman's reason" for the faith that is in her. And when she has rejected her heretical suitor, she fails to win the approval of her Society friends, who, sad to say, seem to regard heresy as rather an agreeable novelty.

It is not in incidents, however, but in dialogue, that Mr. Frankfort Moore presents aspects of Freethought for which, it may be assumed, he believes the fashionable world is prepared, if not exactly hungering. The dialogue sparkles with humor and irony, mostly of a man-of-the-world stamp. One extremely well-drawn character is Phyllis's father—a Member of Parliament who is always "asking questions of a questionable House." His sublime indifference to the Rev. Holland's heterodoxy, as contrasted with his daughter's hysterical horror, leads to a most entertaining breakfast-table chat.

The congregation of S. Chad's, Battenberg-square, have been thrown into a pleasurable state of excitement by their pastor's newly-published book entitled *Revised Versions*. Therein Mr. Holland has set forth the true lives of some of Jahveh's favorites—as Freethought writers have done, time after time, and, in former years, to their cost.

> "'I think there is good cause to grieve when we find a man like George Holland turning deliberately round from truth to falsehood,' said Phyllis, sternly.
>
> "'And, what's worse, running a very good chance of losing his living,' remarked the father. 'Of course, it will have to be proved that Moses and Abraham and David and the rest of them were not what he says they were, and it strikes me that all the Bench of bishops, and a Royal Commission or two thrown in, would have considerable difficulty in doing that now-a-days.'"

He admits, however, somewhat sadly, that the clerical biographer might have "left us Ruth, the heroine of the harvest festival. Besides, she was a woman. Heavens above, is there no chivalry remaining among men?" Says Phyllis: "Ah—if it was only chivalry! But—the Bible!" To which replies this cynical, unconcerned heathen: "Quite so—the—yes, to be sure. But don't you think you may take the Bible too seriously, Phyllis?" In further conversation of a highly diverting kind, Mr. Ayrton expresses his wonder that any man should give up a thing of flesh and blood like Phyllis for the sake of "proving, or trying to prove, that some people who lived five or six thousand years ago—if they ever lived at all—would have rendered themselves liable to imprisonment without the option of a fine if they lived in England since the passing of certain laws—recent laws, too, we must remember. A man who can't see that crime is usually a question of temperament, and sin invariably a question of geography—well, we'll say no more about it."

The book—"strikingly modern in design and in tone," though so very reminiscent—which gives Phyllis bitter heart-burnings is described in detail, and a shocking catalogue of Hebrew infamies it is. "It purported," we are told, "to deal with several personages and numerous episodes of the Old Testament, not from the standpoint of the comparative philologist, not from the standpoint of the comparative mythologist, but from the standpoint of the modern man of common sense and average power of discrimination." The rev. author "dealt with the patriarchs in succession, and they fared badly at his hands. He showed that Abraham had not one good act recorded to his credit, and contrasted his duplicity with the magnanimity of the ruler of Egypt whom he visited." And so on with other of Jahveh's favored friends, including David, who is described as a "loathsome, senile sensualist."

Of course, upon the publication of this book, the bishop of the diocese—who "knew something of men, and knew something of the Church; he even knew something of the Bible"—is asked to take immediate action. But that particular prelate is a man who had never been known to err on the side of rapidity. Nearly a week passed before he made a move in the matter, and then the move he made was in the direction of the Engadine. He crossed the Channel with the book under his arm. A later chapter, which describes the long-deferred interview between the bishop and the offending clergyman, may be regarded as a triumph in the way of smart dialogue and knowledge of the devious ways of ecclesiasticism behind the scenes. The bishop admits at the commencement that the book reflects in no inconsiderable measure what he had himself long thought. There are some complaints, he says, in the human system—nervous complaints—that require to be startled out of the system. "But the Church is not neurotic. You cannot apply the surprise method to her system with any chance of success." And the bishop suggests caution. His subordinate's views are quite right, but it is inadvisable to proclaim them. In fact, if he remains in the Church, it is his duty to preach exactly their opposite. And he may do so without let or hindrance, it apparently being no concern of the Church to inquire whether any of its ministers are hypocrites.

The rector's defence of himself to Phyllis might be an article from the *Freethinker*, so drastic is its treatment of the Church's idolatry of the Bible, and her impotent opposition to scientific research. "The intolerant attitude of the Church, still maintained in these days when the spirit of science pervades every form of thought, has been productive of probably the largest body that ever existed in this country of sensible men and women who never enter a church door. They want to know whatsoever things are true; they do not want to be dredged with the mummy dust of dogma." There is a long summary, too, of Mr. Holland's sermon to his parishioners in justification of his heterodox principles—which summary shows, as indeed do many other parts of the book, that Mr. Frankfort Moore is an original thinker, besides being exceedingly well versed in the points of Freethought attack. Some of the congregation were disappointed. "Why could Mr. Holland not have followed up the course indicated in his book, by showing up some of the other persons in the Bible? it was asked. There were quite a number of characters in the Bible who were regarded as estimable. Why could he not, then, have followed up his original scheme of 'showing them up'?—that was the phrase of the critics. There was Solomon, for instance. He was usually regarded as a person of high intellectual gifts, but he was susceptible of piquant treatment. And then someone said that Noah should have had a chapter all to himself, also Lot; and what about the spies who had entered Jericho? Could the imagination not suggest the story which they told to their wives on their return to the camp, relative to the house in which they had passed all their spare time? They supposed that Jericho was the Paris of high-class Jews of those days."

It is, however, impossible to mention here a tithe of the witty and true sayings and common-sense reasonings on matters theological which appear throughout the book. Of genuine humor there is an abundance. Take, for example, the following guileless chatter of a fashionable beauty, lured out of her depth into religious controversy. "I'm no judge," said Ella to Phyllis, "of what is horrible in theology or metaphysics, or whatever it is. But I do profess to know when a man has made a hit, whether in theology or anything else. Who cares, now-a-days, for what is dully orthodox? Whoever heard of a hero in orthodoxy, now-a-days? A man was telling me about one Colenso; he was, so far as I could gather, a first-class man at algebra and heresy, and things like that. He was Bishop of Zanzibar or Uganda, or some place, and he wrote a book about Moses showing that Moses couldn't have written something or other. Well, he took a lot of prosecuting—five or six years, I believe—and he didn't go nearly so far as Mr. Holland does in that book of his. All this time people talked about little else but Colenso, and his books made him a fortune. Yes, I think I'll try some more of that lovely cake; it's like warm ice, isn't it? No, I'll never believe that you will turn Mr. Holland adrift because he wrote something disparaging about Solomon—or was it David?"

To add to his iniquities, Mr. Holland contributes to the *Zeit Geist* an article, of which a summary is given. One passage is as follows: "And yet with such a record against it—a record of the murder of innocent men and women who endeavored to promulgate the divine truths of nature—the Church still arrogated to itself the right to lay down a rule of life for intelligent people—a rule of life founded upon the impossible amalgamation of Judaism and Christianity. The science of the Church was not equal to the task of amalgamating two such deadly opponents. Was it any wonder, then, that church-going had become practically obsolete among intelligent men and women? the writer asked. But what he most fully dealt with was

Digitized by Google

the indiscriminate selection of what were very properly termed the 'Lessons' from the Hebrew Bible. It was, he said, far from edifying to hear some chapters read out from the lectern without comment, though, fortunately, the readers were, as a rule, so imperfectly trained that the most objectionable passages had their potentiality of mischief minimized. He concluded his indictment by a reference to the sermon preached by the average clergyman of the Church of England. This was usually, he said, either a theological essay founded upon an obsolete system of theology, or a series of platitudes on morality delivered by an unpractical man. The first was an insult to the intelligence of an average man; the second was an insult to the intelligence of an average school-girl."

There is, too, an admirable portraiture of the Church in the present day as it appeared to this heterodox cleric: "The Church had surely become, he said, like unto the giant pagan in *Pilgrim's Progress*, who, when incapable of doing mischief, sat mumbling at the mouth of his cave on the roadside. The Church had become toothless—decrepit—either for evil or for good. Its mouthings of the past had become its mumblings of the present. The cave, at the mouth of which this toothless giant sat, was very dark, and intelligent people went by with a good-natured and tolerant laugh."

Apart from its controversial matter, Mr. Frankfort Moore's book is a novel of fascinating interest, sparkling epigram, and quaint observation. To turn to its bright and entertaining pages—after a surfeit of religious fictional trash—is indeed a pleasure, for which Mr. Moore is to be heartily thanked. FRANCIS NEALE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Catholic Church is always shrewd enough to stoop to conquer. Wishing to retain its hold upon France, and to continue enjoying the two millions or so a year which it receives from the Government, it now affects a certain regard for the Republic. President Faure's return from his successful visit to Russia, where he has secured the blessed word "alliance," has been celebrated in Paris, and the Church has associated herself with the popular rejoicing by singing a Te Deum in the Church of the Sacred Heart. As most Frenchmen look upon the Russian alliance as a means of recovering Alsace and Lorraine, possibly through a bloody war, it will be seen that the Church is not over-scrupulous in its proceedings.

Abbé Gayraud has been elected again by a large majority in the Third District of Brest. His previous election was invalidated on the ground of undue clerical influence. He is described as a Christian Socialist Republican. A very pretty mixture!

Admiral Field, besides being a member of Parliament, is also a Justice of the Peace at Gosport. In that capacity he had to assist in trying a Sunday League excursionist who got into the water somehow, and was charged with attempting to commit suicide. The prisoner was discharged, but Admiral Field, as though he were on the quarter-deck, proceeded to denounce the Sunday League, which he said was "for Sabbath-breaking." He said that people ought to go to church or chapel instead of taking excursions on Sunday. Well, perhaps they would if Admiral Field would only get up and preach. He would be sure of a good congregation. It would beat a pantomime.

The Rev. S. W. Thackeray, on behalf of the Curates' Union, sent a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury protesting against the appointment to St. Mary's Vicarage, Kennington, of the Rev. John Darlington, who is a curate of but three years' standing, passing over the claims of curates of long service and faithful work. His grace, in reply, says he is sorry there are so many clergymen unemployed, and thinks "the proper remedy for the trouble is to be found in the encouragement of a pension fund for clergy after a certain age. And," he concludes, "I advise your society to look in that direction." That is, the head of the Church, instead of promising the curates justice, recommends them to beg for charity. It is announced that the Rev. Mr. Darlington, who has dropped into the good billet, is engaged to marry the daughter of the Dean of Canterbury.

A former curate of Kennington asks in the *Times* of August 30: "Is the real explanation that Dean Farrar has practically appointed his future son-in-law? If so, why not make Kennington a family living, with a presentation vested in Dr. Farrar? Through his influence his son-in-law, the Bishop of Tasmania, was formerly appointed vicar; he was succeeded by Mr. Bowman, a former curate of St. Margaret's, Westminster; and now the Archbishop arranges that Mr. Darlington shall make the third of these Farrar-esque appointments."

E. P. Scymgour also writes to the *Times* on this shameless perversion of patronage. He asks what people will think of this passing over of men who have served from ten to thirty years, for the favor of one who has only been three years in the Church. "What a comment on the clergy from the lips of their head!"

Even the *Church Times* says the Archbishop's answer to the Curates' Union is unsatisfactory, "and drags a red herring across the trail, in the hope that the pursuers may be thrown off the scent."

Intense excitement has been stirred among the negroes of South Carolina by the constant ringing of a bell at a new chapel for colored people at Mountville, accompanied with the declaration that the Devil is dead. The exhorters declared that Old Nick has been tried by the Almighty and a jury of twelve angels, and has been consigned to the negroes of Mountville to be interred for all eternity. A throng of negroes shout, yell, shriek, and dance in an ecstasy of religious excitement until exhausted and unconscious.

The occasion should be one for singing Béranger's *Mort du Diable*; or, as we have them handy, Denton's *Radical Rhymes* may serve:—

Sigh, priests; cry aloud! hang your pulpits with black,
Let sorrow bow down every head;
The good friend who bore all your sins on his back,
Your best friend, the Devil, is dead.

Your church is a corpse—you are guarding its tomb;
The soul of your system has fled;
The death-knell is tolling your terrible doom—
It tells us the Devil is dead.

You're bid to the funeral, ministers all,
We've dug the old gentleman's bed;
Your black coats will make a most excellent pall
To cover your friend who is dead.

Camp-meetings henceforth will be needed no more;
Revivals are knocked on the head;
The orthodox vessel lies stranded on shore—
Their captain, the Devil, is dead.

After one of Sam Jones's characteristic revival sermons, an old negro woman rushed up, and, grasping him by the hand, exclaimed with emotion: "I likes to hear you preach, Brudder Jones. You're a white man, but yo' preaches mo' like a negro than I ebber hear. You have got a white skin, Brudder Jones, but, t'ank de Lawd, you'se got a black heart."

Here is a verse of a genuine "Negro Hymn of the Judgment Day," the full hymn being given in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, September, 1896:—

Done yo' see de King a-comin' in de clouds?
See de nail-prints in his han's how they shine!
O dat mornin' yo'll hyar a mighty roarin',
Dat'll be de earth a-burnin',
When de heabens fly away.

A new American magazine is called *Monumental Records*. It is edited by the Rev. H. Baum, and its first number gives a translation of both the Moabite Stone and the Siloam inscription. It is not mentioned that the Moabite Stone expressly contradicts Scripture in making Mesha, King of Moab, overcome Jahveh, and indirectly refutes the statement in Joshua xii. 6, 7, xiii. 8–25, and 1 Chronicles v. 11, that the Hebrews conquered that territory several hundred years previously. As to the Siloam inscription, it in no way helps the old book, and a writer in a recent number of *The Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology* has conclusively shown that, instead of belonging to the time of Hezekiah, it must be placed in that of Herod.

The Pope is said to have permitted priests to use the bicycle; but in the orthodox Greek Church it has been pronounced an unseemly practice for clergymen, and it has therefore been forbidden.

American sky-pilots complain that their churches are empty by reason of the congregation having gone "biking." They have, therefore, formed a league, the members of which sign the following pledge: "Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Sunday wheeling has become a popular mania, and is now one of the most subtle foes of the Lord's Day. Desiring to throw all my influence against its desecration, I pledge myself that I will not ride my bicycle for pleasure on Sunday, and, further, that I will not use my wheel for any purpose on that day if my reasons for

Digitized by Google

doing so are likely to be misunderstood by others." It is not stated what percentage of wheelers have joined the league.

The *Church Times* urges the London clergy to prepare for the coming School Board elections. "What is wanted," it says, "is a compact body of members on the Board—whether Moderates or Progressives—who, on the religious question alone, will speak and vote as Churchmen." It hopes for "the formal adoption by the Board of the Apostles' Creed." Teach the children the nonsense in this forgery, and the parson may hold his own for a long time to come.

What a pretty state of things obtains in many of the "People's Schools" under the control of the clergy! The rector of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, advertised for a certificated master and mistress, the salary of both together being £100 a year, with a "nice house and garden, rent and rates free." In reply to an applicant the man of God stated the necessary qualifications for the post. The applicant and his sisters were (of course) confirmed and regular communicants, and would be expected to lead the way in opposition to the spirit of dissent, which was rather too prevalent in the parish. They would all have to attend Sunday services and train the choir. The applicant himself would have to superintend the Sunday-school, morning and afternoon, and teach a class of boys. One of his sisters would also have to teach every Sunday afternoon. In short, the schoolmaster was expected to carry on the day school, and to devote all the rest of his time to acting as factotum to the clergyman. And this is the sort of thing which the Tory government is fostering deliberately by paying another £600,000 per annum to these *soi-disant* Voluntary Schools.

Father Bernard Vaughan calls Board School Christianity "the thin end of nothing whittled down." If he could only introduce the thin end of Romanism, he would soon ram in confession, indulgences, and the absolute power of the priest.

The French Canadian paper, *L'Electeur*, supported the return of the Liberal Catholic premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It was, in consequence, excommunicated by the priests. One M. Fafard, an educated man of good social standing, refused, though a Catholic, to give up *L'Electeur*. Shortly afterwards he was run over by a railway train, through the neglect of the company controlling the line. Thereupon two anti-Liberal curés preached sermons, in which M. Fafard's death was cited as a terrible consequence of his obstinate persistence in taking *L'Electeur*. His family, who are good Catholics—one of them himself a curé—appealed in indignation to the ecclesiastical superiors of the two priests. In one case they were successful, and the offender, Father Barolet, had to make a complete retractation from the pulpit, and pay the injured family 400 dollars. In the other case the appeal was not attended to, so an action at law was brought. Priests rarely stick at slandering the dead, or anything else, in the interests of the Church.

On high authority, the announcement is made that Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple in London, "takes a cold bath before he enters his pulpit." There are reasons for believing the statement to be correct. Dr. Parker's sermons often give people the shivers.—*Leeds Daily News.*

Five demented, religion-crazed women were lodged in jail at Omaha, August 10, to serve out a sentence in default of payment of fines for disorderly conduct. They are said to be reputable residents of Gretna, Neb., and showed no symptoms of demoralization until they became converted to religion. They entered a Methodist meeting, dancing about the church, screaming at the top of their voices, denouncing the preacher and his congregation as "lost," and charging all of them with being possessed with the devil. In court they danced about the justice and shouted: "God told us to do it. We are his servants. Hallelujah!" They told the justice that he was the devil, and went shrieking to jail. They will probably live to be ashamed of themselves if they recover their reason, but meanwhile the same fanaticism will be wrecking intellects in other quarters. If a decent God governed this world, how quickly he would stop the mouths of the clerical impostors who profess to speak in his name.—*Truthseeker.*

An extraordinary incident was witnessed at a certain church in a remote part of Anglesey on a recent Sunday. While the service was in progress a large number of ducks entered the church and paraded the aisle, uttering loud and continuous quacks, which caused several of the congregation to burst into laughter.

It seems that the Goose Fair at Nottingham is not to be dispensed with, as desired, on account of the meeting of the Church Congress. It remains to be seen which of the rival assemblies will be the more productive.

Borderland gives a portrait of the spirit Katie King—or is it the medium, Florrie Cook, who so egregiously duped Sir William Crookes? No wonder "Aretas," the chief writer of the *Theosophical News*, of Boston, says: "Periodicals like *Borderland* make me blush to think that human beings are capable of such folly."

Mrs. Longley, the medium, to the question, Where is the spirit located in the human organism? replied: "In every part and atom of the organic structure." If this be so, the old witches were not so far out when they thought they could influence the lives of people by getting hold of pieces of their hair or cuttings of their nails.

Under the new United States tariff law, sacramental wafers as well as Bibles may be imported duty free. This rouses the patriotism of F. H. Shrock, who writes thus to the *Truthseeker*: "Here in America we pay god-makers princely wages, and the factories are thus forced to compete with the pauper-made gods of Rome. Another glaring inconsistency in this villainous law is that the blood of Christ is taxed to prohibition, altar-cloths pay a heavy tax, while pancake-gods come in free. I want to know how our infant industry of god-making is going to flourish under such a law. The home market for gods is already at the lowest ebb, and our export trade is limited to Hindoo and Chinese gods made in Connecticut. Unless McKinley knows no other god but 'Protection,' he will call an extra session of Congress to expunge this insult to our domestic God. Let American labor be protected."

"A Sufferer," who is also a bookbinder, writes to the *Chronicle* anent the Jubilee Bible, which was sold at 2s. under cost. He says he was asked for a price for binding, which of course was too high, and adds that, if subscribers to the Bible Society only realized the harm it does, he is sure they would insist on its being stopped. The publisher, to meet the competition thus created, sweats the binder, who, in turn, is compelled to sweat, as far as possible, his employees. The men have a strong trade society to protect them, but the woman's trade society is not strong, and it is they who suffer.

While London is again patronizing the wall-poster piety of the *Sign of the Cross*, Berlin has prohibited Herr Sudermann's drama *Johannes*, on the ground that it would offend the susceptibilities of pious people by its introduction of John the Baptist before the footlights.

A story is told of Parson Whistler, of All Saints, Hastings, that, once going into the belfry, he found a whitewasher whistling a dance tune while at his work. "Is that a proper tune for a place of worship?" shouted old Whistler, and the young chap was took aback, and sort of shame-faced. "Beg your pardon, sir," he said, "but I forgot where I was"; and then, to show he was sorry, he started whistling the "Old Hundredth." Now, you see, being a member of the band, his hand kept time with the music, and so the "Old Hundredth" made the whitewash brush go wonderful slow. "Oh, get back to your dance tune," the old parson shouted, "or the job'll never be done."

The Rev. Douglas Randolph, curate of Sudbourne and Orford, shot himself through the heart in a wood, and the evidence showed that he had been ill and depressed for some time owing to financial difficulties. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while temporarily insane."

The Rev. A. R. W. Seton, formerly incumbent of Elsted, Petersfield, Hants, has had a varied financial experience, which he detailed in the Bankruptcy Court. He bought his living for £2,800, and, after enjoying it and its £250 a year for eight years, sold it for £4,000. He, however, had to pay for dilapidations to the tune of £1,200, which left him what he had originally paid. This encouraged speculations on the Stock Exchange, which resulted in disaster, and liabilities returned at £4,506 against assets £1,440.

In a sermon by Canon Gore, reported in the *Phonetic Journal*, he says: "Jerusalem was destroyed because she rejected Christ. That is an historical fact." Canon Gore knows he has no historical fact to bear him out, so he adds: "I mean the temper which caused her final destruction was simply the same as the temper which caused her to reject Christ." This sudden shifting from one statement to a totally different one is characteristic of the school to which the Canon belongs.

Canon Gore goes on to say: "Brethren, I believe this in particular is our intellectual vocation and duty to-day, to realize that natural laws are God's methods, and that it is not the less, but rather the more, his working because he works by ordinary sequences, and by what we call natural causes in the government of men as of the world." Our intellectual vocation yesterday was to swallow all the miracles the parsons used to tell us; but things have altered

Digitized by Google

to-day. Providence, he says the cynic remarks, "is to be observed generally on the side of the strongest battalions." "Perfectly true" is the Canon's comment. Canon Gore is a big gun, but he does not see that the cynic, who, by the way, was Napoleon, meant that Providence had nothing to do with human affairs at all.

The Zionist Congress at Basle, which is discussing the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine, has addressed a telegram to the Sultan thanking him for the good treatment accorded to the Jews in Turkey. From all we have read, however, it appears that the Jews in the Turkish empire play the part of jackal to the Mohammedan lion, and batten on the spoils of murdered or persecuted Christians. A plague on all their houses, say we. Every religion is a curse in its own way.

"Providence" has afflicted poor Japan with another earthquake and tidal wave. Hundreds of buildings were wrecked on various parts of the coast, and a great many persons killed or fatally injured. Hofuku colliery was flooded by the wave, and a hundred colliers were drowned like rats. "His tender mercies are over all his works."

Providence is afflicting many parts of Ireland with the potato-blight, and in West Cork the greater portion of the grain crop is also lost. This, with dear bread, means a hard winter for Ireland.

One hundred and thirty-five lives have been lost in Northern Bohemia through floods, many women and children being among them. In Hungary the incessant rain has so softened the dykes that the workmen who are strengthening them are in constant danger.

Sir James Clerk-Rattray was shot between the shoulders during the Indian Mutiny. His condition was so bad that he was told he had probably only an hour to live. He was also asked what he would like. Of course he ought to have asked for a Bible, but he didn't. He asked for a big cigar. And the cigar seems to have pulled him through. Anyhow, he didn't die; in fact, he is still living, and has recently been knighted.

Louis Becke, in the *Westminster Gazette*, gives an interesting account of Niué, an island in the South Pacific. This is the native name of the place, but Cook called it Savage Island on account of the ferocity of its inhabitants, and by this designation it is still known among mariners. The natives are "a grasping, avaricious race, and in their outward lives display much hard-shell piety." They were long ago converted to Christianity, and Louis Becke speaks highly of the resident missionary, the Rev. Frank Lawes, who is generally respected and beloved. It appears that he has to restrain the bigotry of his flock on some occasions. During the time that Louis Becke was staying on the island the native Parliament passed a law that no white man must have a fire lit for cooking purposes on the Sabbath day. This was a terrible prospect for the half-dozen white traders there, and Mr. Lawes had to remonstrate with them. They only yielded after a stubborn resistance. The fact was, we take it, that the unsophisticated islanders thought keeping the Sabbath meant keeping the Sabbath. They did not understand the refined interpretations of the more subtle civilisees of Europe, who make all sorts of accommodations with heaven.

The Rev. E. Husband, vicar of St. Michael's, Folkestone, takes his text from 2 Timothy iv. 14, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil," and announces in a placard that during the Folkestone season coppers must not be placed in the plate, but omits to say whether he prefers buttons or lozenges as a substitute. Probably he does not want to preach the gospel to the poor during the season. Their coppers may be welcome in the winter.

In Georgia, the other Sunday, the services in a church were adjourned for ten minutes to allow the congregation to lynch a nigger. After the execution the crowd returned to church and resumed its devotions.

It has transpired that the fire at the Grand Hotel at Baden-by-Zurich was the outcome of religious mania. A servant-maid was responsible for it. She declared that the Almighty commanded her to do what she did. The unhappy creature, after the fire broke out, attempted to throw herself into the river.

While the bells were being chimed for service at the parish church of St. Mary, Dover, on Monday evening, one of the clappers of the bells broke and fell on the head of a lad named Wilson, severely injuring him. He was removed to hospital, suffering rom concussion of the brain.

Another attempt to sell the goods of Morecambe Nonconformists for not paying the Vicar of Lancaster's tithes was made at Lancaster. Considerable excitement prevailed but, with the exception of one lot, the sale was boycotted, the bailiff who acted as auctioneer being subjected to continual jeering and hooting by the crowd.

Mr. Hilliary, the West Ham coroner, in the case of a member of the "Peculiar People" at Silvertown who allowed his child, aged nine weeks, to die without medical attendance, pointed out that, whatever the tenets of a religious body, neglect on their part to call in medical aid for their children might, according to the law, amount to manslaughter. The jury found that "the parents did not neglect the deceased by not calling in medical aid, or that the death was accelerated by their not doing so; but, in our opinion, they are deserving of severe censure." The coroner remarked: "That is not a very consistent verdict, gentlemen." Perhaps the jury felt that St. James was really responsible, since he gives the instructions on the treatment of the sick which the Peculiar People follow.

Dr H. R. Oswald, the deputy coroner for Central London, also had to point out that in England the law of man takes precedence of the alleged law of God. A Mr. Cohen excused himself from acting on the jury on the ground that he was a descendant of the High Priest Aaron, and was forbidden by the Pentateuch to enter the presence of the dead. The coroner said there was another law, called the law of England, which he thought was superior to the Jewish law. The officer would therefore have to summon Mr. Cohen to attend at the next inquest, so that he could explain the matter.

The German police regulations for the outward sanctification of Sunday require that all articles offered for sale, if not removed from their customary places, shall be covered during the church hour. Their Sabbatarianism is nearly as rich as that of Ruskin's mother, who used to insist on his pictures having their faces turned to the wall on Sundays.

Thomas Osborne, a Strand beggar, waits on the attendants at Exeter Hall, and tells them: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Those who give to the poor lend to the Lord. The birds of the air have nests, and foxes have holes, but, like the Son of Man, I have nowhere to lay my head." The mendicity officer, instead of acting on the precepts of Jesus, "to give to him that asketh," has the pious Thomas run in to Bow-street.

Frank M. Browne, an artist residing at Cold Norton, has been arrested and brought before the magistrates at Maldon. He is accused of sending "indecent and obscene" postcards through the post, and is committed for trial. We understand that the postcards contain quotations from the Bible. Mr. Browne seems to be a man of a somewhat erratic and excitable temperament, and his action is not at all wise; indeed, it is worse than foolish if it be true that one of these postcards was sent to the vicar's daughter. On the other hand, Mr. Browne pleads that he has been exasperated by petty persecution, in consequence of his refusal to have his children dosed with religious teaching. On the whole, it seems advisable to make further inquiries on the spot, and Mr. Forder, the N. S. S. honorary secretary, is running down, with the President's sanction, on a visit of investigation.

Many people wonder where all the gold that has been discovered goes to. The Church certainly uses up a good quantity in ornaments. It is stated that the gold contained in the medals, vessels, chains, and other objects preserved in the Vatican would make more gold coin than the whole of the present European circulation. No wonder there is a cry for bimetallism.

Dr. Conan Doyle is reported to have told a humorous story at a recent dinner in London. A friend of his contended that every house, even the most respectable, had a skeleton in the cupboard; and he determined to put this opinion to the test, selecting for the subject of the experiment an irreproachable archdeacon of the Church of England. A telegram was dispatched to the reverend gentleman: "All is discovered. Fly at once." And the venerable archdeacon disappeared, and has never been heard of since.

A MISTAKE.—The Brighton Electrical Railway does not run on Sundays, so the station at the Aquarium end, it is said, is appropriated by psalm-singers, who decorate it with banners, on which texts more or less suitable for the occasion are inscribed. A correspondent says he read on one occasion: "'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.' Electric cars every five minutes."—*Electrical Review.*

One blade of grass, rightly understood, destroys the orthodox creed.—*Ingersoll.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 5, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints', Manchester; at 11, "Who was Moses? A Reply to the King of Siam's Question"; at 3, "Is Christ Possible?"; at 6.30, "God and the Devil."

September 26, Birmingham.

October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 15 and 16, debate at Athenæum Hall, London; 19, Plymouth; 21, 22, 23, 24, debate at Plymouth. 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society; 31, Stanley, Durham. November 2, 3, 4, and 5, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. G. DOBSON.—Thanks. It was a clerical blunder, but your remittance pleasantly rectifies it.

J. M. GIMSON (Leicester) writes:—"I enclose cheque for £2 2s. as a donation towards the Spanish Exiles Fund. I suppose I am as far from being an Anarchist or a Socialist as any one living, but such tortures as these poor people have been subjected to put the matter outside the question of opinions and make it one of simple humanity. And we do not know that they are worse than the bulk of other people, after all."

DAVID HUGHES (Swansea), promising a subscription towards the Treasurer's Scheme, says:—"If I can double it, I certainly will. I hope the needful amount will be subscribed towards this excellent fund."

E. H.—You are misled. The wish was father to the thought. Did you ever hear of the tremendous fish caught in an American lake? It was so big that when it was landed the lake fell six feet. Every now and then a man leaves a Society imagining himself to be as great as that fish; and occasionally he spends most of his spare time in telling strangers of the prodigious subsidence caused by his departure.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.—Thanks. T. C.'s tract shall appear.

E. C.—Mr. Wheeler's articles on Tacitus and Pliny appeared in the *Freethinker* for January 31 and February 28 this year.

CHILPERIC points out that, in his letter on page 557, it should read רעה, not רצה. Thanks for extract.

SAINT CHARLES.—Your verse is not without merit, but it is hardly up to our mark for publication. No doubt you will do much better in time by continued practice.

J. KEAST.—(1) Our position is clear enough, as you perceive. Sympathy for the victims of brutal tyranny is possible without the least agreement with particular forms of political opinion. (2) We do not think Mr. Grimstead's opinion of the late Charles Bradlaugh is of any importance. Mr. Bradlaugh did know Hebrew, as a matter of fact; but even if he did not, it would not have incapacitated him from criticising the Bible. How many clergymen know Hebrew?

J. W. WHITEHEAD.—Whoever assures you that Charles Bradlaugh, speaking at Cogers' Hall in 1870, denied that he was or ever had been an Atheist, must have a fertile imagination. He should write stories for Christian magazines. The statement is inherently absurd. The person you refer to might just as well allege that Mr. Gladstone once denied that he was or ever had been a Liberal.

T. MARTIN (Pontypridd).—Thanks for the reports of the debate at Porth. Mr. Foote hopes to visit you shortly and make Mr. Cox's acquaintance. Please present him our congratulations.

J. H.—Subscription acknowledged elsewhere. Thanks for cuttings.

G. J. SAUNDERS.—We have *not* received a marked copy of the *Age of Reason*. We never heard of the existence of such a paper. If it contains a "vile attack" on Messrs. Foote and Cohen, we cannot reply until we see it. Even then it may be beneath our contempt. We utterly dissent from the view that public men are bound to answer every vilifier. When would they find time for their work?

J. LEWIS.—We are unable to give you any authority for the statement that there are from six to seven million sceptics in this country. If there are, most of them lie very low.

A DEIST.—We expect you will be considered orthodox soon.

A. G. W.—Thanks. The *Citizen* is always welcome.

J. PARTRIDGE.—The Birmingham Branch is acting generously. We wish all Branches were animated by the same spirit.

H. LEES SUMNER, subscribing to the Spanish Exiles Fund, says: "I hate bomb-throwing, and I hate cruelty to man and beast." This correspondent was sorry to see such meagre reports of the Trafalgar-square meeting in papers like *Reynolds's*, and no mention of it at all in the *Clarion*. The fact is, a good many "advanced" people were a bit frightened. It was amusing to see the large number of letters of sympathy from those who couldn't come. It reminded us of the New Testament passage about certain invited persons: one had bought oxen, one had married a wife, and another had to attend a funeral.

ALERT.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for your good wishes and generous support of the movement.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON (Leicester), sending a cheque for the Spanish Exiles Fund, says: "I have no sympathy with the bomb-throwing fraternity, but I send this relying on your assurance in the *Freethinker* that the men are not violent fanatics, but heretics to Spanish governmental ideas of religion and politics." That's it precisely. It couldn't be put better.

C. HEALD, who sends a subscription to the Treasurer's Scheme, states that twenty years ago he was a Methodist lay preacher, and in trying to convert an Atheist he got converted himself, and has been a Freethinker ever since.

C. DAVIES vouches for the truth of the following story:—When the Darwin Memorial was first proposed at Shrewsbury a thunderstorm damaged the roof of the church, and the parson in his next sermon said it was a visitation from God for contemplating a memorial to such a wicked man as Darwin.

P. D.—You will probably have to pick up a copy of George Eliot's translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* as you can—perhaps second-hand. This translation is the best. The published price of the one-volume edition was 15s.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Your letter, etc., shall be laid before the Executive. We fear that the London press, which gave publicity to Sir Charles Warren's order, and to the falsehood behind it, is very unlikely to publish your correction. Any stick is good enough to beat Freethinkers with.

J. C. JORDAN.—Thanks for the cutting. We have no room to notice it this week, but will do so in our next issue.

E. S. ROBERTS.—Let the old sky-pilot go. We shouldn't think the worse of him even if he played a good game of billiards and was a judge of a good smoke.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—G. Brady, 10s.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—We have received:—J. M. Gimson, £2 2s.; J. H., 1s.; Birmingham Branch, £1 1s.; H. Lees Sumner, 2s. 6d.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2 2s.; C. H. Gask, 2s. 6d. *Per R. Forder*:—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d.; A. Lewes, 2s. 6d.

E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. secretary, acknowledges the following subscriptions to the Spanish Exiles Fund:—H. J. Stace, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrap, 2s. 6d.; W. Leat, 2s.; E. L., 10s.; collection at Mr. Foote's lecture (August 22), 14s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Islamic World—Crescent—Animals' Friend—Liberty—De Dageraad—English Mechanic—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Blackburn Times—Blue Grass Blade—Boston Investigator—Two Worlds—Liberator—Ourselves—Theosophy—Birmingham Argus—New York Public Opinion—Progressive Thinker—Chester Chronicle—Humanity—Christian Commonwealth.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 23 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures at Manchester to-day (Sept. 5), reopening the Secular Hall, which has been closed for repairs and decoration. The subjects should attract the general public, and no doubt there will be a good gathering of the local "saints" on this occasion.

"God's Prison" was the subject of Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, Mr. Marriott occupying the chair. There was another fine audience, and the lecture was much applauded. This evening (Sept. 5) the Athenæum Hall platform is occupied by Mr. Charles Watts, who takes for his subject "The Triumph of Reason." We hope he will have a good audience and a hearty reception.

The National Secular Society's Executive, at its last meeting, appointed a sub-committee to look after the Treasurer's Scheme. This committee was to report at the next Executive meeting (September 2), particularly with regard to the employment of a financial and organizing Secretary, who would have as a part of his duty to call upon sympathizers throughout the country, with a view to obtaining their subscriptions towards the Scheme. No doubt we shall be in a position to announce something definite in our next issue. Meanwhile we prefer to let another week slide before

Digitized by Google

amplifying and emphasizing our appeal to the Secular party.

A fresh list of promises reaches us from Mr. Swain on behalf of the Derby Branch :—J. Martin, 5s.; E. Barker, 5s.; O. Ford, 5s.; G. Heritage, 5s.; R. Wellings, 2s. 6d.; G. Lander, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Lander, 2s. 6d.

Further separate promises have reached us as follows :—C. Heald (paid), 5s.; C. Davies, 5s.; G. Brady, £6 (10s. monthly.

The following promises have been sent to Miss Vance, secretary, at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand London, W.C. :—H. Smith (paid), 10s.; W. Ingram (paid), 10s.; C. Mascall (paid), 10s.—all three from Stanningly ; W. Stewart, 5s.; J. F. Hampson, £1 ; Mrs. J. F. Hampson, £1.

The Spanish Exiles Fund will not be continued after next week. All subscriptions received will be acknowledged in our next issue, and the whole amount, with the two guineas voted by the Executive, will be paid over to the Atrocities Committee by Mr. Hartmann (treasurer) on behalf of the N. S. S.

Local papers report the public debate at Porth, South Wales, between the Rev. R. Mon Evans and ex-Rev. J. W. Cox, on, "Is the God of Creation the God of the Bible?" the chair being occupied by the Rev. W. Hindes. The hall was crowded on the first evening, and there was a good attendance on the second, when the subject discussed was, "Has Christianity Benefited the World?" Mr. Cox appears to have had a good hearing during a portion of the debate, but at one point his voice was drowned by hisses. The *Glamorgan Times* honorably complains of this treatment. "Although Mr. Cox's ideas did not fit in with those of the audience," it says, "the people at least might have shown him some civility. If they did not wish to hear his views, why did they trouble themselves to attend the meeting?"

Mr. C. Cohen was married on Tuesday. We wish him and his wife a long lifetime of happiness and usefulness together. Our esteemed young colleague has been through the philosophical stage. When he gets a pair of soft little arms round his neck, with a pair of half-moulded little lips near, trying to say "Dada," he will pass into another stage which will give new life and color to his lectures.

Dr. Bruno Wille, the Freethinker of Berlin, who has more than once come into collision with the authorities, was arrested at Graz for delivering a lecture on "Religion and Joy." Subscriptions for his support in prison are asked for by the German *Freidenker Bund*, and may be sent to the treasurer, J. Hoch, 23, 1 Markt-strasse, Wiesbaden.

The *English Mechanic and World of Science* is now in its sixty-sixth volume. The fact speaks definitely to the purpose it has fulfilled, and its pages are certainly as interesting and as useful as ever. The reports of the British Association are well worth the price of the September number.

The *Sketch* of August 28 has a very good portrait of Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who bears his age wonderfully well, being as sprightly with tongue and pen as ever.

The *Torch of Reason*, of Silverton, Oregon, shows that they are pushing on with the Liberal University there. By the way, Mr. B. F. Underwood, in an article on "Meliorism," quotes the words at the end of *Romola*, ascribing them to "Dr. Liddon." This is the more extraordinary, as Mr. Underwood is acquainted with the works of George Eliot.

The Liverpool Branch opens its winter campaign this evening, when addresses will be delivered by several local friends on "The Principles of Secularism." On the following Sunday Mr. J. M. Robertson begins a course of lectures extending from September 12 to October 3.

The Camberwell Secular Hall, 62 New Church-road, re-opens for its winter season this evening by a lecture on Egypt, which will be illustrated with an oxy-hydrogen lantern. On the following Sunday the subject will be "Athens and Greek Civilization," also with illustrations. We are informed that our South London friends have had splendid meetings on Peckham Rye this summer. We understand that the various Christian bodies are getting up a united counter-demonstration for to-day.

Friends who intend to be present at Mr. Watts's two nights' debate with the Rev. Mr. Waldron at the Athenæum Hall, on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, September 15 and 16, will please remember that tickets must be secured beforehand, as no money can be taken at the doors. The prices of the tickets are sixpence and one shilling, and they can be had of Miss Vance at the office of the National Secular Society, 376 Strand, and at 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet-street.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

IV.—Manufactured Prophecies of the Nativity.

Throughout the Gospel narratives we find it over and over again asserted that various events and circumstances in the life of Christ were foreseen and foretold by ancient Hebrew prophets, and in the accounts of the Nativity we encounter no less than five such alleged predictions. Before proceeding further, it will be well to consider some of these so-called "prophecies." By so doing we shall not only obtain a better idea of the character of the Gospel stories, but we shall be able to disprove, once for all, the ridiculous claim of inspiration. I will now briefly examine some of these inspired predictions.

I. The writer of the First Gospel, after stating that Mary, the betrothed wife of Joseph the Carpenter, was with child by the Holy Ghost, says that this interesting event occurred in fulfilment of a prophecy of Isaiah :—

> "Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us" (i. 22, 23).

The quotation is from Isaiah vii. 14. From the context we learn that Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, made war upon Ahaz, king of Judah, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Isaiah then received the command to go to Ahaz, and tell him that the two confederate kings should not prevail against him, and also to predict that they should, within a short period, be deposed, and taken captive to Assyria. Ahaz was, further, told to ask a sign, as a proof that the prediction should certainly be fulfilled. Upon his declining to do so, "the Lord" persisted in giving one. A young woman, he said, should give birth to a son, and before this child should have arrived at an age to distinguish between good and evil, or even before he should be able to say "My father" or "My mother," both the king of Syria and the king of Israel should be removed from their kingdoms. This was the sign, and the fulfilment took place a few years later.

> "And the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying.....the Lord himself shall give you a sign : Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.....For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken" (vii. 10-16).

This child, it will be seen, was to be a sign to king Ahaz, and to him only. Some of the words in the passage quoted by Matthew have, however, for obvious reasons, been mistranslated. The Hebrew word rendered "virgin" was used to designate simply a young woman, or a young wife ; also the words, "shall conceive," denoted an existing condition. The sentence should read : "Behold a young woman is with child, and beareth a son," etc.

We find, also, from the next chapter that the birth of this child actually took place, and that he was Isaiah's own son. That writer says (viii. 3, 4) :—

> "And I went unto the prophetess ; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the Lord unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the king of Assyria."

From this passage it is quite clear that the child born to "the prophetess" was the one promised to Ahaz as a sign ; for the prediction concerning the two kings is stated as about to be fulfilled in him, and we find, as a matter of Bible history, that the fulfilment shortly afterwards took place (2 Kings xv. 29 ; xvi. 9). The child, it is true, was not called Immanuel ; "the Lord" appears to have altered his mind upon that point. He named him instead "The spoil speedeth, the prey hasteneth," in order to show that the prediction, like a charm, was working its way to the desired end. We find, also, a few verses further on (viii. 8), that the name Immanuel is employed to designate the whole kingdom of Judah.

Leaving the name out of the question, it will be plainly seen that the prophecy and sign which were made to Ahaz had no more reference to Christ than to the man in the moon. Even had the carpenter's wife named her son Immanuel, instead of Jesus, the prediction would still have no reference to the latter personage

Digitized by Google

In order to make up his "prophecy," Matthew has dishonestly taken some words in the narrative of Isaiah away from their context, and, wilfully disregarding both the sense of that context and the fact that the prediction was fulfilled in the days of Ahaz, he unblushingly declares that those words were written concerning a child who was not born until seven hundred and thirty years after that time —to wit, Jesus Christ. A grosser fraud it is scarcely possible to imagine. Inspiration in this case means nothing less than deliberate falsehood and unscrupulous misrepresentation.

II. The same veracious evangelist states that when certain Magi came to Jerusalem, and inquired where the newly-born king of the Jews was to be found, Herod called the chief priests and scribes, and put the question to them. The reply is thus recorded (ii. 5, 6):—

> "And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come forth a governor, that shall be shepherd of my people Israel."

The quotation is from the book of Micah (v. 2-6):—

> "But thou Bethlehem Ephrathah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me, that is to be *ruler in Israel*; whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days. .....And this man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and shall tread in our palaces; then shall we raise against him [*i.e.*, the Assyrian] seven shepherds and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: and *he shall deliver us from the Assyrian* when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

Micah lived in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, in whose reigns the Assyrians several times invaded the land of Canaan. We find from the cuneiform inscriptions that during this period Ahaz paid tribute to Tiglath Pileser III.; that Sargon carried into captivity 27,280 of the inhabitants of Samaria; that Ashdod was taken and burnt by the same king; that Hezekiah was besieged in Jerusalem by Sennacherib; and that the last-named king carried away from all the principal cities of Judah 200,150 captives.

This being the state of affairs, Micah, in a burst of patriotism which he mistook for inspiration, predicted the advent of some great man, a native of Bethlehem, who, with the assistance of fifteen other heroes, should deliver his countrymen from their Assyrian oppressors. The reference is plainly to a great miliary leader, like Judas Maccabeus, who should not only repel the invaders, but should carry the war into the enemy's country and lay waste the land of Assyria.

This prediction was doubtless very comforting to the Jews of Micah's time; but, unfortunately for the credit of that prophet, it was never fulfilled. No such leader ever appeared. Bethlehem was selected as the locality from which the deliverer should come, simply because that city was supposed to have been the birth-place of David, the ideal king.

It goes, of course, without saying that this false prophecy could in no case refer to Jesus of Nazareth; for that personage was never a "ruler in Israel," nor did he ever deliver the Jews from the Assyrians. As a matter of fact, those troublesome invaders of Canaan had passed away as a nation several hundred years before Christ was born.

The words, "whose goings forth are from of old, from ancient days," appear to be a later addition, probably by some copyist who thought of David as living "in ancient days," or who intended to signify that the coming leader should be a descendant of David, in the same way as Isaiah foretold a deliverer of the "root of Jesse" (xi. 10-16). In any case, the predicted ruler was to be a man who should deliver his people from the Assyrians; that is the only point necessary to be considered.

Here, then, we have a second case of deliberate misrepresentation on the part of the writer of the First Gospel, who must have known perfectly well that Micah's prediction could in no possible way refer to Christ.

III.—Matthew, after stating that Joseph the Carpenter, with his wife and child, had fled into the land of Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod the Great, says that they returned to Palestine in order to fulfil another Old Testament "prophecy."

> "And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son" (ii. 14, 15).

The quotation is from Hosea xi. 1, and reads:—

> "When *Israel* was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."

This passage Matthew has the audacity to say referred to the child Jesus. Now Hosea, throughout his book, almost invariably speaks of the Jewish nation by the name "Israel." Thus we read:—

> "For *Israel* hath forgotten his maker, and buildeth temples" (viii. 14).
>
> "I found *Israel* like grapes in the wilderness" (ix. 10).
>
> "By a prophet the Lord brought *Israel* out of Egypt, and by a prophet was *he* preserved" (xii. 13).

In the passage quoted by Matthew, Hosea reminds the Israelites that when they were young as a nation "the Lord" loved them, and delivered them from the bondage of Egypt. The words have no other meaning. The familiar title "son," which Hosea applies to Israel, did not originate with that prophet. He took it from Exodus iv. 22, in which verse Yahveh is represented as saying to Moses:—

> "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, *Israel is my son*, my first born; and I have said unto thee, Let *my son* go that he may serve me."

Hosea has simply adopted the same figure of speech in speaking of the nation. Thus the clear, plain, and only meaning of the passage quoted by Matthew is, that "the Lord" had led his people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. The assertion of that veracious evangelist, then, that the child Jesus was taken to Egypt, and afterwards brought back again, in order to fulfil this "prophecy," can only be characterized as a gross case of lying and deceit. The fact that he carefully omitted the first part of the sentence —"When Israel was a child I loved him"—and only quoted the words, "and called my son out of Egypt," proves that he knew he was committing a fraud. So, also, in the other two which we have examined; in the first he has omitted all mention of Ahaz and the other matters which showed the nature of the prediction, and that it had been fulfilled; in the second he has been careful to omit all that was said about the ruler delivering his people from the Assyrians. Matthew was thus a systematic perverter of the truth, who unscrupulously deceived the ignorant Christians of his time, not one in ten thousand of whom, probably, was able to verify the statements for himself. All the New Testament writers, including Paul, employed the same dishonest methods, as did also the early Christian fathers.

There are two more of these manufactured prophecies of the Nativity to be examined; but, without waiting for any additional evidence, we have already more than sufficient to enable us to pass a judgment on the claim made on behalf of the Gospel-writers—that of writing under an influence which informed and directed them, and kept them free from error; in other words, of being guided in the matters they recorded by divine inspiration. This pretentious claim we find to be an impudent imposture.

ABRACADABRA.

After the Theatre.

The lovers are happy, the villain is slain,
And here we are out in the starlight again.
And was it not fair,
Mid the brilliance and glare
Of lights upon purple and spangles and prism?
Is it all just as bright
'Neath the stars and the night
As we see it in thought beside life's criticism?
The surface of tinsel, the heart with its pain,
Where villains are happy and lovers are slain.

R. M. W.

The Greek and Roman of pre-Christian times was a citizen *par excellence*; the best part of his self was identified with his city-state. Of the solitary and self-sufficient man, post-Hellenic times have made an ideal; he is either a saint or a Robinson Crusoe. With the Greeks he was—a Cyclope. All the sentiments and most of the intellectual forces of free men were engaged in, or absorbed by, their several States.—*Emile Reich.*

Digitized by Google

COLD IRON AND STEEL DROPS.

"And the Lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."—JUDGES i. 19.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—This remarkable passage is one deserving most prayerful consideration. Taken in conjunction with other verses of Holy Scripture, to which I shall draw your attention, it will, I think, assure us that the Lord Jehovah had as decided objections to cold iron as to cold pig. Marvel not at this saying. If it be true, as Hudibras sings,

Ah me! what perils do environ
The man who meddles with cold iron,

this may be no less true of God than of man. The Stone Age was the thriving age for gods, and that the Rock of Ages comes down to us from the Stone Age is evident from many considerations. When the Lord met Moses at the inn, "and sought to kill him" (Exodus iv. 24), Zipporah mitigated his wrath by taking up a sharp stone and therewith cutting off the foreskin of her son, offering it as a barbarous token of subjection at the feet of the deity. When Joshua circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, he did it, as the Septuagint informs us, with stone knives. When Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God on Mount Ebal, it was "of whole stone, over which no man hath lift up any iron" (Joshua viii. 31). According to the Deuteronomic law (xxvii. 5), "thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them." Even as late as the time of Saul "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel" (1 Samuel xiii. 19); and in the days of Sultan Solomon, that wealthy monarch had to send to Tyre for workers in brass and in gold. For we are expressly told that the temple "was built of stone, made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor ax, *nor any tool of iron*, heard in the house while it was in building" (1 Kings vi. 7). Evidently iron was a desecration.

If we revert to our text, we shall notice, dear brethren, the particular mention of iron. It would not have mattered if the vale dwellers had chariots of wood or of brass or of copper, or even of pewter. The Lord, and Judah with the Lord, and the Lord with Judah, could not drive them out, because they had chariots of *iron*. Some commentators and Christian Evidence men have suggested that the particle translated "because" might be rendered "although." I think those who give prayerful consideration to the texts I have mentioned will see that this is a perversion of holy writ. The Lord had lived so long in the Stone Age that he objected to the innovation of iron. Further, dear brethren, I think we shall notice that his objection was well founded. As iron comes in, God Almighty goes out. His greatest enemies to-day are the railway engine and the steel pen. Let us pray!

W. MCIAN STEEL.

Obituary.

A VETERAN French philosopher of some note in his day has passed away in the person of Monsieur Etienne Vacherot. Born in 1809, he replaced Victor Cousin in the chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne in 1839. For his free opinions expressed in his *Critical History of the School of Alexandria* he was much attacked by the clergy, and lost his position. He afterwards wrote *Essays of Critical Philosophy* and *La Religion*. He was one of the mayors of Paris during the siege, and for many years contributed to the *Revue des deux Mondes*.

The death is also announced of Dr. Jules Bernard Luys, the famous French alienist and hypnotist, who was born in 1828. His work on *The Brain and its Functions* was translated for the International Scientific Series. He was a member of the Academy of "Medecine."

A Dutch Freethinker of some note has passed away in the person of Professor Antonius van der Leyde, the historian and philologist, who died on August 17 at Wiesbaden, where he was chief librarian. He was an expert in the bibliography of printing, of chess, and of all pertaining to Spinoza.

All priests have necessarily the desire of influencing the minds of others. From their very calling they have a disposition to be teaching. Women and children are the materials they like to work upon. Next to the Devil, they dread men of understanding.—*William Cobbett*, "*Political Register*," vol. xxxiii., p. 297.

Mr. Henry Seymour lectures, under the auspices of the Legitimation League, on "The Physiology of Love: a Study in Stirpiculture," at the Holborn Restaurant (Chinese Salon) on Monday, Sept. 6, at 8 p.m. Admission free; discussion invited.

BOOK CHAT.

IN Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, acting on the best information then obtainable, he put the name of George Simson as that of the author of the remarkable *Refutation of the Argument à priori for the Being and Attributes of God*, by "Antitheos," in reply to Dr. S. Clarke, W. H. Gillespie, and others. This very acute work was published by the Glasgow Zetetic Society in 1838. Quite recently Mr. William Simpson, the eminent artist and author of *The Buddhist Praying-Wheel*, told Mr. Wheeler that he thought it should rather be James Henry, and mentioned that his grave might be found in the High Kirkyard, Glasgow. Mr. T. Macleish has kindly visited the grave, which records that James Henry Simson died March 6, 1844, aged 54, and adds the quotation from *Hamlet*:—

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world.

James Henry Simson was a frequent lecturer for the Zetetic Society. He had been in the Peninsular War, and had lost an arm. At the time of his death he was employed as a clerk by a large engineering firm in Glasgow. Though one of the little-known Freethinkers, "Antitheos" was certainly a remarkable man.

* * *

The *Tablet*, noticing the "Sayings of Jesus," says of the logion, "Lift the stone and there you will find me, split the wood and I am there": "Can it be there is some reference to the stone of the sepulchre and to the wood of the cross, or have we here the expression of some form of pantheistic belief? Or have we simply an assertion of the omnipotence of our Lord in his divine nature?" The *Tablet* is modest enough to say these cannot be determined. But Dr. Adolf Harnack, who has made a German translation of his own, is cocksure that pantheism is not taught. He contends that the meaning rather is that Jesus promises his presence to the man engaged in coarse day labor for his bread. He thinks this is a genuine, beautiful, and valuable utterance. Only it requires a deal of expounding. Dr. Harnack considers the *Logia* as extracts from the Gospel of the Egyptians and as belonging to the early part of the second century.

* * *

Louisa Twining, in her *Symbols and Emblems of Early and Mediæval Christian Art*, gives specimens of early Christian baptism, in which Father, Son, and Ghost are all engaged in ducking the neophyte, while the Devil is bodily escaping from his person. Trees symbolize the resurrection, and so does the pelican.

* * *

In the September *New Century Review* Mr. E. H. Parker writes on "The Religion of the Chinese." This, with the exception of reverence for ancestors, appears to be almost a minus quantity. Mr. Parker tells us that priests and nuns are usually uncultured. "The social position of priests in the neighborhood of Pekin is hard to define. The calling is universally despised, and they are almost invariably spoken of with good-natured contempt." The Chinese have a saying:—

When ill, embrace Buddha's feet;
When well, neglect to burn incense.

This, according to Mr. Parker, is the usual attitude of the Chinese mind with regard to religion.

* * *

Mr. Parker declares: "In no part of China have I ever found that the hope of happiness or fear of punishment in another world exercised the slightest influence over personal conduct," though he allows that there is a strong feeling that, if a gross neglect of family duty be committed, there will be vengeance from unappeased ghosts. Chinese prayers and sacrifices are commonplace and practical. "There is nothing ethereal, imaginative, ecstatic, sublime, or in any way holy about them; it is simply, like all other Chinese transactions, a question of bargaining or money's worth. They even thrash their gods if no results come of persistent prayer. The Emperor himself 'rewards' the gods if their succor comes sharp, and in one instance I remember reading a decree instructing the Governor to admonish a lazy deity."

* * *

In Southern China, where external religion is more in evidence than in the northern provinces, Mr. Parker tells us that many of the priests are stated to be, and have the appearance of being, debased criminals, who have fled to the monastery as to a sort of Alsatia or sanctuary. The local authorities forbid women to visit the temples, and a few years ago one of the finest monasteries in Canton was burnt down by an enraged mob, owing to some real or fancied misconduct of the priests during a popular "woman's holiday." Can we, then, wonder that they sometimes attack Christians who are supposed to kidnap women and children for unhallowed purposes?

* * *

Mr Parker says: "The true attitude of the intelligent

Digitized by Google

classes towards religion is that officially laid down by Tao-Kwang, grandfather of the present Emperor. It is, in effect: 'All religions are nonsense; but the silly people have always believed in ghosts and after life, and therefore, in order to conciliate popular feeling, we are disposed to protect every belief, including Christianity, so long as there is no interference with the old-established customs of the State.'"

CORRESPONDENCE.

"TESTIMONY" FROM EXETER HALL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The "noontide hour of prayer" at Exeter Hall on Monday last was presided over by Mr. Oscar Owen, a well-known evangelist of the higher order of society, who holds forth in Hyde Park on a Sunday, when the weather is favorable.

At the mid-day meetings held within the sacred walls petitions for prayer are invited, and then comes forth the cadger. Among the petitioners on Monday was a venerable-looking person, somewhat scrubby so far as his beard was concerned, and faded in his attire, which was composed, for the most past, of a heavy winter overcoat, a tall wide-awake hat, and a pair of spectacles. A policeman, so he represented, had *sworn falsely* that, in proclaiming the truth in Hyde Park, he had been led into mundane matters, and had solicited money; wherefore an unregenerate magistrate had convicted him of an offence, and had decreed that, unless he paid a certain amount of bullion into court by to-day (Saturday), he would have to expiate the error he had not committed in his own proper person in Pentonville, or other of Her Majesty's prisons. This grand chance of Christian martyrdom was not one bit to the liking of the petitioner, who did not care to go to prison gladly, as he of Tarsus did; so he decided to cadge the faithful through the Lord and Oscar Owen. And many and fervent were the prayers sent out, or up, that the chosen vessel might be delivered from the "dreadful punishment" awaiting him.

The chairman, in commending the case of the suffering brother to the faithful, stated that during the thirty years of his labors in Hyde Park he had "never known the power of the enemy—of infidelity and so-called Secularism—so strong as at the present day." Testimony, however unwilling or unconscious, from such a quarter is invaluable. It is not known whether the Lord answered the prayers offered on behalf of the impecunious convicted one, whose name, it is said, is the not uncommon one of Jones; but it was evident that the Lord's people were chary of parting with the shekels, if one could judge from the speedy exodus of Christians after the benediction. One man did tarry. He had reminded the Lord, in a previous prayer, that he had been eighteen times before rulers for bearing testimony to the Truth, and proffered a request that the immense audience of some two dozen should rise and sing "Praise God," etc.; whether in token of gratitude for his eighteen convictions, or for that of Jones, did not transpire. The Doxology was sung by the remnant. J. D.

"WHY I ADMIRE JESUS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With your kind permission, I should like to reply briefly to Dr. Henry Smith's article under the above heading in your last issue. I take exception to Mr. Smith's first sentence. He says "Jesus dared to think and act for himself." But this is precisely what Jesus admitted he did *not* do. He declared that his words and works were not his own (John xiv. 10 and John viii. 28). Again, in John v. 19 he declared, "The Son can do nothing but what he seeth the Father do." If that, sir, is independent thought and action, words have no meaning. Dr. Smith says "Jesus taught us to love one another." True. He said "Love your enemies," but he had no mercy on his own (Luke xix. 27). Dr. Smith asserts "Jesus taught us pure religion." I have only to remark that I do not consider any religion pure that enforces its precepts with the threat of eternal damnation, as Christ did (Matthew xxv. 46). Again, "He taught that heaven must be within us." On the contrary, he taught that he was going to prepare a place, and would come again to receive his disciples (John xiv. 3). Finally Dr. Smith says, "His teachings are the teachings of the human mind." This sentence is really meaningless. "The human mind" teaches according to environment and knowledge, or it may be dominated by superstition and idolatry. Darwin and Spencer's are teachings of the human mind, but did Christ teach evolution? All teaching is representative of some particular bent of the human mind, but no special teaching can ever be properly designated the teaching of the human mind—at least according to my judgment.

ALERT.

THE MEN OF GOD.

FIRST Pastor—"Do you attend the Church Conference to-day, Brother Haggs?" Second Pastor—"No, I'm not feeling very well, and I've decided not to leave the house unless some matter of great importance calls me out." First Pastor—"Er, I suppose you know that the case of Brother Harkins, for undue familiarity with several sisters of his congregation, is to be tried in the conference to-day?" Second Pastor—"Wait a moment, brother, and I will get my coat and hat."

A Free Church organist had been discharged for playing, though very slowly and solemnly, a march from an opera-bouffe. Seventeen deacons recognised it at once.

Sky-pilot (to choir-leader)—"The collection this morning, Mr. Hotwater, was very small, and I am sorry to say that I think the meagreness was largely due to you." Choir-leader—"Largely due to me, sir?" Sky-pilot—"Yes. Hereafter, while the plate is being passed, I wish you would try to make a better selection of music than 'Salvation's Free.'"

Our surplus population—the sky-pilots.

HOW TO BECOME A PREACHER.

If you want a receipt for a popular minister,
  Skilled in expounding the doctrines of sects,
Arrange a collection of expletives sinister,
  Mingled with fragments of various texts;
Take the last wailing of Christ in his agony,
  Latin, and Hebrew, original Greek—
Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani—
  Howl it and chatter it, mumble and shriek;
Of Moses and Joshua study astronomy,
  Copy the morals of Jacob and Lot,
Practise each day in Ezekiel's gastronomy,
  Drink with old Noah, the bibulous sot;
Fill your discourses with all that's fanatical,
Rattle them off in a manner theatrical;
Doubt every fact and believe every mystery,
Meet modern learning with biblical history;
Praise all the actions of pious rascality,
Damn every heretic as a finality.
These qualities constitute, blended in unity,
The joy of the modern religious community.

PROFANE JOKES.

MINISTER (to elderly female crofter)—"I'm sorry to hear your potatoes are very bad this year, Janet." "'Deed they are, sir, but I've reason to be thankfu' to Providence that other folks are as badly off as mysel'."

Nurse—"Johnny, the stork has brought you a little baby. Wouldn't you like to see your little brother?" Johnny—"Naw: but I'd like to see the stork?"

Pip—"When the righteous man begins to swear——" Quip—"The profane man should be around to take lessons."

"Speaking about childish blunders as to proper names," said one of a party of romancers, "your story reminds me of one which my wife's parents told about her when she was a little one. The folks were one evening commenting on the fact that there are no family names mentioned in the Bible, and she took exception to the statement. 'Why, you forget about the first chapter of Matthew, where it tells about Abraham Begat, and Isaac Begat, and the whole Begat family.'"

One paterfamilias, who started reading these genealogies for family worship, got tired of the names as soon as he had read "And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naasson"; so he skipped, saying, "And so they went on begetting one another down to the seventeenth verse."

Bishop Field Flowers Goe, annoyed by the professions of friendship of a bibulous person on the platform at a railway, made his way to headquarters and confronted King Dicky at his desk. "Mr. Speight," said he wrathfully, "do you allow drunken persons to travel on your trains?" The chairman of the Railway Commissioners paused a moment to glance up and down at his visitor, and then, with a merry little twinkle in his eye, he said *sotto voce* and confidentially: "Just you take a seat about the middle of the train and keep *very* quiet; and you'll get into no trouble." The bishop goed—went, we mean.

A man had been up for an examination in Scripture, had failed utterly, and the relations between him and the examiner had become somewhat strained. The latter asked him if there was any text in the whole Bible he could quote. He pondered, and then repeated: "And Judas went out and hanged himself." "Is there any other verse you know in the whole Bible?" the examiner asked. "Yes, 'Go thou and do likewise.'" There was a solemn pause, and the proceedings terminated.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Triumph of Reason."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "The Bible, the Child, and the Coming School Board Election." September 4, at 8.30, Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Egypt and the Dawn of History." Limelight illustrations.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, Stanley Jones.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 8.15, H. P. Ward.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, W. Ramsey.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 8.15, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, C. Durrant.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Life Hereafter"; 8.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Age of Reason."

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Life Hereafter."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism."

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, J. T. Thurlow. September 7, at 8.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, F. Haslam. September 8, at 8.30, H. P. Ward.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, Stanley Jones.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Evolution of Thought."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Addresses by local friends on "The Principles of Secularism."

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall, Courtenay-street): 7, E. P. Luke, "Christianity a Failure."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Ethics and Economics"; 3, "Religion at the Bar of Science"; 7, "The Priest and the Child." Tea at 5.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): S. R. Thompson—11, "Whence and Whither?" 3, "A Few of God's Favorites"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 5, Sheffield. 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—September 5, m. and a., Hyde Park; 12, Clerkenwell.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

J. T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—September 5, Limehouse.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 5, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Bradlaugh Club. 8, e., Mile End Waste. 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Brompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 5, e., Clerkenwell Green. 7, e., Limehouse. 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temp
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "J. W. Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Digitized by Google

GREAT SUMMER SALE.

21s. Parcels that contain £2 worth of Goods. Each parcel sent Carriage Paid for 21s.

1.—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color. **2.**—4 Trouser Lengths, wear guaranteed; Stripe, Check, or Mixture. **3.**—2 Full Dress Lengths, with linings and buttons complete. **4.**—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material. **5.**—1 Complete Costume to measure, and a Silver-mounted Umbrella. **6.**—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse. **7.**—50 yards of High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs. **8.**—11 yards Deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color. **9.**—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trouser length. **10.**—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trouser Length, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella. **11.**—1 pair of All Wool Blankets, 1 pair of large Sheets, 1 beautiful Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 pair of Curtains. **12.**—1 pair Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella. **13.**—15 yards Suiting for Boys' Suits—very strong and durable. **14.**—30 yards of Remnants for Children's Dresses—all good colors and quality. **15.**—2 pairs All Wool Blankets. **16.**—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 pairs Stockings, 2 Skirts, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Silver-mounted Umbrella, 1 Fur Necktie. **17.**—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella. **18.**—1 Youth's Suit to measure, chest over vest not to be more than 32 inches. **19.**—3 pairs Men's Trousers to measure, all different. **20.**—Parcel of goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during sale we are selling at about half ordinary prices. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

GRAND CLEARING LINE.

630 Ladies' Mackintoshes.

Warranted thoroughly Waterproof and Odorless. Sizes, length at back, 54, 56, 58, and 60 inches. Very latest style, and every garment well finished. Colors: Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Slate, and Grey. To fit persons up to 36 inch Bust.

Price Carriage Paid. **12/6** **Worth nearly double.**

1 Copy of G. W. Foote's "Flowers of Freethought," value 2s. 6d., will be presented to each customer.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Mr. Hall Caine's *Christian*.
Iconoclasm in Excelsis.
Mr. Baring-Gould's *St. Paul*.
The Growth of Human Nature.
Training Young Citizens.
American Heterodoxy.
A Thoughtful Man's Religion.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
Chats about Books—VII. With Dr. R. Bithell.
Samuel Laing: In Memoriam.
German Critics at Work.
Etc., etc.

*** Copies of the July issue, containing two important Supplements, may still be had, price 2d., by post 3d.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 37. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

"THE RIGHTS OF RELIGION."

UNDER the above heading the *Rock* dated August 27 has a leading article in which the writer replies to my claim for Free Speech which was published in this journal of August 8. Therein I endeavored to show that the *Rock* favored the recent action of Sir Charles Warren in prohibiting the Secularists from continuing their propagandism on the Chatham Lines in New Brompton. I also reminded the pious editor of the harsh and insulting epithets which constantly appear in his paper in reference to the Roman Catholics and their religion, and drew his attention to the words ascribed to Christ: "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

The main points in my article are left unnoticed by the editor. For instance, he is silent upon the passages given from the New Testament in favor of persecuting unbelievers, and upon the historical references presented, showing how the Christian Church from almost its inception had tortured and imprisoned those who did not accept the orthodox faith, and how that Church "was ever ready to resort to the civil power to compel obedience to her decisions." Were the Bible quotations and the facts of history too strong for the self-appointed "defender of the faith" to grapple with? He takes not the slightest notice of my request to know what he meant by writing of "the profanities of an infidel lecturer," who is alleged to have spoken "in very offensive terms of the Christian religion." Let me inform the editor of the *Rock* that nothing of the kind took place, and the report that it did was but a "weak invention of the enemy." Evidently the Biblical command, "Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Deut. v. 20), has no effect upon this Protestant exponent. His idea of the "rights of religion" appears to consist in assuming that his narrow and out-of-date view of religion is "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," and that those who cannot accept his pretensions deserve to be branded as "infidels," and to be exposed to the unjust imputations of theological bigotry. "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Romans iii. 7).

The editor's reply to my article on "Free Speech" is a curious specimen of controversial evasion and theological juggling. He writes: "A writer for the Infidel—or, as he would prefer us to call it, Secularist—Press has lately been taking us to task, as by some process of reasoning peculiar to himself he has discovered that we approve of violent suppression of Atheist lecturers, without having the courage to say so in express terms. Our readers may remember that, in commenting on the hostility shown by a crowd to a propagandist of Secularism who had indulged in a very gross attack on the Christian religion, we, while distinctly condemning resort to violence in such circumstances, drew attention to the interest and significance of the occurrence, as it indicated that, in spite of much indifference and irreligion, there is still enough instinctive reverence among the masses of the people to make an ordinary gathering sharply resent any coarse handling of the holy things of religion. Our Rationalistic critic endeavors to justify the blasphemies of the Infidel by reference to the Protestant attack on Romanism. The Infidel has no Gospel." Here we have a tissue of misrepresentations and inaccuracies (to use no harsher terms) which it would be difficult to find outside the columns of an orthodox paper. Why this repetition of the term "Infidel"? Is it employed to arouse religious prejudice and fanaticism against men and women who are no more "Infidels" than is the pious editor himself? Why this absence of that charity which "thinketh no evil" (1 Cor. xiii. 5)? This is another instance of orthodox hypocrisy, preaching one thing and practising another.

If words have any meaning at all, the editor approved of "violent suppression" of the Freethought lecturer. To him (the editor) it was "interesting to find that an ordinary working-class crowd can be stirred to such indignation" in preventing free speech upon the part of Secularists, "and satisfactory to learn from the sequel that authorities can act so firmly as has Major-General Sir Charles Warren, commanding the Thames district, who has given instructions that Secularist speakers are not to be allowed to address meetings on Chatham Lines." Is not this a direct approval of the attempt to suppress freedom of speech? If language has any clear signification, we allege that it is, although the editor lacks "the courage to say so in express terms." When his orthodox friends are treated in a similar manner, he whines at the injustice. For, in the article under consideration, when noticing that, at certain seaside resorts in the North, Protestant propagandism has been interfered with, he writes: "The sinister character of the interference which is going on with the right of public meeting and free speech is shown from the fact that in every case the sacerdotal party is very strong in the locality, still more from the fact that the public official immediately concerned is, in more than one instance, a Romanist, and aggressively asserts that *he* (mark you) will not allow Protestant evangelists to preach. The Town Clerk in one of these places, when appealed to, airily dismissed the protest by stating that 'the only right of the public on a highway is the right of passing along it'; a remarkable contention, surely, and fraught with amazing possibilities." Thus, while he rejoices that Secularists are interfered with in their open-air work, he winces and protests when professed Christians are treated in like manner. This, we suppose, is another instance of "the rights of religion." Theology is indeed potent in deadening all sense of justice and fairplay towards unbelievers in the Christian faith. This may be the *Rock's* notion of freedom, but it is a bitter satire upon the principle of true liberty.

It is a mere subterfuge to charge the propagandists of Secularism with indulging in "gross attacks on the Christian religion," and with "coarse handling" of "holy things." This did *not* happen on Chatham Lines. If it did, let the editor prove his charge. But is *he* justified in assuming the pharisaical *rôle*? Does *he* not, week after week, indulge in "gross attacks" on his co-religionists—the Roman Catholics? Is it not "coarse handling of the holy things of (the Catholic) religion" to call it "blood-stained," and to speak of its professors as "heretics," "seducers," "wolves in sheep's clothing," etc.? Yet this is the choice language the *Rock* employs towards the devotees of Catholicism. The editor says: "Our Rationalistic critic endeavors to justify the blasphemies of the Infidel." The critic does nothing of the kind, for the good reason that he knows of no such blasphemy; and, what is more, the *Rock* cannot impart that knowledge. It may suit this would-be-thought-sanctified journal to dish up for its credulous readers "idle tales" about

Digitized by Google

Secularist speakers, but the dignified and honorable course would be to adhere to truth, and not to slander those who have the courage of their opinions, and whose "religion" consists in doing good and in striving to remove the blight of superstition which supplies victims to the machinations of theological pretensions (see Revelation xxi. 8).

It would be well for the editor to acquaint himself with the principles of Secularism, and then perhaps he would not commit such a blunder as he does in saying "the Secularist has no Gospel." The truth is, the Secular Gospel is clear, definite, and practicable, and is proving more and more the "good news" to mankind. It is based upon cultivated reason, and teaches the necessity of truth, honor, and upright conduct. It enjoins love, justice, and mental freedom for the whole of the community. It deems the formation of good character more important than the profession of creeds and dogmas, and its value consists in its adaptability to the needs of the human race. This is more than can be truthfully said for the Gospel preached by the *Rock*. No nation has ever been able to adopt the Christian Gospel as a rule of life. The popular Liverpool preacher, Mr. Aked, admitted this in a sermon preached so recently as Sunday, August 22, in which he said: "It is a mistake to speak of this as a Christian country, or of our civilization as a Christian civilization. There is no Christian nation on earth to-day. At best there are only countries professing an official and ceremonial attachment to ecclesiastical institutions, partly Jewish, but more Pagan.....The plain fact is, that a man could not live the first-century oriental life in the midst of a nineteenth-century European civilization, and the grounds of sanity are departed from when he attempts to follow literally what he believes to be the literal teaching of Jesus. Neither our commerce nor our national life nor civilization itself could stand if these ideals were taken as commands, prosaic as a railway-guide, to be literally obeyed" (*Christian World*, August 26, 1897).

By all means let us have "the rights of religion," but those rights must not be secured through the infliction of wrongs upon those who are termed "irreligious." My desire is to see the "Rights of Man" established in this "Age of Reason," without special regard to any of the theological religions of the world.

CHARLES WATTS.

CONVERTING THE CHRISTIANS.

THERE are always a few croakers who, usually doing little themselves, complain that nothing is being done for Freethought. The latter-day Jeremiahs pour their lamentations over the decaying state of the movement. They have often some pet scheme, the non-adoption of which is responsible for the fact that the Church is still a thriving corporation, and Freethinkers have to fight for the right of being heard. One of these gentlemen pestered me so recently that I had to tell him: "Well, I try to do my little; suppose you try to do yours." I have heard so often the cry that we are making no advance that it has ceased to move me. For I have only to look round to see that an immense advance has been made since my young days.

Progress is slow, and is all the surer for being slow. The old creeds are dying. Year by year the Christians are being converted to once-stigmatized Darwinism, and they may alter the cry put by the monks into the mouth of the expiring Julian to "Thou hast conquered, O Evolution!" It is the same in the domain of criticism. The reviled views of Spinoza, Voltaire, Paine, Strauss, and Colenso now find utterance in the pulpits, and deans and canons of the Church of England are engaged in sapping the foundations of the creeds they are paid to support. Freethought, if still tabooed in some quarters, is leavening the entire lump of contemporary thought.

The Christianity of to-day is like the Irishman's old gun, which had had, in turn, a new lock, stock, and barrel. It would not be recognised by its original makers. All its characteristic features have been altered and modified to suit the exigencies of modern times. The Dean of Canterbury now admits there is a fallible human element in the Bible, and writes: "Christians must make their choice between freely admitting that there is a human, and therefore a fallible, element in the sixty-six books which we call the Bible; or the adoption of 'reconciliations' which 'may be accepted with ignominious rapture,' but which are so transparently casuistical as to shock the faith of men who are unprejudiced." He does not tell us where the divine and infallible element is to be found.

Since evolution has come in vogue, Christians have begun to speak of the development of their religion. It is not the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, but is, they pride themselves, a growing religion. It does indeed grow small by degrees and beautifully less. Every change that has been made in the faith has been by lopping something off. And as one by one its impedimenta are cast overboard, it is seen that something fresh must follow. With the story of the Creation goes that of the Fall, and tied on the heels of the Fall is the Redemption.

Belief in miracles is being abandoned. Joshua's astronomy raises a smile in the pew, while Jonah's whale is a laughing stock in the pulpit. The story of the creation is dismissed as an allegory, and the talking snake as a fable. The belief in original sin and infant damnation is extinct. Hell has refrigerated, and threatens to become a skating rink. The efficacy of the blood of Jesus has become as dubious as that of the pills to cure earthquakes.

All this nonsense has been driven out of the Churches by Freethought, and most of it within my own generation. Secularism, too, has come to the fore, and the Churches claim consideration on the ground that they are doing secular work and preaching the true Secularism.

On all sides we may see the increased attention given to the affairs of this life. As genuine Christianity has declined, secular progress has advanced. We know far more of the world and of its forces than did our pious forefathers. Care for souls has receded, but care for bodies has advanced. The average of human life has, by regard for sanitary conditions, been increased within our own generation. Our children have great facilities for education, and we have a vastly increased freedom on our one day of leisure. Our movement is extending in every country, and it is safe to say that Christians are being converted to some of the various forms of Rationalism far more rapidly than the heathen are becoming Christians.

But we have still a big work before us. We have to withdraw the children from the influence made by priestly dogmas on their plastic minds. We have to disestablish and disendow the Church, which has lost its intellectual foundation, and is sustained by the material wealth at its command. We must place its propaganda on a footing of equality with that of every other form of opinion. We have, too, to diffuse a knowledge of the results of science and criticism to people who sit in darkness. What is needed is, that those who stand aside and criticise should lend a hand and help to make things better. It is true the Church is still powerful, and still retains its boa-constrictor grip on the young; true that we have a heavy task before us; true we are not doing as well as we might. These should be but reasons for each doing his or her best to help. Let us think of the cause rather than of ourselves, and, putting aside minor differences, take "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together."

J. M. WHEELER.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

V.—MORE MANUFACTURED PROPHECIES.

IV. THE ingenious evangelist who has so specially distinguished himself in discovering prophecies relative to Christ further states, in his veracious history, that Herod the Great, desiring to slay the child Jesus, caused all the male children of Bethlehem under two years of age to be slaughtered, and that this inhuman act fulfilled another "prophecy"—one by Jeremiah:—

> "Then Herod.....slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under.....Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matt. ii. 16-18).

The quotation is from Jer. xxxi. 15-17.

> "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth

Digitized by Google

> to be comforted for her children, because they are not. Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears.....and *they shall come again from the land of the enemy.* And there is hope in thy latter end, saith the Lord, that *thy children shall come again* to their own border."

There were two cities named "Ramah," one within the territory of the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 36), and the other in that of Ephraim (1 Sam. i. 1, 19, etc.). In the paragraph just quoted the writer simply referred to the fact that many of the sons and daughters of the Israelites had been carried away captive to Babylon. He was therefore only stating what had already occurred when he spoke of "Rachel"—*i.e.*, the mothers of Israel—"weeping for her children" in Ramah, as elsewhere. The captives would naturally be the youth of both sexes, the best fitted for slaves or concubines; old people would not be worth the trouble of carrying away.

Both in this chapter and in that proceeding, Jeremiah speaks of many of the Jewish race as captive in Babylon and other places; there was, therefore, plenty of "lamentation and bitter weeping" in the land. In the passage under consideration, however, Jeremiah tells the mothers of Ramah to refrain from weeping, and he endeavors to comfort them with the promise that their children should "come back again from the land of the enemy." There cannot, therefore, be the shadow of a doubt as to the meaning of the passage.

Yet, in the face of this very plain statement, Matthew has the effrontery to say that the writer was referring to an alleged massacre of infants, six hundred years later, by Herod the Great; and, in order to twist a statement of fact into a prophecy, Ramah, he says, means Bethlehem, and the mourning for grown-up sons and daughters deported to a distant country he represents as lamentation on account of an imaginary slaughter of babies by mothers then unborn. In vain does Jeremiah say that the weeping was heard in his own day, and in the city of Ramah, and also that the children mourned for should return; these facts, stated as plainly as words can express, had no power to deter the dishonest writer of the First Gospel from misrepresenting the Old Testament narrative. Prophecies had to be made, otherwise Christ could not be represented as fulfilling them.

Matthew's story of the massacre in Bethlehem must, of course, be set down as a fabrication. The reasons for this are three-fold.

In the first place, the only other evangelist who speaks of the Nativity, Luke, appears either never to have heard of this alleged slaughter, or not to have believed the story; for his own narrative not only makes no mention of it, but completely excludes it. According to the latter account, the child was born in Bethlehem, was circumcised when eight days old, and was taken by his parents shortly afterwards to the temple at Jerusalem. "And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, *they returned into Galilee to their own city, Nazareth.* And the child grew, and waxed strong, becoming full of wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" (ii. 39, 40). This account includes the whole of the infancy of Christ, and excludes the massacre at Bethlehem and the going to live in Egypt. Instead of these matters, Luke relates a story of an angel appearing to some shepherds near Bethlehem, and of the latter paying a visit to the child. This event he probably considered more credible than Matthew's fictions.

It has also to be borne in mind that Luke's narrative is given as a complete account, and that he professes to write "accurately," and to arrange the events "in order," so that Theophilus, for whose information the book was written, "might know the certainty" of the events and circumstances therein recorded (i. 3, 4). Luke also clearly implies that the other Gospels then in existence were either incorrect or untrustworthy. His omission, then, of the massacre and the flight into Egypt brands those stories as fabrications.

In the next place, there is not the smallest evidence that such a wanton act was ever perpetrated by Herod. Had such a massacre really taken place, the fact would have been well known, more especially since Bethlehem was but a few miles from Jerusalem, and accounts of it would doubtless have been preserved by various historians—and certainly by Josephus. But, it is scarcely necessary to say, no such record exists, nor was any such ever seen by any of the Christian fathers, many of whom were most assiduous in searching for evidence that might corroborate the Gospel narratives.

Josephus has given a long and detailed account of the life of Herod the Great. In his twenty books of *Antiquities*, which embrace the events of 4,070 years (B.C. 4004–A.D. 66), he devotes thirty-seven chapters, or more than one-sixth of the whole, to this one man. Yet, though many iniquitous acts of Herod are faithfully recorded, we find no mention of a slaughter of children at Bethlehem, or elsewhere. There can be little doubt, then, that had such an event really occurred, it could not, both as a well-known fact of history and a notable circumstance in the life of this king, have been overlooked or omitted.

Lastly, we have only the bare word of Matthew himself for the truth of the story, and that is not worth the paper on which it is printed. As a mere matter of probability the narrative is, for this reason, more likely to be false than true; for a practised falsifier of facts, like the First evangelist, would scarcely be able to let a matter of history pass from his pen to the parchment without trying his hand upon it. The man who believes anything recorded by Matthew upon no other grounds than that it is vouched for by that pious perverter must be very far gone indeed.

In looking for the source of the massacre story, we find one of a similar nature related of the Hindu god, Krishna. At the time of the birth of this deity, Kansa, a tyrant and prince of the country, having been informed that a child was born who should overthrow his power, and being unable to lay hands upon him, ordered all the male infants in the district to be slaughtered; but the child-god, like Jesus, was warned and sent away to another part of the country, and so escaped. The *Bhagavat Gita*, in which the life of Krishna is given, is said to have been in existence several centuries before the time of Christ. But, whether this be so or not, it is certain that the stories related of Krishna were known long before the commencement of the Christian era.

If Matthew had heard the Hindu account of the massacre by Kansa, he would not have thought twice about altering the names and relating the story as an attempt by Herod on the life of the child Jesus. He would be able to do this with less fear of detection than in the case of the distorted prophecy of Jeremiah; and, regarded as a matter of probability, there can be little doubt that he did so. Like all the early Christians, he, no doubt, considered that the end justified the means.

V.—The same great distorter of Scripture texts—that is to say, Matthew—further states that Jesus came and lived in Nazareth in order to fulfil another "prophecy."

> "He withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (ii. 23).

There is no prediction in any of the Hebrew sacred writings that any person—priest, seer, savior, or messiah—should be called a *Nazarene;* neither does the name occur anywhere in the Old Testament. But, to be fair to Matthew, that writer does not say "Nazarene," but "Nazarite"; the first-named title is a mistranslation. In the revised Greek text of the New Testament, Christ is in eleven passages called "Jesus the Nazarite" *(Nazoraios);* in six passages he is named "Jesus the Nazarene" *(Nazarenos),* and in two only is he designated "Jesus of Nazareth" *(apo Nazaret).* Also, by a comparison of these texts it soon becomes evident that the last-named appellation results from error or interpolation. Hence Christ was never called "Jesus of Nazareth," but was spoken of either as "the Nazarite" or "the Nazarene." Matthew employs only the former term, and this occurs in his Gospel but twice—viz., xxvi. 71: "This man also was with Jesus the *Nazarite*"; ii. 23: "He shall be called a *Nazarite.*"

The name, as amended, is found in several books of the Old Testament. A Nazarite was one who had made a vow to abstain from wine and intoxicating liquors, and not to permit his hair to be cut, as long as the vow lasted (Numbers vi. 1–21). Samson and Samuel are examples of Nazarites who had been dedicated to the service of God from their births (Judges xiii. 4; 1 Samuel i. 2). Jesus, according to the canonical Gospels, was not a Nazarite; but in the earliest Gospels, if we may judge by the stories related of his brother James, he was so represented. That holy man—whom Paul calls "the Lord's brother"—was said to have been "consecrated from his mother's womb," to

Digitized by Google

have "drunk neither wine nor strong drink," and to have "never allowed a razor to come upon his head." It is not in the least surprising, then, that the holier brother, Jesus, was considered "the Nazarite" *par excellence*, and was so designated.

It is scarcely necessary to say, however, that nothing is gained for Matthew's pretended prophecy by this emendation. The word occurs, it is true, in the Old Testament; but that is all. There is no prediction in any of those books of a savior who should be a Nazarite; neither, again, would the fact of residing in the city of Nazareth (assuming such a place to have existed) confer upon the resident the right to such a title; the term "Nazarite" had no connection whatever with the name Nazareth. Here Matthew's ignorance of a matter known to every few of his time is plainly manifest, which fact is one of the many indications which prove to us that we are not dealing with the narratives of an apostle, but with a non-Jewish second-century compiler.

But there can be little doubt that in this "prophecy," as in all the others, Matthew was referring to one particular text in the Old Testament; hence, knowing that perverter's methods—viz., to completely ignore the entire context—we have but to look for a passage in which it is stated that some child, then unborn, should be brought up as a Nazarite. Following this simple and admirable plan, we find that Matthew's prediction was taken from Judges xiii. 5, and reads:—

> "For the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb."

This is the only passage in the Old Testament that is anything at all like the quotation, "He shall be called a Nazarite," and there can scarcely be a doubt as to its being the one referred to. The words, it is true, were addressed to Manoah's wife, and had reference solely to her promised son, Samson. But these circumstances are mere accessories, which Matthew, in his quest for prophecies, piously sets aside. There the prediction certainly is, and Christ certainly fulfilled it; for he went and lived in the undiscoverable city of Nazareth for the express purpose of doing so. Those who are not satisfied with this evidence, and who deny the truth of Matthew's statements, are nothing but unbelieving "Infidels" who wickedly reject the inspired word of God. ABRACADABRA.

BLASPHEMY, OBSCENITY, OR WHAT?

[We have already referred to the case of Mr. F. M. Browne, an artist, who lies in Chelmsford Prison, being committed for trial on a charge of sending obscene postcards through the post. Mr. Browne wrote to us that the postcards contained Bible texts, and that he had been driven to desperation by local bigotry in consequence of his refusing to let his children be dosed with religious instruction. The case seemed, at least, one for inquiry, and Mr. Forder undertook to run down last Saturday and learn, if possible, the real facts of the case. The result of his inquiry is sent to us in the form of a letter to the President of the National Secular Society, and in this form we let it appear without alteration.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

ACTING on your instructions to make inquiry into the charge of sending "blasphemous, indecent, and obscene" postcards, I at once communicated with two gentlemen in the neighborhood in whom I had confidence, and I also wrote to the prisoner—F. M. Browne—now awaiting his trial in H.M. Prison at Chelmsford, and to Mrs. Browne. I impressed on the two latter that it was essential that, before we could take any steps to aid him in his defence, we must have the text of the cards which he sent through the post. His wife could not inform me, and Browne did not. So I wrote Browne that I would visit him on Saturday, taking the chance of its being a visiting day. I had been supplied by one of our friends at Maldon with a local paper, but I failed to find in the report a single reference to the "indecent" passages. One of the postcards was reported, and the prosecuting solicitor was so shocked by it that he appealed to the bench whether he was bound to read it. The report is as follows:—

ATTACK UPON A CLERGYMAN.

Mr. Dixon: There is drawn upon it a clergyman, with two children kneeling before him receiving his benediction.

Defendant: Not his benediction.

Mr. Dixon: The writing on the front of the card, below the address, is as follows:—"Good children, when you were born and your pious mother came to be churched she put money in the bag. When you were christened she put money in the bag. When she died I got my fees. Do ye both likewise bring your pennies to me in your sweet childhood. Bring your tithes all your lives. Pay marriage fees pay, pay."

This may be to a clergyman annoying, and to many it may be inane; but that alone, out of a benighted corner of Essex, would hardly warrant a man being sent to prison to wait seven weeks to be tried by a jury. However, I imagined that when I got to the prison I should know the particulars of the "indecent" postcards. Travellers by the G.E.R. know that gloomy, hideous building on a hill outside of the town of Chelmsford. Beautiful country all around, charming villas, cottages smothered with creepers (vegetable), and fronted with copious flowers—geraniums, marguerites, asters, etc.; and such asters, some of them four feet high at a guess; and my thoughts reverted to those in my back yard which I have watched and watered with so fatherly a care for months past. But opposite was the prison, in which I was informed there were two hundred unfortunates, some of whom were lodgers—*i.e.*, when there is a surplus in London a few get boarded out. I have had some experience in visiting prisons, and you will remember, Mr. President, my having a pleasant chat with you in Holloway, through two iron grids, some fourteen years ago, while you were "doing time" for "blasphemy." When I was admitted by a most civil warder, the very clang of the door of the lodge, coupled with the turn of the key in the big lock, brought to one's mind the line—is it Dante's?—"Abandon hope all ye who enter here." Having written to the prisoner, my name was known, and the telephone immediately brought the chief warder, who is, if one may judge from a forty minutes' experience of him, a kindly, humane, genial gentleman. His opinion was briefly: "At times Browne is quite rational, but at others on religion he is evidently mad." In a few minutes I was ushered into a small room with the inevitable double grid and a warder between Browne and me. My question was: "Why have you not written me the copy of the texts from the Bible that are charged against you as being indecent and obscene?" He at once said he had done so, but it seems the governor had prohibited the letter from being sent. Here let me remark that one of the evils of the prison system in this country struck me very forcibly. Browne was under committal, and a jury of his peers may acquit him as innocent. Yet in seeing me he was caged in like a wild beast, and from his neck was suspended a wooden or metal board with his letter and number, A 10, or G 60—I could not distinguish in the gloom what it was. After getting all the particulars that I could from him, I had a further chat with the chief warder in the prison yard. He had evidently been an unseen listener at the interview, for he had the committal warrant to show me which was the ordinary printed committal form, applicable to all offences, from wilful murder to breaking windows. Written in was the sole information of sending "blasphemous, obscene, and indecent postcards." All inquiries at Chelmsford, and subsequently at Maldon, prevented me from getting a sight of them, and no other course is open but to employ a solicitor, who could at once get copies.

Where these postcards are is also a mystery, but an attorney would soon find out. I went, on leaving the gaol, to Maldon, and had a brief interview with one of our friends there, and a record ride back to London. Maldon is 39½ miles, if the fare of 3s. 3½d. enable one to judge. Leaving there at 5.10, I arrived at Liverpool-street at 8.35, about the time one could get to Manchester or Leeds. Desirous of getting more information on the spot, I, accompanied by Mr. George Ward, went down on Monday to see Mrs. Browne and her children at Ashingdon. How many of your London readers know where Ashingdon is? Booking-clerks at Fenchurch-street knew it not; the guard of the train had never heard of it, but advised us to go to Southend, for there, he said, the cabbies knew everywhere. Instead of a cabby, we at once repaired to our old and still energetic friend Sykes. He soon put us in the way of getting there by cab—six miles. The village has no pub and no post-office, but there is a pillar-box erected outside a farmhouse, in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee of 1887. I doubt if we should ever have found "Brotherhood Cottage" if we had not met a country

Digitized by Google

postman, who was collecting letters and selling stamps to people at their gates. We had to leave cab at top of a narrow lane, but even here men at work did not know where Browne lived. But the name of the cottage acted like magic on their minds: "Turn to the right; third one." Here let me say that I had no idea of finding such a lovely scene. In a beautiful garden, with fruit-bushes and flowers in profusion, stood a model dwelling (one of several), at the back of which was a splendid view of Essex pastoral scenery; a neat parlour, clean to perfection, and seven robust, hearty children, ranging in age from sixteen (a girl) to three, and all speaking in affectionate terms of their "dad." They were being looked after by a kind neighbor, for their mother—whom we had journeyed to see—had just left for Hockley to post letters to her husband. We had not time to await her return, but we gathered that these little ones were living on the most meagre fare. Two of them (the eldest twelve) had tramped, on the previous Friday, twelve miles each way to see their father. Now I know where Ashingdon is, and how to get there, I shall go down again on Saturday afternoon, and see Mrs. Browne.

In the meantime let me give my first-hand impression of what we ought to do. The man may be a hot-headed fanatic, and his place rightly may be an asylum, and not a prison; or he may be a man smarting under what he thinks is tyranny, and has not considered the proprieties in making his assumed or real wrongs public. Yet I think we ought to see that, until his trial, his wife and children shall not want bread. I, therefore, would suggest to you, Mr. President, that four hundred of your readers should subscribe sixpence each—ten pounds. Seven pounds of this should be devoted to giving the family a pound a week until the trial, and three pounds should be expended for getting a solicitor at Southend or Maldon to obtain a copy of the depositions and indictment. I can undertake to get several of our friends at Southend to administer the fund to save expense.

ROBERT FORDER, Hon. Sec., N. S. S.

[Mr. Forder's interesting letter does not contain much fresh information, though that is not exactly his fault, but rather Mr. Browne's. Of course one would like to know what he wrote on those postcards. If he quoted dirty Bible texts, he was very foolish; but the dirtiness, after all, belongs to the Bible. I fancy Mr. Browne is in a condition bordering on irresponsibility, and it would be a great pity to let him be pushed over the border. I approve Mr. Forder's suggestion that he should have a fair trial, and that his wife and children should be assisted; and I shall be happy to receive any subscriptions for this purpose. I give my own 5s., and Mr. Wheeler adds his 2s. 6d.—G. W. FOOTE.]

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED."

IN that declaration you have the quintessence of Christianity; and a more absurd or more wicked pronouncement never fell from the lips of man.

Its absurdity lies in the assumption that it ever can be a duty to believe. If a judge were to tell a jury that they were bound to believe certain testimony they had heard, the jury would at once see that the judge was either a fool who did not understand his business, or a villain who wished to lead them to give an unjust verdict. Let a teacher tell his pupils that they must believe or be damned, and he'll turn them into imbeciles or rebels and scorners of his dictum.

It can never, in any case, be a moral duty to believe; and that is just where Christ and his party show themselves most absurd. Let the doctrine be true and its evidence good, and the belief will arise spontaneously where the case is understood. If the doctrine is untrue, or appears to be so, and the evidences very unsatisfactory, doubt or disbelief is the only possible condition of mind for a person who understands the merits of the case. If Jesus, or rather the inventors of the gospel-yarns, had understood and acted upon it, what a world of hypocrisy and tyranny we should have escaped! How different the history of Europe and Europeans would have been! In that case, there never would have been a church, or bishop, or inquisitor, nor any persecution or religious wars. People would have been left to believe what they could, to doubt and disbelieve what they could not accept; and no more would ever have troubled them.

The worst and most prolonged miseries of the past 1800 years have arisen quite naturally out of the stupid and savage threat, "He that believeth not shall be damned." There is the root of all the persecution the Christians have inflicted, and must ever inflict so long as that brutal declaration sways them.

No matter what may be a man's character or abilities, if he does not believe the gospel rubbish and fudge, he must be damned; and the Christians do their best to damn him. They make his life as wretched as they are able, by way of showing what a blessed religion theirs is, and how much better they are than their neighbors.

The author of "He that believeth not shall be damned" must have been full of malice, a being who resented as an insult all independence of thought, a thing too ignorant to reason, as certain of his own opinions as perfect ignorance could make him. And this monster the Christians set up as their model, example, and ideal! No wonder they should be so foolish and so wicked!

"He that believeth not shall be damned" is the spontaneous language of absolute and savage tyranny. No man who respects his neighbors could utter it. It is the language of a savage brute who will frighten you if he can; and he would frighten you because he has no rational means of bringing you over to his side. He cannot reason, he will not try to convince you; he does not understand the meaning of reason and conviction. He therefore resorts to brute force in its worst possible form, and sets up a perpetual Reign of Terror by way of gaining adherents.

Such was Jesus, such are his real followers—the most detestable of all that is human and all that is legendary. The only person in the case who ought to be damned is the brute who utters the threat.

JOS. SYMES.

ACID DROPS.

SOME time ago the Archbishop of Canterbury, and a lot of other Church of England dignitaries, gave an ecclesiastical performance at Ebbsfleet, near Ramsgate, where a memorial marks the supposed landing-place of St. Augustine, the supposed introducer of Christianity into England. Cardinal Vaughan saw in this a fine opportunity for his own Church. St. Augustine was, of course, a Catholic, and the Church of England is to be forcibly reminded of the fact. On September 14 the Romanists will have a most imposing celebration at Ebbsfleet—the most imposing, it is said, that they have ever had in this country since the Reformation. All the religious orders will be represented. Franciscans, Dominicans, Benedictines, Jesuits, Servites, Oratorians, Oblates of Mary, and Oblates of St. Charles Borromeo, all dressed in their special garbs, will form a grand procession, with a host of secular priests. Cardinal Vaughan means to show Archbishop Temple that "they do these things better at Rome."

Jacob Primmer, the Scotch ultra-Protestant, is disappointed. He is also indignant. It appears that he sent a copy of his book, entitled *Jacob Primmer in Rome*, to the Queen, and Her Majesty's private secretary replied: "I regret to inform you that I am unable to lay this work before Her Majesty, and consequently must beg you to allow me to return it." Whereat the reverend gentleman stares and rages. This is impudence, he says; my book has been sent to the Pope, the King of Italy, and Mr. Gladstone, and they have not returned it. Very likely, Jacob; but have they read it? Or has it been put to baser uses?

The *Christian Herald* for September 2 prints a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Talmage. It is entitled "The Power of Christianity," and it certainly shows what Cobbett would have called the preacher's power of face. Talmage has a fling at Voltaire, whom he fantastically describes as "the most notorious libertine of the century." This is really too absurd for criticism. We therefore pass to the next assertion, that Voltaire in his last hour "asked for Christian burial, and asked his friends to give him the sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ." Anyone who reads Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds* will see that this is a monstrous falsehood. Voltaire did want his body to be buried, and not flung into a ditch, which was then the only alternative to being buried in a churchyard. But there is not a word of truth in the story that he asked his friends to give him the sacrament. The last moments of Voltaire have been recorded for English readers ever since Carlyle wrote his famous essay on the great French sceptic. Carlyle gives the evidence of eye-witnesses, relates the quiet and peaceful manner of Voltaire's death, and sneers at the "idle tales of

Digitized by Google

dying horrors" which were manufactured by the clergy. But all the eye-witnesses, and all the Carlyles in the world, count as nothing with a pulpit mountebank like Talmage.

Talmage is bad enough about Voltaire, but he is worse about Thomas Paine. This is what he regales the public with at this time of day: "Thomas Paine, the paragon of Bible-haters—about whom his brother-infidel, William Carver, wrote a letter (which I have in my house) saying that he drank a quart of rum a day and was too mean and too dishonest to pay for it—Thomas Paine, the adored of modern infidelity—Thomas Paine, who stole another man's wife in England and brought her to America—Thomas Paine, who was so squalid and so loathsome and so drunken and so profligate and so beastly in his habits—sometimes picked out of the ditch, sometimes too filthy to be picked out—Thomas Paine; one would have thought that he could be depended on for steadfastness against this great delusion. But no; in his dying hour he begs the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy."

The only proper answer to Talmage would be to kick him round the church in which he uttered these lies. Yes, *lies*; we repeat, *lies*. Talmage has told this yarn before, and seen it refuted. He knows what he is doing. He is lying deliberately, and should be told so. What is the use of considering the "feelings" of a brute like this?

Talmage knows very well that this William Carver was a malignant libeller. Paine prosecuted him before a jury and obtained damages. It was this Carver who accused him of adulterous relations with Bonneville's wife, and it was in respect to this very accusation that the jury gave a verdict in favor of Paine. Yet, after the lapse of nearly a century, the mendacious Talmage hides the facts and renews the libel. Such a calumnious beast is unfit for human society. He may be a Christian. He is not a man.

Paine did not drink a quart of rum a day, he was not profligate, he was not dirty in his habits. Every word of this is a lie. Nor did he die begging the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy. Talmage knows that well enough; only he is a liar by trade and inclination. Every biographer of Paine, including the malignant Cheetham, gives the lie to this pious story. Cheetham admits that Paine "died as he had lived, an enemy to the Christian religion." Cheetham would have been glad enough to publish that Paine had recanted, but he could not get such information. He applied to Dr. Manley, who attended Paine in his last illness, and Dr Manley said that he had himself asked Paine whether he wished to believe in Jesus Christ. Paine's reply was: "I have no wish to believe on that subject."

Talmage is not the only sinner in this line. There is a clergyman called Beauchamp Stannas, who issues what he calls a magazine from Arrow Rectory. It consists of a letter to "My Dear Friends," printed on a flyleaf. In the copy before us this parson says that "the death-beds of Hume, Paine, and Voltaire were the scenes of greater mental agony than were ever witnessed on this side of Hell." Very likely Parson Stannas has taken his information (heaven save the mark!) from some religious tract. His letter shows him to be a great fool, and probably his reading is on a par with his intelligence. But he might, in some lucid interval, read Adam Smith's letter on David Hume's death, and learn how calmly and sweetly the great "infidel" passed out of life.

According to the *Saturday Review*, Mr. Caine is a shrewd man of business as well as a Christian. *The Christian* first appeared by instalments in the *Windsor Magazine*, and Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co. spent lavishly in advertising it, expecting that the issue of the book would be in their hands. Mr. Caine, however, made other arrangements; and it is said that Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co. will also make other arrangements with all future serial writers in their magazine.

Mr. Hall Caine is indifferent to criticism while he gets lumping cheques from his publisher. It is announced that *The Christian* is selling at the rate of a thousand copies a day. The first edition of fifty thousand is to be followed immediately by a second edition of twenty thousand. If Christianity had paid like this at the outset, Judas would never have ratted, and Jesus would never have been crucified. Probably the "Master" would have died at the good old age of eighty in a Galilean villa, and his wine would have come from the best merchants, instead of being manufactured out of cold water.

Every theologian knows that this is the best of all possible worlds. But optimism has its trials outside as well as inside Voltaire's *Candide*. The other evening we met with the following in a London paper. A stranger committed suicide by taking oxalic acid in Watergate-street-row, Chester. He had written upon a piece of paper: "Am mechanic out of work. Am knocked up with tramping from place to place, and cannot get food. I am better dead than living." What a tragical commentary on the cheap providential doctrine of Jesus Christ! "Give us this day our daily bread" and "Your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of these things" must be read sarcastically while honest workers commit suicide to escape the terrible strain of non-employment and destitution.

The same evening paper reported the suicide of a Spanish lady married to an English magician. The poor fellow had been out of employment since last April, but had picked up a little occasionally by tuning pianos. He and his wife had often but little to eat. They owed five weeks' rent, and were afraid of being turned out. So the poor lady got some poison, and said she was not coming to bed for fear of the cramp. Her husband fell asleep, but awoke at half-past one, and saw her standing by a chest of drawers mending his socks. What a touch! And what a hint for a tragic novelist! Still the poor lady refused to go to bed, and the husband dropped off to sleep again. At ten minutes to three she aroused him by calling "Anselm, Anselm!" The poor lady had taken the poison, her stomach was being burnt out by it, and she called for the last time the name of the man who had been hers, and she his, for twenty years.

We haven't done yet. That same evening paper contained a report of another suicide in Paris. A funeral was passing through the Rue de Flandre when the chief mourner suddenly threw himself under the hearse, the wheels of which passed over his head. He was a young man of twenty-two, inconsolable for the loss of his wife six months after marriage.

All three of these cases were in one evening paper. Multiply them by three hundred and sixty-five—and that is really a small estimate—and you may form some idea of what a beautiful world this often is for the children (or victims) of "Providence."

"Storms and Floods"; "Damage to Crops"; "Gloomy Harvest Prospects"; "Rain and Ruin in Ireland"; "Destitution in the Hop Fields"; "Earthquake in Japan, Great Loss of Life"; "Volcanic Eruption in Luzon; Enormous Loss of Life," are among recent newspaper captions reminding us that we live under the loving protection of our Almighty Father.

It is curious to find William II. of Germany using the same expressions as Charles I. of England. Both declared themselves kings by the grace of God, and responsible alone to God; but two hundred and fifty years ago the English king was taught a different lesson.

God and the Emperor appear to rule jointly in Germany. God, by the way, is always an imperialist; we hear much of his kingdom, but never of his republic. The double rule involves a slavish militarism which is by no means congenial to the people, and Dr. Reinhold predicts that the next elections will show the spectacle of an irritated people making a determined front against the power of the Government.

The Fribourg Roman Catholic Conference shows there is a large number of the better-educated priests who are prepared to put aside the Bible, so long as they can hold on to the Church. Nonetheless, the fact remains that the Church has largely been built on the book, and damage to its authority will react on the Church. The story of Redemption is founded on the Fall, and when Genesis goes Jesuitism should go with it. But the Church has a double doctrine. It will meet scientific thought with a theory of evolution, while it teaches the old legends of creation to the children.

This is what the Evangelical *English Churchman* says of the present position of things in the Church of England: "Our sacerdotalist bishops, with Lord Salisbury at their back, are carrying matters with a high hand, and unless men with stern resolutions be raised up to protest, there will be no evangelicals left in the Church of England. Utterly unsound books are prescribed for candidates to study; Romanizers are selected to address them before ordination; Romanizing churches and preachers are provided at their ordination."

The progressive party at Birmingham seem somewhat more worthy the name than those in London. They announce as their policy for the coming School Board Election: "Making the people's schools as good as they can be made, keeping them absolutely free from sectarian influences, and securing the best teachers without regard to religious tests." The only way to keep schools absolutely free from sectarian influences is not to include the Bible or any form of religious teaching.

The *Freeman* says there are 80,000 children of Nonconformist parents in England attending Church schools

Digitized by Google

simply because there are no elementary unsectarian schools within their reach.

The New York *Sun* has a Roman Catholic correspondent at Rome. This is not surprising, for the *Sun* seeks the suffrages of the Catholics of New York; but it allows its correspondent, who signs himself "Innominato," to stuff its readers with the most egregious nonsense concerning Italian and Papal affairs. It represents the Marquis of Rudini's policy as "a step towards the evacuation of the Eternal City," and says that the Italian Government will have to give up the temporal to the Pope as surely as Bismarck was brought to Canossa. "Innominato" says it is the law of history. "Every time that the temporal power attacks an impregnable foundation of the Church or an essential interest of the Papacy, there comes a moment when to draw back and to sign peace becomes a condition of existence." Evidently "Innominato" reads history through priestly spectacles.

Father Mylott, who of course is a devout Catholic, preached at Cleveland, Ohio, recently, on the need of prayer. He said: "Man, bending to his own passions, if left to follow the whims of his own desires and inclinations, lives as the brute and dies as the brute; but he does not cease to exist, for he is endowed with an immortal soul that cannot die; he exists himself, soul and body, in the eternal abyss of hell." When the holy father receives his female parishioners at the confessional, history records that he often "follows the whims of his own desires in putting curious and disgusting questions to them, such as no decent woman would tolerate."

In Father Chiniquy's book, *The Priest, Woman, and Confessional*, page 266, Agnes Catherine Byrne says: "I do now publicly and with shame acknowledge that I have carefully perused the translations of *Dens' Theology*, where alone the true practice of the Roman Catholic confessional is to be found.....I solemnly declare, in the presence of my Maker, that, horrible and unspeakably vile as that book is, I had a hundred times more disgusting questions put to me in the confessional, which I was obliged to answer, under pain of being told 'that, being ashamed of answering him, I was in a state of mortal sin.'" Father Mylott, perhaps, knows how it is himself.—*Progressive Thinker.*

In the case of the death of Arthur Vince, the infant son of one of the Peculiar People, the jury have brought in a verdict of manslaughter against George Vince, the child's father. This man will now have to take his trial for following the directions of the New Testament with regard to the treatment of the sick. He prayed to the Lord, and he called in an elder who laid hands on the deceased and prayed as prescribed by James; but the words of the apostle, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick," were not borne out by the event.

The coroner, in summing up, said "the law was quite clear with reference to a case of this description—the parents are compelled to call in a doctor. If the death was accelerated in any way by their failing to do their duty, they were liable to punishment; their religion had nothing to do with it." As a matter of fact, their religion had everything to do with it, and the verdict of the jury is really a censure upon the New Testament.

There was a curious service at All Saints, Wittram, Essex, last week, when the Rev. Canon Ingles thought it necessary to shrive a pervert who had gone over to Rome and returned. The penitent was put on his marrow-bones at the communion rail, and in abject tones proclaimed that he would never go there any more. Canon Ingles then absolved him in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, after which he retired, looking a good deal better.

The co-operators have declined to adopt the Bishop of Chester's suggestion, that they should run breweries and public-houses. They mistrust this method of promoting temperance; besides, they don't want to dabble in the liquor traffic at any price. All that remains for the Bishop of Chester to do is to make a final proposal to the next meeting of Convocation Let the clergy take it up, and sell wine for the Timothy-stomach complaint, and short drinks for those who wish to forget their poverty and misery. Communion port is already well known. Why not follow it up with Bible beer and Gospel whiskey?

There is a gentleman named Burrow at Exmouth who has just leapt into notoriety. In the absence of his father, the borough coroner, this gentleman conducted the inquest on a drowned yachtsman. One of the jury, a Scotchman named Axon, wished to be sworn in the Scotch fashion, with uplifted right hand. Mr. Burrow insisted on his using the English form of imprecation as well, and on his refusing to do so he was promptly fined forty shillings—which ought to be spent on law books for the use of the court. But something worse followed. After the jury had been dismissed, one of them, a Mr. Firth, told the coroner that he did not administer the Scotch oath correctly. Mr. Firth was smoking, and the coroner ordered him to take the pipe out of his mouth. This he refused to do, as the inquest was over and the place was a public-house. Thereupon the coroner made out an order for his committal to prison for contempt, and Mr. Firth was conveyed to Exeter Gaol, although an order was obtained for his release the next day. The sequel to all this will be an action by Mr. Firth against the coroner for wrongful imprisonment.

Two reflections are suggested by this incident. The first is, that men soon lose their tempers over matters in any way connected with religion. Most men, as Swift said, have just enough religion to make them hate each other. It is therefore an act of prudence to banish religion altogether from the public sphere. The oath in courts of law is simply a nuisance, as is felt by many of the judges themselves.

The second reflection is this: That "contempt of court" is a matter which requires drastic revision. At present a judge can send a man to prison for contempt, and keep him there as long as he pleases. Now this is a monstrous and wicked absurdity. We are far from denying that a judge should have power to protect his court from disorder and defiance, but when a man is once in custody his punishment ought not to be determined by the person he has aggrieved. The offence of contempt of court should be legally defined, and a person alleged to have committed it should be tried in the ordinary way, in which case the judge whose authority he has contemned would not be able to preside at the trial.

Before leaving this subject, we venture to make an observation on the scandalous way in which persons are sent to prison by County Court judges. Imprisonment for debt is abolished in England, but the judges have re-established it under the disguise of contempt of court. No less than eleven thousand debtors were imprisoned in England last year. Orders for their incarceration are often obtained in the loosest manner. Sometimes a poor man is summoned to appear at a great distance from his abode. He cannot plead in the nearest court, but if an order is obtained against him in the distant one it can be transferred to the nearest court, and he can be summarily arrested, without the slightest proof of his ability to pay. Cases of this kind happen every day in the week, and lives are embittered and homes ruined by a process which is a scandal to civilization.

Sometimes a creditor uses the "contempt of court" dodge to put pressure upon a debtor's relatives. He knows that the debtor himself is, at any rate for the time, incapable of discharging the liability; but he argues that if an order is obtained against him—and in some courts it is obtainable with great ease and celerity—his relatives will club together and pay the debt themselves sooner than see him go to prison.

In view of these and similar facts, it was argued by Robert Lowe, and it has been argued by Professor Newman, that it would really be better to abolish legal recovery of debt altogether, leaving creditors to exercise more prudence in trading, and curtailing the scope of improvident credit.

Some weeks ago we reported the case of a New York "drunk and disorderly," whose defence before the magistrate was the quotation of the text in Proverbs—"Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." The magistrate's sentence consisted of one word, "Discharged."

Thomas Osbourne was less lucky than that New York prisoner. Brought before Sir John Bridge, at Bow-street, for begging in the streets, Thomas Osbourne was committed for trial. The Bible texts he was in the habit of quoting in the public thoroughfares made no impression on the magistrate—such texts as "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," "They that give to the poor lend unto the Lord." Sir John Bridge cannot check the cheerful giver, but he apparently means to prevent the poor borrower from negotiating a loan for the Lord.

Mr. Ichiro Tokutomi, editor of the *Kokumin Shimbun* (*The Nation*), a most important Japanese paper, now on a visit to England, has been interviewed by the *Daily News*. This gentleman is outspoken enough on the subject of religion, and what he says corroborates the statements made some time ago to the same journal by the Marquis Ito, Prime Minister of Japan during the war with China. "Our country," he says, "is our idol, and patriotism our first doctrine. From the Emperor downward, the vast majority have no other religion." There are professed Buddhists and Confucians, and a handful of professed Christians; but all

Digitized by Google

these beliefs are "Japanised." The practical religion of the country is hero-worship. Temples are erected to national heroes; generals, statesmen, poets, and philosophers. The virtues and services of the great dead are celebrated by the admiring and grateful living; which seems an improvement on our plan of worshipping a mythical character as a God.

In New Guinea it is said to be no uncommon thing for the Missionary Flag to be seen floating above the Union Jack. This paper does not feel hurt about it, but "what-hever will they say hin Hingland"!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Here is a verse of a poem, "From Australia to England," sent by John Farrell at Jubilee time:—

Red sins were yours: the avid greed
Of pirate fathers, smocked as Grace,
Sent Judas missioners to read
Christ's Word to many a feebler race—
False priests of Truth who made their tryst
At Mammon's shrine, and reft or slew—
Some hands you taught to pray for Christ
Have prayed His curse to rest on you!

The Rev. W. H. Watkinson, president of the Wesleyan Conference, tells the ministers that the power of Methodism lies in the pulpit. He apparently has not yet learned the secret of General Booth, that the power lies in the orchestra. The Pleasant Sunday Afternooners, too, have discovered that the man of God can much better be dispensed with than the choir.

The Rev. W. H. Watkinson went on to say there is only one Name given whereby men can be saved. This may do for the followers of Wesley, but will hardly go down with those who look up to Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed.

A young woman named McMurdo, charged at Llanidloes with concealment of birth, stated that the Rev. Thomas L. Martin, the late pastor of the Congregational Church at Llanidloes, and now pastor of a church at Berriew, Montgomery, is the father of her child. According to her statement, the man of God had apartments in the house of her uncle, where she resided, and seduced her under promise of marriage. When aware she was pregnant, he, according to her account, would only marry her provided she handed over to him £300. The woman McMurdo is committed to the next assize court at Ruthvin; the man Martin is preaching the gospel of the Lord.

The *Tablet* says: "Speculative Freemasonry was founded by Theophile Désaguliers, George Payne, and James Anderson at London on June 24, 1717. From the outset Freemasonry declared its real character, which has been pithily described by saying that, discarding faith and hope, it retained and made much of a kind of charity which was certainly not the Christian virtue described by St. Paul. The days of the foundation of Freemasonry were the days in which the English Deists, Toland, Anthony Collins, Matthew Tindal, Thomas Chubb, Thomas Woolston, and Lord Bolingbroke were propagating their ideas in England, and the spirit of Freemasonry from the outset was the spirit of undogmatic and anti-supernatural Deism."

The Edinburgh *Evening Dispatch* (September 4) records the sad story of an evangelist who believed he had reclaimed a burgling jail-bird in the Calton Jail. The prisoner got a letter saying a relative had died and left him £500. The evangelist looked on this as an intervention of Providence, and the prisoner professed his anxiety to devote the legacy to the work of the Lord. When liberated, he induced the evangelist to provide him with two suits, a watch and cash, to look after his legacy. He departed to do so, but never returned. The legacy-letter, it is suspected, was written by a "pal."

"The evangelist's story of the Son of Joseph and Mary of Bethlehem reads like some far-off dream, or as the ancient allegory of Job. It is outside our present-day experiences." So writes a contributor to the correspondence on Jesus Christ now going on in Mr. Fletcher's *New Age.*

The proposal to put God in the constitution of federated Australia is, of course, to be followed by that of the appointment of a chaplain. On this the *Sydney Bulletin* observes: 'To impose the chaplain of Faith on the consciences and pockets of the holders of Unfaith would be to introduce into a country now free from all religious tests an incubus identical in character with that of the Established State Church which for generations turned the blood of Ireland into gall, or that of the millions-grabbing episcopacy which, by tithe-bludgeons and other legitimatized burglars' jemmies, at present robs the Nonconformists and non-religionists of England."

Last week we mentioned the new American journal, *Monumental Records.* The editor, the Rev. H. M. Baum, it appears, inspired an article in the *New York Herald* on 'The Story of the Creation from the Ruins of Nineveh,' which is reprinted in *Public Opinion.* Everything in America is large, and the Rev. Baum's ignorance is something stupendous. He talks of "*Professor* Smith, the famous English Assyriologist." The late Mr. George Smith was never a professor at all, although he was a far more able man than the majority of those who boast that title. The *New York Herald* article is full of mistakes that we will charitably suppose are printers' errors. But when we are coolly told that "Sennacherib sent copyists to all parts of the world to gather up the important documents bearing upon the origin of the world, the birth of man, and the deluge," it is evident that the Rev. Baum does not know an atom of what he is talking about. He has apparently read some secondhand account of the library of Assurbanipal, the grandson of Sennacherib, and has not understood it. The Rev. Baum winds up with the statement that "the explorations have brought to light seven distinct accounts of the creation. They have each been carefully studied by the most eminent scholars in both this country and abroad, and *the consensus of opinion of these learned men is that they all corroborate the main features of the origin of the world as given in the Bible.*" It is hardly conceivable that newspapers of the standing of the *New York Herald* can print such utter rubbish. *Monumental Records* will not enlighten the American people in the slightest degree, and we do not know which is the greater feature of the rev. editor, his mendacity or his foolishness.

The Church Congress has got to be such a parade of Ritualism that the Evangelical Alliance is holding its Conference at Cambridge at the same time as the Black Palaver takes place at Nottingham, a week before the Goose Fair.

When the *National Observer* merged into the *British Review* it was the beginning of the end. From Henley to Mallock was too big a downfall for the reputation of any paper.

The New York *Critic* prints the following story from a correspondent: "We have a Methodist colored church here, and, as the newspapers say, 'there has been a religious awakening' in it recently. One of the dusky exhorters, speaking of the condescension of the Savior, said that while on earth he did not hesitate to associate with 'publishers and sinners.'"

Mr. Howard Evans, in an article on "The Sects" in the *Contemporary Review,* gives the following figures concerning the clergy: Incumbents, 13,802; curates, 6,463; bishops and cathedral clergy, 230; making a total of 20,495. Taking the nine leading free churches, there are only 8,369; but these are supplemented by local preachers to the tune of 49,947. These are all of the nine churches aforesaid, Mr. Evans pooh-poohing the long list of denominations given in *Whitaker's Almanac.*

The *Tablet* is responsible for the statement that Her Majesty's decision, granting to the children of Legal Life Peers the right to be styled "Honorable," has stirred dissatisfaction in the breasts of the Spiritual Peers, and, it is suspected, also certain feminine ambitions within the episcopal palaces. It is urged that if the son of a Law Lord is to be an "honorable," and have precedence of baronets and knights, the progeny of a Right Reverend Father-in-God should be no less favored. It is a standing grievance with bishops' wives that they have no precedence at all, and merely rank as plain Mrs. So-and-so, as Mrs. Proudie used to complain.

A contemporary has been discussing, "Why are the Clergy Unpopular?" It suggests because they are a caste giving themselves peculiar airs, and dangling with women rather than meeting the society of men. This does not seem to hit the bull's eye. Is it not a fact that they are generally recognised as charlatans, assuming to teach what they know nothing of, and pretending to virtues which are conspicuous by their absence?

It is said that the proposal for the establishment of a bishopric in South Yorkshire is dead. The committee appointed to carry it out has made no progress, and no offers of money have been received. It is further alleged that the collapse has arrived because evangelicals will not subscribe for a new bishop, since all Lord Salisbury's episcopal appointments have been Ritualists.

Mr. J. F. Nisbet says in the *Referee:* "I have always had a sneaking regard for Pontius Pilate, who looked down with good-natured indifference upon the squabbles of the Jewish cliques who came before him, and I agree with Matthew Arnold that it would be extremely interesting to have his notes of the famous case that it fell to his lot to try."

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 26, Birmingham.
October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 15 and 16, debate at Atheræum Hall, London; 19, Plymouth; 21, 22, 23, 24, debate at Plymouth; 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 10, Birmingham; 24, Halifax Sunday Society; 31, Stanley, Durham. November 2, 3, 4, and 5, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

LOVER OF TRUTH.—If you read Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*, you will see what truth there is in the common religious stories of the last hours of great *Freethinkers*. Accurate references are given to unquestionable authorities. Mr. Foote's little book is not merely a polemic; it is a history.

THOMAS MACLEISH.—Mr. Foote accedes to your request, and will give a poetical reading before his evening lecture at Glasgow.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Postcard to hand. Thanks.

JOHN BAIN.—Dr. Smith's book of stories for the young is entitled *Steps to the Temple of Happiness*. The publisher is *Sonnenschein*, and the price 5*s*.

J. COLLINSON.—Thanks for cuttings.

P. GORRIE.—See our leading article. If the book of Revelation be true, Talmage will have a warm place in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire; that is to say, he will burn and stink to all eternity.

F. W. SWAIN.—Sorry to hear the Derby Branch's excursion was spoiled by the rain, though glad to know that the few who braved the weather had a good time after all. See paragraph.

MISS VANCE acknowledges on behalf of the Spanish Exiles' Fund: R. Malcolm, 1*s*.; J. Garven, 1*s*.; A. B. Moss, 2*s*.; T. Dobson, 1*s*.; A. J. Gimson, £2 2*s*.

J. ROBERTS.—Why is not a hall large enough obtainable for lectures by Mr. Foote at Liverpool? Is the Oddfellows' Hall no longer available? Or cannot you try for the Picton Hall again?

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Shall appear.

A. J. GIMSON (Leicester), sending a cheque for the Spanish Exiles' Fund, says: "I find you have my brother's comments in print. I am of the same mind."

ALERT.—Freethinkers do real service to the cause by taking part in controversial correspondence in public journals.

A. E. ASPINALL.—See the paragraph in "Acid Drops." Your order is handed to Mr. Forder.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—We have received the following promises:—J. W., 10*s*. *(p)*; J. H. Foster, £1 *(p)*; J. Wacker, 5*s*. *(p)*.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance has received the following promises:—W. Elcoat, 10*s*. *(p)*; R. Fountain, 2*s*. 6*d*. *(p)*; H. Good, 10*s*. *(p)*; J. Garven, 5*s*.

J. H. FOSTER, sending a donation, hopes that every Freethinker will support the new Financial Scheme.

J. W. hopes to subscribe his 10*s*. annually.

J. WACKER will endeavor to obtain other subscribers at Motherwell.

E. P. LUKE.—Order handed to Mr. Forder, to whom please send direct in future.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The New Age—Liberator—Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Phonetic Journal—Southend Times—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—De Dageraad—Freidenker—Glasgow Daily Record—Crescent—Unigraphy—Echo—L'Etoile Socialiste—Lucifer—Ourselves—Age of Thought.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10*s*. 6*d*.; Half year, 5*s*. 3*d*.; Three months, 2*s*. 8*d*.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1*s*. 6*d*.; every succeeding ten words, 6*d*. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4*s*. 6*d*.; half column, £1 2*s*. 6*d*.; column, £2 5*s*. Special terms for repetitions.

SPECIAL.

IN accordance with my promise, now that the summer is broken and the winter season is approaching, I recur to the matter of the Treasurer's Scheme for the financial reorganization of the National Secular Society.

Mr. Hartmann's Scheme has already been explained in the *Freethinker*. Briefly, it is as follows:—He proposes to raise an income of £1,500 a year, by means of regular annual donations from members and friends. Mr. Hartmann promises £50 himself for the first year, and will make it £75 if four others subscribe the same amount by October 1. He is sanguine enough to hope that one or two Freethinkers may be found to give £100 a year each, and another one or two £50. More might give £20, still more £10, and a larger number £5. A good many might give £1, and hundreds might give five shillings or ten shillings.

Of course the first thing needful is to obtain these donations. They can be paid during the year at the subscribers' convenience. Money is not asked for immediately, although it is naturally welcome. What we want at once is promises, so that we may have an approximate idea of our financial prospect. These promises can be sent to me at 28 Stonecutter-street, or to Mr. Hartmann or Miss Vance at the N. S. S. office, 376–7 Strand, London, W.C. A list of them will be carefully kept, and in the course of time reminders will be sent to the givers who have not redeemed them.

A full list is printed this week of the promises acknowledged up to the publication of last week's *Freethinker*. It will be reprinted from time to time, with additions up to date.

Now for the way in which it is proposed to expend the income thus raised. There is the N. S. S. office rent, and also the secretary's salary. Those are the standing expenses already. Mr. Hartmann proposes, in addition, to keep two or three lecturers travelling through the country at a fixed salary, whose services would be available to all the Branches gratuitously, on condition of their paying their own local expenses. He also proposes to have a salaried travelling secretary, to promote organization and solicit subscriptions personally from sympathizers in all parts of the country. Finally, he proposes to pay the President a salary, so that he may attend to the Society's business without loss, and also lecture (say) twenty-six Sundays a year in the provinces without a charge to the local committees. Other matters are proposed, such as issuing tracts, manifestoes, etc., and keeping up correspondence in newspapers; but these can be dwelt upon hereafter.

This is a large, ambitious scheme, which cannot be carried out suddenly. It will take time, but it ought not to be impossible. There are Freethinkers enough to find the requisite funds, if they will only rouse themselves and do their duty. The same number of Christians would be expected to do more.

A sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Warren, Bater, Gorniot, and Quay, has been appointed to give special attention to this Scheme. I have been asked to write a circular for wide distribution, and this will be done immediately. As a first step in the direction of activity, Mr. Cohen has been engaged up to Christmas by way of experiment. He will act as travelling agent for the committee, soliciting subscriptions, and delivering week-night lectures on similar conditions to those which obtained under my Lecture Scheme.

As we cannot afford to sit still while the Treasurer's Scheme is maturing, I have, on my own responsibility, authorized Mr. Watts to make some week-night engagements in the neighborhoods of Glasgow, Birmingham, etc. Of course he will do his best for the scheme as well as Mr. Cohen, though more incidentally.

Personally, I do not intend to be any burden upon the new Fund, at least until it it fairly flourishing. As everybody knows, I have a princely income, derived from mysterious sources. Meanwhile, it cannot be said that I am

Digitized by Google

neglecting the Scheme. I am giving it a big advertisement on gratuitous terms, and using all my influence to secure its success. Nobody will be better pleased than I to see the N. S. S. self-sustaining. Far too much has hitherto been left to the President, who has had to take heavy responsibilities, for which he has not always been thanked.

The matter is now one for the whole Secular party. We have an earnest, substantial Treasurer, who will hold the key of the exchequer, and a capable sub-committee of the Executive to look after the working of the Scheme. Let the party, then, supply the sinews of war if they want to see a really vigorous campaign. Grumbling and criticism can be postponed for a while. What is wanted is work, and this cannot be done without money. This is the plain (or, if you like, brutal) truth. We ask for promises for the first year, and hundreds of them, from £100 down to 5s.

G. W. FOOTE
(*President, N. S. S.*).

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S
FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION SCHEME.

Promises for the First Year received up to September 5.

	£	s.	d.
S. Hartmann	50	0	0
S. Munns	5	0	0
J. Fulton	5	0	0
W. H. Harrap	1	0	0
J. Hughes	1	1	0
W Davey	0	5	0
F. Oscar	0	5	0
R. Axleby	0	5	0
J. G. Dobson (*p*) ...	0	10	0
J. J. Wyand	5	0	0
E. Lawson	5	0	0
H. Thomas	0	5	0
J. Thomas	0	5	0
W. M. Franklin ...	0	5	0
H. McGuinness ...	0	5	0
Mrs. McGuinness ...	0	5	0
J. A. (Edinburgh) ...	0	10	0
Lancashire Friend...	2	0	0
Dr. Mortimer	1	0	0
Tom Beach	1	0	0
W. Lewis	0	5	0
G. H. Gask (*p*)... ...	0	5	0
D. T. Snow	0	5	0
J. T. Lewis	0	5	0
J. Williams	0	5	0
W. Waymark	0	5	0
J. Unsworth	0	5	0
S. J. B.	0	5	0
T. Dobson	0	5	0
T. J. Head	0	5	0
C. Cattell	0	5	0
F. Collins	0	10	0
E. D. H. Daly ...	2	0	0
W. W. Roberts ...	0	10	0
J. Hayes	0	5	0
J. Barks	0	5	0
A. Hurren	0	10	0
A. G. Lye	0	10	0
W. Muir	0	5	0
C. Heaton	0	5	0
S. Graham	0	5	0
Cardiff Branch ...	1	15	0
F. T. Brookes ...	0	5	0
T. Gorbell	0	10	0
A. C. Byrom	0	10	0
F. Theobalds	0	5	0
B. Waterhouse (*p*)...	1	0	0
F. W. Donaldson (*p*)	0	10	6
W. H. Spivey (*p*) ...	0	10	0
W. Lamb (*p*)	1	0	0
T. Ollerenshaw (*p*)	0	10	0
G. R.	2	0	0
E. Truelove	2	0	0
J. H. R.	0	10	6
Dr. T. Bulloms ...	1	1	0
W. H. Wood	1	1	0
J. P.	1	1	0
J. Sumner	0	10	6
C. H. Cattell	0	5	0
R. Meredith	0	5	0
W. T. Pitt	1	1	0
S. Armfield	1	1	0
J. Terry	1	1	0
Lees Sumner (*p*) ...	1	0	0
R. Taylor	0	10	6
B. A. Millichamp ...	0	5	0
G. Dixon	2	0	0
Dr. Walker	2	0	0
F. H.	0	5	0
A. Tripp (*p*)	2	0	0
J. W. Gott	0	10	0
J. Cuff	1	0	0
Alert	0	5	0
J. Ralston...	0	10	0
Mr. Ralston	0	10	0
James Stanway ...	0	10	0
J. C. Bridge	0	10	6
W. H. Witney... ...	0	10	0
G. Harper...	0	5	0
F. W. Swan	0	5	0
J. Brownswood ...	0	5	0
T. Newton	0	5	0
J. Brooks	0	5	0
T. Gorbell	0	5	0
J. Edwards	0	5	0
Mr. Todd	0	5	0
Mr. Fish	0	5	0
J. Kimberley	0	15	0
F. Simons	0	15	0
L. Brooker	0	10	0
James Boorman ...	0	10	0
J. Martin	0	5	0
E. Barker	0	5	0
O. Ford	0	5	0
G. Heritage	0	5	0
R. Wellings	0	2	6
G. Lander...	0	2	6
Mrs. Lander	0	2	6
C. Heald (*p*)	0	5	0
C. Davies	0	5	0
G. Brady	6	0	0
H. Smith (*p*)	0	10	0
W. Ingram (*p*)... ...	0	10	0
C. Mascall (*p*)... ...	0	10	0
W. Stewart	0	5	0
J. F. Hampson	1	0	0
Mrs. J. F. Hampson	1	0	0

[Any error or omission in the list should be communicated at once to Mr. Foote.]

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's visit to Manchester was very successful, in spite of the wretched weather. The morning audience was moderate, the afternoon's extremely good, and the evening's crowded. Altogether the meetings were the largest that have been seen in the Secular Hall for some years. Friends attended from Bolton, Wigan, Chester, and other places; some travelling over forty miles to be present. There was a noticeable warmth in the reception given to the N. S. S. President, which was not without significance. Collections were made during the day on behalf of the N. S. S. General Fund.

The Manchester Secular Hall looks all the better for the recent repairs and redecoration. It is pleasant to the eye all over, from the entrance to the wall behind the platform, from which stand out in bold relief the picture and the bust of Charles Bradlaugh. We are glad to know, too, that the Manchester Branch is starting the winter season with an improved prospect. Certain discordant elements having been eliminated, the committee are now working amicably and harmoniously together.

Notwithstanding the heavy rain on Sunday last, Mr. Watts had a good audience in the evening at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. His new lecture on "The Triumph of Reason" was enthusiastically applauded, and we are informed that Mr. Watts was at his best. Mr. Kay presided, and drew attention to Mr. Hartmann's Financial Scheme. There was no debate, although it was specially invited.

Mr. Watts will again occupy the same platform this evening, Sunday, September 12, taking for his subject, "Is Christ Possible?" Previous to the lecture Mrs. Charles Watts will give a reading.

On the following Wednesday and Thursday, September 15 and 16, Mr. Watts debates at the same hall with the Rev. Mr. Waldron. The admission will be by ticket only, which can be obtained of Miss Vance at the office of the National Secular Society, 376 Strand, and at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street.

The Glasgow Branch's winter session begins to-day (September 12) with three lectures by Mr. C. Cohen, who will give three more lectures on September 19. The committee hope to see a large rally of members and friends on these occasions. They have spared no pains to make up a fine program for the season, and have secured the services of the most prominent Freethought lecturers. Messrs. Foote and Watts are included. The former, in addition to a course of Sunday lectures, is to debate for four nights (October 12–15) with Mr. W. T. Lee. Mr. A. G. Nostick, F.G.S., has undertaken to deliver lectures on geology and other scientific subjects. The prospects of the Branch were never brighter, and it only requires the steady co-operation of members and friends to make the new session thoroughly successful.

Mr. Percy Ward, the latest promising recruit to the N.S.S. platform, carries on a week's Freethought mission at Derby, from Sept. 12 to Sept. 19 inclusive. He lectures morning and evening both Sundays, and every intervening week-night, in the Athenæum, Victoria-street, under the auspices of the Derby Branch. Admission is free, with a collection towards defraying the expenses. Of course discussion is invited, and we hope plenty will be forthcoming.

The Liverpool Branch has removed from the Oddfellows' Hall and taken the smaller Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, for regular Sunday lectures. Mr. J. M. Robertson occupies the platform from Sept 12 to Oct. 3 inclusive, lecturing twice each Sunday, at 3 and 7 o'clock. The subjects are calculated to attract good meetings. Local speakers fill up the program till Christmas.

The Bradlaugh Club is organizing a Bradlaugh Celebration during the week commencing on Sunday, Sept. 26 (Charles Bradlaugh's birthday). There will be a tea and *soirée* on that day, and two public meetings on Sept. 28 and Oct. 1, at which addresses will be delivered on Bradlaugh's freethought and political work. The remainder of the week will be filled up with amusement.

A lengthy correspondence on the subject, "Is Jesus Christ Possible?" has been going on in *The New Age*. "Alert" contributes a letter giving the Secularist side of the question.

A writer on "Science, Sentiment, and the Soul," in the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen*, observes: "The idea of a soul, mysterious, impalpable, and indestructible, imprisoned in a corruptible and relatively unimportant body, gives place to the modern idea, which is more in line with the doctrine of evolution. Men of science are beginning to regard the higher powers of man, the attributes of the 'soul,' as developed from the simple mental and emotional characteristics of primitive man and the higher animals. The chain of continuous evolution from animals to man was previously supposed to be broken by the supernatural inbreathing of the

Digitized by Google

immortal soul. The modern view places the 'soul' as the highest product of an evolution, continuous, wonderful, and all due to the unwavering action of the inevitable Laws of the Universe." This would have been considered rank heresy but a little while ago.

The *People's Newspaper*, of Rockhampton, Central Queensland, gives a full report of a lecture on "The Theory of Evolution," by Wallace Nelson, who, our Sheffield friends will be pleased to hear, seems now to be a person of some importance in that district.

In *Science and Progress*, an American magazine, Professor Poulton calls attention to the services of James Cowles Prichard as a founder of true anthropology and a forerunner of Darwin. His *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, of which the first edition appeared in 1813, was certainly a remarkable step in the right direction.

A. H. Gerhard conducts *De Dageraad*, the organ of the Dutch Freethought Society, in a very able manner. His own articles always hit the topics of the day. In the September number Herr Ten Bokkel continues his studies of mythology, and, under the sarcastic title of "Suffer Little Children to Come unto Me," "Jan" exposes the truly puerile character of religious instruction in Holland.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of special Executive meeting held at the Society's offices, August 20, 1897. The President in the chair. Present:—Messrs. M. Loafer, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, C. Mascall, Stanley Jones, E. Bater, T. Gorniot, H. J. Stace, G. J. Warren, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, V. Roger, C. Cohen, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

The President reported the result of the delegation to the Spanish Atrocities Committee. Personally, he was satisfied that the allegations of torture were substantiated. Mr. Wheeler moved, and Mr. Heaford seconded: "That this Executive, having heard the report of its delegates to the Spanish Exiles Committee, requests them also to attend and speak on their behalf at the Trafalgar-square meeting." Carried unanimously.

It was then moved by Mr. Roger, seconded by Mr. Cohen: "That the President be requested to open an N. S. S. subscription in the *Freethinker* for the Spanish Atrocities Committee's work in the relief of the Spanish Exiles, and that this Executive head the list with a donation of two guineas, the subscription to be paid to the Committee as the contribution of the N. S. S." Carried unanimously.

Messrs. G. J. Warren, E. W. Quay, E. Bater, and T. Gorniot were then elected as a sub-committee to report upon matters in connection with the working of the Treasurer's Scheme at the next meeting of the Executive.

It was resolved to issue the Society's Almanack for 1898, and Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. J. M. Wheeler kindly undertook the editorial work. The secretary was instructed to report names of branches in arrears with subscriptions, and the meeting adjourned until Thursday, September 2.

Report of meeting held on Thursday, September 2. The President in the chair. Present:—Messrs. E. Bater, S. Hartmann, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, G. J. Warren, C. Watts, Annie Brown, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, P. Sabine, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, C. Mascall, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received. The President read correspondence from the Chatham Branch in regard to the action of Sir Charles Warren. It was resolved that the Chatham Branch be informed "That, as Sir Charles Warren has prohibited *all* lectures on the Chatham Lines, this Executive does not see that it can do anything specially in this matter, as the only successful action must, apparently, be local."

A letter was read from Mr. Harry Snell, asking the Executive to support the candidature of Mr. J. F. Green, a Socialist, who was in favor of Secular Education, and who intended to run for the Finsbury Division at the forthcoming School Board election. Mr. Wheeler moved, and Mr. Heaford seconded: "That the President be requested to interview Mr. Green, and find out if he is such a candidate as the Executive would wish to endorse." Carried.

The President reported further upon the delegation to the Spanish Atrocities Committee, and the treasurer was authorized to pay a cheque to the secretary of that Committee, on account of the subscription being raised in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Charles Watts reported upon his attendance at the meetings of the Union of Ethical Societies.

The President advised the Wood Green Branch in regard to the hiring of a Lecture Hall.

The report and minutes of the Sub-Committee elected to carry into effect Mr. Hartmann's Scheme were then read and discussed.

Mr. Cohen had offered his services to the Committee until Christmas next; and, certain minor matters having been deleted with the consent of the Committee, the following recommendations were adopted:—

"That Miss Vance act as secretary to the Committee; that Mr. Cohen be appointed to collect subscriptions, and to lecture under the direction of the Committee upon week nights during his stay in the provinces; that the President be asked to write a circular, setting forth the Scheme, and inviting subscriptions, such circular to be signed by the President, treasurer, the secretaries, and the sub-committee, with the addresses of same, and that it be sent to all Branches, members, and sympathizers; that Branches be asked for names of persons known to be in sympathy with the cause in each town, and for the names of persons who might be asked to become collectors."

The Executive then passed, as an instruction to the Committee: "That the subscriptions collected by Mr. Cohen or other collectors be all acknowledged in the *Freethinker*, and that the secretary send an official receipt to subscribers wherever possible."

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

SUNDAY AT THE SEASIDE.

ON the shore of the sea things are gay as can be; there's no
end of amusement and fun;
Every day—save the day that is frittered away in the worship of God and his Son—
There are plenty of sports, of all manner of sorts, for the
men and the women and weans;
Funny clowns (full of pranks), acrobats, charabancs, not to
mention the bathing-machines;
"Ethiopian" fellers—such blue-devil quellers—and character-tellers from bumps:
On a "Secular" day things are lively and gay, and you never
feel down in the dumps.

But as soon as the Sabbath approaches,
How to spend it you puzzle your nut;
Things are slow as last century's coaches,
And as dense as a fog in the "Cut."
It is true there's a band that performs on the sand,
But to listen you are not enticed;
'Tis a "Salvation" mob that is out "on the job"
For the glorification of Christ.

They inform you in song that a gentleman long since
deceased, whose initial was J.,
Made them clean as new pins, washed away all their sins—
but you wish that he'd washed *them* away!
Then your hands you apply to your ears, and you fly from
the sound of the hideous strains,
You are off like a shot from that terrible spot, if your
noddles are furnished with brains;
Then you go for a stroll, meeting scarcely a soul, on the
cliffs or the Grand Esplanade;
You are left in the lurch, other folks are in church, in their
best Sunday garments arrayed,
For the bells that are hung in the steeple have rung, and
the people have been since eleven
Where the party who lives on the jugginses gives them
instructions for getting to heaven!

For as soon as the Sabbath approaches,
Opened wide as the mouth of a butt
Are the mouths of white-chokered "cockroaches,"
And the mouths of the "niggers" are shut.
Other days folks perhaps are intelligent chaps;
Common sense on *that* day's sacrificed;
They recline in their pews and they swallow the "news"
Of the crucified "infidel," Christ.

You're as wretched, no doubt, as a fish that is out of its
element, sad and forlorn;
You are waiting for Monday, and wishing that Sunday had
never, oh never been born.
Thank the Lord, there's some fun at a quarter to one, or for
death you would certainly seek,
For the people then pour from the joss-house's door like
the rats from the vessels that leak;
And their forms are displayed up and down the parade till
it's time to be thinking of lunch:
You derive from those folks better fun than from jokes that
appear in the pages of *Punch*.

They amuse you much better than jokers
That contribute to *Fun* or to *Cuts*,
Do these credulous dupes of white-chokers,
By their ludicrous antics and struts.
Quite forgotten, you ken, is the sermon, for then
Men and women, both single and "spliced,"
On the promenades walk, and they laugh and they
talk—
But they're none of them talking of Christ!

ESS JAY BEE

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

In a very interesting paper in *Scribner's Magazine* on "John Cabot," Lord Dufferin incidentally remarks that while the doctors and the divines of the Middle Ages persisted in regarding the earth as a plane surface, on the ground of such texts of Scripture as "Thou hast made all men to dwell on the '*face*' of the earth," and denied its rotundity because the Psalmist says, "In his hands are all the '*corners*' of the earth," or argued that "men at the supposed Antipodes could not walk with their heads downward," and that ships could not sail, nor rain fall, "upward," there existed all the time in the writings of Aristotle and of his heathen successors conceptions of the nature of the globe which came wonderfully near the truth. For instance, in his treatise on the heaven, Aristotle asserts that "the earth is not only round, but not so very large, and the sea which washes the shores outside the Pillars of Hercules bathes also the neighboring coasts of India." Eratosthenes not only proclaimed the earth a sphere, but attempted to measure its circumference. Macrobius says, in his *Dream of Scipio*, "If you go far enough west, you will come to the Antipodes." Here, as elsewhere, the old book stood in the way of progress, and when Magellan circumnavigated the earth he was refused credence on the ground that it was not according to holy writ.

* * *

The *Animals' Friend* for September gives a fine portrait of Robert Browning. In the accompanying sketch Dr. Berdoe gives a letter from the poet, in which he says: "I would rather submit to the worst of deaths, so far as pain goes, than have a single dog or cat tortured on the pretence of sparing me a twinge or two." His fine poem "Tray,' it is said, describes an incident which was witnessed by one of his friends in Paris. The *Animals' Friend* mentions, as still existing this very year, a custom at a religious festival held on St. John's Day at Kalgouet, in Brittany, of burning alive a dozen cats, who are carried in a large open basket. A visitor expostulated, but he was simply told that it was the St. Jean, and that the cats were there to play the parts of sinners in hell, a sight in which the good Apostle was sure to find pleasure. "In older days," added the Breton, with a gesture of horror, "they used to keep for the St. Jean six criminals and burn them. But now-a-days, you understand, Monsieur, this would not do. Happily, we are more humane!"

* * *

Fisher Unwin has published *St. Mark's Indebtedness to St. Matthew*, by F. P. Badham, M.A., a stout attack on the priority of the Second Gospel, dedicated to Professor Hilgenfeld. The case seems to stands thus: There are clearly passages in which Mark is the earlier. There are also clearly passages in which he has copied from Matthew, or a gospel similar to Matthew. The result of an investigation tends to show that both are, strictly speaking, concoctions from other documents.

* * *

On the heels of *The Posthumous Memoirs of Madame Blavatsky* comes volume iii. of *The Secret Doctrine*. It is amusing to notice that Mr. Mead shifts all responsibility for it, and especially for the impossible Greek and doubtful Hebrew and Sanskrit, upon the shoulders of Mrs. Besant. That lady says herself concerning the Sections on "The Mystery of Buddha": "Together with some most suggestive thought, they contain very numerous errors of fact, and many statements based on exoteric writings, not on esoteric knowledge.....I do not feel justified in coming between the author and the public, either by altering the statements to make them consistent with fact, or by suppressing the Sections." What a wealth of estoric lore, says *Theosophy*, we have missed through Mrs. Besant's literary delicacy! She has published these erroneous statements of H. P. B., when she might with her own pen have given us the inside facts about the mystery of Buddha. According to Mr. Mead, volume iii. is composed mainly of fragments "excluded from volumes i. and ii., because of their inferiority to the rest of the work"; but he takes comfort in the small price of the book, which is but fifteen shillings net. Trash, however, is dear at any price.

* * *

In the *Contemporary* for the current month Mr. J. Rendel Harris gives his views on the *Logia and the Gospels*. With regard to that concerning the duty of fasting and keeping the Sabbath, under penalty of rejection of the kingdom of God, he pronounces the Logian "a genuine saying of Jesus Christ" anterior to the New Testament. He says: "The effect of this discovery of the antiquity of the recovered matter upon the criticism of the Gospels cannot fail to be great, for we find not only that we are behind the Gospels, but that there was more in the sources of the Gospels than is conserved in the Gospels themselves." It gives us, he says, "the suggestion of an earlier Gospel or Gospels than any of our existing volumes." On the other hand, since it is quoted by Clement and Polycarp, "it prevents our quoting Clement and Polycarp as attesting the antiquity of the canonical Gospels."

* * *

The Rev. H. A. Redpath gives vent to a more doubtful theory of the *Logia* in the September *Expositor*. He says: "I believe we have in them a fragment of perhaps some apocryphal gospel claiming to give a sort of *procès verbal* of the indictment or evidence used at the trial of Jesus before the Jewish authorities, in much the same way as the trials of the early Christians before the heathen tribunal were officially recorded." The Rev. H. A. Redpath ought to know that there are no official reports of such trials, the stories of early Christian persecution being mainly bogus.

* * *

Madame Mary Darmesteter's *Life of Ernest Renan* will be published by Messrs. Methuen in the autumn. The authoress has been greatly helped in her labors, first by the late Madame Renan, and since her death by Madame Psichari, Renan's daughter, who has revised the proofs and supplied many of the facts. The only "Life" of Renan hitherto issued in this country is the little volume in the Great Writers Series, by Mr. Espinasse.

* * *

In his stanzas on "The Unknown God," in the September *Fortnightly*, William Watson repudiates the Old Testament Deity, and goes in for the one of the new-found *Logia*, as witness the following:—

A God like some imperious king,
Wrath were his realm, not duly awed;
A God for ever hearkening
Unto his self-commanded law;
A God for ever jealous grown
Of carven wood and graven stone.

The God I know of I shall ne'er
Know, tho' he dwells exceeding nigh;
Raise thou the stone and find me there,
Cleave thou the wood and there am I.
Yea, in my flesh his spirit doth flow
Too near, too far, for me to know.

The publishers ask that only two stanzas shall be quoted, or we might be tempted to give our readers more.

* * *

Mr. Watson's verses are pronounced by the *Academy* to be a challenge to Mr. Kipling's Jubilee Recessional. The refrain of that poem, "Lest we forget, lest we forget," is skilfully employed in one of the stanzas:—

Best by remembering God, say some,
We keep our high imperial lot.
Fortune, I fear, hath oftenest come
When we forgot—when we forgot!

* * *

From Mr. E. C. Walker, 244 West 143rd-street, New York, we receive some of his own pamphlets. One is on *Prohibition and Self-government*, illustrating their irreconcilable antagonisms; another on *Bible Temperance*, showing that the old book commends, defends, and enjoins liquor-drinking; a third is on *Love and the Law*; and a fourth on *What the Young Need to Know*. In all these Mr. Walker advocates the virtue that is based on knowledge and freedom.

* * *

Noticing Dean Farrar's latest book on the Bible, *Public Opinion*, of New York, remarks: "The importance attached to Old Testament teaching has had a pernicious influence upon character and conduct, and been responsible for the agony and desolation of many a blood-stained page of history, tolerating, if not sanctioning, passions, practices, and institutions abhorrent to conscience. The moral imperfections and unbecoming stories, the discrepancies, contradictions, erroneous, trivial, and unjust details, were softened by the allegorical method of interpretation which is justly ridiculed."

* * *

The *Vegetarian Messenger* for September gives a good portrait of Mr. W. E. A. Axon, the well-known man of letters, who at one time edited the *V. M.* Mr. H. S. Salt sends a letter with regard to the presidential address of Professor Mayor. He says: "When, therefore, he is reported in the *Vegetarian Messenger* as saying that 'they (vegetarians) went to the Scripture for guidance as to principles,' I am compelled, as a Freethinker, to ask whether he was speaking for himself and for those who think with him, or for the Vegetarian Society as a whole. I trust not for the Society—though his words, as reported, can scarcely be otherwise understood—because, if that were so, it would be impossible for Freethinkers like myself to continue to be members. Food reform is to me a secular question of morality, economy, and health; and nothing, in my opinion, could be more fatal to our cause than the impression conveyed by the *Vegetarian's* offer of a prize for the 'Ten best texts,' and confirmed by the President's remarks at the recent Jubilee meeting—that modern vegetarianism relies on the authority of the ancient Jewish Scriptures." Professor Mayor replies that in the main he agrees with Mr.

Digitized by Google

Salt. He says: "I read, from the chair at Ramsgate, the verses of Romans and 1 Corinthians, not to prove that every Christian must be a vegetarian, but to show that Christians are not bound by their religion, as Jews are, to eat flesh, even once a year." To make reformers of all grades place their views on the ground of humanity, rather than on fetish-book theology, is a great point gained.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MANUFACTURED PROPHECIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There is one point with regard to the faked-up prophecies which "Abracadabra" has been so ably exposing that deserves, I think, further attention. When a lawyer has good witnesses, he dwells on the evidence. When he has none, he seeks to argue a case by appeals to his hearers' prepossessions. Now, one and all of the early Christian writers, from Paul and the Gospelers right through the Christian Fathers, appeal to the Old Testament to prove the things said to have occurred in the New. Does not this very fact show they had no evidence? We are told in Acts xvii. 8 that Paul alleged "that Christ *needs must* have suffered, and risen again from the dead," not that he *did* suffer and rise again, which would require proof. Again, in the famous 1 Corinthians xv., he says: "He rose again according to the Scriptures." At the date of that epistle the Christian Scriptures were not in existence, and the Jewish Scriptures have nothing whatever about rising on the third day. Paul's argument was a bit of pure bounce, in which he would not have indulged had he ready for cross-examination five hundred brethren who were said to have seen the risen Savior. CAIAPHAS.

A FASHIONABLE METHODIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Under the above heading Uncle Ben satirizes the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. As there are, in that satire, statements that are not strictly accurate, and as there are comments that are unfair, perhaps you will allow one who has known Mr. Hughes for several years, and one who is not blind to his many faults, to occupy a little of your space. You state in your leader on the Trafalgar-square meeting that you love freedom and hate cruelty. In the interests of true freedom and in opposition to cruelty, of perhaps the worse sort—*i.e.*, misrepresentation—I feel impelled to write this letter. Uncle Ben's first hit is at Mr. Hughes's "consuming vanity." I don't think Mr. Hughes has a greater share of that vice than Uncle Ben or yourself. At any rate, a knowledge of Mr. Hughes's career would prove that vanity and self-profit have not, as Uncle Ben hints at, been the motive-powers of his life. To-day he could easily have been a richer, more fashionable man, had he been an Atheist instead of a believer in Jesus Christ (though it be the Christ of conventional religion). The result of his work in London, and of the West London Mission, has not been mainly a flourish of trumpets, but the brightening of many a life. The "lively and spiritual paper" was started a considerable time before the Mission was thought of. "Uncle Ben" knows that Mr. Hughes does not dress like a fop and affect West-end manners to attract the rich, and it is not his aim to dispense the "filthy" lucre of the rich. Mr. Hughes has, I believe, received more votes for the presidency than any Wesleyan minister of his age ever had, so the sneer as to that honor being "long deferred" is not well-founded. I am not a member of any church, and hope I am always open to conviction; but I cannot but admire the wonderful teaching and life of Christ, the beneficent result thereof, though I deplore the un-Christian conduct of the Churches, and of so many who claim to be his followers. At the same time, I am a searcher after truth, and that I am seeking for everywhere—even in the *Freethinker*. I admire, Sir, the article by yourself on the Spanish Anarchists, and other features of your paper; but I deplore the tone in which you and your contributors refer to your opponents. You deny to them the sincerity which you claim should be allowed yourselves; you so often use ridicule instead of argument, quibbles instead of reasons. Sayings taken from the Bible are taken literally or symbolically, quite apart from context and evident meaning. Surely, Sir, such methods as these are calculated neither to give us the truth nor to increase the number of Freethinkers. No man has exactly the same views as another on matters of opinion, but we who are seeking after truth, whether we be, according to our light, Methodists, Romanists, Agnostics, Atheists, Theosophists, Plymouth Brethren, or Buddhists—we can, *if we are sincere*, at least bear in mind that our common goal is truth, and we can, and therefore must, respect the sincere convictions of our fellow truthseekers, and we can and should exercise and extend the courtesy and liberty which we in our turn should expect. FRED. H. GOOLE.

PROFANE JOKES.

AN old Methodist hymn-book versified the Christian idea of the Atonement as follows:—

"Come filthy, come nasty, come dirty, come bare,
You can't come too nasty; come just as you are."

"Gospel's free—free to all dis congregashun," said brother Sparhawk, "an' salvation's free. You only got to walk right up an' help yourself, or call on me to gib yo' some." But when the collection box was passed around there was a murmur of discontent, starting in the corner where sat the Venus chapter of the Sisters of Mary and extending to the masculine pillars of the church. "How yo' reckon salvation's free w'en yo' sergashiate de 'lection box roun' 'de congregashun?" asked Mr. Smallwood. "W'y, it's dis way, frien's. Dar's a spring o' pure livin' water way up de mountain, free—free to all. But dere's pipin' laid to bring dat water down whar yo' all can use it, an' de pipin' costs money. Now de gospel fount am free, but de pipin' am 'spensive, an' I'm de pipin'."

SMITTEN.
(Up to date.)

His kiss was like a blow unto
Her modesty. With meek
And truly Christian spirit
She turned the other cheek.

"Uncle Ben," said Miss B., "from what portion of the Bible do you derive so much comfort?" Laying his index finger in the palm of his hand, the old fellow proceeded as follows: "Well, de Bible says, 'Dem dat de Lord loveth he chases!' An' from de way he is bin chasin' o' me dis year, I know I mus' be one 'er His favorites."

Tommy—"Pa, the Chinese invented gunpowder, didn't they?" Mr. Figg—"Yes; but it never really amounted to much for killing purposes until the Christian nations took hold of it."

AN INSPIRED REVELATION.

IF it was worth God's while to make a revelation to man at all, it was certainly worth his while to see to it that it was correctly made. He would not have allowed the ideas and mistakes of pretended prophets and designing priests to become so mingled with the original text that it is impossible to tell where he ceased and where the priests and prophets began. Neither will it do to say that God adapted his revelation to the prejudices of mankind. Of course, it was necessary for an infinite being to adapt his revelation to the intellectual capacity of man; but why should God confirm a barbarian in his prejudices? Why should he fortify a heathen in his crimes? If a revelation is of any importance whatever, it is to eradicate prejudices from the human mind. It should be a lever with which to raise the human race. Theologians have exhausted their ingenuity in finding excuses for God. It seems to me that they would be better employed in finding excuses for men. They tell us that the Jews were so cruel and ignorant that God was compelled to justify, or nearly to justify, many of their crimes, in order to have any influence with them whatever. They tell us that, if he had declared slavery and polygamy to be criminal, the Jews would have declined to receive the Ten Commandments. They insist that, under the circumstances, God did the best he could—that his real intention was to lead them along slowly, step by step, so that in a few hundred years they would be induced to admit that it was hardly fair to steal a babe from its mother's breast.
—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

LOVE THE UNKNOWN, OR BE DAMNED!

LOVE God with all your heart and strength,
Or else you'll land in hell at length!
Your fate will on your love depend,
So love away! and mind your end!—
The "end" that parsons call "your latter";
But who the devil God might be—
Ev'n *if* He be—God knows, not we;
But, bless you! that's another matter!
You simply have to love Him! See?
G. L. MACKENZIE.

The half-hearted religiosity of latter-day Christianity may choose to ignore the fact, but it remains none the less true that he who refuses to accept the demonology of the Gospels rejects the revelation of a spiritual world, made in them, as much as if he denied the existence of such a person as Jesus of Nazareth; and deserves, as much as any one can do, to be ear-marked "Infidel" by our gentle shepherds.—*T. H. Huxley.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Is Christ Possible?"

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. W. Mengedoht, "Assyriology and the Book of Daniel." September 11, at 8.30, Concert.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Athens and Greek Civilization." Limelight illustrations.

East London Branch (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, Stanley Jones.

West London Branch, 341 Harrow-road (near Westbourne Park Station): September 13, at 9, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture.

Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 3.15, A lecture.

Clerkenwell Green (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

Edmonton (Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey.

Finsbury Park (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 3.15, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

Hammersmith (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, H. P. Edwards, "The Origin of Christianity."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, H. P. Edwards; 3.30, R. Rosetti.

Islington (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A. Guest, "Christianity a Secondhand Religion."

Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, H. P. Edwards.

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism."

Limehouse (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A lecture. September 14, at 8, E. Pack.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam; 7, A lecture. September 15, at 8, A lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of Christianity."

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Mr. Lewis.

COUNTRY.

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. Heaford, "Heresy in High Places".

Derby (Athenæum, Victoria-street): H. P. Ward—11, "What is Secularism?" 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform."

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Women: Past, Present, and Future"; 2.30, "The Dream of Immortality"; 6.30, "The Case for Secularism."

Liverpool (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and the Ancient World"; 7, "Christian Evidences."

Pontypridd (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Last excursion. Members and friends meet in front of Victoria Station at 8.30, and will leave for Grimsby and Cleethorpes by 8.45 train.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Chatham (near corner of Lines): 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Failure of Christianity."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 12 and 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—September 12, Clerkenwell.

J. Fagan, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

H. Percy Ward, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 12 to 19, Mission at Derby; 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Brompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. Pack, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 12, Northampton. 14, e., Limehouse. 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m. Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. Baldwin, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

By C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 22*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 3d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above School having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. Taylor, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERTS "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Sixpence,

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand.)

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

GREAT SUMMER SALE.

21s. Parcels that contain £2 worth of Goods. Each parcel sent Carriage Paid for 21s.

1.—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color. **2.**—4 Trouser Lengths, wear guaranteed; Stripe, Check, or Mixture. **3.**—2 Full Dress Lengths, with linings and buttons complete. **4.**—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material. **5.**—1 Complete Costume to measure, and a Silver-mounted Umbrella. **6.**—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse. **7.**—50 yards of High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs. **8.**—11 yards Deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color. **9.**—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trouser length. **10.**—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trouser Length, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella. **11.**—1 pair of All Wool Blankets, 1 pair of large Sheets, 1 beautiful Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 pair of Curtains. **12.**—1 pair Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella. **13.**—15 yards Suiting for Boys' Suits—very strong and durable. **14.**—30 yards of Remnants for Children's Dresses—all good colors and quality. **15.**—2 pairs All Wool Blankets. **16.**—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 pairs Stockings, 2 Skirts, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Silver-mounted Umbrella, 1 Fur Necktie. **17.**—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella. **18.**—1 Youth's Suit to measure, chest over vest not to be more than 32 inches. **19.**—3 pairs Men's Trousers to measure, all different. **20.**—Parcel of goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during sale we are selling at about half ordinary prices. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

GRAND CLEARING LINE.

630 Ladies' Mackintoshes.

Warranted thoroughly Waterproof and Odorless. Sizes, length at back, 54, 56, 58, and 60 inches. Very latest style, and every garment well finished. Colors: Black, Navy, Brown, Fawn, Slate, and Grey. To fit persons up to 36 inch Bust.

Price Carriage Paid. **12/6** **Worth nearly double.**

1 Copy of G. W. Foote's "Flowers of Freethought," value 2s. 6d., will be presented to each customer.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

NOW READY.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

The Age of Reason. New edition, with Preface by G. W. FOOTE. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 38. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

BACK TO ROME.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, and the other right reverend fathers-in-God of the Church of England, did not look very far ahead when they got up that St. Augustine celebration at Ebbsfleet. They did not see that they were creating a splendid opportunity for the great rival Church of Rome. In commemorating the alleged introduction of Christianity in the south of England by St. Augustine and his brother monks, they overlooked the fact that all those missionaries were Roman Catholics. But this fact was very naturally not overlooked by Cardinal Vaughan, who at once proceeded to work it for all it was worth. He began to organize a counter demonstration at the same spot in the county of Kent, taking care that it should outvie the other one in every important feature. There should be more clericals, a greater variety of costumes, and a bigger procession; and, above all, England should be reminded that the Romish Church, which brought Christianity here, was still waiting to welcome back this country to her maternal embrace.

Cardinal Vaughan's counter demonstration took place a few days ago, and seems to have been a very pretty show. Ecclesiastical millinery, and ritual tomfoolery, were displayed in a manner which showed that the Church of England is dull in comparison with the Mother Church from which it seceded.

The Catholic Church beats all others in the matter of scenic display. On Sunday last it held its annual procession in the East-end of London "in honor of Our Lady, and in commemoration of the thirteenth century of the conversion of England to the Catholic and Roman faith." From the circus point of view, it was a tremendous success. There were hundreds of men and women; children in white carrying baskets of flowers; a contingent from the Italian Church, dressed in scarlet, and carrying a gigantic crucifix; priests in surplices, and acolytes in blue and white; a distinguished Father vested in a gorgeous cope, and a statue of the Virgin Mary surrounded by lights and flowers. According to the *Westminster Gazette*, the attitude of the vast crowd of spectators was sympathetic and even reverent; in fact, our contemporary regards it as "extremely remarkable, and as denoting the extraordinary change of public opinion towards the Roman Church during the last few years."

One incident of the procession was worthy of particular notice. At the site of the scaffold in Trinity-square a halt was made, and prayers were said in honor of Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Fisher, and other Catholic "martyrs," who were executed there, or elsewhere, in the reign of Henry VIII. This would be a touching incident if we did not know that most of those "martyrs" sent other people to the flames with the utmost cheerfulness. More himself sinned against the light. He had set forth the justice and advantages of religious toleration in his *Utopia*, on the ground that force cannot change opinions, and that threats only manufacture hypocrites. But afterwards, as an apologist for the persecution of the Lutherans, he argued that "the burning of heretics" was "lawful, necessary, and well done." This has always been the doctrine and policy of the Catholic Church. As Cardinal Vaughan once said, perhaps in an unguarded moment, it has "never spared the knife" in its treatment of heretics. Whenever possible, it has always let blood to cure the headache of thought. And those who are conversant with its history, and aware of its present doings in countries where it is strong enough to command, will only laugh contemptuously at its simulated love of religious liberty in countries like England, where its weakness compels it to assume a certain air of humility.

Among the foreign participants in this Catholic celebration is the famous Cardinal Perraud, Bishop of Autun, and a member of the French Academy. He was the preacher at the Brompton Oratory on Sunday. He discoursed in French, and the place was "crowded with a fashionable congregation." He asked his hearers to pray constantly that England might be brought back to the fold. Bossuet's prophecy that England would return to the faith was being gradually fulfilled.

Cardinal Vaughan struck the same note in his speech the next day at Ramsgate. "The change that had come over England," he said, "during the present century was without a parallel in Christendom. England was not indeed Catholic—far from it—but multitudes had swung so far round that they were more than half Catholic." A curious and an ambiguous remark, which was greeted with loud cheers.

There was no superfluous modesty about Cardinal Vaughan. He plainly told the Anglicans that "not to be in continuity with the one true Church of Augustine was confessedly to be in schism and heresy, and, if culpably, out of the pale of salvation." We dare say, however, that Archbishop Temple will bear up under this terror with a great deal of fortitude; at least until he is convinced that Cardinal Vaughan, or his master at Rome, holds the keys of heaven. It will take far more than this, we imagine, to frighten the Archbishop out of his fine position and his fifteen thousand a year.

History was treated by Cardinal Vaughan with the same assurance. The Church of Augustine, he said, had served the people of England for nearly a thousand years, when "a tyrant arose in his lust and overthrew it." This is an allusion to Henry VIII., whom we are not going to defend. He was very much like other kings in most respects, only he had a strong will, and God's own Church (as Cardinal Vaughan would call it) went down before him when it stood in his way; a fact which shows us how much more force has had to do than persuasion in the establishment of religion. At the same time, it must be admitted that Henry VIII., forceful and imperious as he was, could not have bowled over the Catholic Church by himself. Opposition to Rome had been growing ever since the days of Wicklif. The Reformation had spread widely in England, despite the efforts of the Catholic Church to crush it. And a still greater movement had been in progress, that which is known as the Renaissance, the new birth of science and philosophy. Henry VIII. counted for something, but the successful revolt against Rome would certainly have taken place (sooner or later) without him. He struck at the Pope in his anger, but the time was ripe for the blow, and the forces of Protestantism which he liberated were not of his own creation. He simply transformed latent power into potential energy. A single spark will do that in a barrel of gunpowder. Some people call the spark the cause of the explosion, as though it would have caused an explosion had it fallen on a barrel of sand!

But let us leave history for the affairs of the present. Cardinal Vaughan calls himself the unworthy successor of Augustine, and we will not quarrel with the description. He tells us that he wears the same pallium (how dirty it must be!), exercises the same metropolitan jurisdiction, teaches the same doctrine, uses the same holy water (how

Digitized by Google

it must stink !), venerates the same relics, and offers the same sacrifice of the Mass. It is with this rubbish that Cardinal Vaughan aims at the conquest of England—the England of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. We venture to prophesy that he will fail. England shows no sign of going back to Rome. The Catholic Church will doubtless sweep into its net a growing number of respectable superstitionists from other churches. But science is against it, philosophy is against it, democracy is against it, freethought is against it—and history is against it. It is all very well to censure the tyranny and lust of Henry VIII., but when did the Catholic Church denounce the vices or the crimes of a king who served its interests? Cardinal Vaughan weeps over the three hundred English Catholics who "suffered death for the spiritual power of the Pope" under Henry VIII. Has he ever dropped a tear over the Protestants who were sent to the fire by Mary? Has he mourned over the butcheries of Alva in the Netherlands? Has he deplored the frightful massacres of St. Bartholomew? Has he sighed over the wholesale torture and extermination of the American natives by the Christian Spaniards? Has he regretted the agony of a single victim of the dread Inquisition, the bloodiest tribunal ever established on earth?

Back to Rome! Back to relics and holy water, and childish superstition, and cunning, unscrupulous priestcraft, and suppression of liberty, and persecution and murder of heretics! Back to the glorious condition of Spain! Back to the state of Italy under Papal dominion! Never! England must cease to be England before this can happen. Rome may go on capturing idle rich men, and fantastic professionals, and the poorest of the poor who admire charity above justice; but the moment she imagines the time has come to dare as she once did, she will have to face millions of free men, who would fight lions in defence of their rights, and would soon settle an army of wolves.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS.*

THE third volume of Mr. E. S. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus* completes a work which ably combines the labors of the folk-lorist and mythographer with those of the anthropologist. The researches of men like Tylor, Lubbock, Evans, Mannhardt, and Frazer into the early history of mankind are worthily followed up by this study of the ramifications of one of those classical stories which are not only hallowed by antiquity, but seem enwoven in the very fibre of the traditions of humanity. *The Legend of Perseus* is not only of deep interest to all students of human evolution, it is not without important bearings on Christianity itself, as the *Church Times* has recently discovered. The first volume, reviewed in the *Freethinker* of September 1, 1895, was devoted entirely to the story of "The Supernatural Birth." Mr. Hartland shows that this story is so widely spread that it may be considered as at some time well nigh universal. An ingenious man of God has suggested in the *Church Times* that such stories may be regarded as Pagan prophecies of the exceptional event which happened at Bethlehem some nineteen hundred years ago, when the Holy Ghost got Mary with child. But this clever theory won't wash. The fact made patent by Mr. Hartland is that these stories are all savage in their superstructure. The tales of heroes brought into the world in an extraordinary manner arose in times of ignorance, when men actually believed in the possibility of such modes of reproduction.

Mr. Hartland's second and largest volume was on "The Life-token," the notion of the hero's life being bound up with some specific object, such as a plant. In this he delved amid the very origins of human thought—man's early conception of his connection with nature and with his tribe. Mr. Hartland, going over much of the same ground as my own *Footsteps of the Past*, poured forth a store of information on witchcraft, leechcraft, sympathetic magic, sacred trees and wells, totemism, the blood covenant, saliva customs, and funeral and marriage rites, all tending to elucidate obscurities in the history of human belief and custom.

In this third and final volume we have the most generally interesting part of the Perseus legend—the rescue of Andromeda, and the capture of the head of the Medusa Witch. Mr. Hartland has chosen to treat them in the order named, but, in my opinion, he would have done better to have reserved for the finish the story of the deliverance of the maiden from the monster. In regard to this last, it is clear that the root of the story was the custom of offering human victims to appease the water demons, the rescue representing a time when the custom became repugnant to civilized humanity. The story of petrification caused by the Gorgon glance is, of course, paralleled by many stories of "the evil eye." From the fact that "the evil eye" is usually feminine, and associated with envy, I conjecture that the belief has largely been influenced by the fact of children dying at, or shortly after, birth really from neglect or improper treatment, which has been ascribed to the evil-eye of some attendant or ill-wisher. The fascination exercised by some animals doubtless countenanced the belief.

Taking the subject as a whole, Mr. Hartland finds that the incidents of the Supernatural Birth, the Life-Token, and the Medusa Witch are founded on superstitions common to all mankind, and arising in the depths of savagery. The Rescue of Andromeda appears to be restricted to nations which have attained a certain grade of civilization, and to spring out of the suppression of human sacrifices to divinities in bestial form. It is the merit of Mr. Hartland that he has not only collected from every quarter of the world all sorts of folk-tales and sagas bearing on the Legend of Perseus, but he enables us to interpret them and see their place in the history of evolution. We may in some cases dissent from his interpretation, but we must admit that it is always suggestive, and we must thank him for bringing together such a collection of facts. Still further must we Freethinkers thank him for not shrinking from showing the bearings of his views on theology. I must cite his own words on one point. He says (p. 188):—

> "I cannot hide from myself the important bearing that some of the subjects dealt with in these pages may have upon matters of Christian controversy. Our illustrations of the Supernatural Birth have been drawn entirely from certain forms of the story, to the exclusion of other forms which, interesting as they are in themselves, were for our purpose irrelevant. But sufficient has been said to raise questions which may be summarily stated thus:—If these legends be universal, if they must be rejected in every case but one as the product of an inevitable tendency of human imagination, then why not in that one case also? Assuredly that one case can be regarded as exceptional, only if it stand upon historical evidence totally different in kind from the others, and of inevitable cogency. But can anyone who sits down (as it is the duty at least of every educated man to do) calmly and, so far as he can, with scrupulous impartiality to weigh the evidence, say that the testimony of ecclesiastical tradition, or even of our Gospels, is different in kind from, or of greater cogency than, that which we reject, without hesitation, in the case of Sákyamuni, or of Alexander the Great? About ecclesiastical tradition I need say nothing. The records in the two Gospels which bear the names of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke are, carefully considered, irreconcilable. Both Gospels are now admitted to be secondary documents. It is hardly claimed for either of them that it was written less than sixty years after the event. It is by no means certain that they were in existence, as we now have them, when Justin Martyr wrote in the middle of the second century. Outside them there is no record, no unambiguous allusion even, that can be dated within one hundred and ten years of the Birth, and then only if we admit the genuineness of the questionable Epistles of Saint Ignatius, and the earliest possible date for his very doubtful journey. Is this the testimony on which belief in so amazing an event can be safely built?"

On the equally important question of the Christian Sacrament Mr. Hartland says: "That sacramental superstitions were rife in Judea as well as elsewhere in the time of Jesus Christ is certain, though our information concerning them is still lamentably deficient. The influence of mysteries upon Christianity has been hitherto little studied." Mr. Percy Gardner has, however, paid some attention to the matter, and in 1892 I devoted a series of articles to this subject. There is a cognate question—that of initiatory rites—which, now that his task on *The Legend of Perseus* is so ably performed, I wish Mr. Hartland would undertake. There is no one in England so competent to deal with the

The Legend of Perseus. A Study of Tradition in Story, Custom, and Belief. By Edwin Sidney Hartland, F.S.A. London David Nutt, Strand.)

Digitized by Google

subject, with the possible exceptions of Mr. J. G. Frazer and Mr. W. Simpson. The former is busy with *Pausanias*, and the latter, who is now aged, has already provided valuable material for the person who will one day show what an important part secret fraternities have played in the history of man. J. M. WHEELER.

MODERN SCEPTICISM.

ALTHOUGH Christian exponents may not be willing to admit that scepticism is the correct mental attitude which should be assumed towards the religious questions of the day, it is not denied, even by theologians, that sceptical views are rapidly spreading, and that disbelief in Christianity is presented in a more definite form than it was in former times. The *Rock*, in its issue of August 20, has a leading article on "Modern Rationalism," in which the editor, admitting that "the last fifty years have witnessed a remarkable change in the climate of religious thought," notices the various Rationalistic aspects which at the present time are so prominent. He grants that "it is perfectly true that some of us, impervious to change, and oblivious of the movements of the intellectual barometer, have managed to escape or to evade any corresponding alteration in the fabric of our minds; but, for the most part, those who have achieved this feat of remaining in a permanent *status quo* are but an insignificant minority. Wise men will prefer to brave changes, even the sudden and the unexpected, and force themselves to adapt their intellectual constitutions to the altered conditions, rather than, ostrich-like, bury their heads in the sands, muttering 'Peace' when there is no peace."

The editor reminds us that "Rationalism, like Christianity, is sub-divided into many sects, each of which is more or less guided by one master desire—that of freeing the human mind from the burden of dogmatic belief." He omits, however, to add that there is a marked difference between the "one master desire" of the Rationalistic sects and those belonging to orthodox Christianity. The object of the former is to get rid of all dogmatic belief, while the latter seek to perpetuate those dogmas whose very tendency is to fetter thought and to retard investigation. He presents his readers with a pious comment upon the Rationalistic "isms," mentioning, among others, Atheism, Agnosticism, and Secularism. Further, he contends that a belief in God is an absolute necessity to good conduct, and that no "*vital* morality" existed until the advent of Christ. Here we have another specimen of orthodox misrepresentation, and of those dogmatic claims which characterize, more or less, the whole of theological advocacy.

We are informed that "Atheism need not detain us, for, to all intents and purposes, it is a dead creed—if ever, indeed, it was a creed at all, or ever seriously held by any but a madman." Why this false and unjust imputation upon men and women whose characters stand conspicuously forth among the loftiest teachers and exemplars of moral purity? Theodore Parker said, as the result of his experience, that "Atheists are men who aim to be faithful to their nature, and their whole nature." And Professor Tyndall wrote: "If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond.....if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor, and a just citizen, I should seek him, and find him, in the band of Atheists." An Atheist "a madman," forsooth! Why, to give utterance to such outrageous nonsense as this is indicative either of unpardonable ignorance or of a theologically-diseased brain. Who but one whose mental vision is dimmed by orthodox bigotry will dare to say that such men as Diagoras, Lucian, Bion, Danton, Condorcet, Diderot, D'Holbach, Shelley, Swinburne, Professor Clifford, George Jacob Holyoake, and Charles Bradlaugh were madmen? These men were Atheists, and among them were mighty geniuses, whose work—intellectual and moral—will adorn all ages. So far from Atheism being a "dead creed," it has more practical force to-day than it ever had. In all mundane affairs the supernatural is almost entirely ignored. It is the natural that is the controlling power at the present time. Science, which is the Providence of modern scepticism, is purely Atheistic. This the Bishop of Carlisle frankly admitted when he wrote in the *Nineteenth Century*: "I maintain that science is Atheism; that all physical science, properly so-called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God."

We are told by the editor that, of all forms of scepticism, "that which has chiefly influenced, and still profoundly influences, men to-day, is Agnosticism." But we allege that this is only Atheism under another name. It is simply a more modern phrase, representing in reality the same mental attitude. Neither of these "isms" denies the existence of God, while both assert that nothing is known of such a being. We are glad to read that our orthodox writer admits: "There is so much truth mixed with the falsehood in it [Agnosticism], so much of what is reverent in the attitude of its noblest upholders, that we cannot wonder that it has led captive so many in our midst." We should have been better pleased if the alleged falsehood in Agnosticism had been stated. Its teachings relate only to the supposed supernatural, and to a life beyond the grave. Upon these subjects the Agnostic refuses to dogmatize, inasmuch as he considers that they involve problems the solution of which by man is impossible at the present stage of his mental development. If those who condemn this position possess that knowledge upon these subjects which we cannot command, let them state what they suppose they know, and then we may be able to judge of the value of their information. We are also gratified to read the following confession by the editor of the *Rock*: "Christians, as a rule, are profoundly ignorant of the real movements of Agnostic thought, because they will not read the publications of the Agnostic Press, whereas Agnostics do at least study, and often carefully, the trend of Christian thought in our time. Hence, much of the antagonism displayed by Christians to Agnostic writers and writings is founded on wretched support, and, therefore, sadly ineffective." Being a constant reader of the Christian journals, we have no difficulty in believing that what is here stated is quite true.

If the writer of the above had carefully read the publications of the Secular Press, he would not, probably, have written about what he terms "the purely destructive criticism, and negative position, of those older forms of Secularism—which indeed was so anxious to have done with Christianity in every shape, as to be unable to detect where its marvellous power lay, and what constituted the secret of its success." What "older forms of Secularism" are here referred to? From its inception as a philosophy and organization about fifty years ago, it has adhered to its two leading aspects—namely, negative to theological errors, and positive to those principles which foster and regulate good and useful lives. From these two leading aspects Secular propaganda has never departed. Even in our desire to destroy the errors of Christianity, we have always been enabled to recognise its truths, believing that no system is either all bad or all good. Adopting the eclectic principle, we have endeavored to separate the chaff from the wheat; and that is precisely what some of the leading exponents of the "new Christianity" are also doing. Doctrines and teachings, once held to be true, are now abandoned as being false. Surely professed Christians ought not to condemn our "destructive" work, for they are constantly engaged in trying to destroy all that they deem erroneous in other religions and in other systems than their own. The *Rock* is particularly active in this work towards Roman Catholicism, and its method is often of the rudest and most offensive kind, exhibiting no consideration for the feelings of co-religionists. It is quite a mistake to suppose that sceptics fail to detect where the "marvellous power" of Christianity lay, and "the secret of its success." It should be remembered, however, that the power and success of Christianity, as taught in the New Testament, have been much exaggerated. What power it has, and what success it has had, can readily be accounted for. On the one side it has had wealthy exponents, who deemed it to be to their interest to support a system that enjoined submission to "the powers that be." It has had a priesthood whose functions were to preach the doctrine that those who accepted the faith would be rewarded with eternal happiness, and that those who rejected their dogmas would be punished with everlasting misery. Finally, it has had governments who have enforced belief under penalties of fines, imprisonment, and death. On the other hand, Christianity has been preached to those who were poor and dependent; to others who for centuries were deprived of the knowledge necessary to enable them to detect the delusive nature of what was

Digitized by Google

taught them; and, finally, the exponents of the faith appealed largely to the fears and credulity of those who were too indifferent to think for themselves.

Next week we shall deal with the editor's claim that all "*vital* morality" is to be accredited to Christianity, and that "there can be no morality apart from God."

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

VI.—THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

THE great perverter of the Old Testament narratives—otherwise our old friend Matthew—tells us, in the second chapter of his veracious history, that certain Magi, or astrologers, who lived in a country to the east of Palestine, having noticed the appearance of a new star in the heavens, knew that this denoted the birth of a king; that these Magi were so interested in the matter, or were so curious, that they left their homes and their country, and journeyed in the direction of the star; that the star moved before them, and ultimately led them into Judea; that, losing sight of it, they went to the capital, Jerusalem, and made inquiries of Herod, the king; that, after leaving the presence of Herod, "the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was"; that, the exact house having thus been indicated, the "wise men," without further inquiries, entered, and, falling upon their knees, worshipped the baby whom they found there. This is the story we are asked to believe.

The first question which naturally arises in the mind of any rational person upon reading this narrative is, What is the nature of the evidence upon which one is expected to believe it? The answer is simple, and ought to be conclusive. We have no evidence whatever; we only know that the story is related by the great falsifier of facts, Matthew, and that it is also recorded in a gospel which is admitted to be a fictitious history—the *Protevangelion* (par. 21). These two accounts are, further, given in nearly the same words; there cannot, therefore, be much doubt either that one was copied directly from the other, or that both were derived from a pre-existing narrative. But the mere fact that the story is found only in the writings of two such systematic deceivers as Matthew and his *confrère* is sufficient to stamp it as a fabrication. In any case, in no court of justice in the world would the testimony of a witness who had, in cross-examination, been five times convicted of lying and deception in matters connected with the subject under investigation (as is the case with Matthew) be received as evidence. We are, therefore, at liberty to set the story aside without further examination. There are, however, two points which clearly indicate its fictitious character; these it will not be out of place to notice.

The first is the introduction of the Magi, or "wise men," who were probably worshippers of Ahura Mazda. They were certainly not adorers of the Hebrew God, Jehovah; yet that God is represented as notifying to them the birth of his son Jesus by means of a "star."

The superstitious concocter of the story evidently believed that great events in the lives of men, and matters that affected the destiny of nations, were connected in some way with phenomena in the heavens. Even the more learned Josephus records a fancied resemblance to armies seen in the sky at the siege of Jerusalem. The originator of the Gospel story must, beyond all doubt, have been a believer in astrology; he could not otherwise have represented his Lord as acting in accordance with the theories of that now exploded science, as he has done. The action of "the Lord," in fact, gives clear confirmation to the truth of the belief in astrology, and is, therefore, besides being misleading, a complete justification of that once popular delusion. One small fact, however, furnishes the reason for fabricating the story. The Magians were priests, soothsayers, and interpreters of dreams among the Persians; and their approval or recognition was believed to be of great assistance, if not absolutely necessary, for the success of any great undertaking. It is for this reason that some members of that fraternity are represented as coming to seek the child Jesus, whose divine character their testimony would, in the eyes of many, firmly establish. In point of fact, the God Yahveh, in the story, tacitly admits the pretensions of these soothsayers.

The second point which serves to indicate the fictitious character of the narrative is the statement that the star "came and *stood over* where the young child was." Let anyone, some fine star-light night, take note of some particular star overhead. Let him walk on for a mile or so, and then look at the star again. It will still be directly over his head. Could he instantly transport himself a million miles away, in a plane tangential to the earth at his first position, he would still see the star directly overhead. The "star," then, in Matthew's story could not have been elevated much above the surface of the earth. It could not have been even of the height of the ordinary clouds; for one of these—or some easily distinguished portion of it, such as a white speck—would not, in passing over a village, indicate one particular house more than another. To do this, the cloud or "star" would have to be no higher than an average church steeple, if so high. We are to suppose, then, unless we summarily reject Matthew's story, that some luminous body sailed through the air like a fire-balloon, at about the height of two hundred feet, or so, above the ground. Under these conditions, but only under such, the astrologers might be able to follow the "star" into Judea, and the moving light, when it came to a stand-still, might indicate the house in which the child lay.

But here an important matter, in which no less a personage than "the Lord" himself is shown to be guilty of wanton cruelty, has to be considered. It is implied in the narrative that it was the God Jehovah who placed the star where it could be seen by the "wise men," and that it was he who caused it to move from "the east" into Judea. Why, then, it is to be asked, did he not lead the Magi straight to Bethlehem, and so prevent the slaughter of a number of innocent children? Had he taken this course, there would have been no necessity for those star-gazers to go to Jerusalem, asking Herod, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" etc., and there would have been no massacre of babies; this fact is indisputable. But, had "the Lord" acted in this straightforward and common-sense manner, how was Matthew to introduce his manufactured prophecies? If there were no massacre, how could that evangelist insert Jeremiah's statement about lamentations heard at Ramah? And how, again, could he make Jesus flee to Egypt to escape death, and afterwards return in fulfilment of another made-up prophecy? Hence, assuming the story to be true, "the Lord" was not a free agent; his hands were tied by Matthew's "prophecies." There is also no possible way of rehabilitating that deity's character except by showing Matthew's story to be a fabrication, and as "the Lord" appears never to have read the account in the First Gospel—otherwise he could not have allowed nearly eighteen centuries to pass without setting the matter right in the eyes of his worshippers—I will undertake to do so. He will then see that his servant Matthew has libelled him, and can settle the matter with that evangelist as he thinks fit—that is, if he knows where to find him.

One of the methods sometimes adopted to prove a matter false is to assume it to be true, and to note the absurdities or impossibilities which result from such an assumption. Let us suppose, then, that certain astrologers in Persia, in or about the year B.C. 6, saw a small luminous body appear in the air (!), and knew by their hanky-panky science that this denoted the birth of a king (!!); that they followed this "star," journeying only by night, and resting during the day (for that luminary would not be visible in the broad daylight), the star also remaining stationary during the day and moving only during the hours of darkness and twilight (!!!); and that, after travelling in this way for several months, the star led them into Judea, and there suddenly disappeared, so that they were obliged to go to Jerusalem and make inquiries of the king in order to bring about a massacre (!!!!). Now, had such an event really occurred, the "star," as it moved onwards, would have been seen by others besides the Magi—by all, in fact, whose business or pleasure took them in its way. People everywhere, along the whole route, of all classes and conditions, would have flocked to see the extraordinary phenomenon—a luminous body moving only a few score cubits higher than the trees—and multitudes would have followed it, the majority believing that the end of the world was at hand, or, at the very least, that something

Digitized by Google

awfully portentous was about to happen. All kinds of speculations would be hazarded as to its nature, signification, and destination. The Magi would be questioned, and, having nothing to conceal, they would proclaim to all the great event of whose occurrence the moving "star" was sent as a sign. They would, consequently, enter Jerusalem accompanied by thousands of shouting enthusiasts, and, after their interview with Herod, would come to Bethlehem at the head of an immense multitude, who, after filling up every available foot of space within that village, would take up their position in the suburbs, all waiting to have a look at the divinely-announced king. Jerusalem being only six miles distant, every hour would bring a fresh influx of sightseers to Bethlehem, and those returning to their homes would spread the news, so that that village would be thronged for a long time to come. There would be no privacy for Joseph and Mary, and no chance of a surreptitious flight to Egypt.

If the parents took the child up to Jerusalem "to present him to the Lord," as stated by Luke (ii. 22), they would be escorted thither by joyous multitudes carrying palm branches, and singing "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxi. 9); and—what conclusively proves the massacre story to be a fabrication—King Herod would have no difficulty in laying hands on the child. In fact, the birth of this wonderful babe, and the remarkable circumstances attending it, would soon be known throughout the whole of Palestine, and would be the common talk for years to come. After such a world-wide advertisement, it would have been simply impossible for Jesus to have lived in Nazareth, or in any other Jewish city, for thirty years, and then to make his *début* as an unknown teacher. Yet, according to the writer of the Fourth Gospel (ix. 29), the chief men at Jerusalem say of Christ: "But as for this man, we know not whence he is."

It goes, of course, without saying that such a marvellous event as Matthew's "star" story, if true, could not go unrecorded. We should expect to find accounts of it related by Philo, Josephus, and Justus of Tiberias, if not also by some of the Pagan historians; but, needless to say, no such records have ever been seen by anyone.

We have now to contrast what we know would obviously have been the result of a real appearance of a moving "star," in the superstitious age which is called "apostolic," with the fictitious story in the First Gospel. In that fabulous history the Magi came into Judea, and entered Jerusalem alone, no one but themselves having seen the star; subsequently, when the star went before them and showed them the way to Bethlehem, they entered that village alone, everybody else upon the route being apparently blind. Also, none of the priests or scribes, and none of the curious, of the sight-seeing, or of the truth-seeking, inhabitants of the holy city, who all knew, according to Matthew's story, that the birthplace was Bethlehem, thought it worth while to accompany them. The Gospel narrative, in fact, will not bear thinking of as an actual occurrence.

We may also notice here the statement of Luke (ii. 25–38) that the child Jesus, at his presentation in the temple, was known as a being whose birth had been divinely ordained, to two individuals only—an aged seer named Simeon, and a still more ancient biddy named Anna; but in each of these cases the matter had been revealed by the Holy Ghost. Here, again, the star-story is clearly excluded.

ABRACADABRA.

The temporary nature of Christianity is plainly indicated by its endorsement of the Old Testament. Jesus was never able entirely to outgrow the prejudices of his Jewish education. "One jot or one tittle," says he, "shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." As if the doctrine of these Jewish law expounders was all divine! Jesus refers to the old stories of the Jewish Bible as if he believed them—and he evidently did; and even takes the marvellous tale of Jonah for true, and refers to prophecies of himself in the Old Testament which certainly have no existence.—*William Denton.*

Ignorance is a disease, and a deadly and dangerous disease. There are few things in the world more costly than an ignorant man.—*Ernest Jones.*

To know life we must detach ourselves from life.—*Feuerbach.*

THE CETACEAN HOTEL; OR, BELIEVE WHAT CHRIST BELIEVED.

You've heard of the tale
That is told of a whale
In the book where the godly man grazes;
But, don't be deceived,
It must *all* be believed,
If your soul's to be rescued from blazes.

No doubt it is hard
That your soul should be barred
From a temp'rature lower than "roasting,"
For smiling to hear
That a fugitive seer
In a chartered whale's "tummy" went coasting.

Believe in a ghost
And its youngster, or roast;
But, remember, the fish-tale's included!
The Lord thought it true,
And, of course, so must you,
If you don't think that Christ was deluded.

You cannot have faith
In the son of the wraith
If you think he believed what is silly;
So, credit the tale,
Lest you weep, gnash, and wail
In a district where no one is chilly.

If grace you'd receive,
You must firmly believe
What the "Savior" believed—as recorded;
So, swallow the tale
Of the lodging-house whale,
And the comforts its parlor afforded.

If heav'n you would gain,
You must weaken your brain,
For it's no use disguising the matter;
You'll *never* get there
If for reason you care;
But you *may* if you're "mad as a hatter.'

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

MR. JOHN BURNS continues to be president of the body which calls itself the Progressive School Board Election Council (of London), the secretary being Miss Constance Williams. This lady has been interviewed by the *Echo*. In reply to a question concerning the Council's policy in regard to religious teaching, she spoke as follows:—"The Progressive policy, expressed in the words of Mr. Lyulph Stanley, is—strictly to maintain the settlement arrived at by the Board on the proposal of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith in 1871. To resist all attempts to introduce dogmatic formulas for the children or tests for the teachers, and to refuse to substitute the definition of the Churches for the words of the Bible as the basis of instruction. Progressives are anxious that the theological controversy should be excluded from discussions, and that the Board should be left to its proper business of advancing education."

How infantile is all this! The Progressives want to exclude "theological controversy," but to include "the words of the Bible." Don't they know that controversy has always been, and still is, raging over these very words? What controversy do they think would be left *without* the Bible? They cherish the source and denounce the stream. Sooner or later they will have to learn that there is nothing progressive in fighting the battle of Nonconformity against the Church for the control of religion in the public schools, and that the only way to banish religious controversy is to banish religion altogether. Nothing is more ridiculous than the idea that parents are anxious to have their children taught religion without caring as to its color and character. There is no such thing as a general religion, any more than there is such a thing as general politics. A genus is only a name; the species are the realities. At bottom, indeed, the only realities are individuals; and religion, like everything else of the kind, only exists as it exists in them. Set a Conservative to teach politics, and you know what he will do. It is just the same with a Catholic, a Churchman, or a Wesleyan teaching religion. To ask him to separate the

Digitized by Google

essential from the non-essential is to ask him to be a philosopher and an unbeliever.

The Trade Union Congress has taught the "Progressives" a lesson, which it is to be hoped they will soon carry into practice. An amendment was incorporated in the resolution condemning the educational policy of the Government. This amendment states that it is "essential to educational progress that sectarian strife should be entirely dissociated from the question of the education of the nation's children, and that this can be done only when theologians, as such, are debarred from raising sectarian strife, and when the State provides only for teaching secular subjects and social duties, leaving the teaching of creeds and dogmas to the parent and the numerous religious denominations." This is not too well expressed, but we welcome it as a first pronouncement by the Trade Unions of this country in favor of secular education. A similar resolution was carried at the last annual conference of the smaller Independent Labor Party. Mr. Burns had better take care, or he will be left in the lurch.

The Ameer of Afghanistan has written a little book on *Jehad*, or Holy War, a copy of which has reached England. A correspondent gives an account of it in the *Times*. This is interesting as far as it goes, but it is not full enough on the essential point. One would like to know exactly what the Ameer says on the Mohammedans' duty of waging war for religion, especially in view of the great unrest now obtaining throughout the whole of Islam. One point, however, is made clear enough. Those who die in the *Jehad* are martyrs, and enjoy six advantages. All their sins are forgiven, they are exempted from all punishment after death, they are freed from anxieties as to the Day of Judgment, they are crowned with the diadem of glory, they are each married to seventy black-eyed houris, and they are allowed intercession for seventy of their relatives. How natural it is that Mohammedans who believe all this—not with a cool assent, but with a fervent conviction—should rush joyfully into the arms of death. One reason of the tenacity of the belief in a future life is undoubtedly this: that men have been taught it to make them face death on the battlefield, in order to carry out the worldly designs of their rulers, who have often laughed at the superstitions they encouraged.

"Sat Bhai" is of opinion that Theosophy, as well as Turkey's successes in Thessaly, is responsible for some of the troubles in India. It has been preached there, and is expressly stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, that 1897-8 witnesses the end of a cycle, "when accounts will be squared between the races." Political designs in the East are always accompanied by prophecy, which may serve to explain a good deal of the unfulfilled rubbish of the Old Testament.

The writer of "Our Handbook" in the *Referee* says: "We certainly do all we can for our subject races compatible with robbing them of their land in the first instance. We respect their customs and their religion. If we afflict them with missionaries, we also supply them with idols at a reasonable rate." Precisely so. And this shows that John Bull is the greatest hypocrite as well as the greediest thief on this planet.

Mr. Kipling asks us to remember God, and Mr. Watson replies that we have picked up most of our empire during times of forgetfulness. Mr. Nesbit tries to steer a middle course. "Why," he asks, "should the policy of might be accounted immoral? It is the great and the most universal law of nature." But morality is not a law of nature; it is a law of human society. Call it artificial, if you please; and so it is, in the primary meaning of the word; but is not all civilization artificial? It is artificial to eat with anything but one's fingers, artificial to wear clothes, artificial to inhabit houses, and artificial to refrain from certain natural functions in public. In the same way, it is artificial to abstain from a present gratification for the sake of a future advantage, artificial to be polite and considerate of other people's feelings, and artificial to pursue an ideal at the cost perhaps of poverty, imprisonment, or death. Yet these artificialities constitute the most precious part of human existence.

No doubt it is true that behind civilization there always lies the raw force of barbarism. Yes, and below the brain lies the raw force of the viscera. But is that a reason for slighting the brain? The word *force* is used as though it only meant measurable physical power. Yet, in the long run, it is ideas that rule the world. "We are ultimately," said William Smith, "in the power of our ideas"—and there is no profounder aphorism. Mr. Fouillée, the great French thinker, has actually written a book on *Les Idées-Forces*; and Mr. Nesbit, who is a thoughtful and suggestive writer, would do well to study it before dealing again with the subject of "might is right."

Sentimental Christianity is a paying business. It beats mesmerizing and conjuring. Witness the success of Wilson Barrett's *Sign of the Cross* and Hall Caine's *Christian*, to say nothing of Marie Corelli's *Sorrows of Satan*. It is now reported that Mr. S. R. Crockett has declined an offer of £6,000 made to him by Major Pond for a prolonged series of readings and lectures in America. Perhaps the refusal is only temporary, like a girl's "No" to a fellow she likes who is pretty sure to renew the offer.

Winans, the Yankee millionaire, who caused considerable depopulation in Scotland for the sake of sport, has left personal estate in this country to the value of £2,403,527 17s. 5d. All of it goes to his own family, not a penny to any charitable or public use. Winans appears to have been a sound Christian.

Sir William Marriott, if we recollect aright, was once terribly mauled by Mr. Chamberlain, in whom there is something feline, claws as well as teeth. Both gentlemen, however, now belong to the same party, and perhaps they have buried the hatchet and smoked the pipe of peace. The noble Marriott, in any case, has preserved his wonderful gifts of intellect. He was the star speaker at a recent Primrose League meeting at Lathom park, and he explained that this astonishing organization of duchesses and bricklayers was formed to combat the evils that threatened the very existence of every good old English institution. Among these evils he mentioned "irreligion and Atheism," which had been so successfully assailed that Parliament had passed a Bill giving a large additional grant of more than half-a-million a year to "schools in which religion was taught." No doubt this is a very effective way of promoting religion—among children; but the fact that the Tory religionists are driven to resort to it proves their inability to make any persuasive impression on the minds of adults.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews alone has spent two-and-a-quarter millions of money. The net result, according to Mr. Oswald Simon, is that it has not converted a single Jew who is not ready to return to Judaism if he be equally well provided for.

"There was arraigned in Adams-street-court this morning," says the New York *Evening Journal* of August 28, "a demented woman—a beautiful young mother, who had killed her baby son because she thought she was called upon to make a sacrifice. She gazed around the court-room with wild eyes, never realizing that the charge against her was murder. To her it was only a sacrifice—a sacrifice she had been called upon to make by God, just as Abraham had been called upon to sacrifice his own son to the Lord." Under this belief she killed her babe. What a lovely thing is religion!

Another imitator of Abraham has turned up in America. Samuel Hostetter, a young farmer, residing near Wooster, Ohio, while laboring under religious excitement, attempted to offer up his young son as a sacrifice recently. He carried the boy into the rear yard, and gathered a large quantity of wood. The boy helped his father gather the wood, and was in high glee over the pleasure he expected to get out of the bonfire. The young wife came to the rear door of the house and watched the preparations curiously for a moment. She did not anticipate the intention of her husband until after the pile was in readiness to light, and Hostetter drew a razor from his pocket and called the child to him. Realizing the fate in store for her child, the mother rushed towards her husband, crying for an explanation. He told her that he had been directed by divine power to offer up this child as a sacrifice, and explained that he was going to cut his throat and burn him on the pile of fagots, and warned her that she would go to hell if she interfered. She tried to pull the child away, but failed, and then she fought for the razor. She finally got the razor, but not until her hands and arms were cut badly. Neighbors got the husband under control, and he was lodged in jail. The incident is commended to the advocates of Bible reading in public schools.

In a debate with a minister recently, Senator Tillman, of South Carolina, said: "It is the abuse, not the use, of whiskey that the Bible condemns, and I can show you hundreds of passages in the Bible where the use of whiskey and wine is sustained by divine authority." The Senator is right, though the beverage which he calls whiskey was not known to Bible writers, being a modern preparation. Solomon's "strong drink" was probably something worse. —*Truthseeker.*

The money which the Rev. Dr. Simpson collects on behalf of Foreign Missions is invested in real estate in Nyack, N.Y. The tract he has purchased is on the mountain side, overlooking the Tappen Zee, and extends from the foot to the summit. It is almost a mile wide. Simpson is putting up extensive buildings, and will run a health resort. His immediate followers are fanatics.—*Truthseeker.*

Digitized by Google

A local preacher named Smith has been found dead in a pond near Spalding, and is supposed to have committed suicide. Not an Atheist, this one, Mr. Talmage.

J. L. Sullivan, the ex-pugilist, aspires to become Mayor of Boston. His qualifications are that he is a reformed drunkard and was always kind to his mother. On this ground a Methodist journal supports his candidature.

Another case of burial alive is reported from Russia. A lay brother of a monastery near Uralsk, finding the life there not adequate to his ideas of mortifying the flesh, had himself buried up to the armpits in a cave. Tapers were lighted around him, and six pieces of consecrated bread and a bottle of water were placed within reach. This must have prolonged his agony. He is now supposed to be in heaven.

A Newbury firm of contractors received a good order from London. It was inside an envelope bearing the text, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The firm replied that the order would be executed on receipt of cash or satisfactory references.

The Cretan question, like the Turco-Grecian peace question, still drags its weary length along, though happily it seems to be approaching a settlement. An interesting light has just been thrown upon it by Admiral Canevaro, who has been commanding the Italian squadron at Canea. He says that the Cretans are quieting down and getting accustomed to the idea of autonomy. "Once started," he said to a *Daily News* interviewer, "I think government by autonomy will work perfectly, as radical differences between the Mussulmans and Christians of the island in reality do not exist. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to look them in the face. They are of exactly the same type, and the only difference is that the former wear the fez, while the latter have a silk handkerchief." Here again religion is the great cause of discord and division.

The Synod of High Russian ecclesiastics, recently held at Kasan to consider measures to stop the spread of sectarianism, acted after the historic fashion of holy Christian Councils. It was declared that the adherents of Count Tolstoi were particularly dangerous to State and Church, and ought to be treated accordingly. The Government will, therefore, be asked to proceed rigorously against the Count and his followers. Further, the schools of the sectarians are to be closed, and the congress demands that membership of the different sects be declared dishonorable. The peasant communes are to have the right to exclude sectarians, and to send them to Siberia.

Further than this, the head men of God in Holy Russia decreed that the publication of Lutheran books in the Russian language is to be prohibited, as is the preaching in Russian of Evangelical pastors in places where Stundism reigns. Finally, it was proposed that sectarians' children should be taken from them and educated in public institutions in the Orthodox faith. This proposal met with difficulties, because there are no such institutions. A Russian bishop also suggested the confiscation of the property of sectarians. Almost all the resolutions were passed unanimously. This is the attitude taken by the great Christian Churches since the days of Constantine towards any difference of opinion. Can we wonder that heresy has been a plant of slow growth? Yet Christianity claims to be the most tolerant of faiths. It makes a desert, and calls it peace.

Mr. Ernest Pack, a Secularist lecturer, has been mobbed at Northampton and chased through the streets, though happily without sustaining any bodily injury. The local *Daily Reporter* says that he stirred the susceptibilities of a large number of youths by being "attired in the ordinary costume of a Church of England clergyman." We hope this is not true.

The Welsh Sunday Closing Act having utterly failed to secure the suppression of Sunday tippling, the Prohibitionist party now urge magistrates to suppress the *bonâ fide* traveller by granting only six-day licenses. This will, if carried, only lead to a development of "clubs" to replace the closed inns.

It is proposed to lay a cogwheel railway up Mount Sinai, so that pilgrims may take an easy journey to see the spot where Moses interviewed his Maker and received the tables of the law written with His own fingers. The only trouble is, that no traveller now believes that the traditional Mount Sinai is the one Moses could have ascended. Even the Rev. Professor Sayce argues that it must be looked for in another direction. Like the other Palestinian sites, it is altogether without authenticity.

A short time ago the School Board of Gaddesby, in Leicestershire, advertised in the *Schoolmaster* for a first-class certificated master for a small mixed school, the salary offered being only £90 a year. Among the candidates who applied for the post was a teacher who had matriculated at the University of London, and held the best qualifications in drawing, mathematics, sciences, etc. The answer he received is another illustration of the clerical policy of sweating schoolmasters in the interest of the Church. He was asked whether, if the Board accepted him, he had "any suggestion as to provision for needlework, or would be willing to take any less salary to enable the Board to arrange for the same." This was bad enough, but the next question was worse. He was asked whether he would undertake to play the organ in church on Sunday, or whenever required. For the magnificent sum of £90 a year, less than the wages of many an artizan, this clerical-ridden School Board wanted to obtain the services of an Admirable Crichton, with the special conditions that he was to pay out of his own pocket for the school needlework and slave for the parish parson. It is not surprising that the candidate in question withdrew his application for the post.

Three great Bible Societies—the British and Foreign, the American, and the National of Scotland—have joined in preparing a large folio Bible as a present for the Emperor of Japan. This, of course, is a copy of the Protestant Bible. We hope the Emperor of Japan will also be presented with a copy of the Catholic Bible, so that he may perceive the wonderful harmony which prevails among the Christians who are seeking to convert his subjects to "the only true religion."

Murderer Butler's pathetic parsonically-conveyed allusions to Sunday-school and drink are accepted by the orthodox community generally as satisfactory evidence that the Mountain monster died penitent, and is now, according to the theological Cocker, among the happy mortals. The jump-to-glory travesty is reminiscent of the dying speech of murderer Doolan in the condemned cell in Glasgow. Doolan, addressing the officer of the prison, said: "I often think of the many narrow escapes I have made in Ireland and England when I have seen a fellow-workman sent into eternity by an accident, which might have happened to me as well as to him. Had I died then, I would have been called into eternity without a moment's preparation, and my immortal soul would have been lost. But I have reason to thank God that He has given me a long day to prepare for the change that awaits me, and I hope I have improved my time and will go straight to His blessed arms."

In effect, Mr. Doolan reasoned that, had he died by an accident while at work, he would have gone to hell, but that God was good to him, and, by allowing him to brutally murder the foreman of his gang, secured for him some weeks in gaol, where he was able to properly prepare himself for death. The Butler theory is the same. Had that worthy fallen overboard fifteen years ago, he would have been damned—because he did not slip gracefully through a parson's hands. Now, although a murderer, he is in heaven. The parson let him in.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The Rev. D. T. Viljoen was invited to become the pastor at Swellendam. He refused; it is supposed on account of the name of the place. Anyway, he is the ninth minister that has jibbed at the job. The local chapel folk say they'll be Swellendam'd if they ask anyone else.—*African Critic.*

Mr. Howard Swan is going to re-write the Bible in pure English idiom, and translate all the Hebrew proper names. The idea is very far from original, and we do not know Mr. Swan's competence for the task. He asked a *Daily Mail* interviewer if he knew the meaning of the name Barabbas; but this is by no means a simple question. It is still disputed whether Barabbas stands for "Bar-rabban" = son of a rabbi, or "Bar-Abba" = son of a father. The latter reading looks strange, but Bishop Lightfoot showed that it was supported by respectable authority. Mr. Swan may not be aware of the fact that the original reading of Matt. xxvii. 17 appears to have been: "Whom will ye that I release unto you—*Jesus* Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" thus contrasting the two Jesuses. At any rate, Origen implies that in his time this was the common reading.

E. B. Nicholson, in his *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, says (p. 62): "There is no doubt that the name Barabbas was rightly treated in the Gospel according to the Hebrews as a mere surname, nor have I any doubt that the reading 'Jesus Barabbas' in Matt. xxvii. 16, 17, supplies his real circumcision-name." Origen's comment is: "In many MSS. it is not contained that Barabbas was also called Jesus, and perhaps rightly, so that the name Jesus would not belong to any sinner. This implies that "Jesus Barabbas" was at that time the reading of most MSS.; and while there is manifest reason why the "Jesus" should have been omitted, it is inexplicable how it should ever have been inserted. Why, too, if Barabbas was not named Jesus, do Mark, Luke, and John exhibit so singular a unanimity in

Digitized by Google

withholding his real circumcision-name? It is suggestive to find the legend of Jesus the Nazarene mixed up with a legend of Jesus, Son of the Father. We cannot forget that, according to the Moslems and the Gospel of Barabbas, it was not the real Jesus who got crucified, but someone put in his place.

Shakespeare said, What's in a name? but in ancient times there was a good deal. In all the legendary characters the names have meanings, and this fact suffices to show they are legendary. Thus we read: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Evidently such names were not given at birth, but possibly long after. In this story there is probably a contrast between Jesus-bar-Rabban (Jesus the Son of the Master) and Jesus-bar-Abba (Jesus the Son of the Father), which would convey the idea that the Father had supplanted the Master as the true Savior.

There is a curious story told by Philo Judæus of one Carabbas, a daft fellow, who went naked about the streets. On a certain occasion he was taken into the theatre, placed on a lofty seat, crowned with paper, a reed put in his hand, and hailed as lord. It is Lardner who parallels this passage with the story of the Savior's sufferings.

Trench, in his *Studies in the Gospels*, says (p. 295): "Keeping in mind the significance of names in Scripture, we can hardly fail to recognise a fearful mockery in his name Barabbas, or 'Son of the Father': as though in the very name which he bore, not to speak of the work which he wrought, he should be the Devil's counterfeit and caricature of the true Holy One of God." Trench goes on to argue that the name Jesus was attached to Barabbas, because, "while we can scarcely conceive anyone daring to introduce the sacred name of Jesus to give it to Barabbas, we can very well understand that many transcribers should have been shocked to find it there; and, marring the text, which they impertinently sought to amend, have ventured to omit it." Further, "there appear vestiges of the existence of such a reading in the text as it now stands; the words, 'which is called Christ,' twice introduced after the human name of our blessed Lord on the occasion when Barabbas is brought in opposition to him, and nowhere else, seem to be employed by Pilate out of a necessity to distinguish between him and another who bore the name of Jesus as well."

Some amusing Swiss agony-column advertisements were given in a recent issue of the *Westminster Gazette*. A handsome German baron advertises for a wife with good character and plenty of money, and "If possible a Christian." That was not an indispensable condition, like the well-filled purse. But the best advertisement of all was the following:—"Wanted, a Christian home for an ass." Criticism would only spoil the exquisite flavor and subtle suggestiveness of this specimen.

The Pope is said to have called Mgr. Bonetti, Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople, to Rome, to devise means for opposing the Jewish Zionist plans, which are naturally regarded with horror by good Catholics. In fact, this project interferes with the Pope's own desire to collect the necessary money to redeem the Holy Land from the infidel. Pecci sees there's money in it. With Jews and Catholics alike competing for the Holy Land, the Sultan should command a good price. But we doubt if he will sell, however tempting the offers.

According to the *Theosophical News*, the International Conference at Stockholm endorsed the claims of Mrs. Tingley to the leadership of the movement. Mrs. Besant seems already relegated to the background.

Jaryna Jeryernknowna, an eighteen-year-old prophetess of Bukowina, has come to grief. She declared that she died and was buried fourteen years ago, that she went to heaven, and was sent back again by God to redeem mankind. Crowds of peasants followed her in spite of the remonstrances of the priests, till the police arrested the prophetess, as she had a criminal record for petty larceny.

The Bible orders that "when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor and the stranger." This beneficent provision was unheeded by Mr. Richard Kelhan, who prosecuted five women at Long Sutton for stealing wheat of the value of one penny. The Bench ordered the women to pay costs, which amounted to 2s. 3d. in each case.

A Domestic writes to the *Daily News* on the Servant question. She says: "My mistress professes Christian principles, and is also a district visitor, and gives where her name is published. And yet she treats her servants worse than her dog." She complains that her food is poor and insufficient, and she has to tell lies when she answers the door Truly a Christian home.

The *Saturday Review* pooh-poohs those who "reject the Christian religion because of the madness of some Gadarean swine." We should say that the endorsement of demonology by the Christian God was a pretty good reason for classing Christianity among ancient superstitions.

The China Inland Mission have found it necessary in evangelizing work to employ a Chinese artist to design and execute Scripture pictures to bring the truths of Holy Writ home to the heathen mind. We have some blocks of the Comic Bible series which might prove efficacious for this purpose.

The Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* has an article on "Lapsing in the Methodist Church." It observes that "over forty thousand members have been lost from the fold within the last year. One-eighth of that number have died. Of more than twenty-two thousand, all that can be said is that they have ceased to meet in class. Nothing can be said regarding the remainder save they are not." The pastoral letter recommending the preaching of the doctrines of sin and repentance but induces the *Weekly Citizen* to remark that to the enlightened intellect and refined heart of to-day the Methodist gospel does not come as good news. It comes as an unwelcome echo of the faith of a darker and crueller age.

W. T. Macgregor—is he a Jew or a Scot, or both?—writes to the *Jewish Chronicle* that the purchase of Palestine "would be liable to interpretation as a religious decline, a want of faith in the covenant-keeping God of Abraham, a manifest disbelief in the power of the Almighty disposer of events to work their deliverance." Certainly, if God wishes the Jews to go back to Jerusalem, he can take them there without money and without price; and we suspect that, on the whole, the chosen race would prefer to go that way.

Mr. Oswald John Simon, who, like Rabbi Adler, is opposed to Zionism, makes the statement in the *Times* that "Dr. Herzl is neither an Orthodox Jew nor a Reform one, because he is an Agnostic." Is this the secret of Rabbinic opposition to Zionism? Mr. Simon, who is a rationalizing Jew, has at all events other ground, for he says emigration to Palestine should be discouraged, as it "is already over-populated and unhealthy."

The disingenuousness of the *Church Times* is shown by a brief reference to Charles Bradlaugh, which occurs in its first leading article on September 10. It says: "That doughty champion thought he was assailing Christianity, while all the time he only succeeded in showing that verbal inspiration had its difficulties." What humbug! Charles Bradlaugh attacked and overthrew every one of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. It now suits the *Church Times* to make out that he only succeeded on the part of the ground which they have themselves abandoned.

Appleton's *Popular Science Monthly* for September, noticing Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, says: "His chapter on the Arrest of Inquiry is, for the most part, an effort to show that the Christian religion was an arresting force in man's intellectual development—the chief barrier to the development of Greek ideas. We cannot accept this view. Christianity is no more the cause of the dark ages than it is of the enlightenment that has followed them. Both are steps in the evolution of mankind in which Christianity has degenerated, and has achieved new birth side by side with science and philosophy and art."

This seems to us mere playing with words. The writer does not show what were the true causes of the dark ages, does not explain why they followed the triumph of Christianity, why that religion degenerated, or how it had new birth. Now Mr. Clodd does make clear these points. Christianity looked forward to the speedy end of the world. It despised intelligence, discouraged science, and fanned the flames of fanaticism. Its degeneracy lay in its non-provision for secular welfare; and any rebirth only comes by accepting the things it formerly contemned.

The *Weekly Times and Echo*, referring to the Jezreelites and their tower near Chatham, remarks: "When we see how, in the closing years of this nineteenth century, thousands of men and women crowd forward to embrace a farrago of nonsense like that enunciated by poor James White, it is not difficult to understand how the religions with which fanaticism has cursed humanity gained vogue."

At the application for a full license for the Raleigh Hotel at Dartmouth, it was stated that the number of confirmations of cadets had increased, and that the confirmations increased the liquor business. The application was granted.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 19, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People."

September 26, Birmingham.

October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 19, Plymouth; 21, 22, 23, 24, debate at Plymouth; 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 5 and 6, debate at Birmingham; 10, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 31, Stanley, Durham. November 2, 3, 4, and 5, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. J. HOOPER.—We do not insert Christian notices in our weekly list. Other journals will do that for you. What we should like is a little information as to the alleged Freethought career of Isaac Selby, who presents himself as an anti-infidel plucked from the fire of scepticism. When and where did he lecture on the Freethought platform? We do not deny his statement; we merely ask for details.

JAMES HAINING, who read with much pleasure Abracadabra's article in the *Freethinker* of Sept 5, wishes he had given the Hebrew words which are wrongly translated in the famous Isaiah passage about the virgin bearing a child.

MISS F. A. LAW, 7 Victoria-road, Peckham, in sending a photograph of Mrs. Law to Mr. Wheeler, mentions that a portrait was taken at Glasgow about twenty years ago, which her family has been unable to trace. Can any of our readers oblige her with a copy?

FOR THE BROWNE FAMILY.—We have received:—T. Warrick, 2s. 6d.; Birmingham Friends (per J. Partridge), 6s.; J. Pruett, 2s. 6d.; Pontypridd Branch, 10s.; W. S. Clogg, 6d.; James Neate, 2s. 6d.; Jones, 1s.; S. H. Munns, 5s.

R. FORDER, hon. sec., N.S.S., acknowledges the following subscriptions to the Browne Fund:—R. A. Cooper, 6d.; R. Forder, 1s.; Mrs. Forder, 1s.; E. Truelove, 6d.; C. Thomas, 6d.; W. G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; W. Cross, 5s.; Mrs. Small, 2s. 6d.; Toby King, £2; L. H., 2s.; G. F. Wenborn, £2; J. Hockin, 1s.; R. Tripp, 2s. 6d.; D. Nemmo, 2s. 6d.; J. Sumner, Junr., 2s. 6d.; H. L. Barron, 1s.; H. W. Jones, 1s.; J. Titherington, 1s.

T. HIBBOTT, subscribing to the Treasurer's Scheme, hopes it will be supported as it deserves. This correspondent's order is handed to Mr. Forder.

ALERT.—Thanks for cuttings. Too late for this week. See next.

S. BURGON.—Pleased to hear from you. We share your wish that you could give more. But if all would give as much as you, the Secular movement would soon make marvellous progress.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Corrections shall be made.

J. ROBERTS.—Thanks for your notes. See paragraphs and obituary.

PONTYPRIDD BRANCH (per H. G. Barnes).—Your subscription to the Browne Fund is acknowledged with the rest. We cannot send written receipts by post. Stamps cost money, and letters cost time. We have no secretary, have to do everything with our own hands, and are often sick of the sight of pen and ink. Do be merciful. We note your promise of 10s. annually towards the Treasurer's Scheme.

JAMES NEATE, subscribing towards the Browne Fund, says: "The man should have a fair trial, and be saved from possible petty bigotry."

JONES.—We cannot make out your initial, though your surname is plain enough, and have had to acknowledge as "Jones" simply.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d. This fund is no longer open. Mr. Foote has carried out his engagement with Mr. Cohen, and minor engagements with other lecturers, and is very much out of pocket. But this is one of the perquisites of the presidency.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—S. Burgon, 2s. 6d.; H. M. Ridgway, 10s.; T. Horby, 1s.

K. C. WALTON.—Platina's "Lives of the Popes" is now published in two shilling volumes. Ranke's work on the same subject is published in Bohn's Library.

N. S. S. FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION [SCHEME.—We have received the following fresh promises (those marked *p* being paid): T. Hibbott *(p)*, 5s.; S. Burgon *(p)*, 10s.; Pontypridd Branch, 10s.; A. J. Marriott, 10s.

A. FORDYCE.—The Athenæum Hall is easily accessible. Omnibuses run past the door. It is situated at No. 73 Tottenham Court-road, on the west side, nearly opposite Store-street, about halfway between Oxford-street and Euston-road. At the corner of those two thoroughfares you can get a 'bus to almost any part of London.

ERSKINE wants to know how, if the Canaanites were exterminated in Joshua's time, Simon the Canaanite turns up in Matthew x. 4 and Mark iii. 18. This is a trifle. The Lord said to Moses: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus xvii. 14). The Amalekites were utterly destroyed by Saul (1 Samuel xv. 20); but they turned up again in the time of Hezekiah (1 Chronicles iv. 43).

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Northampton Daily Reporter—Echo—Freedom—Isle of Man Times—Referee—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Intelligence—Theosophical News—Two Worlds—World's Advance Thought—Liberator—Free Thought Magazine—Isle of Man Times—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Yarmouth Independent—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Dartmouth Chronicle—Dominion Review—Islington Gazette—Secular Thought—Star.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (Sept. 19) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, at 7.30, taking for his subject "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People," in reference to a London coroner's jury and its verdict of manslaughter against one of these Bible Christians for allowing his child to die without a doctor. Freethinkers would do well to bring their orthodox friends to this lecture. Those who believe the Bible without reading it will find the lecture an eye-opener.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts had another good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. His lecture on "Is Christ Possible?" was enthusiastically received, and when he resumed his seat he had quite an ovation. The chair was occupied by Dr. Rollins, from Canada, who is on a visit to England. The doctor made a neat little speech, describing the position of Freethought in the Dominion, and the good work Mr. Watts did during his residence in Toronto. Previous to the lecture Mrs. Watts gave two readings, which were highly appreciated and applauded by the audience.

To-day, Sunday, September 19, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth. On the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday he debates in the same hall. We hope the friends will rally in good force on these occasions.

The Glasgow Branch's winter session was opened on Sunday by Mr. Cohen. His morning and afternoon audiences were good, and there was a large attendance in the evening. Mr. Cohen occupies the same platform again to-day (Sept. 19). During the week he has been lecturing under the Treasurer's Scheme at Greenock, Paisley, Law, and Motherwell. On Monday evening (Sept. 20) he has agreed to deliver an open-air lecture in Cathedral-square at 7-30. Freethinkers residing in the neighborhood should attend, for obvious reasons, and bring as many as possible of their Christian friends along with them.

Until Christmas, at any rate, Mr. Cohen is engaged by the special sub-committee of the N. S. S. Executive to deliver week-night lectures, and to collect subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme. The subscriptions he receives are all to be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*, and as far as possible official receipts are to be sent to subscribers by the secretary from headquarters. Mr. Cohen sends us the following list (his first one) of subscriptions he has collected at Glasgow—all paid:—Ram, £1; Duncan, 1s.; Bell, 1s.; S. Swale, 5s.; P. D. Cameron, 10s.; W. Abernethy, 2s. 6d.; John McGlashan, £1; James McGlashan, £1; T. Robertson, 10s.

Mr. Forder informs us that he has seen Mrs. Browne since the last issue of the *Freethinker*. Mrs. Browne is the wife of the artist who lies in Chelmsford Gaol awaiting trial on the charge of sending "indecent postcards" through the post; the said postcards, as he alleges, containing only references to Bible texts. Mr. Forder has relieved the immediate necessities of the family. He has not yet obtained a copy of the depositions, but is expecting them by every post. What is most wanted is a copy of the writing on the incriminated

Digitized by Google

postcards. We shall want to see that before we form our own judgment of what should be done with regard to the trial.

"Our English friends of the National Secular Society," Mr. Joseph Symes says in the *Liberator*, "had their annual conference on Whit-Sunday, in Leicester. There is nothing special to report. They too have had their troubles and struggles, although not so many and long-continued as ours have been. They are not, I am happy to see, discouraged or disposed to drop the fight. Real heroes don't until they are beaten. Freethinkers must fight on, no matter what they have to encounter, until fighting is no longer possible."

Mr. Symes has been asked to contest Collingwood at the coming general elections. He doubts whether the voters are prepared to elect an outspoken Atheist, any more than they were several years ago; however, if a large number of voters would like him to represent them, he is ready to take the field and fight their battle.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, the distinguished Positivist, speaks out strongly on behalf of secular education. "The only solution," he says, "of the educational imbroglio is: teach in common at the public cost that in which all agree; and teach separately, and at your own cost, that in which sects and Churches differ."

Frederic Harrison, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the death of Auguste Comte, adverted to the fact that, although the Positivists were by no means numerous, yet in various cities of Europe they had without relapse continued to assemble and celebrate the founder of the Religion of Humanity.

Our Ipswich friends hope to see a good gathering at the meeting this evening, as it is proposed to enter on a smart winter campaign.

Mr. Roberts, secretary of the Liverpool Branch, takes us to task for the well-meant paragraph in our last issue. "You are quite mistaken," he says; "we have migrated to a lecture-room capable of holding nearly twice the number of the one previously tenanted by us." But is this contradictory to what we said? Special lectures were always delivered in the large Oddfellows' Hall, not in the Board Room, which was used on ordinary occasions; and it was that we were thinking of when we were asked to make the announcement of Mr. Robertson's lectures in the new meeting-place.

Mr. Roberts adds that the new meeting-place is within a stone's-throw of the leading churches and chapels, and the Branch wants to establish itself there by means of regular Sunday meetings. Certain structural alterations are being made on the premises, and when they are completed the Branch will be able to have the use (occasional or otherwise) of another hall nearly as large as the Oddfellows', and more commodious. We publish this news with pleasure.

Birmingham people, not above smiling at a trifling absurdity, may be amused at the following nonsense nursery rhyme which appears in the current *Cornhill*:—

> There were two young ladies of Birming'm,
> A sad tale I have learned concerning 'em;
> They stuck needles and pins
> In the reverend shins
> Of the bishop engaged in confirming 'em.

Freethinkers of the Midland metropolis have, at one time or another, stuck many "needles and pins" into "reverend shins," and it is gratifying to observe that they are showing a disposition to stick many more.

The *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives in its September number a portrait of the Rev. W. E. Copeland, with an article by that gentleman entitled "The Bible of Humanity." Mr. Copeland's standpoint may perhaps be judged by his saying: "No Bible can decide what is truth for me; but I can decide by virtue of the Christ within me what is true in every Bible." There is also a portrait of Watson Heston, who contributed many cartoons to the pages of the *Truthseeker* of New York. Mr. T. B. Wakeman extols Mr. Taber's book on *Faith or Fact?* which is also praised by Judge Waite; and Mr. B. F. Underwood discusses "Weismann's Theory of Heredity."

Open Court of Chicago has, as frontispiece, a portrait of Amos Bronson Alcott, the Concord transcendental philosopher. There is also an illustrated article on the canonization of "Two Saints"—namely, Zacaria of Cremona, and Pierre Fourier—at Rome. The proceedings appear to have been of a theatrical description. There is a learned article on "The Unrecorded Sayings of Jesus Christ," by Dr. Pick; and Professor Cornill continues his rational "History of the People of Israel."

RELIGIOUS TIMIDITY.

"Frances Havergal, in one of her letters, complains that she has lost some of the radiance which characterized her faith a year ago; she attributes it to the reading of Shakespeare."—Rev. Dr. Matheson, *in the "Expositor," September, 1897.*

A DISTRESSING result, no doubt; but Frances Havergal should have continued her reading and study of Shakespeare, and if, in the end, the philosophy and poetry of the "myriad-minded man" destroyed her faith altogether, she might have consoled herself with the reflection that she was well rid of it. What she really did in the circumstances Dr. Matheson does not say, and most readers will have to confess that they do not know. But the inference from the context is that she dropped Shakespeare for the reason mentioned, and secured salvation by the simple expedient of shutting her eyes. Heaven seems to be favored with many such acquisitions, and is doubtless proportionately proud of them. Yet one can hardly conceive of any thoughtful reader of Shakespeare who has not caught at least a spark of the fire which burns in that noble and heroic utterance: "Who tells me true, though in the tale lie death, I hear him as if he flattered."

Frances Havergal is not, of course, the first believer whose farthing-candle faith has "lost some of its radiance" in the effulgence of Shakespeare's sun. At the same time, there does seem to be something a little comical in the picture of the Christian lady, in deadly fear of her faith, thrusting aside the great bard—as the maid in Antolycus's ballad "puts him off, slights him with 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man.'"

It may be some comfort to the pious to have the assurance of the Rev. T. Carter that Shakespeare was a religious man—his father being a Puritan and recusant. On the other hand, the *Academy*, in reviewing Mr. Carter's recently-published work, observes: "Theological problems, indeed, racked and disturbed the poet's mind, but they go deeper than any controversies of forms or Church discipline or the nature of the Mass. The origin of evil and the moral government of the world—these are weighed in the balance, and you will not claim the framer of those terrible indictments in *King Lear*, against the little wanton gods who kill us for their sport, as Romanist or Anglican." It is easy to understand how faith may be not only dimmed, but extinguished, in those who have the courage and the capacity to probe to the bottom for the poet's deeper meaning.

A noteworthy fact is, that the timidity which avoids particular avenues of study and inquiry lest they should lead to undesired conclusions often conceals most violently aggressive propensities. Its tendency is naturally and inevitably to intolerance. It says: "I dare not go that way myself, and I feel it my duty to prevent you." This curious forcible-feeble amalgam presents itself in Dr. Matheson's contribution to the *Expositor*, a high-class theological magazine. He discourses on "The Freedom of the City of God," and, after citing the experience of Frances Havergal as above, proceeds to suggest that books like Renan's *Life of Jesus* should be "forbidden" to the "uninitiated," because, forsooth, there is "a danger to limited minds which have not been impregnated with the New Testament portraiture." A cool kind of suggestion, indeed, for the close of the nineteenth century! If this is a fair sample of the freedom of the City of God, one would much prefer to be without it, even though it were presented in a golden casket. Sensible people would sooner be citizens of somewhere else. Nevertheless, the intolerance and bigotry of the suggestion are the natural outcome of the fear, visible or concealed, of all the Christian sects—an outcome that will continue to manifest itself as long as belief in the Christian superstition exists.

If timid inquirers would compose their nerves and take time to consider, they would see that, after all, they have little or nothing to fear, however far they may wander in their investigations from the beaten track. Though there are in the Scriptures some dreadful denunciations of unbelief—though damnation is declared to be the unbeliever's portion—nobody's equanimity need be disturbed. The existence of these threats is in itself one good reason for rejecting as a Divine revelation the book that contains them; for belief is not a matter of will. It is, however, the duty of inquirers—for their own protection—to particularly search the writings of such authors as are clerically proscribed and "forbidden." They are very

Digitized by Google

likely to find in them truths which the Church would be glad to hide.

Just now there is a type of religious timidity to which no feeling of sympathy can be extended. It is well known to all who are acquainted with the undercurrents of clerical life that the Established Church is permeated with a spirit of disbelief and unrest which sooner or later must find some considerable outward expression. The clergy have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, and are naked and ashamed. In respect of the origin and inspiration of the Scriptures, they are in the equivocal position that they dare not openly proclaim all that they privately know and believe. The clerical flock are, in fact, holding back until a sufficient number of daring spirits among them have gone forward and opened the way. The adventurous few who have already advanced have not inspired quite enough confidence to induce the main body to follow. As a result, pulpit discourses of the present time are largely fashioned on one or the other of the following pusillanimous lines, as far as many vital matters are concerned :—(1) Weak avoidance of debatable points ; (2) Ambiguity and obscurity of expression; (3) Orthodox terminology with arbitrary meanings ; (4) Bold assertion with nullifying qualifications. The result is either vapidity or misrepresentation amounting to spiritual fraud. FRANCIS NEALE.

RELIGION AND SUICIDE.

ONE of the most pernicious of all the pernicious tenets of Christianity is the one relating to suicide. Christians hold that a person who commits self-murder perpetrates an unpardonable sin, and will have to endure an eternity of infinite torture as a punishment for so doing. It is a doctrine which has wrought incalculable evil, and we can almost say with certainty, judging from the reports of the daily papers, that the number of suicides is not diminished by it. On the other hand, how many parents has this horrible doctrine not weighed down into a premature grave? How many sweethearts has it not bereaved of their reason? To how many husbands, wives, brothers, and sisters has it not helped to embitter life and render existence unbearable?

I should probably not be so bitter against this monstrosity of the Christian imagination if I did not speak from personal experience ; but I myself have had a near relative who, seemingly in cold blood and with his full reasoning faculties, laid hands upon himself. I was only a youth when it happened, and had an implicit faith in the Christian religion, including the theory which had been instilled into my mind from childhood, that to kill oneself was an act as criminal as that of killing someone else, and that there was one chance less of salvation, inasmuch as there was no time left for repentance after the deed ; whereas an ordinary murderer gets time to be converted. We had been brought up together, been educated together, had played together in field and meadow, worked together, and slept in one bed. He was my near kith and kin ; and to think that he was now to be kept in a state of detention, perpetually going through the mental anguish and despair which he must have experienced before the rash act, and dreaming of the past agony of death until the day of judgment, and then only to be liberated in order to bear his dread sentence, and to be sent to his eternal doom, almost drove me mad. The restless ticking of the clock he had left behind sounded like a death-knell ; all his belongings spoke with the voice of an angry god. I could not bear to see any of his old clothes ; from the darkness arose myriads of spooks ; every sound frightened me, and at every step I took I stopped and asked myself, "Am I awake, or is it all a dream?"

The unfortunate young man's mother was a mental and physical wreck for months after the event, and his father went to an early grave as a consequence thereof.

Our spiritual guides were, of course, consulted as to the possible future of the dead man's soul ; and they were the kindest and best, broadest and most liberal of religionists ; but they gravely shook their reverend heads, and told the despairing parents that they could give them no consolation.

Now, most Christians, on reading this, will probably shrug their shoulders with a pitiful smile, and call me weak-minded for taking this so seriously. That proves *their insincerity*, and does not speak much for their character and faith. If the Christians really believed in their doctrines, they could not but prostrate themselves in the dust, preach and plead, weep and wail every hour of the day. A Christian who can for one moment forget the unspeakable doom towards which the majority of mankind is drifting, to such an extent that he can smile or participate in any kind of frivolity whatever, must be absolutely insincere—in short, a sincere Christian must be insane as a consequence of the barbarous doctrine of hell-fire.

Our law, which is supposed to be based upon our religion, does not recognise suicide as a crime equal to murder, the punishment meted out for an attempt at the former offence being but slight compared with that meted out for the latter. It is also notable that the suicide in the eyes of the law is "insane"; but if one makes an attempt at it, and does not succeed through no fault of one's own, one is a criminal, and liable to punishment. But, if the suicide is insane, and not responsible for what he does in *our* judgment, why do we believe that he is responsible to God to such an extent as to incur a punishment surpassing all human imagination, both in degree and length of time? Why do we not try and depict a god whose qualities soar above ourselves as an ideal for men to strive to live up to, instead of picturing one in the blackest dyes of human passion and depravity? Of course, the explanation is simple. Man made his gods in his own image, and as man slowly climbs upwards, so his gods as slowly improve ; but, owing to the fondness with which we cling to our petty prejudices, the progress of our gods is slower than our own, wherefore they keep at a respectable distance.

Before Christians so ruthlessly condemn their weaker and unfortunate, often downtrodden, brethren, who fail in the race for life, and are flung to the wall ; who become weary of the struggle for existence, and voluntarily quit the scene to make room for a score of new combatants eager to take his place, they should draw a line. Who takes his own life, and who does not, is a question which is not so easily determined as it at first sight seems. We are all—or, at least, most of us—responsible for the abbreviation or prolongation of our lives. But if a man coolly says to himself, "I am sick of life and want to divest myself of its burdens and responsibilities," sits down writing to his friends telling them so, has a good feed, leaves his messages behind on the table and goes out, puts a rope round his neck with some straw under in order not to cause the skin to smart, and hangs himself—we say that man commits suicide, and he goes to eternal torment. If a woman standing alone in the world, outrageously victimized by a brutal, amorous scoundrel, deserted by friends, and disowned by relatives, in a moment of despair flings herself over the precipice into the river, we still call it suicide, and that young woman, be she ever so pure *intentionally*, goes into "the fire everlasting, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels." When the gambler loses his whole fortune, and upon the spur of the moment puts a bullet into his delirious brain, he commits suicide, and is lost for ever. But when a father throws himself into the river to save his drowning child, knowing beforehand that he himself will lose his life, we sing praises over his grave, and extol him before men as an ideal and a hero. And yet, if he knows beforehand that he will himself go under, is the case not one of suicide just as much as any of the other cases I have quoted? If a man dies from consumption, which has sprung from a slight cold contracted through going out on a cold and rainy day insufficiently clad, the man knowing that this may cause death, and seeing the malady creeping upon him, but wilfully neglecting himself till too late, we say that that man died from natural causes. And yet is it not as much consciously self-caused, and therefore self-murder, as in the cases above mentioned? The scientist who drinks the deadly poison, in order to test the effect thereof upon his system, we laud to the skies for his steadfastness and heroism in thus risking his own life, and laying it down as a martyr in the interests of science ; and yet, in reality, if we would be consistent, is he not as much a suicide as those we stigmatize as such? Whatever may be laid to these unfortunates' charge, they are certainly not cowards who dare, voluntarily, face the terror of creation—our arch-enemy, grim Death.

It is not here contended that we should commit suicide wholesale in order to shirk the responsibilities of life ; but I *do* maintain that it is absurd to deny their irresponsible dead remains a decent burial, and that it is criminal on the part of society to vent its spite on those whom the unfortunate one has left behind by refusing to bury their dead relative in consecrated ground, or to omit ringing the bell ; and, in addition, to tell the weak-minded, broken-hearted wife or mother that his soul is now roasting in hell. Shame upon the dastardly hypocrites of priests who commit these crimes ; who have to subsist upon the ignorance of the weak-minded, and the credulity and timidity of women and little children! J. K. MAAGAARD.

The Egyptian theologians attributed the origin of plants to tears falling from the eyes of the son and daughter of the sun. After the creation of the universe by Rā, it was observed to be barren—a defect supplied in the manner just indicated, which seems to be symbolical of the fall of rain in a dry country after a long period of heat and drought. —*Athenæum.*

We may truly say of the theological notion of the relations of mind and body that it has been surpassed by few false doctrines in the evil which it has worked.—*Dr. Henry Maudsley, "Body and Mind," p. 120.*

Digitized by Google

MISSIONS TO JEWS.

INCREASING interest has of late been taken by the various missionary societies in the welfare of the Jews, probably stimulated in a measure by the non-success of their efforts. In attempting the conversion of the Jews the missionaries have an exceedingly difficult task. His creed is too firmly rooted in the Jew for him easily to change it. In the East-end of London a large number of the journeymen claim to be Secularists, though unattached to any Secular Society; but so great is the hold of ancient customs upon them that many keep up the observance of the Bris Milah, Burmitzvah, and sitting Shiva, for which latter funds are provided by the various benefit societies. The working classes are certainly not reached by these Bible thumpers. The reports of the societies seldom, if ever, give any details of the converts that have been made, urging the inadvisability of publishing names. It would serve greatly to arrest imposition if these names were published; the public would certainly like to know who they are. Are they men and women likely to bring credit to the societies and to the general community? Or are they men like Joseph Samuel Levi, afterwards known as Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, the originator of the London Society, who seduced the wife of his friend and frequented bawdy houses until he became so notorious that the society shipped him off to America? Or are they like Joseph Josephson, who kept forged banknotes within the covers of a religious book, cashing them when opportunity offered, and who afterwards stole a large quantity of plate? Or are they like L. Leon, who ruined the servant girl of the printer at the home and then decamped? Or like Warsawlak, who a few weeks since was expelled from the Presbyterian Church on the ground of immorality, and from whom his supporters are waiting for a settlement of the building fund? Or are they like Mr. Routenburg, an account of whose career is given in the *Toronto Mail* of June 28 last, who, before his alleged conversion to Christianity, was admittedly a gambler, a thief, and "a prey to every vice"? Why is it that at the annual gatherings none of the converts are brought forward? What tremendous applause there would be, for the general public look upon a converted Jew as a curiosity worthy of exhibition. There are many Jews who, like Esau, are willing to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage and make their religion a saleable article, and are encouraged to do so by these highly-paid and over-fed missionaries, who do their uttermost to make some sort of a show for the enormous sums they receive annually from the gullible British public. The London Society originated in a dream. Dreams seem to have been in Mr. Frey's line, for he relates others which he had, and which proved beneficial—to himself. The results are about as solid as Mr. Frey's dreams.

DUDLEY WRIGHT.

DIES IRÆ.

IT was some millions of years after the great Judgment Day. Satan had been sleeping, and when he awoke he felt somewhat chilly.

"Confound those imps!" he exclaimed; "I believe they've let the fires down a bit. A more careless set of devils I never had to do with in all my eternity. I'll give them particular sheol for this."

As he spoke he touched the electric bell, and a few seconds afterwards a trapdoor in the floor fell open, and a devil, burnt to a rich terra-cotta by the eternal fires, shot into the presence of the Lord of Hell.

"How now, sir?" thundered the potentate; "do you think hell was meant to be an ice-house, that you let the fires down so low? You seem to have mistaken your vocation. The whole stoking department ought to have been angels with white robes and crowns of glory. What do you mean by it, anyhow?"

The stoker-devil trembled like a leaf. "May it please your majesty," he said, "it isn't really our fault; the fact is, we are running out of fuel."

"What!" roared Satan, "running out of fuel, with the whole universe to draw on?"

"We've been using ten constellations a minute for the last three million years," explained the stoker; "and now the supply has given out. We kept the Milky Way till the last, hoping against hope, but this week we had to use it. We are running the furnaces now with the Magellan Clouds, but the quality is none of the best, and we'll want a fresh supply in a few hours."

"Search the ends of Space then!" exclaimed Satan, "there must surely be any quantity of constellations left."

The stoker-devil shook his head sadly. "We've used 'em all up," he replied. "Our cinder heap reaches to the farthest depths."

"Search that cinder heap then!" cried Satan; "plenty of suns and constellations may have been thrown carelessly out."

"No," replied the stoker-devil despondently; "during the last million years the ashes have been carefully sifted, and all burnable parts have been returned to the furnaces."

Satan ground his mighty teeth in despair. "This comes of damning too many souls," he exclaimed. "I begin to think that I was far too active in the old days. If I had had any foresight at all, I'd have let the parsons save all the souls they wanted. Here I am brought to beggary in my old age—burnt out of house and home by a lot of miserable souls who have not the common decency to thank me for giving them the chance. But I will not submit; I'll strain the universe through a hair sieve before I give up the game. Here, you, turn out ten thousand of those Australian miners we damned in the nineteenth century. Tell 'em to prospect all Space. Tell them I'll give threepence each for planets, and ninepence each for suns—in asbestos orders, good for whiskey at the refreshment-room. And, while they are routing around, I'll see what I can find on my own account."

At once the message clanged throughout hell, but before the order could be carried out Satan took a header into the depths on a quest of his own. In a few seconds thousands of eager souls swarmed out on to the clinker-heap. There they were, gaunt and grim, seared by millions of years of searching fires, grilled for ages on the unmelting fire-bars of the inferno, racked and torn by the tireless torturers, and hideously disfigured by a thousand endless and unimaginable torments. But there they stood with the old prospecting fever still strong within them, and before them lay the biggest prospecting field ever offered to the sons of men. There lay an apparently duffered-out universe, with just a chance that somewhere in it were constellations, every sun of which was worth a drink in the private bar of hell, and so with a whoop that shook the grim portal of the inferno they dashed into Space.

But little they recked of the task before them. For days they wandered, that troop of disconsolate diggers, and many a billion miles they prospected without success. At last, when the search seemed almost hopeless, something huge and filmy hove in sight on the great black wall of starless Space. With a simultaneous rush the prospectors went for it, and, hooking themselves on by every available point, they dragged it, with a wild hurrah, through billions of miles of emptiness, till they triumphantly dumped it at hell's gate, and sent it bodily down into the furnaces.

A stoker-imp rose up and thanked them, with tears in his eyes.

"Just in time, oh, just in time!" he exclaimed, in broken accents. "The weather prophet in the third gridiron has prophesied a white frost."

But suddenly a mighty form spun up from the exterior darkness. It was Satan, returned from a fruitless search.

"I hear the roar of the furnaces," he said; "what have you found?"

They told him.

"'A filmy thing, floating in Space.' Oh, fools!" he cried, "you have gone and burnt up Heaven. It won't last ten minutes. We are lost!"

And, sure enough, fifteen minutes later Hell froze over.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* Z. E. F.

Obituary.

FRITZ MÜLLER, who died in Brazil, deserves mention as the first German naturalist to accept the theories of evolution. His book, *Für Darwin*, helped to popularize Darwinism in Germany, and he was a correspondent of our great naturalist. Fritz Müller said that the eyes of faith were never suited for the microscope.

We regret to record the death of Mr. John Tanner, of Prospect-vale, Liverpool. He had attained to the ripe age of eighty-seven. Mr. Tanner was a familiar figure at Secular meetings in Liverpool for we know not how many years. He and his wife—who survives him, and has our deep sympathy in her bereavement—sat in front and greeted the lecturer's every point with a sympathetic smile. They were also good financial supporters of the movement. Mr. Tanner was interested in many advanced causes, and the world is poorer for the loss of a man of so much goodness and intelligence.

Daniel Greenleaf Thompson, who died a little time ago in New York, was the author of *A System of Psychology*, a book on *The Problem of Evil*, and another on *The Religious Sentiment*. He was a descendant of Benjamin Thompson (Court Romford), and was a Freethinker. For several years he was president of the Nineteenth Century Club, one of the Liberal Associations of New York.

The only monopoly any Church has a right to claim is a monopoly of the errors peculiar to it; what truth it has is generally common to all.—*Laurence Oliphant*, "*Scientific Religion*," *p. 131.*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

It is related that a Spanish preacher once delivered a sermon to a crowd of victims of the Inquisition, about to be delivered to the flames, from the text, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." We are reminded of the circumstance by an unctuous book entitled *Thoughts for all Times*, by Monsignor J. S. Vaughan. This worthy follows his Church in proclaiming that animals have no rights, and suggests that the anti-vivisectionists might have prosecuted Jesus for sending devils into pigs. According to Monsignor Vaughan, the cutting-up and torture of living animals is, "in the theological sense, wholly indifferent." As much might be said of the torture of men believed to be doomed to eternal torments.

* * *

Professor Woods Hutchinson opens the *Dominion Review* by an essay on "The Value of Pain." Pain, he contends, is the essential condition of progress. We rather hold that much of it is superfluous, though, perhaps, once useful, when man, without mind, needed it as a warning to danger or a stimulus to exertion. With intelligent men we hold that pain is of no more use than the os coccygis which tells us what we once were. Professor Woods Hutchinson, who approves of it, is welcome to our share. His essay, however, is worth reading; and among other papers are Professor Dolbear on "The Divisibility of Matter," Mr. G. J. Holyoake on "English Co-operation," and Mr. J. M. Wheeler on "The Resurrection Mystery," a reprint from the *Freethinker*.

* * *

W. R. Morfill, writing on "Russian Literature" in *Cosmopolis*, refers to translations of the works of Poe and Shelley, and observes: "Shelley is at last beginning to make himself felt as a power in Europe."

* * *

The publishers of Mr. R. Le Gallienne's book, *If I were God*, have thought it necessary to defend his title from blasphemy by citing the old epitaph:—

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod.
Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,
As I would do were I Lord God,
And you were Martin Elginbrod.

This sentiment is very ancient. In the *Rig Veda*, viii. 1, etc., the writer exclaims: "If I were thou, O Agni, and thou were I, then thy wishes would be fulfilled.....If I, India, were like thee, the lord of wealth, he who praised me would not lack cows"; and again: "If I were Lord as much as thou, I would support the sacred card; I should not abandon him to misery." This appeal to put yourself in my place is one of the most ancient sentiments of which we have record. Yet Christians have the cheek to say that the Golden Rule was originated by Christ.

* * *

General Forlong, writing of Confucius in his *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions*, says: "The Golden Rule, which only appears once in the teaching of Jesus, he reiterates three times, as in 'Doctrine of the Mean,' xiii. 3, 'Analect,' v. xi., xv. 23, and again in his 'Great Learning' (Com. x. 2), where he exhaustively expands it as 'The principle with which, as with a measuring square, to regulate one's conduct.'"

* * *

Under the title of *Faith or Fact?* Mr. Henry M. Taber has collected, and published in a handsome volume through Peter Eckler, of 35 Fulton-street, New York, a number of his contributions to the *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago. Mr. Taber goes over a great deal of the ground in controversy between Christians and Freethinkers, and on every article dealt with has a number of apt quotations from great writers, intermixed with shrewd observations of his own. The book is dedicated to the lovers of mental freedom of every land, and especially to those who have endured the sneers, the invectives, the ostracisms, the persecutions of orthodox Christianity.

* * *

Among the topics dealt with in *Faith or Fact?* are "Woman in Christian and Heathen Countries," "Inspiration," "The Origin of Christianity," "Religious Decadence," "Faith," "Religion not Morality," "The Trinity," "Miracles," "Sunday," "Primitive Christianity," "Religion and Education," "Future Punishment," "Prayer," and "Church and State." Mr. Taber brings a well-read and well-formed mind to bear on these and other subjects. His work is written in plain language, and he is evidently one who, having lost his hold on faith, yet retains a strenuous grip on fact. The book has a capital preface by Colonel Ingersoll, part of which we have already laid before our readers.

* * *

One good line in a poem is something to be thankful for in these days, when Professor Goldwin Smith thinks he may live to see the last horse, the last woman, and the last poet. And there was one line in William Watson's poem on "The Unknown God" which was rather a happy description of the old deity: "Man's giant shadow which he calls divine."

CORRESPONDENCE.

EMINENT TESTIMONIES CONCERNING PREMATURE BURIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—It may interest some of the thoughtful readers of the *Freethinker* to learn that the movement initiated by correspondents in your own and a few other influential journals for the prevention of premature burial has arrested the attention of a number of men of light and leading, both at home and abroad.

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone writes: "I am very sensible of the interest attaching to the subject." The Hon. T. F. Bayard, late United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, writes that "the subject is certainly of great interest and importance." The Right Rev. Dr. Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London, says: "The subject is one to which you are justified in calling attention." His Excellency Count de Karnice Karnicki (Chamberlain to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia), who has been instrumental in rescuing a young lady from premature interment at the grave, writes: "I am astonished that anyone should be insensible of its paramount importance."

These testimonies might be multiplied indefinitely. My object is, however, to acquaint your readers that a Bill has been drafted by a well-known barrister-at-law for the consideration of Parliament, with the object of providing such safeguards against premature interment as have proved so successful in Munich, Stuttgart, Weimar, Vienna, and other German cities. Whether the Bill will receive adequate support, in order to secure its adoption by Parliament, must depend on the action of County and District Councils, as well as upon the amount of pressure brought upon our representatives.

Meanwhile I shall be happy to supply printed information to enable anyone to safeguard himself and family against the most terrible of tragedies, on receipt of a stamped and addressed envelope. Jas. R. Williamson.

42 Stibbington-street, London, N.W.

MANUFACTURED PROPHECIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—"Abracadabra" well shows up the misapplication by Matthew of the text in Jeremiah xxxi. about "Rachel weeping for her children" in connection with the bogus legend of Herod's massacring the innocents—a story similar to many found in folk-lore. One point proves it was not concocted by a Jew familiar with the Scriptures. Bethlehem was of Judah. Now, Judah was Leah's son, not Rachel's. When the children of Bethlehem were destroyed a Jew might have said, "Leah was weeping for her children," but would never have referred to Rachel. Jeremiah was correct in referring to Rachel, because Ramah was of Benjamin (see Joshua xviii.), and Benjamin was the son of Rachel, as Judah was of Leah (see Genesis xxxv. 23, 24). But "Matthew" again was out in his genealogies.

Caiaphas.

PROFANE JOKES.

The Wesleyan *Children's Advocate* is responsible for the following: "A little girl, who had been reading the seventh verse of the second chapter of Genesis, was standing near a window looking at the dust as it blew in clouds along the street. When asked what she was looking at, the little creature said: "I thought perhaps God was going to make somebody, and was just getting the dust ready!"

The children in a Sunday school were being questioned on the incident of the Tribute Money. The following answer was given by one of the scholars:—"And when they brought him a penny he said: 'Whose subscription is this?'"

Nurse—"Good bye, Freddy; I am going to church." Freddy (aged three and half years)—"Tell God I was a good boy." Nurse—"But I cannot: you were not a good boy." Freddy (after meditation)—"Well, fool him!"

Entering a butcher's shop, a Jewish rabbi said to one of the salesmen: "Give me four pounds of that salmon." "That is not salmon," was the reply; "that is ham." "Did I ask you what it was?" retorted the Rabbi.

The vicar looked very severe at the golden-haired little girl before him: "Nelly, they tell me you use swear words, is that true?" "No, sir," "I am very pleased to hear it. I only heard it, and wished to know if it was true." "No, sir, it is not true." After a pause—"Who told you, sir?" "A little bird." "Then it must have been one of them d—— sparrows."

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "The Mystery of Evil Explained." September 11, at 8.30, Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Rome, Ancient and Modern." Limelight illustrations.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford, A lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture; 7, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture. September 22, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. September 21, E. Pack.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Mr. Lewis.

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Athenæum, Victoria-street): H. P. Ward—11, "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist"; 7, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity?—A Secularist's Answer."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Ethics and Economics"; 2.30, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 6.30, "Science and Religion."

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, Members' meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, J. M. Robertson, "The Reformation in Continental Europe"; 7, "The Collapse of the Christian Creed."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Is Secularism Compatible with Socialism or Anarchism?"

PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

PONTYPRIDD.—6.15, J. W. Cox, B.A., "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 19, Mission at Derby; 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Brompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 3, Chatham. 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "J. W. Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Our New Autumn-Winter Patterns are now ready; they include all the latest novelties in Suitings, Trouserings, Overcoatings, Dress and Costume materials. Our prices are extremely reasonable, and every care has been taken to include only the best-wearing materials. Just give our patterns a look before buying elsewhere. You will never regret it. Patterns on approval Post Free.

MACKINTOSHES

DOWN ANOTHER SHILLING.

The 630 Ladies' Mackintoshes have been reduced to less than 400. We are now clearing them at

11s. 6d. Each.

Flowers of Freethought, 2s. 6d., free with each garment.

Colors left—Brown, Fawn, Slate. Plain Colors: Brown, Fawn, Grey Checks and Mixtures.

This is a regular Eye-opening Line.

J. W. GOTT,

2 & 4 Union Street,

BRADFORD.

(Two Minutes from all the Railway Stations.)

If ever you visit Bradford, don't forget to call.

Are You Satisfied with Your Income?

Working Men and Women wanted everywhere to assist us in making our goods known.

WRITE FOR TERMS.

Persons with spare time can easily add from 10s. to 30s. to their weekly income.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FIRST EDITION—Printed at the Chiswick Press, with Portrait of the Author and thirteen full-page illustrations (Nine Engravings on Wood), in one volume, 128 pages, cap 4to, gilt lettered, price 5s.

Steps to the Temple of Happiness:

THIRTY TRUE MORAL STORIES FOR THE YOUNG;

With Hints to Parents on the Education of Children.

By HENRY SMITH

(Author of *Simple Thoughts in Prose and Verse*, etc., etc.)

"Thirty stories for children of more or less interest are contained in a handsome and well-illustrated volume, entitled *Steps to the Temple of Happiness*. They inculcate in a winning and attractive manner lessons of kindness, and lay stress on the homely but primary duties of truthfulness, obedience, and unselfish regard for others."—*The Speaker.*

"The author of these Thirty True Moral Stories for the Young is an earnest and a good man, we have no doubt, and into his charmingly illustrated volume has introduced a treasury of noble thoughts and excellent advice."—*Schoolmaster.*

London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Limited, Paternoster-square; and all booksellers.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Mr. Hall Caine's *Christian.*
Iconoclasm in Excelsis.
Mr. Baring-Gould's *St. Paul.*
The Growth of Human Nature.
Training Young Citizens.
American Heterodoxy.
A Thoughtful Man's Religion.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
Chats about Books—VII. With Dr. R. Bithell.
Samuel Laing: In Memoriam.
German Critics at Work.
Etc., etc.

*** Copies of the July issue, containing two important Supplements, may still be had, price 2d., by post 3d.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Special Eight Days' Mission

In BARNSBURY HALL, Barnsbury-street, Islington, N., from Sunday, September 19, to 26 inclusive (Thursday and Saturday excepted), conducted by ISAAC SELBY (of Melbourne), formerly Freethought Lecturer, now Minister of the Gospel. Sunday afternoons, 3.30 o'clock; Sunday and week evenings 8.30. All heartily invited, especially Freethinkers, Infidels, Secularists, and Sceptics. Questions permitted at close of lectures—Sundays excepted. For list of subjects see posters.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 39. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MEDICINE AND PRAYER.

THERE are two extremes in the Christian camp. At one end we find the Higher Critics, who make the Bible mean anything you please. At the other end we find the Peculiar People, who think the Bible means what it says. Moreover they try to follow its teachings. Whatever may be thought of their intelligence, no one can deny their honesty; which is a great deal more than can be said of the gentlemen who endeavor to keep the clerical business going by proving that, if you only read the Bible upside down, or sideways, you will see that it thoroughly agrees with all the latest ideas of modern civilization.

The only peculiarity about these Peculiar People, after all, is that they are straightforward Christians. But it must be admitted that this is a very striking peculiarity in the present state of the Christian world.

When one of these Peculiar People falls ill, he does not call in a doctor. That is simply ignoring God's providence. He calls in the elders, who anoint him with oil and pray over him. Sometimes he recovers, and that proves the efficacy of prayer. Sometimes he dies, and that proves there was a good reason for his not recovering.

The ordinary Christian professes to believe in prayer, but he prefers to combine it with medicine. He thinks that Providence is more reliable in partnership with a doctor. He is neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a sophistical mixture of both.

Ordinary Christians, however, are in the majority, and they persecute the extraordinary Christians. One of these Peculiar People in the east of London has just been found guilty of manslaughter by a coroner's jury. He followed the prayer-and-oil treatment in the case of his sick child, instead of calling in a doctor, and he is held to have been contributory to its death.

A coroner's is only a court of first instance. The case will have to be tried, if it ever *is* tried, by a superior court. Perhaps the grand jury will throw out the indictment, in order to prevent a scientific exposure of Christianity.

There is no law in England compelling a man to hire a doctor. Apart from the religious issues of this case there is a legal issue. Doctors follow a better profession than priests, but doctorcraft is no more respectable than priestcraft. One tyranny is as bad as another. Doctors sometimes save lives, but how many do they kill? There is no satisfactory debit and credit account, and until there is it does not seem the business of the law to find them patients.

Should this Peculiar Person be found guilty in a superior court, and be punished with fine or imprisonment, it will be a severe condemnation of the Bible as a practical guide. It will also be a gross exhibition of Christian hypocrisy.

The Bible is set up as the Word of God. It is forced into the hands of children in our public schools. It is used as a swearing-block in our courts of justice. Even members of parliament are sworn in on a copy of the New Testament. Now it is this very book which the Peculiar People obey, and to punish them for it in a Christian country is an act of consummate duplicity.

In the Old Testament we read that King Hezekiah's life was saved, not by the fig-poultice that was put upon his boil, but by his tears and prayers. King Asa was perfect before the Lord all his days, and his long reign of forty-one years seems to have been a beneficent one for his subjects. But it is mentioned to his discredit, and apparently by way of censure, that in the disease which carried him off he "sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians."

In the New Testament we find a statement by Jesus Christ of the signs which should follow belief. In his name the believers were to cast out devils, take up serpents, drink poison, and "lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." This is precisely what the Peculiar People do. Jesus Christ said nothing about calling in a doctor. There was no room for doctors if his teaching was true. Faith was sufficient, and science was unnecessary.

James, who is alleged to have been Jesus Christ's brother, and who should therefore have been most familiar with his teaching, gives the following instructions in cases of sickness:—

> "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."

Surely this is clear and explicit. It is not open to misunderstanding. It is incapable of two interpretations. Every sincere Christian, with that text in front of him, knows exactly what to do. If he calls in a doctor for himself, his wife, or his child, he is flying in the face of the New Testament. He is following custom, or his own judgment, and not the Word of God.

Everywhere in the New Testament we find the supernatural theory of disease, which was therefore to be cured by supernatural agency. Jesus Christ "rebuked" a fever, which "left" the patient. This shows that he, or the writer of the story, shared the belief of African savages that disease is the work of evil spirits. Curing disease and casting out devils were two branches of the same business, as they still are in uncivilized countries. Peter healed the sick by letting his shadow fall upon them. Paul healed them by sending them his handkerchiefs. Both are instances of savage superstition. The shadow is held to be a part of a man's personality, and therefore to participate in his virtues; and the same characteristic is ascribed to articles that come into close and immediate contact with him.

It is perfectly obvious to any unbiassed reader that these Peculiar People obey the spirit as well as the letter of the Bible. They are thoroughly consistent; that is to say, they are real Christians. They do not try to reconcile God's wisdom with human science, and they do the Holy Ghost the credit of believing that it meant what it said.

What right have ordinary Christians to punish these people? Do not ordinary Christians profess to believe what these people practise? Are not all the Churches ready to maintain against "infidels" the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer? Have we not recently seen a number of Christian ministers contributing to a certain religious journal a quantity of instances of prayer being most circumstantially answered? Does not the Prayer Book of the Church of England, as by law established, contain set forms of prayer for rain, for fine weather, and for recovery from sickness? Do not Church clergymen and congregations regularly beseech God to prolong the life of the Queen? Why then is it wrong for a poor father to beseech God to spare the life of his child? Perhaps the ordinary Christian will reply that it is not wrong to pray, but wrong to refrain from using natural

Digitized by Google

remedies. But what does this mean? It means that it is wrong to trust in God implicitly, that infinite wisdom and power should be supplemented, that the mysterious Spirit of the Universe should be assisted by another mystery in the form of a bottle of medicine.

Several years ago the Prince of Wales was dangerously ill of gastric fever. Christian congregations all over the land prayed for his recovery, and when he was himself again a solemn thanksgiving service was held in St. Paul's Cathedral. The people were assured that God had answered their prayers. At the same time, the doctors were not forgotten. They were handsomely paid, and the principal one was knighted. But this was highly inconsistent. If the doctors saved the Prince's life, God did not; and if God saved his life, the doctors did not. To say it was a case of co-operation is nothing less than ridiculous blasphemy.

Over in America there are many honest Christians called Adventists. They read the Bible without orthodox spectacles, and they find that the second coming of Christ is an event to be expected. It may happen to-day or to-morrow, and they think it right to be ready. They also find that the New Testament does not really change the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week. They therefore keep the old Sabbath on what we call Saturday, and disregard the sanctity of Sunday. For this crime they are sent to prison by their fellow Christians. They are chained and set to work on the roads by Protestants, who declare that every man has the right of private judgment.

Will the Christians in this country make a similar exhibition of hypocrisy? Will they punish men for being *real* Christians? Or will this East-end case be stifled by the grand jury, to avoid a scandal? From the Freethought point of view, it would be an advantage to have the case tried in a superior court. The trial would be reported in all the newspapers, and would set people thinking. It would draw general attention to the antagonism between the Bible and science. It would do more good than a hundred Freethought lectures, because it would reach the right people.

G. W. FOOTE

SLAVERY AND THE CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

DURING the Middle Ages, the palmy days of the Church, when religion claimed paramount rule over secular affairs, slaves were kept by ecclesiastics exactly as by seculars, both on the continent and in England. The former is dealt with by M. Patrice Larroque in his work, *L'Eglise et L'Esclavage*. Doomsday Book (i. 239) mentions slaves among the possessions of the English abbeys. It was the custom for the slaves to go with the estate on which they were placed, and when the clergy induced pious scoundrels to save their souls by bequeathing their lands to the Church the legacy included the serfs upon the land as much as the trees which adorned it. Besides becoming possessed of them in this way, the bishops obtained them through the misconduct of the clergy. By the canons of Anselm, 1108, c. 10, cited in Johnson's *Ecclesiastical Laws*, if a priest was found harboring a concubine, the woman was not permitted to return to secular uses, but was forfeited as a slave to the bishop, who doubtless restored her to virtuous ways.

Pike, in his *History of Crime in England*, says: "The boundary which divided the free from the unfree was so slight that the churl was always in danger of passing over it. The infliction of a penalty which he could not pay, and which none would pay for him, rendered him utterly bankrupt in freedom." Pike states, too, that "in the law of a King of Wessex, who lived at the end of the seventh and beginning of the eighth century, the purchase of wives is deliberately sanctioned; and it is stated in the preface that the compilation was drawn up with the assistance of the Bishop of Winchester and a large assembly of 'God's servants.'"

In old records may be found many a tragic touch concerning the Church and slavery. Thus, in the middle of the thirteenth century the Abbot of Bourne sold Hugo the Shepherd for four shillings, and about the same time bought a slave from Matilda, the widow of John the physician, for twenty shillings.* Sometimes we have a more noble record, as in the book of Exeter the item: "Edric of Fordham bought his daughter of Alfrige, the Abbot of Bath, and restored her and her offspring to everlasting freedom," which opens up a scene of long peasant toil crowned by the joy of redeeming a daughter from ignoble captivity.

I do not want to make the picture too black against the clergy. Just as to-day one may find a Dennis Hird or a Parson Fillingham standing out against the remnants of servitude, so through the Middle Ages there were noble men in the Church who taught kindness towards the serf, and who in some instances gave freedom to their own, or who, like John Ball, pleaded for the rights of the peasantry, often, like him, to their own detriment. But the institution of slavery was never denounced by the Church. On the contrary, it was believed to have divine sanction, as assuredly it had the support of both the Bible and the Church. It was English slaves whom Gregory saw in the market-place at Rome, *non Angli sed angeli*. The 17th and 70th Canons of the Council of Toledo, A.D. 633, decreed that once a slave of the Church, always a slave; so Archbishop Egbert, while denouncing the sale of Christians to Jews or Pagans, told the Saxons that an abbot or monk could not bestow freedom upon a slave of the monastery; for it is impious, he exclaims, that he should damage the Church.* It was considered a worthy thing to make slaves for the benefit of the Church. Thus Michael, Abbot of Glastonbury, is extolled by John the monk because, finding thirty-two poor peasants called Gracians or freemen, he reduced sixteen to slavery; but, alas! he was unable to bring the others under, because of their powerful friends. Chattel slavery lasted in England right from the time of the Saxons till after the Black Death, when new sociological conditions—not Christianity—altered the position of the peasant. Macaulay remarks that the end of slavery was silently brought about "neither by legislative regulation nor by physical force." None can fix the moment when it ceased. "Some faint traces of the institution of villenage were detected by the curious so late as the days of the Stuarts; nor has that institution ever, to this hour, been abolished by statute."†

Mental slavery is of all servitude the worst. From the earliest times the Church has persistently done its utmost to rivet its own intellectual thraldom upon the masses, and to this day it does its worst to thwart the establishment of any schools save those where the teaching is under parsonic influence. The Church is still the bulwark of slavery.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Madox's *Formulare Angli* (418).

* Johnson's *Ecclesiastical Laws*, i. 740.
† *History of England*, i. 23.

CHRISTIANITY AS A MORAL FORCE.

LAST week we corrected some glaring errors into which the editor of the *Rock* had fallen in his article on "Modern Rationalism," which appeared in that journal dated August 20. We propose now to endeavor to correct his further mistakes, and in so doing we hope to vindicate the Secular position. It is to be regretted that theological writers are so prone to misrepresent their opponents' views, and to urge the most extravagant claims on behalf of their own faith. So long, however, as they do so, it will be our duty to expose their tactics, and to state the *facts* bearing upon the questions at issue. The three inaccuracies of the editor of the *Rock* with which we are concerned on this occasion are as follows: (1) "*Very few men indeed have ever earned for themselves the right to disbelieve.*" (2) There was no *vital* morality "till the advent of Christ." (3) "*There can be no morality apart from God.*" The italics are the editor's, and therefore we presume he wishes to emphasize his allegations.

(1) What is meant by denying to men the legitimate right to disbelieve? We are told: "Most disbelief is moral, not intellectual; men do not desire to have Divine leading or enlightenment, for the heart of man is possessed with pride." This is sheer orthodox nonsense. Disbelief is both moral and intellectual. To refuse to believe that to which our reason cannot assent is undoubtedly moral, and if this ethical principle were acted upon more than it is, there would be less hypocrisy than we now find both in and out of the Church. As to disbelief not being intellectual,

Digitized by Google

what about such men as Darwin, Clifford, Huxley, Tyndall, and a host of other sceptics who could be mentioned? Surely the disbelief of these men was the result of intellectual discrimination. To accuse them of mental indifference would be a stupid and malicious libel. It was not until after thorough investigation that they arrived at the conclusion that they could not honestly believe the prevalent teachings of theology. It is nothing less than pure orthodox slander to urge that it is "pride" which prevents men from desiring "Divine leading and enlightenment." Let such "divine" influence be demonstrated as a *fact*, and one calculated to enhance personal improvement, and disbelievers would be glad to avail themselves of the advantage.

(2) It is not true that there was no *vital* morality before the time of Christ. The highest and most practical ethics that ever illuminated the world were taught and practised long before the Christian era. Have we not the grandest and most consistent examples of moral lives in such characters as Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Euclid of Megara, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, and many others, who will survive as ethical exemplars when the pernicious influence of orthodoxy shall be remembered only as a blight of the past? In the words of Joshua T. Smith: "Point to the works of moderns equal to those of Plato, either in vastness and majesty of conception, in extent and force of illustration, in beauty and elegance of sentiment, in depth and profundity of thought, or in mellowed grace, harmonious flow, and vigorous energy of language; and then you may sneer at the wisdom of the ancients—then may you despise their works, and scoff at their progress, advancement, and remains" (*Progress of Philosophy*, p. 328). "We need not hesitate to assert that few men have had their names recorded in the book of history whose lives and characters can afford, in the perusal, more deep gratification to the benevolent and virtuous inquiry—few more worthy of our admiration and our imitation" (*ibid.*, 303). In his work upon *Liberty*, J. S. Mill points out that "what little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian.....other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources, must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind" (pp. 29 and 30, People's Edition). And the present Archbishop of Canterbury tells us: "It is in the history of Rome rather than in the Bible that we find our models of precepts of political duty, and especially of the duty of patriotism..... To the Greeks we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature" (*Essay on the Education of the World*).

If it were true that no *vital* morality existed before Christ, it would indeed be a sad reflection upon "God's divine government." To leave the world, until about two thousand years ago, without any practical morality could not be the conduct of a loving father, to say the least. But what becomes of the boasted influence of the alleged moral teachings of the Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments, and the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus xix. 18)? Was there no "vital" morality in the ethical system of Buddha, and in the great religions of the world that flourished for ages before Christianity was known? And what was the "vitality" manifested after the "advent of Christ"? According to the New Testament, his influence did not prevent "contentions," "strife," and "indignation" among Paul and his contemporaries. And from that time down to the present, hatred, slander, cruelty, persecution, and oppression have marked the history of the Christian propaganda. This is a fact that even some Christians have been candid enough to admit. For instance, the Rev. T. Finch observes: "With few exceptions, religious sects manifest an ample portion of a savage spirit, and endeavor to vilify and destroy one another." Dr. Campbell exclaims: "Nothing can equal the dogmatism and arrogance with which one sect pronounces sentence against another, except, perhaps, the dogmatism with which the other retaliates upon them." Dr. Scott says of the Christian sects: "It is five hundred to one but that everyone is damned, because everyone damns all but itself, and itself is damned by four hundred and ninety-nine." Bennett writes: "Jealousy, detraction, and persecution are the sure attendants of a revival of religion." Chandler bursts forth: "What ruins and desolations—what rapines and murders—have been introduced into the world under the pretended authority of Christ!" Wyvil records: "The barbarities which professed Christians have committed against unbelievers, and against their own brethren of the same faith, exceed in horror whatever acts of cruelty have been perpetrated by tyrants" (see *The Prophet of Nazareth*, pp. 608–9). It was this same Christian spirit that caused the rapine, desolation, and murders of the Holy Wars; that flooded the streets of Paris in the sixteenth century with human blood; that made the valleys of Piedmont a scene of most inhuman butchery; that instigated the sacrifice of more than three millions of lives by the conductors of the Inquisition; that prompted the enactments of the horrors of the Star Chamber; that produced the St. Bartholomew massacre; that prosecuted and imprisoned Freethinkers; and that to-day keeps "Christian nations" armed to the very teeth in consequence of their dread of each other.

(3) If the belief in God were necessary to morality, we should of course expect to find that Atheists were destitute of ethical power, and that God-believers were remarkable for high-toned morality. Such, however, is not the case, inasmuch as we have shown that many of the very people who professed to know God, and to obey his commands, have been practically destitute of all moral principle; while, as Tyndall observed, Atheists are men "to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown." The Bishop of Hereford, in his Bampton Lectures, admits: "The principles of morality are founded in our nature, independently of any religious belief, and are, in fact, obligatory even upon the Atheist." Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon on an "Estimate of Morality that is without Godliness," states that in the "region of Atheism the eye of the sentimentalist might expatiate among beauteous and interesting spectacles—amiable mothers shedding their graceful tears over the tomb of departed infancy—high-toned integrity maintaining itself unsullied amid allurements of corruption, benevolence plying its labors of usefulness, and patriotism earning its proud reward in the testimony of an approving people." The truth is, no form of supernatural faith is necessary as an incentive to good conduct. The origin of morality was different to that of religion, and the two have not always been allied in their development.

Fortunately, as Secularists, we have a moral force which depends upon no God. With us, the morality of an act consists in its ability to add to the welfare of the individual and to the progress of the commonwealth. The reasons, or sanctions, for a moral act are the improvement of individuals, the protection of society, and the necessity that exists for rendering practical service with a view of increasing the ethical value and stability of the general community. The incentive, or motive-power, prompting such moral conduct is the enlightenment and happiness of the human race, inasmuch as we know from experience that, in proportion as we foster the desire to augment this happiness, so will the miseries and drawbacks of life disappear, and mankind proportionately enjoy the material comforts and intellectual advantages of existence. The happiness to which we aspire will result from a condition of living in which moral instruction and general education shall be sufficient to enable man's character and intellect to be developed to the fullest extent of their capabilities. The realization of such a condition as is here indicated is, according to Secularism, necessary to proper and useful conduct. If a person cultivate his mental powers; if he shun actions grovelling in their nature and injurious in their influence; if he avoid the excessive indulgence of his animal passions; if he regulate his emotions by the exercise of his reason and judgment; if he adhere to truth for its own sake, and for the confidence it inspires; if he manifest fidelity to convictions that are the outcome of thought and earnest examination;—if a person do this, he will at least feel the happiness which accompanies the knowledge that his aim has been to adopt a course of conduct that will entail no misery upon others, and leave no injurious effects upon himself. Whatever is calculated to induce the discipline of a character of this description must surely be a moral force, and that force is supplied by the principal objects of Secular teaching.

CHARLES WATTS.

Announcement at a Limerick church:—

Sunday, THE REVEREND CANON—"Descended into Hell."
You are all affectionately invited.

Digitized by Google

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

VII.—The Call of Andrew and Peter.

It has been shown, in a former series of papers, that the three Synoptical writers were not independent historians, but that they took the matter which is common to two or to three of their histories from pre-existing narratives; that they were, in fact, mere compilers, who in the majority of cases followed both the order and the diction of the earlier Gospel. The evidence of this fact is too clear to be denied by any one who has taken the trouble to investigate the matter; hence, the more advanced among the professional reconcilers endeavor to account for it in one of two ways. The first is by declaring the Gospel accounts to have been composed under the divine influence of inspiration. This claim, as we have seen, is nothing but an impudent and baseless assumption, which cannot for a moment be sustained.

The second way of accounting for the identity of arrangement and the verbal agreement is by asserting that the Gospel writers were either apostles, or companions of apostles, who went about narrating the various circumstances in the life of Christ; and, the same story being told again and again, in course of time it came to be related in something of the same way; consequently, each writer, *with perfect independence*, recorded the same matters in the same order, and often in the very same words.

According to this apologetic statement, the first promulgators of the Christian religion were a set of cranks, who had learnt all the stories and anecdotes common to the three Synoptics by heart, and went about, parrot-like, repeating them. In their first addresses they recited the early chapters; in their next they took up the narrative where they had left off; so that in a series of addresses they would get through the whole list of Gospel events, including the sayings and parables, and would then begin again. A good memory and a loud voice were the only qualifications needed.

It is scarcely necessary to consider this absurd contention seriously. Sufficient it is to say that Paul, the greatest of the early teachers and the real founder of Christianity, did not employ this method. So far from this, if we may judge from his epistles, he had no knowledge whatever of the events and circumstances now recorded in the Gospels. Those matters were fabricated after his time.

In comparing the accounts in the three Synoptical Gospels we find also, as a fact deserving of notice, that whenever the writers have not adhered strictly to the original narratives they almost invariably contradict each other. While they keep to the earlier account they are safe; but the moment they diverge in the slightest degree from the pre-existing cut-and-dried narrative, contradictions and discrepancies are the result. As an illustration of this fact, I will now examine the four Gospel accounts of the call of Andrew and Peter to the apostleship.

1. Matthew's account (iv. 18-20):—

> "And, *walking by the Sea of Galilee*, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him."

Nothing can be plainer than this. Jesus, while walking near the Sea of Galilee, saw the two brothers engaged in fishing, and he then and there called them to be his disciples. Though he had at that time done nothing to show the possession of wisdom or supernatural power, the brothers had such faith in him that they immediately left their occupation and followed him.

2. Mark's account (i. 16-18):—

> "And, *passing along by the Sea of Galilee*, he saw Simon, and Andrew the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed him."

These two evangelists, it will at once be seen, have adhered pretty closely to their copies, and have employed almost identically the same words. There are, consequently, no contradictions.

3. Luke's account (v. 1-11):—

> "Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that.....*he entered into one of the boats*, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitude out of the boat. And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let your nets down for a draught.....And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their nets were breaking; and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink..... And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all and followed him."

Here we have a totally different account to that given by Matthew or Mark. According to this version, Jesus did not, while walking near the Sea of Galilee, see the brothers fishing and call them to follow him. He went into a boat belonging to one of them, and after giving a long discourse which displayed his wisdom, and after performing a conjuring feat which proved his power to work miracles, he called them to follow him. They did so, because they had heard his teaching and had beheld an exhibition of his wonderful power, and so believed him to be, at the very least, a great prophet. Luke would have done better to have kept to the original narrative. His idea of writing an "accurate" account (i. 3) was to completely alter and embellish the story, so as to transform it almost beyond recognition. He has not mentioned Andrew, it is true; but there can be no doubt that the narrative represents the same incident.

According to all three Synoptists, Jesus makes his first public appearance in Judea, and, after being baptized by John in the Jordan, fasts forty days in the wilderness, where he is tempted by the devil; then, *after the Baptist is cast into prison*, he departs for Galilee and commences his public ministry (Matt. iv. 12-17; Mark i. 14, 15; Luke iv. 14, 15).

Jesus came to Galilee alone, and, after preaching there for some unstated time, began to choose his disciples. While walking near the sea he saw Andrew and Peter fishing, and, as we have seen, called them to follow him. Then, according to Matthew and Mark, walking a little farther he saw, on the same occasion, James and John mending their nets in a boat, and he also called them to follow him. It was these two brothers whom Luke describes as "*their* partners in the other boat"—the pronoun "their" referring to Peter and someone with him who is not named, probably Andrew. That it is the same incident is, further, placed beyond a doubt by the words "from henceforth thou shalt catch men.....they left all and followed him."

4. John's account (i. 35-43):—

> "Again on the morrow, John [the Baptist] was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, *and they followed Jesus*.....They came, therefore, and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day.....One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him and said, Thou art Simon, the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation Peter). On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me."

This account, it is scarcely necessary to say, differs entirely from the other three. According to this version, John the Baptist, who had disciples of his own, was baptizing at Bethany, a village about sixty miles south of the Sea of Galilee (which the writer erroneously places near the Jordan), when Jesus chanced to pass. John, by some mysterious means, knew Jesus, and pointed him out as "the Lamb of God," whereupon two of his disciples left him to follow Jesus. One of these was Andrew, who ought to have been fishing in Galilee. This apostle was so delighted at having found the Messiah that he sought out his brother Peter (who ought also to have been fishing in Galilee) and introduced him to Jesus. The latter, then and there, received them both as his disciples, and the next day left for Galilee to commence his public ministry accompanied by the brothers.

According to this account, Andrew and Peter became followers of Jesus, not because that personage had seen them fishing in the Sea of Galilee and had called them to follow him, nor because they had heard his teaching and

Digitized by Google

had witnessed a miracle, but because one of them had heard the Baptist call him "the Lamb of God." According to the two identical narratives of Matthew and Mark, these two disciples were perfect strangers to Jesus when that teacher commenced his preaching in Galilee; but, according to this last version, they had become his disciples in Judea, and accompanied him as such to Galilee. Further, in the accounts in the First and Second Gospels, Jesus did not commence his ministry in Galilee until *after* John had been cast into prison, and it was not until then that he began to choose his disciples.

> "Now, after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God.....And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew casting a net in the sea," etc. (Mark i. 14, 16).

But, in the account in the Fourth Gospel, the two brothers became Christ's disciples while John was baptizing, long before that individual was cast into prison. No reconciliation is thus possible. Amid all these contradictions, the only thing any rational person can do is to reject all four versions of the story—or rather, three, for those by Matthew and Mark, being the same, count only as one. In any case, it is certain that two out of the three accounts of the call of Peter and Andrew to the apostleship are fabrications, while it is very improbable indeed that one of them may be true; and since it is now impossible to say which two are certainly false, the only course open to us is to reject them all.

ABRACADABRA.

INSANITARY SAINTS.

THERE is a sect spreading in the south-western provinces of Russia who are named after their founder, Panjaschkovtzi. The central idea preached by Panjaschko is, that while the soul is immortal the body is of the Devil, and should, therefore, be neglected as far as possible. In pursuance of this idea, the Panjaschkovtzi never wash themselves, never shave, allow their nails to grow long, and do not change their clothes until the latter fall in rags off their backs. They never clean their houses, eat food scarcely fit for dogs, and have, in addition, very primitive conceptions of morality. Their religion may, in fact, be described as the gospel of uncleanliness. These "reformers" are but attempting to get back to primitive times. Professor Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, shows that the early Christian saints lived in a disgraceful state of dirt. Many refused to wash themselves. St. Athanasius, in his *Life of St. Antony*, the father of all hermits, relates with enthusiasm that the venerable devotee had never been guilty of washing his feet. St. Amnon had never seen himself naked. St. Abraham the hermit, who lived for fifty years after his conversion, steadily refused from that day to wash even the exposed parts of his person, such as his face or his feet. St. Simeon Stylites spent years on a column—

> From scalp to sole one slough and crust of *dirt*.

Tennyson, in his poem on Stylites, makes the saint say:—

> For many weeks about my loins I wore
> The rope that haled the buckets from the well,
> Twisted as tight as I could knot the noose.

Gregory Nazianzen (Orat. 12) regards dirty and tangled hair, "naked feet in imitation of the apostles," and a scanty mantle, as among the principal characteristics of a monk. St. Labre, one of the latest additions to the Roman Calendar, who lived at Rome in the last century, went about with a ragged cloak bound round a cord. *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God, Benedict Joseph Labre* (p. 97), says: "The foul state of his clothes and linen, never washed, produced innumerable vermin; and, never trying to free himself from them, he gave them an opportunity of multiplying and attaching themselves more closely to him."

Most of the early monks allowed no change of garb. Indeed, such is not permitted in the instructions of Jesus to his disciples. He says: "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves" (Matthew x. 9, 10). They are to "take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on" (Matthew vi. 25). Jesus says explicitly: "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." They were to be, in fact, mendicant monks, detached from all pertaining to this fleeting and sinful world.

The early Christians were called Ebionites or poor men, because they despised the body. Jesus says, "Blessed be ye poor." The name Christian may have come in from their anointing with oil; being equivalent to "greasers." It was a rule of the Nazarenes that no razor should touch their heads. John the Baptist had only a hairy garment, and lived on locusts and wild honey. The old Gymnosophists, we are told, passed their life naked; saying that the body was given as clothing for the soul.

Genuine Christianity cannot be separated from an ascetic view of life. It is monkish at the core. Nor can the monkery of Christianity be historically explained without looking back at that of Buddhism, and of the Hindu hermit system which preceded it. Paul says, "Though I give my body to be burned"; and the very phrase shows that he had heard of the Hindu Gymnosophists. In India these yogis and fakirs used to go stark naked, but British law compels them to adopt some slight clothing. It is quite possible the saints and apostles were hardly a whit more decent than the fakirs, whom they emulated in their mendicant monkery. Cleanliness is a part of godliness in Islam, while in the faith of Old Japan it is godliness itself. Shintoism has no creed or dogmas, but consists in a system of observances of which purification and ablutions are the chief items. Its one gospel is cleanliness. A gospel of uncleanliness is reserved for Christians.

SHINTO.

REVIEW OF TALMAGE.

IT has long since become proverbial that the American people are fond of humbugs; probably the latent wisdom of this maxim throws a beam of light into the unsolved mystery of Talmage's popularity. He is a preacher of but little reason, and utterly devoid of that gift which distinguishes all those who are truly great—common sense. There are hundreds of common country preachers who can preach a more practical sermon than he can. He is simply a word-juggler, who amuses his audience with his sleight-of-tongue performances. None of his productions bear the stamp of original genius. They are a travesty upon the austere dignity which the pulpit assumes, and his bald and illogical ideas are an insult to common sense. In fact, his reverential harangues about some theological gewgaw or the keyhole of the pearly gates, and how the delinquent sinner can trick St. Peter and enter the New Jerusalem, remind us of good-natured mockery of religion, and sound like Washington Irving's burlesque on the battle of Fort Christina between Peter the Headstrong and Risingh. "Words," says a philosopher, "are the vehicles of thought." Verily Talmage possesses a multitude of vehicles which have never borne a burden save wind. His most marked characteristic is a natural predilection to hear his voice echo in his cranium. Let it be said, however, for his eternal credit, that, like that meek and obedient animal so conspicuous in Bible history and noted for its long ears and sonorous voice, he is perfectly harmless. The power to do good is inseparably linked to the power to do harm, and whether a man who possesses native force of character is good or bad depends principally upon his early raising and teaching, and his own choice and application. While Talmage does but little good, it must be said he does no harm. His mind is passive, and not active; he receives, but he does not create, ideas. He has a good command of language, and as a reciter of historical scenes and incidents he stands pre-eminent. He would have made a much better actor than he is a preacher, and as a noise producer even the most sanguine quail to question his right to the world's championship. He is considered great by those discordant thinkers who mistake sound for sense and brass for brains. His exhortations are frequently as inflammatory as the vapid howlings of a frenzied female fanatic proclaiming the blessings and glory of the Salvation Army; and, antithetically considered, his pulpit palaver is a splendid argument for free thought and infidelity. Judging from his utterances, he is either densely credulous, or cunningly designs to mislead his hearers by incensing their fears and figments and fanning the flames of denominational rancor. He preaches the Bible, with all its idiotic theories and silly fables, as being

Digitized by Google

the unerring masterpiece of the great Creator; and when his audience grows a trifle listless he spurs them to animation by telling them when and where and how the indignant Almighty struck dead some scoffing sinner. According to him, this harmonious universe is governed by two omnipotent rulers, each the implacable foe of the other—viz., God and Devil. Isn't it anomalous that two such beings, so radically different, can get along together so amicably! In all the great events of history which have resulted for the good of mankind Talmage can clearly see the blessed hand of God; but in those which have resulted in human misery and added to the sum of our sorrows he can plainly see the finger-marks of the slimy hands of Satan. Of course he has not yet invented a middle deity to which he could attribute those events which have been intermediate, neither good nor bad.

Talmage is the Warrior of Words, the Napoleon of verbal array. He robs the dictionary of the mightiest treasures and crams them into his voice-box. He marshals them with mystic and masterful skill, and when he commands them to charge, too fierce and frosty for deliberate and efficient work, they rush to that famous aperture below his nose, and tumble and roll over each other like apparitions in a drunken devil's dream. Oh, truly, to slightly change a Bible sentence, "He shaketh his tongue like the cedar; his strength is in the muscles of his lungs, and the sinews of his jaws are wrapped together" (see Job xl. 16, 17).

Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, but the Rev. T. De Witt, being more humane and merciful, uses the same instrument to tickle the vanity and charm the ears of reverential audiences. Where and how he acquired his marvellous adeptness in using such lingual monstrosities is an unsolvable mystery, as deep and dark as any which ever benighted the minds and bewildered the visions of the riddle-solvers in this world of wonders and witches. He can take an infinitesimal thought and girdle it with a tiara of verbal abortions and Talmagian thunder. He can bury a pismire idea under a mountain of sesquipedalian words. An English king so loved tall soldiers that he searched his kingdom, picking out the lengthy men for his body-guard. Talmage rakes the dictionary for words, measuring their merit by their horizontal hugeness. Stew down his ocean of noise, and you will not have a quart of common sense. But he is a typical Christian. In fact, he is the Tamerlane of modern orthodoxy. His tongue is his sword, and his garrulous verbosity his artillery. Thus heroically formidably accoutered, he is Gehenna's sleepless and unbending foe, perpetually bombarding the helmeted hosts of hell, and emptying the quivers of his virulent and untoward wrath in endeavoring to pierce the rhinoceros hide of the Devil.

When the Brooklyn Tabernacle was last destroyed by fire, the Doctor is quite sure that the Lord postponed the conflagration, for he says: "Had the fire commenced thirty minutes sooner, the most appalling catastrophe of the century would have happened." If the Lord held the fire in check for thirty minutes, why didn't he go to the less trouble of totally extinguishing it? Secret societies attribute the death of their members to God, but Talmage makes him a common incendiary, sneaking around burning churches, his own temples, and disturbing the congregations which love him so dearly! He knows well the prodigious depths of human credulity, and, like all other preachers, his favorite text is: "God loveth a cheerful giver." He is the most colossal pious snide of the age, and his hodge-podge homilies display a knowledge of the sycophant's art which only an adroit hocus-pocus could possess. We dismiss him with Horace Greeley's crushing blow: "His title to eminence rests on his ability to be a thousand different kinds of fools." J. KAZAD.

—Free Thought Magazine.

A Choice.

Not endless life, but endless love, I crave,
The gladness and the calm of holier springs,
The hope that makes men resolute and brave,
The joyful life in the great life of things.
The soul that loves and works will need no praise;
But, fed with sunlight and with morning breath,
Will make our common days eternal days,
And fearless greet the mild and gracious death.

—W. M. W. Call.

ACID DROPS.

CARDINAL VAUGHAN is dreaming of the conquest of England by the Papacy, but over in Italy the people have just been commemorating the twenty-seventh anniversary of the fall of the Pope's temporal power.

Other times, other manners! The newspapers announce that the Archbishop of Canterbury has been staying for some weeks in the Isle of Wight. His Grace is the first Christian in England, unless the honor is disputed by Cardinal Vaughan. But how funny it would have looked, eighteen hundred years ago, if newspapers had been able to make similar announcements concerning the founder of Christianity. Fancy something like this in the *Jerusalem Gazette*:—"The eminent preacher, Joshua Davidson, has taken a villa during August and September at Joppa"; or, still more plainly, "The celebrated Mr. Jesus is now recruiting his health in a yachting trip on the Sea of Galilee." We shudder to think of it.

The parsons' palaver at Nottingham, which, had it fallen on the usual date, the first Thursday in October, would have come into dangerous competition with the Goose Fair, means to take the winds out of the sails of the cacklers who follow. To attract the public it announces that there will be on exhibition a portrait of John Bunyan, the Puritan who was opposed to prelacy, and "a missionary's travelling case of vessels for the administration of the sacrament, designed by the missionary himself, and used in his long journeys. The case is strapped to the saddle, or carried by a strap over the shoulder." Surely good Church people will come from near and far to see these rare sights.

And the papers set down for discussion are so attractive! The Trades Union Congresses and Social Science Associations are not in it when the Church once begins to show its concern for the people. Ecclesiastical subjects, sacerdotal privileges, and the dogmatic side of Church teaching are almost entirely left out of sight. The Church is ready to become all things to all men so long as it may retain its endowments.

Jesus Christ was "lifted up" on a cross. The Bishop of Bristol will soon be hoisted more agreeably. His enthronement takes place on October 28. Of course a bishop wants a special residence. What suits ordinary mortals is not good enough for him. But his lordship's mansion, alas, is not yet provided, and until it is ready he has to put up with a house at Clifton.

The Pope, says the *Tablet*, has "concentrated upon the Isle of Britain the prayer of Christendom." How kind! Pecci has established an Archconfraternity in wicked Paris, of all places in the world, "which shall gather the prayers of all the world for the conversion of this single isle." Meanwhile, after concentrating all its efforts on the conversion of the rich, the Church got 160 persons to take guinea seats for its greatest function, and complains of a serious leakage among the poor.

Dr. Grünhut, a Hungarian Jew, who is headmaster of a German school in Jerusalem, says the city cannot comfortably hold more Jews than it already contains. There are about thirty thousand, and, with the exception of four hundred Sephardim and three hundred Askenasi families which follow some trade, they all live on alms from their European co-religionists. They include 1,200 Austrians and Hungarians, all very poor; but the most wretched are the Morocco Jews, who must live on about two shillings a month! Dr. Grünhut might approve of Zionism if the rich Jews would go and settle in Palestine, but he says they are already overstocked with the impoverished.

Wonderfully good business is being done with Lives of Christ. The latest is by M. Tissot, the French artist, and is said to be a splendid production. The English edition is being issued in twelve monthly numbers, each costing a guinea. Mr. Gladstone has accepted the dedication. He is the Grand Old Christian of this country, and his Christianity is as old as his age.

Mr. Gladstone describes M. Tissot's work as a "monumental" one, "conceived and executed for the honor of our Lord and Savior." Why certainly; but a good deal of cash by the way is not at all unwelcome.

M. Tissot has gone to Palestine for the scenery of his pictures. He surprised his own father by telling him that Mount Calvary was only twenty-two feet high. It is as much a mountain as Snow-hill in the City of London.

The Bishop of Majorca has excommunicated the Spanish Minister of Finance for not sufficiently respecting Church

Digitized by Google

property. That is always the greatest sin in the eyes of ecclesiastics. Unfortunately, the Finance Minister is weak enough to feel his excommunication. Perhaps the poor man thinks that, if he were to die before it is taken off, he would probably go to the wrong establishment. Anyhow, the Spanish Ambassador at the Vatican is instructed to lay the matter before the Pope, who wields God's thunder with a due regard to conflicting interests.

Wherever there is a corporation like the clergy, which is always gathering and never dissipating, the time is sure to arrive when the State, in self-defence, finds it necessary to lay hand on the stored-up wealth, which has usually been largely gained by frightening fools about their death-beds.

The vicar of Linby, near Hucknall Torkard, Notts, coolly tells parishioners, who desire the banns put up for marriage, that he is going for a holiday and the church will be shut up. Among the implied conditions of his tenancy is keeping the church open and attending to the needs of the parish. When he takes a holiday he should find a *locum tenens*, and his parishioners ought to see that he is made aware of this.

In Gadsden, Alabama, there is every prospect that a race religious war will be aroused over the interpretation of certain Christian doctrines. A colored woman preacher, known as Sister Sapp, announcing herself as the agent of the Messiah, wrought upon the negroes and "poor whites" to wash each other's feet, and to salute each other with the kiss of brotherhood. At news of this the educated whites undertook to banish Sister Sapp, and a riot occurred, in which she was horsewhipped. Her followers declare that they will exterminate the better classes.

It is reported from O'Neill City, Nebraska, that the Rev. Mr. Beackim, the pastor of a negro church, is now urging the members of his flock to put out one of their eyes in order to comply with the Savior's command. He seems to have had the courage of his convictions, for he gouged out one of his own eyes. The inflammation which has set in will probably cause him to lose the sight of the other eye also. He says that the Almighty approves of men with one eye, and he quotes the Gospel of Matthew (vi. 22) in support of this contention.

There were seventy-one summonses under the Lord's Day Act heard recently in Hull, and the number, says the Hull *Daily News*, is on the increase. Customers are plentiful, and extra is charged on Sunday in order to pay the fine, which cannot exceed five shillings.

The Rev. Dawson Burns, D.D., writes in the *Daily News* on the Revised Version. He says: "Considering its incomparable superiority over the Authorized Version, I am surprised that so many men of education, ministers of the Church of England and Nonconformist denominations, should be content to make only occasional and incidental use of the Revised Version. Why, too, is so little done to extend its use in Bible classes, Sunday-schools, etc.?" The reason is patent. To let young or ignorant and credulous people know that the word of God needed revision might lead to inquiry, leading to disproof of its being the word of God at all. So the Bible Society goes on multiplying myriads of copies of the Authorized Version, although, as Dr. Burns says, "one of two things is certain—either the Authorized Version is free from the faults which were thought to render a Revised Version necessary, or the Committee of the Bible Society are persisting, without consulting its members, to give to the people a version chargeable with serious faults, when they might issue a version more accurate and faithful."

That the Revised Version is, in critical matters, an improvement may be seen in the passage referred to in this issue by "Abracadabra" and "Chilperic," where "a virgin shall conceive" is, in the margin, "a maiden is with child." Other Messianic prophecies get knocked on the head in the margin, as in Genesis xlix. 10, Psalms ii. 11, xxii. 16, xlv. 6; while the future tense of Isaiah liii., being properly changed into the past, shows that the servant spoken of is Israel, not Jesus. In Haggai ii. 7 "the desire of all nations" is altered to "the desirable things of all nations," that being what the Jews really wanted. Then the Revised Version leaves out the forged 1 John v. 7, and notices the addition of the last twelve verses of Mark.

"Heretic" writes in the *Sydney Bulletin*: "The rabid parson's pathetic ignorance of men's real minds is well exemplified by the Rev. Dill Mackay's assertion that, with the exception of a very few infidels and Agnostics, all the people of N. S. W. want God's name in the Constitution. The infidel-positive certainly doesn't grow on every tree, but the ostensibly orthodox person who doubts-and-daren't-say-so is nearly as common now-a-days as the outsider who simply laughs at the notion of taking a fellow-creature's word for what can't possibly be known."

The *American Hebrew*, alluding to the Anglican Bishops' Pastoral reference to the Jews, observes: "From time to time we read *exposés* of converted Jews. We are told from time to time of Jews converted. We know them to be Russian Jews. We know that they could have escaped persecution and all disabilities in Russia had they embraced Christianity. We know they refused, and preferred to suffer. Why should they be converted here? We answer that their conversion is false; it is assumed for worldly gain. We dare assert that out of five hundred 'converted Jews'—if, indeed, that number has been converted—four hundred and fifty shake off their baptism in as many days, or when they move away. And we dare assert that it is doubtful if even one out of the whole five hundred fails to die a Jew. O bishops of the Anglican Church, stop this hypocrisy!"

When the Jews have freedom they become Freethinkers. According to the *New York Herald's* report of the recent Jewish Chautauqua Assembly, a Conference on Jewish Education, one Rabbi expressed the belief that the story of Moses is a most dangerous one to take up in a Sunday-school. Another Rabbi "was satisfied that the Book of Daniel was written to please the people of his time." Yet another Rabbi spoke against the Book of Esther. The Convention of American Rabbis at Montreal, recently, both transacted business and went for an excursion on Saturday, and the Rabbis "disavowed *any plans* for the re-establishment of a Jewish State." This, by implication, includes the plans set forth by the prophets.

Schrader, the divine healer who perambulates the country on a bicycle, is now fooling the people of New York. He has rented a store in Harlem, where he receives his patients and their offerings publicly. He thinks he can beat the relic of St. Ann effecting cures, because, while St. Ann was only the grandmother of Christ, he is Christ himself. Many visit him out of curiosity, and some say they have been benefited by his treatment.

A writer in the *Indian Witness* says: "The stolidity of Indian students under Gospel fire is one of the amazing—and shall I say humiliating?—phenomena of missionary work in this land. They listen with attention and respect to the plainest and direct presentation of divine truth without betraying the slightest emotion." The truth is, Hindu students, all of the upper castes, have learned to use their brains, and wonder that intelligent, rational beings can credit such nonsense as the teachings of Christianity.

Talmage's *Life of Christ* is entitled "From Manger to Throne." It wouldn't have been so romantic had the title been "From Cowshed to Crucifixion."

The Very Rev. Monsignor Croke Robinson, preaching at the Church of St. Francis De Sales, Tottenham, on Sunday week, said that a man who did not believe in God was not worth arguing with, but should be sent to the nearest lunatic asylum. He omitted to mention to what institution the people should be sent who accepted without question all the ridiculous nonsense uttered in the Roman Catholic pulpits. It requires some brains to become a lunatic; none worth speaking of to be an idiot.

A special commissioner of the *Christian Commonwealth* has interviewed an Australian gentleman who has come to England to carry on an anti-infidel crusade, although there are several gentlemen already occupied in that business, with fifty or sixty thousand professional soul-savers to back them up in case of necessity. This special commissioner gives a little preface of his own to the interview. He says it is rare for a Christian to become a pervert to infidelity, and when a case does occur "the wanderer is almost certain to return." On the other hand, he says, it is common enough for "an infidel of talent and power to yield to the force of the truth he has assailed." Now we should like to feel that special commissioner's bumps. We fancy he has "imagination" large and "conscientiousness" minute. The fact is, the Christians make a great noise over every infidel they capture, though they seldom give the real history of the transaction. Freethinkers, however, see nothing to make a noise about when they capture a Christian, partly because they capture so many. Eight out of every ten Freethinkers are "perverted" Christians.

At the Young Men's Christian Association Conference Mr. D. M. West (Glasgow), in the course of a vigorous speech on "The Dangers of the Y. M. C. A.," pointed out that hundreds of young men pass through the associations without ever being touched by the religious agencies. It was a real danger to have a social club under the name of a Christian institute where the greater part of the management was devoted to secondary purposes, to the exclusion of Scripture study and the encouragement of the Christian life. He suggested the establishment of a travelling lectureship to advance the study of the Bible throughout the country.

Digitized by Google

The American men of God are alive to the secularizing influence of the bicycle. The Rev. Dr. McConnell, rector of Holy Trinity, Brooklyn, declares in print that it is the most important matter that confronts the churches, which he confesses it has depleted. He says: "There are tens of thousands of men and women who five years ago were in the habit of attending church on Sunday who now spend the day riding in the country. During the same period other outdoor games on Sunday have wonderfully increased in popularity. As a result of it all the Church is confronted with the gravest situation she has faced since the Reformation."

Dr. John M. Watson, "Ian Maclaren" of that ilk, has been lecturing on the old book, under the auspices of the Bible Society of Clackmannan. He told the good Clackmannanites that long ago those that loved the Bible had learnt that, whatever the Bible was intended to teach them, it was not physical science. But he seems to think that Biblical failure in a matter where its statements can be tested is a good ground for believing it on subjects where no test was possible.

Dr. Watson said that "perhaps, by-and-bye, they would reach such a state of contrition that they would repent of having ill-treated the critics, and would remember with great tenderness of heart how their learned and good men gave of their time and their knowledge to aid the search after truth in a better understanding of the Scripture narrative." The report says his lecture "evoked subdued laughter" at many points. No wonder.

"Visiting recently in the East Riding of Yorkshire," writes a correspondent of the *Christian World*, "I met with an instance of superstition hardly to be credited in this enlightened age. Walking through a churchyard, I noticed that the late vicar had been buried at the east end of the graveyard, but instead of being laid facing the east, as is usual, had been laid in the opposite direction—namely, facing the west. He had left instructions that he should be buried wearing his cassock and surplice, shoes on his feet, and an open prayer-book in his hand, in order that on the resurrection morn he might rise up facing his parishioners, prepared to resume the duties which he had discharged while living among them." Well, the *Christian World* believes in the resurrection of the body, and the old vicar was only logically carrying it out.

Dr. R. F. Horton is heterodox on the question of inspiration, but he can't give up the dear old Devil, who, in the Gospels at least, is quite as distinct a personality as the Father himself, and more distinct than the Ghost. He says: "There was a power at work in this world which could not be better described than the 'Prince of Darkness,' the Tempter of the Soul; and it was no exaggeration to speak of the power—though it was a bold figure—as a roaring lion, who goes about seeking whom he may devour." This, says the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen*, "is surely an unnecessary revival of a crude superstition." The superstition is found in its crudest form in the Gospels.

Mr. David Macrae, in his book of stories entitled *Repartee*, fathers one of the best Wilkes stories on Campbell of Monzie. Wilkes was soliciting a vote, and the man said he would sooner vote for the Devil. "Yes," said Wilkes, "but if your friend doesn't stand?"

The Herald of the Golden Age sneers at those who justify meat-eating by quotations from Hebrew patriarchs. It says that the teaching of Jesus Christ forms the standard of morality to-day. But where does Jesus Christ say anything in favor of vegetarianism? We pause for a reply.

Lloyds' quarterly report shows the loss by shipwreck, fire, or other casualty, of 254 vessels of 212,094 tons within the three months. Under the distressing category of missing ships there are 29 vessels of 29,550 tons. Providence is conspicuous by its absence from Lloyds' list.

Mr. Nisbet gives another instance of Providence in that fully one-third of all human beings born into this world quit it before they are five years of age, and another very large portion, making at least one-half, before they are twenty-one—that is, before they have really begun to feel their responsibilities.

In his book on *Nippur*, Dr. Peters, the director of the explorations there, says that the temple of Bel in that city was the religious centre of "the dominant people of the world at a period as much prior to the time of Abraham as the time of Abraham is prior to our day." The director says that some of the written records found by him are six thousand years old, and that other remains prove the existence of an organized society there at a period two thousand years earlier than the oldest written documents. All which carries us back eight thousand years. Dr. Peters at Nippur claims to have carried the history of human society back to a date two thousand years earlier than that assigned to the creation of the world by the chronology of the Bible. Adam and Eve threaten to become quite modern people, as indeed they do in the light of anthropology, for there must have been an immense period of savagery behind the barbaric civilization of Babylonia.

Christian Work, of New York, says all denominations indulge in the practice of building beyond their means in the present and mortgaging the future. To put a heavy mortgage on a church and "trust God for the future" is often nothing else than to put the church under the domination of the commercial spirit, trusting to business to make the venture profitable. This is the way many of the unendowed churches and chapels are run in England, and Scotland also.

The Bishop of Ballarat contributes a short sermon on Procrastination in last week's *Lloyd's*. He says that the Holy Ghost alone can rid us of this vice. So, my lord, so? How is it then that Jesus Christ is such a procrastinator? He promised to come again in the lifetime of some persons who were listening to him. That was eighteen hundred years ago, and he hasn't come yet. On the whole, the Holy Ghost seems a bad doctor for this complaint.

Apropos of the new ghost discovered down in Kent by a *Daily Chronicle* reporter, the *Westminster Gazette* observes: "Really these ghosts are very silly creatures. They have great opportunities for doing good. They might act as detectives and reveal many mysteries, but they don't. When they happen to know the details of a mysterious crime, instead of going and telling the nearest policeman they moon about for centuries, making themselves and everybody else around them unhappy, and in the end they go and worry someone who is not in the slightest degree interested in the occurrence."

A New York policeman the other day found the Rev Father Edward Holden, a Catholic priest, unconscious in the street. In great alarm, the officer summoned an ambulance and had the reverend gentleman conveyed to Bellevue hospital, where the doctor, after smelling the priest's breath, predicted an early recovery. The clerical dress saved the patient from the station house and a police court.

The Rev. Harry Hess, a noted evangelist, sometimes called the boy preacher, is wanted in Johnstown, Pa. A sixteen-year-old girl wishes him to acknowledge the paternity of her unborn child, and several married men whose homes he has darkened would be glad to give their testimony against him. Hess is a great fund raiser, and the most powerful exhorter who ever appeared in Johnstown.—*Truthseeker.*

The Leamington Town Council has done well in refusing to celebrate Trafalgar Day. It was Nelson, more than Wellington, who broke the colossal despotism of Napoleon; and from the historic point of view the Battle of Trafalgar was of immense importance to the whole of Europe. Nevertheless, it is a shabby mistake to celebrate the event as an illustration of British prowess, and that is all the celebration means to everybody but the students of modern history. To strut about at the end of the nineteenth century because we beat the French at the beginning of the nineteenth century is a piece of extremely bad taste, and a wanton irritation of our gallant French neighbors. What would the chivalrous Sir Philip Sidney have thought of it—he who coined that delightful phrase about "our sweet enemy" France?

A well-known Rand parson, says the *African Critic*, resigned his billet, and the following announcement was issued:—"This evening the Rev.——will preach his farewell sermon, and the congregation will render a thanksgiving, composed for the occasion."

A 'Maritzburg paper reports the arrest of "an idle and suspicious person in clerical attire" up Natal way. There are lots such awaiting arrest in England.—*African Critic.*

A revelation is only a revelation to the individual to whom (if such a thing be possible) it is made. His account of it to another is not a revelation, and whoever puts faith in that account puts it in the man from whom the account comes; and that man may be deceived, or he may have dreamed it, or he may be an impostor and may lie. There is no possible criterion whereby to judge of the truth of what he tells, for even the morality of it would be no proof of revelation.—*Paine's "Age of Reason."*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 26, Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham: at 11, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; at 3, "Who was Moses?" at 7, "God and the Devil."

October 3, Athenæum Hall, London; 10, Glasgow.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 5 and 6, debate at Birmingham; 10, 11, and 12, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 17, Huddersfield; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

FOR THE BROWNE FAMILY.—We have received:—R. Johnson, 2s.; A. W. S., 2s.; Brewster, 1s.; Hornby, 1s.; H. Lees Sumner, 2s.; Lyon, 1s.; T. W. G., 1s. *Per Miss Vance:* W. S. M., 2s. 6d.; H. P., 2s.; E. L., 2s. 6d.; Thorney, 6d.; B. E. Marks, 5s.

GEORGE WISE (Liverpool) writes: "Permit me to thank you for your excellent article on 'Back to Rome.' It is a noble protest. You have expressed the true sentiment of every broad-minded man."

LAURA COOK.—See paragraph.

F. LODGE.—Your letter is well-meant and well-written—*very* well-written, and we are obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. We say this sincerely, without a taint of sarcasm. But have you allowed for differences of temperament? Writers vary, so do readers, and a journal edited in one vein would have few subscribers. Different pens are at work in this journal, and, if you find something that you like, you might leave the rest to readers of other tastes.

SECRETARIES of N. S. S. Branches are requested to send particulars for insertion in the Almanack for 1898 to Miss Vance, 377 Strand, W.C.

R. JOHNSON (Manchester), promising £1 yearly towards the new (Treasurer's) Financial Scheme, says: "I think this is a very good idea, and the first year's result ought to rouse those Freethinkers who seem always hanging about to see if there is anything to grumble at, instead of trying to help."

G. THWAITES, subscribing to the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme, wishes he could send twenty times as much, and hopes all Secularists will give the Scheme their best support.

F. W. SWAIN.—See paragraph.

G. PROCTOR.—Thanks for the three promises for the Treasurer's Scheme. We hope you will succeed, as you anticipate, in getting others.

G. ROBERTS.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Watts was in such good form at Plymouth. We note that Mr. E. P. Luke, the converted Wesleyan local preacher, lectures this evening (September 26) for your Branch on "Some Bible Saints." Please send lecture notices on separate slips of paper.

DUDLEY WRIGHT.—Will try to find room next week.

STUDENT.—Gibbon's great work can be obtained in all sorts of editions. The best is the one in eight volumes, edited by Dean Milman, and re-edited by Dr. W. Smith. It is expensive. Even a good second-hand copy would cost £2 10s. or more. Professor Bury's edition is cheaper, but is not yet completed.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—We have received the following fresh promises:—G. Thwaites, 10s. *(p)*; G. Proctor, 10s.; R. Bloesom, 10s.; R. Gillon, 10s.; E. F. B., 5s. *(p)*, half-yearly; Rd. Johnson, £1.

W. S.—(1) We could not follow all the intricate details of the case, but we understand that Mr. Symes's troubles were mainly caused by professed Freethinkers, some of whom were Anarchists or Socialists. Apparently by trickery they excluded him from the hall which had been built by his exertions. Mr. Symes appealed to the courts, but he obtained no redress. A marked "infidel" of his standing and calibre is sure to suffer injustice. He has also been a target for unlimited calumny. (2) Much pleased to hear that a lecture by Mr. Foote in Finsbury Park some years ago was the cause of your being liberated from Christian superstition, after an experience of five years as a Sunday-school teacher; also that you look upon the *Freethinker* as a treat every Thursday afternoon.

A. E. DAVIS.—It was an excellent letter. Such correspondence in local newspapers is of great assistance to Freethought.

LYON and T. W. G.—You say the shilling is for the Jones case. We presume you mean the Browne case.

J. EASTON.—(1) We fear our readers are not interested in the Rev. Walter Walsh's movements. (2) Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning conductor.

TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance, N. S. S. Secretary, has received the following fresh promises: W. S. M., 10s. *(p)*; J. Oram, 2s. 6d. *(p)*; E. G., 10s. *(p)*; J. Rose, £1; C. Harwood, 5s.; G. A. Lupton, £4 4s.; Marie du Bois, £1; A. E. Lupton, £1.

G. HILL.—Rather too long; it would have been better for much compression. Otherwise it does you credit. By the way, the saying you attribute to Cicero belongs to Confucius.

GLASWEGIAN.—Statements in court are privileged.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Thanks for a sight of the interesting enclosures.

J. MCDONALD.—We hope the South London Freethinkers will rally to the support of the Camberwell Branch, which has done, and is doing, such excellent work. It is not creditable, as you say, to leave all the burden on a few shoulders. Mr. Foote will visit Camberwell shortly.

W. TURNER.—After the Trafalgar-square meeting in behalf of the Spanish exiles, the *Sun* insinuated that the speakers divided the collection among themselves. A suggestion was made on the Committee that the *Sun* should be proceeded against for libel. Mr. Foote took the view that the *Sun* was best left to public contempt, as it would be practically impossible for marked men in the advanced camp to obtain a verdict. A single thorough-paced bigot on the jury would prevent that. In the Hall of Science libel case, although the facts were incontestable, and the libel was described by Mr. Justice Wright as about the worst he had ever seen, we happen to know that it was touch-and-go with the jury. Had Mr. Foote appeared in the case himself, it would certainly have ended in defeat. Mr. Bradlaugh had the greatest difficulty with juries. He only won his litigation in respect of his seat in the House of Commons on the off-chance of a final appeal in the House of Lords. The President of the National Secular Society must expect to be libelled. Only last week a most atrocious slander was communicated to us from Bristol, where a Christian stated that Mr. Foote had been obliged to contribute to the support of two bastard children at Plymouth. The only proper answer to these libellous wretches is a good thrashing, and Mr. Foote's fingers sometimes itch to administer it. But it would be undignified. Besides, if he once began thrashing one of these wretches, he is not quite sure that he would leave off in time. It might result in some such heading as this in the newspapers:—"Deadly Assault by a Well-known Secularist. The Victim in the Hospital." On the whole, it is best to let the heathen rage, if they must, and get on with the work for Freethought.

W. SIMONS.—Your list of notices had to be abbreviated. We only announce public functions of a Freethought character.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Blue Grass Blade—L'Etoile Socialiste—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Echo—Glasgow Saturday Weekly Citizen—Islington Gazette—Christian Commonwealth—Pacific Theosophist—McClure's Magazine—Liberty—Autonomist—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Secular Thought—Liberator—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Torch of Reason.

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

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a fine audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. His lecture on "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People" was much applauded. Mr. Marriott occupied the chair. Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Sept. 26) at Birmingham. His subjects are attractive, and no doubt there will be large meetings.

The Birmingham Branch has arranged for an active winter's campaign, and engaged the large hall of the Bristol-street Board School for Sunday lectures. Mr. Foote will be followed a fortnight later by Mr. Charles Watts, who will also hold a two-nights' debate, besides lecturing in the district under the new Financial Scheme. Other lectures will be delivered by Messrs. Cohen, Forder, Snell, Ward, and Armfield, and Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner. Unfortunately, it is impossible to make a charge for admission. The Branch, therefore, relies upon local Freethinkers to render their utmost financial support.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice in Plymouth. He had an enthusiastic reception, and both lectures were highly appreciated. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday he debated in the same town. Next week Mr. Watts will have something to say about the discussion.

This evening, Sunday, September 26, Mr. Watts lectures in the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "The Theory of the Resurrection."

Digitized by Google

Mr. Cohen had three good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday, and was in excellent form. A correspondent of ours walked twelve miles to hear him, and was well repaid.

Mr. Cohen is authorized to collect subscriptions under the new N. S. S. Financial Reorganization Scheme. All he receives will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker* first, and afterwards by the secretary at headquarters, who will forward an official receipt. Mr. Cohen sends the following (second) list from Glasgow, those marked *(p)* being paid: B. D., 10s. *(p)*; W. Allen, 1s. *(p)*; Mr. and Mrs. Jones, 5s. *(p)*; A Friend, £2 *(p)*; W. Turnbull, 5s. *(p)*; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, 10s. *(p)*; O. Jamieson, 5s.; A. Paton, 10s.; Mrs. Faulkner, 2s. 6d.; J. Turnbull, 5s.

We are always glad to receive our American exchange, the New York *Truthseeker*, which is conducted with such signal ability and devotion by Eugene and George Macdonald. The former is nominally the editor, but really the work is done (we believe) under a free-and-easy brotherly arrangement. The last number to hand contains a leaderette referring to our article on "Anarchy and Assassination." Mr. Macdonald (we don't know which is the writer) endorses the view we expressed. "The Governments and States," he says, "now having the life or death of citizens at their disposal keep the world well supplied with executions, and an extension of capital privileges to societies and individuals is a tendency that cannot be curbed too soon."

George Macdonald has a beautiful vein of sly facetiousness in his composition, derived no doubt from a pawky Scotch ancestor. It lends a charm to his weekly "Observations." The Free Lovers among the American Secularists don't appear to like the conduct of other Secularists who decline to be Free Lovers. They have, therefore, decided to form a separate organization. George Macdonald, however, is satisfied with a Freethought Society that sticks to Freethought, and leaves its members their right of individual liberty on other questions. "Of course," he says, "I cannot join the new organization, even as a passive member, nor can I attend its conventions. It is a man's duty to defend the sanctity of his fireside; hence, in these days, when time-honored institutions are imperilled, he should stay at home to work the gatling gun against the would-be destroyers of his domestic peace, and send his wife and children to foregather with the social innovators." That will do, George; you won't improve it.

The Watford Exchange Society is formed for study and free discussion. The syllabus for the autumn session announces debates on Monarchy, Vivisection, Foreign Missions, and Ibsen's Dramas. November 5 is to be a Shakespearean evening, with special reference to Colonel Ingersoll's grand lecture on the immortal dramatist.

Mr. Moss informs us that he had a large audience in Victoria Park last Sunday, including the veterans R. A. Cooper and W. P. Ball. This Sunday morning Mr. Moss lectures on Peckham Rye, and in the evening at Camberwell.

The Bradlaugh Club holds two public meetings on the evenings of September 28 and October 1 as a "Bradlaugh Celebration." At the first, addresses will be delivered on Bradlaugh's freethought work, at the second on his political and social work. The speakers announced are G. J. Holyoake, George Howell, A. B. Moss, F. J. Gould, Dr. Drysdale, Stewart D. Headlam, W. Heaford, H. P. Ward, and "Chilperic."

The New York *Missionary Review* publishes an article on Japan by the Rev. W. E. Griffis, D.D., who sadly confesses that the gospel of Herbert Spencer is the favorite creed of the average educated Japanese. The reverend gentleman comes to the conclusion that the Japanese are not a religious people. Perhaps this accounts for the wonderful progress they have made during the last half century.

Mr. Swain, secretary of the Derby Branch, sends us a highly flattering report of the week's Freethought mission conducted by Mr. Percy Ward. The meetings increased in size and enthusiasm, and we are informed that Mr. Ward was brilliant in discussion. The Branch has to struggle against financial difficulties, but its propaganda is telling on the town.

Our East London friends have already issued tickets for a Tea and Concert which they intend holding on Sunday, October 10, at the King's Hall, 83 and 85 Commercial-road, E. There is to be a good entertainment, and ladies are specially invited. Tickets may be obtained from G. J. Warren, 20 Rhodeswell-road, E., J. Neate, 385 Bethnal Green-road, and at the lecture stations.

Mr. W. D. Rolley would make an active member of a Freethought Letter-Writing Corps, were one formed. He has a capital reply in the *Islington Gazette* to a well-known Christian Evidence man, whom the editor seems to have permitted to wander at large.

September 16 was the jubilee of the purchase of Shakespeare's House at Stratford-on-Avon. In the agitation for a committee to acquire the house Harriet Martineau took a leading part.

The Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen*, which always knows a good thing when it sees it, says of Ingersoll's lecture on Shakespeare: "The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness which many may envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."

We have nothing further to report concerning the Browne case. Mr. Forder has been burying his mother, who died suddenly at Yarmouth at a very advanced age. When he returns to London and business we shall request him to obtain the one thing indispensable, without which it will be impossible to judge what should be done with respect to Mr. Browne's trial—the assistance of his wife and children being a comparatively simple matter. We must have a copy of what was written on those postcards. To proceed without it is merely acting blindfold.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, is reprinting from our columns the articles of "Abracadabra" on the Gospel Narratives. These papers, like his former series, are well worth republishing in more permanent form.

THOSE KIDS.

A LITTLE girl was watching the moon one evening as it rose over the hill, and finally she turned to her grandmother and asked: "Grandma, who made the moon?" "Why," replied the old lady, "God did, my child." The little girl thought for a moment, and then replied: "Well, anyhow, he made it with a mighty dirty face."

Professor Sully tells in *Children's Ways* of an American little girl who, on being told that God watches us always and everywhere, declared that she "would *not* be so tagged."

Divine Omniscience struck another little fellow as equally incredible with Divine Omnipresence: "I know a 'ickle more than Kitty, and you know a 'ickle more than me; and God knows a 'ickle more than you, I s'pose; then he can't know so very much, after all."

One little offender of four, when reminded by his sister—two years older—that he would be shut out from heaven, retorted impiously, "I don't care"; adding, for reasons best known to himself, "Uncle won't go—I'll stay with him."

"Ma," inquired Bobby, "hasn't pa a queer idea of heaven?" "Well, I think not, Bobby. Why?" "I heard him say that the week you spent in Brighton seemed like heaven to him."

Even in an advanced stage of civilization there is always a tendency to prefer those parts of literature which favor ancient prejudices rather than those which oppose them. And in cases where this tendency is very strong the only effect of great learning will be to supply the materials which may corroborate old errors and confirm old superstitions. In our time such instances are not uncommon, and we frequently meet with men whose erudition ministers to their ignorance, and who, the more they read, the less they know. There have been states of society in which this disposition was so general that literature has done far more harm than good. Thus, for example, in the whole period from the sixth to the tenth centuries there were not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves, and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was, during those four centuries, sunk in the most degrading ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the "fathers." From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of that time is principally composed.—*H. T. Buckle.*

Digitized by Google

IVORY, APES, AND PEACOCKS.

In the veracious old documents concerning Sheikh Solomon it is related that "the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes, and peacocks. So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom" (1 Kings x. 22, 23). The parallel passage (2 Chron. ix. 21) says: "The king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Huram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes, and peacocks."

Many have been the disquisitions upon ancient history and geography founded on this passage. Tarshish has been located in various quarters, but a consensus of opinion now identifies it with Tartessus, the Phœnician colony near Granada, in Spain, referred to by Arrian. Eusebius says Tarshish was in Spain. The only trouble is that neither ivory, apes, nor peacocks are found there, unless we translate kophim or apes as Gibraltar monkeys. But this word has been identified with the Sanskrit *kapi*, ape, and *habbu* for ivory, with the Egyptian *ebu*.

Dr. Keil, the learned German commentator on Kings, tries to slope out of any difficulty by suggesting that the word for peacocks "probably denotes *aves Numidicæ*, a choice delicacy of the later Romans, which comes from Tucca, a town of Mauretania and Numidia." This is hardly satisfactory. Peacocks were a royal sign known to the Persians, and also to the Greeks, who associated them with Hera, as the Latins did with Juno. The only other passage translated peacocks is in Job xxxix. 13; but there the Hebrew word is totally different, and is properly translated "ostrich" in the Revised Version. A long while ago Sir Emerson Tennant pointed out in his *Ceylon* (ii. 102) that "the terms by which these articles (ivory, apes, and peacocks) are designated in the Hebrew Scriptures are identical with the Tamil names, by which some of them are called in Ceylon to the present day—Turkeyim may be recognised in *Tokei*, the modern name for these birds." In Sanskrit "peacocks" are Cikhi, but the word seems to be an onomatop, or descriptive imitative name like, maybe, our "chicken."

Professor Max Müller, who was very loth to believe that Buddhism could have influenced Christianity, even after Alexander had opened up the route to India, and Asoka, the Indian Buddhist king, had sent missionaries to Antiochus, King of Syria, yet says: "That a channel of communication was open between India, Syria, and Palestine, in the time of Solomon, is established beyond doubt, by certain Sanskrit words which occur in the Bible as names of articles of export from Ophir, which, taken together, could not have been exported from any country but India." So far from this being established beyond doubt, we shall see, I think, there is ample reason for questioning it, so far at least as regards Solomon's alleged "navy." Professor Max Müller seems to associate the ivory, apes, and peacocks of Tarshish with the statement (1 Kings x. 11), that "the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug-trees and precious stones"—and to take the almug-trees for sandal-wood from India. But the passage with which we are concerned implies that the ivory, apes, and peacocks came from Tarshish; and Tarshish, we gather, even from the story of Jonah, lay to the west of Joppa. There is more difficulty about the situation of Ophir. Some make it India, others Cush (wherever Cush may have been); some place it on the Persian Gulf, others on the Red Sea, and yet others on the east coast of Africa. Certainly ivory, apes, and peacocks might come by way of Ophir; only Ophir is not mentioned where they are spoken of.

Speaking of this passage to my friend "Chilperic," he pointed out that the peacocks, which alone would decisively show a connection with India, are entirely wanting in the Septuagint. This version, which is far more ancient than any Hebrew manuscript, reads the passage in Kings thus: "Solomon had a ship of Tharsis in the sea with the ships of Chiram: one ship came to the king every three years out of Tharsis, laden with gold and silver, and wrought stones and hewn stones"—a more profitable cargo than apes and peacocks, though one would think they had plenty of stones in Palestine. The passage in Chronicles reads in the LXX.: "For a ship went for the king to Tharsis with the servants of Chiram: once every three years came vessels from Tharsis to the king, laden with gold and silver and ivory and apes." Here we have the apes, but not the peacocks, and of course all these may have come from Africa by way of Carthage. It is notable that the LXX. reads "Carthage" for Tarshish" in Isaiah xxiii. 1, 6, 10, and 14. The passage in Chronicles is mere Midrash, written eight hundred years or so after the supposed time of Solomon, whose wealth increased in imagination as he was farther removed in fact. And it appears likely from the Septuagint that the ivory, apes, and peacocks crept into Kings from Chronicles, as the seven hundred horsemen of 2 Samuel viii. 4 become the seven thousand of 1 Chronicles xviii. 4. All the stories told of Solomon's wealth are downright fables. 1 Kings x. 14 says: "The weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred three-score and six talents of gold." This would be over £4,000,000 annual income. Yet only in the previous generation "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel" (1 Samuel xiii. 19). "All the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon" (2 Chron. ix. 23). Yet the position of Palestine shows it must have been tributary to either Egypt or Assyria, while the plateau on which Jerusalem is built could never have accommodated more than forty or fifty thousand inhabitants. Solomon's temple, according to the record itself, was a mere shanty, ninety feet by thirty; and probably the sensual old sultan had fewer wives and concubines than a mid-African chief. Not a single shekel of his fabulous wealth has been discovered by the Palestine Exploration Fund, nor even the tomb of David and all his successors who slept with their fathers. Of course these things may yet providentially turn up, together with the ivory and skeletons of apes and peacocks.

J. M. W.

TIMES CHANGE.

Gospel Shops for Sale!

Passing along Gresham-street westward the other day, I noticed a large black board which caused me to recall Matt. xxi. 13, having in large white letters, "London Joint Stock Bank. Site of the Wood-street Branch." Just below this new staring notice is an old, time-worn, almost illegible notice board setting forth various details, the heading of which is Church of St. Michael, Wood-street, and St. Mary Staining; so that, in spite of the dual protection of two patron saints, the house of prayer changes its character, as set forth two thousand years ago. Will this be taken by the faithful as a fulfilment of prophecy?

The earliest record of this church dates somewhere about 1328, and old Stow speaks of the St. Michael of his time as a "proper thing," and tells a tall yarn in connection with the head of James IV. of Scotland, which head seems to have had a rough time after the battle of Flodden Field. The head, after being chopped off by some workmen, was brought by one Young, a master glazier, to Elizabeth, to Wood-street, where he lived, keeping it because of the sweet savor given forth. When this savor became a bit too strong the head was given to the sexton of St. Mike's to bury.

The present building was built by Wren, 1675, for £2,554, and the ecclesiastical commissioners have now sold building and freehold for £31,500. In a short time there will probably be—when the builder's men start in with pick and shovel—quite an assemblage of sweet savors, and several more verses of Holy Scripture fulfilled to the utmost letter.

One thing is very completely proved by the above. To build churches in the City of London is certainly *not* the way to perpetuate one's name; Wren's churches must be getting scarce, and there are certainly more banks.

It would seem that the old phrase, "nothing sacred to the sapper," will in this connection have to be recast and "auctioneer" substituted, for in an advertisement of a sale to take place at the Mart, on September 6th, we find it blasphemously suggested that Jezreel's Tower at New Brompton affords a suitable building and site for cement factory or brewery or lunatic asylum.

Recalling the history of this building, and the money which the dupes of the clever James White Jershom Jezreel must have poured out to buy the freehold and erect the massive tower, this last mention of "lunatic asylum" was very unkind of the knight of the hammer. Buyers of ascensionite towers seem scarce, and the Jezreelites have yet a chance of using their upper floor as a starting place of the 144,000: the highest bid was £3950; withdrawn, not sold.

T. Shore.

Volcanoes and Hell.

It would be a gross omission, in treating of the popular errors connected with volcanoes, to neglect that which considers sulphur to be the source of fire in eruptions. Burning sulphur was of old supposed to be the cause of the phenomena. The terror that volcanic eruptions excited in the minds of primitive man caused him to link them with the work of destructive gods. The seed thus sown bore fruit in various ways as time rolled on. Greek mythology wrought strange stories of the Immortals and the volcanoes of Vulcano and Etna. It remained for Christians to associate the doctrine of eternal torment in a fiery hell with the phenomena of volcanoes. The "Lake of Fire," which burned and burned, but was never consumed, was but a reminiscence of the crator of a volcano. So close indeed was the connection that Vulcano was long regarded as the place of everlasting punishment of the Emperor Theodosius; and the unfortunate Anne Boleyn was, in the ecclesiastical imagination of the age, spending the remaining portion of eternity in the heart of Etna. Similar ideas are reported by travellers as existing among the savage tribes of to-day. —*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

Digitized by Google

THE DYING ATHEIST.

THE tract literature of orthodox Christianity contains many recorded cases of the death-beds of Freethinkers, Deists, Infidels, Atheists, etc. In every case these persons are represented as suffering great mental trouble—some in agony and fear of hell, and others crying in vain for mercy of an offended God; the object of such tracts being to show the awful effects of the sin of unbelief in the doctrines taught by the Churches. The writer (rapidly approaching the age of fourscore) has been a confirmed Atheist upwards of forty years; and by the word Atheist he means a person who utterly rejects the idea that this world of humanity is governed and controlled by an all-powerful, wise, and good Being. The conditions under which the race has existed for thousands of years, and still continues, contradict this teaching. Among savage races cruelty and cannibalism is the long-time record, while another variety of horrors is manifest where so-called civilization prevails. The punishment attached to unbelief is unjust. If a man believes without evidence, he is a fool; and if he believes contrary to evidence, he is a knave. An intelligent God could never punish a man because he believed according to the best and honest conviction of his senses. Such a course would arraign him as a monster of injustice.

With regard to a life beyond the grave, outside of the fairy tales of spiritualism and the insane idiotisms of Theosophy, there is not a particle of evidence tending to prove the fact; men and animals go through the same routine, from youth to age; the accidents which destroy vast numbers of men and animals show no especial care for either, and imply complete indifference. It is not denied that an ignorant faith may supply comfort to its votaries, and this is equally true of all religions and among all races.

The believers in an immortality seem to forget that it requires an eternity to prove it, while they fail to suggest any intelligent occupation in another or spiritual world throughout the ages.

To the Atheist death is the end of life. Where, then, and what is his consolation? I reply: In the course of a long life I have enjoyed the loving regard of very dear friends. Many of them are passed away, leaving a delightful memory of faithfulness. Friends and enemies are both gone, but I am spared the thought that any of them are in a place of torment. In place of the Christian's God—"past finding out"—I have nature and her laws to be studied and obeyed, accepting the inevitable without fear, and looking forward at last to a time of eternal rest. Who can look at the events occurring in the world to-day in the shape of earthquakes, tornadoes, pestilence, and war, and believe in a personal benign Ruler? The late Oliver Wendell Holmes exclaims: "How can God bear it, this ball of anguish forever spinning around before him, and the great hum of its misery going up to his ears?"

The Atheist is spared this horrible thought. Nature, to him, has no mercies and no revenges; the great tides of life ebb and flow, not for him alone, but as a part of a universe of millions of worlds; his philosophy is to observe, to learn, to obey, to love the sunshine, to appreciate the beauty of the stars, to value the sympathy and love of friends, to help those in need, and recognise the universal brotherhood of man in joy and sorrow. He loves life, but does not fear death, and at the end "he sleeps the sleep that knows no waking." Have believers in a heaven and hell greater consolation than this?

The Christians' claim, that their God sent his son into the world nineteen hundred years ago to save mankind, is not borne out by facts. Leaving out entirely the history of the past since then, what is man's condition at present? In India, in 1895, over thirty thousand human beings were destroyed by poisonous snakes, or killed and eaten by hungry tigers. Cannibalism is still rife over a large part of Africa, while the great Governments of Europe keep vast armies to destroy each other when opportunity offers. The claim that God governs by certain laws becomes childish when we remember that a God who made the laws must also have made the consequences attending a breach of them. The crowning question of the Christian believer is this: "Who made this world and the universe we see?" I reply honestly, I do not know. But Atheism and science agree in this, that matter is eternal. Life is a phenomenon of matter in motion, and men and animals—from the lowest to the highest—have the same origin and the same destiny. I have been told by men calling themselves good Christians that their God is leading me blindfold down to hell, forgetting that such a statement pictures him as a monster unworthy of respect. As for the priests and preachers who for pay and power occupy themselves in flattering their credulous hearers, and in talking of goodness from Pope to street-talker, the Atheist has for such men the most supreme contempt. T. C.

Confine your thoughts to what is real,
And cease to nurse a vain ideal.—*R. H. Shepherd.*

BOOK CHAT.

MORISON BROS., of Glasgow, publish in their "Pennyworth Series" *A Pennyworth of Repartee*, by the Rev. David Macrae. It is a cheap pen'orth at which we may pause awhile. Repartee is not defined by Mr. Macrae beyond its being a smart reply. But its essential character is the giving tit-for-tat in a witty and conclusive way. A good illustration was supplied by a genial Radical and Freethinking Alderman of Margate, who never loses temper. An ill-mannered and bigoted mayor alluded to him as a blackguard. In reply he said smilingly: "Calling me a blackguard will not make me one, any more than calling the mayor a gentleman would make him one." Mr. Macrae's first illustration is scarcely so good as this. Here it is: A bumptious man, with a shock of flaming red hair, was bantering a bald-headed Yankee about his smooth pate. "Where were you," he said, "when the Almighty was giving out hair?" "I was there all right," said the Yankee, calmly; "but before the Almighty got my length he had nothing left but red hair; so I declined with thanks."

* * *

Of course we have some Scotch specimens. For instance: A Scotch sky-pilot went into a barber's shop to get shaved. The barber, unfortunately, was addicted to the use of whiskey, and his hand that day shook so much that a gash was made in the minister's cheek. "Eh, John, John!" cried the minister; "it's a terrible thing that whiskey." To which the barber replied: "Ay, sir, it maks the skin unco tender."

* * *

Mr. Macrae gives among repartees what is usually called "capping" a boasting remark or story. Thus, three men speaking of likenesses, one said he had several times been taken for Lord Salisbury. The other capped this by saying that *he* had been taken once for the German Emperor. The third declared that he had once a still more remarkable experience. A friend who had been away for years in Australia met him unexpectedly, and, after staring at him for a moment, exclaimed, "Holy Moses! is that you?" This is the revised version of an old profane joke in which the original version, as given in the *Freethinker* a dozen years ago, read "Good God" for "Holy Moses." But Mr. Macrae has already supplied us with a good "*Pennyworth of Chestnuts.*"

* * *

Gay and Bird publish *Walt Whitman: The Man*, by Thomas Donaldson, a work giving thirty years' reminiscences of the good grey poet, by one of his intimate friends. The same firm issue Whitman's works, and a portrait etched by Leon Richeton.

* * *

The Rev. William Henry Young, Professor of Homiletics, in Nova Scotia, writes a book on *How to Preach with Power*. Here is one of the most important items: "Scripture reveals the first process in correct breathing. When God made man He breathed *into his* NOSTRILS the breath of life; preachers are doctrinally wrong in sucking air through the mouth in defiance of this. *Always inhale through the nose alone.*" This combination of scripture and physiology is amusing.

* * *

The New Orthodoxy is the title of a new religious magazine which, we are informed, is to appear, under "the editorship of the Rev. Robert Tuck, B.A., in the early autumn." The magazine will "endeavor to aid in that reconstruction of the Evangelical faith which is demanded by the accepted results of modern science and criticism."

* * *

If the fragment of the Greek translation of the Old Testament MS. found by Mr. Burkitt, and ascribed to Aquila, be of the sixth century, the fact that the Tetragrammaton, name of Jahveh, is retained in the Phœnecian character proves the late use of the old character and the comparative modernity of the Square Hebrew. This is another blow at the Massoretic Bible text on which Jews have built, and Christians have followed them.

* * *

D. Nutt announces the publication of volume ii. of a *Dictionary of British Folk-Lore*, and a work on *Babylonian Influence on the Bible and Popular Beliefs*, the latter being the work of the Rev. A. S. Palmer.

* * *

Thomas J. Wise is doing a careful Tennyson Bibliography in the *Athenæum*. He included Mr. Foote's penny pamphlet on *Atheism and Suicide*.

* * *

The *Daily News*, noticing a missionary book entitled *Africa Waiting: or, The Problem of Africa's Evangelization*, says: "It may be remarked here that the Mohammedans are far the most successful proselytizers in Africa—far ahead of Romanists and Protestants. Readers interested in this subject may find in a lately-published work on *The*

Digitized by Google

Preaching of Islam many striking passages about the spread of Mohammedanism in the Dark Continent." Curious that God should send the world a supernatural and exclusively divine revelation, and yet allow a rival religion to spread more rapidly than the only true faith.

* * *

The October number of the *Adult* is before us. It is published at the office of the Legitimation League, 16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C., price twopence, and is devoted to the free discussion of sexual questions. Most of the writers are Free Lovers—that is to say, they are opposed to the institution of marriage. We have not the slightest objection to the discussion of the utility of this or any other institution. At the same time, we do not think that social progress is likely to be accelerated by jejune essays like some of those in the *Adult*. One article, signed "Lucy Stewart," denounces the Freethinker for getting "respectably married, just like his orthodox neighbor." The lady might just as well blame him for doing anything else like his orthodox neighbor; for instance, wearing trousers, shaving, and eating with a knife and fork. It is the sign of a small mind, not of a large one, to want to do everything as differently as possible from other people. Marriage existed before Christianity, and will probably outlive it; and the idea that Freethinkers should be Free Lovers because Christians get married needs only to be stated plainly to dispense with the necessity of criticism.

* * *

John Henry Mackay is engaged on a biography of Kasper Schmidt, the German Egoist, who wrote under the pseudonym of "Max Stirner," and who may be considered the John the Baptist of the insane Messiah of Egoism, Friedrich Nietzsche. The work is nearly finished, and will be published in German next February.

* * *

John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People*, which we have already noticed as they have been sent to us, are now issued in book form at eighteenpence. The volume contains twelve papers on Freethought, social, and political matters, and Mr. Robertson's pamphlet on *The Future of Liberalism*. The papers are written with much polemical vigor, and the first one, "The Priest and the Child," deserves extensive circulation at the present time.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SECOND COMING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Zionism, which periodically asserts itself among a section of the Jewish race, is welcomed as much by the Christians as the Jews. The Jews believe that the re-population by the Israelites of Palestine will at the same time witness the advent of the long-expected Messiah, while the Christians believe that the Jews must go back to the Holy Land before their Messiah can again appear. In the event of either or both appearing, how will the Jews or Christians know he is the right individual? What country will he visit first, and to what denomination will he first reveal himself? In the olden days his mode of travelling beat even the motor-car, for he often disappeared so quickly that no one saw him depart. Will he perform the same wonders as he did before, and visit the lunatic asylums, make all the insane people sane, and, on leaving—say, Battersea-park—to pay a visit to the old pensioners at Chelsea, discard the Albert Bridge and paddle across on the Thames? And, in visiting his followers in various parts of the world, will he patronize the famous Cook's excursions or make use of Shank's pony? If he appears to the Christians first, will the Jews string him up again? In this event, will he shuffle off this mortal coil for a period and then re-appear? It would be well for both Jews and Christians to consider these most important questions before raising that ten millions of money to buy back the land of Palestine. In the event of these wonders occurring, it may be assumed that Maskelyne and Cooke will have to retire.

DUDLEY WRIGHT.

ISAIAH VII. 14.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to the remarks of Mr. Haining, I can only say that I did not consider the point he has mentioned of sufficient importance to make another paragraph. I am often obliged to curtail matters in order to bring them within the compass of a single article. In this case, the prediction, such as it was, having, beyond all doubt, been fulfilled at the time, I did not think it necessary to point out that the word *Almah*, which is translated "virgin," simply means "youth," and, being feminine, would be more correctly rendered "young woman." Had the writer intended to indicate what in the modern physiological sense of the word is termed a "virgin," he should have employed the word *bethulah*. If Mr. Haining will turn to the passage in the Revised Version, he will see in the margin that this and the other point I mentioned are practically conceded. Here I may also take the opportunity of saying that I think the matters referred to by "Caiaphas"—but why such an inappropriate *nom de plume*?—are deserving of attention; but they in no way affect the only possible conclusions at which any rational person can arrive.

ABRACADABRA.

[On this same matter "Chilperic" writes: "Matthew i. 23 has nothing to do with the *Hebrew* text; it is the *Septuagint* that is quoted; and it is beside the mark to accuse the *Evangelist* of perverting the passage. The Septuagint translation of Isaiah vii. 14 is grammatically impossible. The revisers of the Old Testament recognised that the ordinary translation was wrong, but they only corrected it in the margin of the Revised Version. What the Hebrew says is: 'Behold the young woman, pregnant, and bearing a son, and she has called out his name, 'With us is El.'"]

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Christians, we know, live in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. They sing of the glorious times they are going to have "over there," but they usually exhibit particular anxiety not to go "over there." They not only call in the doctor at every ailment, but insist that others shall go and do likewise. To my mind, the conviction of one of the Peculiar People for following the injunctions of St James, calling in an elder while failing to call in a doctor, is going a shade too far. It is all very well to chaff them for depending on prayer; but it is a different matter to imprison them for not depending on the physician. Prayer is noxious when it frustrates available effort; but usually it is only a sedative, which, if it does no good, at least relieves the mind, and does no bodily harm. But a compulsory physician who is mistrusted, who may diagnose wrongly, and give drugs which may accelerate death instead of recovery, may be as much worse than prayer as hell is than purgatory. To compel parents to employ doctors they distrust—and in country districts there may be only one within a radius of many miles, and he perhaps a drunkard or incompetent for a difficult case—seems to me as gross a tyranny as that of compulsory vaccination. Parents should be responsible for giving careful nutrition, attention, and sanitary surroundings to their children; but State doctorcraft opens up as intolerable a prospect as State priestcraft. What is wanted is that all children shall be taught physiology in the schools. Then they may grow up able largely to dispense with the medicine man, and, when a doctor is called in, may be able to judge of his abilities for themselves. Every adult should be his or her own priest and own physician.

A PECULIAR SECULARIST.

PROFANE JOKES.

SUNDAY-school teacher (to Ah Sin, the laundryman)—"What are the wages of sin?" Ah Sin—"Sleventy-five cent a dozen. No checkee no washee."

At a church entertainment in Surrey the following item was seen on the program: "Miss Fisher—'Put me in my little bed.' Accompanied by the curate."

A newly-appointed Bishop of St. David's confided to an old Welsh clergyman his difficulty in mastering the Welsh double L. The parson replied: "Put the tip of your apostolic tongue in the roof of your episcopal mouth, my lord, and then hiss—hiss like —— like a gander, my lord!"

Kettle—"Why do you think him insane?" Skillet—"He attends church every Sunday alone, though his wife is away at the seashore."

Freddy went to Sunday-school. One day his father said to him: "How is this, Freddy? You have been going to Sunday-school for a long time now, and have never yet brought home a good ticket. I am really ashamed of you." "Papa," said the little culprit, swelling up like a toad, "I—I'll bring home a good ticket next Sunday, if—if I have to hook it!"

The Vicar's Wife—"Don't you think, my dear, you might cultivate a little more vehemence in your sermons?" The Vicar—"No; I should be very unpopular if I woke up the congregation."

The Freethinker has no theory, no pet scapegoat upon which he can throw his sins, and thereby escape the natural consequences of his wrong-doing. He has no great bankrupt salvation scheme by which to get rid of paying his honest debts.—*B. F. Underwood.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Theory of the Resurrection."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): Charles Bradlaugh's Birthday. Tea at 6, speeches at 7. Sketches ("Good for Nothing Nan" and "The Married Bachelor") to follow. September 28, at 8.15, Public meeting. October 1, at 8.15, Public meeting.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."

Hammersmith (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, Stanley Jones, A lecture.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards.

Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 8.15, A. B. Moss, A lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan; 8.30, Stanley Jones.

Islington (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 11.30, A. Guest, "Paley's 'Evidences of Christianity.'"

Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, C. Durrant.

Kingsland (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Secularism and its Advocates." With special reference to the late Charles Bradlaugh.

Limehouse (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, F. Haslam. September 28, E. Pack.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, E. Pack; 7, T. J. Thurlow. September 29, H. P. Ward.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 8.15, R. P. Edwards, A lecture

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, A lecture

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Bristol-street Board School): 11, G. W. Foote, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; 3, "Who was Moses?—A Reply to the King of Siam's Question"; 7, "God and the Devil."

Chatham Secular Hall (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, H. P. Ward, "Was Jesus an Infidel?"

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 6.30, G. Faulkner, A lecture.

Liverpool (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, J. M. Robertson, "The Reformation in the British Isles"; 7, "The Meaning of Atheism."

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Cocoa Rooms, Newbridge-street): September 28, at 8, Monthly meeting of members.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Derby (Market-place): 11, W. Dyson, "Facts for Christians; or, The Fight for the Children"; 7, "Is Jesus Christ Possible?—A Criticism of the *New Age*."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

J. Fagan, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 26, m., Hyde Park.

H. Percy Ward, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Brompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 10, a., Victoria Park. 17, Manchester. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

E. Pack, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 3, Chatham. 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m., Camberwell.

A. B. Moss, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—September 26, a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Ingersoll's Works.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.—Mistakes of Moses; Reply to Gladstone; Rome or Reason; Faith and Fact; God and Man; Dying Creed; The Ghosts; Great Mistake; Myth and Miracle; Real Blasphemy; and The Hope of the Future.

VOL. II.—Defence of Freethought; Why I am an Agnostic; Clergy and Common Sense; Do I Blaspheme? Marriage and Divorce; The Household of Faith; Limits of Toleration; Art and Morality; God and the State; Live Topics; Repairing the Idols; Truth of History; and Social Salvation.

VOL. III.—About the Holy Bible; Oration on the Gods; Walt Whitman; Paine the Pioneer; Humanity's Debt to Paine; Love the Redeemer; Religion of the Future; Breaking the Fetters; Difficulties of Belief; Is Suicide a Sin? Last Words on Suicide; and Christ and Miracles.

Cloth, gilt, 3s. 6d. each. Each vol. can be had separately.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin; Or, Darwin Made Easy.

By E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 33, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

Beware of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

Look for Autograph Registered Trade Mark

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

In *Red* Ink on each Box, without which None are Genuine.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians In parts 4 1. each.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERTS "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY. A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Our New Autumn-Winter Patterns are now ready; they include all the latest novelties in Suitings, Trouserings, Overcoatings, Dress and Costume materials. Our prices are extremely reasonable, and every care has been taken to include only the best-wearing materials. Just give our patterns a look before buying elsewhere. You will never regret it. Patterns on approval Post Free.

MACKINTOSHES

DOWN ANOTHER SHILLING.

The 630 Ladies' Mackintoshes have been reduced to less than 400. We are now clearing them at

11s. 6d. Each.

Flowers of Freethought, 2s. 6d., free with each garment.

Colors left—Brown, Fawn, Slate. Plain Colors: Brown, Fawn, Grey Checks and Mixtures.

This is a regular Eye-opening Line.

J. W. GOTT,

2 & 4 Union Street,

BRADFORD.

(Two Minutes from all the Railway Stations.)

If ever you visit Bradford, don't forget to call.

Are You Satisfied with Your Income?

Working Men and Women wanted everywhere to assist us in making our goods known.

WRITE FOR TERMS.

Persons with spare time can easily add from 10s. to 30s. to their weekly income.

INGERSOLL'S

Greatest Lecture

ON

SHAKESPEARE.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 40. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

CHRIST AND THE CORONERS.

"PECULIAR PEOPLE" cases are multiplying. In addition to the fresh one which is dealt with in our paragraphs this week, there is a still more recent one which serves as the occasion for this article. Mr. G. E. Hilleary, the West Ham coroner, held an inquest last Monday evening on the body of a child named James Senior, aged four years, whose death was due to cardiac failure and pulmonary collapse. Mary Ann Senior, the child's mother, deposed that nothing was done for him beyond the "customary prayers" and the "laying on of hands" by the Elders of the Church. James Senior, the father, decided to reserve any statement. Dr. Charles Saunders, Medical Officer of Health at West Ham, believed that a doctor might have saved the child's life, but could not "say positively." Being asked by the coroner whether the neglect of not calling in a doctor accelerated death, he replied: "I cannot quite go so far as that." Yet in the very next breath he declared that he was "quite of opinion that medical advice and necessary medicines would have prolonged life." Perhaps he did not see the utter inconsistency of these two statements; and perhaps, at bottom, he really meant that, while prayer alone had not saved the child's life, prayer and medicine might have done it together. The jury consulted in private for nearly half-an-hour, and then brought in a unanimous verdict that if medical aid had been called in the child's life might have been prolonged. But this did not satisfy the coroner. He wanted to know whether the jury meant that the child's death was due to natural causes, or that the father should go for trial on the charge of manslaughter. The jury retired again, and after another absence of half-an-hour they returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against the father, James Senior, who was accordingly committed for trial on the coroner's warrant.

This being the second case relegated to a jury in a criminal court, we think the matter is of sufficient importance to call for another article in the *Freethinker*. The ordinary newspapers are too cowardly to speak out, and the religious journals are pursuing a policy of hypocritical silence.

Let us repeat the governing facts in the consideration of this matter. Christianity is the established religion of this country, and the Bible is declared by law to be the inspired Word of God. To bring either Christianity or the Bible into disbelief and contempt is to commit a crime punishable with twelve months' imprisonment like a common malefactor. The present writer has suffered that punishment, and has therefore a more than academic interest in the subject. What we desire to know is this. Will the law of England, and will judges and juries, while punishing a man for *disbelieving* the Bible, also punish him for *believing* it? Are the two extremes of sincerity to be rewarded with imprisonment, and are the intermediate multitude of hypocrites to lock up and torture both divisions of the honest minority?

It is not these poor Peculiar People, after all, who are being sent for trial by a judge and jury in a criminal court. *It is Jesus Christ.* That is the point to be pressed as firmly as possible on the attention of Englishmen. The verdict of manslaughter against these sincere Christians, if endorsed in a superior court, will really be a verdict against Jesus Christ, who taught them to do the very thing for which they are prosecuted. It is idle for the "Higher Critics" to explain that the second half of the last chapter of Mark is not in the earliest manuscripts, and is probably an interpolation. It is in the English Bible, and until it is removed, with the sanction of parliament, every Christian is bound to obey it. Now it is distinctly stated by Jesus Christ himself, in that portion of Mark, that those who believed his gospel should not only be able to take up serpents and drink poison, but also be able to lay hands on the sick so as to heal them of their disease.

To keep this passage in the English Bible, to declare that book the word of God, and the utterer of this particular text to be the second person of the Christian godhead; to do this, and at the same time to send a man to prison as a criminal for believing it, not theoretically but practically, not with idle acquiescence but with active conviction, is a scandal that cannot be properly stigmatized in decent language. To do it justice would require the epithets and expletives of Aristophanes and Rabelais. It is too gross a scandal for the more delicate pen of a Lucian or a Voltaire.

We quoted in our previous article the passage in James, which elaborates the saying of Jesus Christ in the last chapter of Mark. James is alleged to have been the brother of Jesus, and in cases of sickness he distinctly says that the elders are to be called in, that they are to pray over the patient and anoint him with oil, and that this treatment shall ensure his recovery. James and Jesus ought to stand in the dock instead of these Peculiar People, and the sight would be worth seeing.

Furthermore, every clergyman of the Church of England (at least) should be prosecuted for instigating to a breach of the law; for this very fifth chapter of James is appointed to be read twice a year in every church of the Establishment. Every time a clergyman reads it he incites his congregation to do what coroners' juries are pronouncing to be manslaughter.

What a pity it is that some honest rural clergyman (we hope there is *one* left) does not bring this matter before the Church Congress at Nottingham. Many less important matters are being discussed there. Archbishop Temple, for instance, is talking unctuously about the *unity* of the Church, which is to be brought about more or less miraculously, some time before the day of judgment. But the *honesty* of the Church is far more serious. In the long run, the Church has a good deal to lose by being found out; and it *will* be found out if it goes on preaching from Christ and St. James, and keeps a decorous silence while poor men are punished as criminals for doing what Christ and St. James plainly tell them to do. There is no limit to clerical hypocrisy, but there is a limit to lay hypocrisy; and when the laity have had enough of it, they will turn upon the Church with passionate indignation. It is really of no use to pursue the ostrich policy. Wilful blindness to facts does not abolish them. The day of reckoning will come. And, as Carlyle said, the ostrich who buries his head is wounded more ignominiously in the rear.

We do not intend to drop the case of these Peculiar People. We shall deal with it again. It furnishes Freethinkers with a splendid opportunity. It provides an object-lesson in the superstition of the Bible, and the futility of the Christian religion, and the decay of sincerity among the great mass of its professors. And presently, if it happens that one of these Peculiar People is imprisoned, it will be our duty to see whether the country cannot be flooded with an exposure of the Scripture—and Jesus Christ!

G. W. FOOTE.

Digitized by Google

WHEN WERE THE GOSPELS WRITTEN?

In the last number of *McClure's Magazine*, of New York, is an article with the above title, by F. G. Kenyon, M.A., purporting, as the secondary title has it, to give "The Evidence of Recent Discoveries, and What it has Done towards Answering the Question." The paper is, perhaps, only the beginning of a series, for it seems a somewhat belated one. The really important recent discovery of the *Logia* of Jesus is not as much as mentioned, and the only discovery dealt with is the very debateable one of the *Diatessaron* ascribed to Tatian, which, if genuine, is not so very recent, since, it is said, a copy has been in the Vatican since 1791. This, however, like a number of other things, requires proof.

The first person to mention a *Diatessaron* is the unveracious Eusebius, who (*Eccles. Hist.*, iv. 29) tells us that Tatian was a heretic who said that "Marriage was only corruption and fornication. And he also devised arguments of his own against the salvation of Adam" Eusebius continues: "Tatianus, having formed a certain body and collection of gospels, I know not how, has given this the title *Diatessaron*—that is, the gospel by the four, or the gospel formed of the four." Baur and the author of *Supernatural Religion*, not having the ways of God before their wicked eyes, argued that Tatian's *Diatessaron* might not be constructed out of the canonical Gospels. But there is a special providence which looks after the interests of the Church, and when any ancient document is particularly wanted it is pretty sure to turn up. The humble instruments of Providence in these matters are usually Greeks, Syrians, or of the chosen race; but in this case it appears to have been a Catholic Copt.

"The story of the recovery of the *Diatessaron* is curious," says Mr. Kenyon. It is, indeed, and might be thought very strange had we not studied the wondrous ways of the Lord. Father Ciasca, Orientalist scriptor to the Vatican, in 1886 chanced to show the Arabic MS.—which, by the way, could not be by Tatian, since it begins with the second gospel instead of that ascribed to John—to the Vicar Apostolic of the Catholic Copts, then on a visit to Rome; and this gentleman at once remarked that he had seen another copy of the same work in private hands in Egypt, and could undertake to procure it. He was as good as his word, and the harmony of the Gospels—or, at any rate, a Latin version of an Arabic version of a Syriac version of a Greek harmony of the Gospels—was published to the world, to the confutation of all unbelievers! After this, who can doubt the Devil setting Christ on the pinnacle of a temple as related by Tatian (iv. 47), or the devils going into the pigs (xi. 43)?

The question, When were the Gospels written? as far as Mr. Kenyon's paper is concerned, resolves itself into When the *Diatessaron* ascribed to Tatian, and introduced to the world by Padre Agostino Ciasca, of the Guild of Writers, to the Vatican, was written. On this question there is always a safe basis to begin upon—viz., the date of publication. This was in the year 1888 of human redemption, being the jubilee of the priesthood of His Holiness Pope Pecci, whom may the saints preserve. It is quite safe to start there. How far Mr. Kenyon can safely get beyond this in crossing the gulf of sixteen hundred years, I leave him to decide. He may shew it conforms to the statement of Bar-Salibi, and to the fragments of the commentary ascribed to St. Ephrem. Who would produce a Tatian that did not? But it does more. It conforms to orthodoxy. Dr. Hogg, its latest editor, says: "If the *Diatessaron* has been growing so as to represent the ordinary text of the canonical Gospels more completely, we have also evidence that suggests that it has been at some time or times purged of certain features that are lacking in these canonical Gospels."* What, then, is the worth of its evidence?

According to "Epiphanius" (Hær., xlvi. 1), the *Diatessaron* of Tatian was called the Gospel according to the Hebrews. But the fragments of that Gospel, reproduced by Mr. E. B. Nicholson, are quite distinct from this *Diatessaron*. Then Theodoret (Hær., i. 20) tells us that Tatian, in his *Diatessaron*, cut out the genealogies and whatever other passages show that the Lord was born of the seed of David according to the flesh. This concoction omits the genealogies, possibly from the impossibility of reconciling them in one narrative, but gives the story of Christ's birth according to the flesh, and calls him the son of David, as in our Gospels. All the early Fathers who mention Tatian wrote of him as a heretic, and considered his *Diatessaron* heretical. Irenæus called him false, ignorant, and blind. Yet the *Diatessaron* produced is orthodox, and, although Tatian condemned animal food and wine, gravely records that the Son of man came eating and drinking. Its close conformity to our Gospels is curious, in view of Dr. Tischendorf's admission: "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them" (Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of N. T., p. xv.). Still more strange is its conformity to Tischendorf's own Harmony of the Gospels, which is so close that it looks as if the compiler, in the second century, had been inspired to foreknow what Tischendorf would do in the nineteenth.

When the Lord takes to backing up Christian evidences we must look for such wonders. The sceptic asked for Tatian, and, lo, Tatian—or an imitation—is produced. Who knows but that some wandering Simonides may yet find the originals of the Gospels themselves; adorned, perhaps, with a photograph of their hero, and with Röntgen rays exhibiting the bones, blood, and nervous structure of the divinity?

What, if genuine, does the *Diatessaron* prove? Its date, the very language in which it was originally written, is uncertain. It gives no information concerning the evangelists, whose stories it copies; as to their personality, their character, or trustworthiness. Their yarns, inherently incredible, are no whit more worthy of credence if twisted together in a so-called harmony in the early days of the Church.

But the newly-found *Logia*? Aye, there is a discovery indeed. Henceforth no one can take it for granted that any quotations found in the fathers are necessarily from our Gospels. They may be from some similar *Logia* which may yet turn up. For the ways of Providence are very peculiar.

J. M. Wheeler.

* *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, additional volume, p. 38; 1897.

THE PRESENT LIFE.

In using the phrase "present life" we do not wish it to be implied that we have any belief in a future state of existence. Personally, we have no faith in any life "beyond the grave." We regard man as a combination of material parts depending for the manifestations termed life upon organic organization; and it appears to us that, when the conditions necessary to functional activity are gone, life will cease. Of course we do not deny a future existence, for the simple reason that we have no means of obtaining any knowledge upon the subject; and we hold that it would be unreasonable to either affirm or deny that of which we know nothing. All the teachings which we have examined in reference to "another world" seem to us merely speculations based upon emotional feeling, without any proof of their accuracy. The Agnostic position upon this question commends itself to us as being perfectly safe. With some knowledge of the present life, we are aware of certain duties connected therewith; the first of which we think is, to seek to attain the highest possible self-improvement—physically, morally, and intellectually—and thus secure a healthy and well-regulated body; and if we have a "soul" it should be all the better for being allied with superior conditions. Then, if we are to live again, that life will be the purer in consequence of our having realized a noble and exalted career on earth. We have not the slightest desire to condemn those who consider they have evidence to justify them in believing in another life. For years we have earnestly sought for that evidence, but have found it not; and we refuse to profess that to which our reason does not assent.

The present life, if properly regulated, is quite sufficient to satisfy the desires of Secularists. We do not believe that this world must necessarily be a "vale of tears"; or, as the Bible alleges, that we "were born in sin and shapened in iniquity," and that, therefore, a person possesses a "vile body." It has been well said by a writer, whose name we forget for the moment: "While Christians have quarrelled and fought each other on almost every other article of faith, they have always agreed that

Digitized by Google

to be worldly-minded is a sin, and that no one could be fit for heaven without learning to hold in light estimation the things of this world. But why should we despise it? Is it not our home? Do not the sweet memories of our childhood cluster about its rocks and rills, woods and templed hills? Did not the very sunshine seem to bless us, as we roamed the fields or played upon its shores? With what delight we gathered flowers or reclined upon the sweet-scented grass in spring and summer, gathered fruit in autumn, tossed snow or skated over the ice in winter! As time flew on, did we not find a nobler pleasure in acquiring knowledge, and finding the world so much greater and more wonderful than we had been led to hope or dream? Are not these all made sacred by the remembrance of the brooding tenderness of a mother's love and a father's faithful and patient care? Was it not here that love first stirred our hearts with unspeakable emotion, and kindled us into heroic purpose and devotion?" No; with all life's drawbacks we, as Secularists, do not despair of humanity if it can be once freed from the mischief and errors imposed upon it by kings and priests and their gloomy theology. We know that human nature is not wholly corrupt and abominable, incapable of good, and necessarily prone to wickedness. On the contrary, we are possessed with the inspiriting confidence that within ourselves lie the potencies that we need; that it is possible to devote our energies to the task of successfully removing evil from our midst, in the sure and certain hope of reaping a good harvest, providing that good seed be previously sown.

The fact is that for nearly two thousand years mankind have been taught a radically false and mischievous theory of existence. We have been told that God has bestowed it on us as a trust or a pledge; need we wonder, therefore, that men have, like the man in the parable, buried their talents in the earth rather than wisely putting them to the best uses for their own welfare? If the old theological hypothesis of human life were the true one, such a life would, indeed, not be worth having. If the orthodox theory were correct; if we were environed by a subtle, tempting devil, by lusts and passions knocking perpetually at the heart, demanding admission; and if the penalty of yielding to these were to incur eternal damnation in hell, why then it would have been better ten thousand times that man had never been born. Upon this theory the Bible interrogatory of "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" acquires a terrible significance. Happily, however, such teaching is as false as it would be fiendish. We are not human shuttlecocks, to be bandied about between God and the Devil—now inclining towards heaven, now sent spinning and whirling away towards the gates of hell. No; science and reason have emancipated us from the rusty fetters and shackles of such theological figments. At last we have learned to recognise that we are men, independent of all supernatural powers, if such there be; and with this recognition there have also come to us clearer, better, nobler, worthier notions respecting human existence.

The present life affords ample scope for practical works of utility—a fact which concerns every Secularist whose aim it is to so act that the world shall be the better for the part he has played therein. On every side reforms are needed. Religion has to be divested of its priestly-invented creeds, its council-decreed dogmas, and its relentless teaching of future retribution. Church dignitaries have to be induced to use their ability and influence in instructing the people how properly to live, assuring them that such a course is the only safe preparation for a happy death. The schoolmaster must be impressed with the importance of aiding in the training of the rising generation so that they may be enabled to master the important duties of life, and thus prove a credit to themselves and useful to others. The moralist must be brought to acknowledge that ethical conduct consists in the performance of good actions apart from all theological considerations. The politician must be convinced that his business is to labor for the extension of the basis of national freedom, so that all qualified citizens shall share its advantages, regardless of class distinctions or religious restrictions. The social reformer must be reminded that the laboring classes have still unjust burdens imposed upon them; that the wrongs of woman have to be removed, and her proper position in society recognised and maintained; that the capitalist and laborer, having mutual responsibilities in the production of wealth, should each have a fair share in the result of the alliance; and that the working classes must be encouraged to rely upon themselves, and to act justly towards all with whom they come in contact. Finally, it should be understood that true social elevation can be only effectually secured by sound education and harmonious co-operation.

It will thus be seen that, if we wish to avail ourselves of the fullest advantages of the present life, we should do our best to construct a new order of things, to strive to effect a wide, universal change in the thought and action of society. In breaking down the wall of prejudice and superstition, upon which all supernatural religion is founded, consists the destructive work of Secularism; while its constructive work simply means educating the people into accepting the great principle that all human improvement must be achieved by humanity alone, without reference to the aid of any external Being, if such there be.

CHARLES WATTS.

COLOSSAL IMPUDENCE.*

A SMALL band of irreconcilables professes to find *external* evidence from archæology to combat the conclusions of the Higher Criticism. The work before us is typical of its class. Dr. Hommel puts forward four main propositions:—

1. That the proper names contained in the Pentateuch agree in formation with proper names found upon Semitic monuments of an early date.

2. That the Minean and Sabean inscriptions go back to a remote antiquity.

3. That the names of the eastern kings of Genesis xiv. have been discovered upon the monuments.

4. That the Jews before the time of David spoke Arabic, and were ignorant of Hebrew.

It must be evident to everyone that, even if these four propositions were *true*, they would not concern the conclusions of the Higher Criticism in the least degree; but the Doctor, in the usual style of his school, flouts them all as if they were demonstrated facts of the highest importance to criticism. The *truth* of his propositions, however, is but a secondary matter, as it always is to the orthodox apologist.

I.—Dr. Hommel's first assertion is not worth examination; for, of course, Semitic names must always be formed upon Semitic principles. Mr. G. B. Gray, in his *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names* (London; 1896), has anticipated Dr. Hommel's whole position, and he has articles in the *Expositor* and *Expository Times* which are well worth reading.

II.—The early date of the Minean and Sabean inscriptions is a totally unproved hypothesis. When Glaser and Hommel have any trustworthy evidence in support of their theory we shall be glad to study it. These said inscriptions are in the Himyaritic character, which was used in Arabia before the time of Mohammed, and which was the original of the modern Abyssinian, or Ethiopic, script. The Himyaritic alphabet is well known to scholars, and specimens may be seen in the British Museum. Some of the Himyaritic inscriptions are dated according to the era of the Seleucids; and these dates only belong to the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era. Dr. Halevy, Dr. Mordtmann, and Dr. Müller, who are considered the highest authorities upon this subject, are totally opposed to Glaser's suggestions of early date; and it is nothing better than an imposition to throw Glaser and Hommel's theories at the heads of the British public, which knows nothing of the question. Many of Dr. Glaser's inscriptions are not even published, and Hommel himself says, on page 16 of the present work: "I earnestly hope that Edward Glaser will not oblige us to wait much longer before he consents to open his treasure chambers.....He is, however, very chary of his inscriptions, and only allows us to examine them piecemeal.....A great benefit would be conferred if these documents, which no one but a Glaser could have ferretted out and procured, were to be placed in some museum where they would be available for general use." (!) Dr. Glaser's views are set forth in a work of two

* *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition, as Illustrated by the Monuments.* A Protest against the Modern School of Old Testament Criticism. By Dr. Fritz Hommel. (S. P. C. K.; 1897.)

Digitized by Google

volumes, entitled *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens.* The first of these volumes is unobtainable. The second is a thick book of 575 pages, with neither table of contents nor index. The inquirer, therefore, finds great difficulties before him. Dr. Glaser's views on the antiquity of the Himyarite inscriptions are not new. They were anticipated in the *Geography of Arabia* of the notorious Rev. Charles Foster, upon grounds just as wild as his. But any crackbrained hypothesis is considered good enough for the purpose of combatting the Higher Critics.

III.—The pretence that the names of the kings in Genesis xiv. have been found upon the cuneiform monuments can only be characterized as a gross fraud. But, even if they were, that would not prove Genesis xiv. to be historically true; nor would it affect the conclusions of Biblical critics. It is utterly untrue that the critics (as a whole) attack this chapter. On the contrary, many of them, from Ewald downwards, have treated this silly saga with the greatest respect, and have considered it as a piece of ancient history embedded among the Pentateuchal legends. In the *Guardian* of March 11, 1896, Canon Driver went into the whole question with his accustomed cautious deference to the views of his opponents; and, after pointing out that *no* critic had ever contended that the names in Genesis xiv. 1 were unhistorical, he went on to say, very truly, "That the historical character of a given person is in itself no guarantee of the credibility of a particular act"; and that the bearing of the alleged discoveries upon the credibility of the chapter was *nil.* But the whole of these identifications are of such a strained and over-drawn character that they would be laughed at if urged in support of anything but a religious theory. They have only to be stated in order to prove their absurdity. A town in Babylonia was called Larsam. This is asserted to be the Ellasar of Genesis. One of the kings of Larsam was named Kim-Agum, Kim-Sin, or Arad-Sin. These names are said to be the same as Arioch! Some years ago Dr. Hommel was quite certain that Amraphel was a Babylonian king named Sin-muballit; but in 1892 he announced that Amraphel was another individual named Khammurabi. So long as he can identify him with somebody, he is not particular who it is. As to Kedorlaomer, Mr. Pinches told the Victoria Institute in January, 1896, that he had discovered a Babylonian tablet, which is probably later in date than the Christian era; and upon this tablet was the name *Ku-ku-ku-bit*, which might possibly be an ideogram for Kedorlaomer! Of course it might as well be an ideogram for Dick Turpin. But the Dominican, Father Scheil, also discovered another tablet, upon which he read *Ku-tur-nu-ukh-ga-mar*, as our old friend K., who seems to be recognised in *any* combination of cunieform characters. This latter discovery was put forward in an obscure Roman Catholic periodical—apparently without the cuneiform text; and it would appear from Dr. Hommel's translation that *Kuturnu*, etc., was a spirit or deity, if a name at all. As to Mr. Pinches's paper, read before the Victoria Institute, it has never been printed in the proceedings or anywhere else; and it is impossible to get any information about it. Some favored individuals have seen a proof, marked "Under Revision"; but ordinary persons have to be satisfied with mere hearsay. We are afraid that the adherents of the Higher Criticism will not be converted by means of wild assertions about alleged discoveries whose authors keep their evidence so modestly in the background.

IV.—Dr. Hommel's assertion, that the ancient Hebrews spoke Arabic, is the funniest proposition in the book. He does not condescend to inform us why Moses wrote his Laws in Hebrew, when the Jews did not understand that language until after the time of Joshua. It is also difficult to understand how this proposition is going to overthrow the critical position. The difficulties are increased by our being told that the patriarch Jacob was an Aramean.

Orthodoxy must indeed be in a bad case when it is considered necessary so translate all this trash into English. The *Athenæum* says that it is translated badly, and complains of the "slovenly and untrustworthy character of the translation"; but any rendering would be good enough for such a work. Some of the misrenderings are, however, made with a purpose; others seem to show that the translator was not familiar with the subject of the book. In a pretentious work like this, in which so many novel readings and theories are put forward, the least the author and translator could do would have been to give the Arabic, Hebrew, and cuneiform words in their native dress. Many of the assertions are unintelligible, with mere trans literations, except to a first-class oriental scholar (who would not take the trouble to read such rubbish); and they are evidently merely intended to throw dust into the eyes of the average reader by a display of much pretended learning. After wading through the work ourselves, however, we can only offer the average reader our deepest commiseration, should he attempt its perusal. Dr. Hommel's views will have to be put into a much more attractive shape before even the orthodox will tackle them.

CHILPERIC.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

VIII.—The Forerunner of Christ.

It has been shown, in the first of this series of papers, that the Gospel accounts of the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist are, from beginning to end, fabrications. The only matter having to do with that individual which appears to be historical is, that a baptizer of that name made his appearance in Palestine during the reign of Herod Antipas, and was put to death by that tetrarch. It is very improbable indeed that the Baptist ever saw Jesus, and still more improbable that he bore testimony to the divinity of that personage. If the writer of the primitive Gospel from which Matthew and Mark took their accounts thought it a meritorious act to fabricate the Gospel story of the death and imprisonment of this baptizer, he could have no scruples in concocting everything else now recorded of that individual in the Synoptics.

The Gospel used by the earliest Jewish Christians (*i.e.*, the Ebionites) contained the following choice paragraph:—

> "And when the people were baptized Jesus also came, and was baptized by John. And when he came up from the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the holy Spirit of God in the form of a dove, which came down and came upon him. And a voice came from heaven saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.' And again, '*To-day have I begotten thee.*' And immediately *a great light shone round about the place;* and John when he saw it saith to Jesus, 'Who art thou, Lord?' And again a voice came from heaven to him: 'This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

If we compare this paragraph with the parallel passages in the three Synoptical Gospels (Matt. iii. 13-17; Mark i. 9-11; Luke iii. 21-22), we shall see how the original narrative has been altered and revised. The "great light" which, it is stated, "shone round about the place," and the words "To-day have I begotten thee," are omitted by all three. Also, Matthew records only the second announcement by the voice—"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; whereas Mark and Luke give only the first—"Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Each evangelist had thus the authority of the same document for his version.

There cannot, also, be much doubt that the matters omitted by the Synoptists were in the earliest Gospel narratives, for Justin, who does not appear to have seen the canonical Gospels, says, when quoting from writings which he calls the "Memorabilia" of the apostles (Dial. 88):—

> "And then, when Jesus had gone to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing, and when he had stepped into the water, *a fire was kindled in the Jordan;* and when he came up from the water.....the Holy Spirit alighted upon him in the shape of a dove.....and a voice came at the same time from heaven.....'Thou art my son; *this day have I begotten thee,*' meaning that he was then born to men, when their knowledge of him first began.'

Here, it will be seen, the "great light" which, in the primitive Gospel, shone upon the Jordan had become in Justin's day a "fire" burning in the Jordan.

The passage which suggested to the original Gospel writer the little fiction of the voice from heaven is found in the Second Psalm (verse 7), and reads:—

> "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee."

Assuming David to have been the writer of this passage—as was believed by all the early Christians—*he* was the person whom "the Lord" called his son. Of this there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. The words were

Digitized by Google

certainly not addressed to one who was not born until ten centuries after the time of David—that is to say, Jesus; neither can they, with any regard to truth, be twisted into so doing. Yet so deeply rooted was the practice of perversion and misrepresentation among the early Christians that, as a matter of fact, we find it three times distinctly stated in the New Testament that the passage *was* written concerning Christ (Acts xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5; v. 5). Looking at all the circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that, had the passage in the Old Testament never been written, we should never have had a story of a voice repeating it in the New.

In the account of the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel (i. 32-34) that individual is represented as saying of Jesus:—

> "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And *I knew him not;* but he that sent me to baptize with water, he said unto me, *Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending,* and abiding upon him, *the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit.* And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

According to this statement, the Baptist did not know Jesus until after the alleged descent of the "Spirit" upon him; but, if we turn to Matthew's account, we find it plainly implied that he *did* know him:—

> "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbade him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee,* and comest thou to me?"

This was before the descent of the "Spirit," and before the grand announcement by the voice. We have, then, in these conflicting statements a clear indication that the story of the baptism is a fabrication; and this view is confirmed by another incident related in two of the Gospels (Matt. xi. 2-3; Luke vii. 18-20). In the first of these passages we read:—

> "Now, when John heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

Here it is evident that had John really beheld the "Spirit" descend upon Jesus, and had he heard a voice from heaven proclaiming Christ the beloved Son of God, he could not have had a doubt upon the subject, and would not have found it necessary to send and ask such a question. It may, of course, be said that one of the versions of the baptism story is true, and the latter incident fictitious. In that case we have but another illustration of the fact that we are dealing, not with history, but with a mass of Christian fabrications.

We come now to a matter which may assist us in deciding whether the other Gospel statements respecting the Baptist are fact or fiction. All four evangelists represent this baptizer as the forerunner of Christ, and they all state that his coming was foretold by Isaiah (Matt. iii. 1-3; Mark i. 3; Luke iii. 4; John i. 23). Taking the first of these accounts, the great perverter Matthew says:—

> "In those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For *this is he* that was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

The quotation is from Isaiah xl., a chapter written towards the close of the exile in Babylon—that is, about two hundred years after the time of the prophet Isaiah. The writer says (xl. 1-6):—

> "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortingly to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her time of service is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.....*The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make level in the desert a highway for our God*.....The voice of one saying, Cry. And I said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field," etc.

Here the writer, whom for convenience we will call Isaiah, speaks of himself as one "crying." The Lord (*i.e.*, the God Jehovah) is represented as telling his prophet to comfort the people, to proclaim, or cry out to them, comforting news, to declare to them that their service in Babylon was near its end, and their transgressions (for which the captivity was said to be a punishment) were forgiven. Two voices are mentioned—Jehovah's and Isaiah's—and they are a little mixed. First, the voice of "the Lord" commands his servant to comfort the people; the prophet then speaks of himself as a voice crying—but *not* "in the wilderness," as stated in the Gospel quotations. Again the voice of "the Lord" commands the seer to cry, to which that individual responds by asking, "What shall I cry?" Then he commences his cry by proclaiming, "All flesh is grass," etc. The writer may have considered this language comforting; but, whether he did or not, he himself was the one crying, and that is the only point with which we have to do.

The reference is to the pioneer road-making which was often necessary before the march of an eastern army through a desert country. The "highway" which the prophet called upon the people to prepare was to facilitate the return of the Jews from exile, there being about five hundred miles of desert between Babylon and Judea. In accordance with this view we read in the same book:—

> "And *there shall be an highway* for the remnant of his people, which shall remain, from Assyria" (xi. 16). "For they shall see eye to eye when the Lord returneth to Zion.....For ye shall not go out in haste, neither shall ye go by flight: for *the Lord will go before you;* and the God of Israel will be your rearward" (lii. 8, 12).

Jehovah returned to Zion when his people returned from captivity; he marched invisibly at their head, and guided and protected them. Isaiah's language seems to have been based upon the following passage:—

> "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: *cast up a highway for him that rideth through the desert;* his name is Jah; and exult ye before him.....he bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity; but the rebellious dwell in a parched land. O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, *when thou didst march through the wilderness*.....yon Sinai trembled at the presence of God, the God of Israel" (Psalm lxviii. 4-8).

The reference in the latter portion of this paragraph is to the Exodus from Egypt. In the passage quoted in the Gospels Isaiah has employed precisely the same language. There is no prediction of an individual who should prepare the way for a new teacher by preaching, baptizing, and directing attention to such a personage. The reference is simply to the making of a road through the desert as a passage for the God Jehovah and his people. The misrepresentation in this case turns upon the peg, "the Lord." The Gospel-writers, in common with many other early Christians, considered it legitimate to apply to Jesus anything they found stated in the Old Testament respecting the God Jehovah—both personages being called by them "the Lord." Hence, in the example under consideration, Isaiah is said to mean the Baptist, and Jehovah Christ—another clear case of deliberate misrepresentation.

Let us now, in order to get fresh light upon the subject, compare what Jesus says of himself with what the Baptist says of Jesus, as recorded in the Fourth Gospel:—

Words of Jesus.	Words of the Baptist.
"Howbeit *he* that sent me *is true;* and *the things which I heard* from him, these speak I unto the world..... as the Father taught me, I *speak these things*" (viii. 26, 28).	"*What he hath* seen and *heard,* of that he beareth witness.....that *God is true.* For he whom God hath sent *speaketh the words of God*" (iii. 32, 34).
"For *the Father loveth the Son*.....he *hath given all judgment* unto the Son.....*He that* heareth my word, and *believeth* him that sent me, *hath eternal life*" (v. 20, 22, 24).	"*The Father loveth the Son,* and *hath given all things* into his hand. *He that believeth* on the Son *hath eternal life*" (iii. 35, 36).

Here, it will be observed, the Baptist uses precisely the same language as Jesus. He speaks of God as "the Father," and Jesus as "the Son." He knows that Jesus was sent by God; that "God is true"; that Jesus bore witness of what he had seen and heard in heaven, and therefore spoke "the words of God"; that "the Father" loved "the Son," and had "given all things into his hand"; and that whoever believed on Jesus would obtain "eternal life." He knows, in fact, as much as Jesus himself, and is evidently in the confidence of "the Father." No one in his senses could imagine one who had such a full knowledge of God's plans relative to "the Son" and to the redemption of mankind sending disciples to ask, "Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?"

But the words here ascribed to the Baptist must be set aside as a fabrication; for, it is scarcely necessary to say,

Digitized by Google

the statements put in the baptizer's mouth belong not to that alleged forerunner, but to the writer of the Gospel himself, who, it has already been shown, manufactured the sayings he has placed in the mouth of Jesus. In short, there cannot, I think, be any reasonable doubt that all the circumstances related of the Baptist in the Gospels are of the same questionable character—that is to say, matters obviously fabricated to show the superiority of Jesus.

ABRACADABRA.

DOUBLE-PROXY; OR, VICARIOUS BELIEF IN VICARIOUS ATONEMENT.

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*."—MESSRS. PAUL AND SILAS.

O PARENT! save your children
From the doom of Christian 'Doxy;
Remember that a household
Can be saved from Hell by proxy.

Believe in Joseph's step-son,
And you'll save your house—tho' *vile* as
The *best* of Bible worthies—
As declared by Paul and Silas.

You never need be fearful
Of your children being roasted;
Believe, yourself, and, Presto!
They are saved and Holy-ghosted!

Don't heed the counter statements
Of the Son of Joseph's *sly* lass,
Nor those of James and Peter;
But attend to Paul and Silas.

Have faith in Mary's eldest,
The Apostle told his keeper,
And you and yours are rescued
From the doup-less pit,-or deeper.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

TRUTH THE TEST OF RIDICULE.

ON the Zangwillian principle of reversing trite, and ofttimes untruthful, aphorisms, one occasionally arrives at curiously apposite conclusions. Thus, ridicule may be discovered to be less frequently an effective test of truth than truth is an effective test of ridicule. But are we, therefore, to abandon ridicule as a salutary detergent—decry its powers in face of its results? God forbid! Is it thought that, because some people are dull and prosy and commonplace, innocent of smiles and insusceptible to mirth, there shall be no more Rabelaisian fun made out of religious tomfoolery, no more wit or humor exercised in the scarifying of sanctimonious cant and shams? Are we ever to treat Superstition with ceremonious respect, bowing to the convicted culprit as he descends from the dock, and shedding crocodile tears because his villainy has been discovered and exposed?

Let us consider—to whom are we asked to speak with bated breath and whispering humbleness? Who are they, and how many of them? So few, indeed, as to be absolutely inconsiderable. The saintly seraph-creatures, who live in a transcendental atmosphere of ecstatic fervor quite beyond the range of rude and ugly facts, and who are to be approached in the upper storey only by Freethinking burglars with dark lanterns and rubber shoes—where are they? As a man of the world, living and moving in the world, I knock against but few of them, and they are such that one would, instinctively on contact, be glad to leave alone. I begin, indeed, to think that this crowd of supersensitive souls, who are fashioned so slenderly, and who are to be handled with so much care, exist more in the imagination of Christian strategists than in real life.

In real life what do I find? A general indifference to theological teachings—a dull and dead feeling which the clergy themselves deplore. To the bulk of work-a-day people, who give a nominal assent to the prevalent superstition, a Freethought discourse—modelled as the enemy would wish it—would be *caviare* as are the present pulpit pratings. One must be severe and satirical—if not sensational—to be understood. The great reformers of the world were never mealy-mouthed—meanly apologetic to the abuses which they meant to sweep away. They painted with a big brush and in lurid colors, and their methods were justified by the success achieved.

If ridicule be one of the weapons employed, it is well to remember that, when used as a test of truth, it must itself be tested by truth and good taste, and that, as a discreet smile differs from a grin through a horse-collar, so an ineffective exercise of wit may, in Falstaffian phrase, be simply "the cause of wit in others." X.

JONAH AND THE WHALE.

MOST modern Christians are rather shy of the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale, and are inclined to think it is one of those divine revelations about which the less said the better. Dr. Lyman Abbott has been bold enough to say that it is without any historical foundation, although the story and the whale are certified to by our Blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Indeed, Christ puts his own resurrection, after three days' burial, on a parallel with the three days' immurement of Jonah in the whale's belly, and the inference is that, if Jonah did not actually live in the whale and come safe to land, neither did Jesus resurrect. But Dr. Lyman Abbott finds a beautiful allegory in the legend of Jonah, and so may one find another allegory in the fable of the resurrection. The trouble is, that when you say a tale is an allegory, everyone may put on it his own interpretation. One person may say Jonah represents the sun swallowed up by the sea monster at night, and re-emerging at dawn. Another rationalizer will find he was a sailor, who spent three days and nights in a tavern with the sign of "The Whale."

According to the Rabbins, Jonah was the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings xvii.), whom Elijah restored to life (the son, not the widow) by stretching himself upon him three times. This would date him about 900 B.C. Most critics incline to put him considerably later. The Rabbis, however, were knowing fellows, and probably had a meaning in thus identifying Jonah with the child who was miraculously restored from death by Elijah. Jesus Christ emphatically says that Jonah—not the whale—was a sign, and "as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation." What we have to do is to consider what these signs signified. For this purpose we may do well to go to Nineveh and though we cannot get there like Jonah, who must have gone all the way round Africa and up the Persian Gulf, we can easily get to the Assyrian galleries of the British Museum. Here we shall see the fish-god, and the priest within the fish. Or we may read the story in Berosus and Layard of the fish-god Oannes, whose body was that of a fish and his voice that of a man. During the day he taught the Chaldeans the arts and sciences, and at night returned to the sea. Certainly there were those in Babylonia who worshipped the fish, and who believed that wisdom came out of the waters. The priest in ritual placed himself within the skin of the fish, and there is strong reason to believe that this was a rite of initiation to assimilate oneself to the fish, as in a bear-dance one wore a bearskin, and the buffalo horns in the dance of the buffalo.

A Pagan parallel to the story of Jonah may, perhaps, be found in that told by Lycophron and Hellanicus concerning Hercules. Hesione, the beautiful daughter of King Laomedon, was given in sacrifice to a whale. When the monster approached her, Hercules leaped down his throat, and for three days and nights maintained a conflict, till at length the monster expired, and the hero emerged unharmed, save by the loss of his hair, which, by the heat of this animal, had been made to fall from his head, so that the place where the wool ought to grow appeared like the nut of a new-born child, or that of a tonsured monk. These similes are not chosen capriciously, for the monk's tonsure is a rite of initiation, symbolizing the new-born, imitating the appearance of the head of a new-born child. Hercules rescued Hesione, much as Perseus rescued Andromeda from the sea monster.

Colonel Claude R. Conder, in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* for July, 1881 (pp 214-218), describes a bronze tablet found in Syria, in which two of the figures, standing at the head and foot of a bier, "are robed in the peculiar fish-headed costume, with a scaly body and fish tail, which is supposed to be symbolical of the mythical Oannes, who, according to Berosus, issued from the Persian gulf and taught laws and arts to the early dwellers on the Euphrates." Probably what is depicted is a rite of initiation, the figure on the bier being the candidate, and the Oannes figure being the representative. Some have found a similarity between Oannes and Jonah, and conjecture that the tale of a whale may have been suggested by the initiation into the fish-priest order.

LUCIANUS.

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

Mr. Tom Mann took time by the forelock on Sunday, speaking twice in the Grand Theatre, Nottingham, before the opening of the Church Congress. Mr. Mann wanted to know what the Church was going to do for the people; in other words, whether it proposed to help the workers in their struggle against capital, especially the women workers. Of course he was only taking advantage of a golden opportunity to point his moral and adorn his tale. He could hardly have been serious in hoping that the Church would turn right round upon itself, and attempt what it was never designed for. The real, and indeed the only, business of the Church is to show the people the way to heaven; and if that business is played out, then the only thing to be done with the Church is to disestablish and disendow it.

Mr. Mann was more himself, and more felicitous, when he said that the Church Congress was meeting at Nottingham to "tell more fairy tales." He was also well inspired in telling his hearers "not to be led astray by clergymen, who would make them believe that there could be no heaven on earth, but while on earth they must do the preacher's bidding, and wait for joy in the heaven to come."

It appears to have been a "Labor Church" meeting that Mr. Mann was addressing. Another meeting of the same body was addressed by the "Dosser Parson," the Rev. Mr. Collings. According to the *Daily News* reporter, the congregation was grave and attentive, but it did not consist of working men. "I should say," he observes, "that it was largely composed of middle-class people, who went to the theatre merely to learn for themselves what the Labor Church is."

Another Peculiar People case has occurred in Southwark Coroner Langham held an inquest respecting the death of Walter Frederic Osborne, aged three years and five months. According to the medical evidence, deceased suffered from bronchial pneumonia and congestion of the brain. No doctor had been called in, but an elder had laid hands upon the boy and anointed him with oil. A special prayer meeting had also been held a few days before the child's death. As the doctor who made the post-mortem examination could not positively say that medical assistance would have saved the child's life, the coroner held that the father should have the benefit of the doubt and not be sent for trial; and the jury, acting on this direction, returned a verdict of natural death, adding that they "believed the child's life might have been saved but for the father's stupidity."

Stupidity! That's a good word. But it is applicable to others as well as the Peculiar People. Every Christian is stupid as far as he *is* a Christian. And if a man is stupid who follows the orders of James and Jesus Christ, what are we to think of those who *gave* the orders? The jury ought to tackle that question, especially if they profess and call themselves Christians. They should also consider whether it is wise or honest to take an oath on the very book which contains the "stupid" orders of James and Jesus Christ.

After the coroner had "censured" the father for being a *bonâ fide* Christian, the poor man himself had an innings, and this is what he said: "Before God saved my soul I used to have a doctor. But after he did that, it was such a mighty work that I believed he was well able to save and heal my body. I could not trust in God and man too, and God will not have half a heart. Since then he has been all-sufficient for me and my family, and he has healed them many times."

This is the language of sincerity, and if the Bible be true it is the language of common sense. The real question, therefore, is this: Is the Bible true? That is to say, is it the Word of God? If it is, that poor laborer, Arthur Osborne, is right, and the coroner and jury are wrong. And if the coroner and jury profess to believe that the Bible is true, that it is the Word of God, they are something more than wrong; they are thoroughly illogical, and their bullying of this poor, honest Christian is a piece of wretched hypocrisy.

Christians are always talking about Providence. They quote Hamlet's saying, "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow," which of course is a philosophical paraphrase of a well-known saying of Jesus Christ. Well, if there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow—and we have the authority of the second person of the Trinity for the statement—is there not also a special providence in the death of a child? And if there is, physic is useless, and doctors are unnecessary; in fact, the science and art of medicine are a perfect farce.

Nottingham being a Dissenting city, the High Churchmen are keeping in the background at the parsons' palaver. The population of the lace city is 230,000. The Church communicants, as estimated by the clergy themselves, number but 9,500. The number of confirmations last year was given as 1,200, of whom only 431 were males.

Rev. J. Guinness Rogers takes Mr. Arthur Clayden to task, in the *Daily News*, for standing up for secular education. Mr. Rogers admits that this is what "we religious stalwarts" proposed in 1870, and it is still "logically right," but practically it is all wrong, as the Compromise works so well and so satisfactorily. What does this mean, after all? Simply this: Mr. Clayden stands up for a principle, and Mr. Rogers deserts it. The fact that he expects to gain something, as against the Church, does not add to the dignity of his position.

Athelstan Riley writes to the *Church Times* protesting against the policy of Mr. Diggle in shirking the religious question and appealing to Conservatives and ratepayers on the issue of economy, "that issue affording him the most certain chance of obtaining his majority and the chairmanship." This Mr. Riley protests against, and appeals to Churchmen to support only candidates approved by the Voluntary Schools Defence Union.

Dr. Rigg objects to the Apostles' Creed being taught in Board schools, though, he says, it is contained in the Wesleyan Conference Catechism. He is afraid lest it be explained in the interest of the Church. But does not that exactly apply to the Bible, to which we object?

The sudden deaths, almost simultaneously, of Gregory Yussef, the Melchite patriarch, residing at Damascus, and Cyril Behnam Benni, the Syrian patriarch, residing at Mardin, have given rise at the Vatican to suspicion of foul play. Religious enmity and opposition to the Pope's scheme for the re-union of the Oriental Churches are supposed to have been at the bottom of it.

The Rev. Mr. Miller, vicar of South Cave, applied to Lord Grimthorpe, Chancellor of the diocese of York, for a faculty to put up a reredos in his church. Lord Grimthorpe severely censured the vicar, and mulcted him in costs. In the Anglican Church that is allowed in London and Lincoln which is declared illegal in York. Such is ecclesiastical law.

In a certain Midland town the Wesleyans wanted to enlarge their chapel, and to do this it was necessary to erect a scaffold pole in the next-door garden, which belonged to a Baptist. This gentleman refused to oblige them. He would not have his ground soiled with the Wesleyan scaffold pole. In good, forcible, pious language, he said he "would not let them have a —— inch." So they still love one another.

The old Pope is said to be preparing for his end. It has long been the talk of Rome that in the lifetime of Pio Nono an old prophet-priest, known as Padre Philippo, said: "Cardinal Pecci will be the next Pope, and he will reign for twenty years." Pecci was chosen chiefly because the other cardinals thought him weakly, so that another turn would soon come; but he soon showed renewed vitality, and has taken up every work with confidence in the old Padre's prediction that he had twenty years before him. Pius IX. departed on February 8, 1878, and now Leo XIII. thinks it time he put his private affairs in order.

Among the illiterate of the Pennsylvania Germans, says Dr. W. J. Hoffman, of Washington, D.C., diseases are sought to be cured by laying on of hands, breathing upon the affected part, charms, incantations, exorcisms, making passes with the hands, and crosses with the index finger, at the same time pronouncing the name of Jesus and coupling therewith some act in his life. The medicine-man there is still undifferentiated from the priest. Sneezing is always followed by the utterance of "helf Gott," or "Amen," an old and very extensive custom. They also divine with the rod, reciting the following words: "Thou Archangel Gabriel, I beseech thee through God, the Almighty, if there is water here, or not, to indicate it." It is supposed that the rod will tip towards the ground if water is beneath the surface.

The *Daily Chronicle* has received a "long and pathetic letter" from the Barcelona prisoners immured in the fortress of Montjuich. They have all been acquitted by the court which tried them, yet after fourteen months they are still kept in confinement, because they have not the means to pay for their passage to some other country. There are about a hundred and twenty of them, and their fate is a scandal to civilization as well as an infamy to Spain.

Spain has been ruined by the Catholic Church—that is, by Christianity. After the terrible story of the tortures inflicted on the Barcelona reformers, there comes a letter from the Philippine Islands, which shows that similar

Digitized by Google

atrocities are being perpetrated there. The writer speaks from personal knowledge; his letter is addressed to the Howard Association in London, and is published in the *Daily News*. We reproduce it for our own readers: "I have not been in Cuba; but the atrocities committed there, and denounced in the leading American papers, are only mild instances of the ferocious barbarity practised by the Spaniards in the Phillipines. There, at the present day, one sees the omnipotent friars reigning in all their pristine glory, asserting their preponderance over the civil power, living in debauchery and concupiscence, setting even the Roman Church at defiance, by means of the enormous wealth accumulated at the expense of these patient islanders. It is a state of affairs incredible to those who have not lived in the islands. During the present rebellion they have been the instigators of the bloodshed and torture of their unfortunate political prisoners, on whose sufferings these worthy disciples of Torquemada have revelled with delight. I can confirm nearly all that has appeared in the Press on the torture. I know personally many of the victims, prominent and enlightened Phillipines, who have been maimed for life, and others have succumbed; while many of the tortures applied are too disgusting for publication, such as—[here the writer describes certain horrible tortures which cannot be described in our columns]—the first of which I have myself seen practised."

A subscriber, who has lately visited Spain, writes: "Not long since a Spanish Liberal newspaper mentioned the fact that several noted Spanish professors and scholars had lately met in conference on the subject of education in Spain, and that the conference received no notice from the Spanish press. But, said the article, 'if it had been a conference of bull-fighters or priests,' all the press of Spain would have given particulars of the meeting."

The agricultural districts of Spain, says our correspondent, are in a deplorable condition, the peasants working very long hours for a mere pittance. They live in dirty hovels, devoid of the decencies or necessities of life, and with no provision made for their education. Eighty-two per cent. of the population, according to the official statement, cannot read. This is holy Spain, where religion rules.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has an article on Hommel's new book, entitled "The Turn of the Tide." It glories in the thought that the days of the "Destructionists" are over. We commend the editor's attention to the article by "Chilperic" in our present number.

"Healer" Schlatter has left a book of revelation, in which he says "A New Dispensation is approaching." Here is an extract: "'Father says that Robert G. Ingersoll is a man of great faith, only the professing Christians have given him too much material to use against religion by their hypocrisy and mouth worship. Had they lived the principles Jesus taught, Mr. Ingersoll would have found fewer facts, and less insincerity to hold up to scorn, and he would not have had the chance to say so much. Father says he has faith in the Unseen Forces, and is ready for the impending change."

The *New York Herald* is giving Mr. George Smith's Creation tablets from Assyria as if it was a new discovery, and speaks of "Professor Smith, the famous English Assyriologist," as if still living. Is Professor Baum responsible for this?

A petition was presented to the Sydney Presbytery from the Rev. J. Benvie, Presbyterian minister of West Maitland, directing attention to certain published statements of the Rev. L. M. Isitt, the temperance lecturer, which, it was contended, gravely reflected on a minister of the Presbyterian Church. What Mr. Isitt states is that a Presbyterian minister of Sydney was drunk on the street, and picked out of the gutter by the Rev. Routledge.

The *Sydney Bulletin* is a lively, but it is also a cautious, paper. A correspondent writes to know the *Bulletin's* views of Christianity. The answer is: "What do you mean by Christianity, and we will tell you what our views are upon it." A similar answer might serve for those who ask about God. Trot out your God before you ask our opinion of him.

The *Bulletin* got a good answer to another question it asked: "'What do the early Christians in 'The Sign of the Cross' do for a living?' That's an easy one. Like the folk who took in each other's washing, they earn a humble but honest livelihood by preaching the Gospel to each other."

Bits of the old, old story, from the evidence in a Melbourne alleged criminal assault case:—The complainant was a prepossessing girl, aged fifteen years and eleven months.....Accused was a teacher in the Brighton Presbyterian Sunday-school. They first met there, as she was a scholar in his class.....They were improperly intimate in a paddock, and he then left her, saying he had a mission service to attend at the church, and expected to see her there.....She admitted that a letter produced, in which a number of improper questions and answers appeared, was written by her to the accused. She got the questions from another girl at a Band of Hope meeting.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Of what religion is a shark? Says Rev. W. G. Taylor in the *Primitive Methodist* of New South Wales: "A traveller had recently said that in Australia and America they had found the Methodists the pioneers of religion everywhere, and when he was going to Australia a shark was caught, and in it they found a ticket of Methodist membership."

Who says the lion will not lie down with the lamb—inside him? The Unitarians of Boston have met the Trinitarians in friendly conference at the Isle of Shoals, and indulged in much kindly talk about Christian re-union. Some think this indicates that people are ceasing to care a bawbee whether Jesus was God, man, or mixture.

An embarrassing scandal has arisen in a Lancashire town much frequented by holiday-makers. A lady who has for twenty years been an active member of a Nonconformist Church, and a Sunday-school teacher, turns out to be a person of the male persuasion. It appears that her (or rather his) sex was, for monetary reasons, concealed from birth. This person has shared the feminine confidences of many dear sisters in the Lord, and their distress of mind at the exposure may be easily imagined.

Peter Lombard tells in the *Church Times* of a man of God who was asked to take the duty for a clergyman just back from his honeymoon. On turning to the occasional prayers, he saw a notice: "The prayers of the Church are desired on behalf of Anna Smith." He read it out to the astonishment of the congregation, the incumbent, and the bride; Anna Smith being the incumbent's former wife, who had died some months previously.

An earthquake in Italy, a landslide in the Chilkat Pass, the plague in India, and bad harvests in Russia and Ireland, are among recent illustrations of merciful Providence.

Probably the orthodox will think they were "infidel" burglars who broke into the parish church of St. Mary, Long Crendon, Bucks, and not only stole what they could lay hands on, but actually tried to burn down the holy edifice. But men who would rob a church, when they could find much better swag at the parson's house, can hardly have brains enough to be "infidels." They must be Christians gone a bit wrong.

Mrs. Besant finds that Madame Blavatsky foretold the troubles through which the Theosophical Society is passing, but this unfavorable "cycle" is to end next year, certainly before the end of the century. "This society," Mrs. Besant says, "is the ark of spiritual truth," and those who do any sort of work for it are "the privileged of the earth." It reminds us of the glorious reign of the saints on earth, which was always going to begin, though somehow it never got a real start. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus. "We are the salt of the earth," says Mrs. Besant. The one is as accurate, and modest, as the other.

The vicar of the parish church of Folkestone is working the oracle with a lot of old bones, which are supposed to be relics of St. Eauswythe. They were exposed the other evening within the "altar" rails, surrounded by five lighted candles. A number of credulous fools passed by in single file, most of them bowing nearly to the ground before these "mortal remains," perhaps of a sheep or some other four-legged animal. Even supposing the relics to be human, it may be imagined what the old Reformers would think and say of this "worshipping of dead men's bones."

A characteristic comment was made by a Dublin gallery *habitué* on a curious dramatic hitch which occurred some years ago at the Queen's Theatre. A very portly Mephistopheles, in some *Faust* extravaganza, had to "go home." The dramatic Devil was, like Hamlet, "fat and scant of breath," and as he sank through a small circular trap—a sort of "converted vampire," to be technical—he stuck. The demons below tugged at his crimson legs in vain; the mortals above tried to stuff him down; everything was useless—and then, over the delighted Dublin din that rose from the whole house, came a still, small voice: "Well, boys, that's a comfort, anyway—hell's full!" The curtain came down with a run.

"How shall we check the Sunday bicycle?" demanded the president of the Christian Citizens' Reform League. "Same as trunks," courteously suggested the commercial tourist, who had wandered in merely because he saw a crowd.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 3, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Man's Origin and Destiny."

October 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, Glasgow; 17 and 24, Athenæum Hall, London; 31, Camberwell.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 3, Sheffield; 5 and 6, debate at Birmingham; 10, Birmingham; 11, City-road School, Dudley road, Birmingham; 12, Nelson-street School, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 17, Huddersfield; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. H. F.—Books sent us for review are noticed, but we cannot insert gratuitous preliminary advertisements, especially of works dealing with subjects in which our readers are not particularly interested.

THE BROWNE FUND.—We have received: E. Jones, 2s.; Marie du Bois (per Miss Vance), 10s.; W. Button, 6d.

THE BROWNE FUND.—The case of Mr. Browne, who is still in Chelmsford Gaol, has taken a new and unexpected turn, which Mr. Forder will fully explain in our next issue. Meanwhile fresh subscriptions are not invited. Mr. Forder acknowledges the receipt of the following:—J. Gale, 2s. 6d.; W. Barker, 2s. 6d.; Manchester Man, 5s.; Mr. Leaf, 1s.; Mr. Bater, 6d.; A Friend, 6d.; J. Martin, 2s.; W. H. Putz, 6d.; J. Greevz Fisher, 5s.; Garibaldi, 1s.; J. G. Dobson, 1s.; J. Umpleby, 1s.; W. A. Jones, 6d.; A. Lewis, 2s.; J. Warner, 1s.

ERNEST PACK.—We cannot give space for the long extracts you send for insertion. There was no intention of doing you any injustice. The word "chased" seemed a fair summary of the newspaper report, which says that you "beat a retreat," and that the mob followed you, hooting, shouting, and yelling. It did not occur to us that *you* were responsible for the conduct of these bigots. Mr. Johnson's letter in the *Reporter* puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter. He says that the Secularists retired from the meadow in the usual way after the meeting was over, and that constable Perry did not actually protect you from violence, though he did disperse the mob that followed you. According to the report, you were attired like a clergyman, and we expressed a hope that this was untrue. On this point you are silent.

DR. MORTIMER.—Thanks for the cuttings.

E. CHURCH.—You may read about Pappus and his story of the inspired books staying on the table, while the non-inspired ones fell off, in W. Mace's *Greek and English New Testament*, p. 874.

P. TODD.—Dr. Cumming prophesied the end of the world for 1866. He lived on till 1881, and it is said had a long leasehold property.

J B.—Mr. Stead is no authority on that, nor perhaps on any other subject. If he likes to say that Büchner's *Force and Matter* is antiquated, well and good; he has a right to his opinion. Science is progressing day by day, but Büchner's arguments are based upon truths that do not change with time. His arguments may be fallacious, but they have not been refuted by subsequent discoveries.

A. F. WALTER.—It is too late now to think of a lecture on Peckham Rye. Mr. Foote has arranged to lecture in the Camberwell Secular Hall on the last Sunday in October. He would have given a date before, but the Branch, while wanting him to lecture, had overlooked the requisite invitation.

T. FENTON (Edinburgh).—Mr. Foote's debate at Glasgow with Mr. W. T. Lee takes place in the minor City Hall on the evenings of Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (Oct. 12–15). The subjects are: "Is there a Future Life?" and "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—W. Brownlee (Havelock, New Zealand), £5; Edward Self, 4s. Further subscriptions are not invited for this Fund, as the Lecture Scheme is dropped for the present in favor of the new Treasurer's Scheme. Mr. Foote puts up with the loss he has sustained since the Conference.

WE have received the following fresh promises towards the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme, those marked *(p)* being paid:—E. Jacques, 5s; T. Lewis, 5s.; Thos. Stephens, 10s. 6d. *(p)*.

TREASURER'S SCHEME (N. S. S.).—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges the following:—A. W. Marks, £2 *(p)*; Mrs. B. E. Marks, £2 *(p)*; F. Roger, 10s. *(p)*; E. H. Bass, 10s.; J. Umpleby, £1.

C. COHEN acknowledges the following fresh promises towards the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme:—Miss Garven, 5s. *(p)*; J. Walker, £1 *(p)*; W. Thomson, 4s.; R. Skouce, 5s.; D. Watt, 10s.; W. Tait, 5s.; D. Fyfe, 5s. (*p* 2s. 6d.); J. McLelland, 10s.; J. Raven, 5s.

J. KEALT, 24 Albert-street, St. Paul's, Bristol, has taken the secretaryship of the N. S. S. Branch, in place of Mr. Treasure, who has resigned through pressure of other business.

EDWARD SELF.—Thanks for your cordial and encouraging letter.

PRO PATRIA.—We deal with the subject again this week, and hope the new article will please you as much as the former one.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—James Neate, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Bethnal Green Branch, 4s.

J. ROBERTS (Liverpool).—See paragraph. We regret to hear of the death of Mrs. Tanner so soon after that of her husband. It will be felt by the bereaved family.

C. W. HECKTHORN.—Thanks for your excellent letter, which would have been inserted, only the subject is dealt with in our leading article.

W. G. ROBERTSON.—Under consideration.

HUGH THOMPSON.—Your letter shall be kept, and the corrections made in the list. Thanks.

ALERT.—Will appear next week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberator—Sydney Bulletin—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Herts Leader—Vectis—Secular Thought—Crescent—Islamic World—Isle of Man Times—Reynolds's Newspaper—Glasgow Herald—Star—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Essex Weekly Herald—Literary Guide—Stratford Herald.

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

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (October 3) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "Man's Origin and Destiny." Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their orthodox friends to this lecture.

The Birmingham Branch is in a high state of delight over the extremely successful opening of its winter campaign last Sunday—the birthday of our late great leader, Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Foote delivered three lectures in the large hall of the Bristol-street Board School, and the meetings exceeded the most sanguine anticipations. Even in the morning the hall was well filled, and in the evening it was crammed almost to suffocation, every inch of standing room being occupied. Happily the lecturer was in his very best form, and the audiences were remarkably enthusiastic. Over a hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold at the bookstall, and many more could have been disposed of if the supply had not been exhausted.

A capital program up to Christmas has been issued by the Birmingham Branch, and with a start like Sunday's there is every reason to expect a thoroughly successful session. Among the special lectures are those by Mr. Charles Watts and Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner.

Friends attended on Sunday from places as distant as Coventry and Burton. The friends from Wolverhampton, including the veteran Mr. Christopher, begged Mr. Foote to come over to them and wake up the "saints" with a view to reforming the Branch and resuming the propaganda.

The chair was taken in the evening at Birmingham by that gallant veteran, Mr. Ridgway, who was ill on the occasion of Mr. Foote's previous visit. It was pleasant to see him about and active once more. He is a fine type of the grand old army of Freethinkers who fought around Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Taylor, the Branch president, was as active and genial as ever; the indefatigable Mr. Partridge slaved away quietly, but with great effect, at the bookstall; and all the committee seemed to be working together with absolute harmony. Such a Branch cannot help succeeding.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. His lecture upon "The Theory of the Resurrection" was followed with close attention and warmly applauded. Mr. Harry Brown made an excellent chairman. It was pleasing to see so many ladies present.

To-day, Sunday, October 3, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Science Hall, Rockingham-street, Sheffield. We hope the friends from the surrounding districts will rally in full force.

Mr. Watts has returned from his visit to Plymouth, where

Digitized by Google

he delivered Sunday lectures to good audiences, and held a public debate with Mr. W. T. Lee. This debate was to have lasted for four nights, but Mr. Lee seems to have lost his temper on the third night, and declined to appear on the fourth. Mr. Watts was present to fulfil his engagement with the public, and the audience, consisting of Christians as well as Secularists, unanimously passed a vote of confidence in him. We have received a long letter from Mr. Barter, representing the Secularists at Plymouth, but it arrived too late for insertion in this week's *Freethinker*. Besides, we should prefer to hold it over till next week, in order that Mr. Lee may have an opportunity of stating his own case without any sort of prejudice. He has always acted courteously in debating with Mr. Foote, and we should be very sorry to do him an injustice. He will see this paragraph and take his own course. In any case, we shall have to print Mr. Barter's letter, and whatever Mr. Watts may have to state himself, in our next issue.

Since the previous paragraph was written, we have received a letter from Mr. Lee, in which he refers to the "unpleasantness" at Plymouth. Of course the matter is graver than that. Mr. Lee hopes that we shall give him fair play, and in this he will not be disappointed. Both sides shall be heard. Mr. Lee will doubtless send us a statement for our next issue, and both he and Mr. Watts will be at liberty to correct each other, if necessary, in the following number.

An appreciative notice of Colonel Ingersoll's lecture on Shakespeare appeared in last week's *Stage*. We extract the following: "Colonel Ingersoll has certainly the gift of eloquence, and his description of Shakespeare as 'an intellectual ocean whose waves touched all the shores of thought' is by no means the only fine sentence in a powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear. In these days of finicking special pleading it is pleasant to come upon such an example of bold, uncompromising argument on behalf of firm-seated opinions."

Mr. A. B. Moss had a fine audience last Sunday afternoon on Peckham Rye, and a good one in the evening at the Camberwell Secular Hall. Mr. Moss lectures at Camberwell again this evening (October 3), on "Is Religion Necessary or Useful?"

Mr. J. M. Robertson's lectures at Liverpool have (we are informed) been highly successful and much appreciated. He concludes the course to-day (October 3) with two lectures, at three and seven, on "Are the Clergy Honest?" and "Life and Morals without Religion."

Mr. H. Percy Ward is arranging a lecture tour in the North in the new year. On the way he would be pleased to arrange for Sunday or week-night lectures with any of the Midland Branches, if they will communicate with him as soon as possible at Leighton Hall, Kentish Town, London, N.W.

The President of the N. S. S. interviewed Mr. J. F. Green at the request of the Executive. This gentleman was going to contest Finsbury at the approaching School Board elections. He had been adopted as a candidate by a meeting of "advanced" representatives, including delegates from the Social Democratic Federation, and he was strong on the question of secular education. Mr. Green, however, has since been obliged to retire. The Social Democratic Federation now insists on the program including the universal free maintenance of school children. Mr. Green had accepted the free maintenance of "necessitous" children, which is a heavy burden enough to carry before the ratepayers. "I am sorry," he writes, "that this fiasco has happened, as I think I could have made a good fight on the program originally adopted, and I intended to make a special feature of my opposition to the Compromise and to religious teaching in the schools."

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School, whose approaching bazaar is advertised in the *Freethinker*, is a most deserving organization, and we hope it will succeed in raising the requisite £500. The school is open every Sunday morning and afternoon, for the purpose of instructing the members' children. There are about 150 names on the books (scholars and teachers), and the average attendance is nearly eighty, the ages varying from four to twenty years. In the winter there are also Sunday evening lectures. The school was erected in 1880, and about £900 has been expended on the building. At present there is not a penny of debt. The alterations it is intended to make for increased accommodation are estimated by Mr. Larner Sugden to cost £500. The land is freehold, and the property is invested in trustees. If the alterations are completed at once, the premises will meet the requirements of the Education Department, and a day and evening school will be opened. As all the members are working men, their enterprise is extremely creditable. They deserve all the support that can be given them. The bazaar will be held on October 30 and November 1.

A Cornish friend, who sympathizes with the Peculiar People who are being persecuted by their dishonest co-religionists, offers to contribute towards making good any pecuniary loss they may have suffered. He would forward £3 (say) if we could undertake to distribute it. Unfortunately, we are so extremely busy at present that we cannot very well undertake this duty, and perhaps it would in any case be better to wait until the case is tried before a jury in a superior court. This Cornish friend also offers to subscribe £1 towards reprinting our last week's article as a leaflet for general distribution. This might be done, with some alterations and additions, when the final trial attracts more public attention.

The Bradlaugh Club has been having an octave in connection with the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh, beginning last Sunday with a largely attended tea-meeting and followed by meetings and entertainments through the week.

The Wood Green Branch of the N. S. S. this Sunday open their new hall, Station-road, with a tea-meeting at five p.m., followed by a lecture from Mr. Forder. All friends in the district are invited.

Thomas Stephens, of Darleston, is a member of the National Secular Society. He is an old working man, earning only twelve-and-sixpence a week. Last Sunday he travelled into Birmingham to hear Mr. Foote's lectures, and handed him half a guinea towards the new Treasurer's Scheme. Thomas Stephens did not want an advertisement, but we choose to give it as a stimulus to other members of the Secular party. If all subscribed in the same proportion as this poor workman, what a glorious future the N. S. S. would have, and what a magnificent propaganda it would carry on.

Obituary.

THE Manchester Branch has sustained a heavy loss by the death of Mr. Samuel King, at the age of forty-one. For the past nine years the deceased filled the important office of Treasurer, and, by his ability, straightforwardness, and sterling honesty, did much towards placing the Branch in a sound financial position. His work in this respect always received the warmest praise from the auditors and members for its accuracy and neatness. Mr. King had been in indifferent health for some years, but he bore up manfully, while suffering from a painful disease, which he well knew could have but one termination. The final attack came a few days ago, and on the 18th ult., in the presence of two of his many friends, he passed quietly and peacefully away. The deceased left instructions that his body should be cremated, and that he should have a Secular funeral. His wishes were carried out, a member of the Branch (Mr. Pegg) reading in an effective and impressive manner the Burial Service of Austin Holyoake, which was listened to with the greatest attention by a large gathering of relatives and friends. The service ended by the organ playing the "Dead March in Saul."—F. GOUGH.

It is with deep regret that I have to record the death of Ann Todd, wife of Edward Todd, of the Stanley Secular Society, at the age of seventy. For many months prior to her death she had been bedridden, but nothing pleased her more during her illness than to have a few of her Freethought friends near. She would brighten up, and commence conversing with all the vivacity of youth. Her enthusiasm for the cause was unbounded; it was always her first inquiry, when you visited her, as to how the Freethought world was going on. She was a well-known character to all our lecturers. Mr. Cohen, when he was here, visited her twice, and I remember he wrote in the *Freethinker* of the remarkable intelligence displayed by so feeble an old lady. It was her special request, right up to her death, to have a thorough Secular burial—no one but Secularists were to officiate. Mr. John White said a few appropriate words before leaving the house, and at the graveside he read the Burial Service of Mr. Austin Holyoake in an impressive manner. I beg to tender to her husband and children the heartfelt sympathies of the many friends and members of Stanley and district.—G. CRUDDAS.

There never will be a question in this world on which people will be unanimous, if only because an existing system, however bad, must always be advantageous to somebody.—*J. F. Nisbet.*

Digitized by Google

IF GOD EXISTED.

If there is a God, he should be good—all-good—towards all his creatures, as a recompense for having brought them into existence without their will and knowledge, and often contrary to both. He should be omnibenevolence itself, in order to command the respect and counter-love of his creatures. It is innate in man that he cannot love any one who is cruel to him; and unless He is kind to *me* and all my fellow-creatures I cannot (reciprocate his affection, even if he love me, though I strive as hard as I may. He should also be omnipotent; for a god who can create this wonderful universe can do anything. But, on the contrary, we find by looking into the facts that he cannot, and does not, possess these two attributes at once. The facts of nature tell us that he must either be a malignant monster, who delights in torturing and maiming the poor unfortunate beings whom he, perhaps in momentary evil whims, has brought into existence; or else, though he means well with us, he is unable to remove the evils with which we are surrounded. But his only excuse is that he is not.

The greatest power in the world has always been, and still partly is, might, not right; the sword, not peace; blood, not brotherhood. Man has had to slowly raise himself up from a state of savagery to one of civilization. Through the terrible school of suffering, disappointment, and hardship, he has had to go in order to emancipate himself and make himself superior to the rest of creation. He was placed upon the earth in a state of nudity, and through the horrible and repeated exposure to wind and wave he was driven to learn how to cover his naked hide. He was put upon this globe without food, and the only teacher in the arts of obtaining it was the horrid pang of hunger. He was surrounded by conditions engendering disease; but he was given no remedies, and the sole teacher in the science of medicine was frightful suffering, pain, and death. He was brought here minus fire, and his only teacher in the art of kindling it was his ingenuity, experiment, and want. The gruesome process of evolution went on through the awful struggle for existence, the inevitable survival of the fittest, and natural selection, which brought about the merciless elimination of the unfit and the rejection of the *unnatural*. But the element fittest for survival was not always the best *morally*. The moral, *the meek*, inherited the earth, and the worms inherited *them* in turn; or perhaps they went to a better world, where they were more fitted to survive.

Race superseded race in the reckless struggle for ascendancy. One nation climbed to the top of the ladder of civilization, became indolent in its superfluity, and slowly sank to the bottom again; another race took its place, and soared above the rest, became corrupted, had its civilization crushed by an enemy, and had to begin its upward march anew, march on and on at random, without goal and without end, apparently without purpose, knowing that it will in its turn be superseded by still another, though the latter may never reach so high as the one it conquers. It is brute conquering man, savage beating the civilized, physical slaying moral force, evil destroying good, cunning superseding simplicity. One section of society has always warred against another. Jealous foolishness and avaricious greed have sought to eradicate unselfish wisdom and the honest love to human kind. The pioneers of every movement which was on the road to bring emancipation and happiness to poor, suffering, and struggling humanity were ruthlessly cast into dungeons, tortured and maimed in the most horrible ways that human subtlety of skill could devise, and put to death; and still man is winding his way forward on his thorny path.

Now, if God existed, what was he doing all these countless centuries, seeing the terrible struggles of man; seeing virtue being trampled under foot, and vice to reign supreme; seeing truth ignored and falsehood rear its head in unblushing effrontery, and not to assist in the promulgation of true principles? If God had existed, he would surely at least have now and then given the human race a push forward on its thorny way; he would have lent struggling humanity a hand; he would have given a sign whereby to travel—a revelation, definite, clear, consistent, and unmistakable, as a link between father and offspring. If God existed, he would never sit coolly by and allow a rascally priesthood, who profess to speak in his name, to utter the most unholy, the wickedest, and most monstrous blasphemies against his name, thereby deceiving men and causing them unutterable evils. If God had existed when it was written that he commanded Moses to go and slay the enemy and spare none—men, married women, and male children—but to save the young women for themselves, and to give a percentage of all the spoil to the priest as an offering to the Lord, including thirty-two virgins, and all the thousands of other obscene and brutal calumnies perpetrated upon him in the same "infallible" book, he would rather have paralyzed the writer's arm than permitted such writings to be spread broadcast over the world, inducing some men to act upon it, and others to turn their back upon him in disgust and deny him. If God had existed during the Dark Ages, while the Inquisition raged through Europe, when innocent men were being subjected to unnamable and unendurable tortures—as rack, thumbscrew, and flames, and when women's breasts were torn open with iron instruments, he would have sent plagues and blindness upon the priestly monsters who were the authors of these crimes. If there had been a God when thousands of pure women and children were burnt alive for imaginary crimes, he would have struck dead the clerical brutes who perpetrated these abominable outrages. Yes, and if there were a God now he would rise in his wrath and paralyze the lying tongues of the damnable impostors who dare to stand before public nineteenth-century audiences and tell them that the "Old Book," which, as they very well know, sanctions and commands these brutalities to be committed, is the inspired word of the holy, living God. If God existed, he would bind the tongues of the infernal slanderers, who trade in the vilifications of the dead teachers of their race, whose shoe-strings they are not holy enough to touch. If God existed to-day, he would cast into the blackest depths of hell those vile scoundrels who live in grandeur and splendor at the expense of those who can less afford it, and try to keep the masses ignorant and slavish, while professing to be followers of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

But God's excuse is that he is not. A reverend Father-in-God, in replying to the Danish critic, Georg Brandes, asked the silly question, "If Jehovah does not exist, why try and kill him?" It is not the real Jehovah that needs killing, because we are satisfied that he never lived; but the *imaginary* Jehovah in silly folk's minds. People point to the order of things in the universe. That is only since the Evidencers have been in the field, and turned everything topsy-turvy. We used to be constantly referred to the *dis*-order of things—*i.e.*, miracles, as a proof of the existence of God. But as a result of modern criticism and reasoning, and because all the so-called miracles we know to have been shown by science to be parts of the natural phenomena of the law of causation, the theory of miracles has become untenable, and men have got ashamed thereof; and so, as a last refuge, they point to nature's regularity. But what about the irregularities and deviations of nature? What about the thousands of little—apparently purposeless—things and incidents occurring every day? How about the eyes that never see, the ears that never hear, the legs that never walk, the hands that never grasp, and the brains that never think? The child that is stillborn is as perfect in its organism as the one that lives. It has been conceived, nurtured, and born without any purpose, except to cause pain. It has been formed and shapened, and has all the organs that are necessary to be ready to enter upon life; but it is never to use them. How about the caterpillars, that spend a whole summer for the purpose of preparing their bodies for the winter trance in order to awake as butterflies or moths, which die during the long winter night, and never attain their aim? How about the storks that return to the mother country too early in spring, and perish? Or the flies and bees that drown? Or the birds' eggs that rot? What about the rain that falls at the wrong season, and does not fall at the right? And how about the human beings that are said to have been created for the sole purpose of being eternally roasted for the edification of God, the holy angels, and the Devil?

If there is a God, he must have a design for everything, as we cannot imagine a trivial, undesigning, blundering God. He could never have designed *me* to say that he is not—if God existed.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

The Bible Elohim.

The Elohim and all Alê-im, including Yahve, are spoken of as partial, hating, loving, and jealous; as the Creator he was pleased, and then displeased, with his work—the world and man (Genesis i. 31; vi. 6). All Elohim repent alike of their good and their evil intentions (1 Samuel ii. 30, 31; Jonah iii. 10); they associate with lying and deceitful spirits, and are often unjust, and visit the sins of parents upon innocent children—a cruelty Christianity has virtually accepted in her leading dogmas. The Elohim required bloody sacrifices, human and bestial, innocent and cherished victims, even the firstborn of man and beast. They gloried in "creating evil as well as good" (Isaiah xlv. 7; Amos iii. 6); and so loved savory food and the burning odors of the sacrifices that these were called "the food of the Elohim."—*Major-General Forlong, "Short Studies," p. 346.*

Suppose that all the money wasted in cathedrals in the Middle Ages had been used for the construction of schoolhouses, academies, and universities, how much better the world would have been! Suppose that, instead of supporting hundreds of thousands of idle priests, the money had been given to men of science for the purpose of finding out something of benefit to the human race here in this world.—*Ingersoll.*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

The Humanitarian League will shortly issue two new volumes through different publishers—viz., (1) *Human Science Lectures*, the series of addresses given last winter in London by Edward Carpenter, the Rev. Douglas Morrison, chaplain of Wandsworth Prison, Professor Thomson, of Edinburgh University, and Dr. Milne Bramwell (Bell & Sons); and (2) *Humanitarian Essays*, being volume iii. of *Cruelties of Civilization*, dealing with various subjects, contributed by Harry Roberts, Maurice Adams, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Joseph Collinson, G. W. Foote, and H. S. Salt (William Reeves). The first part of this series dealt with certain social questions of immediate human interest; the second with those questions that more closely affect the welfare of animals. In the present volume both kinds are included, but in such proportion as to leave no ground for complaint so often brought against humanitarians—that, while pleading the cause of the lower animals, they forget that of their fellow-men. It has from the first been the Humanitarian League's purpose to show that the cause of humanity is everywhere one and the same, and that it is iniquitous to inflict unnecessary suffering on any sentient being.

* * *

Dr. G. Brinton, the author of *Myths of the New World*, has written a work on *The Religion of Primitive Peoples*. We dislike the word "primitive," but have no doubt Dr. Brinton's work will be far better worth reading than the pretentious study of Mr. F. B. Jevons, who philosophizes about the faith of savages from arm-chair researches.

* * *

In the fifty-first volume of the *Dictionary of National Biography* the greatest name of the entire roll appears—that of Shakespeare. It is, of course, written by the editor, Mr. Sidney Lee, and occupies nearly fifty pages, being divided into biography, portraits, and memorials, bibliography, and Shakespeare's reputation. Mr. Lee, who has gone most carefully over the ground, shows that materials for the great poet's life are fuller than usually thought. His conclusion, however, that from the time Shakespeare left Stratford (1585), "although he was never wholly estranged from his family, he saw little of his wife or children for eleven years"—when his son was buried there—is a surmise from want of evidence. We prefer to suppose that he had them with him in London as soon as ever he could afford to bring them. Mr. Lee appears to adopt Gerald Massey's view, that Lord Southampton was the patron of the sonnets. Much has recently been made of Shakespeare's father having been presented as a recusant for absenting himself from church. The commissioners reported that his absence was probably due to "fear of process for debt." Of the poet's will Mr. Lee says: "The religious exordium is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions." So far, so good; but Mr. Lee goes on to say: "What those opinions were we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing." We think his works give both. No religious man would have written such plays, or indulged in the profanities which appear in them. When, moreover, we find the same sentiments on death placed in the mouth of his greatest characters in many different plays, we can hardly escape the thought that they reflect his own views.

* * *

Among the other contents of this volume are "Sir J. R. Seeley," the historian and author of *Ecce Homo*, by Professor Prothero; "Sir Walter Scott," by Leslie Stephen; "Michael Scot," the early scholar, by Sheriff Mackay; "Reginald Scot," the first English writer against the belief in witches, by S. Lee; and a too brief notice of Thomas Scott, the Freethinker, by J. M. Wheeler.

* * *

The University Magazine for October opens with "A Hundred Years of Malthusianism," the parson's work on Population being published in 1798. Nitti's criticism of Malthus is roughly handled. There is one little slip. Carlile's work, from which, it is said, we must date the Neo-Malthusian movement, was entitled *Every Woman's Book* (1826). A. Ebbels reviews Professor Bruce's *Apologetics*, Mr. F. H. Perry Coste replies to W. S. Lilly on Evolutionary Ethics, and there is an acute criticism on the ever-interesting novelist, Charlotte Brönte.

* * *

We expect the article which will most attract our readers in the *University Magazine* is "My Family Folk-Lore," by J. M. Wheeler. Our sub-editor tells a lot of strange yarns about wheelers and wheels. His paper is of real human interest, besides containing much curious antiquarian matter, and a suggestion of the late survival of pagan cults in England. Those interested in Mr. Wheeler should certainly read this number.

You can always tell a sacred concert, because it is always given on Sunday.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF THOMAS PAINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—In your paper of August 29 Mr. J. M. Wheeler decides very positively that the portrait left by me in the National Portrait Gallery as Romney's "Paine" is not by Romney. Anxious as I am to have the picture discussed, I read Mr. Wheeler's paragraph with regret, for it compels a rejoinder which, with all my kindly feelings towards a Freethinker of long service, cannot be made pleasant to him.

Mr. Wheeler mentions my article in the London *Athenæum*, but evidently has not read it. He seems to assume that I have occupied the valuable space of that journal—and that its editor permitted me to do so—with statements unworthy his consideration, and consequently occupies your space with forestalled objections. He says: "It is certainly not by George Romney. No critic who will compare it with Romney's masterly portrait of himself in the same Gallery, or with any of his portraits, can be in doubt upon the point." In the *Athenæum* I said: "I have not the slightest doubt, *and this accords with the opinion of persons well acquainted with Romney's work who have already examined the portrait*," etc. Mr. Wheeler's implicit charge of mendacity on my part would be inexcusable were it not plain that he had not read my assertion.

Mr. Wheeler says he "asked the opinion of the curators. The answer was decisive: 'The painting is not by Romney, and is a very bad *replica*.'" Turning to the Standard Dictionary, I find: "*Replica*.—A duplicate executed by the artist himself, and regarded, equally with the first, as an original." According to these curators, then, the portrait *is* by Romney, though he did not paint it! But perhaps they meant "copy." There are many liveried "curators" in galleries who do not know the difference between a *copy* and a *replica*; but Mr. Wheeler would have got a more important opinion if he had asked their superiors—Mr. Lionel Cust, for instance, director of the Gallery, who came to my house to see the portrait, and at once pronounced it a Romney.

Professor Colvin, keeper of prints in the British Museum, who also came to see the picture in my house, remarked a characteristic of Romney—the red in the inner corner of the eye; and Mr. Cust pointed out the same thing to me in Romney's portrait of himself—that very portrait of which Mr. Wheeler says "no critic," etc. (see above).

Professor Colvin thought that the background had been painted in by a later hand, and advised me to consult an expert cleaner as to whether it could be scraped off. For that purpose I called in Murchall, merely telling him it was an old picture, as I did not wish it talked of as a Romney or a Paine until I had written to the *Athenæum*. The portrait was shown to Murchall's expert in a room apart from other portraits of Paine. So soon as he saw it he said, "It's a Romney." "How do you know?" I asked. "We prepared many Romneys for the Romney family's sale, and I know them well." He had no knowledge of Paine, nor any notion who was the subject, but repeated, "It is a Romney." I then brought in Sharp's large engraving of Romney's Paine, and pointed out the differences in minor details between the engraving and the painting. These differences are in the lower part of the dress and in the papers on the table, which are roughly done in the painting, but finished off in Sharp's engraving. The expert said: "In painting portraits of men Romney did not care much after he had got the head, and often left the engraver to do his own finishing." He advised that the repainted background should not be tampered with, as the canvas was very old and might be injured. I may here add that all experts and critics who examined the picture, at my request, agreed that the canvas is as old as Romney's work (1792)—an important fact, for no American painter could then have painted Paine, who was in Europe 1787-1802.

"Moreover," continues Mr. Wheeler, "the artist has taken liberties of alteration from the engraving, or the picture, which William Sharp certainly would not have done." But this is what Sharp certainly did. Had Mr. Wheeler read my article, he would have known that Sharp made two engravings of the portrait—one in 1793, another in 1794, and that these two differ from each other; in one of them, therefore, he did alter Romney. I left both of the engravings in Mr. Cust's hands.

Mr. Wheeler writes of "alteration from the engraving, or the picture." He is entitled to speak of the engraving, but what does he know of the picture? Did he ever see it?

A critic so cocksure ought to know that the variations of a painting from an engraving made from it are often evidence of its originality and genuineness. When an artist regards a picture as important enough to copy, he does not omit or alter details, and so invite injurious comparisons; but engravers often make changes in minor details, as some things that are well enough in colors look slovenly in black and white. In my article I said (not without due consulta-

Digitized by Google

tion with men of more knowledge than myself): "While the resemblances between the painting and the engraving are such as could not possibly occur in pictures of independent origin, the few differences sufficiently prove that the painting could not have been made from the engraving."

Mr. Wheeler says: "The search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia" [South Carolina, where Dr. Cooper, its first owner, died, 1840], "and not from New York, whence the Jarvis portrait was produced." What Jarvis portrait? Save a little lithograph at Paine's death, there is but one Jarvis portrait—that painted by the younger Jarvis in 1857 from Sharp's engraving, which I lately presented to South Place Chapel. I proved in my article that this newly-discovered portrait could not be by Jarvis. Mr. Wheeler says that admirers of Paine are indebted to me; if so, I hope that no others among them will show it by such utter disregard as he displays of a statement in which I have summed up the investigations of years (as stated therein). Mr. Wheeler's instructions to myself and other Freethinkers over here ("our American friends should know," etc.; "the search for the Romney portrait should begin from Columbia," etc.), however awe-inspiring, give us little credit for common sense. Two years ago I corresponded with the President of the University at Columbia, to which Cooper belonged, and all others likely to know anything about the matter. Dr. Cooper's surviving granddaughter and his descendants have been discovered in another region by the aid of my friend, James Elliott; but they know nothing whatever of the portrait, or what became of any of Dr. Cooper's effects. Mr. Wheeler's instruction about Columbia begins sublimely: "I do know"; but one thing he does not know—namely, that when Dr. Cooper died (1840) any portrait of "Tom Paine" publicly shown in any part of the South would have stood more chance of being burnt than of being sold; anybody wishing to realize on such an asset would have sent it to New York or Boston.

Mr. Wheeler closes his article with a request that American papers will copy it. I am sorry for this on his account, for it compels me to communicate his grievous blunders to the Freethinking editors in this country. I hope, however, that this may be the means of preventing his article or this letter from appearing in America.—Respectfully.

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

305 West Seventy-street, New York.

MR. WHEELER'S REPLY.

I BROUGHT no charge of mendacity against Mr. M. D. Conway. The question, Has he discovered Romney's portrait? is a matter of opinion. He is confident he has; I, in his polite expression, am "cocksure" he has not. I have no axes to grind; and if I have any personal interest, it is that of an admirer of Romney and of Paine, who would like to show my friends the portrait of a great Freethinker by a superb artist in our national collection. Doubting its authenticity, and being confirmed in this doubt by authority, I felt it right to say so emphatically, that others might not be debarred from the search. That was, and is, my chief concern.

It is one thing to say in a gentleman's own house that his picture is like Romney, another to recommend its purchase by the British nation as a Romney. If Mr. Cust, or Mr. Colvin, assumes that responsibility, I shall cease to be "cocksure," but not cease to wonder. I doubt if they will rely on "the red in the inner corner of the eye." (Possibly the shadow under the brow is meant) This may be found in portraits by Gainsborough, Guy Head, Raeburn, and others. Perhaps some American friend will see if it is not also found in Jarvis. What I venture to think more decisive is the treatment of the hair. This is altogether different from Romney's manner, and different too from both engravings. The skin, also, is too smooth and enamel-like. The real work was painted in July, 1792. Romney was in the plenitude of his powers. His *Memoirs* call Paine's portrait "one of the finest heads ever produced by pencil, both for professional skill and physiognomical expression." What critic will say this of Mr. Conway's picture? Of course it has some Romney characteristics, being, as I think, painted from the engraving of Romney's picture by a capable artist, and restored in the belief that it is a Romney. I do not wish to disparage it. On the contrary, I urged on Mr. Milner, who is no "liveried" curator, but a responsible authority, that, even if not a Romney, it was still, in the absence of the original, a most desirable picture for the national collection.

It would be tedious to readers, who have not the picture and engravings before them, to go into the minutiæ of detail which suggest that the picture is from the engraving, and not *vice versa*—the variations of light and shade, the form and number of buttonholes, etc. One point I may mention. The table in both engravings is square edged, and in the picture draped. This is just such an alteration as an artist would make on an engraving, but which a faithful engraver like Sharp would not venture with the picture before him. The issue is obscured by talking of the two engravings. The differences between that issued at a guinea in July, 1793, and that issued at half-a-crown in February, 1794, are only those which any competent engraver would produce. The second, though much smaller, is artistically an improvement. But the standard is the large one catalogued by Horne. In both there are essential differences from the painting. Their meaning I leave to experts.

Mr. Conway speaks of the investigations of years. In October 11, 1890, he asked about Romney's Paine in *Notes and Queries*, and wrote: "There is some reason to believe that the portrait was painted for Thomas "Clio" Rickman, Paine's friend and biographer." In 1892, the date of his *Life of Thomas Paine*, he knew nothing, or said nothing, of the portrait having been painted for Cooper, of Manchester, though he mentions a (possibly spurious) Romney claimant turning up at Birmingham. If I am wrong in introducing the name of Jarvis, it is Mr. Conway who himself misled me. He now says: "There is but one Jarvis portrait—that painted by the younger Jarvis in 1857 from Sharp's engraving." In the catalogue of the Paine Exhibition held in South Place Institute, December 2, 1895, I find under Mr. Conway's name "266.—Paine, Large Oil Portrait, copy by C. W. Jarvis of his father's (J. W. Jarvis) portrait of Paine, while residing in his house." Will Mr. Conway explain this? Can he tell us why the picture, now ascribed to Romney, was, as he mentions in the *Athenæum* (June 26), "always ascribed to the 'elder Jarvis'—John Wesley Jarvis—an artist in whose house Paine resided for a time in 1806"? The work of Jarvis was well known in America, so was Sharp's engraving, of which there have been thousands of reproductions issued. Paine had many admirers in America who desired his portrait, and of course got supplied from this, the best available source. My own dead friend, Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, over a generation ago had a portrait of Paine painted for her by Jarvis.

Mr. Conway now says: "I proved in my article that this newly-discovered portrait could not be by Jarvis." What was the proof? "Jarvis did not see Paine until he was many years older than this portrait." Only this and nothing more! So a painter could not copy a picture taken at an earlier date than that at which he himself knew the person painted! If this is Mr. Conway's notion of proof, I do not wonder at his sliding over the absence of evidence that the Romney ever went to America, though he tells us that Cooper's descendants "know nothing whatever of this portrait." The painting does depict Paine older than does the engraving. The hair is whiter, the cheeks more sunken. The frontispiece to Mr. Conway's *Life* is inscribed, "Thomas Paine. Ætat 67. From a picture by Jarvis in possession of the author." It portrays Paine as a younger man than that shown in the Romney taken when Paine was 55! But Mr. Conway's boasted frontispiece is another faked-up modification of Sharp's engraving, and Mr. Conway's "grievous blunders" with regard to Paine's portraits have already been exposed in America by Mr. W. H. Burr, of Washington.

One thing can decide our controversy. The proof of the picture will be in the payment. If what I contend, it may be worth some fifty guineas in the absence of the original. If by George Romney, its value is over fifty times that sum and it would be dirt cheap at a thousand guineas. Who bids?

J. M. WHEELER.

ISAIAH VII. 14.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In reply to some remarks by Mr. Haining on the above passage, "Chilperic" writes: "Matthew i. 23 has nothing to do with the *Hebrew* text; it is the Septuagint that is quoted; and it is beside the mark to accuse the *Evangelist* of perverting the passage." That the above statements are correct goes, of course, without saying; but there is an imputation contained in the last sentence which I cannot allow to pass without notice. If I understand this sentence rightly, it implies that I was so illogical and unjust as to accuse Matthew of perverting the words he has quoted from Isaiah. It is scarcely necessary to say that I did nothing of the kind. I noticed in passing, it is true, the fact of a mistranslation of the passage in the English version; but I did not set this down to the account of the evangelist, nor did I make use of the mistranslated words at all. Here is my sole accusation against the Gospel writer in this matter:—"In order to make up his 'prophecy,' Matthew has dishonestly taken some words in the narrative of Isaiah *away from their context*, and, wilfully disregarding both the sense of that context and the fact that the prediction was fulfilled in the days of Ahaz, he has unblushingly declared that those words were written concerning a child who was not born until seven hundred and thirty years after that time—to wit, Jesus Christ. A greater fraud it is scarcely possible to imagine." Now, admitting that Matthew has quoted correctly, and that he found the word "virgin" (*varthenos*) in his copy, how can this fact affect the misrepresentation with which he is here charged, seeing that I do not refer to the mistranslation at all? It alters nothing, and that is the reason I did not waste time in noticing it.

ABRACADABRA.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Man's Origin and Destiny."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "School-taught Morality." October 2, at 8.30, Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Is Religion Necessary or Useful to Mankind?"

KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club—Report and balance-sheet.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Class Distinctions in England—(1) The Aristocracy."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Aristocracy."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 5, Tea meeting; 7, R. Forder, "The Jesus of the Gospels."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, H. P. Ward.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, H. P. Ward.

EDMONTON (Angel road): 7, Debate between Messrs. Ramsey and Boyce, "Is there a Future Life?"

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S.W.R. station): 7, Debate between Messrs. Halling and Edwards.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Exodus."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): S. Armfield—11, "What do we Know of the Hereafter"; 7, "God and His Bible."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, E. Pack, "The Brain and the Soul."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Business meeting; 6.30, Social meeting.

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, Members' meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. M. Robertson—3, "Are the Clergy Honest?" 7, "Life and Morals without Religion."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Miss Voltairine De Cleyre—3, "Woman *v.* Orthodoxy"; 6.30, "The True Mental Attitude of the Freethinker."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Watts—11, "Drawbacks of Christianity"; 3, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb"; 7, "The Triumph of Reason." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 10, a., Victoria Park. 17, Manchester. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—October 3, Chatham. 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. You pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on Platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, painless by gas, 5s.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices pos. free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronic Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 132 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN C.M. Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

LOT 11

1 Pair Pure Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Bed-Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 Tablecloth.

To each customer for **Lot 11** we present a handsomely bound volume of John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People*, or with orders for **2 Lot 11** we give G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*, and with orders for **5 Lot 11** customers will receive Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*.

This offer is made during OCTOBER only.

WINTER PATTERNS
NOW READY.

Overcoatings
Suitings
Trouserings
Jacket Cloths
Costume Cloths
Dress Fabrics

Patterns Post Free to any Address.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE,

Write for Terms.

STOCK SIZES.		TO MEASURE.
25s.		27s. 6d.
30s.		32s. 6d.
35s.		37s. 6d.
Each.		Each.



In Serges, Tweeds, Freizes, or Meltons, any Color. Patterns and Self-measurement Forms free to any Address. Every Garment well cut, made, and trimmed.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

SEWING MACHINES

Umbrellas
Carpets
Blankets
Quilts
Sheets
Corsets
Skirts
Shawls
Shirts
Furs
and all kinds of general Heavy Drapery.

Price List Free.

WORKING MEN,
You can **add** 10s. to 30s. per week to your Income by Selling Goods for us.

Write for Terms.

Price 2½d., by post 3d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE OCTOBER NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Scientific Criticism: Mr. J. M. Robertson's New Book.
A Singular Singer: M. C. O'Byrne.
The Youngest of Sciences: The New Psychology.
Crystal and Other Visions: Andrew Lang's "Ghosts."
Heresy in Fiction.
Did Mark Follow Matthew?
Goethe's Great Thoughts.
Professor Goldwin Smith Interviewed: The Progress of Agnosticism.
Literary Shrines and Pilgrimages. 1.—The Grave of Mary Chaworth.
The Study of Darwin: A Concise Guide to Darwinology.
Random Jottings; and the usual features.

Also a 4 pp. Supplement, containing a review and criticism, by Mr. F. J. Gould, of Dean Farrar's recent Work on *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy*.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

INGERSOLL'S
Greatest Lecture
ON
SHAKESPEARE.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS :—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
Christian Methods of Reformation
Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
Paley and Sydney Smith
Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
Bible Drinks
Scriptural Praises of Wine
Jesus and the Wine Miracle
The Last Supper
Communion Port
The Two-Wine Theory
Religion and Intoxication
Religious Drinking in the Bible
Water-Drinking Heretics
Christianity and Mohammedanism
Church Drinks
Absurdity of Bible Temperance
Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.
Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason*.) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 41. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE DEATH OF PRAYER.

WE have written two consecutive articles on the recent cases of Peculiar People, who have had to appear at coroners' inquests on the dead bodies of their children. The father of one of these deceased children, as our readers will recollect, stands committed for trial on the charge of manslaughter. Another was severely censured, after the style of the old magistrate whose judgment was "Not guilty: but don't do it again." A further case has occurred since our last issue. This time a juryman wanted to have a Biblical discussion with the Peculiar father, but was checked by the coroner, who did not care to have his court turned into an arena of theological debate.

Another fact which we desire to notice is this. The medical witness in this fresh instance was asked whether a doctor would have prolonged the child's life, and he was unable to answer the question. It was an ordinary case of pneumonia, yet it was impossible to say whether a doctor would have done any good or not. Could there be a more striking illustration of the empirical character of the "art of healing"? Does it not warrant a strong opposition to the overweening pretensions of the medical profession? Does it not justify us in refusing to be ruled by so-called experts? Does it not warrant us in declining to invest their nostrums with any sort of privilege? The medical art is in many ways a noble one. Its object is, or should be, the alleviation of human suffering, and the prolongation of human life. But when the doctor seeks to invade our homes with compulsory powers we have a right to investigate his scientific credentials; and when we find that doctors are very much at variance with each other, that fundamental points of treatment are still in dispute, and that a medical dogma like vaccination is easily riddled by evidence, and especially by statistics, we have a clear right to ask these gentlemen to be more modest, and to fall into a line with the general body of their fellow citizens.

This point, however, is collateral. Our primary object is to deal with the doctrine of prayer. And we venture to assert that this doctrine is practically dead. It has a semblance of life, but no reality; and the committal of one of these Peculiar People on a charge of manslaughter is the first stroke of the bell at its funeral.

For a long time the clergy who come into contact with thinking people, and have to face an educated opinion, have been very chary about pressing the doctrine of prayer in the good old-fashioned style. When the late Professor Tyndall suggested that the efficacy of prayer should be submitted to a scientific test, a wily clergyman replied that it was absurd to expect God Almighty to let himself be made the subject of an experiment. And when Mr. Galton investigated backwards, in the region of the unalterable past, and proved by statistics that the efficacy of prayer was absolutely imperceptible, the clergy took shelter behind a dignified silence. We still find ministers like Mr. Price Hughes successfully praying for the exact sum of one thousand pounds; and Muller's orphanage is still supported by the wide and constant advertisement that he relies entirely upon the Lord. But every man of the world smiles at such equivocal simplicities. They are relics of a bygone age of credulity. The general tendency of the age is to ignore prayer altogether, except in the perfunctory rites of "divine worship." Insurance companies treat it with quiet disdain. Christians have to pay the same life-policy premiums as infidels, and churches have to be protected by lightning conductors. Underwriters never trouble themselves about the religious or irreligious habits of the captain of a ship, or whether his list of passengers is hallowed by the presence of a bishop or damnified by the presence of an Atheist lecturer. The rate of insurance depends entirely upon secular considerations. When a town is visited by an epidemic fever, the citizens know very well that the remedy must be found in improved sanitation, and they look upon church prayers as a harmless ceremony of the time-honored clerical profession. The town councillor who proposed a religious procession, and general supplication to God, would be laughed at as an old fogey. That sort of thing has been impossible ever since Lord Palmerston told the Town Council of Edinburgh to try whitewash instead of prayer against the cholera.

The Church of England has forms of prayer for rain and fine weather, but it rarely uses them, and some day or other they will be dropped out of the Prayer Book. The most thick-headed farmer, in these days of scientific agriculture, and international competition in the food market, is quite aware that it is no use relying upon the parson. Thanksgiving services are still held; they have been holding them down in devastated Essex; but they are regarded as routine ceremonies, without any real relation to the character of the harvest.

The scientific spirit is gradually but surely permeating the public mind; and science knows nothing of miracle, and every answer to prayer is a miracle.

The clergy who try to reconcile science with miracle only do so metaphysically. All they urge at bottom is this, that if there be a God he can work miracles if he chooses. No one denies this hypothetical proposition. The only practical question is this: If there be a God, *does* he work miracles? In other words, do miracles *occur*? That question is to be settled by evidence, and all the evidence we have points to the negative. Every man of science believes in natural causation and the unbroken order of nature.

Prayer is now generally recommended as a pious exercise. But whoever prays to God without expecting an answer is, as Coleridge said, indulging in a species of self-magnetism. It is like any other kind of dram or drug. A Christian soldier might fight better after a prayer, but so he might after a glass of brandy. It may be said that prayer is at least a conscious communion with one's ideal, but that is possible without simulation and self-deception.

G. W. FOOTE.

Digitized by Google

INGERSOLL ON SHAKESPEARE.*

WHAT can be said of Shakespeare? The theme is inexhaustible; the expression necessarily inadequate. To do it justice would need "a muse of fire that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention." To understand Shakespeare in his height and depth and fulness needs a poet and genius of masculine strength and feminine tenderness, with clear, freethinking brain and mighty heart, worthy to be the peer of the poet himself. Some of our greatest literary men—among them Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, Carlyle, Hazlitt, Lamb, Bagehot, Massey, Swinburne, and Dowden—have said their best and written at length on Shakespeare. I have read them all, besides an immense mass of critics and commentators who hold their farthing candle to the sun, and I do not think there is any one of them I would not give to hear Colonel Ingersoll deliver the lecture of which a copy lies before me. For it glows with noble eloquence; its words are warm from the heart, and instinct with the insight which comes from sympathy. The utterance needs but the tones of the orator's voice to make us thrill in unison, and simply to read it is a delight. The secret of this is that we are for the time both made the companion of the great myriad-minded English dramatist, whose words are rooted in our common speech, and likewise let into the very heart of the great American orator. It is Ingersoll's personality which adds to our enjoyment. Shakespeare touches Ingersoll not on one side only, but all round. He can appreciate his heroic words of fire, and also his fun and frolic; the drollery of his Dogberry as well as the tragic sublimity of his Lear; and as he takes us over the plays, pointing out the exquisite beauties and summarizing the characters in well-chosen Shakespearean words, we are enraptured with his admiration, and enjoy all the familiar scenes with keener zest because he enjoys them so keenly.

Ingersoll opens with the trumpet tones of a herald proclaiming a hero monarch's might:—

> "William Shakespeare was the greatest genius of our world. He left to us the richest legacy of all the dead—the treasures of the rarest soul that ever lived and loved and wrought of words the statues, pictures, robes, and gems of thought. He was the greatest man that ever touched this grain of sand and tear we call the world."

Here is none of the cautious and delicate approach of a man who is afraid of his cause. It is rather the forthright utterance of a plain, blunt man who loves his friend; and every item of the lecture shows how Ingersoll has taken Shakespeare to his heart of hearts, and made him the companion of his life.

I rejoice that a citizen of the great Transatlantic Republic should so justly appreciate our mighty poet. For, be it said without offence, our ears have been assailed by a long asinine bray from across the herring-pond asserting evidence, God wot, that the plays of Shakespeare were the production of Lord Bacon. We have had good Shakespearean studies from America, but the work of men like Hudson, Furness, White, and Rolfe has been almost lost amid the noise made by this stupid folly, which, although it has found scant footing in England, has infected some of the small Germans. Very effectively does Ingersoll dispose of this nonsense. Knowing Bacon as well as Shakespeare, he shows how utterly dissimilar are the characters displayed in their various writings. The section devoted to this subject is simply unanswerable, and should relegate the Bacon bogey born from the muddled brain of Delia Bacon, and hatched by the ingenuity of Ignatius Donnelly, into the limbo of obscurity.

My notice must not be all panegyric, and there is just one statement to which I take exception. The Colonel says of his hero: "Nothing is known of his mother except her beautiful name—Mary Arden." This is not quite correct. Her descent and connections are known. She was of gentle birth from an old county family, and although Colonel Ingersoll guardedly says there "does not seem to be as much in heredity as most people think," I venture to believe that she brought to her household priceless elements of character and culture. But I shall not enter into controversy with the Colonel on the fruitless topic of explaining Shakespeare. His own few words on the poet's environment are much to the point:—

> "Shakespeare lived during the great awakening of the world, when Europe emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages, when the discovery of America had made England, that blossom of the Gulf Stream, the centre of commerce, and during a period when some of the greatest writers, thinkers, soldiers, and discoverers were produced.
>
> "Cervantes was born in 1547, dying on the same day that Shakespeare died. He was undoubtedly the greatest writer that Spain produced. Rubens was born in 1577; Camoens, the Portuguese, the author of *The Lusiad*, died in 1597; Giordano Bruno—greatest of martyrs—was born in 1548, visited London in Shakespeare's time, delivered lectures at Oxford, and called that institution 'the widow of learning'; Drake circled the globe in 1580; Galileo was born in 1564—the same year with Shakespeare; Michael Angelo died in 1563; Kepler—he of the *Three Laws*—born in 1571; Calderon the Spanish dramatist, born in 1601; Corneille, the French poet, in 1606; Rembrandt, greatest of painters, 1607; Shakespeare was born in 1564; in that year John Calvin died. What a glorious exchange!"

There are many little Freethought touches like this last which give piquancy to the address. There are also some capital criticisms and suggestions, as that the poet's epitaph was the production of Dr. John Hall, his son-in-law.

I fancy Colonel Ingersoll somewhat underrates Shakespeare's reading. He says we know Shakespeare's Library. But the books he shows acquaintance with are neither few nor mean. Plutarch, Montaigne, Seneca, Ovid, and Terence are world classics. Beyond published works many translations circulated in manuscript at that time. The average standard of the reading man was far higher then than now. There were no distracting newspapers, and less trash. If Shakespeare had little Latin and less Greek, he utilized what he had, and supplemented it with French and Italian. It did not take him long to learn, and he had native English force which enabled him to soar above—

> All that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

Certainly Shakespeare's was never the mere bookman's outlook on life. He had not what, to avoid a coarser expression, I call the sedentary view of affairs which characterizes our modern erotic, neurotic, and tommyrotic poets, the decadent duffers who, suckled on absinthe, can find only smut in Shakespeare's sonnets, and are positive that the creator of Rosalind, Perdita, Hermione, Miranda, Desdemona, Imogen, and Cordelia was unhappy *in* marriage and unfortunate in his relations with women. Shakespeare was Nature's oracle. He loved his country:—

> With shadowy forest and with champains rich'd,
> With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads.

He read man and nature direct with his own eyes, but he also had the mind to assimilate the best that the past had left of towering thought or noble example.

One strong impression left after reading this lecture is that it is the healthy, hearty admirer, and not the mere critic with measuring rule and microscopic eyes for defects, who makes the best guide to works of genius. It is the magnanimous nature that can most thoroughly understand art. The beauties of Shakespeare are best brought out by a pellucid and penetrating intellect, united to keen, deep, and sympathetic emotions. Such a man is Colonel Ingersoll. Hence his lecture is worthy of its subject. It can have no higher praise. From start to finish it is a splendid piece of sustained eloquence. It closes with a fine peroration, sonorous as the surge of rolling billows on the resounding shore:—

> "Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean, whose waves touched all the shores of thought; within which were all the tides and waves of destiny and will; over which swept all the storms of fate, ambition, and revenge; upon which fell the gloom and darkness of despair and death, and all the sunlight of content and love, and within which was the inverted sky lit with the eternal stars—an intellectual ocean—towards which all rivers ran, and from which now the isles and continents of thought receive their dew and rain."

To read the lecture is to wish to hear it all over again from the lips of the orator, and makes us ask when is the Colonel going to visit "our precious stone set in the silver sea," and let his English admirers listen to his eloquence.

J. M. WHEELER.

* *Shakespeare.* A Lecture. By Robert G. Ingersoll. Price 6d. P. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.)

Digitized by Google

THE VALUE OF PUBLIC DEBATE.

FROM an intellectual standpoint, an honest and well-conducted public discussion is most valuable. It enables a comparison of views to be made, and thus an opportunity is afforded of distinguishing truth from error. Bacon says: "To believe without examination is no belief in reality, but merely an assent that such and such things are believed by others, and is, in fact, only believing that we believe." And Mansfield observes: "The judgment must be employed to discern the truth or falsehood of assertions, by attending to the credibility and consistency of the different parts of the story; the veracity and character of witnesses in other respects; by comparing the assertions with accounts received from other witnesses, who could not be ignorant of the facts; and, lastly, by bringing the test of a comparison with known and admitted facts." Secularists are in favor of real debate because, in addition to the advantages above indicated, it is the means of imparting to professed Christians a knowledge of Secular principles and teachings. Believers in the Bible and the supposed followers of Christ should be equally favorable to controversy, inasmuch as their Bible enjoins them, and their Master and St. Paul set them the example, to "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself" (Proverbs xxv. 9). We read in the "Word of God": "Come now and let us reason together" (Isaiah i. 18); also, that very early in his career Jesus was found in the temple in the midst of doctors, "both hearing them and asking them questions," and that St. Paul "disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him, and spake boldly for the space of three months" (Acts xvii. 17; xix. 8).

Christians of the present day are not anxious, however, to obey the teachings of the Bible, or to follow the example of Jesus and St. Paul in this matter, any more than they are in many other things. Twenty or thirty years ago the leading exponents of the Christian faith were "eager for the fray," and willing to "stand the hazard of the die"; but now the first-rate men in the Church cannot be induced to enter the arena to debate with the representatives of Secularism. The equals in controversial ability of the Rev. T. D. Matthias, Dr. McCann, Dr. Harrison, Dr. Smith of Edinburgh, Rev. W. Adamson. Rev. A. Stewart, and Dr. Sexton, are not forthcoming in these times. It has been my pleasure to discuss with all of the above Christian exponents, and I should be only too glad to once more meet upon the platform opponents of such polemical calibre.

What are the causes of this falling off in the ranks of first-class Christian debaters? Probably it has been found that discussion does not strengthen the Christian's position. The clergy, as a rule, are not being trained in the art of debate, and their general knowledge has, no doubt, convinced them that it is difficult in this critical age to harmonize Christian teachings with modern requirements. The recent changes and modifications which have occurred in the interpretation of the term "Christianity" have placed its advocates in a dilemma. The more intelligent adherents of the faith will not now accept it in the same sense as their predecessors did. Doctrines once regarded as essentials no longer command implicit belief. Hence the logical result of this "change of front" is, that Christianity was not originally perfect, in which case a severe blow is struck at its alleged "divinity"; or that man has so "improved" its nature that we do not now possess "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Moreover, it is evident that Christians do not attempt to practise what they preach, which shows the inutility of their teachings as a guide in human conduct. Christ's words: "Blessed be ye poor"; "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God"; "Love your enemies" and "your neighbor as yourself"; "Resist not evil"; "Lend, hoping for nothing again"; "Give to every man that asketh"; forgive your brother "seventy times seven"; "Take no thought for your life"—such sayings are unheeded, and never acted upon even by those who preach "Christ and him crucified." To reasonably defend in public debate such inconsistency as is manifested in putting forth these impracticable injunctions as the regulators of daily life is more than can be accomplished. And Christian advocates recognise this, which accounts for the fact that many of them who discuss will never touch the main points at issue, but content themselves with dealing with side issues, and appealing to the religious emotions of their audiences.

The results of Freethought criticism furnish other reasons why the clergy will not debate the claims of their faith. It has been demonstrated particularly during the last two decades that the "divine" origin of Christianity cannot be proved; that probable causes for its human origination can be assigned; that its morality, doctrines, and ceremonies are not original; that belief in its teachings is not necessary to the living of moral lives; that it has not been the cause of modern progress; that its teaching that prayer is a source of material help, its demand for uniformity of belief, its threatened punishment for disbelief, and its sanctions of persecution are opposed to science, the nature of our mentality, the principle of justice, and the right of intellectual freedom. Finally, we discern a cause for the dislike of public debate upon the part of most of the professors of Christianity, in the growing desire for a different religion to that embodied in orthodoxy. There is at the present time a marked tendency to accept the term religion in its etymological and secular meaning, rather than in its alleged supernatural sense. Regarding true religion as ethical unity, established to promote the welfare of mankind on earth, its proper basis is enlightened benevolence. This great human instinct is not dependent upon any form of supernaturalism for its manifestation; its activity is evoked by a desire to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted, and to enhance the happiness of the unfortunate. Emerson has said: "The mind of this age has fallen away from theology to morals. I conceive it to be an advance." Undoubtedly this is true, for the intellect of the age is more than ever finding its justification for being good in the results of action, rather than in the commands of creeds and dogmas. The inspiration to goodness is now recognised as coming from earth, not heaven; from man, not God.

To make public debate valuable it appears to me that the following method should be observed: (1) That principles, not men, should be discussed. "Black sheep" are to be found, unfortunately, in all sections of society; and Christianity, with all its wealth, power, and two thousand years of existence, has failed to remove them. (2) While, of course, some oratorical display is permissible, the main consideration in all discussions ought to be an argumentative exposition of a person's own views, and a fair and reasonable criticism of those of his opponents. (3) Warmth in debate cannot always be avoided, but loss of good temper should never occur. It impairs the reasoning powers, mars the function of judgment, and arouses the inferior passions of the audience. (4) Neither disputant should assume that he has "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" in his favor. The value of debate consists in the sincere endeavor to discover what truth obtains on either side. The mistake of some Christian disputants with whom I have debated has been that they have assumed they were absolutely right in their opinions, and that their opponents were unquestionably wrong in theirs. This is dogmatism, which, when exercised, must destroy the utility of debate. Dr. Watts, whose belief in Christianity will not be questioned, wrote very sensibly upon this point. He says: "A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious to his neighbors Every one of his opinions appears to him written, as it were, with sunbeams, and he grows angry that his neighbors do not see it in the same light. He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of low and dark understandings, because they do not believe what he does." (5) If mistakes are made on either side, they should not be termed wilful misrepresentations. Such an imputation is a charge of dishonesty, which no disputant is justified in allowing to be made unrebuked. (6) The audiences ought to listen calmly to both speakers, as, presumably, those who attend debates are present for the purpose of hearing that from which they dissent. In the language of Dr. Watts, whose words should have weight with Christians, it is necessary to "keep up a just indifference to either side of the question if you would be led honestly into the truth; for a desire or inclination leaning to either side biasses the judgment strangely; whereas, by this indifference for everything but truth, you will be excited to examine fairly, instead of presuming, and your assent will be secured from going beyond your evidence."

Digitized by Google

In all discussions the disputants need not be regarded as necessarily personal enemies. Differences of opinion should not be allowed to destroy that friendship which is essential to the pleasantness and value of public debate.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS.

PRESUMING, worthy reader, that you are of a sceptical disposition, you certainly ought to read the gospel of the doubting Thomas. If you do, and exercise your critical faculties, you may be led to some very sceptical conclusions indeed. The gospel exists in three forms—two in Greek, and one in Latin. All are translated by A. Walker in the volume of *Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations*, in T. and T. Clark's *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. But before we go any further it is necessary to warn the sceptical reader that he must neither take the alleged date of the Council of Nice [A.C. 325] for granted, nor that any given document is ante or post-Nicene. Let us see what Tommy has to say for himself. The first Greek form has nineteen sections, the second eleven, and the Latin is an amplification.

Tom sets out by informing us that he is an Israelite—presumably without guile—and is going to tell the miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ in his infancy for the benefit of the brethren among the heathen. First of all, at five years of age he made twelve mud sparrows on the Sabbath. He clapped his hands, and said, "Off you go," and the sparrows went off, like the twelve apostles. Then the son of Annas, the scribe, took a willow branch, and let out the waters Jesus had collected. Jesus withers him on the spot. He dried up. Then another boy ran against him. "And Jesus was angry, and said: Thou shalt not go back the way thou camest. And immediately he fell down dead." The complaisant Joseph expostulates with him, but he retorts by striking his accusers blind. Next he goes to Zachæus to learn his letters, but Jesus said to him: "Thou hypocrite! first, if thou knowest, teach the A, and then we shall believe thee about the B." Zachæus beseeches Joseph to take him home. Then we are told that, Jesus playing with some boys in a loft, one fell down and was killed. The parents reproached Jesus, who make him stand up and confess that he (Jesus) did not throw the boy down (as one might suspect from his usual behavior). Then he raises to life a young man who cut his foot with an axe, and died from loss of blood. Proverbs xxx. 4 asks: "Who hath bound his waters in a garment?" Tom takes the hint, and says that when J. C. was six years old his virgin mater sent him for water. He broke the pitcher, but brought back the water in his cloak. "And seeing this, she was struck with astonishment, and embraced him and kissed him." Anon he sows one grain of corn and reaps a hundred big baskets-full. Pater Joseph makes a bedstead too short, and Jesus pulls it out to the right length. Then he goes to school again, and says to his master: "Tell me the power of the Alpha, and I will tell thee the power of the Beta." James, his brother, is bitten by a viper and is healed, and Jesus restores a child to life and afterwards a man, and then is taken to the temple, and says the same as is recorded in the second chapter of Luke—which ends the gospel.

Let us suppose such a Gospel as this published for the first time to-day. Whether it appeared in the *Rock* or in the *Freethinker*, its author would be suspected of writing a skit on Christian credulity. Yet the book has as good claims to antiquity as any other portion of Christian literature. Either Justin Martyr used it, or it used Justin Martyr, for almost the same words are used in mentioning that Jesus made ploughs and yokes. Irenæus (*Against Heresies*, i. 20) tells the story about Alpha and Beta as among "an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings forged to bewilder the minds of foolish men." Origen, in his first Homily on Luke, explicitly mentions the Gospel of Thomas; and it is also mentioned in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 25. The evidence for its early existence is quite as clear as that for any of the Gospels. One point is particularly notable. In the Syriac recension of the Gospel of Thomas, Joseph is several times spoken of as the father of Jesus, exactly as he is in the Syriac Gospel discovered by Mrs. Lewis at Mount Sinai. This notable admission is struck out in the Greek and Latin versions. But what living mortal would place the slightest credence on any one of its stories? The Gospel of Thomas is in many particulars very similar to the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, which has claims of embodying stories clearly older than our canonical Gospels. Indeed, the comparative freedom from absurdities in these rather argues for their being of a later date.

Orthodox Christians make much of the puerility of the Apocryphal Gospels, and indeed, for stupid absurdities the Gospel of Thomas would be hard to beat. But it is rather rich of those who believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that he was taken by the devil to the pinnacle of a temple, that he walked on the water, cast devils into pigs, and withered a fig-tree by cursing it for not bearing when the season of figs was not yet, to talk of puerile miracles. Those related by Tommy are meant as puerile. They concern Christ's childhood, and are just fit for those in a childish state of mind.

If we ask ourselves as to the probable origin of the Gospel of Thomas, few would dispute that it bears marks of being a concoction, based probably in part on tradition; part, as in the case of the water in the garment, on a ridiculous application of the Old Testament. But cannot exactly the same be said of Matthew? Does he not concoct the genealogies and fulfil the prophecies in just as barefaced a manner?

LUCIANUS

FISH STORIES.

A DOLPHIN carried the wonderful musician, Arion, to shore. He had made a great deal of money on a foreign professional tour, and was returning home by sea. The seamen flung him overboard, in order to secure his money for themselves. Arion played upon his harp, and a dolphin appeared and offered him his back, on which he safely rode home.

Fishes, and other denizens of the sea, have also played a most important part in the history of superstitions, and the Christian superstition is more or less permeated by that element, as we shall probably see.

The dolphin was a sacred, mystical symbol long before Arion's day, and it figured much in classical sculpture and painting. It also, at a much later period, figured in Christian symbolism. The meaning of the symbol may be learnt from my *Phallic Worship* pamphlet.

There is a fish called the *Remora*, or the Sucker-fish. It has a "sucking" apparatus on the back of its head and neck, by which it can attach itself to almost anything—fish, ships, etc. They have no swim-bladder, and therefore cannot rise and fall in the sea as other fishes can; but they attach themselves to others, and so rise or sink without effort, and at the expense of those which exert themselves.

The remora fastens itself to the bottoms of ships, and a great number of them would render sailing very slow, no doubt. The ancients, knowing the leading facts about the remora, proceeded to credit it with miraculous powers. It could stop a ship in the midst of the sea by simply clinging to its bottom or side; and nothing less than mystic or supernatural agency could release the vessel and enable her to proceed on her voyage. A French poet sang its praises:—

> The Sucker, darting forth its feeble snout
> Against the side of vessel tempest-tost,
> In the mid-flood delays its onward course.
> . . . . .
> Tell us, O Remora! where thou dost hide
> The anchor which can suddenly control
> The movement of a bark, when struggling hard
> With all the elements?

Ben Jonson says:—

> I say a remora,
> For it will stay a ship that's under sail.

Spenser sings:—

> Looking far forth into the ocean wide,
> A goodly ship, with banners bravely dight,
> And flag in her top-gallant, I espied,
> Through the main sea making her merry flight;
> Fair blew the wind into her bosom right,
> And th' heavens looked lovely all the while
> That she did seem to dance, as in delight,
> And at her own felicity did smile;
> All suddenly there clove unto her keel

Digitized by Google

A little fish which they call remora,
Which stopt her course, and held her by the heel.
Strange thing meseemeth that so small a thing
Should able be so great an one to wing.

This nonsense accords with what I was solemnly told when a boy—namely, that the breast-bone of the common toad, carefully cleaned by ants, in whose nest the toad had been buried for the purpose, would make its way in the sea against the strongest of tides; and that, carried in the pockets by any one on board, it would stop the swiftest vessel afloat. I believed it for a time, as I did Christianity; but by-and-bye grew out of both, and out of the one as naturally as out of the other.

Spenser, in the above quotation, marvels at the alleged power of the remora. Why? A man who could believe that faith like a grain of mustard seed could remove mountains, a word cure the most terrible diseases, and even raise the dead, ought surely to have been astonished at nothing. Those who believe that prayer can stay or speed a ship need not sneer at the remora or the bone of the toad. Common sense rejects them all and all alike; it treats every superstition in the same manner, and ascribes to Christ and God and saint and relic just the same power it does to that toad's bone—nay, something less. One superstition is as rational as any other, although tastes differ, and one man takes to this, another to that, for no other reason than that he was born to it and has not yet grown out of it.

JOS. SYMES.

APPEAL TO FREETHINKERS.

ONE of the most striking features of the present age in our country is the development of religious organizations. The Church of England is far stronger than it was thirty years ago, and its denominational schools are supported by immense sums of public money, which are really a fresh endowment. In these schools, which are more numerous than the Board schools under the control of the ratepayers, definite Church teaching is imparted to a vast multitude of children. Nor is the Catholic Church, although on a smaller scale, one whit behind the Church of England in extending and solidifying its power. Under the guidance of Cardinal Vaughan, it exhibits all its old mastery of the arts of priestcraft. On every side we are threatened by the forces of reaction. They are active, enterprising, haughty, and aggressive; and, in spite of the progress of science and general culture, they are a serious menace to liberty and civilization.

In these circumstances, it behoves Freethinkers to make a special effort to improve and fortify their own organization. The scientific arts of warfare on the one side cannot be successfully opposed by guerrilla fighting on the other. There must be union, concord, policy, discipline, and resources.

The only extensive organization of Freethought in Great Britain is the National Secular Society, which was founded by the late Charles Bradlaugh, who remained its President until a few months before his death, when he resigned on account of broken health and the pressure of other engagements. Under his leadership the Society became widely known, and it powerfully assisted him in his splendid struggle for constitutional rights against the House of Commons. But it was never an effective organization apart from his personality, and it never enjoyed an approach to an adequate income. During the past eight years the Society has been conducted, more or less on the old lines, under the presidency of Charles Bradlaugh's successor, Mr. G. W. Foote. To him has been mainly left the task of carrying on the Society's business, and of raising funds from time to time for that purpose. But it is now felt by the Executive and most of the party, as he himself has felt all along, that this is by no means the best policy. Less responsibility should be thrown upon the President; others should take their proper share in the Society's operations; the policy pursued should be at once more general and more settled; and, above all, the Society's finances should be placed upon a business-like and solid foundation.

A scheme designed on these lines was brought forward by the new Treasurer, Mr. S. Hartmann, shortly before the last Whit-Sunday Conference. The Conference remitted it to the Executive, with authority to put it in operation as far as might be found advisable, and also feasible. The Executive has adopted the Scheme broadly, and has appointed a special sub-committee to see to its promotion.

Mr. Hartmann proposes to retain the Society's central office in London and the services of its paid Secretary. Hitherto these have been the sole regular expenses of the organization. But it is now proposed to go much farther. *First*, to pay the President a salary, so that he may superintend the Society's affairs without loss. Should it be possible to make this salary adequate, it is contemplated that the President should lecture (say) half the Sundays in the year for provincial Branches gratuitously. *Second*, to engage a financial secretary, whose duty would be to travel through the country, visiting Branches with a view to assisting their organization, and calling upon members and sympathizers with a view to obtaining subscriptions. *Third*, to engage three Lecturers at a reasonable salary, who would deliver lectures in London and in the provinces without a fee. *Fourth*, to circulate leaflets, manifestoes, and other literature, including the Society's old-established Almanack, and to organize a system of correspondence in the press and otherwise on matters in which the Society is interested.

This Scheme could be carried out on an income of £1,500 a year. To raise this it is proposed to obtain promises of regular annual subscriptions, ranging from £100 (or more) down to 5s. Mr. Hartmann himself leads off with a promise of £50, at least for the first year. It is thought that other considerable subscriptions may be forthcoming, that a few may subscribe £20, more £10, still more £5, a large number £1, and a very much larger number 10s., or even 5s.

A number of such promises have already been obtained, and acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker;* and it is hoped that this appeal, in circular form, will induce a large accession of subscribers. It is not necessary to pay the promised amount at once, although of course a prompt remittance is always welcome. A list of promises will be kept at the Society's office, and they can be redeemed during the year at the subscribers' convenience.

Besides a public acknowledgment in the *Freethinker*, every subscriber (as far as possible) will receive an official receipt from the Society's secretary.

All the money received will pass through the Treasurer's hands, and a balance-sheet will be published annually, duly certified by the Society's auditors.

The expenditure will be watched in detail by the special sub-committee, and in general by the Executive, to which the sub-committee reports at every monthly meeting. The President has always the right to attend committee-meetings when he deems it advisable, and as he always occupies the chair at the Executive meetings there is no fear of the working of the Scheme falling into the hands of any partial or irresponsible clique. Indeed, the machinery seems to promise the utmost safety and efficiency.

Should this Scheme be carried into effect, it will immensely promote the progress and organization of Freethought in Great Britain; and it can be developed indefinitely with the increase of financial resources. It now remains to be seen whether the Freethought party will give it their effective support. That they are able to do so is beyond a doubt. They are numerous enough, and, although they are a comparatively poor party, they are also rich enough for this. What is asked of them is not an intolerable tax upon their generosity. If every one does something, according to his means and opportunity, the sum of £1,500 a year can be raised without a strain. In making this appeal, therefore, its promoters are not without a reasonable hope of success. They await with some confidence the response of the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

(On behalf of the Executive)

G. W. FOOTE (*President*).
S. HARTMANN (*Treasurer*).
R. FORDER (*Hon. Secretary*).
E. M. VANCE (*Secretary*).
E. BATER
T. GORNIOT
E. W. QUAY
G. J. WARREN
Sub-Committee.

National Secular Society's Office, 366-7, Strand, London, W.

Digitized by Google

A MYSTERY UNVEILED.

I DREAMED. Perhaps a heavy supper accounted for it, but I prefer to imagine it a revelation from the Almighty—one-third of deity. An angel stood by the side of my bed in the regulation white robe, draped like a Grecian statue, with long wings folded at her—his—oh, hang it—*its* side. Remembering the legend of "Rabbi ben Levi," I did not fear this mysterious visitor, who, when it saw that I was awake, spoke as follows: "Being of earth, blessed art thou above all men (what price the Virgin Mary now? thought I), for thou shalt see the mystery of the Trinity unveiled. Come with me." I objected that I could not fly, and incidentally mentioned that I was somewhat sceptical as to whether it (the angel) could, without a tail, properly steer itself to its destination. Being, however, somewhat sharply admonished, and told to "cut it short" by my heavenly visitor, I announced myself as ready to accompany it, whereupon it laid its hand on my head. The room and all familiar surroundings disappeared, I felt myself travel at a prodigious rate through space, then suddenly stop, my eyes growing slowly accustomed to the dazzling light that met their gaze. "Behold," said the angel, "time is annihilated; you shall see the mystery of ages, the problem of mankind ever since man took it into his head that his God was three persons, and yet only one God; for God is the embodiment of man's idea, and is doomed by his own act of creation to be whatever his creatures make him look and understand."

I looked, and when I could see a little clearer I saw what seemed liked a gigantic path encircling the universe, for all the world like a cycle track. Suddenly, as I looked, the angels, myriads of which were seated round the track ("throne" must be a mistranslation in St. John's nightmare), struck up "Holy, holy, holy" in such a variety of keys that I was forced to put my fingers into my ears to prevent the drums being split. "You'll soon get accustomed to that," said my guide, when I had recovered myself a little. "*Here they come.*" I looked, and the mystery was clear; the word "*in*," in the "three-in-one" doctrine, should have been, and was probably, originally "*on*"—three *on* one. It was clear now, clear as crystal; for down the long track came a triplet, with God the Father on the front seat, God the Son on the middle, and God the Holy Ghost occupying the back, and twisting his ethereal legs round the back stays in an endeavor to escape doing any work—a peculiarity which is even now apparent among some of his followers. As they went along, behind their pace, which consisted of a quad "manned" by Gabriel and three other leading lights of heaven, the rows of angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim, and the other holy spectators and animals, made space hideous with the continued twanging of harps that had evidently not been tuned since the inauguration of heaven, and cries of "Holy, holy," etc., until they had passed, when the cry was taken up further along the vast circle, until it died away in illimitable space.

Then my guide turned to me and said: "Even as the Gods of Christianity are man's own creation, so are the others you will see"; and as I looked I saw Buddha, mounted on a single path racer, being paced by three Hindu Gods who were pointed out to me as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. Immediately following him came Mohammed on a tandem with one of his chosen ones, whom I did not know, occupying the back seat, followed by numerous gods and goddesses, some of whom I recognised as the old Greek deities, and whom I noted were absolutely out of the running now, and simply rode round and round—played-out gods of a departed age.

I followed them with my eyes as far as I could, then turned and looked along the track in the opposite direction. Could I believe my senses? Coming straight towards me was a quintette, and the front rider was—yes, it was Charles Darwin. As it drew nearer I saw the other riders, and recognised Huxley, Bradlaugh, Voltaire, and Paine, while "hanging on" behind, with his front wheel a few inches away from their back one, seated well over his work, and pedalling with the steady perseverance of a machine, was a youth with dogged resolution written all over his face, and whose eyes flashed defiance at the rows of heavenly inhabitants as he rode along. His approach was not heralded with the music (save the mark) that signalled the approach of he others; on the contrary, there were a few hisses and groans, but for the most part dead silence. As he passed I turned to the angel. "Who is that," I asked; he answered, "That is Reason." "And has Reason always ridden against the gods?" He appeared somewhat reluctant to answer. "Well," he said, "if you must know, he has always *tried* to ride, but up to the last century or so he has had but little chance of success, it taking him nearly all his time to repair damages caused by the others, who, although at enmity with each other, yet unite in hemming in or trying to overturn him if he is anywhere near them. Of late years, however, he has been getting on slightly better, for, with the new scientific pacing, the others are somewhat chary of interfering with him; and although they could, when he was alone, give him a nasty fall, the chances are that, now he is stronger and is paced in a proper and methodical manner that particular deity who tried to throw him would get thrown himself. But here they come again." Once more the triple deity of Christianity went by; again the other gods followed at about the same distance; while looking down the track I could see Reason coming along with a regular swing, swing of his pedals, but a little nearer than before. "He has a lot of work to do yet," said my guide. The last of the gods had passed, and as I waited I noticed how pale and worn they looked. Their time had nearly come. With the regularity of clockwork the quintette drew nearer. I could contain myself no longer; I sprang to my feet, and with a loud "hurrah!" I—awoke. PERSEUS.

ACID DROPS.

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, who is (we believe) a sort of Christian Socialist, recently delivered an address as president of the Bedford Liberal Association. Bedford is a very pious town, and Mr. Russell humored its bigotry. Referring to the recent war between Greece and Turkey, he described it as "a prolonged and desperate encounter between the powers of light and darkness, between civilization and barbarism, between Christianity and Islam." Now, this "prolonged" encounter lasted a few weeks, and this "desperate" encounter was marked by the Greeks running away every time the Turks came up to fight a battle. So much for the plain facts of the case. And as to the statement that Christianity stands for light and Islam for darkness, one has only to refer Mr. Russell to the history of these two religions in relation to each other. Christianity has sinned more against Islam than Islam has ever sinned against Christianity; and certainly the Mohammedans have never equalled the Christians in domestic quarrels and butcheries over disputed points of faith.

We advise Mr. George Russell, before he talks any more about Christian light and Mohammedan darkness, to look at the last monthly report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. During one month this Society inquired into 2,153 complaints of neglect, ill-treatment, and other wrongs, of which 1,939 were dealt with, and 214 are pending. The cases found to be true were 1,807. The welfare of 4,921 children was affected, and there were 2,759 offenders. Of these 1,428 were warned, and 169 prosecuted, only ten being discharged, and the other 186 being convicted. The punishments inflicted amounted altogether to £41 in fines and 32 years of imprisonment. That is the record for one single month in "the most Christian country in the world," while no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is wanted in Mohammedan countries, not even in Turkey. The average Turk, hearing of such cruelties to little children, would raise his hands to heaven and exclaim: "Great Allah! why dost thou *suffer* these infidel dogs to pollute the earth?"

Mr. Russell would also do well to read the interview with Madame Hyacinthe Loyson, wife of the famous Catholic reformer, Père Hyacinthe, published in the *Westminster Gazette* of Wednesday, September 29. This lady with her husband spent nearly two years in North Africa, Palestine, and Syria, and is about to publish a book on "The Lands of Islam." She went to the East with the usual Christian prejudice against the Mussulman faith and morals, and she came back considerably disabused. "We have heard much lately," she says, "about the persecuting intolerance of Islam. Of course, there can be no justification on either side for the recent atrocious massacres, but it is nevertheless true that no creed in the world is more tolerant than the Mohammedan of other varieties of monotheistic belief. They are intolerant only of idolatry. To say that the Mussulman has any *religious* feeling against the Christian which is not the reflection of wanton contempt on the Christian's part is absurd."

Even in the matter of morality, Madame Loyson says that the Moslem women have no very high opinion of the Christians. The Moslem women are chaste, and their homes are sacred. Polygamy is rarely practised, and when it is it is far superior to prostitution and adultery. The Moslem women say: "We have a legal and limited polygamy; with you it is illicit and promiscuous." Madame Loyson found material devotion and domestic happiness everywhere. The youths were as shy and chaste as maidens; there were not two codes of morals, one for men and one for women; and flirtation was absolutely unknown. Madame Loyson still believes in Christian civilization "as it should be," but as matters stand she denies that Christian nations can claim moral superiority over the Moslem world.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie has just been declaring that "rank and wealth are clogs upon the energies of man"—a declaration which the poor people of Kingussie greeted with loud

Digitized by Google

applause. Whenever this millionaire proposes to unload we are quite ready to take over his burden.

Almost at the same time, Archbishop Temple was holding forth at the Church Congress on the deceitfulness of riches. He doesn't propose to unload either. At least he doesn't make any sign. What he does is this: he tells us that "genuine self-denying Christians" seldom fall into poverty and trouble. Very likely. There aren't many of them to fall into it.

The other evening the *Westminster Gazette* published a statement, summarized from the Australian *Review of Reviews*, concerning the expurgation of school books in Victoria, in which it was stated that "even the name of Christ was blotted out as an evil thing," and that classic pieces of literature by Burns, Longfellow, and other writers, were mulilated in this way to fit them for the palate of Victorian children. The next evening the *Westminster* published a correction by a correspondent, who put the case as follows: "Before the schools were taken over by the State, religion was hardly taught in them, although the clergy had it all their own way. The late Minister of Instruction, Dr. Pierson, believed firmly in the religious education of children, but the difficulties were very great in compulsory education for all denominations; and he did not approve of a master teaching what he probably disbelieved himself. The denominations could not agree as to the form of religion to be taught. Dr. Pierson then gave the clergy of different denominations the right to teach so many hours in the schools. But very few availed themselves of the privilege."

The *Westminster* adds that it finds the following words in a pamphlet issued by Dr. Pierson himself: "The men who first started the statement that the name of God had been expunged from our readers must have known that they were propagating a deliberate lie." By the way, this "Dr. Pierson" was really Dr. Charles H. Pearson, author of that most able and interesting book on *National Life and Character*.

The Congress of the Holy Synod of Russia has determined that the schools of Raskolniks (Dissenters) are to be immediately and permanently closed. Membership of any of the extreme sects is to be treated as a criminal offence, and the authorities of the commune in which such sectarians are domiciled are to have the power of banishing them to Siberia. The ecclesiastical authorities are to be empowered to take away Raskolnik children from their parents and place them in orthodox educational establishments. Once again the saying of Christ is to be fulfilled, and the fathers set at variance with the children, and the children with their fathers.

The persecution of Christians by Christians is narrated in a shilling book on *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, by V. Tchertkoff, which has been published by the Brotherhood Publishing Company. There are, it seems, in Russia some 20,000 Doukhobortsi, or Spirit-wrestlers, who hold with Tolstoi and the Quakers that Christianity forbids the taking up of arms or going to law. They and their families have been relentlessly beaten, robbed, exiled, starved, and imprisoned for not conforming to the behests of the Christian State in which they have the misfortune to dwell.

"Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you," said Christ; but these fanatical followers, in the policy of non-resistance, seem to have undergone every variety of outrage and oppression, and the remnants of them left are in such necessitous circumstances that an appeal has to be made for them in other countries than that dominated by God and the Czar.

It is said that about eight thousand Nestorians in Persia are preparing to enter the orthodox Greek Church. This is to put themselves under the protection of Russia. The Nestorians object to calling Mary the mother of God; but that is a trifle easily swallowed when compared with the possibility of incurring martyrdom at the hands of the Kurds.

Tibet, where the Mahatmas come from, has been displaying its standard of civilization by the torture of Mr. Henry Savage Landor, the distinguished artist and traveller. But for the interference of the Grand Lama he would have been decapitated. He has now returned to India with injured spine and twenty-two wounds.

On Sunday last all the Roman Catholic churches and chapels in England were solemnly dedicated to the Mother of God. England is called the Dowry of Mary. Unfortunately, she cannot realize upon it yet. When she does she will be able to increase poor old Joseph's pin money.

After the dedication to Mary, the Mother of God was solemnly besought to "intercede with her Divine Son to bring England back to the Catholic faith." But we guess it will take a lot of praying to accomplish this. Mary and Jesus don't seem to be moving very rapidly towards it. Their motto seems to be *festina lente*—with heavy stress on the *lente*. England, as a matter of fact, is less Catholic now than she was soon after the Reformation. Catholicism continued to be strong, though it grew feebler and feebler, and made its last splash in the days of the Young Pretender.

We quite understand the desire of the Catholic Church to recapture England. She is the centre of a wide empire, and the richest country in the world. The priests *pray for* England in the hope that they may yet be able to *prey on* England.

Josephine Coquard, who stabbed the Abbé Ménard, curé of St. Médard, Paris, is unmarried, and is said to have pestered the Abbé for the last three years with her cases of conscience and wild declarations of love. Confession sometimes proves a trying ordeal for both penitent and priest.

The Archbishop of Vienna having interceded with the Pope on behalf of Count Badeni, on account of his duel, the Papal absolution was sent by telegraph. Without it the Count must have been excommunicated, and doomed to Davy Jones's locker.

More troubles have arisen in Uganda, where, we were told a little ago by the Bible Society, the natives display an extraordinary desire for copies of the Word of God, which they, with reason, regard as the white man's fetish. King Mwanga, a convert, has risen in rebellion, and, according to a missionary's letter, it appears that the revolt was an "anti-European and anti-religious affair." Mwanga was restive under British control, and, in the view of the missionaries, his sympathizers were black sheep; for, runs the letter, "all the Baganda who have at present joined the king are either those who have been excommunicated, or who have been threatened with excommunication." The process of conversion is by no means a guarantee of good behavior, or the Church would not so often have to bring excommunication into use.

The Rev. Mr. Haweis has been facetiously earnest on the subject of church collections. According to the *Daily News*, he last Sunday brought his congregation perilously near to an explosion of laughter. After stating that Christians did not worship copper, but sometimes worshipped gold, he bethought himself and acknowledged that they sometimes sacrificed to the god of copper in church. There was a sanction in the Christian records for copper tribute in the story of the widow's mite, because she gave all she had. Then he added that it sometimes seemed to him that he had been preaching to a church full of widows.

It was with dreadful alarm we turned over the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* to read "The Coming Revolt of the Clergy!" by the Rev. Heneage Jebb. What outburst of revolution was to be expected from our magnificent army of sky-pilots? Would the State, the bishops, or only society in general, be overturned? Happily we discovered nothing but a country cleric's grumble, that he had not benefited as he expected under the Agricultural Rates Act. It is only a parson considering his own pecuniary interests. We breathe again.

At the Church Congress there was lamentation at the decline in the supply of curates. The sky-pilot business is still fairly attractive, needing little brains and less work. But it is not esteemed as formerly, and young men of talent will not choose a career in which they must either be dull or dishonest.

Man millinery is still a great attraction in the Church. Canon Streatfield, Vicar of Emmanuel Church, Streatham, has withdrawn his acceptance of the living of Clifton, Bristol, owing to the disapproval of the trustees of his proposal to preach, not in a black gown, but in his surplice. A year ago the point was seriously argued in a court of law that the surplice was alone the legal vestment of the clergy in the pulpit, and that the use of the black gown was an irregularity, and that therefore a bequest left for the maintenance of a church at Eastbourne, conditional on the use of the black gown in the pulpit, was valid, notwithstanding the abandonment of the black gown for the surplice. The Court, however, scouted the contention.

Heinrich Wintzer, who has spent a number of years in Mexico, says that in the churches the priest himself sells the candles that are sacrificed to Mary, and when the person that has bought the sacrifice has left, the priest blows out the candle and sells it over again. The clergy still have

Digitized by Google

a strong influence over the semi-barbaric Indians and uncultured women; but the leading men are Freemasons or adherents of "a rationalistic system of philosophy closely akin to that of the French Encyclopædists." They never go to church except as a matter of form.

Some very orthodox person, who has far more money than sense, has, for a long time past, advertised in the leading daily papers texts of Scripture, as "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins," and "He that believeth not shall be damned." Doubtless he is one of the undesigned agencies of Freethought, for the perusal of his texts must tend to bring the old book into disrepute.

Moody has been telling an American yarn of an Atheist, out of whose grave a tree is shown which grew as proof there is a God. A German correspondent says the same tale is told of a countess at Hanover. In England a tree is shown growing out of a grave in Tuan Churchyard, near Welwyn, Herts, and the same story is told of a lady in that district. In each case, however, the story was not known till long after the tree had sprouted. At Hanover, according to Herr Dorscher, the lady out of whose grave a tree sprang was a Christian.

The Rev. John McNeill is one of those believers who, when they have once opened their gullet, do not baulk at what they are asked to swallow. Preaching, it is said, before close on five thousand people in St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, he took his text from the opening verses of 1 Kings vi., which relate how the bald-headed Elisha, without any magnet, caused an axe to swim. "That is a swimming story, isn't it?" he asked. "Jonah and the whale, the axe made to swim, and the Jericho that fell down flat without striking a blow! Isn't it strange, let's frankly admit, that God should have put stories like these into this book of his." But, says the Rev. J. McNeill, he thanks God for these miraculous stories. He poohpoohs those who would like to reduce the Bible to a mere collection of moral and spiritual maxims and precepts, and follows the Salvationist who shouted after quoting the text, "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him," hallelujah! Enoch arrived at heaven in his boots. Mr. McNeill shows what suits him, but we suspect there were a few shrewd Scotsmen even among his audience who would "ha'e their doots."

James Campbell, of no address, is under remand on a charge of stealing silver spoons and ivory-handled knives from the Rev. Dr. Patterson, at St. Mary's Rectory, Cadogan-street, Chelsea. Instead of presenting him with the other contents of his plate-chest, the rev. gentleman, who is Catholic Bishop of Emmans, is prosecuting the prisoner, whose sole treasures will soon be where thieves cannot break through and steal.

The Puget Sound Methodist Conference has convicted and expelled the Rev. W. T. Ford, of Everett, Wash. The Rev. Mr. Ford was found guilty of ministerial conduct involving the virtue of his servant girl.

In the case of Henry Scott, a yachtsman of Chelmondiston, Suffolk, who committed suicide by hanging himself to a tree on Sunday morning, some little girls leaving chapel saw the deceased hanging, and they told the adult worshippers; but not one of them would touch the deceased until a police-constable arrived on the spot. This was almost as absurd as the case where the coroner asked: "Did you cut the man down?" "I did not." "And why not? Do you know that had you cut the rope this man might have been living now?" "Yes," responded the witness sulkily—"living, and suing me for the price of the rope."

Noticing the Rev. G. C. Bateman's work on *The Vivarium*, the *Daily News* observes that the common smooth snake has no venom, as the barbarians of Malta—where the snake is still found—discovered to their astonishment when, on a certain memorable occasion, there came a "viper" out of the heat and fastened on Paul's hand. The story in Acts xxviii. 6 says that on this account they "said that he was a god"—a little fact which, like the saying of Herod that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, proves the credulity of the age when Christianity was first promulgated.

A Star and Cross of the Order of Christ of Portugal, composed of a large number of fine brilliants, was offered for sale by auction at Debenham, Storr, and Sons' Rooms in Covent Garden, but were withdrawn at £520. The order of Christ seems to be of much more value than the order of Jesus.

"Vindex" sent to the *Daily News* an amusing vindication of the Authorized Version of the Bible as against the Revised, in answer to the strictures of the Rev. Dawson Burns. His first contention is that in 2 Samuel xv. 7 they have actually retained the manifestly absurd and impossible translation "forty years"—"It came to pass, after forty years, that Absalom said unto the King," etc. But if this is the reading of the last MSS., who is "Vindex" that he should undertake to say the Holy Ghost did not mean forty years when he says forty? "Vindex" would say "four" is more probable. So it is more probable that Methusaleh lived 96 years than 996.

Then he says: "In 2 Kings ii. 23 the term 'little children,' used of those who mocked Elisha, is retained; whereas it is understood that they were almost 'grown-up' young people." "Vindex" does not seem to relish the two she-bears gobbling up forty-two little children, but the job would have been harder were they grown-up. Lastly, "Vindex" objects to the unwise use of the word "whale" in Matthew xii. 40. The Revisers were too scrupulous for "Vindex."

General Bailey (we see from the New York *Truthseeker*) is travelling as a lecturer in the Southern States, and from Columbus, Missouri, he writes to a Story county paper, Indiana, of his experiences there. He says that the Mississipians don't know what ham and eggs really are, and that cooks should be sent along from the North instead of missionaries. "Bibles are plenty," he says, "but the cooking is awful." "The boy who cleans my room," he adds, "and helps me kill bed bugs, said sorrowfully, 'Boss, I wish I could read.' Poor nigger! And yet Bishop Taylor is wanting money for Africa."

An amusing little occurrence is reported from Baden-Baden. An over-zealous policeman noticed two gentlemen buying flowers at an hour when, according to Sunday regulations, selling is prohibited. The policeman immediately walked up and asked them for their names. The one proved to be the Oberbürgermeister of Stuttgart, Herr Ruemelin; the other the Chancellor, Prince Hohenlohe.

The *Bulletin* says that many Christian churches, mortgaged to the very apex of their steeples, are sacking paid bell-ringers, organists, etc.; the ubiquitous bun-struggle and bazaar have to be run for all they are worth to rake in money enough to keep the show going; and some ministers, rather than submit to the "special effort" humiliation, forego a slice of their stipends every year. Verily the Kaws is sick, and the pietist waxes too mean to pay for his own salvation.

Parkfield Wesleyan Mission, Stockton-on-Tees, is getting up a Christmas Goose Club. The printed handbill of this enterprise contains a portrait of one of the intended victims. We suppose it is imaginary, and not from life, unless a Mission convert sat as the artist's model.

A writer in the *Daily News* says: "*Apropos* of my remarks on the sometimes conflicting ideals of religion and gentlemanliness, a lady sends me an amusing anecdote of a friend who bewailed to her the loss of a somewhat ill-bred but extremely wealthy neighbor who had been very liberal in his help to her country charities. 'Miss X. is dead,' said she; 'he was so good and kind and helpful to me in all sorts of ways; he was so vulgar, poor dear fellow, we could not know him in London; but we shall meet in heaven.'"

Mr. E. T. Hargrove, the President of the Theosophical Society of America, has resigned in the midst of his term of office, which does not expire until next April. Mr. E. A. Neresheimer is nominated as the next President. At the same time, the *Theosophical News*, edited by Mr. Crosbie, gives up the ghost, and is to be reincarnated as the *New Century*, which is to be edited by Mrs. K. A. Tingley, the leader of the movement in America, who is understood to be on speaking terms with the Mahatmas.

Adam Oldfield, a Bethnal-green dock laborer, suffered many years from chronic rheumatic gout, and often expressed a wish that God would give him a happy release. At last he took the matter into his own hands, and drowned himself in the River Lea. The jury brought in the usual verdict of temporary insanity. No doubt they thought the poor fellow should have gone on praying to God. But that is a justification of the Peculiar People. Christian juries are evidently in a very mixed condition.

"The Wonders of Prayer" are trumpeted in the *British Evangelist*, and an anonymous infidel is silenced by a Christian lady who prays for cash to carry on her mission work, and gets it. This pious journal, however, has nothing to say on behalf of the Peculiar People. It only believes in prayer with proper reservations.

The union of Christianity and Humanity was displayed by the thirteen Salvationists who rode seven miles from Chesterton in a cab with one horse.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 10, Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow: 11.30, "Giving up the Bible"; 2.30, "Is Christ Possible?" 6.30, "God and the Devil."

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, October 12-15, City Hall (North Saloon), at 8 p.m., Debate with Rev. W. T. Lee; subjects, "Is there a Future Life?" and "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" Councillor George Mitchell in the chair.

October 17 and 24, Athenæum Hall, London; 31, Camberwell.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 10, Birmingham; 11 and 12, debate at Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 17, Huddersfield; 18 and 19, lectures at Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham, under the Hartmann Scheme; 24, Camberwell, London; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. N. L.—Both jokes are "chestnuts." We printed them more years ago than we care to remember.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Thanks. See paragraphs.

SHREDS.—Your verse begins well, but does not keep up to the same level. But do not be dismayed. In this, as in other matters, the way to succeed is to keep trying.

W. ELCOATS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

MONCURE D. CONWAY writes us from New York: "Two corrections are needed in my rejoinder to Mr. Wheeler. 1. Dr. Cooper died in 1839, not 1840. 2. The lithograph of Paine, circulated at Paine's death, is from a portrait of him painted by the elder Jarvis in 1805, the only portrait of him ever painted by Jarvis."

G. ROBERTS.—See paragraph. Mr. Heaford cannot be well-known when he visits a town for the first time. We have no doubt whatever that his audiences will improve now that he has introduced himself at Plymouth.

MRS E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, acknowledges the following fresh promises towards the Treasurer's Scheme, those marked *(p)* being paid:—Dr. W. Hardwicke, £1 1s.; W. H. Deakin, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. W. H. Deakin, 10s. 6d.; W. Davey, 5s. *(p)*; J. Ross, £1 *(p)*; G. H. Bligh, 2s. *(p)*.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Positivism, at least as taught by Auguste Comte, deserves different treatment. Comte used the word *religion* in a purely natural sense. There may never be a Religion of Humanity, as Thomas Paine dreamed before Comte, and as Shelley dreamed before him too; but the conception is a great one, and Freethinkers should treat it with respect.

R. E. HOLDING.—See "Sugar Plums."

N. S. S. FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION SCHEME.—G. Brady sends us £1, being two monthly contributions of 10s.

ALERT.—(1) Thanks for the enclosures. Pleased to hear you appreciate our articles on the case of the Peculiar People. (2) You overlooked our paragraph on Mr. Ward's week at Derby. No report was sent us of the Watts and Waldron debate. We do not keep a staff of reporters. (3) What reason is there why the same subject should not be debated in another town? You might as well say that the same lecture should not be delivered twice. As a matter of fact, fresh points *do* arise in these debates, although, of course, the leading arguments are fixed and unalterable. Ingersoll himself cannot start a new argument against Christianity. The value of a lecture consists in its force and originality of presentation. (4) The only persons who have any right of complaint against any officer of a Society are its members. Those who scream from outside deserve, and as far as we are concerned will receive, but silent contempt.

C. COHEN acknowledges the following promises to the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme:—H. Irving, £1; S. Rodger, £1.

R. TEMPLEMAN.—We are neither for nor against Socialism in this journal, which is devoted to Freethought. Many Freethinkers are Socialists, and many are opposed to Socialism. Why should we introduce unnecessary antagonisms? Outside topics can be discussed in outside journals.

F. FARRINGTON.—Next week.

C. WRIGHT.—Buckle's statement is that "It is idle to attribute the destruction of superstition to the Reformation. Protestants were as superstitious as Catholics."

W. WITT LEAVIS.—Shall appear.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Crowded this week. In our next.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Echo—People's Newspaper—Torch of Reason—Der Arme Teufel—Two Worlds—Truthseeker—Liberty—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—L'Etoile Socialiste—Essex Weekly News—Sunderland Echo—Progressive Thinker—Wood Green Sentinel—New York Public Opinion—Secular Thought—Herts Leader—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Weekly Citizen.

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

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

***The Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.**

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture on "Man's Origin and Destiny" drew a crowded audience to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. Percy Ward occupied the chair. The last time (he said) that he had stood on the same platform with Mr. Foote it was as an opponent. He never dreamt then that he would stand on the same platform with him again in such an altered position.

Mr. A. B. Moss occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Oct. 10). We hope he will have a good audience and a hearty welcome. Mr. Moss has labored long and earnestly for Freethought.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Oct. 10) at Glasgow. His subjects are attractive, and no doubt he will have large meetings. On Monday he takes a rest, and on the following four evenings he debates publicly with Mr. W. T. Lee in the minor City Hall; the questions for discussion being, "Is there a Future Life?" and "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" On the following two Sundays he will be at the Athenæum Hall again, and the Sunday after that (the last in October) he pays a visit to the Camberwell Secular Hall.

Councillor George Mitchell takes the chair at the Glasgow debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee. Proceedings open each evening at 8 punctually. For the sake of friends who may come in from outlying or even distant places, we add that the prices of admission are one shilling and sixpence. Course tickets for the four nights can be obtained at 3s. and 1s. 6d. respectively at Mr. Lindsay's news-shop, 82 Ingram-street. The entrance to the City Hall (North Saloon) is from the Candleriggs.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had three excellent audiences at Sheffield. Friends were present from the surrounding districts, and some came from distances such as Redford, Doncaster, and Barnsley. Each lecture was received enthusiastically, and the many ladies present added to the interest of the meetings.

Mr. Watts will have a busy time during the present week. To-day, Sunday, October 10, he lectures morning and evening in the Bristol-street Board-school, Birmingham. On Monday and Tuesday he debates in the same place, and on Wednesday and Thursday he discusses at Bradford. We hope the friends will muster in good force at all the meetings.

We extremely regret the necessity for such a correspondence as appears in our columns this week concerning the Lee-Watts debate at Plymouth. Mr. Lee, in a private letter accompanying his public communication, after thanking us for our impartiality, says: "If you think it desirable, I am prepared to submit the whole case to arbitration. If this cannot be done, nothing will remain but to publish my letters in the Plymouth papers, with such evidence in my favor as published books and pamphlets may supply." We do not think, however, that *we* are called upon to intervene. We have given both sides fair play, and the rest must be left to themselves. Our own feeling is one of regret that Mr. Lee did not go to the hall on the last night of the debate, and insist there and then on having a redress of any wrong which he held to have

Digitized by Google

been committed. The public, as well as the disputants, has always to be considered.

The Freethinking Jews of East London have an Ethical Society of their own, and the members have been celebrating the Great Day of Atonement in a heterodox fashion at South Place Institute. As the function took place after this week's *Freethinker* went to press, we must content ourselves for the present with saying that Mr. G. W. Foote accepted an invitation to be one of the speakers, though he could not undertake to discourse in Yiddish.

This Sunday our East London friends are starting the winter season with a tea and concert at the King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road, commencing at 5.30. Tickets can be obtained from G. Warren, 20 Rhodeswell-road, E., or J. Neale, 385 Bethnal Green-road.

The Camberwell Branch is also leading off with a dance and entertainment, which they expect to be largely attended this Sunday evening.

The report of the National Secular Society's Executive meeting has to stand over till next week. It reached us a little late, when we were already overset for this week's issue.

Mr. Forder also sends us, similarly late, a letter on the Browne case, which we are compelled to summarize. Mr. Browne, who is still in Chelmsford Gaol awaiting trial, has written a postcard to his wife, ordering her not to take any more money from the Secularists, on the ground (apparently) that Mr. Forder suggested the possibility of his being temporarily beside himself. Mrs. Browne is in a state of destitution, but is afraid to disobey her husband's orders. Mr. Forder has now obtained a copy of the depositions, and of the incriminated postcards. Had we seen these at first, we should have declined to meddle with the case. Mr. Browne's postcard to a lady school-teacher is of such a character that we could not possibly take any share in defending it. The only charitable supposition is that he is distracted by real or imaginary grievances. Mr. Forder will make another effort to help the wife and family, since there is money in hand; but, if this is impossible, the balance will be handed over to the N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.

We gather from a circular, issued by the Committee of the Leicester Secular Society, that an endeavor will be made to arrange with Mr. H. Snell to stay permanently in Leicester to organize the Society and help with its Sunday-school and meetings for young people.

Our appeal on behalf of the Spanish exiles realized £9 9s., which we have handed over to Mr. S. Hartmann, the National Secular Society's Treasurer. The sum of £1 16s. was sent to Miss Vance. Including also the Executive's vote of £2 2s., the total is £13 7s. We do not make any further appeal, as this is a fair contribution from one society. Should there be any real necessity for reopening the matter, our readers will be duly apprised of the fact.

The New Pontypridd Branch of the N. S. S. is still working with spirit and enterprise. Mr. J. W. Cox, an ex-reverend, seems to be lecturing for the branch in both English and Welsh; and he appears to attract good and attentive audiences. This Branch held a successful social party in commemoration of Charles Bradlaugh's birthday. Altogether it has been deemed necessary by the orthodox to import an infidel-slayer from London; and we are glad to hear it, for agitation is always to the advantage of Freethought. Mr. Foote is earnestly invited to visit Pontypridd, and he will try to do so in November.

The King of Siam went to Madame Tussaud's exhibition, and readily recognised the celebrities. He pointed out Voltaire, Bismarck, and Bradlaugh. His Majesty is an all-round man and up to date.

Mr. Hall Caine's new novel is roughly handled in *Lloyd's*. It describes the hero of *The Christian* as being "full of contradictions," and speaks of his religion as being "rasping," as well as "rhapsodical." It points out, as we did, the absurdity of Mr. Caine's descriptions of London life, especially in hospitals; and ends by saying that the story is "not one upon which the author can be congratulated." We are sorry to see *Reynolds'* puffing this ridiculous book as a great democratic novel. John Storm, the Christian Socialist, is a moral prig, with no intellectual power, and a strong dash of insanity.

Mr. F. J. Jones is a candidate for the new London School Board in the Chelsea division. His address is already in circulation. He is a Socialist and Trade Union candidate, but he does not go in for the ridiculous policy of "free maintenance" for all children. His program is solid and sensible, and he stands for secular education, in the sense that "no education of a theological character shall be given in any Board school." No doubt the Freethinkers in Chelsea will give Mr. Jones their support.

The Wood Green Branch of the N. S. S., having secured the People's Hall, Station-road, opposite the tramway terminus, has made a good start for the winter campaign. The hall holds from two to three hundred. It was opened on October 3 with a successful tea-meeting. Mr. Forder followed with a short lecture, and there was also an entertainment, to which our venerable friend Mr. Truelove, Mr. Herzfeld, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. Ward, Master Lewis, Mrs. Stewart, Mrs. Wheeler, and others, contributed. Mr. Lewis presided. This Sunday Mr. A. Guest takes the platform.

Mr. Truelove on Oct. 29 enters on his eighty-ninth year. His interest in Freethought is shown by his still demanding work, and his help to the Wood Green Branch should stimulate the youngsters. We are glad to say he is in fair health, despite a recent fall, and he recited "Job's Patience" in capital style. His has been the example of a well-spent life, which we trust may yet long abide with us.

Mr. W. Heaford delivered three lectures on Sunday at Plymouth, and gave great satisfaction to those who heard him. We regret to hear that the audiences were not as large as they should have been, and we hope there will be a considerable improvement to-day (October 10), when Mr. Heaford delivers three more lectures in the Co-operative Hall. During the week he has been lecturing at Devonport under the Treasurer's Scheme.

"A. G. H.," who is well known to some of our North London friends, has a very good article in the *Echo* entitled "Hints to School Board Electors." He deals specially with "German Methods." He says Wurtemberg and Baden have for centuries been very forward in educational matters, and, the inhabitants of both being very freethinking, religion has never been a stumbling block. Bavaria, being partly hemmed in by the two former States, was obliged, although deeply Roman Catholic, to keep in line with them.

In Saxony the greatest tolerance in religious matters always prevailed, in consequence of the Court being Roman Catholic, and the bulk of the people Protestants. Of the smaller States for centuries nearly all their princes have been learned in art and science, and have always been anxious to establish the best schools for their subjects. Religion was put into the background, and it may safely be assumed that of all the Germans those of the smaller Principalities are the best educated.

In Prussia, by an Act of Frederick the Great, religion was excluded from the curriculum, but if the clergy wished to teach it they might do so out of school hours, for which purpose the schoolrooms would be lent to them, both to Catholics and Protestants. Sects were not acknowledged, and no child need attend if parents, guardians, or relatives objected. On no account were teachers to be subjected to any religious test. Clergymen could be neither teachers nor school inspectors, unless they resigned their spiritual office, and qualified, by examination, like any other person. In 1852, in the reaction after '48, these wise rules were rescinded by the Black Brigade, and what is known as the dark age of Prussian education set in till 1872, when the clergy and religion were again bundled out of schools, and the old rule restored, to the advantage of Germany. France, at the same time, not only copied the

Digitized by Google

Prussian system of education, but went one better, and banished all religion—yes, even the name of God from public schools; and Matthew Arnold was of opinion that he liked the French system best.

Subscriptions are being asked for the support of Dr. Bruno Wille in prison. The treasurer of the fund is J. Hoch, 23 I Markt-strasse, Wiesbaden. Dr. Bruno Wille is a leading Freethinker of Berlin, a doctor of philosophy of the university of Kiel, editor of *Der Freidenker*, and writer, speaker, and teacher for the Free Religious Society of the German capital. He is idolized by the hundreds of children in the society's school. Several times, under the bigoted government of Emperor William, he has been fined and imprisoned. His last arrest was for delivering a lecture at Gratz on "Religion and Joy." His case will be laid before the National Secular Society's Executive at its next meeting. Meanwhile we shall be happy so receive any subscription that may be sent to us, with a view to forwarding the same before the Executive meeting (if necessary) to Mr. J. Hoch, with whom we have just communicated, asking him for further information.

The *Secular Almanack* (issued by the National Secular Society) for 1898 is in the press. Secretaries of Branches should send in their reports at once. It is a pity there is so much delay. Advertisements also are wanted. Freethinkers should occasionally patronize their own publications in this way. The Almanack is the property of the N. S. S., all the work on it is done gratuitously, and any profit accrues to the Society's exchequer.

Admirers of Colonel Ingersoll will doubtless hasten to provide themselves with a copy of *The House of Death*, which is advertised on the last page of this week's *Freethinker*. It contains some of his most beautiful utterances. Most of these pieces have never been printed before on this side of the Atlantic. They are now offered to the English public in a very attractive form; print, paper, and binding being all that could be desired. Every Freethinker should keep a copy of this noble little volume by him; first, to read for himself again and again; secondly, to lend to a less heterodox friend, especially at a time of bereavement. Ingersoll speaks of death and its issues with so much sympathy. and tenderness, and poetry, as to make this little volume an excellent thing to place in the hands of those who have just felt the pang of separation from wife, or child, or relative, or friend. At such a moment the grief-smitten would find it medicinal, and it might lead them on to an acceptance of Ingersoll's philosophy of life and death.

SPURGEON'S HELL.

Realism in Theology.

In our issue of September 11 a paragraph appeared dealing with the recent lapsing in the Methodist Church, which had been revealed by the statistics published in the pastoral letter of the Wesleyan Conference. The remedy officially proposed for this lapsing was the more emphatic preaching of the great doctrine of repentance, and the inevitable punishment hereafter of the unrepentant sinner. It was suggested, in opposition to this view of the matter, that this very doctrine was the cause of the lapsing. The logical outcome of this doctrine is vividly expressed in the accompanying extract, which is from the second series of sermons by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon. After a perusal of it, one is struck with wonder, not only that a man could include this view of things in a message purporting to be "good news," but that he should have been, for many years in the latter half of this century of enlightenment, a preacher with an immense and enthusiastic following:—

"There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now a real body—a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in everything except this, that it will not consume, though it will torture you.....When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone—that will be a hell for it, but—at the Day of Judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells, body and soul shall be together, each brimful of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pores drops of blood, and thy body from head to foot suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured; but more, thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; thine ears tormented with 'sullen moans and hollow groans and shrieks of tortured ghosts, thine heart beating higher with fever, thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony, thy limbs cracking like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburned; thyself put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the Devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament."

—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

BETTER THAN THE RIB STORY.

Among the many interesting traditions which have recently been brought to light by a man who has been making a careful study of the legends and the folk-lore of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians, of the Indian Territory, is one that accounts in a singular way for the origin of woman. The Indians of these tribes sniff disdainfully at the rib theory when the resident missionaries try to teach them the initial lessons of the Old Testament regarding their first parents. The wise men of their tribes wrestled with the fundamental facts of the creation long ago, and evolved theories concerning it which, with the lapse of time, have come to be looked upon by the Indians of to-day as historical truths.

It is little wonder that the Cheyenne and Arapahoe braves look down upon their women as inferior beings, in view of their supposed origin. The legend says that originally all men were created with long, sleek, and comely tails. These tails were their delight, and they adorned them with paint, beads, and wampum. Then the world was at peace; wars and discord were unknown. Men became prosperous and proud, forgot their Maker, and became envious and quarrelsome. Their Maker became displeased with them, and sent a scourge upon them to teach them humility, and to make them realize their dependence upon the Great Spirit. He amputated their tails, and out of these beautiful members he fashioned women.

Anonymous.

CORRESPONDENCE.

HOLY SPAIN.

To the Editor of "The Freethinker."

Sir,—From my own personal knowledge and experience in a Spanish city, I can testify that any man who is more or less of a Radical or Freethinker, or a Reformer or Freemason, is considered as an active or passive Anarchist. A physician of my acquaintance, with French and German college degrees, wealthy, and who practised medicine without fee, often furnishing both food and medicine as well as advice to those he treated, wrote some pamphlets against cruelty to animals and bull-fights. For this he was cried down, insulted, and cut by former friends. He left the town in disgust, and went to Madrid, where he learned, from friends in the Government, that he had been shadowed as a suspected Anarchist. Another English M.D. tried to establish a secular school in the Spanish seaport where he resided. This brought the priests down on him, and when he died burial was refused. In my own case, though I have tried in many ways to benefit the town, in connection with public works, necessary charity, and fighting the cholera, there is a class of priest-ridden bigots here who would like to crucify me, and I dare not make my name and address public for fear of consequences, as I am aware that, being a Freethinker and Freemason, I am under suspicion as an Anarchist, like my friend, the first-mentioned Doctor, though we have never had a word together on the subject of Anarchism.

Quite recently the governor of a province in Southern Spain sent for the editor of the local paper, and bullied and threatened him as an Anarchist, because he had commented on the sad condition of the agricultural laborers of Spain, their long hours, starvation wages, bad food, and want of the decencies of life. The governor could not contradict the statements, which the laborers themselves could not read, for ninety-eight per cent. of them neither read nor write.

Since the Barcelona affair fifteen months ago I can never get my mail straight. The reader may be quite sure that it does not take much to bring the stigma of Anarchist upon a man in Spain, and also that a man can be charged with being an Anarchist without a shred of proof. The bigotry of the sermons preached here is beyond belief in England. And they are implicitly believed by the women. The people are purposely kept ignorant by the priests, and then provided with holy shows, gaudy processions, and bull-fights.

English people usually know as much about Mars as they do about Spain. In this very year at a bull-fight hundreds broke into the ring and attacked one of the bulls with broken bottles, stones, clubs, and knives. And these same

Digitized by Google

people are docile worshippers of the priests. Assassinations are common; a mass is soon said, and the affair is forgotten. Not so if any gewgaw is stolen from the image of a saint. That evokes a prolonged howl of rage. (The only exception to this is when some valuable church jewellery and a priest are both missing at the same time; then nothing is said.) No resident in Spain cares to tell the truth, for should his name be known his business will be ruined, and a gang of bigots soon have their knives in him. Of course, there are Englishmen who know how to avoid all risks. They wear a red sash, join the Catholic Church, chum with the priests, and go to the bull-fights. They are more Spanish than the Spaniards, and say it is policy to be so. Some of my best friends are Spaniards, and among them are men of liberal and advanced ideas. I assure the reader that these men constantly look towards England to aid them in the moral redemption of their country. VALDOSERA.

THE WATTS AND LEE DEBATE AT PLYMOUTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your readers will doubtless be interested to read some local impressions concerning this debate, which, at the end, turned out such a fiasco, thanks to the Christian advocate's display of white feather, and his utter disregard of duty to the public whom he had invited to hear him. Mr. Lee's manner (or rather want of manners) throughout the debate was, to say the least, tantalizing, both to his opponent and to the audience. He fell out with each chairman as to his ruling, and refused to propose a vote of thanks on the third night to the chairman, Mr. E. P. Luke; seconding it, however, on pressure, as "a matter of form." He seemed to assume that he alone possessed all the knowledge, and more than once accused Mr. Watts of ignorance of his subject, and deliberate disregard of questions to which he (Mr. Lee) required replies. In dealing with statements made by Mr. Watts, he would lean across the table, facing his opponent instead of the audience, and tauntingly say: "Where did you get that information, Mr. Watts?" or, "Who told you that, Mr. Watts?" "Mistake No. 1, Mr. Watts; mistake No. 2, Mr. Watts." Now, such conduct is not calculated to ensure that calm, dispassionate treatment of a subject which is expected from two experienced debaters of well-known ability.

For the first two nights Mr. Watts endured this treatment with marvellous equanimity; indeed, at the close of the meeting some of his friends remonstrated with him for not resenting it. On Mr. Watts quoting a passage from *Acts xxii.*, Mr. Lee denied that any such words occurred in *Acts xxvi.* Mr. Watts retorted that he did not say the 27th, and, even if he did, Mr. Lee must be aware of the passage he quoted, and was unfairly attempting to make capital out of an imaginary error; that, in fact, Mr. Lee was equivocating. Then came an exhibition of Christian charity and forbearance. Says Mr. Lee: "Mr. Watts charges me with equivocation, which is equivalent to calling me a liar. I now charge Mr. Watts with uttering a deliberate and barefaced falsehood, which, unless he retracts, I shall decline to continue this debate after to-night." At the close of the meeting the disputants expressed their mutual regret at what had occurred, and, cordially shaking hands, agreed that no such unpleasantness should mar the future. They parted the best of friends, after arranging a meeting at my house next morning for a friendly chat. That appointment Mr. Lee never kept, but sent a note instead, stating that he had reconsidered his position, and imposing the impossible condition that, unless Mr. Watts furnished him with a *written withdrawal* of two statements he had made, he should decline to continue the debate. Mr. Watts very properly refused to place such a weapon in Mr. Lee's hands.

At the evening meeting Mr. Watts and the chairman, Mr. Page (who, by the way, was Mr. Lee's host for the week, and whose conduct throughout was most gentlemanly and dignified), put in an appearance, but no Mr. Lee. The chairman and Mr. Watts placed the position very fairly before the audience, the latter putting himself entirely in their hands as to the disposal of the evening, and the return of the entrance money. A resolution was then proposed by a Secularist, seconded and supported by two Christians; the supporter stating that he had never before heard a Secularist speak in public, but was so charmed with Mr. Watts's manly, straightforward bearing that he could listen to him with pleasure for twenty nights running. The resolution, a vote of confidence in Mr. Watts, and thanks for his valuable services and honorable conduct, was *unanimously* carried by a meeting of about an equal number of Christians and Secularists. A suggestion was then made that Mr. Watts should deliver a lecture; upon which the chairman stated that, as a Christian, he should prefer to vacate the chair in that case. Mr. Chubb, a broad-minded Deist, was then voted to the chair, from which he stated that he had listened to Mr. Watts twenty-five years ago in the Midlands, and, although not always agreeing with him, had always admired him, and sympathized with him very much in his treatment that night.

On being requested to deliver a lecture, Mr. Watts, in a few brave words, pointed out that he could not lecture except upon the subject of the debate, in which his treatment by Mr. Lee would necessarily be referred to; but in the absence of that gentleman he declined to take any unfair advantage. He, however, was prepared to continue the debate if any clergyman (and there were some in the hall) would volunteer to fill Mr. Lee's place. The challenge was not accepted, but his chivalry won him friends all round. A clergyman who had occupied a front seat throughout the debate came forward, shook him by the hand, sympathized with him, and expressed his disapproval of his opponent's discreditable tactics.

Members of Mr. Lee's committee felt ashamed of him, and intimated that reasons other than those he had given must have kept him away; and, from what I have heard, I am inclined to concur with them in that opinion. It will, I think, be a long time before Mr. Lee will again venture to face the music of a Plymouth audience.

H. J. BARTER.

75 King Gardens, Plymouth.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The dispute between Mr. Watts and myself is one which has to do wholly and solely with a simple matter of fact—viz., Were the principles expounded by Mr. Watts on the third night of our debate at Plymouth the authorized principles of the N. S. S., or the private opinions of Mr. Watts? My opponent again and again asserted that they were the authorized principles of the N. S. S., and I again and again denied the accuracy of his statements. And, at the close of the debate, I went to Mr. Watts, before he left the platform, and demanded, in the name of truth, that he should promise to put the matter right the next night, or I should refuse to continue the discussion. Mr. Watts promised to do as I wished. The next morning I wrote Mr. Watts, asking for a written guarantee. He called at the house where I was staying, and left a verbal promise. As this did not satisfy me, I wrote him again, and told him that, unless I got his written promise to put matters right, I should decline to go on with the discussion. Copies of these letters I now enclose, and shall thank you to print them, as they fully and frankly explain my position.—Yours truly,

October 1, 1897. W. T. LEE.

Copies of Letters to Mr. Watts.

42, Woolster-street, Plymouth, September 24, 1897.

DEAR MR. WATTS,—It is a very real grief to me to feel compelled to depart, in ever so slight a degree, from the usual methods of public debate. I want you, therefore, to believe that, in sending this letter, my one desire is the vindication of truth and right. In our discussion last night you again and again stated that the *seven principles* which you brought before the audience were the authorized principles of the National Secular Society. And, though I again and again took exception to your statements, and said your seven principles had never been accepted by the N. S. S. as the authorized principles of that Society; and, further, that the authorized principles of the N. S. S. are *different* from the seven principles expounded by you, you nevertheless persisted in your statements that your *seven principles* were the authorized principles of the N. S. S., and that I was guilty of equivocation in saying they were not. Again, you stated time after time that I had misrepresented you, put words in your mouth you had never used, and had not hesitated to reserve statements which I knew to be untrue until my last speech on Wednesday, when I knew you could not reply to me. In proof of this, among other things, you said I had told the people that you were unable to give the names of any Church which disbelieved in the resurrection of Christ; and you asserted that I was guilty of misrepresentation, as you had given the names of three Churches which did not believe in the resurrection of Christ.

Now, I am writing this note to say that, unless I get your *written assurance* to put these two matters right at the very commencement of the meeting to-night—i.e., before my opening speech, I shall, in respect to myself, the interests of the audience, and, above all, in the sacred name of truth, decline to go on with the present discussion, and any other that may be contemplated by us.

Trusting that you will let me have an early reply to this note, I am, dear Mr. Watts, in the interests of truth, yours very truly, W. T. LEE.

42, Woolster-street, September 24, 1897.

DEAR MR. WATTS,—I very much regret that I was out when you called. Mr. Page very kindly gave me your message, and I would gladly accept your offer, but it does not go far enough, and does not really meet the points raised in my letter. I therefore feel, since truth is above everything, that I cannot consent to meet you to-night. I have

Digitized by Google

debated many times in this town with Mrs. Besant, Mr. Foote, and others I need not name, and have never had occasion to call in question the word of any opponent until now. Of course, you will not be ignorant of the fact that my experience is not singular; others have had occasion to make the same complaint. However, as things are, I feel I should do a wrong to myself, to the audience, and, above all, to the sacred name of truth, were I in any way to become a party to the passing over of the grave misstatements of fact made by you last night.

Though I may lay myself open to the charge of "cant," I cannot close this note without expressing the hope that the day is not far distant when you will give me the satisfaction of a full and frank withdrawal of the misstatements of last night.—With deepest regrets, I am yours truly, in the cause of truth, W. T. Lee.

As I shall not come to the hall, you may take whatever action you feel to be right.

MR. WATTS'S REPLY.

I have no wish to prolong this controversy with Mr. Lee. Evidently we each take a different view of the cause of the dispute. The only parties capable of giving valuable opinions upon the matter were those who were present; and this they did by passing a unanimous vote—Christians and Secularists alike—to the effect that my conduct was honorable and straightforward. I did not send a *written* reply to Mr. Lee's first letter, preferring to see him in the presence of his and my representative. Unfortunately, after waiting a considerable time, he failed to return home. I then left a message with Mr. Page (Mr. Lee's representative), saying that I never stated my "seven principles were the authorized principles of the N. S. S." I had both there, and referred to each, and urged that they were not opposed to each other. I repeated this again and again. I also named three Churches (taking that word to represent a body of Christian worshippers) who did not believe in the resurrection of Christ. After the debate on the third night, I assured Mr. Lee that he had quite misunderstood me, and that I would fully explain the matter to the audience the next night. We parted, and he appeared satisfied with my assurance. *After* this he wrote the two letters printed above, and refused to go on with the debate. It is quite unnecessary for me to say more, as Mr. Barter has given a very fair and temperate statement of the *facts*.

Charles Watts.

WHY NOT A FREETHOUGHT POSTAL MISSION?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I think we Freethinkers might well take a leaf out of the Unitarians' book. They run a "Postal Mission." Advertisements are inserted in various papers offering to send certain tracts free. These Postal Missions do an immense amount of good; people are reached who would never otherwise be influenced. I wish the N. S. S. could do somthing similar. A Postal Mission Fund should be opened, and Postal Missionaries appointed to carry out the work in various parts of the country. I submit that this is worthy of your serious consideration.

Then I should like to see formed a "Correspondence League." Members pledged (1) to institute or take part in newspaper correspondences (giving the Secular views and philosophy). (2) To watch reports of Christian meetings, and get into controversy, if possible, with any of the speakers through something they have said. For instance, statements about "infidels" should be sifted, the speaker asked for his authority, etc. I remember once a speaker declared that "Scripture compared with Scripture" explained itself. I sent him a list of Scripture contradictions as a sample of "Scripture compared with Scripture." (3) To keep going some private correspondence with Christians. Personally I have nearly always a discussion going on with some one. I have just concluded a long correspondence with a Wesleyan minister on theological subjects. A remark of his in a sermon started it, and I trust it has been the means of him learning some good Secular truths. I do wish some definite movement could be made on these lines.

Alert.

BOOK CHAT.

Cardinal Wiseman, the restorer of the Catholic hierarchy in England, would turn in his grave if he could see a book written by his grand nephew, M. W. Wiseman. It bears the title, *The Dynamics of Religion: An Essay in English Culture History*, and deals critically with the religious evolution from Henry VIII. to the end of the nineteenth century. The work is published by the University Press, and will be noticed at length later on.

Volume i. of the new edition of the Babylonian Talmud, revised by Rabbi Wise, gives the Tract "Sabbath." It has the following parallel to the Golden Rule: "Another Gentile came to Shamai, saying, Convert me on the condition that thou teach me the whole Torah, while I stand on one foot. Shamai pushed him away. He therefore came to Hillel, and the latter accepted him. He told him, What is hateful to thee do not unto thy fellow; this is the whole law. All the rest is a commentary to this law; go and learn it."

* * *

The *Literary Guide* for October reviews Mr. Robertson's new volume of *Essays Towards a Critical Method*. Besides other interesting contents, there is an interview with Professor Goldwin Smith; and a lengthy summary criticizing Dean Farrar's book on *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy*, by Mr. F. J. Gould, is given as a supplement. Mr. Gould points out the Dean's admissions, and shows how far he shatters the old fetish, while extolling the beauty and value of the remaining fragments.

* * *

The Rev. J. A. Cross, M.A., writing in the *Expositor* on the newly-discovered "Sayings of Jesus," holds that they were written independently of the Gospels, and that the coincidences are due to the resemblance between two separate streams of tradition descending from the same source. Professor Rendel Harris goes a great deal farther, holding that the sayings are antecedent to the Gospels, and represent the original source from which these later documents sprang.

* * *

The latest reading of the most important of the newly-discovered *Logia* is an Atheistic one. It runs thus: "Jesus saith, 'Wherever there be men, even Atheists, and even be there but one alone, I say that I am with that one. Lift the stone, and there thou shalt find me. Split the wood, and I am there.'"

* * *

The catalogue of Mr. Bertram Dobell contains a number of the now scarce works of Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, a modern pagan. Mr. Dobell reprints an interesting advertisement by Hogarth which shows the painter's powers of sarcasm in speech. There are also sonnets on A. H. Clough and Man and Nature, by B. D., the latter of which we reprint:—

Here is the source of man's unhappiness:—
That he regards himself as nature's crown,
To pleasure whom Fate should relax its stress,
And humbly to his needs or whims bow down.
How small his part upon the Eternal Stage,
What petty passions rage within his breast,
His microscopic vision cannot gauge,
But magnifies his actions, worst and best,
To huge proportions. Will he learn at last
He's but a bubble on the ocean wave,
A grain of sand upon the seashore cast?
Learn this, all's learned; for then he will not crave
What cannot be awarded, but will bend
His faculties to seek their proper end.

* * *

The *Westminster Review* departs from its usual custom in giving an anonymous article on "Magic and Primitive Man." The paper is a reply to Mr. Jevons, who has already been tackled by Mr. Wheeler in our own columns on this very point. We wish the present article had been signed, for it is a very good one, and we fancy the author's name would have added weight to his arguments.

PROFANE JOKES.

A provost of Dundee, who was an Atheist, was going by sea from Dundee to London, accompanied by one of his Bailies, who was an elder in the kirk. A storm came on, and the Bailie anxiously inquired of the steward if "there was any danger?" "Weel, sir," said the steward, "I canna say; we maun just trust to Providence." "Guidness me," said the Bailie, whimpering, "has it cam' tae that?" "Hoot awa', Bailie," chimed in the Provost; "dinna greet, we maun a' dee some time!" "It's a' vera weel," was the reply, "for ye awtheistical deevils, but what's tae become o' me?"

A gentleman travelling in the wilds of Fayette county, Virginia, last winter, had to pass the night in the lowly home of a "broomsager," who, before the family retired, offered the following prayer: "Now we lay we 'uns down to sleep. We 'uns are not jealous of our betters, and if the snow fall fo' feet deep to-night, in the mawnin' perhaps the stranger will trade we 'uns his watch and chain even up fo' the old yellow mule."

Soul-saver—"Fine weather, Jones." Jones—"For them as ain't got to work, sur." Soul-saver—"Your garden looks well, Jones." Jones—"To them as doan't ha' to toil in it, sur." Soul-saver—"I'm glad the wife's better, Jones." Jones—"Them as doan't ha' to live wi' her may be!"

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Is Religion Necessary or Useful to Mankind?"

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Pack, "An Hour with God." October 9, at 8.30, A Concert. October 13, at 8.30, A Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Dance and entertainment.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 88 and 85 Commercial-road, E.): 5.30, Tea; 7, Concert. Tickets, 1s.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "The Science of Ethics."

NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Dartmouth Park Lodge, N.W.): 7, Mrs. Miall Smith, "The Moral Training of Children."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Class Distinctions in England.—(2) The Upper Middle Class."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Upper Middle Class."

WEST LONDON BRANCH, 341 Harrow-road (near Westbourne Park Station): October 11, at 9, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A. B. Moss.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, H. P. Ward, "The Bible and the Child."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 11, C. Watts, "The Triumph of Reason"; 7, "Sin and Secular Salvation." October 11 and 12, at 8, Debate with the Rev. W. A. Waldron, "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity, in that it is Better Adapted to the Nature and Needs of Mankind."

BRADFORD (Temperance Hall, Leeds-road): October 13 and 14, at 7.30, Debate between Charles Watts and Rev. A. J. Waldron, "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity for this Life or any Other."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and other Religions."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, G. W. Foote—11.30, "Giving up the Bible"; 2.30, "Is Christ Possible?" 6.30, "God and the Devil."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, S. Ackroyd, "The Education of the Young."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): J. M. Robertson—10.30, "Life and Morals without Religion"; 6.30, "The Reformation in the British Isles."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, The President, "The Bible as a Basis of Morals."

PLYMOUTH Co-operative Hall, Courtenay-street: W. Heaford—11, "Life, Death, and Immortality"; 3, "Christian Errors and Secular Antidotes"; 7, "A Freethinker's View of Christ."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' quarterly meeting; 5, Tea; 7, Mr. Dyson, "A Plea for Liberty."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-alley): 7, H. Snell, "Egypt and the Dawn of History."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, An Address.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 10, a., Victoria Park. 17, Manchester. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—October 10, m., Mile End; e., Bradlaugh Club. 17, m., Camberwell; e., Camberwell Hall.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—October 10, m., Limehouse; e., Athenæum Hall, London. 17, e., Wood Green. 24, m., Mile End. 31, m., Limehouse; e., Bradlaugh Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

"Its views are clearly and moderately stated, and all who are interested in sex problems should not fail to peruse its pages."—*Clarion.*

"The most outspoken serial on this or any other planet."—*Agnostic Journal.*

Twopence Monthly.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, W.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation tory 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERT'S "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY. A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye *Poor*—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

Digitized by Google

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LOT 11

1 Pair Pure Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Bed-Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 Tablecloth.

To each customer for **Lot 11** we present a handsomely bound volume of John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People*, or with orders for **2 Lot 11** we give G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought*, and with orders for **5 Lot 11** customers will receive Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh.*

This offer is made during OCTOBER only.

WINTER PATTERNS

NOW READY.

Overcoatings
Suitings
Trouserings
Jacket Cloths
Costume Cloths
Dress Fabrics

Patterns Post Free to any Address.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE,

Write for Terms.

STOCK SIZES.		TO MEASURE.
25s.		27s. 6d.
30s.		32s. 6d.
35s.		37s. 6d.
Each.		Each.



In Serges, Tweeds, Freizes, or Meltons, any Color. Patterns and Self-measurement Forms free to any Address. Every Garment well cut, made, and trimmed.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

SEWING MACHINES

Umbrellas
Carpets
Blankets
Quilts
Sheets
Corsets
Skirts
Shawls
Shirts
Furs
and all kinds of general Heavy Drapery.

Price List Free.

WORKING MEN,

You can **add** 10s. to 30s. per week to your Income by Selling Goods for us.

Write for Terms.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 42. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

TENNYSON'S GOD.

I HAVE not yet had time to go through the biography of Tennyson. It seems a very able and interesting piece of work, and in a sense a monument of filial piety. Many of the letters are well worth reading, and there is a good deal of matter relating to the poet's religious opinions. When I have gone through the two volumes carefully I shall probably deal with this particular aspect of the biography at some length in the *Freethinker*. Meanwhile I desire to write a column or so on a sentence which Tennyson is alleged to have uttered in conversation with the Bishop of Ripon.

"It is hard," the poet said, "to believe in God, but it is harder not to believe. I believe in God, not from what I see in Nature, but from what I find in man."

This bears some resemblance to a famous, and most pathetic and beautiful, passage in Newman's *Apologia*. Newman said that his whole being was full of the idea of God, but when he looked abroad in the world to-day, and at the history of past ages, he found very little corroboration of that idea, and the impression made upon him was as though he looked into a mirror and saw no reflection of his face. Were it not for the voice of conscience speaking within him, he avowed that he might be driven to Pantheism, or even to Atheism.

Sir William Hamilton, the eminent Scotch metaphysician, expressed a similar view before Newman, and in language as plain, though less poetical. Hamilton said that the phenomena of Nature, taken by themselves, rather supported the Atheistic than the Theistic philosophy. The same position was taken by the Rev. Dr. Irons, in his extremely able work on *Final Causes*. Practically, too, it is the position of Professor Knight in his *Aspects of Theism*. Evolution has triumphed, and has won a silent victory over the very Churches. When the teleological argument is pursued, as it sometimes is even now by theologians, they take care to avoid the crudities of Paley. They see that the theory of Natural Selection has destroyed the force of that astute Archdeacon's arguments and illustrations; that he stands convicted of having put the cart before the horse, of placing the effect in the position of the cause; and that design *in detail* is absolutely disproved by modern biology. They therefore present the teleological argument in a cloud of metaphysics. The wisdom and goodness of God is not demonstrated from imperfect human eyes and ravenous shark's jaws; it is demonstrated by what is called the larger view of the world-process. Evolution has produced progress on this planet, and God is postulated as the presiding genius of the whole movement. This was done by that popular, but shallow and sophistical, book on the *Ascent of Man* by the late Professor Drummond; a book which never satisfied a single unbeliever, although it served, and perhaps still serves, as an excuse to many Christians for retaining the faith of their childhood in the light of science and in the age of Darwin.

Tennyson knew enough of nature, not as a scientist, but as an accurate observer, to settle the old theological doctrine of the strict justice and benevolence of the creator. Long ago, in *In Memoriam*, he simply *trusted* that "God was love indeed, and Love creation's final law," for he perceived that "Nature, red in tooth and claw, with ravin shrieked against the creed." It is not surprising that he found it "hard to believe in God." The difficulty came from the suggestions of his intellect. But why did he find it "harder not to believe in God"? No doubt this difficulty came from the suggestions of his emotions. It was terrible to run counter to the ideas of his early training and the very first principle of his inherited faith. Besides, the poet had a strong belief in a future life, although not the future life of the orthodox Christian, with its fantastic heaven and its tragical hell. In a conversation with the Queen, he "spoke with horror (she says) of the unbelievers and philosophers who would make you believe there was no other world, no Immortality." He also said that God would be "far more cruel than any human being" if he did not compensate us for the sorrows and sufferings of this life, and restore us to the society of those we have loved and lost. Evidently, therefore, a God of Love was necessary to Tennyson, by no means as an intellectual demonstration based upon the phenomena of the universe, but as an emotional demonstration based upon the craving for another and a happier existence. Such an existence was longed for, and therefore it was certain; a God of Love would ensure it, and therefore he existed. The logic of it is childish, but the sentiment is pathetic. God becomes the dot to complete the believer's "I." A ruddy drop of heart's-blood, shed in anguish, dilates until it suffuses with a roseate hue the whole heaven of imagination.

Shakespeare was a far greater poet than Tennyson, and a far profounder and more majestic thinker than Tennyson. He understood this pathetic fallacy of the human mind. With the way he had of insinuating the subtlest things where they were sure to be overlooked by the superficial, he pointed out, as he dropped from the celestial heights of that glorious passage on the "tricks of strong imagination," that poor human nature is so constituted that when it "comprehends some joy" it "apprehends some bringer of that joy." So the emotional believer postulates God in order to provide (as he thinks) for the completion of the great sum of his desires.

Tennyson believed in God simply from what he "found in man," including this longing for immortal life—which, after all, is only the psychological side of the physical laws of self-preservation. Just as a rich man wants to feel that he will never become poor, so a living man wants to feel that he will never die. But how many of those who desire to live on in another world would be perfectly satisfied to live on in this world if they had the chance? Probably an overwhelming majority. They are more filled with the lust of life than with the joy of life. It is a blind, passionate instinct, which is only conquerable by a continuous exercise of the higher reason. Sometimes, indeed, it stands between absolute despair and actual suicide; for, as Byron pointed out, the lust of life is often strongest in those who wish the most to die.

Let us not close these observations, however, without remarking that Tennyson's God was at least a civilized conception. The poet did not believe that the Deity could burn a poor worm for ever. He scorned the doctrine of everlasting punishment. He held it was impossible that God would ever ask us what creed we held. He appears to have thought with Pope that "He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

G. W. FOOTE.

Digitized by Google

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.*

MAJOR-GENERAL FORLONG, who has already devoted two large quarto volumes, entitled *Rivers of Life*, to the study of early faiths, has followed them by a thick book of 645 pages, entitled *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions*. This work represents the labors of many years by a bold investigator and distinguished Orientalist, and I have read it through with the interest and attention which such a volume deserves. It is not easy to give within brief compass anything but the barest outline of its contents, which comprise studies of Jainism, Buddhism; Trans-Indian religions—Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, the Vedas and Vedantism; the faiths of China—Lao-tse and Tao-ism, Confucius Mencius, etc., the Elohim of the Hebrews, the Jehovah of the Hebrews, the Bible and its Versions, and Islam and the Koran. The first study is on Jainism and Buddhism, the latter being deemed as derived from the former. Many interesting points in connection with the rise of races and religions are opened up, and in particular the paths by which these faiths may have travelled westwards. This had an important bearing on the history of Christianity. Major-General Forlong says boldly in his second page:—

> "Those of us who are not trammelled by our surroundings have for the most part felt convinced that there has been a close, early connection between Buddhism and Christianity, and that the younger western faith has borrowed many ideas, legends, and parables from the older eastern one; while the scientific evolutionist, who can neither find a first man, first rose, or first anything, has stood apart, silently scouting the idea of a first faith, be it that of Jew or Gentile, Buddhist or Christian. To such an one the prophet or reformer, be he Buddha, Mohammed, or Luther, is but the apex or figure-head of a pyramid, the foundations of which were laid long before his birth."

Professor Max Müller agreed there were numerous coincidences between Buddhism and Christianity, but observed that the historic channel of connection was not distinctly made out.† This our author attempts. Noticing in a footnote that Sir G. W. Cox calls Pythagoras "a mere reflection of Buddha," he shows that the great Buddhist Emperor, Asoka, sent missionaries to Antiochus, and that the Essenes represented a Jewish counterpart of Jaino-Buddhism.

Long before Gotama Buddha, there had been many enlightened pessimists who stood out and apart from the world. Of such there were twenty-four known to the Jainas. The last was called Maha-Vira, and Gotama Buddha is supposed to have been his pupil.

> "At the birth of both Buddhas (Maha-Vira and Gotama) the heavenly hosts sang and rejoiced. Many wonders were seen in the heavens and the earth. 'The Almighty' bestowed on Maha-Vira a divine robe, perhaps 'seamless,' like that which it is said Sakva himself wore, and both teachers went forth on their mission on attaining full manhood, after fulfilling their duties as householders, and after seven to twelve years of meditation or study, Maha-Vira, at about thirty—the same age as Christ."

Maha-Vira seems to have been the John the Baptist to Gotama Buddha. The second study on Trans-Indian Religions gives specially interesting and original views on the character and migration of the Malays. The author advances strong reasons against the belief that Aryans were, either in India or further eastward, the first or chief civilizers; attributing this to Dravido-Turanians and Mongolic peoples who entered India from the West and North, possibly a thousand or more years before Aryans touched the Ganges. The immense ruins of Cambodia are described, and the connection with ancient India in serpent and phallic-worship shown.

The third study is on Zoroastrianism and Mazdaism, represented by the modern Parsis. Our author places Zoroaster or Zarathustra at latest in the seventeenth century B.C., and has a very high estimate of his work as a teacher and reformer. He says:—

> "No stress is put on miracles or dogmas. 'The Excellent Religion' is said to be founded simply on reason or reasonableness; and the theory is little short of perfect, says Haug. It directly denounces murder, infanticide, adultery by either sex, sorcery, sodomy, light-weights, and all other forms of cheating, lying and deceiving, false oaths, slander, bribery, withholding the wage of the laborer, misappropriation of property, apostasy, heresy, and rebellion. It requires the pious to exhibit their piety by zeal in goodness, freedom from avarice, laziness, illiberality, egotism, and envy; and, if a ruler, by showing unswerving justice, sympathy, and tenderness. It insists on many good sanitary rules and methods, kindness to all animals, hospitality to strangers, respect to all, especially superiors, and help to the poor and needy, irrespective of age or sex, rank or creed. Such was the good gospel—an evangel of peace which this lone prophet proclaimed some 3,600 years ago."

Hûmat, Hûkkt, and Hûvarst (Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds) may be said to summarize the best teaching of the Avesta, which anticipated and may have given rise to much in the Christian faith.

The Vedas of the Hindus are next dealt with. Our author holds that the Aryans as they penetrated India took over much of the Dravidian cult and civilization. His experience in India is naturally of great value in this section. His exposition of Verdantism gives in concise compass a very valuable insight into the mystical philosophy of India. The faiths of China are dealt with in two articles; one on Lao-tse, the old philosopher, and Tao-ism, and the second on the more rationalistic system of Confucius.

Interspersed with the erudite information of the book are many shrewd observations; as witness the following:—

> "All gods, being the work of men's minds, if not indeed of their hands, require to be kept up to their duties, and in the prayers of most priests as well as laymen their duties are rather alertly pointed out to them, for peradventure they sleep and require rousing. Only if our God never forgets, leaves, or forsakes us do we 'praise his holy name.' Jacob chose Yahve because of his promised bounties to him. Useless and negligent gods were often cast aside, and even flogged, as we shall see in China and Polynesia."

Throughout the work there is much to show that beneath the higher cults lay a worship of divinities of vegetation, as spirits of groves, trees, corn, and the like. This cult is shown to be as strong in India and Trans-India as among Syrians, Hebrews, Tyrrhenians, Greeks, and Latins. Thus the author upholds the arguments and position he took up in his former work, some twenty years ago, that early gods were but rural and tribal divinities embodying the sensuous wants and ideas of the needy and ignorant; that there is little to choose between the ruddy Etruscan god of groves, the Pelasgian Dodona, Aryan Zeus, and the Ala, Alê, or Elohim of Semites. It is with the Jewish faith that I am here chiefly concerned; for it still sits as an incubus on many minds. I have dealt with it in my own *Bible Studies*, and must reserve till next week what Major-General Forlong has to say on the subject.

J. M. WHEELER.

* *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions.* By Major-General J. G. R. Forlong. (London: Quaritch, Piccadilly.)

† Yet it is Max Müller who himself tells us: "That a channel of communication was open between India, Syria, and Palestine in the time of Solomon is established beyond doubt by certain Sanskrit words which occur in the Bible as names of articles of export from Ophir, which, taken together, could not have been exported from any country but India."

SECULARISM AND SCIENCE.

IT has been frequently remarked that all science is secular, which means that it is mundane in its character, belonging to earth, resting its claims upon the facts of nature, independently of any of the prevalent speculations pertaining to the alleged supernatural. Scientists in their professional pursuits confine their researches, their experiments, and their conclusions to the resources of nature. As the Bishop of Carlisle admitted, "all physical science, properly so-called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God." Thus, in the words of Huxley, "the foundations of all natural knowledge were laid when the reason of man first came face to face with the facts of Nature." Upon these truths are based the teachings of Secularism. Reason and experience have taught us that science is the real savior of mankind, the most trustworthy helper in the hour of need. It has become the parent of thought, the moulder of opinion, and the guide of the

Digitized by Google

civilised portion of the human race. It does its work modestly, but very effectually. Denunciation is a weapon which it disowns, persecution it leaves to its opponents, bigotry and intolerance it ignores; it is as calm as a summer's evening, and as gentle as a zephyr; but it triumphs over all opposition, notwithstanding its history is not written in blood, and no tears of widows and orphans follow in its train. It has proved itself the benefactor of man, for it is the consoler of suffering, the alleviator of pain, the promoter of peace and concord, and it will do more than all the theologies of the world to bring about the brotherhood of man.

No doubt science has been abused and its power misdirected; but that is no fault of its own, but rather the consequence of man's imperfect training and inhuman proclivities. And nothing has tended to produce and perpetuate the perversion of science more than the Church, which has always been its deadliest enemy, seeking either to crush it or to rob it of its intrinsic value. Still, in spite of all attempts to misrepresent its character and to depreciate its potency, science stands forth to-day as an established fact, and as being the greatest benefactor to the race. Those persons who are constantly questioning the truth of science and undervaluing its usefulness should study the following words of Herbert Spencer: "To ask the question which more immediately concerns our argument—whether science is substantially true?—is much like asking whether the sun gives light. And it is because they are conscious how undeniably valid are most of its propositions that the theological party regard science with so much secret alarm. They know that during the two thousand years of its growth some of its large divisions—mathematics, physics, astronomy—have been subject to the rigorous criticisms of successive generations, and have, notwithstanding, become evermore firmly established. They know that, unlike many of their own doctrines, which were once universally received, but have age by age been more frequently called in question, the doctrines of science, at first confined to a few scattered inquirers, have been slowly growing into general acceptance, and are now in great part admitted as beyond dispute. They know that men of science throughout the world subject each other's results to the most searching examination, and that error is mercilessly exposed and rejected as soon as discovered; and, finally, they know that still more conclusive testimony is to be found in the daily verification of scientific predictions, and in the never-ceasing triumphs of those arts which science guides" (*"First Principles,"* pp. 15, 16).

Science, then, being the basis of Secular philosophy, it is gratifying to us to note the rapid progress of scientific truths during the last few decades; for such advancement really means the spread of Secularism. It is not alone that more discoveries have been made within the past fifty or sixty years than during the same period in any earlier time, but research has been carried further, and the conquests over nature's forces have been greater during the present century than in all the previous centuries since human life began. The result of this has been that revolutions in thought and opinion have occurred which must appear to most persons startling in the extreme. The recognised power of steam and its application to locomotion and the various branches of industry; the marvellous development of electricity which has recently so extensively manifested itself, and which is destined at no distant date to still further expand its potency beyond any possible calculation; the extraordinary strides made in photography; the telephone; the advance in surgical operations and in sanitary arrangements—all these secular agencies make the world in its present state, when contrasted with its condition a hundred years ago, appear as though some wizard's wand had been waved over it, the magic touch changing the whole aspect of nature as rapidly and as effectually as a transformation scene takes place in a pantomime. When we contemplate all these vast and manifold changes we feel indebted to science for thus opening up to us the great arcana of nature. And, be it remembered, all the triumphs have been achieved in the most sceptical period of the Christian era.

In fact, it was the secularization of the age that enabled the treasures of nature to be revealed. When the Church was in the ascendant the blessings of science were hidden from the masses, and every attempt to discover its untold advantages was opposed by devout theologians, who professed to rely upon their God in heaven. The secular tendencies of the human mind, however, succeeded to a large extent in destroying confidence in this false dependence, and in vindicating the supremacy of science. Geology, which was at first sneered at and ridiculed by those who saw that its teachings were unmistakably opposed to those faiths that had so long been cherished as being infallible truth, and then opposed by all the violence that the most intolerant bigotry could display, soon came to be recognised as based upon well-established facts, which no opposition could gainsay and no sophistry overturn. As a consequence of this, all opinions had to be cast to the winds, and the theories that had been accepted in darker ages were banished to the oblivion where lie buried so many errors of the past. The antiquity of man, and many other kindred subjects, had the same fate as geology, and now evolution itself is said, by some eminent professors of Christianity, to be quite in harmony with the teachings of records which had declared in no doubtful language that all organic beings were the result of a special or supernatural creator. Even the great Roman Catholic, Dr. Zahm, at the Congress held in Switzerland in August last, said: "As against the alternative theory of creationism, the evidence, all must admit, is overwhelmingly in favor of evolution .....As to science affording any positive evidence in favor of the special creation of the species, it is absolutely mute; and the negative evidence is of such a character that there are few, if any, serious men of science who are willing to consider it as having any weight. Creationism is so highly improbable as to be practically ruled out of court." This is a bold statement coming from the Roman Catholic Church, and we are told in the report of the Congress that, out of seven hundred present, "only one person presumed to hint" that the Doctor was going too far; and when this "brother read a paper advocating the opposite view he was smothered in refutations."

This certain and rapid progress of science, the groundwork of Secular philosophy, is encouraging to us as Secularists, for it inspires us with hope for the future. Theology is no longer defended upon the old lines. Christians have felt themselves compelled to relinquish their old positions, and to sweep away the ancient landmarks of their faith. The entire field of human knowledge is changed, and all thought has been cast in a new mould. This has been achieved through obeying the teachings of our Secular providence—Science.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

IX.—THE SUPPER AT BETHANY.

AMONG the few stories recorded by all four evangelists is one of the anointing of Jesus while sitting at supper in a house at Bethany. This furnishes us with another illustration of the character of the Gospel narratives, which in order to better appreciate, it will be necessary to glance at each of the accounts in turn.

(1) Mark's account (xiv. 3-8):—

> "And while he was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster cruse of ointment of spikenard very costly; and she brake the cruse, and poured it *over his head*. But there were *some* that had indignation *among themselves*, saying, To what purpose hath this waste of the ointment been made? For this ointment might have been sold for above three hundred pence, and given to the poor.....But Jesus said, Let her alone..... she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor always with you.....but me ye have not always..... She hath anointed my body aforetime for the burying."

Mark does not say who were the persons who condemned the use to which this precious ointment was put. He, however, clearly implies that they were some of Simon's guests who had no friendly feeling towards Jesus—some of those who, in the Gospel accounts, are said to have been constantly on the watch "that they might accuse him."

(2) Matthew's account (xxvi. 6-12). This is the same, and given in nearly the same words: "Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper," etc. Matthew, however, tells us who were the persons who were so indignant at the waste of such a large sum of money (£10 12s. 6d.), and who were so

Digitized by Google

solicitous for the welfare of the poor. These ill-natured individuals turn out to be Christ's own disciples.

> "But when *the disciples* saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor."

There is, of course, no actual contradiction between this statement and that in the first account; but no one upon reading the latter would think that it was the disciples, and they only, who murmured at the waste. Mark was evidently unacquainted with this fact.

(3) Luke's account (vii. 36-47):—

> "And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold a woman which was in the city, *a sinner*.....brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and, standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed much his *feet*, and *anointed them* with the ointment. Now, when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee.....Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair.....My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed *my feet* with ointment. Wherefore I say unto her, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

Here we find that the master of the house, "Simon the leper," was of the sect of the Pharisees. That this is an account of the same supper there can be no reason to doubt, for it records the same incident—a woman with "an alabaster cruse of ointment"—and Jesus addresses his host as "Simon." It will scarcely be asserted that Jesus was twice anointed in the manner described, and that in each case it was done while he was at supper in the house of one named Simon, and in each case by a woman who brought "an alabaster cruse of ointment." The woman, according to this version, did not anoint Christ's *head*, as in the accounts of Matthew and Mark, but his *feet*; and, in addition, before doing so, she first wetted them with her tears, and then dried them with the hair of her head, to prepare them for the anointing. We learn, also, for the first time, that the woman was a well-known "sinner," and that Jesus tacitly admitted such to be the case. In this version there is no indignation at the waste of so much costly ointment. Instead of some of the guests, or Christ's disciples, saying it would have been better had the value of the unguent been distributed among the poor, it is the master of the house himself who "spake within himself" of a totally different matter—viz., of Christ's apparent ignorance that the woman belonged to a certain class of sinners. Also, in this version, Jesus does not excuse the waste of such a large sum on the ground that the anointing was for his burial, nor does he refer to that matter at all. He replies to Simon's unspoken thoughts respecting the woman, and he assigns a totally different reason for the anointing—his host's lack of hospitality. Thus, as in the case of the call of Peter to the apostleship, Luke's method of writing a correct account of the incident was to so completely alter it that the original inventor of the anecdote, could he have read it, would scarcely have recognised his own fabrication.

It need, of course, scarcely be added that a woman known to all the city as a harlot would never have been permitted to enter the guest chamber in a respectable house. If the master of the house knew her character, so would also his servants.

(4) John's account (xii. 1-8):—

> "Jesus therefore six days before the Passover came to Bethany..... So they made him a supper there: and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed *the feet* of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair.....But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, which should betray him, saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? Jesus therefore said, Let her alone, that she may keep this against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always."

According to this account, the supper was given in the house of Lazarus, who himself sat at the table, while his sister Martha "served" and waited on the guests. We have found out at last the name of the remarkable woman who anointed Jesus—viz., Mary, another sister of Lazarus. The account agrees with that of Luke with regard to the *feet* being the portion of the body anointed, and also as regards the woman wiping the feet with her hair; but there is no mention of tears. We find, further, that it was the miserable traitor Judas, and he only, who complained of the waste of what might have been sold for three hundred pence, and not the guests or the disciples collectively, and also that it was not his regard for the poor which caused him to protest, but "because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein" (xii. 6). Furthermore, we learn that the person who did the anointing was not a "sinner" after all—or, at least, not in the sense Luke implies—but an honorable woman and a saint; in fact, the most beloved of the lady friends of Jesus.

Why, then, it may be asked, has neither Matthew, Mark, nor Luke given us the name of this woman? To this there can be but one answer. It was for the same reason that they make no mention of Christ's greatest miracle—the restoration to life of Lazarus, after he had been dead four days—viz., because they had never heard of it. Not one of the three Synoptists appears to have known anything about Lazarus, and only one of them, Luke, mentions the name of Martha and Mary. The last-named writer says (x. 38-42):—

> "Now, as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received him *into her house*. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she came up to him and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me."

The Lord, however, like Gallio (Acts xviii. 17), "cared for none of these things," and, instead of asking Mary to assist her sister, he said that the one who had shirked her duties "hath chosen the good part."

It seems more than probable that the writer of the Fourth Gospel has combined the latter incident with the supper in the house of Simon the leper. The two sisters, according to his Gospel (xi. i.), lived in Bethany, and his statement that "Martha served" while Mary was busy at the feet of Jesus points to this inference. It is to be noticed, too, that Luke, in the only passage in which he names Mary and Martha, speaks of the latter as the owner of the house, and says that she "had a sister called Mary"; but he does not say that the sisters had a brother named Lazarus. The last-named individual appears to have lived only in the imagination of the writer of the Fourth Gospel; no one else seems ever to have heard of him.

Looking now at the four versions of this supper, and taking into account the nature and number of the contradictory statements, we can arrive at but one conclusion on the subject. This is: that an original anecdote concocted by nobody knows whom has been re-edited by the four evangelists, the first two compilers giving a fair reproduction of the older account, the other two altering the narrative as each thought fit; furthermore, each of the four publishes his version as a historical incident in the life of Christ, which he coolly expects all good Christians to receive and accept without going into such an unnecessary matter as evidence. This being the case, we have but one course open to us—to reject them all.

ABRACADABRA.

The Way it was Done.

In 1539 King Henry VIII., then on the English throne, himself the author, procured the enactment of a law punishing with death all persons who refused to acknowledge that the bread and wine in the eucharist is converted into the body and blood of Christ. Five other religious opinions were threatened, in the same Act of Parliament, with the same penalty. Our brother Ingersoll would have been an earnest Christian had he lived in those times, else he would have ceased to live. It was by similar methods, beginning with Constantine, that every feature of the Christian creed was made what it is to-day. And the clergy now weep because the American Constitution and advanced civilization will not allow these old-time penalties to be employed in aid of the Church.—*Progressive Thinker.*

Digitized by Google

THE NEW "LOGIA" AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THERE has been much fluttering in the clerical dovecotes over the recently-discovered "Logia of the Lord." The orthodox clergy are by no means enamored of these new sayings, and those who have to any extent brought the higher critical method to bear upon the contents of the New Testament are inclined to look somewhat askance at them, and to doubt whether the support they lend to the standpoint of the Higher Criticism is not a somewhat dearly-bought advantage, in face of the fact that these Logia appear to present us with an entirely different type of character from that of the Gospel Jesus. It is astonishing how completely what may be called the Freethought tradition with regard to the books of the Bible—and in this connection, particularly, those of the New Testament—has been vindicated by archæological discovery and first-hand critical research. The Freethought contention has long been that there is no evidence that the Four Gospels were in existence in their present form prior to the latter half at least of the second century. The alleged quotations of the words of Jesus found in Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr have by Freethinkers always been regarded as of no value as evidence that they were taken from our Gospels, seeing that those Gospels are never mentioned by name, and that these sayings might have been floating about in the form of oral tradition, or, failing that, have been taken from older documents, of the existence of which there are many indirect proofs, and from which, in all probability, the Canonical Gospels were compiled. Stress, also, has been laid on the fact that these quotations are seldom, if ever, literally the same as their assumed counterparts in the New Testament. How often have we been told by Christian apologists that this laxity was owing to the fact that the Fathers were quoting from memory? But the discovery of these "Logia" has robbed even this argument of whatever force it might have been fondly supposed to possess, and has rendered it impossible that it should ever again be advanced by apologists who take serious account of themselves. Professor Rendel Harris, himself an apologist, puts the case with an emphasis which leaves nothing to be desired. Writing in the *Contemporary Review* for September on these Logia, he says: "Here, for the first time, we are definitely introduced to a new stratum in the history of the Evangelical literature, which may be only separated from the lowest stratum of the deposited tradition by the fact of a translation from Hebrew into Greek—that is to say, *we are behind the Gospels.*" Yesterday there were no Logia in the minds of the majority of English-speaking critics. To-day everyone is talking Logia, and when we read over, in the light of the present discovery, the laborious attempts made by Westcott, in his *History of the Canon*, to prove that the variations in the Evangelical quotations of the Fathers are not due to extra-canonical sources, the conviction is overwhelming that he was defending an untenable position.

Again, Mr. Harris says: "We cannot any longer say, with the easy confidence that Westcott does, that 'Papias bears direct testimony to our Gospels'; nor can we assent, without grave reservations, to the statement that Papias tells us the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark *were current in his time*, and that of the former Papias says: 'Matthew composed the oracles in Hebrew, and each one interpreted them as he was able. It may be so, but it does not seem any longer likely"—*i.e.*, that they were *our* Gospels. After quoting from the epistle of Clement of Rome, Professor Harris proceeds: "Now, these are certainly Logia, but they vary from the existing Logia of the New Testament in such a way as to preclude the thought that they are a free reminiscence of Matthew and Luke." Finally, he says these Logia give us on the "one hand the suggestion of an earlier Gospel or Gospels than any of our existing volumes. On the other hand, they prevent us from quoting Clement and Polycarp as attesting the antiquity of the Canon of the Gospels, and this means a possible lowering of our idea of the antiquity of the extant Synoptics." So that, putting aside Freethinkers with undisputed pretensions to scholarly equipment, even the mere Freethought layman, as we may put it, without technical scholarship, and having nothing to guide him save his own critical intuition, has been nearer the truth than the much-vaunted Christian scholars who have written their ponderous tomes in support of the orthodox tradition. The whole critical edifice they had erected has, by the discovery of these Logia, come tumbling about their ears.

BLOOMFIELD STEVENS.

(To be concluded.)

HOLY HEEDLESSNESS.

[In a recent debate a parson said that "jumping suddenly into the water to save life obeyed Christ's command to 'Take no thought for the morrow.'"]

A PARSON, disputing a sceptic's objection
To "never take thought of the morrow,"
Said: Diving impulsively, *minus* reflection,
To rescue the drowning, obeyed this direction;
The fallacy's odd, and of easy detection—
I write not in scorn, but in sorrow.

Although but a parson, he should be acquainted
With some of the methods of logic,
And know how to think in a manner untainted
With logical vice, the disease of the sainted—
The Stagyrite, Mill, and the rest would have fainted
To hear his discourse anagogic.

Unknown to the ghost-guided parson erratic,
His words have this wide implication:
That all are obedient to Christ the ecstatic,
Whenever their actions are unsystematic,
Spontaneous, impulsive, impassioned, fanatic,
And void of the least calculation.

Since thoughtlessness constitutes all of this action
That follows "ne'er think of the morrow,"
The parson must hold that the vilest infraction
Of laws that are wholesome gives Christ satisfaction,
If done as the sudden result of distraction—
I write not in scorn, but in sorrow.

The parson, in giving us this illustration
Of "Taking no thought for the morrow,"
Was taking no thought of his own reputation,
Nor thinking of rules of correct disputation,
But blindly obeying Christ's heedless hortation—
I write not in scorn, but in sorrow.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

A PATHETIC STORY.

MUCH is heard of the wonderful demand for the Bible in heathen lands. The religious press teems with accounts of its translation into new tongues, and its appeals are constant to the generous for pecuniary aid to pay the cost of printing and distribution. *The Church Missionary Intelligencer*, of London, tells a pathetic story in connection with this supply of God's holy word. We copy:—

> "Mr. Thomas, who had once been connected with the London Missionary Society, and was working in Matabeleland, made a translation of the New Testament, which he completed the day on which he was attacked by an illness of which he died. During his last hours he was much troubled by fears lest his work should be in vain. His wife, to comfort him, undertook to have the translation printed. She drew out of the bank £100, the savings of her lifetime, and with it had printed five-hundred copies of the book. Of course, since there was no one in the printer's office who knew the language, many mistakes were made. Mrs. Thomas gave away fifteen copies, and three were sold. The rest were stored at Shiloh, her husband's mission station. During the revolt the Matabeles stole copies and used them as headgear. A friend of the Bible Society in Natal heard of all this, obtained what is probably the only remaining copy of the version, and sent it home."

A new edition of this book should be immediately brought out. They should enlarge the page, make it somewhat thicker by using heavy paper, and multiply the edition by thousands, as the tribe is now quite numerous. A strong cord should be passed through its centre—a strap could be used—and it should be long enough to suspend the book from the necks of the warriors, so as to cover the

Digitized by Google

vital organs. Such a shield, properly used, would be invaluable, and would doubtless save the lives of thousands should they engage in war again with the British. Serving as breast-plate, shield, and buckler, instead of headgear, it would inspire confidence in their own prowess, and probably make them victors. During the wars in British India a large importation of Bibles supplied the natives with the requisite paper for making cartridges. In this form, with a bullet inside, they were sent back to the donors, and it is said they made a strong impression on the usurpers.

J. R. FRASER.

GOD AND DISEASE.

THE horrible typhoid epidemic now raging at Maidstone affords another hard nut to crack for believers in God's Providence, and once more shows how utterly false is the doctrine of Providence as taught by Jesus Christ. A Maidstone clergyman has naturally made it the subject of a sermon, in which he assured his hearers that the typhoid was not God's work. He attempted to save the reputation of God's goodness by casting doubts upon his omnipotence, and by denying the truth of his Holy Word when he said: "I make peace and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." I would call the attention of this clergyman to Amos iii. 6: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it." Some preachers do not deny this. I remember Dr. Pierson preaching a sermon at the time of the influenza epidemic in London, in which he declared that the epidemic was sent by God as a punishment.

To deny that God is in disease, as the Maidstone preacher does, is to deny God. God must be either all or nothing; everywhere or nowhere. God, if he exists, must be as much in disease as in health. God can never be inactive; to deny this would be to deny his existence. He must be everywhere, and at every moment, a living force, a producing will. Continuous and universal action is implied in the very idea of God.

Let us further examine the defence of this clergyman. Justice demands that the criminal be punished himself; with our ideas of justice, we could not possibly let the criminal go free, and feel satisfied with punishing some innocent person in his stead. Such a proceeding would contradict all we understand by the principle of justice. Good men would never stand by and witness such a thing without a protest, and without doing all they could to stop it.

But what good men would not and could not do is precisely the thing we are asked to believe God guilty of. Disease attacks the innocent and guilty, those who had nothing whatever to do with it, and who, in fact, have always been careful, by cleanliness of person and dwelling, to keep free from disease. Admitting that this typhoid is the result of some person's uncleanliness and neglect, justice demands that these should be the persons to suffer, and not the innocent ones, among whom are little toddling mites in all the beauty and innocence of childhood, young maidens guiltless and pure as the riven snow; and God looks on and allows it, permits it. God is dumb while child is taken from parent, parent from child. Tears flow like boiling lava down the cheeks of the suffering ones, homes made black as night by death, hearts torn with anguish by the loss of those whose smile they shall no more see, while prayers ascend to a silent heaven, where we are taught to believe there dwells a loving Father—one who numbers the hairs of our head, and without whose knowledge not a sparrow falls.

Prayers are heard—not, however, by God, but man; not in heaven, but earth. From man comes that help and relief that heaven never gives. Why is it that the innocent suffer, and not always the wicked? Why that the noble are taken, while the mean and ignominious are left? Does not God care for nobility and innocence? A literary man of some note, it is said,* once made use in private of the following: "For the sake of our conception of what goodness ought to be, let us *hope* there is no God." Can we believe that a good Father would or could stand by and see his innocent loved ones suffer unspeakable agony, which by a word he could end? A thousand times no. The paternal heart abhors the thought. It is indeed "sober truth" which John Stuart Mill gave utterance to when he said: "Nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances."

W. WITT LEAVIS.

Do I seem to say, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die? Far from it; on the contrary, I say, Let us take hands and help, for this day we are alive together.—*W. K. Clifford.*

* "The Mystery of Evil." (Scott's tracts.)

ACID DROPS.

SUPPORTING a Sunday Closing Bill recently, Archbishop Temple said: "There was a strong feeling that drunkenness on Sunday was an enormous evil, and a disgrace to our religion and hateful to God." What a beautiful instance of ecclesiasticism! How can drunkenness be more (or less) evil on one day than on another? How can it be worse on Sunday than on Monday? The spirit which dictated the Archbishop's observation is kindled by the knowledge that the public-house is a rival of the Church. For the same reason that he wants to close public-houses on Sunday, the Archbishop wants to close museums, libraries, art galleries, and Secular lecture halls. He is simply a trade protectionist.

An extraordinary argument for Sunday opening was quoted by one of the speakers at the Temperance Convention. He related that, at a public meeting once held in Coventry, an orator urged that public-houses should be opened at noon on Sundays in order that working men should have an opportunity of discussing together the sermons they had heard in the morning. The ingenuity of thirsty souls knows no limits.

Our teetotal Archbishop is still beating the drum ecclesiastic in favor of Sunday closing. Much parsonic support may be expected, for they all keep their own cellar casks. Even the teetotal Archbishop has a good stock of wine for visitors, as the burglars at Fulham Palace tested some years ago.

There is a very pretty quarrel down at Maidstone. The town is plagued with typhoid fever, and the ministers of religion are denouncing the Town Council for not taking scientific precautions. This is extremely rich, and the poor Mayor is highly indignant. It is a pity, though, that he does not rise to the full height of this occasion. "Gentlemen," he should say to the ministers, "the sanitation of the town is our business, and when we want assistance we shall not trouble *you*. Your business is to *pray* for the town, and you seem to do it devilish badly. If the fever carries off any more victims, we shall ask the townspeople to sack you and hire a fresh lot of praying machines, or else to suspend your stipends while the hospital statistics prove your uselessness."

A good deal of grumbling appears to have gone on at Maidstone over the inactivity of the clergy, who have at length aroused themselves. A special form of prayer has been drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the whole town is invited to join in a day of intercession. Probably the fever will be got under by that time; and, if so, the clergy will claim that their prayers settled the epidemic.

The Rev. E. G. Gauge, the president of the Baptist Union, in his address to the Assembly at Plymouth, contended that in international, national, and municipal questions Christ's will should be done. Well, Christ said "Give to him that asketh." Will Mr. Gauge endorse giving Great Britain over to William of Germany, who is said to claim it on the score of being the eldest son of the Queen's eldest child? Christ said: "Take no thought for the morrow." Will Mr. Gauge tell us how this would work in international, national, and municipal questions?

The growth of Romanism in England was one of the subjects that occupied the attention of the Baptist Union Assembly. The Rev. George Hawker, of London, gave some interesting figures. In 1837 there were 502 Romanist chapels; in 1897 there are 1,812. The clergy were 567; they are now 3,115. Religious houses for men were 6; they are now 253. For women 17; they are now 524. There are also 235,000 children in Catholic schools. It appears that Baptist ministers only number 1,800. Still, they are full of fight, and they mean to put down Romanism somehow. But all the Conference did was to pass a resolution against it—at which, we dare say, Cardinal Vaughan will smile serenely.

The Rev. W. H. Shaw, who is agent of the Baptist Missionary Society in Italy, said at a meeting of the Baptist Union in Huddersfield, that "Roman Catholicism was the most powerful engine ever constructed by Satanic ingenuity for degrading, enslaving, and cursing nations." Yes, but Roman Catholicism represents the faith from which his own is derived.

The Baptist Union also tackled the education question. They resolved to accept the challenge of the present Government, and to throw compromise to the winds. But these brave words were soon discounted, for the assembled Baptists went on to declare that no sectarian doctrines should be taught in public schools; by which they mean,

Digitized by Google

of course, that Christianity shall be taught in them (in spite of Jews and Freethinkers), but the Christianity so taught shall be of the description that just suits the Baptists.

The Congregational Union passed a resolution, "That while undisturbed by assumptions of the Papal See, and convinced that Roman Catholics were not increasing, the meeting regarded the sacerdotal claims and Ritualistic practices of English clergymen with stern disapprobation as being a degradation of Christianity." Good! But Christianity must make up with paint outside for its disintegration within.

Fresh excavations at Turnovsky, in the district of Tiraspol, the scene of the horrible self-slaughter by religious fanatics, who allowed themselves to be immured or buried alive, have led to the discovery of six other bodies—men, women, and children. It is believed that thirty more corpses will be found, and the search continues.

Kovaleff, the man who was at the head of the self-immolating sect, says there is no doubt that the bodies already recovered include those of a vine dresser and his two children, girls of eight and six. But his evidence is no longer trustworthy since he has become remorseful. He makes all kinds of contradictory statements to save himself. It is difficult to understand why the judicial authorities do not put this man on his trial under the capital indictment.

It is stated from St. Petersburg that the police have ascertained that the fanatic sect at Tiraspol has also a branch at Bender. Its principal representative was a woman named Kayiowa, the owner of a vineyard, and seventy-five years of age. It was in her house that the meetings were held. It is supposed that persons who have disappeared have been buried alive in the vineyard. During the census the woman refused to make any statements, and offered the vineyard to her neighbors for four hundred roubles, although it is worth eight thousand. She has since disappeared. The vineyard is to be dug up and the bodies searched for.

The woman Pépé, who stabbed that priest in Paris, was fond of attending church, and was regular at confession. She stabbed him because he was handsome and eloquent, and did not reciprocate her affection. She was resolved that he should not have the opportunity of falling in love with some other woman. This sort of erotic piety, or pious eroticism, is only too common in Catholic countries. It gets toned down in Protestant countries, where the clergy marry and there is no confession, and finds expression in slippers for the curate and furtive little caresses at church bazaars.

Prophet Baxter's final fixture for the end of the world is March, 1899. He has shifted the date often, but this is the latest. When '99 arrives we may learn that the correct date is 1903. Herr Falb, an Austrian, also fixes '99 as the date of a catastrophe; but it is fixed for November 13. Nothing like precision in these matters.

A well-known prophet, who lately announced the "final and irretrievable" end of the world in 1900, has this week paid a high premium to secure the lease of business premises for fifteen years. What he intends to do with them after the catastrophe is a mystery.

The Congregationalists of Southport have not got over the marriage of "Miss Thompson" as a man to one of the Sunday-school young ladies. "Miss Thompson," it is said, had the task of preparing the young ladies of the Sunday-school for church membership. "She" was the trusted confidant of the ministers, and a constant visitor to their wives.

One of the warmest mining meetings yet held in Adelaide happened the other day. It was held in a Sunday school. When the language became sulphurous, excited shareholders would grab prayer-books and assume attitudes of defiance, and ever and anon a shareholder, who had perhaps called another gentleman a liar, would duck behind a copy of the Revised Version, and then read out the Lord's Prayer and ask his enemy if he had ever heard *that* before. The chairman of directors, at the conclusion of the meeting, expressed his belief in a personal devil, mentioning a shareholder.

A Sydney bookshop, which often shows rare volumes in its window, lately displayed a very old and massive Bible, opened at random, and, as it happened, at a chapter wherein some very gaudy obscenity appears. A clergyman, in passing, saw and read the awful passage, which was in large enough print to stop a whole presbytery on its way to meeting. Horrified, the good man rushed inside and drew the proprietor's attention to the fact. "Oh, dear! oh dear!" exclaimed the bookseller, "now I shall have to redress the whole window!"—*Bulletin.*

William Gargett, the son of a farmer at Darlington, entered the kitchen, knelt down, and prayed. Then, in the presence of his mother and sister, he seized a table-knife, and cut his throat so terribly that in a few minutes he expired.

Miss Sawtell owed her maid-servant for money lent, and when the girl sought to distrain she pretended she had made over her goods to Baron Nieroth, a Lutheran missionary who resided in her house, because she was charmed with his preaching. The Baron jumped up, and said he considered the action a most shameful persecution. It would never be allowed in his native land. He said he came to London as a missionary to the poor moral cannibals who infested it. He had simply done what any other Christian would do—helped a friendless orphan. His Honor set aside the deed, and gave judgment for the servant for the full amount claimed, with costs on the higher scale. The verdict was received with applause, and leave to appeal was refused.

A funny story concerning the trousers of a Christian man of God and two Jewish clothes-dealers came before Mr. Horace Smith at Clerkenwell Police-court. The Rev. A. Joynt, of 15 Heathcote-street, St. Pancras, charged Benjamin Benjamin with stealing his trousers, valued at one pound. The prisoners were asked into his parlor, and he sold them one pair of trousers for 1s. 6d., another for 2s., and a pair of boots for 6d. After they had gone he discovered he had sold the wrong pair of trousers. When he saw Benjamin again he did not give him his cloak also, but gave him into custody. Benjamin proved that he sold for 5s. 6d. what he gave 4s. for, and said clergymen's clothes went very cheap. He was discharged.

The Bishop of Southwell has deprived the Rev. J. E. Andrew, vicar of Derwent Woodlands, N. Derbyshire, of his orders for drunkenness during public worship. There was also a general charge of frequenting taverns and committing excesses.

A Dutch watchmaker, named Gustave Carl Friedrich Muller, killed his wife and child. He says that, like Abraham, he heard a voice calling to him to use his knife and cut his wife's throat, and he was compelled to obey. He declared he had murdered his father and mother, and in various parts of the world had married fourteen wives, whom, with one or two of their infants, he had also done to death.

A Spiritualist medium named Lang, operating in Louisville, Ky., gave an aged woman "magnetized" water in order to facilitate the development of her occult powers. The woman died, and, some of her property being found in Lang's possession, he was arrested and charged with poisoning her.

Rev. John Emery, pastor of a church in Leavenworth, Kan., committed suicide on September 15, having been charged with seducing his stepdaughter.

It is said that an attempt is being made in Japan to follow the example set by India in the Brahmo Somaj, and to organize a new religion, which shall be a combination of elements from Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism. The new religion is to venerate Christ as a Great Teacher—an Adept, may be—but to discard the Trinity, and the Atonement, and miracles. Vestments and bishoprics and fat livings no doubt will be retained, or why "organize" the new religion? Of course it is being organized by the shepherds, and the sheep will be fleeced as before; but still, if it abolishes some of the most degrading of the Christian doctrines, it will go a long way towards keeping out the Western missionary fakirs, and will pave the way for rational progress.—*Secular Thought.*

The Rev. Dr. Ecob says in the New York *Independent*: "The cry of debt is heard at the treasury of every one of the denominations." According to him, it all comes from rivalry, each denomination setting up little churches in towns where one would suffice. "At the very heart of its communal life," he says, "division and wicked competition are instituted. The religion of Christ comes as a minister of disintegration, debate, and pettiness. Back of this lies a deeper curse. This little community, broken into helpless fragments, must hang for years upon the charity of others. The people are pauperized at the very altars of their worship."

Conselheiro, the leader of the fanatics in Brazil, who has been playing the *rôle* of Messiah, has been killed and captured by the Government troops. They will take care he does not rise again.

Going, going, gone! The City Corporation have advertised for a spiritual guide for the "living" of St. George-

Digitized by Google

the-Martyr, Southwark. Who would like a "cure of souls"? Must be of genteel appearance, good digestion, and a Tory; a relative of the aristocracy preferred; religion no object.

People in London and other large cities, as an esteemed country correspondent remarks, have little notion how ignorant, intolerant, and bigoted many of the country clergy are. They still set up as petty God-almighties, and foster the impression that they are the sole depositories of the knowledge that makes wise unto salvation. Any one who questions their teaching or disputes their authority is made to feel the weight of their displeasure, and stands a good chance of being boycotted as an enemy of society.

A specimen of the amenities of clerical correspondence is communicated to the press by F. Farrington, of Exmouth, from the Rev. S. G. Potter, D.D. The divine sent Mr. Farrington his lecture entitled "Naturalism and Christianity." Mr. Farrington, in thanking him for his kindness, took occasion to remark: "It is a matter for regret that 'fifty years of ministry' has not taught you that it is possible there are other 'sane' and 'honest' men in the world, conscientiously holding views opposed to yours." This mild remonstrance roused the ire of the doctor of divinity, who addressed a letter to his correspondent beginning: "I have long since found you to be one of those my Master bid his followers not to cast pearls before, or as designated by the mighty Paul as 'one full of subtlety and all mischief.' I therefore wash my hands clean of you, and hand you over to the justice of that God who will know how to deal with blasphemers." A second letter from Mr. Farrington was returned unopened by the rev. gentleman, who is a worthy Christian in having no fellowship with unbelievers.

The *Christian World* says: "The following well-authenticated report of a recent pulpit utterance of a clergyman reaches us:—After many years of quiet times the village has been stirred by a revival; and one Sunday evening the vicar noticed some persons present in his congregation whom he knew to belong to the Congregational chapel. In the course of his sermon he said: 'Some of you were at the *little hell* below here (pointing over his shoulder in the direction of the Congregational chapel) this morning, and now you are here to-night. Why do you not come here always? I would have you know that these are the only valid sacraments, and I am the only person qualified to administer the sacraments in this place.' And yet there is the Congregational pastor, a saintly old man, who has ministered in holy things in that village for thirty-five years. The same Christian minister, when asked to bury a man who had attended the Primitive Methodist chapel occasionally, flatly refused, saying, 'I sha'n't bury *the poor devil*,' and sent his curate to perform the ceremony. In how many other villages are similar things going on which never come to the light, but which, nevertheless, are well known locally, and help to explain the rural antipathy to the parish church and its parson?'

The spectacle of a wealthy corporation leaving the London County Council to take steps that one of its churches shall not be a danger to the neighborhood is an edifying one. The church is that of St. Mary the Virgin, in Charing Cross-road. It has gone through a varied history. In 1677 it was built as a church for the Greek colony. It was afterwards taken by the Huguenots for the Soho French Protestants, and then by the Baptists, who gave it up in 1849. As it was in danger of being turned into a temple of Terpischore, it was taken over by the Church and consecrated by Bishop Bloomfield in 1850. There have been recent appeals for money for its restoration; but, as neither the Rev. Dr. Gwynne, the incumbent, nor the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, will shell out, the County Council has been obliged to partly pull it down as a dangerous structure, and it is now left open to the elements.

The old Gravel Pit Chapel, Hackney, has, after years of gradual decline, been closed to public worship. At the farewell service, which was but meagrely attended, though specially advertised, the late pastor, the Rev. J. Irving, said "the people in the neighborhood had tried religion and turned it up." Ichabod.

A distinguished folk-lorist, who has just gone through the correspondence in the *Church Times* on the researches of Messrs. Frazer and Hartland on early beliefs, describes it sarcastically and truthfully as "a monument of the intellect and learning of the English clergy at the end of the nineteenth century."

Lord Salisbury, as protector of the privileged classes, says: "We are all Socialists now." So Dean Farrar, the well-paid pluralist and upholder of the Establishment, declares: "We are all Freethinkers now." He knows that his admissions as to Bible errancy uproot the doctrines which his Church still teaches to children. But the real meaning of Broad Churchmen is "anything you like so that we retain our billets."

The Archdeacon of Maidstone has come to the conclusion that the salvation of working men's souls largely depends on their avocations. A lady worker in Coventry had told him that after the youths had left her influence, and gone into work, it depended on the trade they entered whether or no they retained their religious worship. If they went into the ribbon trade, they would probably remain religious; but if they went into the watch trade, it was equally certain that she would never see them again. The watch trade gives some opportunities for quiet thought. But the Archdeacon put it all down to the labor associations.

A case heard the other day was a new departure in Australian divorces, there being no co-respondent, and no giddiness on either hand. On the contrary, the husband obtained his rule *nisi* because madame was too monotonously holy for an ordinary human being to live with and retain his reason. She desired him to go to church twice on Sundays, and be a shining light at tea and prayer meetings, and other melancholy church festivities, six nights a week. The stricken man attended sermon once a week, under protest, but kicked at bun-struggles and handicap prayer-meetings, and his wife preached at him, and bombarded him with texts, and hymns, and tracts, and prayed aloud far into the night when he was perishing for the want of sleep. Finding, however, that she could not convert him to true holiness and a passion for sacerdotal scones, she packed up and went home to 'pa, and hubby started out after a divorce. The fact that he got it tends to increase one's respect for the administration of local justice.—*Bulletin*

On and Off Duty is a monthly journal for policemen. It does not appear to rate their intelligence very highly. The October number opens with an hysterical hymn, "Are you shining to-day? Shining for Jesus, Shining all the way." The Jubilee offering of the policeman is put down "as an answer to prayer, put up to the Father above."

Canon Reith, vicar of St. Andrew's, Watford, preaching at Shaftesbury-avenue on Sunday last, said Almighty God was much more merciful to us than we were to each other. Well, he puts us all to rest eventually, though he usually precedes it with plentiful aches and pains. Canon Reith eulogized the early Church as having been faithful to the Divine principle as seen in the institution of those ever-welcome periods of rest—Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide. He ought to know that these were Pagan festivals which existed before Christianity, and may remain after it has departed.

Noticing *Chips from my Blockheads*, by Mr. Garrett, a schoolmaster, the *Daily News* remarks: "Scriptural blunders are frequent, but not always very quotable. 'Jehu was one of the most wicked and pious kings of Israel' can scarcely be called a blunder. It is an epigram. History is full of 'wicked and pious' characters, especially the history of the Reformation in Scotland, every man murdering and contriving murder with a text on his lips. That Samson killed the Philistines 'with the pillows' may be a mere mis-spelling, or may be one of the many blunders which children make from a confusion of sounds. Another is, 'The descendants of Noah became very humorous.'"

The divinely-ordained fast on the day of Atonement resulted in the death of Abraham Brosyoseph, a Jewish drug merchant, aged fifty-six. He was found dead with a bruise on his face, having fallen down from exhaustion.

Dr. Theodor Herzl, in his paper on "The Zionist Congress" in the current *Contemporary Review*, gives his testimony, taken from his own observations during his Easter tour, and from trustworthy reports, that "it is just the Mussalmans who are very tolerant towards the religious confessions of others." The spectacle of the Jews anxious to obtain relief from Christian persecution, even under the suzerainty of the Sultan, is a striking comment on the religion of peace and goodwill.

The Bishop of Chester has been lecturing at Macclesfield as a Christian Socialist. We gather that the real object of this prelate is to take the wind out of the sails of the Socialist party, and also, if possible, of the Radical party. All old institutions should be left as they are, but there should be a "policy of conciliation" between the oppressors and the oppressed. Which is a very fine program, particularly for bishops. We do not believe the working man is soft enough to be caught with such a simple bait.

An elderly Christian Evidence man, so we are informed, has recently destroyed a complete set of the *National Reformer*. This shows what he thinks of the free expression of opinion. His action assists to make existing copies more valuable.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 17, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "In Abraham's Bosom."

October 24, Athenæum Hall, London; 31, Camberwell.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 17, Huddersfield; 18 and 19, lectures at Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham, under the Hartmann Scheme; 24, Camberwell, London; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. HAYES.—Received, and will be officially acknowledged on Mr. Foote's return to London.

MUCH correspondence stands over till next week, in consequence of Mr. Foote being occupied in Scotland.

J. L. WHITE.—A discussion on the subject would only arouse ill blood. At least we think so. You might see Mr. Foote at the Athenæum Hall, as you suggest.

J. H. G.—What you say about the Dives and Lazarus story is good sense, but you can hardly expect a Gospel parable to stand a thorough criticism. You will find a chapter on Paul in Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*. There is no more evidence that this apostle ever visited England than that he visited Timbuctoo.

TOREDOR, promising 10s. annually to the Treasurer's Scheme, says: "I should like to say that I do this as a very slight mark of my admiration for your bold and manly fight against superstition and bigotry."

G. DUCKINGFIELD.—The poem, "Actor and Preacher," appeared in the *Freethinker* for July 17, 1892. It should make a good recitation.

H. P. WARD.—Thanks for cuttings. Mr. Foote will see your letter on his return.

A. J. HOOPER.—Many thanks.

F. WOOD.—Cuttings are always welcome.

TREASURER'S SCHEME.—*Per E. M. Vance:* M. Christopher, £1 *(p)*; H. Barratt, £1 *(p)*; A. Cayford, 5s.; T. Holstead, £1.

A. KURNPYRU (André Office, Ceylon).—We shall be pleased to exchange with the *Buddhist*, but the paper has not yet reached us.

A. J. H.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

L. EARL.—Certainly you should ask the candidate if parents are not the proper persons to teach religion, and if what all have to pay for all should not agree upon.

C. COHEN.—Your corrections arrived too late.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Homeopathic World—Birmingham Post—Crescent—Eastern Post—Secular Thought—Nya Sanningar—On and Off Duty—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Ourselves—Torch of Reason—Liberty—Liberator—Isle of Man Times—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Devon Express—Humanity—Wood Green Sentinel—Echo—Lloyd's News—Daily Mail—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator.

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

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had capital audiences on Sunday at Glasgow. There were good meetings in the morning and afternoon, and the hall was crowded in the evening, most of the standing room at the back being occupied. The morning lecture was followed by some discussion, the orthodox side being curiously represented by an Orangeman, a Catholic, and a Christadelphian. The Orangeman was violent and insulting; in fact, he had to apologize twice for unparliamentary language. The Christadelphian was preternaturally solemn and minatory; his opinion evidently was that the only true and perfect Christians were the professors of his own little sect.

The Glasgow Branch is delighted with Sunday's meetings, especially with the very fine one in the evening. It has had difficulties to contend with, but it has triumphed over them, and is now more prosperous than ever. The little knot of bitter malcontents who tried to induce the Branch to secede from the N. S. S., and, failing that, to break it up altogether, have been foiled and beaten, and will now be left to sink into their natural oblivion. The Branch has an increasing membership and an excellent program of lectures and other functions up to Christmas.

During the week Mr. Foote has been debating with Mr. Lee at Glasgow. Some report of this encounter will appear in our next issue. Meanwhile we have to announce that Mr. Foote lectures this evening (October 17) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., his subject being "In Abraham's Bosom."

Mr. Moss was well received by an excellent audience at the Athenæum last Sunday, and his lecture appears to have given much satisfaction. This evening he visits the new hall, Station-road, Wood Green.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice in Birmingham to splendid audiences. In the morning the hall was comfortably filled, and in the evening it was packed to the doors. Except when he spoke at the Town Hall, they were the largest audiences Mr. Watts has had in Birmingham. Although extra *Freethinkers* were on hand, every copy was sold. Mr. C. H. Cattell presided in the morning, and Mr. Ridgway in the evening. The local Branch of the N. S. S. is exceedingly active this season in propagandist work, and we are pleased to learn that its efforts are most successful.

During the past week Mr. Watts has been debating four nights with the Rev. A. J. Waldron in Birmingham and Bradford, and to-day, Sunday, October 17, he lectures afternoon and evening in Huddersfield. To-morrow and Tuesday Mr. Watts returns to Birmingham to give two lectures under Mr. Hartmann's Scheme.

Our Camberwell friends inform us that the Entertainment and Dance last Sunday was a great success, about 250 people being present, many of whom had never spent Sunday evening in such a manner before.

Those in the neighborhood should certainly attend the new Science Classes, under the Science and Art Department, just started at the Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road. The subjects are the useful ones of Hygiene, taught by Mr. W. A. Clark; and Chemistry, taught by Mr. E. Watkins. Both are duly qualified teachers. The classes commence at 7.45 on Friday, and are entirely free to students. All are invited to attend, and those who propose to do so should join at once.

The Camberwell Guardians have saved the ratepayers the goodly sum usually apportioned to the payment of a workhouse chaplain. They find, they say, that the difficulty is not to obtain religious ministrations, but to limit the supply of voluntary ministers. They mean to allow religious equality and no interference with freedom.

The East London Branch began their winter season last Sunday evening with a highly successful tea and concert, which took place at the King's Hall, Commercial-road. The attendance was about two hundred, which included a good proportion of ladies. The program—an excellent one—was prepared under the direction of Mr. M. Loafer, to whom great credit is due in bringing together such a good array of talent.

Many tributes to the late Professor Newman have appeared in the public press. A notable one was in the *Daily News* from T. Hornblower Gill, a Christian, who remarks: "His great endowment, his vast attainments, his large reputation, never impaired the singular kindness and courtesy of his manner, the remarkable considerateness of his conduct towards others."

Digitized by Google

The *Nation*, the leading critical journal of the United States, observes: "The calm, not to say indifferent, reception of the discovery of the *logia* by the theological world, by the organs of religious opinion, is a thing to make people with memories rub their eyes. It would not have been possible fifty, or even twenty-five, years ago. We should have had hasty champions rushing forward to declare the whole affair incredible, an invention of the Evil One to try the faith of the elect. The solemn threat of the Scriptures against any man who should 'add unto the words of the prophecy of this book' would have been levelled at the audacious discoverers and publishers of the *logia*. But things have changed, even with those who vow that they have not changed. It is not simply the growth of tolerance that makes the difference; it is the growth of knowledge."

So, too, with the recent Babylonian discoveries. Thirty years ago the statement, that anything happened among men on this planet more than six thousand years ago, was regarded as a sign of infidelity. Now the alleged doings in Eden are being slowly relegated to the realm of myth and legend.

Reynolds's Newspaper has opened its columns to a discussion on "What is Religion?" Nearly all the contributors appear to be heretics. "South London" says Christianity is but a more elaborate form of fetish worship. Kenneth Ffarrington Bellairs says religion is simply a clever machinery whereby brains have lived on idiots for "countless centuries." Another defines religion as Thomas Paine's motto—"To do good." E. C. Rae says it is the outcome of a purely selfish instinct—distinct altogether from morality—and originated in the mind of primitive man simply from fear, selfishness, and ignorance. Steel, of Wolverhampton, describes Christianity as "the most shameless fraud that ever existed on this planet—a gigantic begging system from beginning to end." F. H. Cliffe gives the excellent advice to study Schopenhauer. Crom Avon says: "I have never yet known a man professing extra religion that did not turn out a thorough scoundrel." "A Victim" accounts for our ready acceptance of an Asiatic faith by the fact that the impressionable minds of children are imbued with the story, and the vanity of manhood prevents its being renounced. W. S. Clogg says that we are all born Atheists. Religion does not come naturally, like eating and drinking, but has to be taught. Therefore, he contends, it is a convention of human society.

Christ is supposed to have brought immortality to light, but an article by "A. G. W.," in the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen*, on "The Hades of the Ancient Egyptians," shows that Christianity in this matter was long anticipated in Egypt.

Mr. James Hooper, of Nottingham, was a brave fighter for Freethought in the old days. Many a time has he stood by the late Harriet Law when she was openly insulted by Christian bigots. Many a time, too, has he fought in the Midlands for the late Charles Bradlaugh when he was persecuted by the Tories and hounded down by a coalition of all the enemies of freedom and progress. We regret to hear that Mr. Hooper is now in a necessitous condition. He has been ill ever since February, and quite unable to earn a single penny; and in this extremity he has to bear the brunt of a painful and costly domestic trouble. A few Nottingham friends are trying to obtain for him a little assistance, and we earnestly hope they will succeed. Subscriptions can be sent to either of the three following gentlemen: T. Bellamy, 6 Thoresby-street, Sneinton; J. Birkhead, 7 St. Luke's-street, Carlton-road; and F. Smith (secretary, Nottingham Branch, Railway Workers' Society), 7 Wool-alley, Woolpack-lane. These gentlemen ask if we will let them acknowledge subscriptions in the *Freethinker*. Certainly.

There must be many friends with saleable articles they can contribute to the Bazaar on behalf of the enlargement of the Secular school at 52 Pole-lane, Failsworth. They should be sent to Mr. Taylor, 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth, before the 28th inst. Failsworth station is on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, and the Globe Parcel Express delivers daily.

Mr. W. G. Pearson, of the Social Democratic Federation, is standing as a School Board candidate in the Tower Hamlets division. His program includes "free maintenance for all children," but, though foolish (as we think), this is perfectly harmless, as School Boards have no power to carry it into effect. On the other hand, Mr. Pearson is in favor of secular education; and, as this *can* be carried out, even as the law now stands, we commend his candidature to the attention of our Tower Hamlets readers.

Mr. George Anderson is sending out, through Mr. Forder, Christmas parcels of literature to soldiers and sailors. He suggests that other "stay-at-home" friends might help to thus enliven our defenders at Christmas time when far from home.

The *Secular Almanack*, which is now in its twenty-ninth year of publication, is for the most part in the printer's hands. We hope that advertisers will yet give it a turn. Societies whose secretaries have not sent in particulars may find themselves omitted, for publication cannot be delayed on account of their remissness.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive Meeting held at the Society's offices, Thursday, September 30; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, T. Gorniot, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, G. J. Warren, C. Watts, Annie Brown, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, J. Neate, P. Sabine, M. Loafer, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, C. Mascall, and the secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

Cash statement received and adopted.

The President reported that he had interviewed Mr. J. P. Green, as requested at the last meeting, and who had intended to run upon the Secular Education ticket; but that gentleman had now decided not to offer himself for election.

It was resolved that the Treasurer be asked to send a cheque for the balance of subscriptions raised in the *Freethinker* for the Spanish Atrocities Committee, and close the matter.

The officers were instructed to arrange for the Society's annual dinner at the Holborn Restaurant early in January.

In the absence of Mr. Forder, the President reported upon the case of Mr. F. M. Browne, which had now taken another turn, and it was then resolved: "That the Executive endorses the action of Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder in the Browne case, and leaves any further action to their discretion." Carried.

Mr. Charles Watts then reported the result of his attendances at the meetings of the Union of Ethical Societies and, being somewhat dissatisfied at the lack of progress, desired to tender his resignation as the representative of the N. S. S. The resignation was accepted, and the following resolution carried unanimously: "That the N. S. S. Executive, having seen the manifesto of the Moral Instruction Conference Committee, does not consider that it sets forth any immediate object to be striven for, and does not consider that it faces the direct issue between those who would and those who would not have the Bible read in public schools. This Executive must, therefore, withdraw its delegate, and pay its share of one guinea towards the preliminary expenses."

The sub-committee's minutes were then read and discussed, and it was moved that at the next Executive meeting a resolution should be drawn up clearly defining the duties of the sub-committee. Carried.

The President then read the draft of the Appeal for Funds, which was greatly appreciated, and ordered to be printed.

The Treasurer was instructed to pay certain accounts, and the meeting closed. E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

The Bible God.

Our liturgies truly say that it is a fearful thing to fall into Yahve's hands. He abhors even his chosen people, said the Deuteronomist (xxx. 11), and was like a fire which burns to the lowest hell, and consumes the earth and all its increase; he delights in heaping mischief upon them and shooting arrows at them; in burning them with hunger, and devouring them with heat and bitter destruction. He sends upon them the teeth of beasts and the poison of serpents. The "sword without and the terror (or plague) within is to destroy the young man and the virgin, the suckling and him with grey hairs." Yahve is to "whet a glittering sword and arrows which shall devour flesh and be drunk with the blood of Islam." He "sets snares" for his children "to provoke them to wrath, so that they may be destroyed and consumed with fire and everlasting burnings."—*Major General Forlong, "Short Studies," p. 352.*

Men of God and Money.

There is scarcely a religion or sect on the face of the earth in which the possession of wealth is not spoken of in terms of disapprobation. Neither do we know of one the ministers and priests in which have not courted its possessors, connived at its misuse, and been eager to share in the possession, exemplifying that vice in most religious teaching and practice is professing in words what is never intended to be practised in conduct, often what could not be performed were it attempted.—"*Studies of Man," by a Japanese, p. 44.*

Digitized by Google

A SABBATH MORN AT WADDY.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL was "in" at Waddy. The classes were all in place, and of the teachers only Brother Spence was absent, strange to say. This was the first Sunday of the new superintendent's term, always an evil time for grace, and a season of sulkiness, and bickering, and bad blood. Each beloved brother coveted the dignity of the office, and those who failed to get it were consumed with envy and all uncharitableness for many Sabbaths after. Some deserted the little wooden chapel on the hill till the natural emotions of prayerful men, pent in their bosoms, could no longer be borne, and then they stole back, one by one, and condoned in hurricanes of exhortation with rain and thunder.

Brother Nehemiah Best occupied the seat of office behind a deal table on the small platform, under faded floral decorations left since last anniversary. Rumor declared that Brother Best was unable to write his own name, and whispered that he spent laborious nights learning the hymns by heart before he could give them out on Sunday, as witness the fact that he "read" with equal facility whether the book was straight, or end-ways, or upside-down. Brother Best was thin-voiced, weak in wind, and resourceless and unconvincing in prayer. No wonder Brother Spence was disgusted. Brother Spence could write his own name with scarcely more effort than it cost him to swing the trucks at the Phœnix; his voice raised in prayer set the loose shingles fairly dancing on the old roof; and his recitation of "The Drunkard's Doom" had been the chief attraction on Band of Hope nights for years past. Ernest Spence had not hesitated to express himself freely at Friday evening's meeting:—

"Ay, they Brother Best, he no more fit for pourin' out the spirit, yon, than a blin' kitten. Look at the chest of en!"

"True for en, Ernie!" cried Brother Tresize.. "They old Devil, yon, he laugh at Best's prayin', sureli. Brother Spence come tuss, you."

But Brother Spence had left the meeting in a state of righteous indignation. Yet here were Brothers Tresize, and Tregastis, and Praetor, and Pearce, and Eddy. True, they all looked grim and unchastened, and there was an uneasy, shifty feeling in the chapel that inspired boys and girls, young men and young women, teachers and choir, with great expectations.

. . . . . .

Brother Best, in his favorite attitude, with one arm behind him under his coat tails, his right hand holding the book a yard from his eyes, his right foot thrust well out, the toe touching the floor daintily, made his first official announcement:—

"We will open they service this mornin' by singing hymn won, nought, won."

Then, in a nasal sing-song, swinging with a long sweep from toe to heel and heel to toe, he gave out the first verse and the chorus, ending unctuously with a smack of the lips at the line:—

Thou beautiful, beautiful Poley Star!

Nehemiah was a dairyman, and had a fixed conviction that the polar star and a poley cow had something in common.

The hymn being sung, the superintendent engaged in prayer, speaking weakly, with a wearisome repetition of stock phrases, eked out with labored groans and random cries.

Brother Tresize could not disguise his cynical disgust, and remained mute. A prayer to be successful among the Wesleyans of Waddy must make the hearers squirm and wriggle upon their knees, and cry aloud. Brothers and sisters were all happy when moved to wild sobbing, to the utterance of moans, and groans, and hysterical appeals to heaven, and when impelled to sustain a sonorous volley by the vigorous use of pocket-handkerchiefs; but that was a spiritual treat that came only once in a while, with the visit of a specialist, or when the spirit moved Brother Spence or Brother Tresize to unusual fervor.

The superintendent's prayer did not raise a single qualm; and the boys of class two straggled openly over the form, pinched each other, and passed such rubbish as they could collect to Dicky Haddon, the pale, saintly, ginger-headed boy at the top of the class, who was in honor bound to drop everything so sent him in among the mysteries of the old, yellow, guttural harmonium through a convenient crack in the back.

Throughout the service Brother Best, proud of his new office, watched the scholars diligently, visiting little boys and girls with sudden sharp raps or twitches of the ear if they dared even to sneeze, but judiciously overlooking much that was injurious and unbecoming in the bigger boys of class two, who had a vicious habit of sullenly kicking elderly shins when cuffed or wigged for their misdeeds.

. . . . . .

The Bible-reading, with wonderful, original expositions of the obscure passages by horny-handed miners, occupied about half-an-hour, and then the superintendent stilled the racket and clatter of stowing away the tattered books with an authoritative hand, and invited Brother Tresize to pray. If he was great, he could be merciful.

Brother Tresize made his preparations with great deliberation, spreading a handkerchief large enough for a bed-cover to save the knees of his sacred black-cloth trousers, hitching up the latter to prevent bagging, and finally loosening his paper collar from the button in front to give free vent to his emotions—and preserve the collar. Then, the rattling of feet, the pushing and shoving, the coughing and whispering and sniffing having subsided, and all being on their knees, Brother Tresize began his prayer in a soft, low, reverent voice that speedily rose to a reverberent roar.

"Oh, Gawd, ah! look down upon we here, ah; let the light of Thy countenance ahluminate, ah, this little corner of Thy vineyard, ah. Oh, Gawd, ah! be merciful to they sinners what be assembled here, ah; pour down Thy speerit upon they, ah, make they whole, ah. Oh, Gawd, ah! Thoo knowest they be some here, ah, that be wallerin' in sin, ah, some that be hippycrits, ah, some that be cheats, ah, some that be scoffers, an' misbelievers, an' heathens, oh, Gawd, ah! Have mercy on they people, oh, Gawd, ah! Show they fires of hell, ah, an' turn they from the wrath, oh, Loord Gawd, ah!"

Brother Tresize was evidently in fine form this morning; already the windows were vibrating before the concussions of his tremendous voice, and the floor bounded under the great blows that punctuated his sentences. As he went on the air became electrical, and the spirit moved among the flock. The women felt it first.

"Oh, Gawd, ah!" interjected Mrs. Eddy from her corner.

"Throw up they windies, an' let the speerit in!" sobbed Mrs. Best.

Brother Praetor blew his nose with a loud report, a touching and helpful manifestation.

Brother Tresize prayed with every atom of energy he possessed. His opinion was on record:

"A good prayer Sunday mornin', you, takes it out of en more'n a hard shift in a hot drive, you."

When his proper momentum was attained, he oscillated to and fro between the floor and the form, swaying back over his heels till his head almost touched the boards—a gymnastic feat that was the envy of all the brethren—he shook his clenched fist at the rafters and reached his highest note The plunge forward was accompanied by falling tones, and ended with a blow on the form that made every article of furniture in the building jump. The perspiration ran in streams down his face and neck; dry sobs broke from his laboring chest; long strands of his moist, well-oiled, red hair separated themselves from the flattened mass and stood out like feelers, to the wild, ungodly delight of class two; and while he prayed the brethren and "sistern" kept up a continuous fire of interjections and heart-rending groans.

"They be people here, ah, what is careless of Thy grace; chasten 'em with fire an' brimstone—chasten 'em, oh Lord, ah! They be those of uz what go to be thy servants, oh Gawd, ah! an' to do thy work here below, ah, what is tried an' found wantin', ah—some do water they milk, oh Gawd, ah! an' some do be misleadin' they neighbors' hens to lay away. Smite they people for thy glory, oh Loord, ah!"

A great moaning filled the chapel, and all heads turned towards Brother Nehemiah Best, kneeling at his chair, with his face buried in his hands, trembling violently. Nehemiah, two years earlier, had been fined for watering the milk sold to his Ballarat customers; quite recently he had been thrown into the Phœnix slurry by an unregenerate trucker, who accused him of beguiling his hens to lay from home. Brother Tresize was wrestling with the superintendent in prayer, and the excitement rose instantly to fever heat.

"They what do not as they wad be done by, pursue 'em, ah, smite they with thy right hand, oh, Lord Gawd, ah! so they may be turned from they wickedness, ah. They what have better food to they table for theyselves than for they children or they wives, ah, they what be filled with vanity, ah, they what havin' no book-learnin' do deceive thy people, an' fill the seats o' the learned, ah, deal with such, oh, Gawd, ah!"

Brother Tresize was now almost frantic with the ecstasy of his zeal. His exhortation was continued in this strain, and every word was a lance to prick the cowering superintendent. The women sniffed and sobbed, the men groaned and cried "Ahmen, ah!" It was a great time for grace.

. . . . . .

But suddenly a new voice broke in—a shrill, thin voice, splitting into that of Brother Tresize like a steam-whistle. Brother Best had assumed the defensive.

"Oh, Lord, ah!" he cried, "give no ear to they what bears false witness against they neighbors, to they what backbite, ah, an' slander, ah, an' bear malice, ah; heed they not, oh, Lord, ah!"

Abel Tresize rose to the occasion. It was a battle. His voice swelled till it rivalled the roar of the ravening lion; he no longer selected his words or cared to make himself

Digitized by Google

understood of the people ; it was necessary only to smother Brother Best, to pray him down, and Abel prayed as no man had ever before prayed at Waddy. A curious crowd—the Irish children, Dan the Drover, an old shepherd, and a few cattlemen from the Red Cow—attracted by the great commotion, had assembled in the porch, and were gazing in open mouthed, delighted.

Tresize persevered, but Best's shrill, penetrating voice rang out distinctly above all. Brother Best was transformed, inspired : under the influence of his great wrath he had waxed eloquent ; he smote his enemy hip and thigh, he heaped coals of fire upon his head, and marshalled St. Peter and all the angels against him.

The severity of his exertions was telling heavily upon Abel Tresize ; he was dreadfully hoarse, his great hands fell upon the form without emphasis, he was almost winded, and his legs wobbled under him. He pulled himself together for another effort, and the cry that he uttered thrilled every heart, but it quite exhausted him, and he went over backwards, striking his head upon the floor, and lay in the aisle convulsed in a fit.

Instantly the chapel became a babel. The teachers ran to Brother Tresize, and bore him into the open air, the wondering children crowding after, and left the new superintendent sobbing on his table like a broken-hearted boy.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* EDWARD DYSON.

THE LATE FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN.

PROFESSOR F. W. NEWMAN, who died on October 4 at his residence, Norwood House, Weston-super-Mare, had far exceeded the usual age of mankind, and had lived to see many of the ideas he had advanced, and some of the most important of the reforms he had advocated, adopted by public opinion. He was the youngest of three remarkable brothers. The eldest, John Henry, is best known, since he became a Catholic, and his talents led to his becoming the most eminent of English cardinals. The second, Charles Robert, was more original, but less ambitious. He became an Atheist. This opened no career. He lost his post as schoolmaster, and lived in retirement. So little was he known that in few of the obituary notices of his brother is he as much as mentioned, and most write as if there were but two brothers, the *Weekly Times and Echo* alone mentioning three. But Charles Robert had the distinction and intellectual power of the family, and his contributions to the *Reasoner*, reprinted as *Essays in Rationalism*, are worthy of being better known.

Francis William was born in London in 1805. His father was a banker of rational views, his mother a pious descendant of the Huguenots. Educated at home, and by Dr. G. Nicholas at Ealing, he went to Oxford in 1822. He took the first honors in classics and mathematics, and in 1826 was elected Fellow of Balliol College, a position he held until 1830. He should then have proceeded to his M.A. degree ; but, as a preliminary to this step, it was then necessary for him to sign the Thirty-nine Articles. Newman had been baptized and confirmed in the Church of England, and had subscribed her Articles at matriculation, and again on taking the B.A. degree. But by this time he had come to doubt the truth of some of the doctrines of those formularies, and, being unable to repeat his subscription, he resigned his fellowship. Striving after a more primitive Christianity, he then went to Bagdad with the object of assisting in a Christian mission ; but his further studies convinced him he could not conscientiously undertake the work. He returned to England, and became classical teacher in Bristol in 1834. In the following year he married a daughter of Sir John Kennaway. In 1846 he was appointed Professor of Latin in the University of London—a position which he occupied for seventeen years.

In 1844 Mr. Newman published *Catholic Union*, being essays towards a church of the future as the organization of philanthropy. In 1847 he wrote *A History of the Hebrew Monarchy*, dealing with Biblical events from a critical standpoint. In *The Soul : Its Sorrows and Aspirations* (1849) he states his Theistic position, and in *Phases of Faith* (1850) he explains how he came to give up Christianity. This work, written in a powerful yet simple style, is comparable to his brother's famous *Apologia*, and shows the development of his own mind from his youthful creed and abandonment of Calvinism to his renunciation of the religion of the letter, and of second-hand faith to his discovery that history and miracle were no part of religion, and that even the moral perfection of Jesus could no longer be maintained.

In politics, also, Newman was an ardent reformer. He wrote on behalf of Hungary and for a united Italy. During the Chartist agitation in '48 he published an "Appeal to the Middle Classes on the Urgent Necessity of Numerous Radical Reforms, Financial and Organic," and within the next three years "Lectures on Political Economy," and others on the "Constitutional and Moral Right or Wrong of our National Debt." He wrote much for the *Westminster, Prospective*, and *Eclectic Reviews*, and contributed to *Fraser's Magazine* and also to the *Reasoner*, at the same time as his brother was writing for it, without his knowledge. To the series of Freethought tracts issued by Thomas Scott he contributed some capital papers against "Hero-Making in Religion," "The Defective Morality of the New Testament," "The Historical Depravation of Christianity," "The Religious Weakness of Protestantism," etc. He also published *Religion not History* (1877) ; *What is Christianity Without Christ?* (1881) ; *Christianity in its Cradle* (1884) ; and a palinode on *Life After Death* (1886). Professor Newman was a thorough humanitarian, and also wrote extensively against vivisection and for temperance and vegetarianism. His was a long and useful life, ever bent on leaving the world better than he found it.

J. M. W.

BOOK CHAT.

MONSIEUR NETTLAU has compiled a *Bibliographie de l'Anarchie*, and certainly contrives to bring a number of great names in his list of Fathers of the Church. From Rabelais to Reclus, and from La Boetie to Bakounin, is a big step. Burke, whose *Vindication of Natural Society* has been taken seriously, finds a place with Paine and Godwin, and Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt with John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. Modern Anarchism, however, properly begins with Proudhon and "Max Stirner" (Kaspar Schmidt), and proceeds in different directions to Kropotkin, Tucker, and Tolstoi. Such names as these should suffice to show how very indeterminate a thing is Anarchism. Nothing but a common aspiration for freedom links together many of the names classed as Anarchists. M. Nettlau's volume will, however, forcibly suggest how indiscriminate is the opinion which takes "Anarchist" as the synonym of "dynamitard."

* * *

Mr. H. G. Keene, in his Reminiscences, relates how Froude told a story of F. D. Maurice and a rich city man, who was inquiring of Maurice what were the doctrines for which he was deprived of the professorship at King's College, London. On receiving the desired information, the alderman exclaimed : "What, no Devil, sir—and no hell ! Then what becomes—give me leave to ask you—of the consolations of Christianity ?'

* * *

Another story in the same book is of Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta. When Dr. MacDougall came to Calcutta to be consecrated to the see of Labuan, he was invited to be an inmate of the palace, and exerted himself the first day so as to amuse the dinner table. When the time for retiring for the night approached, the household knelt round the head in family prayer, and in the course of it the Bishop prayed for his guest as "our young friend who has come among us to take upon him the office and ministry of an apostle. Vouchsafe, O Lord !" he added, "to watch over him ; make him less frivolous, and less prone to giggle upon trifling provocation." Many a sky-pilot has found prayer a capital opportunity for getting in a dig at one's own dislikes.

* * *

Alfred Lord Tennyson : A Memoir, by his son Hallam Lord Tennyson, is the book of the season. The son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, rector of Somersby, near Horncastle, Lincolnshire, descended from the Plantagenets, both aristocracy and orthodoxy were well represented in the influences which moulded the poet's early life. His father was a stern man, and we are told that "more than once Alfred, scared by his father's fits of despondency, went out through the black night and threw himself on a grave in the churchyard, praying to be beneath the sod himself." The time which he spent as a child at school at Louth was not more happy, for he lodged with an aunt who was a rigid Calvinist, and who "would weep for hours because God is so infinitely good"; and at the grammar school of the town he was under the Rev. J. Waite, "a tempestuous flogging master of the old stamp." Yet the poet became a liberalizing influence, and an exponent of "the Higher Pantheism."

* * *

Here is Tennyson's own account of his religious belief : "It is impossible to imagine that the Almighty will ask you what your particular form of creed was ; but the question will rather be, 'Have you been true to yourself, and given in my name a cup of cold water to one of these little ones ?'"

* * *

A century and a half ago Voltaire wrote : "The multiplicity of facts and writings is becoming so great that everything must soon be reduced to extracts." Certainly there is room for a good compilation like that entitled *Modern Thoughts on Religion and Culture*, selected and arranged by H. W. Smith (Williams & Norgate ; 6s.). Here are pithy and telling passages in favor of religious rationalism extracted from the works of modern writers. The list of authors includes M. Arnold, H. H. Bancroft, C. Bray

Digitized by Google

H. T. Buckle, W. K. Clifford, M. D. Conway, E. Clodd, J. Cranbrook, J. B. Crozier, C. Darwin, R. W. Emerson, J. A. Froude, W. R. Greg, Sir H. Helps, P. G. Hamerton, Professor Huxley, S. Laing, R. Le Gallienne, Sir J. Lubbock, Max Müller, J. Martineau, J. S. Mill, J. Morley, Professor F. W. Newman, J. A. Picton, J. Ruskin, S. Smiles, H. Spencer, D. F. Strauss, L. Stephen, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, etc. We understand that extracts would also have appeared from the late J. Cotter Morison's *Service of Man*, but the publishers threw obstacles in the way. This seems very absurd, for the making of such extracts is really an effective way of advertising the merits of the authors quoted. Mr. Smith has certainly made a good collection of most thoughtful passages. Originally designed for his own use, it is calculated to be of service to all free inquirers.

* * *

A companion volume, issued uniform by the same publishers, is *Modern Thoughts on Life and Conduct*, selected and compiled by H. W. Smith. It fully carries out the stated object, "to supply a convenient manual somewhat between a collection of aphorisms and formal essays," designed to bring into prominence the permanent elements which go to make and improve our social life. Choice extracts are given from the most thoughtful modern authors, including those before mentioned, with Carlyle, Lecky, Schopenhauer, and others. The quotations are arranged under appropriate headings, and should aid to make many acquainted with the best thoughts of the best minds. Such a work should be suitable to Ethical Societies, and those who would replace dogmatic teaching by moral instruction.

* * *

The *Agnostic Annual* for 1898 has certainly a fine list of contributors. Giving *place aux dames*, it opens with a paper on "The Progress of Liberal Thought," by C. E. Plumptre. Professor Goldwin Smith follows on "Liberal Orthodoxy," and congratulates himself that rampant and aggressive Atheism has gone entirely out of fashion in England. Leslie Stephen writes with brilliancy and shrewdness on "The Will to Believe." Mr. E. Clodd has a good paper dealing with "Dean Farrar on the Bible." He happily says: "Lord Chesterfield wrote to a friend: 'Both Shaftesbury and I have been dead some years; but we don't wish the fact to be generally known.' It would seem that theologians of the school under review desire to invest with like obscurity the fact of the old claims on behalf of the Bible as a revelation." Other papers are contributed by J. McCabe, C. Watts, W. S. Ross, C. E. Hooper, F. Jordan, and A. Waters. There is also a rather barren discussion between M. Cecil and F. J. Gould on "Is Progress an Illusion?"

* * *

In his memoir of the *Early History of Cardinal Newman* the late Professor Newman mentions an anecdote current in Oxford of a fellow convert, who, rubbing his hands with glee, says: "Dear, dear, Mr. Newman, when shall we begin to persecute?" Mr. Newman playfully rubs his hands in imitation, and replies: "My dear fellow, as soon as we are able."

* * *

A good story is told of a critic who tore out the letterpress of the *Phases of Faith* by F. W. Newman, and bound it with J. H. Newman's *Apology* in an old cover of a book by J. C. and A. Hare, entitled *Guesses at Truth, by Two Brothers. The Essays on Rationalism*, by C. R. Newman, was then unknown.

* * *

The Humanitarian League publish, through W. Reeves, 185 Fleet-street, a shilling volume of *Humanitarian Essays*, the contents being: "The Sweating System," by Maurice Adams; "The Gallows and the Lash," by H. B. Bonner; "The Shadow of the Sword," by G. W. Foote; "Public Control of Hospitals," by H. Roberts; "What it Costs to be Vaccinated," by J. Collinson; "The Humanities of Diet," and "An Appeal to Teachers," by H. S. Salt. The volume is well got up, and the contents are admirably adapted to forward the program of humane reform which the League is intent on carrying out. We hope it will have the large circulation it deserves.

Numberless altars have been reddened, even with the blood of babes; beautiful girls have been given to slimy serpents, whole races of men doomed to centuries of slavery, and everywhere there has been outrage beyond the powers of genius to express. During all these years the suffering have supplicated; the withered lips of famine have prayed; the pale victims have implored, and heaven has been deaf and blind.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

Whatever mitigates the woes or increases the happiness of others is a just criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, is a criterion of iniquity. One should not quarrel with a dog without a reason sufficient to vindicate one through all the courts of morality.—*Goldsmith.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

TREES ON GRAVES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Trees growing on graves, such as those referred to in last week's "Acid Drops," probably owe their existence to a very poetic and touching sentiment, and the practice arising therefrom. In Germany, Switzerland, and possibly other countries, the chief mourner will bring with him to the funeral seeds of flowers, shrubs, or trees, and, when the coffin has been lowered and covered with earth, insert these seeds into the ground, pronouncing at the same time some such formula as this: "Send down your roots and draw up again for me the blood of her beloved heart"; and the sower of the seed will annually visit the grave to watch the growth of the plant. C. W. HECKETHORN.

PROFANE JOKES.

RAGGED One (reading daily paper)—"A Melbourne watchman drowned in a vat of beer——" Boozy One (dreamily)—"O, Death, where is thy sting!"

A little girl who had told a lie was escorted to her bedroom by her mother and told to ask God to forgive her for her sin. This is what the listening mother heard: "O God, I thought you could take a joke."

Della Ware—"Do you believe in the biblical admonition of giving a kiss for a blow, Mr. Westside?' Mr. Westside—"Well—er—that depends, Miss Ware. How hard are you going to strike me?"

Jones—"What's that noise in the next room, Maria?" Maria—"Why, that's little Willie singing 'I want to be an angel!'" Jones—"Humph! you had better see what he's up to."

"Stole any chickens this week, Brudder Jones?" asked the searching class leader of a weak-kneed brother. "No, sah, t'ank de Lord," was the reply. "You'se done well," said the leader, and passed on. Brudder Jones turned to his classmate and whispered: "Lucky he said chickens. If he'd 'a' said ducks he'd 'a' had me shuah."

The Earth was lifeless. The Race of Man was dead. The Resurrection and the Day of Judgment were yet to come. The Lord Almighty and the Angel Gabriel, who had his trumpet tucked under his wing, were taking a final stroll over the played-out planet. They came across a stately monument bearing the inscription:—

IN MEMORY
OF
MANKIND.
ERECTED BY THE LAST SURVIVORS OF THE RACE.
Requiescat in Pace!

"Poor devils!" said the Lord, "I'll take them at their word You may put up your trumpet, Gabriel! There will be no Resurrection."

Sonnet:

FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN'S SAKE.

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell."—MARK ix. 43.

"In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage."—MATTHEW xxiii. 30.

Whole will I enter Heaven, or not at all;
I'll keep my hands, though I should fail of wings.
Is Heaven a place of maimed and sexless things,
Whose chiefest glory is—they cannot "fall"?
No; men and women, strong, majestical,
Full-facultied and free, shall taste the springs
Of life supreme—the larger life that brings
The higher joy, the mind more rational.

Maimed manhood, by the harsh Mosaic law,
Might not God's earthly dwelling-place go in:
How, then, shall such in peerless glory dwell?
Must fleshly pruning cure the spirit's flaw?
Then, rather than a Heaven of cripples win,
I'll go, full-membered, cheerfully to hell!

—*Sydney Bulletin.* J. LIDDELL KELLY.

It is lamentable to notice how little is being, or has been, officially done towards preserving a full record of the habits, beliefs, arts, myths, languages, and physical characteristics of the countless other tribes and nations more or less uncivilized, which are comprised within the limits of the British Empire.—*Sir John Evans.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "In Abraham's Bosom."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road. Ball's Pond): 7.15, R. Forder, "The School Board and the Bible." October 19, at 8.30, Grand Ballad and Operatic Concert. Programmes 3d. each.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "Brain and Soul."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road, E.): 8, H. Silverstein, "A Review of Christianity."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, G. Spiller, "Ethics."

NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Dartmouth Park Lodge, N.W.): 7, F. J. Gould, "What is Labor?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Class Distinctions in England.—(3) The Great Middle Class."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Middle Class."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.

EDMONTON (Angel-road): 7, Debate between Messrs. Ramsey and Boyde.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Reeves.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, R. P. Edwards

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 8.15, A lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner—11, "School-taught Morality"; 7, "Some Plain Words about India." October 18 and 19, C. Watts, at 8 each evening: 18, "Atheism and the French Revolution"; 19, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. Heaford, "Is Christianity the Safe Side?"

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—T. Macleish, "Atheism or Agnosticism—Which?" 6.30, P. McGivern, "Was Jesus a Myth?"

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trades' Hall, Northumberland-street): C. Watts—3, "Why I am not a Christian"; 6.45, "The Triumph of Reason over Faith."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, J. Sketchley (Socialist), "Some Tendencies of Modern Thought."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. R. Washington Sullivan, "The Poem of Job."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, S. Reeves, "The State in Relation to Education."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist"; 3, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?" 6.30, "What will you give us in Place of Christianity?—A Secularist's Answer."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Stanley Jones—11, "Christianity and Other Religions"; 3, "Lord Salisbury and Evolution"; 7, "Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, Politician and Philosopher." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-alley): 7, H. Snell, Lantern lecture, "Athens and Greek Civilization."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, An Address.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 17, Manchester. 24, m., Westminster; a., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—October 17, m., Camberwell; e., Camberwell Hall.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—October 17, m., Camberwell Radical Club; e., Wood Green. 24, m., Mile End. 31, m., Limehouse; e., Ball's Pond. 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

WANTED, efficient GENERAL SERVANT, for small house. Four in family, including two children (eight and nine years); good wages, according to abilities; comfortable home.—Apply Mrs. H., 8 Atterbury-road, Finsbury Park, N.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

"Its views are clearly and moderately stated, and all who are interested in sex problems should not fail to peruse its pages."—*Clarion.*

"The most outspoken serial on this or any other planet."—*Agnostic Journal.*

Twopence, Monthly.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, W.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 22, and Dr Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Ch well-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Important Contributions by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Edward Clodd.

Now ready, price 6d., by post 7½d.,

THE

AGNOSTIC ANNUAL

FOR 1898.

Edited by Charles A. Watts.

The Progress of Liberal Thought	C. E. PLUMPTRE
Liberal Orthodoxy	PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH
The Will to Believe	LESLIE STEPHEN
The Sources of Modern Doubt	JOSEPH MCCABE
The Illusion of Progress	MORTIMER CECIL
Is Progress an Illusion?—A Reply	F. J. GOULD
Dr. Farrar on the Bible	EDWARD CLODD
Immortality in the Light of Evolution	CHARLES WATTS
"In a Strait Betwixt Two"	W. STEWART ROSS
The Gods	CHARLES E. HOOPER
Is a Moral Interregnum Possible?	F. JORDAN, F.R.O.S.
Agnosticism in the Broad Church	AMOS WATERS

London: WATTS & Co., 17 Johnson's court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price 2½d., by post 3d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE OCTOBER NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Scientific Criticism: Mr. J. M. Robertson's New Book.
A Singular Singer: M. O. O'Byrne.
The Youngest of Sciences: The New Psychology.
Crystal and Other Visions: Andrew Lang's "Ghosts."
Heresy in Fiction.
Did Mark Follow Matthew?
Goethe's Great Thoughts.
Prof. Goldwin Smith Interviewed: The Progress of Agnosticism.
Literary Shrines and Pilgrimages. 1.—The Grave of Mary Chaworth.
The Study of Darwin: A Concise Guide to Darwinology.

Also a 4 pp. Supplement, containing a review and criticism, by Mr. F. J. Gould, of Dean Farrar's recent Work on *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation tory 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series,* 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'welp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Acts of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart." —*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

ANOTHER REDUCTION.

Our stock of Ladies' Mackintoshes are now reduced to 230 Garments, latest style, mostly Browns and Greys, and lengths from 50 inches to 60 inches to fit only all 36-inch bust. CLEARING PRICE, ~~10s. 6d. each.~~

With each Mackintosh we send free of cost 1 Copy of G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* (2s. 6d.).

LOT 11

1 Pair All Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Sheets.
1 Quilt.
1 Tablecloth.

21s. CARRIAGE PAID.

With every parcel of **Lot 11** we enclose John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People* handsomely bound, with Portrait of the Author in each.

This offer is only open till October 31, 1897.



Heavy Irish Frieze Overcoats.

25s. each.
30s. ,,
35s. ,,

Send for Patterns.

AGENTS

WANTED EVERYWHERE.

WORKING MEN,

INCREASE YOUR EARNINGS.

Terms on application.

Ladies' Dresses, Costumes, or Jackets

To Measure

21s. each.

Patterns and Self-Measurement Forms free to any Address.

NEW WINTER PATTERNS

NOW READY, SENT TO ANY ADDRESS POST FREE.

All kinds of Clothing and Heavy Drapery; any Length cut, or Garments made to measure.

All Goods supplied Direct from the Warehouse.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 43. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

IN GOD'S HANDS.

MAIDSTONE has been harried by an epidemic of typhoid fever, which is happily abating, although the town is far from being out of danger. Nobody seems to know the precise cause of the mischief, but every one who is not an absolutely brainless Christian is perfectly certain that there has been some neglect of the material conditions of health. Perhaps the most curious thing about it is that the Town Council and the Churches are a good deal in opposition to each other. The city fathers suggest that the clergy have been remiss in obtaining the help of God Almighty, while the clergy suggest that the city fathers have been remiss in attending to the drainage, the water supply, and other elements of sanitation. By this time, however, the spiritual and temporal authorities have settled down more or less amicably together, and by means of prayer and disinfectants they are waging a fairly successful war against the typhoid bacillus.

While the town is struggling to recover its normal condition it is the recipient of many messages of sympathy. One of them comes from the high and mighty Lord Archbishop of Canterbury. His Grace has sent the following letter, which was publicly read by Canon Joy from the pulpit of All Saints' Church last Sunday:—

> "Will you, in whatever way you may think most satisfactory, convey to the people of Maidstone my deep sympathy with them in their present severe trouble? At such a time we are all in God's hands, and the one great support of our courage is reliance on His unfailing love. 'Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?' are His tender words, and even the sparrows are not beneath his care. His life overshadows even when death is standing at every door, and when we cannot see any token of his tenderness, yet that tenderness does not fail. May the Lord soften our hearts by the work of His Holy Spirit, and make us cast our care on him.—Yours faithfully in Christ, F. CANTAUR."

The first observation we have to make on this precious letter is a personal one. Maidstone, we believe, is in the diocese of Canterbury; but in the day of its distress the Archbishop keeps at a respectful distance. He does not visit the town himself, to console the sick and administer consolation to the dying. He prefers to send a little cheap sympathy by the post. It would be a dreadful thing to run the risk of catching typhoid fever, of going to heaven prematurely, and of leaving that fifteen thousand a year behind.

We are all in God's hands, the Archbishop says. Yes, but he likes to keep as near the edge as possible. To get within the clasp of the thumb and fingers is a tax on the most submissive piety.

Let us look into this expression about our being "in God's hands." It is at "such a time" that we are in this position; that is to say, in a time of "severe trouble." The Archbishop does not say in whose hands we are on other occasions, whether in the Devil's or in our own. One would think that we were always in God's hands, if he is an infinite being. How can we escape from Omnipotence, or evade the attention of Omniscience? Perhaps the Archbishop, like many other Christians, remembers the inspired text that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. When people are safe and sound, happy and prosperous, they are apt to be worldly; but when they are in misery and adversity they begin to be religious. In the sunlight they laugh; in the darkness they pray. When mischief is about they soon see "the finger of God."

Curiously enough, the Archbishop turns right about face in the very next sentence. The one great support of our courage, he says, is reliance on God's unfailing love. But if the Deity is to be introduced in the matter, one is justified in asking why he sent typhoid fever to Maidstone at all; or why, if it got there without his direct orders, he did not banish it as soon as he was aware of its ravages. To let the doctors and the sanitary engineers fight it, and the clergy pray against it, while hundreds sicken and many perish, seems a strange exhibition of divine providence. On the whole, we believe the people of Maidstone would rather see the fever depart than receive such holy consolation as the Archbishop forwards them through the Post Office department. Their "courage" will rise to its normal level when the town resumes its wonted condition.

His Grace's reference to "sparrows" is extremely ill-advised. Jesus Christ's words about these little feathered bipeds may be very "tender," but they are not very scientific. Sparrows, like other birds, die wholesale in hard weather; and even in the migration of birds, which used to be given as an instance of providential instinct, we now know that there is a most terrible slaughter, myriads falling by the way or being dashed against obstacles to their flight. If the Deity cares for us as he cares for the sparrows, there is no occasion for many thanksgiving services.

Even the Archbishop is not exactly jubilant over God's "unfailing love." His letter is rather funereal. Faith protests somewhat feebly against the suggestions of Reason. She tries to look assured, but her eyes are moist, and her mouth trembles. God's tenderness "does not fail," but oh that he would show it more convincingly!

We have now a very straight question to ask the Archbishop, though we do not expect he will give us an answer. If we are all in God's hands, and if the recognition of this fact is the one great support of our courage in times of sickness, what is the matter with the Peculiar People? These sincere superstitionists quote New Testament texts precisely like the Archbishop of Canterbury. Moreover, they believe in those texts up to the point of acting upon them. For doing so they are committed for trial on the charge of manslaughter. Yet the Archbishop does not say a single word in their favor. He leaves them to their fate. Does it not seem, therefore, that his talk about Providence, in this letter to the afflicted town of Maidstone, is mere professional cant? The poor Peculiar People stake their own lives, and the lives of their children, on the truth of the doctrine of Providence; while the rich Archbishop would not stake the life of his own pet dog or of his wife's favorite cat.

Finally, we have to note the unction of the Archbishop's concluding hope that the Lord will "soften our hearts." He does not appear to have softened that organ in His Grace's anatomy. It is the Archbishop's head that seems most affected. Many a Christian fancies his heart is softening when his brain is growing pappy. In spiritual as in medical science, the greatest difficulty is diagnosis. Certainly there must be something wrong in the Archbishop's upper storey when he chooses a time like this to prate about casting our care on the Lord. It is obvious that the Lord does not accept the transfer. Maidstone will have to cast its care on Science.

G. W. FOOTE.

Digitized by Google

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.*

JUDAISM being the Asiatic religion which has had most influence on the rest of the world, the chapters given to this subject by Major-General Forlong are the most important in the volume. One is devoted to "The Elohim of the Hebrews," and another to "The Jehovah of the Hebrews." Much time and attention are given to these names and their cognates. Elohim is derived from Al, "the Spirit High and Strong One," who dwelt in sacred trees, fire, lofty hills like Sinai, etc. Such deities are common throughout Asia, and their usual symbols are rude monoliths, men-hirs (or "man-stones"), pillars, robust tree stems, like the pine or rubor oak, the *Alun*, also called in Hebrew the stout and strong Al or Ol—"The High One." How suggestive, too, is it to read that אֵל, translated God 272 times in the Old Testament, is to be identified with אַיִל, a ram, and with אֵלָן, a robust tree. Elohim, translated God many hundreds of times in the Old Testament, is, of course, a plural, indicating that the monotheism of the Jews, as that of every other nation, began in polytheism. It has the signification of gods, spirits, oaks, rams, strong or great ones, lords of creation, kings, and judges. Our author very properly differentiates names which are translated as "God" in the Bible. Elohim dwelt not only in trees, fire, and arks, but in wells, priestly garments, ephods, urim, thamim, and such-like charms as the teraphim, which Rachel hid under her "camel saddle." Hosea thought it terrible to be without teraphim and ephods (iii. 4), so these existed in the temple along with the brazen serpent and other solar and lunar symbolisms, like the sacred pillars, Jachin and Boaz, and the *Od-uth*, or little stone symbols in the innermost adytum of the Ark. So we find these commonly in Eastern temples, and before them placed rice, fruit, and flowers, as Moses told Aaron to put manna before his *Od-uth* (Exodus xvi. 34).

The Elohim, Major-General Forlong points out, are partial, hating, loving, and jealous—features common to most early gods; for, says our author, "fear has always been man's first god, and whoso feared not had no gods, and was therefore called without religion." From the song of Hannah and the story of the Witch of Endor we learn that the Elohim existed not only in earth and skies, but in *Sheol* (the grave or pit), where they dwelt quietly with the dead, and did not like to be disturbed. In this section our author goes into the symbols of the Ashera, mistranslated "groves" in our Authorized Version. He finds that Israel, or rather Ishr-āl, is a Hebraized form of the Ashr-al or Ashrim divinities. Readers of my *Bible Studies* know how these were connected with a phallic cult, of which there were clear traces among the Jews. Into this subject our author has gone very fully in his *Rivers of Life*, some of the many illustrations in which are here reprinted. He enters into the various forms of the word found in the Bible. *Ashr* and *Asherè* are in the Old Testament translated "groves" thirty-nine times, but *Ashl*, "a tree," occurs only twice, and is also so translated—see Genesis xxi. 33, where Abram plants an *Ashl* when he wanted to worship "Yahue, the Eternal, by the well of the oath." The second *Ashl* is also clearly "a tree," under which Saul sat at Ramah (see 1 Samuel xxii. 6). Not only Elohists, "but all Syrians and Arabians, were great *Ashl*- or tree-worshippers, as personal and local names show; nor till about 625 B.C. was any real attempt made by Hebrews to ignore Ashls, Ashrs, and Asheras, and this then hastened the fall of the monarchy."

The worship of Jah, Yahve, or Jehovah, our author traces back to the Akkadian Ea. The Hittite connection is seen in such texts as 2 Samuel viii. 10, and throughout 2 Kings viii., where Juram ("Jah has created") is the Hittite name of the son of Toi, King of Hamath. The proof that the Hebrew gods were in no way distinguished from the gods of the nations around is indeed abundant, and fully pointed out in these studies. The author holds that Judaism, as a distinct religion, only arose when Hebrews were in the grip of Assyria during the eighth and seventh centuries.

One point brought out very clearly is that all the gods are but evolutions. We can but trace them like words and ideas through the ages. The use of such terms as "God," "Lord," etc., in the Bible completely veils the early meanings, which are traced and elucidated in this volume. Of Yahve our author says: "He was anything but an immaculate God—indeed, partook of many of the frailties of Zeus, Jove, and Indra. He was 'cheered' with wine, and took his share of the captive Midian maidens—say the mites of Joshua and Numbers. At Nebo he was a Baal, symbolized and worshipped in Baal Phegors (lingams), trees, stones, sun, etc. The early Gnostic Christian looked back on him as on a devil."

Major-General Forlong remarks:—

> "Throughout the early centuries of Christianity many learned Christians taught, and thousands believed, that 'Jehovah was an evil spirit and the author of the Old Testament'; that he had an angel son Lucifer, who led astray many angels whom he imprisoned in human bodies, and that Christ was another angel who visited earth to redeem them. These beliefs were largely held and taught by southern and eastern Christians down to the Crusades, and by pious and often evangelical sects. From early Gnostics they passed to Paulicians of the sixth century; and north to the cruelly persecuted Albigenses, and like sects, who continued the so-called dual doctrine of the antagonism of evil and good from all eternity—teaching which Christians would obtain from Zoroastrians. Thus Yahve has not escaped the universal law of all existences; birth, life, and old age, if not yet death; and, after a close, calm, unbiassed study of the Hebrew God-idea, we wonder not that religious men gradually framed a new God and found him in a good and pious 'Son of man.'"

Major-General Forlong's next article deals with the "Sacred Books of the West in their Chronological and Historical Aspects." This is sufficiently important to deserve a separate notice. J. M. WHEELER.

* *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions.* By Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, author of *Rivers of Life*. (London: Quaritch, Piccadilly; 1897.)

CHRIST-LIKE FALLACIES.

THE person of Christ as delineated in the New Testament is surrounded by fallacies as great and as palpable as ever deceived the credulous and unsuspecting mind. We certainly have no sympathy with the idea which appears to be more general among a certain class than its members would like to acknowledge—namely, that a belief which is not exactly true, and founded on certitude, should be retained in the interests of the masses. This is too much like the policy adopted by a section of the early Christians, who deemed lying and deceit to be virtues if indulged in for pious purposes. Even St. Paul seems to have justified such questionable conduct, for he exclaims: "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Romans iii. 7). According to Secular ethics, that belief only which is calculated to satisfy the requirements of the most rigid inquirer is at all fit to be inculcated among the general mass of mankind. To teach a falsehood is to endanger truth, imperil the world's welfare, and impede its amelioration. To practise falsehood is a serious danger to the well-being of a community, for it tends to destroy that confidence between its members which is so necessary to build up the stability of the commonwealth. Laplace wisely observes: "Truth and justice are the immutable laws of social order. Far from us be the dangerous maxim, that it is sometimes useful to mislead, to enslave, and to deceive mankind, to ensure their happiness." Equally correct was Bacon when he said: "Truth which doth only judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth is the love-making or wooing of it; the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it; and the belief of truth, which is the enjoyment of it; is the sovereign good of human nature."

The fallacy of all theological religions has been proved by their incompatibility with human needs, and their failure to regenerate society. The Paganism of Greece could not keep the people moral, nor preserve them from falling into decay. The many gods in Rome did not prevent the people becoming victims to the curse of Cæsarian despotism. The Ten Commandments ascribed to Moses could not restrain the evil inclinations of the Hebrews; and Christ and the Gospels have failed utterly to effect the moral redemption of Europe. The strife, vice, crime, and misery by which we are surrounded are truly appalling. Such a horrible condition of things is a

Digitized by Google

national disgrace. We may well exclaim: If the Savior has come, "whence comes salvation?" With the theologies of the past we have now but little concern, except by way of comparison; but the theology of the present, with all its fallacies and power for mischief, still claims our attention. True, to a large extent it has become a "creed outworn," yet there remains enough of the evil to justify us in exposing its fallacies with the view of endeavoring to prevent its further contaminating the minds of the weak and the unwary. Some may point to our high degree of civilization, to our respect for law, to our morality, to our dominion over the non-Christian races, and they may affirm that "the Bible is the source of our greatness"; but the truth is, we owe what civilization we have to those dauntless pioneers who have at their own risk and cost resisted the "powers that be," in spite of St. Paul's threat that they shall "receive to themselves damnation"; and also to those practical scientists who have, figuratively speaking, bridged oceans, spanned rivers, and annihilated the restrictions of time and distance. As to morality, we are indebted for that to the ever-developing nature of man; and the decay of supernatural religion is shown by the fact that, in proportion as the "divine" hypothesis of existence is discredited and set aside, so does the general morality (in its truest sense) of the world increase and improve.

If it be true that whatever is built upon a mistake must be a mistake also, then Christianity is a most fallacious system. Christ is regarded as being the founder of the Christian faith, and but few men, if any, are associated in their lives and teachings with more errors than he is. According to portions of the Gospels, Christ evidently thought that he was a Divine Being. He professed to be the judge of all mankind, and to possess a knowledge as to the time when he would reappear and "reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). He also said: "I am the light of the world" (John viii. 12). Of course there are many other instances recorded in the Gospels wherein it is manifested that Christ was fallacious in his statements; but these three will suffice for the purpose of showing that Christianity is based upon a mistake. The doctrine of the Trinity rests upon the supposition that Christ was a part of the Godhead, and Jesus himself says: "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30); also, "All things are delivered to me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). It is true there are numerous passages in the Gospels which contradict the deity of Christ. For instance, he says: "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28). "The Son can do nothing of himself" (John v. 19). There is ample evidence in the New Testament to justify us in believing that Christ claimed to be equal with God; and in the same book ample proof is furnished to indicate that his claim was fallacious. He was subject to hunger, anger, and reckless passion; he lacked power, wisdom, and a general knowledge of science, philosophy, and an acquaintance with the daily requirements of human life. He therefore lacked those characteristics which are supposed to belong to a Divine or Supreme Being.

Equally fallacious was his declaration, "I am the light of the world." How could he be "the Light of the world" when up to the present date two-thirds of its inhabitants have not heard of him? Taking the earth's population to be 1,500,000,000, only one-fourth are even nominal Christians, and this number is made up by counting the whole population of a country as Christians where the Christian faith is professed. In such a calculation Agnostics, Secularists, Atheists, Deists, Positivists, etc., are all classed as "Christians." But even where Christ has been heard of, where was "light" introduced? Not upon morals; for they existed before his advent, and he failed to teach anything new of an ethical character. Not upon God and immortality; for we are told that the ancient beliefs upon these subjects "were as pure, as exalted, and as free from superstitious mixture" as those professed by "any people or any age." Not upon the secret of a nation's progress; for general advancement was comparatively unknown until the light of science and education illumined the human mind. Not upon the means of establishing "peace and goodwill" among mankind; for during the Christian era "wars and rumors of war" have devastated the world, and provoked the exercise of the worst passions of human nature. No, this assumption of Christ's that he was "the Light" has proved to be a palpable fallacy.

He was equally in error in his announcements as to his immediate second coming. In Matt. xvi. 28; xxiii. 36, 39; xxiv. 34; Mark ix. 1; Luke ix. 27; xi. 32, his speedy return to earth was plainly indicated. Jesus himself is alleged to have said: "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This time has shown to have been a delusion. Now, if the Master committed so many mistakes, it is not altogether surprising that his emotional followers should also have indulged in Christ-like fallacies. That they did so we hope to demonstrate in our next article.

CHARLES WATTS.

(*To be concluded.*)

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

X.—THE GREAT COMMANDMENT.

IN the three Synoptical Gospels we find recorded an incident consisting chiefly of a question and an answer respecting the "great" commandment of the law, which incident may be taken as a fair sample of the wisdom ascribed to Jesus, and also as a specimen of what the original Gospel writer considered a smart reply.

1. Matthew's account (xxii. 35-39):—

> "And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, saying, Master, *which is the great commandment in the law?* And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets."

Here a "lawyer"—that is, a teacher and interpreter of the Mosaic law—is represented as asking Jesus which was the great, or the greatest, commandment in the decalogue (or, possibly, the greatest of the commands attributed to Moses), and receives the evasive answer that he is to love God with heart, soul, and mind. This, it is scarcely necessary to say, was not a reply to the question at all. There cannot be a doubt that the breaking of some of the commandments would produce more evil results, and would evince more depravity of character on the part of the breaker, than some of the others; as, for instance, murder as compared with theft or with simply coveting other men's goods. That all the commandments were equal in the sight of Jehovah is disproved by scores of passages in the Old Testament. Anyone who reads that collection of books will not be long in seeing that the commandment which was of the most importance in the eyes of the Jewish Deity was the First—"Thou shalt have none other gods besides me"—and that for the infraction of this command the Israelites were most often punished, or were so represented by the sacred writers.

Supposing the incident to be historical, here was a grand opportunity for Jesus to give a sample of the divine wisdom which many believe him to have possessed. Instead of doing so, he evades a straightforward reply, and states what was considered man's duty to God and his neighbor.

2. Mark's account (xii. 28-31):—

> "And one of the *scribes* came, and.....asked him, *What commandment is the first of all?* Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."

Here we see that Matthew and Mark have adhered fairly closely to the original narrative, though in the latter account it is a "scribe" who asked the question. Both evangelists represent Christ as epitomizing the ten commandments, and showing that they might be reduced to two; but neither of them states, nor even implies, that Jesus merely repeated the following well-known passages in the Old Testament:—

> "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one;

Digitized by Google

and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 4, 5).

"Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*" (Lev. xix. 18).

These passages were, of course, known to every Jewish rabbi and scribe of Christ's time, and this fact is a clear indication that the anecdote is a fabrication. According to the Gospel accounts, Jesus, by his reply, effectually silenced his questioner, and "no man after that durst ask him any questions." But there cannot be a doubt that, had Christ quoted the two foregoing passages as an answer to the query, Which was the greatest of the commandments? such an absurd and irrelevant reply would not have been allowed to pass unchallenged. Jesus was not asked what two passages of Scripture might be said to contain a summary of the Moral law; the lawyers and scribes knew these passages perfectly well themselves. They required an answer to a totally different question. Hence, Christ's evasive reply would certainly not have been received as an oracle; it would, more probably, be greeted with shouts of laughter. To say, then, that because Jesus, by his reply, demonstrated his inability to answer a question addressed to him, therefore the most learned among the Jews were, for that reason, afraid to ask him any more questions, is an absurdity that could emanate only from the addled brain of a Christian Gospel-monger.

3. Luke's account (x. 25-28):—

"And behold a certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* And he said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

In this version, it will be observed, the lawyer asked, not which was the greatest of the commandments, but what he was to do to obtain "eternal life"—matters as wide asunder as the poles. Jesus, for answer, demanded what was required by the law of Moses. To this the lawyer replied that one should love God with heart, soul, strength, and mind, and should also love one's neighbor as one's self. Christ, hearing this reply, said he had answered rightly; if he did these things, he should "live." The very wide difference between this doctrine and that of salvation by faith only, as taught by Paul and the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, needs scarcely to be stated. Setting aside this small matter—for that Christ should recommend different methods of getting to heaven at different times is not at all extraordinary; many people suffer from an occasional lapse of memory—it will be sufficient to note that, according to Matthew and Mark, one question was asked, and, according to Luke, another; also that, according to the first two evangelists, Jesus himself named the two new commandments, while, according to the Third evangelist, it was the lawyer who did so. Those who can believe, without a scrap of evidence, that Jesus said and taught all that is put in his mouth in the Gospels must be left to choose between these two conflicting accounts; but, as a mere matter of probability, neither of them appears to be deserving of the smallest credit. In both we see but an older anecdote in a new dress.

No reconciliation of these two divergent accounts is, of course, possible; and, this being the case, Christian commentators and reconcilers have but one means of harmonizing them—viz., by asserting that Luke's version refers to a second and similar incident. We are thus asked to believe that there were two occasions on which the two great commandments were quoted in public—once by Jesus, and once by a lawyer. Now, if it could be shown that the three Synoptical Gospels were independent histories, this might, perhaps, be admitted; but since it can be proved that nearly the whole of the Second Gospel and about three-fourths of the other two were compiled from older written narratives, the case is altered. If there were two incidents in which the duty to God and to one's neighbor figured, then how comes it that Matthew and Mark, who each made selections from copies of the same documents as those used by Luke, appear never to have seen the second? And how comes it, also, that Luke, with the same Gospel narratives before him, seems never to have seen the first?

When we compare the three Synoptical accounts we find that four questions were represented as asked in succession. These are: (1) The Pharisees' question concerning the giving tribute to Cæsar; (2) the Sadducees' question respecting a woman's seven husbands in the next life; (3) a lawyer's question as to which was the great commandment; and (4) a question by Jesus relative to "David's Lord." These are recorded as follows:—

	Matt.	Mark	Luke
The Pharisees' question	xxii. 15	xii. 13	xx. 21
The Sadducees' question	xxii. 23	xii. 18	xx. 27
The lawyer's question	xxii. 34	xii. 28	——
Christ's question	xxii. 41	xii. 35	xx. 41

It will be seen from the foregoing that Luke has omitted to give the lawyer's question in the place where it evidently appeared in the primitive Gospel. Also, there can be little doubt that the four incidents were given together in the copies used by all three Synoptists. This being the case, we must look for the third anecdote in another part of Luke's Gospel, and we find it in chapter x.—the paragraph we are now discussing. That the Third evangelist has recast and re-written the incident does not affect the matter; he has done the same in his versions of the Call of Peter and the Supper at Bethany. One matter at least is clear from Luke's recasting of these three incidents. This is, that the anecdotes related of Christ could not have been regarded, in that compiler's day, as undoubted historical occurrences which no Christian writer was at liberty to alter. And this view is confirmed by Luke's reference to other existing Gospels—"Forasmuch as *many* have taken in hand to draw up a narrative," etc.—as well as by the number of lying stories in the Gospels which are now called apocryphal. Abracadabra.

THE NEW "LOGIA" AND THE NEW TESTAMENT.

(Concluded from page 661.)

Let us see how these "sayings" affect the question of the Christ of the Gospels as an historic portraiture. Although in some two or three of these *logia* we catch an echo of those given in the Gospels, yet there are others which have caused our Christian friends to contemplate them with eyes wide open with astonishment and misgiving. The second *logion* runs: "Except ye fast ye shall in no wise find the kingdom of God, and except ye keep the *Sabbath* ye shall not see the Father"; and the fifth of the series: "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." It is around these two *logia* that controversy has for the most part centred. In regard to the first, it has been recognised that, taken as it stands, the solemn obligation it imposes of keeping the Sabbath is quite out of keeping with the latitudinarian teaching and practice of the New Testament Jesus; and the second of the couplet is so distinctly Pantheistic that to conceive of Christ having uttered it would involve a complete change of notion on the part of the Christian on the subject of a personal God. But to suppose that these two sayings would be allowed to stand with their obvious meaning unchallenged would be to fail to reckon with the peculiar faculty of Christian apologists of reconciling the irreconcilable. Thus we have the Rev. H. R. Haweis bravely sailing into the task of demonstrating that the spirit at least, if not the letter, of these Logia is perfectly in harmony with the portrait of Christ as limned in the Canonical Gospels.

Of course Mr. Haweis takes it for granted that these "sayings" did actually emanate from an historical personage known as Jesus Christ, and his method is to take any *logion* which wears on the face of it an aspect of Hebraic severity and Judaistic bias, and, interpreting it in terms of a liberal and easy-going Hellenism, to convert an apparent disparity into an actual consistency with canonical utterances. In a sermon which Mr. Haweis delivered on September 12 he speaks as follows of the Sabbath *logion*: "He (Christ) meant 'Unless you assemble yourselves together; unless you are alone with your Father, although you are in contact with others, you shall not have the quiet heart, the celestial vision, the peace which passeth all understanding. Therefore I say unto you, so far from neglecting the things of religion, so far from holding aloof from

Digitized by Google

holy seasons, the House of Prayer, and the means of Grace; so far from neglecting these things, I say, unless you keep the Sabbath ye shall not see the Father.'" But this kind of verbal jugglery won't do. What we want to know is, whether the saying, ".....except ye keep the Sabbath ye shall not see the Father," had reference to the particular day instituted by Moses—that is, the seventh day? Assuming that there actually was a Jesus who uttered these words, then his hearers, being mostly Jews, would undoubtedly have understood him to have been referring to *their* Sabbath, and so would have found no difficulty in acting upon his instructions. But then the Christian Church has abolished the Sabbath day of Moses, and as it would never do to admit that such abolition had destroyed the chances of the millions of Christendom of ever beholding the face of the Father, recourse has to be had to Jesuitical methods of argument to show that Christ was not alluding to any particular day, but to a sort of metaphysical Sabbaticism, which could be made to apply to any day in the week! This kind of reasoning is not reasonable. Even Christ himself, following, as we are given to understand, the occupation of a carpenter during the six days of the week, would find it impossible to give undivided attention to spiritual things while making chairs and tables, and so would have been in the position of his compatriots—forced to confine their Sabbatic devotions to the day set apart for the purpose by the assumed founder of Judaism himself. If Mr. Haweis's method of interpretation were the correct one, there is no reason why the Israelites in the very days of Moses himself should not have flouted his commandment on the ground that they could Sabbatise any day in the week if they chose.

No, there never has been any sufficient reason why the first day of the week should have been substituted for the Mosaic seventh; but the Christian Church has done it without any warranty from its Jesus, but merely to conciliate and capture the Pagans; which is a fact of some evidential value in the direction of showing that Christianity as we have it was not constructed upon Judaistic lines of thought, but was an *olla podrida* of all religious and philosophic cults which exercised any sort of influence in the first few centuries of the so-called Christian era. But that present-day upholders of Christianity should be put to their wits' ends to reconcile these *logia* with Christian institutions and practices is no reason why we who care for nothing but the truth should be defrauded by a false criticism of a correct appraisement of the significance of these ancient documents.

If the Rev. Mr. Haweis is unfortunate in his manner of dealing with this *logion*, his treatment of that which runs, "Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I," is nothing short of sacrilegious. Violent and strangulous hands does he lay upon this, squeezing out the very pith and marrow of it. Instead of allowing it to remain as a forcible, and perhaps beautiful, illustration of the Omnipresence of God, it is removed from its proper atmosphere, and forced into an odious comparison with a text in Ecclesiastes x., which is in unimpeachable literary relationship to the rest of the discourse therein embodied, and which on the ground of either sentiment or fact is without reproach. It is extremely unlikely that Jesus Christ would have missed the point of that discourse, as we should have to assume that he did if, as Mr. Haweis suggests, he found it necessary to isolate this particular text from the rest of the chapter, and controvert its imagined erroneous implication. Christ in this *logion* was not inculcating Pantheism, says Mr. Haweis; he "was merely referring to this passage in Ecclesiastes where men were advised not to raise stones or to cleave wood." Yes, Mr. Haweis actually commits himself to that piece of fatuity! *Ecclesiastes advised men not to raise stones or to lift wood.* Now, gentle reader, turn to Ecclesiastes x., and what will you find? A discourse on the qualities which distinguish wisdom from folly, and advice proffered in homely phrase and illustration, to the wise man as to his comportment when in the presence of a fool. Take, for example, the verses 11 and 12: "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better. The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself." Now compare these with verses 8, 9, and 10: "He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it; and *whoso breaketh an hedge a serpent shall bite him.* Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith; and he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby. If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength; *but wisdom is profitable to direct.*" It is obvious to the critically-minded that all this talk about the danger of lifting stones and cleaving wood is symbolical of what is likely to happen if a wise man finds himself yoked to a wooden-headed fool, or to one of the stoney-hearted variety. He will have to practise the utmost circumspection; if the weapon he employ to neutralize or destroy the folly be blunt, or one whetted to a sharp edge, it is necessary that it should be used with wise discretion, and in wise direction, if the bearer himself is not to be betrayed into folly. "He that cleaveth a wooden head with rough and overmasterful words shall by the rebound thereof be in danger of a wounded dignity." In the case of the babbling fool, as the serpent will bite without enchantment, don't attempt to silence his babblings by verbose controversy, but let him babble until he tires himself out, and then perhaps you may interpose a few gracious words with some effect.

It is obvious to me that our friend Ecclesiastes knew what he was talking about; and there is not the slightest reason to suppose, as Mr. Haweis does, and even asserts, that he intended to discourage the lifting of stones and cleaving of wood in the discharge of the industrial avocations of every-day life. The whole philosophy of this chapter is beyond adverse criticism, and I for one refuse to believe that Jesus Christ, if he existed at all, was capable of such a grotesque misapprehension of it as Mr. Haweis is desirous of holding him responsible for. But these *logia* are not the spontaneous utterances of a *bonâ fide* flesh-and-blood personality; they are literary productions composed in cool blood, under circumstances where it was inevitable that quite other considerations than those of homiletic appeal merely should arise in the mind—considerations, for example, which were engendered by the necessity of exploiting the resources of the mind to discover the most appropriate phrase to convey the idea. Moral fanaticism and artistic impulse are mutually destructive of each other's mood. Consider in the light of these dicta that strange *logion* running: "I stood in the midst of the world, and in the flesh I was seen of men, and I found all men drunken, and none were athirst; and my soul grieved for the sons of men because they are blind in heart." Now, if anybody tells me that that collocation of words, with its recurrent idea in different phrase, and its parodox of drunkenness in the absence of thirst, does not betray literary artifice, then he must be considered qualified to undertake Christian apologetics and to exegete Ecclesiastes. BLOOMFIELD STEVENS.

A JEALOUS GOD.

"For thou shalt worship no other God; for Jahveh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."—EXODUS XXXIV. 14.

EDGAR ALLAN POE, in his melodious poem on "Annabel Lee," says:—

> The angels not half so happy in heaven
> Went envying her and me.

This has been thought hyperbole *in excelsis*. Yet it would be easy to show that it faithfully reflects man's early conceptions of the supernatural. Among all races, moderation in prosperity has been enjoined, lest pride draw the attention of the gods, and be followed by a fall. This notion, of course, arose because the gods were created in man's image, and were regarded as human chieftains, who often despoiled the man who was getting on in the world. Herodotus (i. 32) says, "The gods are very jealous"; and in several passages gives instances of their jealousy (vii. 10; viii. 119). Arrian relates that when Alexander proposed to invest himself with divine honors Callisthenes expostulated, reminding him of how enraged he would be if any man usurped his royal title. Zeus, father of gods and men, was jealous because Prometheus provided man with fire, and Poseidon was jealous of the Athenians because their city was provided with walls. But of all the jealous gods the Lord God Jehovah was the worst. His proper name, as our text of holy writ assures us, was Jealous. Like a true Jew, he was a thorough monopolist. He proclaims: "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation."

Digitized by Google

If we may believe the clergy, which reason forbid, God was so jealous of his apples that, because Eve took some fruit, he damned her posterity to an eternity of torments midst fire and brimstone in some other world. When men built a big tower at Babel—perhaps for an observatory—the Lord God got so jealous that, in the words of holy writ, "the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded." And the jealous God got in such a rage that he then and there confounded their language so that they could not understand one another's speech. The Lord Jehovah was so jealous that he would allow no sculpture, lest it be worshipped. His first commandment was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And his second was like unto it: "Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." He was so confoundedly jealous that it was death to enter his holy of holies (Numbers iv. 20), and he slew fifty thousand and seventy persons only for looking into his travelling carriage (1 Samuel vi. 19), which was a box of shittin wood (Exodus xxv. 10). Once, when shut up in this box, which was drawn by oxen, he slew Uzzah for merely putting his hand on to steady it when the oxen shook it (2 Samuel vi. 6, 7). He ordered death for those who kindled a fire on his Sabbath (Exodus xxxv. 2, 3), and even for picking up sticks on that day (Numbers xv. 32, 36).

But the Christians are even worse than the Jews. They make out that their jealous God needed an atonement of blood, and spared not his own Son. I guess that when Jehovah gets hold of them he will frizzle them well in hell for singing so many hymns to sweet Jesus, and so few to himself.

LUCIANUS.

ACID DROPS.

THE Pope has fitted out a special expedition to conquer England in the interest of Rome. This new armada was solemnly blessed last Sunday at Paris. Cardinal Vaughan and a large number of English priests were present to give an air of actuality to the ceremony. No doubt this expedition will be as successful as the famous one in Elizabeth's reign. There is little reason to fear that Cardinal Vaughan, or his successor, or *his* successor, will occupy the seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. And we are glad of this, for Priest Log is a smaller nuisance than Priest Stork, who would soon have his long bill poking into the business of every heretic.

Cardinal Vaughan is reported as having said at Arles that, "according to the latest statistics, the conversions [of English Protestants] vary from six to seven hundred per month." This is startling, if true. A few years back the *Quarterly Review* gave statistics showing that Roman Catholicism was not keeping pace with the increase of population, the leakage outnumbering the number of conversions. Perhaps the Cardinal will condescend to give exact particulars, but we rather expect he will not.

Someone has sent us bills of Sunday afternoon lectures at St. Giles' Institute, Dyott-street, New Oxford-street, London, W. The lecturer for the three Sundays, October 17–31, is the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, his subjects being "God," "Man," and "Infidelity." We presume Mr. Engström uses the last invidious term on the plan of getting in the first blow in the fight. There is nothing like putting your adversary at a disadvantage before the first round.

The Rev. Dr. Berry, of Wolverhampton, once called Mr. Foote a "professional infidel." Mr. Foote replied that Dr. Berry's income was greater than that of all the "infidel" lecturers in England put together. Dr. Berry said no more.

This same Dr. Berry, in his presidential address to the Congregational Union at Birmingham, spoke of Secularism as "an inadequate and dishonoring doctrine of man and destiny." But what is the use of these adjectives, especially the malicious second one? The only question that can really be discussed between a Christian and a Secularist is whether Christianity or Secularism is true. Truth, in the long run, carries beauty and usefulness with it. When men see that a certain principle is true, their emotions will sooner or later adjust themselves to the recognition.

Commenting on Dr. Berry's address, the *Leamington Chronicle* remarks that "such forms of Secularism as are represented by the verses and illustrations of the *Freethinker* are utterly repugnant to the average mind." If the writer had just inserted one word, and made it read "the average Christian mind," he would have been quite accurate. By the way, he hasn't a very intimate acquaintance with the *Freethinker*, or he wouldn't talk so glibly about its "illustrations."

Mr. Hall Caine's novel, *The Christian*, contains an account of the visit of John Storm, priest and Christian Socialist, to Glory Quayle, the actress, his old sweetheart. John is going to kill her body to save her soul, and she saves her life by playing upon his amorous emotions. "Kiss me!" she cries at the end of the scene, and he does so. Her hair falls loose, her dress is disordered, her arms are about John Storm and his arms are about her, and the curtain drops on the enamored couple. The next morning John Storm creeps along the streets like a culprit, and Glory Quayle lies in bed with a smile and a long-drawn sigh. "Oh, delicious mystery! Oh, joy of joys!" That is how Mr. Caine goes on, and Mr. W. T. Stead concluded, as every sane person would, that Glory Quayle had surrendered her body to the final embrace of John Storm, or, as Dr. Farrar puts it, committed mortal sin. Mr. Caine denies that he meant this, and calls Mr. Stead's interpretation "an outrage both on art and morals." Mr. Stead replies by printing Glory Quayle's adventure side by side with the "fall" of Kate in *The Manxman*, and they are wonderfully alike, only the former is rather more luscious and suggestive.

Log-rolling is becoming a fine art, and Mr. Hall Caine is an adept. Dr. Parker preached on *The Christian* at the City Temple. Mr. Caine at once telegraphed to the *Daily Chronicle* word of the fact, and added: "I should be profoundly grateful if you could give a report." The *Chronicle* complied, but cruelly printed Mr. Hall Caine's telegram. And now the world begins to see how certain books, like certain pills, get a vogue by dint of persistent advertising. Dr. Parker, by the way, stated how Mr. Caine had prievously called on him to inform him that his next novel would be a religious one.

The Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association has just held its twenty-fifth annual meeting in the Memorial Hall. Mr. Bowers, the new president, gave an address on "The Ethics of the Coming School Board Election," and warned the sacerdotal party that if they captured the schools they would not capture the teachers. These were brave words, and were doubtless well-meant. But what is their real value? Mr. Bowers must know, after all, that the teachers are not, and never can be, the masters of the situation. Those who pay the salaries will always have the whip-hand over those who receive them. If the sacerdotalists capture the Board schools, they will rule in them just as much as they do in the Church schools.

Mr. Bowers went on to say that the present system, under which the children are taught simple Bible truths in simple language, produced the maximum of good with the minimum of friction. He forgot that this can only be true from the standpoint of the average Christian. Citizens who are not Christians, or who do not believe in the State's right to teach religion, regard Bible reading (simple or otherwise; but we dare say it is *simple* enough) as a violation of the principles of civil and religious liberty.

Not satisfied with this statement, Mr. Bowers proceeded to denounce the proposal which is being made to transfer religious instruction from the teachers to the clergy. So far as he wishes to keep the clergy out of the schools, he commands our sympathy. At the same time, we venture to observe that if religion is taught at all it should be taught by professionals, and not by amateurs—by clergymen, for instance, and not by school-teachers. However much this may be disliked, there is only one ground for resisting it. The clergy can be kept out of the schools by keeping religion out of the schools. Logically there is no other method of opposition. And it is curious how logic wins in the long run.

Parliamentary grants now pay very nearly three-fourths of the educational expenditure of the country, the larger proportion being taken by Church and Roman Catholic schools, although these are relatively less efficient. Despite the endowments of Voluntary schools, the Board schools take higher grants per scholar. Yet the Government have been devoting £600,000 a year to the Voluntary schools—a sum as large as all voluntary subscriptions put together. With Government help, voluntary subscriptions have steadily declined. In 1877 they represented 9s. 6d. per scholar; in 1894, 6s. 7½d.; and there has been a further diminution since.

Education has become virtually a State department, with the control still in clerical hands. The posts in all denominational schools are filled on a thorough system of religious test—a system now happily abolished in other departments of our public service. This means, for instance, that in the

Digitized by Google

case of Church schools, nearly one-half of all the schools together, the teacherships are closed against all who are not members of the Church of England, and this although six-sevenths of the total income of these schools is provided by the taxpayer.

"A poor lady" advertises in the *Christian World* for someone to "help her purchase a bicycle," as she is "anxious to take up Christian work in an outlying parish." This is the easiest way of getting a bicycle we ever heard of. It beats the hire system hollow.

Henry Varley, of London, and other evangelists, addressed a crowded meeting of the Christian Missionary Alliance at a New York theatre last Sunday. Funds were pleaded for to send soul-savers to Africa, India, and China. When the enthusiasm was at concert pitch the collection was taken up. Men, women, and children emptied their pockets, giving money, cheques, watches, and jewellery. One man gave a New Jersey farm. Altogether, the sum of seventy thousand dollars was realized. All that money will be spent on catching the heathen. Meanwhile thousands of people in New York are in a state of destitution. Yes, the missionary game is a most admirable one—for the soul-savers.

From Colombo, Ceylon, we receive a reprint of "The Great Controversy on Missions, Missionaries, and Native Ministers," reprinted from the local newspapers. It is stated that the letters have been reprinted at the request of a large number of laymen interested in the welfare and progress of Christian missions; but the pamphlet is sent to us by a Buddhist, who thinks it well calculated to serve the cause of Buddhism.

It appears that Christianity was introduced from Persia into Ceylon at a very early period by Nestorian missionaries. The Catholics under Sir Francis Xavier had considerable success. They are still the largest item in the Christian population, the figures in 1891 being:—Buddhists, 1,877,043; Hindus, 615,932; Mohammedans, 211,999; Roman Catholics, 246,214; Protestants, 55,913. The number of Protestants do not keep pace with the increase of population.

The controversy which has been going on in the local press has mainly centred round the treatment of native ministers. These, if we may credit some of the letters, not only have a sharp line of demarcation drawn between them and their white brethren-in-Christ, but are also paid at about the same rate as the white padre's menials. The European missionaries travel as saloon or cabin passengers, with the attendant comforts and convenience, while their unfortunate colleagues, the native men of God, travel as deck passengers with ordinary coolies. How, it is asked, can it be expected that educated and self-respecting men will preach a religion of brotherhood which sets them such examples?

The European missionary in Ceylon gets a salary ranging from £40 a month, coupled with increase for every addition to his family, and the promise of its free education in England. They have spacious bungalows, rent free, carriages, and tennis grounds; while the native ministers who do the hard work get very poorly paid. If the subscribers to missions fancy it is the white missionaries who labor hard among the wild Singhalese, they appear to be very much mistaken. Christianity as practised by the white missionaries in Ceylon appears to be a broad satire on the teaching that all are brethren in Christ.

At Maitland (N.S.W.) two Chinamen became alle same Clistians last week, per medium of the Scotch Church. The baptism was a success financially, the collection, twenty-two shillings, or thereabouts, going to pay the Chow missioner's back screw. One of the converts took the name of Jacob Napoleon, and the other Joshua Andrew. Both made statements after the hymn, "Safe in the Arms," had been sung. Jacob stated that he had heard the Lord for six months, and was almost sure he was right; but he was not questioned as to whether he kept the spare cabbagee under his bed. This, however, the *Bulletin* does not think any Presbyterian Chinaman would do. Joshua Andrew said that he only studied the Bible for three months and two days; he then felt the Spirit burn brightly within him. It was announced that the Mission was just struggling—pulling the devil by the pig-tail, as it were. They had captured five converts during the last eighteen months; one of these, however, had hanged himself a few weeks ago, and two others had fallen away again. In conclusion, the young ladies of the church were implored to gather the yellow heathen into the fold. (Loud and prolonged Chinese cheers.)

By the way, a Chinese parson is this week to be married in Sydney to a nice white lady, who teaches a Chinese Sunday-school.—*Bulletin.*

Geelong parson, preaching from text, "Thou shalt not leave His soul in Hell," uses the word "Hades" all through his sermon. After church, old lady (*loq.*): "Well, I really can't make it out. It's been hell ever since I was a girl, and hell's quite good enough for me."

There is no country like Abyssinia for seeing Christianity in its primitive aspect. The isolation of the country has kept its religion in much the same condition as when imported in the time of Constantine. It is there seen to be a system of monkery and mendicancy, with a detrimental influence on civilization rather than the reverse.

Even the Christian churches in Abyssinia throw light on early Christianity. They are built in the midst of groves. They are round in shape, with conical roofs, and are divided into three parts. The outer court is open. The inner, which is closed, is used for public worship. The third enclosure corresponds to the holy of holies, and is only entered by the priests. The exterior of this enclosure is painted with sacred subjects by native artists, of great amusement to Europeans. The saints are wondrous to behold, and J. C. is always a swarthy Ethiopian with a halo of glory.

H. C. Richards, the inexpressibly dreary English M.P. for Finsbury, now tottering around in Victoria, and advertised as having given to St. Paul's Church a Bible used for many years at St. Paul's, London, is the pious barrister who opposed Bradlaugh in his Northampton elections during the oath-question struggle. The parsons prayed for the success of Richards; but, heaven having no vote, Bradlaugh won every time. One parson, after an election, preached from the text, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Richards was "this man"; Bradlaugh was "Barabbas." The Iconoclast colossus said that he could not have said anything half so blasphemous if he had tried. Richards is a pet of the Primrose League, but otherwise a person of no consequence. —*Sydney Bulletin.*

I note that the Wrong-Reverend E. H. Harman, formerly presiding elder of the Methodist church at Brenham, but given the grand bounce for getting too gay at Galveston, where, in company with another sanctified ministerial hypocrite, named Wimberly, he had "a hot time in the old town" with hacks, harlots, and barrel-house booze, has been converted to the Christian (or Campbellite) faith, and proposes to preach. Possibly his conversion is genuine; but it is worthy of remark that he saw nothing attractive in the Christian cult until no longer allowed to occupy a Methodist pulpit—until reduced to the necessity of either seeking a job in a new corner of the Lord's vineyard or taking a fall out of the lowly cotton patch.—*Iconoclast.*

The French papers having written with horror of the employment of bullets against the Afridis which make a terrible wound, the *Daily Messenger*, the English organ in Paris, remarks that "no severity ever practised by the harshest of English officers could be a patch on the severity of the old Israelitish military leaders acting under the direct instigation of Jehovah.....And it was the method of Moses (acting on divine directions) to slay not only combatants, but all who could at any future time be of trouble to his people. 'And now therefore kill every male among the little ones,' and was 'wrath,' as the sacred record has it, when these instructions were not carried out to the letter. He had a weakness for 'putting every living thing to the sword,' and we learn later that the 'man after God's own heart' not only followed a similar policy, but 'houghed' or hamstringed all the horses of the enemy. But, notwithstanding that all this had divine approval in dealing with the Afridis of five thousand years ago, what would Exeter Hall say if half as much were resorted to to-day?" What brutality is there that cannot be defended by an appeal to the Divine book?

The murderous state of mind is often closely allied to the religious. The man Cooper, who shot at his wife at Croydon, said: "I thought if I killed Mary I should send her to heaven. I should follow myself, and the shock of it all would kill my dear old mother, and then we should be all right and happy together."

Vacher, the French Ripper, says he has murdered eight persons, and was "chosen by God to make victims on earth. He felt ever so much better after carrying out these divine behests. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Under the heading "The Bible and the Bike," the *Bulletin*, of Sydney, gives a caricature of a cyclist bent almost double over his machine. Underneath is the text: "This only I know: God hath made man *upright*; but man hath sought out many *inventions*" (Eccles. v.).

A Melbourne pastor, who loans the use of his little bethel for "skirt-dancing and other dancing," quotes the Rev. Stewart Headlam (satirized in *Vicar of Bray*) to the effect

Digitized by Google

that "The Ballet is Worship." Everything is worship if you only open the proceedings with a short prayer and end it with a collection.

On St. Edward the Confessor's Day a number of Roman Catholic priests and laymen visited the tomb in Westminster Abbey. Many of them touched the tomb with their rosaries and pocket-handkerchiefs, that some of the virtue of the stone around the long-mouldered dust might come in contact with their own persons. Evidently fetishism is by no means extinct.

The Rev. W. D. Armstrong, pastor of the Church of Seventh-Day Adventists, of West Washington, has been arrested and imprisoned on a charge of working on the Lord's Day. He had kept the Lord's Day as ordered in the Bible, and the Christians punish him because he does not keep also the day they have, without authority, put instead of the Sabbath. There is not a preacher of any intelligence in America who does not positively know that the Seventh-Day Adventist is right in claiming that Saturday is the Sabbath, and the only Sabbath that the Bible knows anything about. Yet they punish a fellow Christian who follows the Bible and his own conscience in the matter; and this in the land of liberty!

There is a good deal of liberty in England for those who take it in the name of the Lord. George Knight is one of these. He and his band with concertina and zither, have a Sunday evening pitch at St. Thomas's-road, Finsbury Park, where they sing and shout and make collections so that lodgers leave to avoid the disturbances. 150 householders petition against the nuisance; but the magistrate only mildly advises its abatement.

A "divine-healer," named Miller, was doing a good business at faith-curing in Atlanta, Ga., until he had the misfortune to "over-drink himself," when he was ejected from his hotel. As the Atlanta *Journal* puts it, "his light went out in a baptism of booze."

Fifty thoughtless persons spoiled a great moral lesson by being killed in a church instead of a dance-hall when the earthquake struck the Leeward Islands.—*Detroit News.*

The *Boston Globe* has had a symposium on "Is there a Personal Devil?" contributed to by some of the leading sky-pilots of the hub of the universe. The Rev. C. A. Dickenson believes there are many devils. The Rev. A. Connolley (R.C.) believes there is one. Rabbi Fleischer says he doesn't know, and inclines to doubt. The Rev. G. C. Lorimer (Baptist) says he believes in the existence of what he calls a malignant spirit; but what particular form it may take, and to what extent its influence operates in the universe, he says that it is not easy to state. The Rev. G. L. Perin (Universalist) does not believe in one, and says that only insane persons do. The *Globe* should now discuss "Is there a Personal God?"

In a paper on "The Psychology of Belief," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for October, W. B. Parker points out the close relation of love and religion. He says: "It is, I think, remarkable how many women, disappointed in love, turn to religion for consolation. Girls and women, who have never revealed the slightest interest in church or creed, become, under the influence of an unrequited passion, the most ardent believers." This indicates how much belief depends on emotion. Women are so devoted to God because man has been hard to them. To make them irreligious, the first thing is to make them happy.

Mr. Parker holds with Bain that the chief fact of belief was primitive credulity. "We are all naturally and primarily credulous; scepticism is a later development, and comes from the sort of experience that makes sadder but wiser men of us." The creeds of Christianity, as he justly remarks, come to us with the force of centuries' unwisdom behind them. They are accepted in their traditional form chiefly because, by multitudinous repetitions, they have been beaten in upon the mind, and in most cases have been yielded credence without question or reasoning.

Father Damien, who died of leprosy among the lepers of Molokai, was a young Belgian priest of the Catholic Church. Perhaps this is the reason why the Rev. J. A. Cullen, one of the missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, is "able to state on the highest authority that Father Damien had contracted the disease of leprosy before he commenced his work at Molokai." If the statement be true, however, it tremendously discounts the rapturous eulogies of Father Damien by Robert Louis Stevenson and others.

Mr. Harold Blindloss, in the *Gentleman's Magazine* makes a statement which is calculated to raise every hair on the heads of the gentlemen who run the Missionary Societies. Writing on the Western Sahara, he says that "any negro with a trace of Arab blood in him is invariably a Moslem, and the Mohammedan black is generally head and shoulders above either heathen or, it is to be regretted, Christian (or semi-Christian) negro in the qualities of sobriety, courage, and fidelity."

The Vienna correspondent of the *Daily News* thought it worth while to telegraph an account of the execution of a vulgar murderer named Dolezal, who robbed and killed two aged women. The fellow occupied the "Poor Sinners' Cell" in the prison, and by means of the assiduous attentions of his father confessor he "found peace with God." He appears to have made an edifying end, and is presumably now in heaven. What place his two aged victims went to is a problem that gives nobody any concern. Such is the delightful ethics of orthodox Christianity.

Said the *Speaker* recently: "When one thinks of the uses men have made of the words 'religion' and 'Christianity'—the former of which does not occur in the Four Gospels, nor the latter in the whole New Testament—one is tempted to wish that some others could be found to do duty for them." Although a great fuss is made about them, they never would be missed. People who say how cold the world would be without religion forget the wise words of Bishop Butler: "Things are as they are, and their consequences will be what they will be."

An esteemed correspondent writes us anent Moody's yarn: "There is a grave in Watford Churchyard with a fig-tree growing out, which has split the tomb all to pieces. There is another at Aldenham, near here. The Watford one has got the Atheist lady story tacked on to it."

The curate of Pakefield, near Lowestoft, is a muscular Christian, and has started a football club. The rector does not approve of it, and in a sermon plainly denounced it as a device of the Devil. "Satan," said he, "was a successful practitioner, and if any in the congregation preferred attendance at a football match to going to a prayer-meeting, they belonged to Satan's flock." This is Christian logic. The Church being run by the deity, all rival agencies must be run by his antagonist.

At Brisbane (Q.) Exhibition Art Gallery there was an ideal portrait of Christ, and alongside it a likeness of Kaiser William the Sudden, of Yairmany. Somehow the numbers were transposed; therefore, visitors who went by the catalogue found the Redeemer with a uniform on, and a big, brassy helmet, and a sword, and a moustache, and with a martial glare in his eye. Yet no one did anything to correct the mistake until a German, full of würst and bock and indignation, interviewed the management, and desired to bump its head against the doorstep. And his grievance was that a gross insult had been offered to Kaiser Bill.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Rev. Canon Berry (Melbourne): "We have been on the down-grade in enlarging the franchise, and the end of the journey will be the granting of womanhood suffrage." Frightful to think of! And yet, if it were not for women, what would become of the clergy? Women are their chief supporters and admirers. Is Canon Berry afraid that if they get the right to vote they will also want to compete with the cloth? Female preachers—if reasonably pretty—would almost certainly draw more men to church than the present class of male expounders. A female bishop in gaiters would be a pleasing novelty. Moody and Sankey used to ask, "Why should the Devil have all the best tunes?" Similarly, it might be inquired, "Why should the Devil have (on the stage, which numbers of the clergy call Satan's Church) all the best-looking legs enlisted in his service?' And what harm has the enlargement of the suffrage done to Canon Berry, anyhow?

Why, O Canon Berry,
Like the heathen rage?
Surely you are very
Far behind the age!

Which would suit your palate,
Which would you think right—
Men to vote by ballot,
Or by dynamite?

—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The *Torch of Reason* says that an Alabama murderer addressed the following note to the governor: "I wish you would grant me a thirty-day respite. I am short on religion. I intended to get it last week, but was too busy."

The Rev. Frank H. Cumming, Methodist, of Geneseo, N.Y., has fallen. Two young women fall with him.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 24, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "The Apostles' Creed: or, What The Church Party want in the Schools."

October 31, Camberwell.

November 23, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—October 24, Camberwell, London; 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Walworth Freethinker.—You are quite right. Mr. Holyoake is mistaken. Mrs. Harriet Law did not *start* the *Secular Chronicle*. It was started by Mr. Reddalls, of Birmingham, and was purchased by Mrs. Law some time after his decease.

F. A.—A very old joke. We printed it in the *Freethinker* twelve or thirteen years ago. It is a good one, we admit.

Unknown.—Matthew ix. 12 does not hit the Peculiar People. Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees, not to his own followers. Not, of course, that it much matters from *our* point of view.—We noticed that whale story before. It seems to have been started as a joke in Paris. Silly Christians took it up seriously on this side of the Channel. Rev. Dr. Townsend, and the readers of the *Christian*, must be in a hopeless condition if they really believe that a missing sailor was found all alive-o in a whale's belly a day and a night later.

J. F. Hampson.—We hope you will return both candidates. See paragraph.

J. G. Dobson has left Workington, and returned to his old address at 33 Trent-street, Stockton-on-Tees. Mr. Dobson was discharged from his employment at Workington on the ground that his Atheism was the talk of the town. His employer "had not read enough" to "argue the matter," but is prepared to give him the best of references. Well, that is something. Not so very long ago such an employer's reference would have read like this—"He ought to be in hell, and I wish he was there."

Horace W. Parsons promises £5 annually towards the N.S.S. Financial Reorganization Scheme.

R. E. H.—Thanks. We had already received copies of the bill and written a paragraph upon it.

N.S.S. Treasurer's Scheme.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges the following fresh promises:—D. Clarke, £1 *(p)*; P. P., £1 1s.; J. H. Ridgway, 10s. 6d.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—The following promises have been sent to us:—L. Fox, 5s.; S. Holmes, 10s.; J. P. Brown, 10s. *(p)*; D. Prosser, 5s.; J. Hayes, 5s. *(p)*.

T. Bellamy, 6 Thoresby-street, Sneinton, Nottingham, acknowledges the following subscriptions on behalf of the veteran J. Hooper, who is in very necessitous circumstances:—J. Cooper, 5s.; W. Numby, 5s.; A Friend, 6d. We advise Mr. Bellamy to formally apply to the N.S.S. secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., with a view to a grant from the Benevolent Fund.

We have received for the J. Hooper Fund:—G. W. Foote, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, 2s. 6d.

W. H. Spivey, Huddersfield, writing in high appreciation of Mr. Watts's lectures there on Sunday, mentions that £1 was collected in the evening and handed to Mr. Watts in aid of the veteran J. Hooper.

Castor.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings. Readers who send us such assist us, and help to make this journal more interesting for themselves.

Richard Woods.—Don't trouble about the abridgment. Read Gibbon in his entirety. The best edition at a reasonable price is that edited by Professor Bury. It is now appearing, and is to be completed in seven volumes at 3s. 6d. each. You could probably pick up a second-hand copy of one of the older editions, containing Gibbon's text and his own notes, for ten shillings, or perhaps less. Your order is handed to Mr. Forder.

J. G. Bartram.—See "Sugar Plums." Have you no hall available for lectures now in Newcastle?

C. C. Turner.—See paragraph.

Police Sergeant.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Best to move along carefully.

W. S. Clogg.—Thanks. See paragraph.

S. Holmes.—Better late than never, far better. A good many who could subscribe don't even see that they are late.

W. G. Macfarlane.—Thanks. See our leading article. Pleased to hear you have read the *Freethinker* for many years, and "can bear testimony to the good it does."

Old Bradlaughian.—Certainly it is amusing to see the names of G. J. Holyoake and Touzeau Parris in the list of the late Charles Bradlaugh's "lieutenants." They must be laughing themselves at this remarkable incongruity. With regard to the other matter, it is of course very easy for mere malignance to do mischief, but the N. S. S. has nothing to fear in the long run from enemies who cannot draw audiences or maintain journals, and have no capacity for organization. Now and then, in some part of a river, you will see a backwash. It looks to be setting up on its own account, and threatening to absorb the whole stream. But it doesn't. It holds back but a little water after all. The main volume always sweeps on its natural course.

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

F. R. Lansdell.—At Ipswich, as elsewhere, it seems to us the clear duty of Secularists to do their utmost in support of the new Treasurer's Scheme, which, as a centralized effort, will do more than any spasmodic local action, at least until Branches stand on a firm, independent footing. No doubt the sub-committee will try to provide you with some lectures, if you only show a reasonable interest in the Scheme.

Papers Received.—L'Etoile Socialiste—East London Observer—Liberator—Egoism—New Century—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Freethought Magazine—Secular Thought—People's Newspaper—Morning Leader—Crescent—Boston Investigator—Islamic World—Herts Leader—New Age—Truthseeker—Birmingham Post—Leamington Chronicle—Isle of Man Times.

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

It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

Lecture Notices must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 23 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 23 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

For the "first time in history" the Oxford Music Hall was opened on Sunday evening for a "sacred concert." Prices of admission were as usual, and the place was crowded. If this sort of thing continues and spreads—and why shouldn't it?—the Sunday League will simply expire in the final blaze of its own triumph.

Of course the Oxford Music Hall concert was a formidable opposition to the "divine services" going on in the neighborhood, but it did not affect Mr. Foote's audience at the Athenæum Hall, which is only three minutes' walk further up Tottenham Court-road. The meeting was large and enthusiastic. The lecture, entitled "In Abraham's Bosom," provoked endless laughter and applause.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (October 24), taking for his subject, "The Apostles' Creed: or, What the Church Party want in the Schools." This is a matter which is not sufficiently understood, and the lecture should prove instructive to orthodox Christians, as well as interesting to Freethinkers. Mr. Forder will take the chair.

Councillor Mitchell was unable to take the chair on the four evenings of Mr. Foote's debate with Mr. W. T. Lee at Glasgow. The muncipal election meetings were in full swing, and Mr. Mitchell had to look to his seat. He came and took the chair on the second evening, thinking he would have two hours' freedom; but before an hour had elapsed he was summoned away to a meeting he had overlooked. Mr. D. Black took the chair instead of Mr. Mitchell, and filled it with dignity. At the close of the debate, in response to a vote of thanks, he expressed his gratification at the gentlemanly way in which Mr. Lee had conducted his side of the debate. As a Secularist, he thought it would not be right on his part to say anything in praise of Mr. Foote. Mr. Lee, however, was a comparative stranger; in fact, it was his first visit to Glasgow; but the favorable impression he had made was an augury that it would not be his last. Mr. Black also complimented the audience on the remarkable order, good-temper, and impartiality they had maintained throughout.

Mr. Watts informs us that he was much pleased at his debate last week in Birmingham with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. It was carried on in the most amicable spirit, both disputants being in good form. In fact, it was, as Mr. Ridgway, the chairman, said, an excellent discussion in every way. Mr. Watts speaks in the highest terms of the local Branch for the successful manner in which they arranged the debate. There were capital audiences both nights. Mr. Ridgway made a first-rate chairman.

On Sunday last Mr. Watts lectured twice in Huddersfield. The audiences were good, but not so large as he has had in that town in former years. The whole districts of Huddersfield and Bradford require waking up. There are plenty of Freethinkers in those places, but of late lectures there have been too few and far between. On Sunday Mr. and Mrs.

Digitized by Google

Gott came from Bradford, and other friends were present from Dewsbury and Leeds.

This evening, Sunday, October 24, Mr. Watts lectures at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, London, taking for his subject "The Triumph of Reason over Faith." Next Saturday evening, October 30, he commences a four nights' debate with Mr. Waldron at Stanley, Durham. We are informed that great interest is manifested throughout the local districts at this coming intellectual encounter.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured last Sunday morning at the North Camberwell Radical Club on "Man and Evolution." He had an audience of 250 men, who listened most attentively, and heartily applauded at the finish. The Club is desirous of having more Freethought lectures. Mr. Moss lectured in the evening at Wood Green.

On Monday, October 11, the Newcastle Secularists held a social gathering to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of their oldest member, Mr. W. Bennett. Mr. Bennett was presented with a neatly-framed photograph of the committee and some of the members, himself being the central figure of the group. Mr. C. Cohen and his wife were present, and a beautiful oil portrait was presented to him of the late Charles Bradlaugh, painted by a member, Mr. Brownlow, which was very much admired. Mr. Cohen returned thanks in a humorous speech. He pleaded guilty to having got married, but it was the first time he had ever done so, and he sincerely hoped it would be the last.

The Ipswich friends are holding a meeting at the G. E. R., Commercial-road, at 7 this evening (Oct. 24), to consider the immediate future of Freethought organization in the city. All are invited to attend.

The Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society's *Weekly Notes*, commenting on a bishop's statement that if Lord Hobhouse's bill were carried there would be no barrier left against the complete secularization of Sunday, asks: "What price the influence of the Church of England?" Had an Atheist made this statement (it says) the "Fetter-Day Society" would have shown that religion rests on the desires and necessities of God-fearing people, and not on the policeman's *baton*; but "the bishops evidently think that, if the *baton* be withdrawn, all other aids to sanctification will go for nought."

Lovers of Shelley will be interested to know that within the last few days a memorial tablet has been affixed to the house in Pisa where the poet wrote "Adonais." The house is on the south side of the Lung' Arno, a few paces below the Ponte Vecchio. The palace where Byron lived is on the other side of the river, nearly opposite the Shelley House.

Dr. Stanton Coit, of the Ethical Society, writing to a correspondent of ours, says that he was misreported by the *Chronicle*. "I do not believe in non-moral education," he says, "as I think that morality is the supreme end of education. I think that we had better have the Compromise than to drive out all moral instruction. The High Church wish to drive out all moral teaching, so that the priests may have a monopoly of the child's soul. I am opposed to theological teaching of morals, and rather than introduce any more theology at present I would stand by the Compromise. But I hate the Compromise. I would advocate it only in face of the two worse alternatives. I advocate substituting secular ethical teaching as soon as teachers and parents can be trained to admit it." After considering this carefully, we cannot help feeling that Dr. Coit is in a state of confusion. Morals or no morals, religion ought not to be taught in the ratepayers' schools. On the other hand, the *sanction* is nearly all that is in dispute in morality, and we can but admire the light and airy way in which Dr. Coit assumes that the leaders of religion, Church and Nonconformist alike, are going to allow the *natural* instead of the *supernatural* sanction of morality to be taught in the schools. Sooner than do that, they would go in for a purely scientific curriculum.

We are happy to hear that the Camberwell Branch has taken a new lease of life, and is making rapid progress. Its open-air meetings on Peckham Rye, as well as at Station-road, have been very successful, and its indoor meetings on Sunday evening have been steadily improving. The Branch is now running its own bookstall, and the secretary informs us that forty copies of the *Freethinker*, besides other literature, were sold last Sunday. This evening (Oct. 24) the Secular Hall platform is occupied by Mr. Charles Watts, who discourses on "The Triumph of Reason over Faith." On the following Sunday evening the lecturer will be Mr. Foote.

The Progressive Thinker, of Chicago, remarks: "Rev. Dr. Thomas, the liberal clergyman of this city, says six orthodox preachers have made application for the vacant place in his pulpit made by the resignation of Rev. Vrooman. We venture the opinion, if there were a thousand vacant places to be filled in churches which deny a triple-headed God, they could all be filled inside of a week from good orthodox pulpits. The churches for centuries have ridiculed the three-headed god Brahma, but lately they have turned their eyes within, and behold, the God they worship has as many heads as has the Hindoo deity."

Nya Sanningar, the organ of the Swedish Freethinkers, has changed its title to *Fria Tankar*. It is now under the editorship of Karl J. Ellington, and is giving its readers portraits of Freethinkers, commencing with Camille Flammarion. Ernst Hellborg has a poem entitled "Fria Tankar."

Sabbatarianism is declining even in the capital of Scotland. Sunday steamboats are now thought little of, and the performance of the band of the regiment which garrisons the castle—once thought monstrous by the unco' guid—now attracts large crowds.

Appleton's *Popular Science Monthly* has a capital article on "Christian Science and Science," by the editor, W. J. Youmans. Science, he says, has revealed itself as the helper and guide of mankind, and, in reply to all questioning of its claims, points to the works it has wrought. "They are they," it may say, "which testify of me." Science has all truth for its domain, and for that reason there can be but one science. To apply to science such an epithet as "Christian" involves a total misunderstanding of what science is. Science can do no more than investigate *all* truth; nor can it consistently, with its essential nature, do less. Mr. Youmans shows that it is science that has relieved human suffering and prolonged human life; it has almost extirpated certain diseases, and greatly mitigated the virulence of others. He draws a picture of what bodily suffering was before the use of anæsthetics, and asks, When did relief come? "From any hocus-pocus speculations upon mind and matter? From any looking away from phenomena, and trying to disbelieve them out of existence? No, but from assuming the reality of phenomena, and bringing a material agent to bear on a physical condition."

The Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* is always worth reading for its excellent selections; and the "Papers by a Special Contributor" often contain matter of much interest to Freethinkers.

A good portrait of John Burns appears in the new number of Mr. Stead's *Review of Reviews*. Beneath it is John's signature, and his motto from Thomas Paine—"The world is my country, and to do good is my religion."

In the *Liberator* of September 11 Mr. Joseph Symes reprints our tribute to the memory of Mrs. Law. At the end appears the following: "I must add my note of sympathetic remembrance of Mrs. Law. I had often heard her name before I became a Freethinker, and, taking my cue from slanderous Christian tongues, regarded her as an ogre of some horrid sort. When I first met Mrs. Law my views and feelings changed, and I was not long finding out how venomously the Christians had slandered her for her honest and earnest attempt to spread the truth and improve the condition of mankind. Few women (or men) ever possessed more sound sense and honesty of purpose; and few Freethinkers ever worked so well and so unselfishly as she to spread our principles. The fact that she was so bitterly hated by the bigots is perhaps the best testimony to her worth. I very much regretted that Mrs. Law dropped gradually out of our work as Mrs. Besant rose in popularity. Time has shown that she was worth a dozen Mrs. Besants, both in sound sense, self-reliance, and sterling honesty. I am sorry so good a woman and so good a worker in the best of causes should die at so comparatively early an age. Her memory will be cherished by thousands."

The Bolton Secularists, those at least belonging to the N. S. S. Branch, have decided to support Miss Reddish and Mr. Joseph Shufflebottom in the approaching School Board elections. We hope these candidates will receive the support of all the local Freethinkers. The gentleman is a member of the N. S. S. Branch, and the lady is a believer in its principles. Both are thoroughly sound on the question of Secular Education.

Next Monday, at 8 p.m., Mr. H. Coryn delivers an address on "Mind as Disease Producer," at St. Martin's Town Hall, under the auspices of the Humanitarian League. This is the first of a new series of Humane Science Lectures; Mr. Coryn being followed on November 23 by Mr. Campbell Black, and on December 21 by J. Arthur Thomas, M.A.

If people can get along six days in the week without religion, why not seven?—*Investigator.*

Digitized by Google

ADAM, WHERE ART THOU?

WHEN the writer of this paper was a very young man and studying for the ministry, he believed implicitly in the story of Adam. In later years the romance began to seem a little absurd, and, after counselling among his fellow pastors he agreed with them that the best thing to do about Adam and the rib business was to pretend to believe it, because the whole scheme of man's salvation was based on Adam's fall, and if Adam never existed the whole plan would "fall" worse than Adam did. As there seems to be considerable doubt among the stiff-necked and unregenerate as to whether Adam was really the first human being, it may be proper to inquire into this circumstance, which is reported to have occurred about 6,000 years ago.

Adam seems to have been a failure from the start. He made an awful mess of his first business venture. If we are to believe the account in Genesis, the creation of man wasn't worth patenting as a paying venture, and the creator has been losing money on the thing ever since. Recent discoveries in the east on the site of the ancient city of Nippur show that mankind was civilized, and that man knew how to express his thoughts in writing over 11,000 years ago; and even these writings tell of other ages reaching through countless years beyond the knowledge of men. Oh, Adam! where art thou?

In Egypt, among the ruins of Dendera on the banks of the Nile, are the remains of what was once a magnificent temple. When this was unearthed two paintings were discovered representing the zodiac. In each the equinoctical point is drawn in Leo; hence the mighty march of time is shown by the equinoxes since the paintings of the zodiacs on the walls of the temple at Dendera. The equinoxes have passed, at the rate of 2,140 years to each sign, through 10,700 years, and even then man had passed from the savage and the stone age, and was building magnificent temples and palaces, reading the stories of the stars, and knew that the world was many ages old. And the whispering query comes across the countless centuries: "Oh, Adam! where art thou?"

From the remains taken from below the rocks that have formed in the Mississippi valley, from the disentombed temples ninety feet below the soil of Egypt, the tombs, pyramids, and stuccoes show us that the negro and white man existed 10,000 years ago in nearly the same type as he does to-day.

Adam, were you white or black? Which of your sons lived in ancient Nippur 15,000 years ago? And which one moved to New Orleans 57,000 years ago? And, Adam, where art thou?

In China, where we send the foreign missionary frauds, are the remains of long-lost cities with sculptured walls and tumbled towers, far beneath the surface; but the pictured signs of the zodiac show the equinoctial point to have been in Virgo, and it is easy to compute that vast ages have passed since these cities lost the hum of busy feet; yet we send missionaries there to teach them that six thousand years ago the first man, Adam, was made, who had trouble with his wife through a snake that walked on the end of his tail and talked Hebrew, and that his eating an apple caused sorrow to the whole human race.

Oh, Adam! why did you, and where art thou?

Adam, you are evidently an old fraud! The evidences of geology show that mankind existed before the glacial period, many thousands of years before there was a garden planted "to the eastward in Eden."

Good bye, missing progenitor! For six thousand years thou hast affrighted the weak-minded and hysterical with the story of thy fall. As one of thy descendants, I drop a tear to thy memory and thy many shortcomings. Like the fossil forests that lie buried one above the other, is buried deep the mystery of creation. The morning stars still "sing together" as they did in that far first morning; but from the mighty horoscope of time comes no answer to the listening ages. Perhaps if we, with the mighty hosts who sleep "where rolls the far Oregon and hears no sound save its own dashing," and those who walked and talked in ancient Nippur, and on the deltas of the Nile and Mississippi, shall arise and wash the last long sleep from our eyes, we may hear among the "trees of the garden" the answer to the query, "Adam, where art thou?"

H. W. C.

WHO CARES FOR CHRIST?

THE Christians are always cracking up their Christ; but none of them follow him or obey his orders. The Jews, who hate the name of Christ, are as fond of following him as the Christians. The Atheists, who laugh at Christ and treat him as a mere ghost, or something less, show as much assiduity in following Christ as do the saints about. Eh! You deny it? Let us see, then, whether you or I am right.

That you don't go out to a river to be dipped by some noted watermonger, nor go to the wilderness "to be tempted of the Devil," may be excused, for it does not appear that Jesus intended anybody to follow that portion of his example. Perhaps he repented of it afterwards, and so never recommended any such mad pranks to others. Let us hope that was so.

Of course, you do not fast as Jesus did, do you? Forty days upon the stretch is *rather* too long for you, eh? Perhaps you don't fast so much as that in a long lifetime, do you? And why should you, unless you find that you are eating too much? If Jesus had only had the sense to be born in our day, he would neither go to be baptized, go to the Devil, nor yet fast. Such ways are unfit for our busy, restless age and time; and, you know, Jesus was quite as much the creature of his time and circumstances as we are.

You do not cast out devils, as Jesus did, now, do you? I suppose you would not even know a devil if you met one? Nor do you believe that diseases are caused by the patient having devils in him; nay, even insane and mad people you now regard as diseased, not "possessed," or harboring devils, as Jesus was fool enough to believe.

Well, you see, you and I regard Jesus in the same light so far: he mistook diseases for devils; he who came to teach us all things never understood either himself or his neighbors. There was no poor ignorant Jew that ever lived more ignorant than poor Jesus.

You enjoy life, and lose none of its pleasures that you can secure, do you? Of course, you don't believe Jesus when he says, "Blessed (or happy) are they that mourn"—I am sure you don't; you think them distressed about something, don't you? If not, their mourning must be a sham.

You don't believe the "meek inherit the earth," I am sure. It is the warlike, the unprincipled, the ruthless, who inherit the earth, while the meek are trampled into the ground to fertilize the fields stolen from them. The parson who writes *Deeds that Won the Empire* has no more faith in meekness than a pirate has. *Only* he likes fools to fight for him. I am sure, my Christian friend or foe, that you think Christ must have been entirely in error when he uttered the above nonsense.

As for swearing, now, you think no more of taking an oath on the very book in which Christ bids you never to swear at all than you do of putting on or taking off your hat. Until your neighbor treats this command of Christ's with contempt, you never take his word in a court, do you? This shows how far you have left poor Jesus behind.

And do you ever turn the other cheek when smitten upon one? Do you, really? I wouldn't if I were you. Your own priest or parson will laugh at you for it, and tell you that Jesus was only joking.

You give the thief who steals your coat your cloak also, don't you? No! Then Jesus might as well have said, "If any man take *thy* coat, steal *his* in return."

You give to everyone who asks anything of you, do you not? and if your neighbor wants to borrow five pounds of you, you lend it at once, and ask if he wants any more? No! Oh, yes, you do. All Christians do, especially the clergy.

And when Jesus bids you not to pray in presence of others, and to pretend that you have taken your accustomed meals when fasting; and to take no thought for the morrow; to hate all you ought to love most ardently (Luke xiv. 26), you obey him? You don't! Well, give me your hand then. You are so far honest and rational. Now take the other step—you despise Christ and his horrid teaching; now have the decency to leave off pretending to be his follower. Be candid, and let the world know that you dare be true to your convictions, and to harmonize your conduct with your belief.

JOS. SYMES.

Digitized by Google

HE DID THE BEST HE COULD.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." We are not told what "beginning" is here meant; therefore, it is not quite as plain as it might be; but we will suppose that God did the best he could under the circumstances.

"The earth was without form and void." We suppose that God must have known the meaning of this; but the human mind cannot grasp the idea of earth without form. Now, this God is unchangeable, yet for millions of ages he existed, surrounded entirely with nothing. Did he weary of this useless kind of existence? Did he change his inactivity and become a worker? Had the immense quantity of nothing he had on hand just reached the right condition to make worlds of? "God formed man out of dust." Not, like the earth, out of nothing; and he pronounced everything good and very good. Was the devil alive then? If he was, did God know it? We suppose that God did the very best he could to make a perfect race and keep all things just right; but in a short time everything went wrong—mankind became so sinful that God, unchangeable, repented that he had made man. Was there any failure in this work and place? Did man make himself weak, liable to sin? Did he place the temptations before himself? Who was running things about these times? Could not God have made man to so abhor sin that he would have remained perfect? But things were in such an awful shape that God, in the greatness of his power and wisdom, resolved to kill off the race he has made a failure of, and try it over again; and his second effort was a worse failure than the first, for he never could say again that all was good and very good. And this undoubtedly must have been very discouraging, but God did not give up at two failures, and from the repeated trials we would judge that he was very much in earnest, and at all times did the very best he could. Now, it looks to our darkened minds that a being with all power and perfect wisdom could have done better than that. Man, even the godless, worldly man, can take the vicious brutes, and by careful breeding make them loving and kind. If God had only known the secret of thus producing a perfect race, it would have greatly relieved his mind. He would soon have had a race so prone to do good that all the hosts of hell and the numerous other places could not even have tempted him. Will some Reverend please make this suggestion to God?

Now, we are not trying to find fault with God. He surely is doing the best he can, but we do heartily wish that he could do better.

Just think of it: a big hell and a little heaven for God's own creation!

For a long, long time God accepted the blood of beasts as a sin offering, but he at last became dissatisfied, so that he sent his only Son and took his blood to try to better the condition of his own work, his own creation; but so far it is a failure. They (the Reverends) think that they have got a few safe—very few—in the Church to-day that are not sinners. Perhaps a Conservative would place the figures at one in a million. Remember that only a few of the professed Christians even claim to be without sin; then there are about twice as many people who worship Buddha, Mohammed, Brahma, etc., as there are Christians of all kinds, Catholic, Greek, and Protestant combined. Surely there be few—very few—that walk in the straight and narrow way. Then there are almost untold millions who make no profession of religion of any kind. Oh, what an awful mess! Yet, if God is good, he has done, and will do, the very best he can.

Do you think that God weeps—"sheds many bitter tears"—to see what few followers he has, quarrelling among themselves? There are hundreds of different divisions wrangling and striving to convert each other, each claiming that their little "ism" is the only right God-established "ism." Where a house is divided against itself it cannot stand.

The only time that God's people really reigned supreme affords a record of crime so great that it is referred to by all as the "Dark Ages."

Do you think we had better let them try it again?

Our "Christian civilization" is much better when it is largely made of infidels and other worldly people.

It is a little like the bran-and-sawdust slop for the cow—the more bran the better it is.

The more people we have who forsake the supernatural and make a study of the natural, the better it is. So it seems to us; but you should remember that we do not spiritualize; we see with the naked eye.

Everything is as God planned it, or willed it, or God has failed. Which is it? Could God have done better? How much worse could he do? S. F. Davis.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

THE SOCIAL CURATE.

Though intellectually a duffer, the curate is still a power in the land, especially among the feminine portion of the community. The emoluments of the office do not tempt intellectual men, and thinking persons who have any share of mental integrity do not care to bind themselves to articles of belief. But the respectable position of a man of God still attracts the fool of many a family, and he soon finds out that the road to success is to make himself agreeable to the ladies. He speaks to them in dulcet tones of affected deference. He is indispensable at muffin worries, and looks in at Dorcas meetings, and delicately compliments the ladies on the chastity of the undergarments worked for the mission in Central Africa. He knows how to carry on a non-committal flirtation with the pretty young virgins of the congregation, and the wealthy old ones who are verging on the days when they give their hearts unreservedly to God because men will no longer look at them. He is great at five o'clock teas, and an authority on lawn tennis.

A brutal psychologist laid it down that emotional religion is a terrible strain on the Seventh Commandment; but there is an eunuch-like innocence about the social curate which guards him from danger. He is of the third sex. Nonetheless, there is something attractive to the average female in a flirtation with the being who addresses you on Sunday from the pedestal of holy superiority and divinely-ordained apostolical succession. It is pleasant to find that those soft, white hands, that have pointed so beautifully to heaven in prayer, can return a warm pressure, and that those eyes, that in the unapproachable holiness of the pulpit have appealed to the ceiling when addressing the infinite God, can still speak love to eyes which speak again. And then there is the devilish delight of bringing one's spiritual pastor and master to one's feet, which is enough in itself to tempt any ordinary daughter of Eve to flirtation. And the curate usually is by no means coy if only his enslaver is fairly endowed with the good things of this world. For the curate conceives himself as working in the Lord's vineyard for a very poor penny indeed; and, as the laborer is worthy of his hire, it behoves him not to throw his precious self away, but to carefully select such ewe lambs of his flock as are likely to prove most remunerative—ladies with fortune, or widows well provided for. Should he have the misfortune to be himself ensnared, and marry for love, woeful is his fate. From "that dear Mr. Verisopht" he becomes "that poor Mr. Verisopht," the epithet referring less to his poverty—that is probably conspicuous enough—than to his having been trapped by a designing hussey. Henceforward no more worked slippers, no more lawn tennis parties. He has to keep up the appearance of a gentleman on the stipend of a clerk, and with marriage his non-sexual characteristics depart, and he usually has so many children that the divine blessing on the man who has his quiver full reads remarkably like sarcasm. Gilgal.

The Religious Conscience.

A striking example of priest-guided human nature was the great emperor, Charles V. After spending his life in continual wars in the attempt to found a universal monarchy, he retired to a convent, and spent his last days in chanting hymns and self-maceration. And what was the subject of his penitence? He had not succeeded in his aim, and heresy had grown where he sought to establish faith. William Stirling, who tells the story of his cloister life, shows that the only sin which seemed to lie with any weight on his mind was that he had not violently exterminated Luther and his heresy. His last injunction on his successors was to carry out the most extreme measures against heretics.

A Vulgar Error.

Pleasure and pride are not, as duty knows
(Though parsons think them), virtue's deadliest foes.
The vice which always serves the Devil best
(Perhaps the parson) is self-interest.

J. T. Rogers.

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

It is just thirty years this October since Deutsch contributed to the *Quarterly Review* that notable article on the Talmud which showed how much Christianity was indebted to the old commentaries of the Jewish law. The article, with his equally concentrated and well-digested article on Islam, is reprinted in *The Remains of Emanuel Deutsch.*

* * *

The Martyrdom of Percy Whitcomb, Socialist and Agnostic, edited by Erwin McCall, is a sad story of a United States Methodist minister, who, coming to see the falsity of his faith, blows out his brains at a Church Congress at Chicago (Watts & Co.; 6d.). The story is told with feeling, and even eloquence; but there is a suspicion of juvenility and rant about it, though Mr. McCall might point to the actual case of poor Edward Easton, who shot himself in St. Paul's as a protest against the dogmas he had been brought up to believe. Despite this juvenile air, there is real power in the little book, and the indictment brought by Percy Whitcomb is not wanting in shrewdness. For instance, he says: "Fellow truth-seekers, when you hear a man advocating any doctrine or maintaining any opinion, do you first ask yourselves, 'What is the relation subsisting between this doctrine and the salary received by the party advocating it?' And then, applying that logical principle of exclusion which you all learned in the schools, ask this other question, 'Would this person receive this salary just the same if he should perchance advocate an opposite doctrine?'" The hero-martyr is called Socialist and Agnostic. The author seems to be Egoist and Atheist. He is certainly worthy of something better than blowing out his brains, and we look forward to his yet giving us a work superior to the *brochure* before us.

* * *

The Triumph of Mammon; or, Christ Betrayed by the Clergy, by Mme. Stella Beatti (Watts & Co.; 2d.), is another eloquent denunciation of clerical hypocrisy, cant, and lucre-loving, by one who is apparently a Christian, or who regards the Christian ideal with reverence. Mme. Beatti says that even now "were Christ to come again, in the guise of a poor man, associating with the poor and downtrodden, and uttering threats and denunciations against the proud ones, the rich ones, the titled ones of the earth, even now the chief priests would be foremost, and their voices loudest, in the ranks of those shouting, 'Away with him! Away with him!'"

* * *

The Old Bible from a New Point of View, by "Incognito" (Watts & Co.; 2d.), shows how Dean Farrar really gives up all that gave vitality to the old faith. "Incognito" holds that the clergy were more honest and clear-sighted who stated that such criticism of the Bible would undermine faith in the mystery of Christ, and, indeed, in the supernatural deity.

* * *

M. Guyau's *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir* has at last been published, by Heinemann, under the title of *The Non-Religion of the Future.* We hope to further direct the work to our readers' attention.

* * *

Rather late in the day Mr. W. Walsh issues, through Swan Sonnenschein and Co., *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement.* The work is said to be the result of immense labor and expert acquaintance with the various phases of the revival of sacerdotalism.

* * *

Sir Charles Gavan Duffy relates in the *Contemporary Review* that Browning confessed that his portrait of Bishop Blougram was intended for Cardinal Wiseman. There are, however, persons in the English Church for whom, with a few modifications, this subtle study of self-deceived, elaborate hypocrisy would serve.

Obituary.

South Shields.—A very quiet gathering attended at Harton Cemetery, on the 8th inst., to witness the interment of the remains of Captain John Thomson, a well-known and highly-respected member of the National Secular Society. Deceased had been in ill-health for some time, and died, firm in his convictions, on the 4th inst., aged 59. Mr. S. M. Peacock read the burial service, in the presence of a large number of members and friends.—R. Chapman.

The late Edward Maitland was the son of a Brighton clergyman, and himself intended for holy orders. His revolt against the black business is seen in his one good work, *The Pilgrim and the Shrine.* He had travelled much, but, under the leading of Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford, became a sort of Theosophist, and the founder of a new and strange "Gospel of Interpretation," which found few disciples. But for the early theological virus, he would have been a notable man.

PAINE AND AMERICA.

A long and eloquent article on Paine and the American People appears in Brann's *Iconoclast,* of Texas. We must give space for the conclusion: "When *The Age of Reason* appeared, the Church of England people and the Puritans dominated the religious thought of this land. The clergymen of the first were royalists almost to a man, and hated Paine for political reasons; the parsons of the latter had not become broad enough to tolerate a man who objected to boring the tongues of quakers and witch-burning as mild religious diversions, no matter what services he had rendered their country and mankind. The author of our liberties was fairly hounded to death by these harpies, and ever since a putrid tide of 'Christian' calumny has rolled across his sepulchre. To this good day the makers of American histories and cyclopedias dare not accord to Thomas Paine the credit that is justly his due, lest they lose a few thirty dollars. The *Columbian Cyclopedia,* while admitting that he 'turned the tide' in favor of freedom, is so eager to belittle and belie him for its publisher's profit that it flatly contradicts itself and garbles dates in an heroic attempt to rehash all the old calumnies..... Gradually Paine's services to this country have been hidden under such piles of compost, and now the masses know him only as the man who dared deny in the shadow of guillotine that Jesus Christ was 'the only begotten Son of God.' But the tide of falsehood is ebbing, and some future generation will do him justice. The day will assuredly come when even the star of Washington will pale before that of Paine—when the creature of the Revolution will no longer outshine its creator. 'The years are seldom unjust.'"

PROFANE JOKES.

A clergyman, visiting an old woman in the agricultural district, read to her the description of the crucifixion and the scenes previous to it. She listened very attentively and moaned audibly, and at last fairly cried. He was naturally pleased at such a proof of the power of his ministry, and, unwilling to weaken the effect, closed the book in silence. The old lady continued wiping her eyes with the corner of her apron. "'Deed, sir, it's all vera sad, I'm sure; but," she added briskly, "as it happened a long way off, and a good while ago, let's hope it's not true."

"Who was St. Elizabeth?" Reply—"*The Virgin Mary's husband's wife.*" So said a youngster to one of the Liverpool diocesan inspectors at an examination.

Minister (to candidate for church membership)—"Of course, Dugald, you have read the *Confession of Faith?*" Dugald—"No, inteet, serr; I neffer do reat ta last dying speeches of condemt creeminals, neffer inteet; and I do hope you do not think me so depased as to reat ta wan you hev shust mentioned."

Village Parson (entering country editor's office)—"You promised to publish my sermon on Monday, but I do not find it in the latest issue of your paper." Editor—"I sent it up. It surely went in. What was the name of it?" Parson—"Feed my lambs." Editor (after searching through paper)—"Ah—yes—um—here it is. You see, we've got a new foreman; he has put it under the head of 'Agricultural Notes,' as 'Hints on the Care of Sheep.'"

"Do you always say your prayers at bedtime?" asked the Sunday-school teacher affectionately. "No, miss, not regular, I don't," was the reply. "Why, Mary, are you not afraid to go to sleep at night without asking a blessing?" "Not when I sleep in the middle, I ain't, miss."

Sunday-school Teacher—"And when the prodigal son returned home, his father fell upon his neck and blessed him. Why did he do that?" Scholar—"'Cause he was so glad to think he didn't come back with a wife and family, I s'pose."

"Well, Elsie," said Mrs. Moral Suasion to her three-year-old daughter, "did you tell God you were sorry for being naughty?" "Ess, I did, and he said: 'Great Scot, Elsie, zat's all right; zere's lot's of 'em worser zan you are.'"

Ignorance and fear generate and nourish superstition. By how much the more anyone's mind is weak and unenlightened, by so much the stronger will superstitious influence be found to have on it. With a much better prospect of success, therefore, if superstition stand in your way, may you undertake to convince ten men than one woman, or a hundred sensible and well-informed people than ten of such as are ignorant and stupid.—*J. L. Mosheim.*

The ignorant call him a heretic whom they cannot refute. —*Thomaso Campanella.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Apostles' Creed."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Jesus Christ Neither God nor Man." October 27, at 8.30, Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Triumph of Reason over Faith."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Character."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Class Distinctions in England.—(4) The Lower Middle Class."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Lower Middle Class."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, W. Heaford, "The Gods and their Doom."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, S. Jones.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. Heaford.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, H. P. Ward, "Is there a God?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): Stanley Jones—11, "Religion and Art"; 3, "Lord Salisbury and Evolution"; 7, "The Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, Politician and Philosopher."

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Keast, "Re-organization."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, H. McGuinness, "Clergy and Common Sense."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner—12, "School-taught Morality"; 6.30, "Some Plain Words about India."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, R. Manton, "The Age of Reason."

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, Members' meeting—"The Prospects of the Branch."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Countess Alice Kearney, "Old Age Pensions and the Poor Law."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Nature Myths."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Animals that are of Service to Plants and Plants that Live on Animals." Illustrated by limelight lantern views. Free.

NEWCASTLE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): C. Cohen—11, "Individual Liberty *v.* State Action"; 3, "Why we Reject Christianity"; 7, "Priest *v.* Teacher."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Musical evening, etc. 27, Members' and friends' Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5.30.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-alley): 7, H. Snell, "Rome, Ancient and Modern."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, An Address.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 24, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 25 and 26, Stockton; 31, Sheffield. November 7, Blackburn; 14, Manchester; 21, Huddersfield.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 24, m., Westminster; e., Victoria Park. 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—October 24, m., Mile End. 31, m., Limehouse; e., Ball's Pond. 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

November Number now ready. 28 pages, 3d. post free.

CONTENTS:—

The Judgment of Paris-up-to-Date. By LEIGHTON PAGAN.
Spiritual Love. By WILLIAM PLATT.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, *p. 22*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, *p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 8s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 3s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 2s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Digitized by Google

Important Contributions by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Edward Clodd.

Now ready, price 6d., by post 7½d.,

THE

AGNOSTIC ANNUAL

FOR 1898.

Edited by Charles A. Watts.

The Progress of Liberal Thought	C. E. PLUMPTRE
Liberal Orthodoxy	PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH
The Will to Believe	LESLIE STEPHEN
The Sources of Modern Doubt	JOSEPH MCCABE
The Illusion of Progress	MORTIMER CECIL
Is Progress an Illusion?—A Reply	F. J. GOULD
Dr. Farrar on the Bible	EDWARD CLODD
Immortality in the Light of Evolution	CHARLES WATTS
"In a Strait Betwixt Two"	W. STEWART ROSS
The Gods	CHARLES E. HOOPER
Is a Moral Interregnum Possible?	F. JORDAN, F.R.O.S.
Agnosticism in the Broad Church	AMOS WATERS

London: WATTS & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.

SHAKESPEARE. 6d

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 6d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation tory 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

ANOTHER REDUCTION. Our stock of Ladies' Mackintoshes are now reduced to 230 Garments, latest style, mostly Browns and Greys, and lengths from 50 inches to 60 inches to fit only all 36-inch bust. CLEARING PRICE, 10s. 6d. each.

With each Mackintosh we send free of cost 1 Copy of G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* (2s. 6d.).

LOT 11 1 Pair All Wool Blankets. 1 Pair Large Sheets. 1 Quilt. 1 Tablecloth. **21s.** CARRIAGE PAID.

With every parcel of **Lot 11** we enclose John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People* handsomely bound, with Portrait of the Author in each.

This offer is only open till October 31, 1897.



Heavy Irish Frieze Overcoats.

25s. each.

30s. ,,

35s. ,,

Send for Patterns.

AGENTS

WANTED EVERYWHERE.

WORKING MEN,

INCREASE YOUR EARNINGS.

Terms on application.

Ladies' Dresses, Costumes, or Jackets

TO MEASURE

21s. each.

Patterns and Self-Measurement Forms free to any Address.

NEW WINTER PATTERNS

NOW READY, SENT TO ANY ADDRESS POST FREE.

All kinds of Clothing and Heavy Drapery; any Length cut, or Garments made to measure.

All Goods supplied Direct from the Warehouse.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 44. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE

ARE WE DYING?

THE attitude of the ordinary press towards Secularism is wonderful; or rather it would be wonderful if we did not understand the commercial principles which decide the policy of ninety-nine out of every hundred newspapers. One would think that the first business of a newspaper is to give news, and it appears to be so in America. But in England the news is very carefully selected. It is an understood thing that causes and movements which the general party public dislike, and which are anathema to the general body of advertisers, must be steadily tabooed. Not so much as a hint must appear of their very existence, unless occasionally when it happens to be possible to misrepresent or malign them, or when it happens that they command a certain number of votes which it is necessary to capture or conciliate. A Christian meeting, for instance, being a "respectable" gathering, will receive notice if it only numbers two or three dozen; while a Secularist meeting, being otherwise, will be passed over in silence though it numbers hundreds. For a long time the late Charles Bradlaugh was a victim of this boycott. And it took a curious and ridiculous form when his parliamentary struggle made him the cynosure of all eyes. He would sometimes deliver three lectures, one political and two anti-theological, or the reverse, as the case might be; and the press would report his political oration, and say absolutely nothing about the anti-theological ones, or merely say "Mr. Bradlaugh lectured again in the evening on" whatever was his subject.

Bradlaugh's atheism was a distinctive element of his intellectual life and his public advocacy, yet when he became famous the Liberal press treated it as only his private hobby, which was to be tolerated, but as far as possible ignored; while the Tory press, on the other hand, made it the occasion of misrepresentation and calumny.

Ever since Bradlaugh's death the press, both Liberal and Conservative, has pursued its old policy of the taboo, tempered with occasional sneers and falsehoods. Scarcely anything our party does is reported. When we ran Mr. Watts for the School Board in Finsbury, for instance, most of the newspapers treated him as non-existent. The policy of imprisonment being played out, the alternative policy is one of ostracism. This is quite consistent, however, with well-timed detraction. Accordingly, we find paragraphs going the round from time to time, hinting or even stating that the Secularism which has been so studiously ignored is actually defunct, or in the last stage of dissolution. One such paragraph is the following, which we clip from an Edinburgh journal:—

> "The National Secular Society, which made some noise in the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh's time, and of which Mrs. Annie Besant was a star, is fading out of existence. The N. S. S. could command at its prime the support of many thousands in London, and throughout the provinces, and attained, apart from its irreligious propaganda, some force in local politics. Now the Society has no meeting-place in London of any note; its provincial branches are few and weak."

Now we are used to this sort of thing. It will not spoil our appetite or disturb our sleep. Secularism is not to be overthrown with straws. How many times have we heard of its death! It dies to-day, and again to-morrow, and again the next day. But no one ever sees its funeral.

In this particular instance the press is misled, if indeed it *is* misled, by a handful of sterile malcontents, capable for a moment of a little mischief, but quite incapable of any constructive effort. They are utterly careless what they say or do as long as it is calculated to injure the National Secular Society. Let us see, however, what there is in this inspired paragraph.

The first trick is to compare the state of the National Secular Society in a time of quiet with its state in a time of intense persecution. Bradlaugh fought year after year, and the Society itself, apart from his position and personality, was never very flourishing. He attributed this to the disabling effect of the Blasphemy Laws, which rob Secularism of the legal rights of property and endowment which are enjoyed by Christianity. During his parliamentary struggle the Society grew in strength and numbers, and this progressive movement reached its climax during the present writer's imprisonment for "blasphemy" in 1883. The persecution was a splendid advertisement; it also rallied to the Secular standard a multitude of those who, while still Freethinkers, were indifferent for want of excitement, or had engaged themselves in political and social movements. This tremendous enthusiasm was bound to be followed by some reaction. In any case the Society was bound to return to its normal condition. A few years of quiet life told their tale, and when Bradlaugh resigned the presidency, less than a year before his death, everything connected with the movement had suffered. Even the circulation of his paper, the *National Reformer*, was not half what it was six years before, during the acme of excitement.

While that persecution and excitement lasted, people saw Bradlaugh's meetings, and meetings against the Blasphemy Laws, and they often imagined that the National Secular Society was a formidable organization. And so it was in a sense, for it included a number of stalwart Freethinkers who spared neither time, energy, nor money in resisting bigotry; and the same thing would occur again if the occasion arose. But it was not a formidable organization in any other sense. Its income was never large; in fact, grumblers often said that most of it was spent on the secretary's salary. Nor had the Society an office. Letters used to be addressed to the secretary's residence; and when Mr. Forder became a publisher, they were addressed to his place of business.

Bradlaugh was a giant, and the Society in his time was little else than a reflection of his great personality. He

Digitized by Google

was not really interested in it as an independent organization. He was a fighter, he lived in a time of deadly combat, and neither his nature nor the circumstances were favorable to the building-up of a strong self-governing party. That is a labor of time, of many hands, of many minds, and many energies.

It is not true that the Society has suffered by Bradlaugh's death in the way that is now suggested. It has lost a leader of immense personal power and popularity; but we are not aware that anyone is responsible for that accident, not even his successor n the presidency. There is really no use in continually saying that Bradlaugh is dead. We regret it as profoundly as the perpetual lamentators, but we keep on with the work, in company with our gallant colleagues, who know what it is to serve an unpopular and unprofitable cause. The Society's income has not diminished since Bradlaugh left it. It is larger than it was the day after his resignation. We have a respectable office in the Strand, and our secretary is paid a fair salary. It is said that we have lost the Hall of Science. But we never had it. Bradlaugh used it on Sundays and some other occasions, paying rent like any other occupant. He did not leave us a property in a single brick in the building. We tried to purchase it, and we failed, and it passed out of the old lessee's hands. But we have other meeting-places, in the West-end, at Camberwell, and at Ball's Pond. It is simply a lie that we only meet in the streets.

Our journals are as numerous and flourishing as ever. The press ignores the *Freethinker*, but it still subsists. We have many good men in the lecture field, and wherever Branches work with energy and harmony there are large audiences and an improving membership. Let those who growl and grumble see if they can beat our performance. That is a far harder task than irresponsible criticism. It may be added that our new Treasurer's Scheme promises in time to be a thorough success, and that we shall probably have very shortly a security for our property under a legal incorporation. And the moral is—Let us get on with our work.

G. W. FOOTE.

INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION.*

DR. CROZIER, the author of a thoughtful book on *Civilization and Progress*, has followed up that work by an attempt to apply its principles to the history of intellectual development. He may, perhaps, be described as a Rationalist with a Platonic bent. That, at any rate, is the impression given by his first volume. He passes in review the labors of his predecessors, Hegel, Comte, Buckle, and Spencer, in attempting a philosophy of history, and holds that only within our own times have the labors of the higher critics brought together a body of historical facts sufficient to justify the endeavor to reduce them to fixed and scientific laws. This may be sufficient as against the first three, but I confess that it seems to me that both Comte and Spencer go deeper than Dr. Crozier, in that they take us down to the savage basis which underlies the higher reaches of thought, with which only he is concerned. Dr. Crozier may say that these alone are of importance to us. He remarks, indeed:—

> "The larger part of Spencer's work is taken up with exhibiting in detail the great fact that, just as in the world of nebulæ and stars, in the solar system, in the crust of the earth, and in the animals and plants on it, so, too, in the intellectual and moral worlds, every new ideal of morality that is dropped like a seed into the world will, like a seed, pass gradually from its first vague and indeterminate condition into a highly complex and involved one; will split itself, as it were, into endless differentiations, and into ever and ever greater complexity and variety of form, whether that germ be a religious precept, a principle of morality, a new style of painting or architecture. This fact of endless differentiation, however, although a truth of prime importance in its bearings on our conception of the universe as a whole, is barren and useless for the more limited purpose to which the author of this book aims to put it; as the sky, although spanning the world and being the abode of the gods, is useless to protect the homes of men from the wind and rain.'

What, then, does Dr. Crozier offer us? It is an evolutionary deity in new shape—a divine idea working, not as man works by good for good, but through evil to good, exhibiting, as our author says, "a steady tendency to the production of higher and higher moral and social relations among men; a tendency apparently never lost sight of for a single moment, and now visible everywhere to us, athwart all the impediments, the immorality, the stupidity, the delusions, and even the frauds by which, in actual history, it was worked out." God, it seems, is a supreme Jesuit, ever dabbling in falsehood, fraud, and all kinds of evil, yet ever justified by the result. Nay, the result is so pleasing to Dr. Crozier that he seems almost in love with the process. Judas and Pontius Pilate were as necessary to the Christian scheme of salvation as Jesus and his apostles, but the world has not hitherto given them equal credit. Paul says that the heathen gods were devils, but, according to Dr. Crozier, all supernaturalisms were equally suited to those who held them at the time, and all individuals that ever lived were but unconscious instruments to the one great end of morality, and the elevation and expansion of the human spirit.

Dr. Crozier starts with Greek philosophy. Thales and his theory, according to our author, were to lead up to Plato and Aristotle, and these, through neo-Platonism, to Christianity. We then have an *excursus* on the evolution of Hindoo thought, Vedantism, and Buddhism, with a chapter on "Modern Theosophy," whose ancient pretences Dr. Crozier considers very seriously. One sentence is worth quoting at length. It ends by saying that "Theosophy, like some opossum among the higher mammalia, is the sole representative, in the Western world, of a type and mode of thought which attained its culmination in the East some two thousand years ago, but which, cut off since then from European influences, has remained stagnant, while European thought has steadily gone on evolving into higher and higher forms."

Coming back to the question of Paganism and Christianity, with which Dr. Crozier next deals, our author seems to me to regard too much the worst aspect of the former, and the best of the latter. At any rate, I would recommend the perusal of Mr. J. A. Farrer's *Paganism and Christianity* as an offset to his theories. Dr. Crozier goes into the question of the evolution of Christianity, and here I must follow him; but, before doing so, I at once express my opinion on his general thesis. Let it be granted that the religions of the past have subserved some useful purposes. All that we are now is the result of all the past, and, so far as the present is approved, that past may be defensible. But might not things have been very much better than they are but for much in that past? Dr. Crozier can fall back on the assumption that all things were necessary simply because they were. Anyway, I have no admiration for a father who can only train his child by offering it illusive hopes, and frightening it with bogies; and retain no reverence for a God who uses alike Judas and Jesus, Borgia and Bruno, for purposes whose ultimate issues we can never know. Falsehood and fraud may have served some purpose, but, once seen to be false and fraudulent, they cannot be countenanced by those who regard intellectual integrity. Christianity, however adapted to a race of slaves, is not true. Its alleged miracles did not happen. Its scheme of salvation, through the blood of an innocent person, is false and pernicious. Its God and its devil, its heaven and hell, are alike imaginary. It has outlived any possible usefulness. Christianity, like the *os coccygis*, has ceased to serve any vital purpose, and is but a reminder of the superstitions of the past. The majority of educated persons have outgrown its real teachings. It is a bogie presented by interested and insincere persons, who have ceased to believe in it themselves, but who force it, at the public expense, on the plastic minds of little children, and find their warrant in the advocacy, by Dr. Crozier and other Rationalists, of its past utility. Freethinkers, too, have their work, no whit less important than that of the teachers of the old supernaturalisms.

Yea, the yeast of evolution works, as hitherto, for ever;
Far are now the wallowing dragons in their slime;
Ah, but further, further, further is the long, long way before us,
And new visions wait revealment down the thoroughfare of time.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

* *History of Intellectual Development on the Lines of Modern Evolution.* By John Beattie Crozier. Vol. i. (Longmans.) 528 pp.; 14s.

Digitized by Google

CHRIST-LIKE FALLACIES.

(Concluded from page 675.)

CHRIST'S fallacy in considering himself "The Light of the World" has been shared by most of those who profess to follow him. Hence, despite the fact that, according to the New Testament, he was subject to all the usual weaknesses and passions that belong to ordinary human beings, he has been extolled as the very essence of perfection, as one presenting to the world the best possible example, and as having established a system which introduced into the world the highest morality. Further, it is said that his teachings have been the cause of the progress of modern society. I have just been reading the report of a special sermon delivered so far back as Christmas Day, 1872, in the Temple Church, London, by the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, from the text: "The Book of the Generation of Christ." During the sermon the rev. gentleman said that without Christ "there would have been no Christendom, no modern Europe, no emancipation for the slave, no dignity for woman, no elevation of humanity into the virtue of unselfishness, into a duty of charity. Then there would have been no birth of philanthropy as the mother of beneficence, no charity kindled at Christ's altar, to be the light of suffering, struggling, down-trodden humanity. Civilization itself would have been impeded, and theology would have been still the prerogative of the Jew and the synonym of all narrowness, exclusiveness, bigotry, and self-righteousness."

Similar extravagant language as this has been uttered by many Christian exponents since Dr. Vaughan thus spoke. In my recent debates the same wild statements were made, and the same preposterous notions were propounded by my opponents. Greater fallacies in connection with Christ it would be difficult to indulge in. It is marvellous how theological theories prevent adherents from recognising the true nature of historical facts. Is it true that without the advent of Christ the world would have been a moral and intellectual blank? If so, how, in the first place, do Christians account for the philosophy, philanthropy, and high-toned morality that were the pride of ancient times? As J. Toulmin Smith observes in his *Progress of Philosophy:* "The man who can read the writings, study and consider the opinions, the reflections, and the sentiments of a Plato or a Cicero, without beholding with amazement and with rapture the excelling powers of mind, the varied and the happy illustrations, the unbounded flow of thought which are discovered and displayed in the perusal of their pages, must indeed be indifferent—callous—dead to all that is beautiful, to all that is sublime, to all that is magnificent in conception and delineation" (p. 11). What better ethical gems can be selected from the New Testament than the following, which we take from Rhys David's *Buddhism?* "Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred—hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature." "One may conquer a thousand men in battle, but he who conquers himself is the greatest victor." "As the rain breaks in on an ill-thatched hut, so passion breaks in on the untrained mind." "Let no man think lightly of sin, saying in his heart, It cannot overtake me." "As long as sin bears no fruit, the fool thinks it honey; but when the sin ripens, then indeed he goes down in sorrow." "Let us live happily, not hating those who hate us." "Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good,.....the stingy by a gift, the liar by truth." "Let a man speak the truth; let him not yield to anger" (pp. 128 and 131). With Buddha, be it remembered, ethical teachings were not merely empty words; they enforced practical, personal improvement. Even the Rev. Dr. Caird admits this when he says: "Now, it is the singular merit of Buddhism, whatever view we take of the ultimate end to which it pointed as constituting the salvation of man, that the way by which it taught men to reach that end was simply that of inward purification and moral goodness" (*The Faiths of the World*, p. 52). These are only a few samples of the grand, moral, and sublime practical teachings which were propounded long before the period when Christ is said to have lived, and they show the utter fallacy of the claim that the world is indebted to him for the ethics by which our lives should be regulated. Can anything be produced from the alleged teachings of Jesus better calculated to regulate human conduct than what has been here cited from men who lived prior to the Christian era? If so, let it be named!

In the second place, if Christ's presence were the principal cause of human progress, is it not a severe reproach upon the conduct of the Christian Deity that he should have kept from the world the power to elevate humanity until about two thousand years ago, and then to have sent it in the person of one who, up to the present moment, has not made himself or his principles known to more than one-third of the human race? If a knowledge of Christ be requisite to human redemption, the great majority of mankind are still unredeemed. Such a supposition, however, is only a dream of the religious enthusiasts. Modern improvements cannot be traced to any one man or any one system; they are rather the result of efforts of many men who lived in different periods, each striving in his day to improve upon the labors of his predecessor. The improved condition of the sciences of astronomy, geology, and physiology; the steam engine, etc., show how progress has gone on since the men whose names are associated with their discoveries first propounded their theories. And so with theology and ethics; the systems taught by Christ and his apostles have given way to professions which are thought more compatible with present requirements. Indications, indeed, are not wanting that what is termed the Christian religion will ultimately be replaced by one of a less dogmatic nature. Moreover, if the influence of Christ has been so potent as an incentive to progress, how has it happened that believers in Christianity have been persistent opponents to social and political advancement? Washington Wilks, in his *History of the Half Century*, from 1800 to 1850, says: "We have seen religion as embodied in a Protestant establishment resisting the concession of civil rights to four millions of British subjects, till statesmen and soldiers could see no alternative but concession or the horrors of civil war; resisting the removal of degrading disabilities from the members of communities similar in faith to their oppressors, until the growth of political liberty wrested away the power of vengeance and tyranny; resisting the concession of political enfranchisement to the demands of an unanimous and indignant nation; resisting, in short, whatever was obnoxious to the ruling powers, so long as it was obnoxious; active only in defence of its own outrageous privileges and noisome corruptions. We have seen in Dissenting sects, it may be, something of a similar spirit" (p. 34).

Further, in the New Testament there is much said against secular reform, and no system is propounded for securing the general temporal advancement of the people. For instance, nothing is stated in denunciation of slavery, in condemnation of poverty—two of the greatest obstacles to the enjoyment of mankind. Neither are there any adequate plans laid down in the book to secure political rights, a system of education, or the elevation and proper position of woman. Christ certainly showed but little respect to his own mother, and St. Paul enjoins absolute obedience upon the part of a wife to her husband *in all things*. As to regard for the sick, and the exercise of general benevolence, Max Müller and others have shown that these virtues were largely exercised in Greece and Rome long before Christianity appeared. We seldom hear now the fallacy urged that hospitals originated with the Christian faith. And so recently as October 11 the *Birmingham Post* reports a speech by the Bishop of Hereford, in which he said "that it was humiliating to find in the most Christian country in the world, and after so many centuries of Christian teaching, so little done to preserve children from those evil influences against which even the heathen philosophers, long before the Christian era, warned them." In the *New Age* of October 7 appears a report of an interview with the Rev. Mr. Douglas Morrison upon "The Increase of Serious Crime." The rev. gentleman, who is an acknowledged authority on the subject, says: "Our English law permits greater severity to be used on prisoners than could be exercised in Russian prisons." This is a telling comment upon the practical influence of Christ's advice, to be merciful, to "love your enemies," and to "forgive your brother seventy-times seven." The truth is, as Lecky points out, the spirit that prompts mercy and a just exercise of humanity, "in which some have imagined that they have discovered the influence of Christianity, was, in fact, simply an echo of the teaching of ancient Greece, and especially of Zeno, the founder of the sect who had laid down, long before the dawn of Christianity, the broad principle that all men

Digitized by Google

are by nature equal, and that virtue alone establishes a difference between them" (*History of European Morals*, vol. i., p. 325). CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XI.—THE MIRACLES OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

THERE is one matter in which the Fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptics: this is, that the former is, for the most part, an independent account of the life of Christ; but, as a consequence of this independence, this Gospel contains a large number of sayings and doings, ascribed to Jesus, which appear to have been altogether unknown to the other three evangelists. In this Gospel, as has been shown, a new mystical kind of language, not found in the Synoptics, is introduced, of which the subject-matter, style, phraseology, and peculiarities of expression correspond exactly with the "First Epistle of John"—the obvious and only rational inference being that the writer of the Epistle, who was beyond all doubt the author of the Gospel, was himself the author of the sayings which he has placed in the mouth of Jesus.

It is upon the sole and unsupported authority of this veracious writer that we are asked to give credence to the following alleged miraculous performances of Jesus: transforming water into wine, curing instantaneously a nobleman's son, giving sight to a man born blind, healing a cripple, restoring a dead man to life, and causing a wonderful draught of fishes. Those who consider the bare word of this writer to be of sufficient weight to establish the reality of these alleged supernatural occurrences are, of course, free to believe them; but they should, at the same time, bear in mind that this evangelist does not go so far as to say that he actually witnessed these wonders himself. He merely records them for others to believe (xx. 31). There are, further, some remarkable statements made in connection with some of these miracles which it may not be out of place to notice.

In the story of the raising of Lazarus we are told that, after the sisters had sent to Jesus informing him of the illness of their brother, that great teacher remarked: "This sickness is not unto death, but *for the glory of God*, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby" (xi. 3). Then, instead of going to heal the sick man, he remained two days in the same place, after which he said to his disciples: "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, *to the intent that ye may believe*" (xi. 15). Also, when about to call Lazarus from the tomb, he told one of the sisters that she was about to see "the glory of God" (xi. 40). It is clear, then, from these statements that the sickness and death of Lazarus, supposing them to be facts, were arranged in order that Jesus, in restoring him to life, might give an exhibition of his wonderful power, and so bring praise and glory to himself and to God. The deity was to be glorified, not for smiting Lazarus with a deadly distemper and causing him to suffer all the agonies of death, but for raising him up afterwards—the first part of the performance being coolly ignored.

In the case of the nobleman's son, Jesus is represented as curing the lad without seeing him. All he did was to say to the father, "Go thy way; thy son liveth" (iv. 50), and the son was healed in that hour. If we ask why this simple method was not employed in the curing of Lazarus, the answer is that, in the first place, it was not so conducive to "the glory of God"; and, in the next, that a great miracle was needed to strengthen the faith of the disciples. It is true that after the little conjuring feat of turning water into wine—by which, it is said, Jesus "manifested his glory"—it is stated that "his disciples believed on him" (ii. 11); but this faith was a thing of the past, and something more wonderful had to be performed. Hence, Lazarus was condemned to die for the rekindling of the faith of the disciples and for "the glory of God."

We come next to the giving sight to a blind man (ix. 1–7). This miracle is thus recorded:—

> "And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*.....When he had thus spoken he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.....He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

One wonders, upon reading this unsavory method of cure, in which of the substances mentioned—the saliva, the road dust, or the water of Siloam—lay the healing virtue. If in none of them, then it was nothing less than idiotic to go through such a farcical performance. With regard to the question, "Who did sin?" it gives us a high opinion of the intelligence of the disciples when we find them asking whether the man himself had sinned before he was born. Christ's reply, however, furnishes us with matter for thought. The man was born blind, he says, in order that "the works of God"—which is but another name for a display of his miraculous power—should be "made manifest" in his cure; that is, the man was doomed to live in darkness from the time of his birth until, say, middle age, in order that Jesus, when he came, might by a miracle give him sight, and in performing this "work of God" bring fresh glory to himself and to "the Father." This sample of the Lord's methods illustrates that deity's statement in Isaiah (lv. 8): "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." It is to be hoped that few men in the present enlightened age would have the heart, if they had the power, to employ the methods which the Fourth evangelist attributes to "the Lord."

Leaving this matter, we come to another of "the works of God"—viz., the miraculous healing of an infirm man (v. 2-9). This is one of the miracles that were written merely to be believed; it is not in the least likely that the writer believed it himself:—

> "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, or Bethsaida, or Bethzetha, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered [waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water, whoso then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had]. And a certain man was there which had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole? The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked."

The words within brackets are omitted in the Revised Version because they are not found in two of the oldest MSS.; but they have to be taken into account all the same, for the reply of the sick man proves them to have formed part of the original narrative. The Revisers would, no doubt, have been glad to have omitted the anecdote altogether; for, if ever a story bore upon its face the impress of falsehood, this story is one. If it were an undoubted historical fact that at certain seasons a real live angel came down from heaven and "troubled" the water of a pool in Jerusalem, and that whoever stepped in first after that was cured of any disease or deformity he had—if this were a historical fact, it would have been known, not only in Palestine, but throughout the civilized world, and people from every province of the Roman empire would have flocked to the holy city to see the heavenly being descend. But, needless to say, no one, except the forger of the Fourth Gospel, appears ever to have heard of such a wonder. We learn from Josephus that there were within Jerusalem a fountain of Siloam and Solomon's pool, and that there were in the palace grounds many porticoes and pillars, with "groves of trees, and long walks through them, with deep canals and cisterns"; but we know of no pool designated Bethesda, or Bethsaida, or Bethzetha—the New Testament MSS. are not agreed even as to the name of this wonderful fount. Possibly the hill Bezetha suggested to the writer a name for his imaginary pool.

Coming back to the Gospel narrative, and the "multitude" of sick, blind, halt, and withered folk who were lying around the pool waiting for the coming of the angel, we notice that Jesus, moved with compassion at the sight of such a number of afflicted persons, graciously decided to work another miracle "for the glory of God." So, singling out *one* of the sufferers—one cure would be sufficient to

Digitized by Google

display his power and secure that glory—he healed him, and left all the other unfortunates to their fate. Shortly afterwards, we are told, he found the man he had cured in the temple, "and said unto him: Behold, thou art made whole; *sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee*" (v. 14). Here it becomes evident that Christ believed—or the Gospel writer believed for him, which comes to the same thing—that disease and deformity were sent as a punishment for sins committed by the individuals so afflicted. The man who had been healed was evidently a cripple, for he was unable, unaided, to get into the water. Yet the loss of the use of his limbs is stated to have come upon him by reason of sins he had committed thirty-eight years before. Truly, Jesus was a wise man! He not only believed that dumbness and blindness were sometimes caused by invisible demons (Matthew ix. 33; xii. 22, etc.), but he likewise believed that diseases and infirmities were sent as a punishment for sins committed against God. How any rational person can credit Christ—that is, the fictitious Jesus of the Gospels—with the possession of superhuman wisdom, goodness, and every known virtue, is a matter that passes all understanding.

ABRACADABRA.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION.*

HISTORY OF THE BIBLE.

THE section of his Studies in Comparative Religions which Major-General Forlong devotes to "Sacred Books of the West" is well worth reprinting separately, for here the results of sceptical criticism are stated in a manner that does not mince matters. Readers of the Preface to the Revised Version of the Bible are aware that "The Received, or, as it is commonly called, the Massoretic Text of the Old Testament Scriptures, has come down to us in manuscripts which are of no very great antiquity, and which all belong to the same family or recension." There is an immense gap between the dates when the Bible books are alleged to have been composed and that in which they were first known to history—viz., in a Greek version called the Septuagint, and again an immense gap between this period and the oldest extant Hebrew MSS. Hence the importance of an investigation of the Septuagint, which is claimed to be a thousand years older than any known Hebrew text. This Major-General Forlong enters into with the result of showing that what passes as the Septuagint—which, by the way, differs from the Hebrew very considerably—is itself a composite of no real authority, the original having been lost at the burning of the Bruchium Library, B.C. 47; while the Roll of the Temple Standard, said to have been sent to Rome by Josephus, has also disappeared. Our author justly remarks at the outset of his inquiry:—

> "The honest histories of Bibles have yet to be written, for ecclesiastics—almost the only writers thereon—have been hitherto bound under vows to strengthen and support these props and foundations of their faith, and to avoid all that seemed to shake or undermine them. Where learned and capable they have, as a rule, shrunk from exposing the weaknesses they have seen, and started with *a priori* assumption of the infallibility which they had to establish, and thus nullified much historical and exegetical labor."

But two centuries ago (January 8, 1697) Thomas Aitkenhead, an Edinburgh student, aged only eighteen, was hanged in that city for having spoken of the Old Testament as "Ezra's Fables." To-day one of the most learned and distinguished citizens of the "Scotch Athens" shows the justice of Aitkenhead's epithet, from the tradition of the Jews and Christians themselves, that Ezra wrote by inspiration the books of the law that had been burnt. He does more. He shows that Ezra cannot have compiled the Old Testament until after 398 B.C., and that even this version was lost. The Jerusalem Standard is lost, the true Septuagint has gone, and the Samaritan Roll of the Pentateuch is also late. Our various texts of the Bible, Major-General Forlong affirms, all belong to mediæval times, and come from unknown and dubitable sources. Those trained to believe the nonsense of the Westminster Confession of Faith about "the singular care and Providence of God having kept the Scriptures pure in all ages" should read Major-General Forlong's account of the known historical vicissitudes through which those Scriptures have passed, by no means unscathed, at the hands of ignorant or designing translators. Says our author:—

> "The fountain is impure at its source, and every addition only polluted more and more the troubled waters; assuring us, as an historic fact, that no true Bible was known, or was possible, after our first century."

He furthermore observes:—

> "As to our present printed Hebrew Bible, these are but medleys—growths of the ages, and compilations of unknown value, belonging to our fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and more immediately based on the editions of Rabbim Hillel, *cir.* 1000, Aaron-ben-Asher, and Jacob-ben-Naphtali of 1030-1040."

His noteworthy conclusion is as follows:—

> "A host of critical scholars now state that no version or text can be accepted as original or authentic; that even the best can only be termed 'one among many, the least corrupt,' and most certainly very far from original. Yet do we read, in the Articles and Confessions of Churches which learned men bind themselves by oath to maintain, that 'the Holy Scriptures contained in the Old and New Testaments are the Written Word of Almighty God and inspired by him; that the only acceptable way of worship is that herein instituted by him, and there limited by his own words, etc. They forget that all that lives must die; that the universal laws of evolution have here, as elsewhere, operated; and that Bibles, like religion, must go on improving or for ever perish."

It will be seen that the important work under review invalidates the claims of Christianity from two sides. It shows that its claim to the exclusive possession of divine truth is false, in the face of the facts known concerning other religions; and it invalidates the claims of its own sacred books by showing how untrustworthy is the evidence of their genuineness and authenticity.

* *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions.* By Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, author of *Rivers of Life.* (London: Allaritch, Piccadilly; 1897.)

BLASPHEMY.

BLASPHEMY is a word often used by foolish and by wicked people; by fools when they hear a truth they are unable to deny; and by rogues when they wish to protect their own dishonest trade, bolster up some palpable fallacy, or crush some honest and courageous advocate of truth. No word is more familiar to religious people than blasphemy; and yet it has never been at all satisfactorily defined. Up to date, there are no means known of distinguishing between the devout and prayerful Christian and the most openly pronounced Infidel or Atheist, as far as blasphemy is concerned. It is blasphemy to a Jew to say that Christ is God; to a Christian, Jews and all others who deny Christ's godhead are blasphemers. To say that Christ died is blasphemy to those who believe him God and deny that God can die. All orthodox Trinitarians are blasphemers to the Unitarian, the Jew and the Mohammedan, who all say God is one, and only one. To call the Pope God's vicegerent or vice-God, is blasphemy to the rigid Protestant; to the Romanist it is heresy, if not blasphemy, to deny him that honor.

In one word, if the case is properly considered, it comes to this, that all rival sects are more or less blasphemers the one to the other; and no man can give an authoritative definition of the term.

If blasphemy consists of abusing God, or saying of him what is both untrue and scandalous, the Bible must be the most blasphemous book in the world, and Christian literature, liturgies, prayers, etc., are steeped in blasphemy—unless God be in reality infinitely the worst character ever known.

Prayer must be insolent mockery and blasphemy, if God be wise and good, and infinitely so. The impudence of asking him who is ever doing everything to do more, who "doeth all things well" to do better, can never be adequately described. How a man who believes in infinite wisdom and goodness can have the cheek to beg and entreat them to change their conduct is beyond explanation.

Nobody cries "Heresy!" or "Blasphemy!" until bankrupt of reason or driven furious by undeniable truth. The cries are intended to frighten and intimidate people who show signs of independence in matters religious.

J. SYMES.

Digitized by Google

TRUTHSEEKERS AND TRUTHSHIRKERS.

WHO finds and gives to men a fact
Befriends the race for ages;
But priests have made a solemn pact
To fight the truth, for wages.

The Church is first to fight a fact,
And last to leave a fiction,
Because she knows that facts contract
Her fiscal jurisdiction.

The truest priests that ever prayed
Are full of sad misgiving;
They long to leave their truthless trade,
But can't; it is their living.

To-day the parson's in a strait:
He's forced to preach his fictions,
Though science urges him to hate
Deceit and contradictions.

In days of faith the parsons ruled,
And coolly nursed abuses;
But now, when fewer folk are fooled,
They blush, and frame excuses.

The priest, when praying was in vogue,
Robbed boldly and serenely;
He was a frank and candid rogue,
But now he cozens meanly.

When nature frowned our fathers prayed,
Through mental indigestion;
We, now, nor pray nor feel dismayed,
But search, and sift, and question.

Instead of pray'r, a paper kite
Prevailed 'gainst heaven's thunder;
Now, God is fading in the light,
And Fear's divorced from Wonder.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

THE London Primitive Methodist Council has issued an address on the coming School Board elections, urging all Primitive Methodists to vote for the "Progressive" candidates, on the ground that they "want the Old and New Testaments, without note or comment from the teachers, excepting such explanations as are necessary to make the lesson intelligible to the pupil, to be the sole text-books of religious instruction." This sort of religious instruction just suits the Evangelicals, who affect to be surprised that it does not also suit the Church of England. Lord Salisbury was quite right when he said that it was Nonconformist religion that was taught in the Board schools. The Nonconformists support it through thick and thin, because it serves their turn; and they do this in spite of their professed principle, that the State has nothing to do with religion, either in the way of maintenance or patronage.

Rev. Dr. Clifford moved a resolution on the same matter at the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation. What the Church party wanted to do was to "divest the religious instruction of its simple Biblical character." But suppose we put it in this way. The Church party wants to teach the Apostles' Creed, which the Nonconformists also believe in; while the Nonconformists want the children to read about Judah and Tamar, and Onan, and Lot and his daughters, and the Levite and his concubine, and the amours of Solomon, and the bawdy adventures of Aholah and Aholibah. Of course Dr. Clifford will not like the matter placed in this light. But that does not concern us. He is fond of telling Churchmen "the truth," and we venture to send him a little for his own consumption.

The Lord's Day Observance Society has written to the directors of the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, and Tate Gallery, in opposition to the memorial of the Sunday Society for an extension of Sunday opening at those institutions. It declares the object of such movements is to abolish the "theological" observance of the Lord's Day. It also points out that the opening of these public institutions on Sunday evenings is a flagrant rivalry with places devoted to religious worship. Aye, there's the rub! After all, it is a dispute between the men of God and the religious free-traders. What the ministers hate is "rivalry." They know they can only flourish under a system of protection.

The *Daily News*, noticing Mrs. Chant's blessing of the utilization of music halls on Sundays for "sacred" concerts, says: "The churches and chapels have had a 'monopoly' of Sunday for a very long time. At the end of it all, they have only succeeded in attracting a very small portion of the available public."

The Christian Socialist party in the Church of England are trying to make some cheap capital out of the engineering dispute. They have sent a round-robin appeal to the Employers' Federation, telling them that they had better accept arbitration, and reminding them of their responsibilities to Christ. This is a new element in trade disputes, and it suggests to us the following idea. Jesus Christ did very little good while he was on earth, nearly two thousand years ago. He has been coming again ever since, but his advent is still delayed indefinitely. Why does he not put in an appearance and begin business in London as an arbitrator? No doubt he would be impartial, for it is against his principles to be a capitalist, and against his inclination to be a workman. His decisions, therefore, should give satisfaction to both sides.

The Archbishop of York, preaching before the Guild of St. Luke, which is composed of physicians, made the remark that Christ took upon himself our infirmities. This he followed by saying: "We never read of any bodily illness in the life of our Lord, nor was there reason to suppose that he ever suffered from any sort of disease." He did not attempt to reconcile these statements, any more than to explain how it was that when Jesus was pierced with a spear "forthwith there came out blood and water," which has led some to suppose he must have been dropsical.

The Archbishop explained that disease rose from the fall of man. All the microbes and bacteria who pollute and thrive on human misery, we are to suppose, were special creations designed for Adam and Eve after they left the Garden of Eden.

The Archbishop said: "The only occasion on which our Lord made any reference to the origin of disease, he attributed it, not to any visitation from God, but to Satanic influence." We wonder he ventured on such a proof of his Lord and Savior's ignorance before educated men; for those who know the history of their profession are aware that Hippocrates had combatted the notion that disease was the work of devils long before Jesus countenanced this stupid superstition.

Here is what the *Weekly Times and Echo* has to say on the matter: "As medicine and medical men become more empirical, it is curious to observe how they are seeking to associate themselves with the clergy. The doctors go to church once a year now, and march in procession at St. Paul's, with lady doctors in scarlet robes and black college caps looking ever so nice.

"And Archbishops preach sermons showing how essentially 'religious' doctoring is, which is no doubt true enough, the ordinary medical conception of the 'cure' of disease being simply the counterpart of the priestly idea of the atonement for sin. And, as a matter of course, the more clerical the doctor grows, the more callous he becomes to human suffering. The priest championed the Inquisition, and the leach defends and practises vivisection."

Frederick Murray Browne has been tried for sending those postcards at Rochford and Cold Norton. A long report of the case appears in the *Essex Weekly News* under the heading of "The Anarchist and the Bible." Unfortunately the Chairman was Lord Rookwood, a bigoted opponent of the late Charles Bradlaugh. Poor Browne, who insisted on defending himself, acted without the slightest discretion; and any just and compassionate magistrates, in consideration of his long detention and his mental derangement, would have let him go under the First Offenders' Act. Lord Rookwood, however, sentenced him to six months' hard labor. This is a most excessive punishment, but we fear there is no hope of its being mitigated. According to the report, the jury were unable to agree, and Lord Rookwood had to lock them up. After an hour-and-a-half's confinement, they returned into Court with a verdict of Guilty, and Lord Rookwood had his coveted opportunity of passing sentence.

Poor Browne will be well advised in future to refrain from writing dirty Bible texts on postcards. All the witnesses said the texts were obscene; they also said the Bible was *not* obscene—which is an absurdity. The truth is, the texts *are* obscene, and for that very reason they should not be reproduced in such a fashion. Nevertheless the sentence on poor Browne will react upon the Bible. A court of justice has declared that there are Bible texts which cannot be copied out and sent through the post without bringing the copier and sender under the law

Digitized by Google

against obscenity, and rendering him liable to six months' imprisonment. Such a judgment must sink the Bible itself in public esteem.

It is a great pity that Browne complicated matters by making one of his postcards, addressed to a female schoolteacher, so gratuitously offensive. He is a red-hot Anarchist, and appears to believe that he has a right to do anything he pleases. But that policy is impracticable in this world, as everyone who tries it finds out to his cost.

Whether anything can be done now for the poor wife and children remains to be seen. Mr. Forder is giving the matter his personal attention, and will report to us as soon as possible.

Mr. H. S. H. Cavendish, a young African explorer, who has just returned after a fifteen months' absence in East Africa, gives his testimony to the barbarity of the Christian Abyssinians, who, he says, have been killing men, women, and children, and inflicting horrible tortures on the prisoners.

Captain Winstanley says that there is greater security of life and property among the Moslem fanatics of the Soudan than among the Christians of Abyssinia, a chief feature of whose religion is hatred of the followers of the Prophet of Arabia, with whom they will not eat or associate when avoidable. The Christianity of the country is a ceremonial rather than a belief, and inculcates no guiding principles to integrity of life. A chronic state of lawlessness pervades the kingdom.

Possession by devils is universally believed in. In the case of a poor woman seized with convulsions, Winstanley says: "I endeavored to instil into my hearer's minds a belief in natural causes producing the unhappy effects I had heard and witnessed; but Jumbo referred me as a Christian to the Bible. 'If you believe the Bible, you must believe in possession by devils; if you do not believe in the possession by devils, you cannot be a Christian.'" This, he confesses, was unanswerable.

These worthy Christians wear amulets against witchcraft, and blacksmiths are for some reason credited with being in league with the foul fiend, with whose assistance they have the power to enchant human beings, to inhabit their bodies, and to convert themselves at will into hyænas and devour their victims.

The Abyssinian Christians invariably believe that the hyæna is a spirit with the power of transforming itself into human shape. So universal and deep-rooted is the belief that any scepticism is regarded as a kind of Atheism.

Speaking last week at the annual meetings in connection with the C. M. S., the Rev. G. H. Pole, a missionary from Japan, denounced the members of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches in that country as little better than heathen. And this in spite of the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is the parent of the church of which the rev. gentleman professes to be so true a disciple. Here we have another of those Devil-dodger missionary frauds crying down the work of his parent Church in the hope that by so doing he will bring more prominently before his admirers his own work, which he had previously frankly admitted to be in many cases a miserable failure.

Following upon the recent revelations concerning the self-immolating fanatics in the district of Tiraspol, Russia, the newspapers now report that there is a sect in the province of Kazan the members of which advocate death by suffocation, believing that heaven can only be gained by suffering martyrdom in this life. Consequently, when any member of the sect is believed to be on the point of death a small cushion is placed over the sufferer's mouth and held there until suffocation ensues, the other members standing round and singing psalms.

A very similar brotherhood of monks at one time existed in Spain. They were known as Dispensadores. It was a cardinal principle with them that, once a sick person had taken the last sacrament, and thereby ensured eternal salvation, he must not be permitted to imperil his soul by returning to a world of sin. Should the communicant, instead of duly dying, show signs of recovery, the pillow was used to ensure that the soul winged its way to heaven, instead of returning to the defilements of earth.

Pestilences, famines, earthquakes, battles, murders, and sudden deaths are permitted by the inscrutable unwisdom of an alleged Providence, in order to give reverend fathers-in-God an increased sense of consolation and comfort, together with a saintly elation of superiority to these evils. Jones gets knocked down by a cab, that Brown may rejoice how a merciful Providence has spared him from such personal experience that God's ways are not our ways.

"Providence" comes on the heels of the tyrannical Spaniards in the Philippines with a disastrous cyclone. The island of Leyte is the worst sufferer. Two towns have been completely destroyed, and thousands of people were destroyed by an immense wave that swept inland and engulphed several villages. Still, as the Scripture saith, he doeth all things well.

Life's ironies are inexhaustible enough to stagger the faith of the cheeriest optimist. Take the death of James Hitchen, for instance. He was one of the oldest and most trusted engine-drivers on the London and North-Western Railway. He was driving the Scotch express between Crewe and Carlisle, and when the train was passing under a bridge at Winsford, in Cheshire, he was struck in the forehead by a stone. It was a serious wound, which bled copiously; but he stuck to his post, and took his engine on to Carlisle, where he was attended to in the local infirmary. But erysipelas set in, and he was soon a corpse. And the cream of the joke, perpetrated by the great Aristophanes of the Universe, is that the stone-thrower probably knows nothing about the death of James Hitchen. Very likely he is a boy, who threw the stone for a lark, and is prepared to repeat his performance at the earliest opportunity.

There is a certain morbid element in adults, as there is a savage element in boys. Over in Chicago a sausage-maker has been prosecuted for the alleged murder of his wife, whom he is said to have boiled in one of his fat-rendering vats. After a trial extending over several weeks, the jury disagreed, and there is to be a new trial as soon as possible. Meanwhile the prisoner is daily deluged with flowers and dainties by Chicago women.

A boy pupil-teacher at Ocker-hill National School was dismissed by the vicar for declining to sing in the choir, and to attend Sunday morning service at a mission. He claimed £20 damages in the Dudley County Court for wrongful dismissal. The vicar alleged that he was dismissed for idleness and disobedience. Nevertheless, the jury gave a verdict for the full £20, with costs. Nor was the judge one whit behind them in reprobating the man of God's action. "The jury," he said, "have been sitting here all day; I have been sitting here all day, and you keep on talking balderdash." But this should not be surprising. Every clergyman talks balderdash every Sunday according to the depth of his orthodoxy.

William Walker, of Newark, is an anti-vaccinator who takes his stand on the Gospel. Prosecuted by the Guardians for failing to have his child vaccinated, he said he would submit evidence of one of the greatest physicians, and that was God, speaking through Jesus Christ. They would read in St. Matthew's gospel, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." As his child was healthy and whole, he refused to have it vaccinated. Common sense and the Gospel did not avail, the law recognising the authority of other physicians than the one referred to.

The *Edinburgh Review* says that there is a popular riddle current in Germany, "What is the difference between the Emperor and God Almighty?" To which the sarcastic answer is, "*Gott weiss Alles, aber der Kaiser weiss Alles besser*"—("God Almighty knows all things, but the Emperor knows all things much better").

God and the Emperor united last Sunday week, when the ceremony of blessing sixty-three colors took place in Berlin in front of the monument to Frederick the Great, in presence of the Imperial Chancellor and an immense crowd of the general public.

Brother Moore says that hell has "cooled down until the difference between spending the winter in hell and in Klondike is hardly worth fussing about."

The recruiting sergeants have taken a leaf from the book of Diggle. A case heard at Marlborough-street yesterday shows that there is now a sort of religious examination for the army. Recruits are asked to state their religion, in order to test the sincerity of their statements that they have never before been in the service. If they make their profession of faith "like a military man," their denial of previous enlistment is at once suspected, and this generally leads to a prosecution for the false declaration. To answer like a military man is to say that you are "Church of England," if you happen to belong to that fold, or that you are "R. C.," if your allegiance is to Rome. The only safe thing, according to the Sergeant, is to confess to no religion at all. A certain want of the power to "give it a name" is supposed to mark the slackness of the civilian mind. —*Daily News.*

The proposition to furnish electric light to the land of the

Digitized by Google

Pharaohs recalls the story of the ingenious little girl who was present at Sunday-school one day when the Golden text happened to be the verse, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles." In answer to the teacher's question as to what various kinds of lights there were, several youngsters suggested "lamplights," "gaslights," etc. But when the little girl was asked what she could suggest as a light for the Gentiles, she cried out, "Israelites!"

Some correspondents of the *Daily News* have been giving instances of what they consider good *repartees*. Here is one:—Two parsons were walking down Sackville-street, Dublin, when an old woman accosted them as follows, begging: "May the blessing of God Almighty follow your reverences all the days of your life." Getting nothing from them, she added, with bitterness, "And never overtake ye."

Another: She—"Sir, do you hold the Church dogma of ——?" He—"Madam, honestly I do not." She—"Then, sir, you are an Atheist?" He—"I beg you pardon, madam; I am a dentist."

S. M. Poole says: "One day I overtook an old woman in St. Mary Cray, Kent. 'How is your neighbor, Mrs. O'Sullivan?' 'Very bad, sir, very bad.' 'Does she do any work?' 'Nivir a stroke.' 'Has she any relations?' 'No, nivir a child.' 'Does the parish allow her any relief?' 'No, nivir a penny.' 'Whoever, then, does keep her?' 'Och, the Lord Almighty keeps her, and the neighbors just help a bit.'"

G. Keith sends this old chestnut:—A Roman Catholic priest met one day a lady whose spiritual condition, in his opinion, was not satisfactory, and greeted her with, "Good morning, daughter of the Evil One." "Good morning, Father," was the smart reply.

Another sends this:—A Scotch minister, seeing one of his congregation asleep, brought him up with a pause, and then, holding out a finger, said solemnly: "There'll be no sleeping in hell, John." To which the offender retorted: "Aye, but it'll no' be for the lack of ministers."

R. Tangye contributes the following:—Simultaneously a young Cornish lady had three suitors, representing the Church, the Army, and the Navy. The rev. gentleman had a great advantage over his rivals, being always "on the spot," but mark how, in his fancied security, he gave himself away. Referring to his rivals in conversation with the lady on one occasion, he made the highly interesting observation that there were "land rats and water rats." "And cu-rats," retorted the lady.

The Howard Association, under the direction of Quaker Tallack, has done marvellously little for the prisoners of the realm, about whose interests it is supposed to be concerned. We should say that the Rev. Douglas Morrison alone, not to speak of the Humanitarian League, has done far more for the ventilation of the question than the wealthy association which numbers the Duke of Westminster and many nobles and M.P.'s among its patrons. The just-issued Report of the Association has much about the Diamond Jubilee of "our honored Queen," and a very indignant paragraph directed against the Ethical Society for inviting the Association to confer with regard to moral instruction in schools; but we learn little of what actually has been done for the diminution of crime or the reformation of criminals.

Our old friend, the divining rod, turns up again in the pages of the *English Mechanic*, but "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society" has a habit of "dowsing" all nonsense in a pail of pitiless logic, and occult humbug finds little mercy at his hands. Dealing with the error in the Christian era, "A Fellow of the R. A. S." says: "If Herod the tetrarch began his rule A.U.C. 713, and died—according to Josephus—at thirty-seven years of age in 750, he must have been ruling while still in his cradle!—which, to be candid, I don't believe. Furthermore, Matthew says that our Lord was born in Herod's lifetime, and hence prior to 750; but a little lower down his birth is set down in A.U.C. 754. This *may* be all right, but to my obtuse intellect it appears singularly like a muddle." The muddle is made worse by Luke putting the date of Christ's birth in the time of Cyrenius. It has been well exposed recently in our columns by "Abracadabra."

The *Catholic Herald* prints a paper read by Dr. Colvin before the Catholic Young Men's Society on "Evolution." He contended that evolution was only a theory, but one which the Catholic might hold as much as the theory of special creation. He does not say how he reconciles it with the legends of Genesis.

John Fiske has been telling the people of Minneapolis that "the last quarter of the nineteenth century has been pre-eminently the age of the decomposition of orthodoxy. One and all orthodox creeds are crumbling into ruins everywhere. The thought of to-day will shortly reach a plane where there will be no place nor use for orthodoxy." But he also told them that "only a few minds have learned to regard absolute freedom of thought as something to be desired."

J. W. Ward, of Denby Dale, near Huddersfield, is an adult Baptist who has the courage of his convictions. Last Sunday he was immersed in a suit of old clothes in the adjacent stream, which is almost black with pollution from the neighboring mills. It, however, served to wash him spiritually "whiter than the snow." The proceeding caused much amusement to the spectators.

London, noticing the movement in Marylebone against the Church rate, points out that the parish has been taxed to the extent of about a million sterling during the present century for the support of the Established Church. The £5,635 a year now taken from the rates is expended as follows:—Canon Barker, Parish Church, £1,100; the Rev. Russell Wakefield, St. Mary's, £700; the Rev. O. P. Wardell-Yerbergh, Christ Church, £500; the Rev. Canon Acheson, All Souls', £500; the Rev. J. Robinson, Trinity, £800.

Sheikh Quilliam, in reply to an opponent who discussed his lecture on Mohammed, declared: "The fruits of Christianity are public-houses at the corners of every street, drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution rampant throughout the land, and gambling in the form of raffles being part of every church bazaar. The whole bench of bishops in the House of Lords voted against the abolition of slavery, opposed the introduction of railways, and at one time denounced teetotalism as being a form of Atheism." Some non-Moslems gave their opinion that Islam was at least more reasonable than Christianity.

The Rev. R. Vaughan Pryce, M.A., principal of the New College, St. John's Wood, lectured there on "Can we still Believe in Miracles?" The trend of his discourse was that we can. In this matter Mr. Pryce should speak for himself. We see no reason to question that his mind is exactly in the state that can easily swallow miracles. Probably even he would like to inquire into the *modus operandi* if he heard that one of his scholars had caused an iron axe to float on the Regent's Canal. As far as argument was concerned, Mr. Pryce depended on God. The gullet that has once swallowed creation from nothing need not gulp at transubstantiation.

It does not look as if the conversion of England would arrive as soon as Cardinal Vaughan expects. From the Registrar-General's returns it appears that the proportion of Roman Catholic marriages in 1854 was 49 per 1,000. Since that year the proportion has, with some alterations, been on the whole steadily declining, and in 1895 it fell to 41. Rome always makes a bounce over its gains, but says nothing of its losses.

Dr. Welldon, the famous Headmaster of Harrow, declared the other day at the University College, at a meeting of the Council of Education, that it was a great mistake to consider that the value of education depended upon its being connected with any definite form of orthodox religious instruction. Education, he holds, is a good and sufficient end in itself. This utterance is not relished by the Church organs, which regard the real object of education to be submission to the clericals.

A new sect of Christians have started in Kansas. They call themselves by the not very distinctive name of "True Believers." They have one distinctive rite, the primitive Christian one of "the holy kiss." "Greet one another with a holy kiss," said Paul. It is said that with the True Believers the kiss is very much more in evidence than the holiness. The sect is likely to have some popularity with young believers, but already the American papers hint that the love-feasts of the early Christians only brought them into trouble, and had to be suppressed.

A very successful evangelist, who had predicted the end of the world and fixed the date of the resurrection, and was working large crowds of people into a state of holy frenzy, visited Ballarat, and presently had a big percentage of the population preparing for its end, and packing up for the voyage over Jordan. Business was bad, particularly among drapers, it being held by the women that existing styles were going right out in favor of diaphanous robes and feathers. At this juncture a Bridge-street draper hung this legend on the outer wall: "Bargains! Bargains!! Bargains!!! Grand clearing sale in view of the Resurrection! Cerements a specialty." It brought business back. The last trump would not drag the average woman from a bargain.—*Bulletin*.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 31, Secular Hall, Church-road, Camberwell, at 7.30, "God and the Devil."

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 31, Stanley, Durham; October 30, November 1, 2, and 3, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 8, Motherwell; 9, Paisley; 10, Greenock; 14, Edinburgh; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. COTTRELL.—Pleased to hear you had such a good audience for Mr. Watts on Sunday evening, also that you enrolled some new members at the close of the lecture. See paragraph.

F. J. BOORMAN.—See "Sugar Plums." Glad to see Mr. Thompson making such a good fight for the cause.

H. TAYLOR, on behalf of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School Committee, tenders us thanks for "the generous assistance" given through this journal. We did not want any thanks, though we are pleased to receive it; for it is our duty, as well as our inclination, to assist every earnest effort on behalf of Secularism as far as possible. What pleases us most is that the lady members "desire to specially thank Mrs. Foote for the beautiful work she has sent."

H. TAYLOR.—See paragraph in "Sugar Plums." Kindly let us know the result of the function.

J. T. BLANCHARD.—Your letter would have been answered had you given any address. As you now ask for a reply in the *Freethinker*, we give it there. You quite misunderstand Mr. Foote's powers and duties as President of the N. S. S. It is no part of his function to issue "authorizations" to lecturers. The Executive has authority to issue special lecturer diplomas, which carry no emolument, but are certifications of fitness. Formal application for such a diploma must be made to the Executive through the secretary, as you might have learnt from Miss Vance.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges the following promises:—J. F. Hawkey (per S. Hartmann), £1 *(p)*; J. Robinson, 5s. *(p)*; W. Early, 5s. *(p)*. C. Cohen acknowledges:—G. Colquhoun, 10s.; Gateshead Admirer, £1; South Shields Admirer, 10s.; J. T., £1 1s.; G. McLelland, 10s. G. R. (as promised), per E. Truelove, £4.

THE HOOPER FUND.—T. Bellamy, 6 Thoresby-street, Sneinton, Nottingham, acknowledges:—J. Barry, 5s.; W. S. Douse, 2s.; R. Kilborn, 2s.; Charles Watts's Huddersfield Friends, £1; J. G. Fisher, 5s.; J. Umpleby, 5s.; C. A. Hooper, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, £1; Edward Self, 2s.; W. Christopher, 5s.; W. Cabell, 5s.

H. A. BRUCE MOORHOUSE (Plymouth).—The question of the efficacy of prayer has nothing to do with the question of the existence of a deity. Supposing there be a God, the question is, not whether he *can* answer prayer, but whether he *does* answer prayer. Furnish your evidence of *that*, and we will submit it to our readers.

W. H. SPIVAY.—Glad to have your expression of confidence and good wishes. No doubt, as you say, silent contempt of such persons is best. The one you mention has a personal grievance. He was not made enough of. Mr. Foote will visit Huddersfield again as soon as possible.

E H.—(1) Reporting debates involves a large expenditure. A mere summary would be uninteresting, like a skeleton instead of a living figure. (2) Mr. Holyoake does not say that there is "something behind Nature." What he says is this, that the God we seek is probably the Nature we know. (3) We believe Joseph Symes met Brewin Grant in debate somewhere in Durham. It was very many years ago.

H. W. C. (Middleton, U.S.).—You will oblige a correspondent by stating your authority for the date of the zodiac in Egypt and in China. He would like particulars of the books.

RAMSGATE SECULARIST.—Pleased to know you think so highly of the *Freethinker*.

C. H. C.—Next week. Overcrowded this week.

J. CHACE.—Doubtless it is a Bible contradiction. But we still think the Peculiar People could reply as we suggested. They might also say that the malady referred to in Matthew ix. 12 was *spiritual*, and that Jesus Christ was standing forth as a spiritual physician, not as a practitioner of bodily medicine.

A. W.—A farcical offer, worthy of the clique and its cause. We have no time to waste on such puerilities.

C. GROVES and J. HUBBALL.—Permission to form N.S.S. Branches has to be obtained from the Executive. We cannot act independently.

W. BRADBURN, illustrating the softening influence of the Gospel, says that he has often heard his mother tell how *her* mother took her finger when a very little child, and put it to the flame of a candle, saying, "That is how you'll be burnt in hell for telling a lie."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Newcastle Daily News—Two Worlds—Liverpool Daily Post—Crescent—English Mechanic—Secular Thought—Hull Catholic Herald—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Adult—Progressive Thinker—Edinburgh Evening News—Chatham and Rochester Observer—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Catholic Times—Hull Daily News—Humanity—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured to a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The Apostles' Creed: What the Clergy Want in the Schools." Mr. Robert Forder occupied the chair, and expressed a hope that all Freethinkers would take a deep and practical interest in the forthcoming School Board elections. This evening (October 31) Mr. Foote lectures in the Secular Hall, Camberwell. It is a considerable time since he has lectured there, and a crowded meeting is anticipated.

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience last Sunday evening at Camberwell—the largest, he informs us, he ever had there. Mr. Sabine made an excellent chairman, and brief discussion followed the lecture.

This evening, Sunday, October 31, Mr. Watts lectures in the Co-operative Hall, Stanley, Durham. On the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he continues the debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron, which commenced on Saturday evening, October 30.

Mr. Forder is sending out parcels of literature to soldiers and sailors in the army and navy, at the cost of Mr. George Anderson. Those soldiers who have left the stations, and sailors that have been transferred to other ships, should at once communicate with Mr. Forder, so that the parcels may safely and promptly reach them.

Dr. Stanton Coit's letter, in reply to our last week's paragraphs, will be found in another column. We insert it as a matter of justice, and also gladly. It shows that Dr. Coit and his friends are aiming at the triumph of their own cause, possibly some generations hence. But that is not what the N.S.S. was invited to co-operate in. Any effort at the approaching School Board elections should be of a practical character, having a definite relation to present issues and the existing state of parties.

From an interview with Dr. Coit in the *South London Mail*, we see that he speaks of his New Church as a common ground for Atheists, Agnostics, Positivists, and Christians. No doubt Dr. Coit means well and is thoroughly sincere in all this, but that only shows how little he realizes the fact that ideas, whether right or wrong, and not mere sentiment, are at the bottom of every system. The Secularist and the Christian may agree together as citizens, but in philosophy, and therefore in ethics, they are sundered by their different views of the origin and destiny of man.

Mr. W. Heaford occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Oct. 31), his subject being "The Flight of the Gods." We hope he will have a good audience and a hearty reception.

Mr. C. Cohen lectured at Newcastle-on-Tyne last Sunday. His audiences were the best he has ever had there. Five new members were enrolled.

The *Echo*, in its column "Hear All Sides," often gives currency to letters from pronounced Freethinkers. Last week it printed an excellent letter on the School Board question from Miss F. A. Law, who inherits a noble tradition. Another notable letter was that of Major G. O. Warren on the Peculiar People, who, he points out, only act up to the conviction to which other Christians pretend. He observes: "What a jumble this Christian civilization of ours is! If you go into Court, you have to swear on a Bible that says you must not swear; and if you obey the Bible when your children get sick, and don't happen to get well, you are liable to arrest and imprisonment. It's queer, isn't it?"

The Secular Almanack for 1898, issued by the National

Digitized by Google

Secular Society, and edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, is now on sale. The Calendar has been overhauled by Mr. Wheeler, who takes a lot of trouble over this publication. Mr. Foote opens the articles by one entitled "Poor Devil!" Mr. Wheeler follows with a careful and instructive one on "Secularism and the Clergy." Mr. Watts writes excellently on "Secularism Vindicated," Mr. Moss brightly on "Miracle Workers," Mr. Heaford trenchantly on "The Religious Temperament," and Mr. C. Cohen cheeringly on "Our Work." There is a full list of Secular and Freethought societies at home and abroad, and other information useful to the public for whom the Almanack is designed. We may add that all profits from the sale go into the N. S. S. exchequer, and will be used in promoting the interests of the Freethought movement.

The Congress of the American Secular Union is called by C. B. Waite, acting president, for the 19th, 20th, and 21st of November, in Hardman Hall, New York. We hope there will be a large and enthusiastic gathering.

We much regret to hear that Mr. Thomas MacLeish, who has been such a zealous and efficient secretary to the Glasgow Branch, has been for a considerable time out of employment, and that, as he may have to leave Glasgow to find a situation, he has thought it best to have someone appointed in his place. The new corresponding secretary is Mr. Thomas Robertson, 218 Allison-street, Glasgow, to whom all communications should be addressed. We sincerely hope that Mr. MacLeish will yet find a situation in Glasgow, and be able to resume his valuable work for the Branch.

Mr. A. G. Nostick, who lectures for the Glasgow Branch to-day (October 31) on "Norway: Its Scenery and its People," will illustrate his lecture with limelight views from photographs taken by himself during his visit to that country. His lecture is the beginning of a series to be delivered once a month during the session. No doubt there will be an excellent audience this evening.

Mr. Thompson is doing good work on the Gillingham School Board. One of his latest strokes is the exposure of the bigotry of the majority who voted for another paid monitress instead of Miss Hill, although, as the local *Observer* admits, the latter was head and shoulders above all her rivals. What kept her out was the fact that she is the daughter of a Secularist, her father having been president of the Chatham Secular Society. "Religious beliefs," the *Observer* says, "still seem to be a bar to promotion."

Mr. Thompson also pulverized the statistics of the Board chairman, who had been trying to make out that the Voluntary schools cost only half as much as the Board schools. The chairman, who appears to be the vicar of St. Mark's, made what the *Observer* calls "a halting sort of reply."

The Camberwell Branch holds its Annual General Meeting on Sunday, November 7, at 3.30. It is hoped that all members will try to attend.

The Liberal Jews of New York, like their brethren in England, celebrated Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) as a festival of Freethought and social recreation.

We have received a handsome volume from the New York Truthseeker Company. It is entitled *Union and Federation*, and contains a report of the Liberal Congress at Chicago in November, 1896. Its sub-title is "Memorial Volume to Samuel P. Putnam and May L. Collins." Tributes to both appear from the pens of well-known Freethinkers. The book is adorned with several portraits, and a Preface is contributed by Judge Waite, who writes as follows about Messrs. Foote and Watts, who represented the Freethinkers of Great Britain at the Chicago Congress: "By their courteous and gentlemanly bearing, and by their considerate regard for the rights of every member, they have endeared themselves to us all, while by their powerful and unanswerable arguments they have given our common cause a stronger hold upon the public mind." We do not know the price of this volume, but we fancy it is a dollar. No doubt it will have a large sale in America. Copies may be ordered in England through Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

☞ It has been decided that the Chicago Public Library, which is one of the finest in the world, shall be opened seven days in the week. This is a good example to other American cities.

The Bazaar in aid of the Failsworth Secular Schools opens on Saturday, October 30, at 3 o'clock. The Mayor of Heywood (Alderman Healey) will deliver the opening address. On Monday, November 1, at 2 o'clock, an opening address will be delivered by James Aldred, Esq. Freethinkers in the neighborhood are earnestly invited to attend. They should also be provided with as much cash as possible for the purchase of articles. To get your money's worth, and at the same time to help a good cause, is a rare way of combining economy with enthusiasm. We shall be glad to hear that the Bazaar has been a great success.

The Hull *Daily News* inserts an excellent letter from Esau Reason on the question, Are Christianity and morality independent of each other?

THE DUTY OF REVOLT.

Preface to a work on "Sky Pilots and Devil Dodgers."

THE real hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* is Satan. After addressing the fallen angels, he appeals to them for support in his warfare against the Bible Deity, who had overwhelmed him by brute force:—

> He spake, and to confirm his words outflew
> Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
> Of mighty cherubim.

Prometheus, bound to the rock by the gods for having stolen the sacred fire and given it to man, is another mythical hero. He at last is unbound and triumphs.

Satan and Prometheus are typical characters representative of the struggles of genius against the brute forces of nature, and illustrate the fearful character of the dreadful combat. But the sacred fire is now in the possession of man, and genius, with science, will ultimately triumph over the brute forces of nature, and will drive before them, in headlong flight, the dark superstitions of the past as the sun of truth rises over the horizon of the human mind.

However much the susceptibilities of many persons, unaccustomed to examine and think for themselves, may be wounded, and the vested interests of the paid advocates of a false and cruel faith may be endangered, the author of the following pages is himself thoroughly convinced of the truth of the propositions he therein advances. He desires, above all things, the triumph of truth, justice, freedom, and the happiness of mankind, and, therefore, desires the destruction of falsehood, injustice, and tyranny, which are the enemies of happiness.

Gambetta's most celebrated saying was: "*Le Cléricalisme voilà l'ennemi.*" He was right. All history points to superstition and its attendant minister, priestcraft, as the deadliest enemies of human progress, and, therefore, of human happiness. Therefore, I appeal to all the courageous spirits, who are not afraid to think for themselves, to rally round the standard of revolt, wherever and whenever it may be raised, against superstition and tyranny, whether ecclesiastical or political.

Those gallant spirits may rest assured that, though the battle may be prolonged and arduous, against the serried ranks of those who are interested in the continuance of the present rotten condition of affairs, both ecclesiastical and political, the ultimate triumph of right against wrong is as certain as the daily rising of the sun. *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*

VARÓN.

How it was Done.

Wrote Professor Clifford, the eminent English scholar: "A man burns your house to the ground, bu ilds a wretched hovel on the ruins, then takes credit for whatever shelter there is about the place."

The Professor used the figure to illustrate the false claim that we derive our learning, literature, and civilization from Christianity. He shows that all through the Middle Ages the priests and monks monopolized learning, and withheld it from the people, keeping the masses in ignorance, to the end that they could the more successfully tyrannize over them, just as the slave-holder governed his menial by keeping him in abject ignorance, even procuring legislation and making it a penal offence to teach a slave how to read or write.—*Progressive Thinker.*

A mind, by knowing itself, and its own proper powers and virtues, becomes free and independent. It sees its hindrances and obstructions, and finds they are wholly from itself, and from opinions wrongly conceived. The more it conquers in this respect (be it in the least particular), the more it is its own master, feels its own natural liberty, and congratulates with itself on its own advancement and prosperity.—*Lord Shaftesbury.*

Digitized by Google

SOME NOTES ON HALLOWE'EN.

In the Romish Church the festival of All Saints, or All Hallow Mass, is still an important feast. It is a survival of a general festival of the dead, of which there are traces among many nations. Early man is much troubled with ghosts. No wonder, then, that he sets apart a day to clear them off and light their passage to another world.

It is curious that a festival of the dead was observed at or near the beginning of November by races as far apart as the inhabitants of Hindostan and Peru. Mr. R. G. Haliburton found the solution of this in an early year beginning at that time, its date being determined by the rising of the constellation of the Pleiades. Even the blacks of Australia hold a corroboree at this time—the beginning of their spring—as a festival of the dead, which lasts three days. It begins in the evening, as our festival of Hallowe'en, followed by All Saints' and All Souls'. Mariner tells how, among the Tongans, a vernal first-fruits celebration and commemoration of the dead takes place about the end of October. Rivero and Tschudi, in their *Peruvian Antiquities*, observe that at the festival of the dead it was customary to visit the tombs of relations, and to leave in them food and drink. They add: "It is worthy of remark that the feast was celebrated among the ancient Peruvians at the same period, and on the same day, that Christians solemnize the commemoration of the dead." They tell us that in November took place the terminals of the year and of seed-time.

Hallowe'en seems to have been connected with a harvest home or first-fruits celebration. Apples and nuts still play a large part. As Burns says:—

> The auld gudewife's well-hoordet nits
> Are round and round divided,
> An' monie lads' and lasses' fate
> Are there that night decided.

Burning the nut is a famous charm. Two are named as male and female. If they lie and burn together, there will be a happy marriage. If one pops off, the other will be jilted. The first day of November was dedicated to the spirit that presides over fruits and seeds, and was, in Keltic, called "La-mas-abhal" (the day of the apple fruit), pronounced Lamshool. It got corrupted to lambswool, a name given to a compound of apples, sugar, and ale.

An essential part of Hallowe'en ritual was the lighting in each household of a bonfire at nightfall. This points to an ancient practice of kindling sacred fires at certain seasons Shaw, in his *History of the Province of Moray* (p. 29), says: "A solemnity was kept on the eve of the 1st November, as a thanksgiving for the safe ingathering of the produce of the fields. This, I am told, but have not seen it, is observed in Buchan and other counties by having Hallow Eve fires kindled on some rising ground." The material necessity of preserving the season sacred was the preservation of the kern baby, the sacred sheaf of corn, carried over from year to year. The soul cakes and bone fire of Hallowe'en reappear in our Christmas cakes and Yule log.

The day following All Saints', or All Souls', Day is set by the Church for memorial of the faithful dead, and on this day their souls were supposed to be released from purgatory. Until recent times, in country districts, the village children would go *souling*—that is, getting small contributions on behalf of the souls. But the ordained priests, who live on the same game, have done their best to suppress the juvenile infringement on their perquisites. The children used to sing:—

> Soul! soul! for a soul cake!
> Pray, good mistress, for a soul cake.
> One for Peter, two for Paul,
> Three for them that made us all.

The soul cake referred to was a sign of the communion of the givers with the recipients, and with the communion of the saints. It was a sort of bun, to be offered to all comers at this time. It is worthy of note that English children went "a-souling," praying for "a soul cake for all Christian souls" at the same time of the year as the Hindu offers his funeral cake to the *manes* of his ancestors.

On "All Souls' Day," in some parts of Europe, the high altar is shrouded in black, while over a huge coffin or cenotaph, that is placed in the church, a solemn mass for the dead is performed. This preserved the idea of the old ghost festival.

All Souls in Ireland is called Samhan. It was the last great fire festival. Smiddy says that the ancient Irish celebrated the day with sacrifices and feasts, and that "the horse was offered as a victim to the sun, and, perhaps, the human being too." The national assembly, or Feis, of ancient Ireland is said to have been convoked for the feast of Samhan. At the present day the apple is the great feature of divination for husbands and sweethearts, and ducking for them in a tub of water is a pastime provocative of much mirth.

In County Clare there still exists a more elaborate practice, which shows an astronomic meaning. A contrivance known as the "snap-apple" is suspended from the loft at the height of an average man's head. It is a wheel with fifty-two spokes, arranged round the hub above one another, and of every three spokes, the first has a short blazing candle, the second is sharpened to a point, and the third has an apple. The wheel is revolved, and the problem is to catch the apple without being burnt by the candle, or scratched by the sharpened stick.

So convinced are the Irish peasantry of the fact that the dead are abroad on Hallowe'en that they discreetly prefer remaining at home on that ill-omened night. Samhan is possibly summer's end. Before the solstices and equinoxes were accurately observed the two chief seasons appeared to have been the beginning of summer and the beginning of winter, represented chiefly by the May-Day festival and All Saints.

Kali Devi, in India, presides over the festival of the dead. She wears a necklace of skulls, and human victims used to be offered to her. This festival of the dead is everywhere largely a woman's festival. It is Catholic women usually who still decorate the tombs at this time. There are two reasons for this. One is that in ancient times, when all men were warriors, it was the women who did agricultural work. Hence the agricultural deities were feminine. Another is that women, as the least advanced and educated section of the community, have always been the best preservers of old customs.

In Sicily Ceres was worshipped in May, and Kore, her daughter, Proserpine, in autumn, when she is taken by Pluto to the underworld for six months. The mourning of Demeter for Persephone lasted three days. For three days, too, was lamentation of Isis for Osiris, who is found on the third day. All these myths were connected with the great and constant miracle to early man—*viz.*, the death and resurrection of vegetation, and with a period of human mourning lasting for three days, to be sure that the corpse was really dead.

J. M. W.

THE MUSICAL CURATE.

"Must be a good intoner" is a not uncommon adjunct to an advertisement for a curate in the *Church Times*. The intoning curate is a sweetly-delicious epicene creature, of great utility in these days when music and ritual have displaced creed and dogma, and when more go to church for the music than for the sermon. He knows nothing of science, and little of literature; but he has cultivated one super-subtle art—the divine and devout art of intoning. The way in which he begins "Dearly-beloved brethren," in the key of A, always reminds you of the tuning of an orchestra. It puts you in the mood for "a musical repast." But "the scripture moveth us" rises in "sundry places" to the key of C, and he varies his pitch throughout, sinking to B flat "with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart," and gradually rising and falling till he ends in a low, melancholy wail, which glides into the solemn response of the organ. To hear him rise to full-sounding G in "O Lord, open thou our lips," is a wonder, if not a delight.

But to know the sweet, musical curate at his sublimest you must hear him intone a Gregorian chant. The monotonous groaning of an animal in extreme pain can never so penetrate to the inner fibres of the feminine heart as the plaintive, sombre, and sonorous sing-song of a Gregorian. It is the concentrated quintessence of æsthetic religiosity. The musical curate is invariably a poor duffer in secular affairs, but the art of intoning gives him something wherewith to occupy what he is pleased to call his mind. To hear him expatiate on the mystic mysteries of musical intonation might make a novice fancy him a philosopher. A minor third, he will tell you, must be dropped at the Confession, indicating the feeling of awe and reverence desired from penitents; while a dominant fifth must be struck at the Absolution, to show the sacerdotal power with which the ministry of God is invested.

The intoning curate derives immense satisfaction in the contemplation of the subtle beauties of his art, all the more delightful from the reflection that few ears can appreciate them like his. He would go through life as a foretaste of celestial bliss, and verily regard church service as a "little heaven below" but for one great but permanent fear. His constant nightmare is the organist.

GILGAL.

To restrain human expectation to what is ascertainable by reason must have the effect of concentrating attention on humanity and intensifying interest in human exertion.—*G. J. Holyoake.*

It is impossible that the sin of one man can be imposed upon another. It is by a fiction not to be realized by the mind that the transference is to be made. Nor can blood of any sort wipe away sin. Sin has to be repented of and turned from, and can be got rid of in no other manner.—*Judge Thomas Lumisden Strange.*

Digitized by Google

COLORED PIETY.

Uncle Jupe being once more before the Court, his Honor asked: "Haven't you been in jail for stealing chickens once before?" "No, sah—no, indeed I hain't. Praise de Lawd for his infernite goodness and mussy, nobody hain't cotched me yit. Hit seems as ef I was pertected by de higher powers."

Mr. Johnson—"Speakin' ob de 'complishments of eddycated people, what am de use ob learnin' de dead langwidges?" Church Elder—"Use? Use 'nuf! What am you goin' to do when you am called to de judgmen' bar ob de Lor'? Got to speak de dead langwidges shua."

The revivalist negro is strong in Biblical history. For lovely anachronism, the following verse from a genuine camp-meeting melody, quoted from the *American Art Journal*, fairly takes the cake:—

In de days ob de great tribulashun,
On a big desert island de Phillistines put John;
But de ravens dey feed him till de dawn come roun',
Den he gib a big jump and flew up from de groun'.
O, come down, come down, John.

It should be added that the John referred to is not the crack-brain of Patmos, but Johnny the Ducker, otherwise St. John the Baptist.

The Great Revival Schemf.

"Dis heah is er great 'vival dat we'se got on han', Brother Marcus," said Parson Hickney, addressing a co-laborer in the great cause. "Yas, indeed. Yas, indeed. It do me er heep er good ter see all dese ole sinners 'fessin' de Lawd; sho's yer born'd, it do." "Me, too, Brudder Marcus. It do 'pear like de day o' de penycost hab come at de las', an' I thanks de Lawd fur it. Start up ernuder him, dar," he added, turning to the congregation. "Yas, Brudder Marcus, we'se gwine ter git our 'ward fur all dis good work we'se doin'. Say, deah brudder, what does de c'leckshuns ermount ter dis ebenin'?" "Ten dollars an' er quarter." "I thanks de Lawd fur dat, too. Say, Brudder Marcus, we ain' gwine ter steal dat money, is we?" "No, indeed." "Jes' gwine ter 'joy ourse'fs er leetle arter sarvices, ain' we?" "Dat's all." "Dar's plenty red plan'ation likker down de street, ain' dar?" "Plenty o' hit." "Gwine ter git some, ain' we?" "'Deed we is." "Fine 'vival dis, Brudder Marcus?" "Monstrous." "An' we'se thankful." "We is dat." "Wall, let 'em sing ernuder him, an' den we'll go. Sing ernuder him, please. Brudder Jake, please start de chune, an' de Lawd'll jine in arter er while."

It was in an experience meeting in an African Methodist church over in Virginia, writes a Washington correspondent. They had been singing the well-known lines, "While the lamp holds out to burn the vilest sinner may return." A now convert had been giving in his confession. He had told the brethren and sisters all the sins of his life, and more too, with all their aggravations. He had confessed to every crime known to the statutes and every sin known to the decalogue. When he paused for breath, gasping at his own wickedness, a brother in the gallery shouted solemnly: "Put out dat lamp!" "Wha' for?" asked the pastor. "Coz," said the solemn brother, "de viles' sinner done return!"

Pernicious Belief.

Churchmen claim the Christian religion to be the only one that teaches true morals, that inculcates just manners and proper conduct of men as social beings, in their relation to each other and to God; that, destitute of faith in Jesus, they are whited sepulchres, filled with all manner of corruption. They seem to have no conception of ethics independent of belief in their creed. They class all believers in their theories with heathens and heretics, and brand them with opprobrious epithets. It matters not how worthy a life, without the virtue of faith in the saving grace of the "Lord Jesus" he is necessarily corrupt. Though our prisons are filled with believers, and scarcely an Agnostic has entered those sacred retreats from the cares of the flesh, yet the latter are esteemed immoral, letting the preachers tell the story. Viewed from our standpoint, the belief that the penalty for sin may be condoned by faith in Jesus is an incentive to wrong-doing instead of restraint. Truly taught that every improper act will be punished, that guilt carries with it a sting, that, however trifling the offence, there is no possibility of escaping the consequences, then much is done in the way of true reform. On the contrary, teach that sin is pleasurable, that the penalty is not inherent in the act, but is outside of it, and may be avoided by prayer, faith, and repentance, then the incentive to a good life does not exist. This pernicious belief has contaminated the body politic; it has poisoned all the channels of thought; it has corrupted the young and followed them through life, and filled our prisons with criminals, and loaded the gallows with murderers. This lesson cannot be repeated too often.

Progressive Thinker.

BOOK CHAT.

According to Mrs. Tweedie, in her narrative of a journey through Finland, the position of woman there is far superior to that she enjoys in any other country in Europe. She has equal rights with men in every respect. She can choose any kind of labor or profession she pleases, and receives the same price as man for work equally well done. This observing author remarks: "There is no sex—men and women are practically equal—and on that basis society is formed. The University and all schools are as free for women as for men. Boys and girls attend the schools, and are brought up to ignore sex. The chaperon is unknown in Finland, and it is found that this perfect liberty and independence of women is followed by virtuous lives. The number of women exceeds that of men, and the stern climate with its short summer and long winter demands close and arduous labor in season. The women have not shrunk from the necessity, but have bravely met the demands made upon them. They are strong, self-reliant, and able to protect their own rights and interests."

* * *

A gem of a preface to a work by an American Anarchist, a disciple, apparently, of "Dod Grile":—"This Book is Inspired. Anything good in it ascribe to me; anything bad put it on to God." Amen.

* * *

The late Sir Peter le Page Renouf, formerly keeper of the Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, did some good work in connection with Egyptology, and his Hibbert Lecture on *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* is well worth reading. He had the misfortune to be born a Roman Catholic, or his statements might have assumed a bolder direction.

* * *

Isabel's Intention, by Mariette (Murdoch & Co.; 1d.), is an extraordinary story of a girl—an innocent, but thinking, sympathetic, and justice-loving girl—who, being told by her mother that society could not get on without prostitutes, and that she herself is indebted to them, determines to take the place of one of the victims, and become the degraded sacrifice for the welfare of society. Twice she attempts the awful task, but happily remains "the woman who didn't." This very unconventional little tract, however apparently absurd its story, is unmistakably from a feminine hand, and an indication that women are bent on squarely facing the facts of life, and will not acquiesce in the degradation of a large number of their sex. The story is graphically written, and calculated to make its readers pause to think.

* * *

The November number of the *University Magazine* opens with a timely article on "Education in Throes," by F. J. Gould. Madame Blavatsky's memoirs are satirized, and Mr. Robertson, in "A Hundred Years of Malthusianism," retorts on the Catholic Professor Nitti as to the relative morality of Catholicism and Neo-Malthusianism. There is an interesting article on "Woman on the Stage." R. de Villiers gives from his diary more reports of conversations with "Cardinal Manning the Sceptic," and there is a lengthy and able review of "Hall Caine and *The Christian*."

* * *

The name of Mark Twain's new book is to be *The Surviving Innocent Abroad*. Mrs. Clemens said, "It's not true for you to call yourself 'The Surviving Innocent Abroad,' because there's so-and-so in Cleveland, and that and the other in Philadelphia." "Oh," replied Mark Twain, "I'll fix that." So, in the new book, there will be an explanatory note pointing out that, although there are still in existence some eight or ten of the pilgrims who went on the Quaker City expedition some twenty years ago, the author is the only surviving one who has remained innocent.

Freethinkers have yet an immense task to perform—namely, to destroy the power of priest and parson, by ridicule, exposure, and incessant attack. We have also the task of rousing a credulous populace from their blind, groping course of life, and the initiation of honest and impartial governments. The task is enormous, but we must do our best. All Freethinkers should unite in this great work—to sweep away the refuge of lies, to expose the liars, and to spread the truth.

Delusion and error perish under the slow and silent operation of changes to which they are unable to adapt themselves. The atmosphere is altered; the organism can neither respond nor respire; therefore it dies. Thus, save where lurks the ignorance which is its breath of life, has wholly perished belief in witchcraft; thus, too, is slowly perishing belief in miracles—and, with this, belief in the miraculous events—the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus—on which the fundamental tenets o Christianity are based, and in which lies so largely the secret of its long hostility to knowledge.—*Edward Clodd.*

Digitized by Google

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF PAINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. J. M. Wheeler, in your paper of October 3, says he has "no axes to grind." I never supposed he had, and I can hardly believe that his remark is meant as an insinuation that I have some pecuniary interest in the picture or in its sale. I have not the slightest pecuniary interest in the portrait, nor in the negotiations for its sale, present or prospective; on the contrary, it has cost me a good deal in gratuitous time and writing.

Whether the painting is a Romney or not will be determined by persons of more knowledge than myself—perhaps of more even than Mr. Wheeler. I have no desire to argue that matter with him, and had he not undertaken to speak for me in contradiction to what I had printed, and insulted all who believe it a Romney, I should not have replied to his paragraph.

Mr. Wheeler is perfectly correct in saying that my frontispiece in the *Life of Paine* is a blunder. He and Mr. Burr could easily point that out after I had freely announced it myself. Since the publication of that biography I have steadily pursued my researches, and in my introductions and annotations to the *Writings of Paine* I have published scores of facts about Paine unknown to me when I wrote his Life, and in some cases corrective of *errata* in the Life. I am still investigating the subject, and have now many new and interesting facts, which will appear in a future edition of the Life.

The portrait which I now believe the long-lost Romney Mr. Wheeler seems still to ascribe to J. W. Jarvis. I am now able to satisfy him on that point. Gilbert Vale, the biographer of Paine and editor of the *Beacon* (New York), was a personal friend of J. W. Jarvis. In the *Beacon* of October 16, 1841, he mentions seeing at Albany "an excellent likeness of Mr. Thomas Paine, taken in *old age*, by Jarvis" (italics are Vale's). In the *Beacon* of May 3, 1845, he announces this picture for sale, and declares it to be "the only one which Mr. Jarvis ever painted of him." Where this picture now is no one can tell me; but I have a lithograph of it, which is carefully described in my *Life of Paine* (ii., pp. 478-9). Beneath is printed: "Jarvis *pinxit*, 1805." It is a directly front face, and in hair, dress, age, so entirely different from the Romney, or any other portrait of Paine, that few could recognise it as meant for him if the name under it was concealed. It is probably hanging somewhere here, and not produced because not recognised as Paine. Gilbert Vale, the friend of Jarvis, declares this the only portrait of Paine he ever painted. There could not be better authority.

This, of course, I did not know when the Paine exhibition catalogue (Dec., 1895) was made up. Before that I had doubted whether Jarvis painted the picture, and had made what investigations I could. My doubts were temporarily allayed by the opinions of others, which originally misled me; and I was 3,000 miles away from the picture. Nobody in America imagined it was a Romney until I said so. I am responsible for the whole thing, and it took long to persuade the owner that it is such, and should be sent to England.

I hope to publish an extended statement about the picture, with some account of Dr. Cooper, whose Will (of which I have a copy) says nothing about the portrait. I must for the present part from the subject. But I will add that this portrait can certainly not be described in the glowing terms quoted by Mr. Wheeler from Romney's *Memoir*. Whether John Romney ever saw the original, or got his impressions from engravings, I know not; but, in any case, this portrait has suffered much in its hundred years. It has been gashed, mended, frayed, and a new background unskilfully painted in. Although I believe the face to be intact, the various "restorations" detract from the best effect even of that. Those who examine it must make allowances for these misfortunes. And they had better also get rid of the superstitious veneration for Sharp, which seems to possess some Freethinkers. Sharp was a frantic devotee of Joanna Southcott, and could hardly appreciate either Paine or Romney. The head and face of the portrait at the National Gallery is certainly not after Sharp; the head is more inclined, the expression different, and, as I think, far more powerful. The younger Jarvis, in his portrait of 1857, though following Sharp in details of dress, etc., improved the face; and, since writing my article for the *Athenæum*, I incline to the belief that he had seen and been impressed by the Romney, although he had forgotten the color of the eyes.

MONCURE D. CONWAY.

MR. WHEELER'S REJOINDER.

I beg to disclaim having sought to speak for Mr. Conway, or to insult those who hold that the work is Romney's. Doubting its genuineness, I shall yet be pleased if they turn out to be right. When I first wrote I had not Mr. Conway's *Athenæum* article before me, or might have modified the strong expression of my opinion, given with the special view of deterring American Freethinkers from considering the matter finally settled. The settlement I am very content to leave to experts.

DR. COIT REPLIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I do not for a moment assume, as the *Freethinker* of this week declares, that the leaders of religion, Church and Nonconformist alike, are going to allow the *natural* instead of the *supernatural* sanction of morality to be taught in the schools. Never has anyone heard me say anything to that effect. And if I do not assume such an improbability at all, then I cannot assume it in a "light and airy way," as the *Freethinker* says. If buoyancy of manner is at all characteristic of my treatment of the School Board controversy, it is only that I laugh to keep from weeping. For I have no hope of near success for our cause. A century will not be time enough, I fear. I am working for what I count to be the *final* settlement of the religious controversy about the State schools. But that settlement *cannot* come until at least a large and powerful minority of voters have been converted from belief in supernaturalistic to belief in naturalistic sanctions of right conduct. And such a conversion, in turn, cannot be brought about except by a unified, systematized, and strenuous effort for years on the part of the thousands of Freethinkers now scattered and isolated—and therefore ineffective—throughout the United Kingdom. Such an organization, again, can only be the result of a profoundly and finely-thought-out policy, balanced and tempered with statesman-like wisdom, so that it will challenge the free assent and ready support of the most uncompromising of Rationalists. This conversion may come in our day; it may never come at all. But if it ever comes, it will come by us.

I note with satisfaction that the *Freethinker* confirms my opinion, that the leaders of religion, Church and Nonconformist alike, would go in for a purely scientific curriculum sooner than allow only natural sanctions of morality to be taught. Of course they would. They see, plainly enough, that a purely scientific curriculum in no wise attacks or replaces the supernaturalistic sanctions, but, on the other hand, would leave in the hands of the priests in chapel, church, and voluntary school the entire control of the child's moral conceptions. There would be no longer any lay teachers of morality, or only such as were puppets of priests. And that is what the priests want; and that is what we might easily bring about. It is, however, unusual to hear the *Freethinker* commending any policy on the ground that Church and Nonconformity alike would go in for it, sooner than for something else. The policy of the Moral Instruction Conference is more radical, and has little chance of speedy success. But that is the more reason why we should set to quickly. I shall be glad if you can find space for this letter in your esteemed paper.

STANTON COIT.

PROFANE JOKES.

ONE of the justices of the Maine Supreme Court was holding court at Ellsworth, and, according to honored custom, called in a local clergyman to open the session with a supplication to heaven. This worthy gentleman came, and, after a chat with the justice, proceeded to address the giver of all good and perfect things thus: "Almighty God, we beseech thee to bestow upon the presiding justice the wisdom which he so greatly needs!" It is said that the same judge once opened court after prayer, which began this way: "O Lord, we pray thee to overrule the decisions of the court to thine own honor and glory."

Pease—"Well, there's the church-bell. Castleton will be around in a minute." Hubbard—"What, are you going to church?" Pease—"Oh, no; but that was to be the signal for our century run."

Christian Friend—"Yes, my dear friends, even the doctrine of the Trinity may be explained in sweet reasonableness. Do you perceive, for instance, the *three* men in that cart? There you have a symbol of that holy mystery, the three in one." First Sceptic—"I think I might begin to understand the sweet reasonableness if you would show me *one* man in *three* carts." Second Sceptic—"The matter would, I think, be simplified if we could see *three carts in one man*." Third Sceptic—"All my wavering faith demands is, to see *one cart* in *three men*." Fourth Sceptic—"I want three carts who are one man, or three men who are one cart. The 'Carmen' who is one girl is the only approach to a solution I know of."

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Flight of the Gods."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road. Ball's Pond): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Shakespeare" (with selections). October 30, at 8.30, Concert and Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God and the Devil."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "The Moral Judgment."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "The Poem of Job."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Masses."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, Debate—Messrs. Blanchard and Herzfeld, "Is Over-Population the Cause of Poverty and other Evils?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A. B. Moss.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards, "Evidences from Monuments."
WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, A. lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): Percy Ward—11, "Secularism and Woman"; 3, "What will you Give us in the Place of Christianity?" 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, An Entertainment. High-class talent engaged.

GATESHEAD (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall-road): H. Bradlaugh Bonner—3, "School-taught Morality"; 7, "Some Plain Words about India."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—J. Culligan, "The Inquisition"; 6.30, A. G. Nostock, "Norway: Its Scenery and People"—with lantern illustrations.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Recitations and Readings.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Touzeau Parris—"Facts About the Bible Everyone should Know"; 6.30, "Diabolism, or the Evolution of the Devil."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Smith, "The Word and the Spirit—John xvi. 63."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, L. Small, B.Sc., "Nature Myths."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Special meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Crime and Criminals"; 3, "The Dream of Immortality"; 7, "The Case for Secularism." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-alley): 7, H. Snell, "Palestine and Arabia"—lantern lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 11.30, H. Snell, An Address.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—October 31, Sheffield. November 7, Blackburn; 14, Manchester; 21, Huddersfield.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—October 31, Birmingham. November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—October 31, m., Limehouse; e., Ball's Pond. 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

WANTED, by a Steady Man, Situation as ENGINE-DRIVER 8 years and a-half good character. Address, J. Abbott, Falcon Villas, Rectory-road, Ipswich.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, O.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 132 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
SHAKESPEARE. 6d
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, *p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, *p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "J. W. Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Digitized by Google

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are :—Poor Devil ! by G. W. Foote ; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler ; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts ; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss ; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford ; Our Work, by C. Cohen ; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Important Contributions by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, and Mr. Edward Clodd.

Now ready, price 6d., by post 7½d.,

THE

AGNOSTIC ANNUAL

FOR 1898.

Edited by Charles A. Watts.

The Progress of Liberal Thought	C. E. PLUMPTRE
Liberal Orthodoxy	PROF. GOLDWIN SMITH
The Will to Believe	LESLIE STEPHEN
The Sources of Modern Doubt	JOSEPH MCCABE
The Illusion of Progress	MORTIMER CECIL
Is Progress an Illusion?—A Reply	F. J. GOULD
Dr. Farrar on the Bible	EDWARD CLODD
Immortality in the Light of Evolution	CHARLES WATTS
"In a Strait Betwixt Two"	W. STEWART ROSS
The Gods	CHARLES E. HOOPER
Is a Moral Interregnum Possible?	F. JORDAN, F.R.O.S.
Agnosticism in the Broad Church	AMOS WATERS

London : WATTS & CO., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERT'S "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY. A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE NOVEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Popular Religious Fallicies.
Dogma Enthroned.
Twilight Moods and Melodies.
In the Rationalist Vanguard.
From China to Peru.
Mrs. Besant's New Book : *The Ancient Wisdom.*
A Disciple of Nietzsche.
Rationalism and the Church Congress.
Literary Chats, XI.—With Mr. W. Swan Sonnenschein.
Rationalism in the Magazines, Jottings, etc., etc.

London : Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents :—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SOME GREAT BARGAINS.

36 GENTS' SCARBORO'-SHAPED MACKINTOSHES, Black, Navy, Dark Grey, Light Grey, Fawn, and Brown, 50 inches, 52 inches, and 54 inches long, 20s. and 25s. each.

These are at least 25 per cent. under the ordinary price. Give chest, waist, and length measurements.

190 LADIES' MACKINTOSHES, Latest Style, Browns, Fawns, and Greys, 10s. 6d. each. *Flowers of Freethought* (2s. 6d.) free with each.

Lot 11.—1 pair all wool Blankets and pair large Bed Sheets, 1 Quilt, and 1 Tablecloth for 21s. carriage paid. John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People* included free of cost with each parcel.

Overcoats, Stock Sizes, Dark Irish Frieze, Youths', 20s.; Men's 25s., wool lined. Give chest measure over vest, and length from centre of back to full length of sleeve.

23 VERY FINE SABLE NECKLETS, 17s. 6d., worth 25s.

Large Purchase of High-Class Dress Materials in Black, Navy, Brown, Green, Fawn, Grey, and Heather Mixtures. To make a Speedy Clearance we are making them into parcels containing 3 Full Dress Lengths, all different, for 21s.

30 Yards Remnants all Double Width, first-class Dress Good for Children's Dresses, for 21s. carriage paid.

Suits to measure ... 35s.
Trousers to measure 10s. 6d.

AGENTS Wanted Everywhere. Write for Terms.

Dresses or Costumes to measure 21s.
Jackets or Capes to measure ... 21s.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 45. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE FARCE OF FAITH.

Two "Peculiar People"—Thomas George Senior and George Vince—have been tried at the Old Bailey, and found guilty of manslaughter. When their children were afflicted with pneumonia, they called in an elder of their Church, who prayed over the little sufferers and anointed them with oil, in conformity with directions given in the New Testament. Medical aid was not resorted to, and for this "neglect" the defendants found themselves in the criminal dock, and liable (as the judge told them) to a long term of imprisonment.

Now, before we go any further let us deal with that same "neglect." According to the *Times* report, Mr. Avory, the counsel for the prosecution, admitted that Senior was "a very kind father, and his home was very comfortable," and that Vince was "a respectable man and a kind father." Clearly, then, there was no *neglect*, in the ordinary sense of the word. They did not act negligently, but deliberately on the ground of a religious persuasion. It was indeed urged that six of Senior's eleven children had died of "ordinary infantile complaints." But that is not uncommon in very large families; if it were, there would soon be no standing room.

Mr. Avory pointed out that as far back as 1868 a statute was passed enacting that every parent should provide medical aid for his sick child. This appears to be the law of the land. But these two Peculiar People, sincere Christians as they are, recognise a higher authority than the law of England. Senior, in his defence, said that he relied upon the Scripture, and gave many instances of sickness being cured by following its precepts. His conscience was clear. He had done all that a Christian should do, and he could exclaim with Job: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Vince followed the same line of defence. He also referred to cures that had been effected in answer to prayer. When the jury, under the judge's direction, found them both *Guilty*, they were asked whether they would give a pledge that if any of their children were taken ill in future they would call in medical aid. With the gaol door staring them in the face, they courteously but firmly declined to give such a pledge. Right or wrong, they are men of principle; and, whatever we may think of their intelligence, we have a much higher admiration for their character than we have for that of the mass of hypocritical Christians by whom they are surrounded.

According to the *Daily News* report, when Senior was asked to give this pledge, he answered that he could not disobey Jesus Christ; whereupon the judge said: "You know the law tells you to do so." His lordship did not mean that exactly; nevertheless, it was exactly true. The law of Christian England commands us to disobey Christ.

Strange contradiction! It is a crime in this country to "bring the Holy Scripture into disbelief and contempt." It is also a crime to believe the Scripture up to the point of acting upon it. Believe it sincerely, or disbelieve it sincerely, and you are equally in danger. There is the gaol for honesty, and the rogues hold the keys.

The prosecution of these Peculiar People was official; that is to say, it was a police prosecution in the name of the Crown. From this point of view, Mr. Avory's arguments are of very considerable importance; and one of them is well worth a little close attention. Mr. Avory found fault with these men for "pinning their faith literally" to the passage in St. James, which plainly orders all good and faithful Christians to call in the elders of the Church when anyone is sick, the duty of the said elders being to "pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." Mr. Avory forgot to add what follows—namely, that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." But this clause is of the greatest significance. It is indeed the governing factor in the case. Without it, there would be room to argue that medical aid was taken for granted. But when it is said that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick," this is impossible; and if the Bible be the Word of God, and St. James was inspired, these Peculiar People are indisputably right. And it is perfectly idle to find fault with them for taking the passage "literally." Words could not be plainer; they do not admit of a double interpretation; and if they do not mean what they say, the Bible should be cast aside altogether as a meaningless volume.

It is urged against the Peculiar People that Jesus Christ said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," and that this implies the necessity of medical attendance. But let us look at the context. Jesus was sitting down at meat with publicans and sinners, for which the Pharisees rebuked him; and he answered them in the words just quoted. Probably the expression was proverbial; but, whether it was so or not, two things must be noted: first, that Jesus was not acting just then as a bodily physician, but as a spiritual physician, so that these words, at the very utmost, are merely in the nature of an illustration; secondly, Jesus was addressing his enemies, who did not accept his doctrine, and not giving directions to his own followers. Such a text cannot be held to outweigh the express declaration of Jesus to his disciples, after the resurrection, when founding his Church on earth, that one sign of faith in those who accepted his gospel should be that "they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Nor can it outweigh the precise command given by St. James, one of the inspired twelve apostles, and by repute a brother of Jesus Christ.

Whichever way you read the Bible on this matter you are in the wrong, according to the law and the magistrates. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," was recently cited by William Walker, of Newark, as a reason why his healthy child should not be vaccinated. The magistrate, however, did not consider this a satisfactory defence, and gave judgment against the defendant. Clearly, then, the Bible is an utterly unsafe guide for those who want to keep out of prison. It is the Word of God; the oath is taken upon it by witnesses, jurors, legislators, and public functionaries; it is thrust into the hands of the children in our elementary schools, and you are liable to severe penalties as a "blasphemer" for criticising it like any other volume. Yet if you take it "literally" as the Word of God, and act upon its instructions, you are also liable to severe penalties for that. And the judge who is sworn to administer justice upon that very book will treat you as a vicious criminal. Such is the farce of faith.

Mr. Justice Ridley, who presided at the trial of these two Peculiar People, is presumably a Christian. He admitted that they had been "actuated by religious convictions," but he declined to discuss the subject with them—which a good many people will regard as an evasion of the difficulty. His lordship proceeded to rate these men soundly. He accused them of belonging to a sect which "arrogated to itself the idea that it alone among

Digitized by Google

all the millions of Christians rightly understood the Word of God." But with all due deference to his lordship, out of court, we beg to ask him whether that is not the peculiarity of every Protestant sect? Why otherwise do they divide and separate? Is it really possible for any man who understands the Bible in one sense not to think that those who understand it in another sense are wrong? And is there any arrogance in his acting upon his own conviction, while respecting the right of his neighbors to act upon theirs? Mr. Justice Ridley's remark, that these men "desired to force their belief upon the rest of mankind," is fudge and fustian. It is the rest of mankind who are trying to force *their* belief upon the Peculiar People.

The judge told the prisoners that they were "liable to long terms of imprisonment," but he need not have insulted their honest simplicity by telling them that he would not make martyrs of them, and they were not worthy of it. They were not seeking martyrdom; they only desired to be let alone, and to follow Jesus Christ in their own humble way. Sneers were also cast at the elder who prayed over the sick children. Mr. Avory pointed out that he was a laborer, and Mr. Justice Ridley referred to him as "an ignorant man, consulted probably because of his ignorance." Fudge and fustian again! Jesus Christ was a laboring man; so were many of the apostles; and a laboring man can pray as well as a judge, and just as effectually. Finally, these men were bound over in their own recognisances, and warned not to commit their offence again. It would not do to imprison them after all—which is the acme of this farce of faith. G. W. FOOTE.

INTELLECTUAL EVOLUTION.

(Concluded from page 690.)

DR. CROZIER, in seeking to justify the past method of giving medicinal truths covered with a thick sugar-coating of lies, reminds us that "at the present day, when good men and women become fired with a noble enthusiasm to leave the world better than they found it, they set to work to accomplish their object by the direct propaganda of the reforms they wish to see established; advocating them and urging their acceptance, not because they are prescribed by any religious code, but for their power to lead naturally and inevitably to the higher life they have in view." "But in ancient times," he says, "no one would have dreamt of trying to carry any serious social, moral, or political reform by the mere demonstration of its power to correct some abuse, or to promote human welfare generally. For morality in ancient times was as intimately bound up with religion as is an infant with its mother; and you could no more reach morality without first striking at religion than you could reach an infant without first striking at the mother on whose breast it hung. To inculcate a higher morality, therefore, you had to begin by destroying the old religion which safeguarded and sanctioned the inferior morality and customs you wished to reform, and by putting a new religion in its place, making the practice of a new morality, which it was your object to introduce, the indispensable condition to the entrance on the supernatural joys which the new religion held out to its votaries."

This is intended as a sort of defence for all the incredibilities found in Christianity. But it will hardly bear scrutiny. Why could not Providence have taught the direct method at first? As a matter of fact, Gotama Buddha, Confucius, and Aristotle had taught morality apart from supernaturalism. The best Pagan teachers had no double doctrine, and it was left to the Fathers of the Christian Church to erect lying for god's glory into an acknowledged principle of conduct. In Dr. Crozier's view, Christianity was such an immense improvement on paganism that all its falsities—such as the Mosaic cosmogony, its countenance of the slave system, its prohibition of usury, and its dogmas as incarnated in the mediæval Catholic Church—were all, so to speak, sanctified by the moral code which these husks tended to preserve.

In my judgment, a much sounder view is put forward by Mr. Edward Clodd in his *Pioneers of Evolution—from Thales to Huxley*. In the judgment of that gentleman, Christianity, centering, as Dr. Crozier admits it did centre, its thoughts on another world and the near approach of the end of this one was really a retrogression. It brought a fanatical intolerance which overcame Pagan learning and Pagan science. To take but one item. Although the Pagan Hippocrates had long before refuted the notion that disease and madness are the work of demons, that belief is countenanced throughout the Gospels, which thus gave warrant for the unspeakable cruelties perpetrated against those stigmatized as in league with demons or possessed by devils. It has been computed that nine millions of lives were taken by the divinely-directed persecution of witchcraft.

Dr. Crozier, like so many other writers, has an ideal Jesus of his own, and he fancies he can set before us "Christianity in its essential spirit and genius as it existed in its Founder's mind." Yet he is bound to admit that Jesus fancied himself the Messiah, believed in the activity of devils, and taught that the kingdom of God on earth was close at hand. His contention is, indeed, that Christian morality grew up under the wing and protection of religion; and it is not too much to say that, without the burning hopes aroused by the belief in the coming of the kingdom of God in the lifetime of men then alive, it could never have got a foothold with the masses of men at all. To put it plainly, the falsity was necessary for the preservation of the truth.

Dr. Crozier points out the error of supposing that "the sublime ethics of the Sermon on the Mount was the chief cause of the rise and triumph of Christianity." "In reality," he says, "the chief cause of that rise was the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and that his followers would sit with him, in their own lifetime, perhaps, in his earthly kingdom of God." Further on he says: "Most of the early converts to the new religion were either Jews or Greek proselytes to Judaism—and indeed, but for the influence of St. Paul, who threw open Christianity to all the world, the broad emancipating spirit of the Gospel would have been crushed under the weight of Jewish tradition." Well, it was Paul who brought the emancipating spirit, for Jesus is represented as saying he came not to destroy, but to fulfil the law, and that he was but sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Yet it was this same Paul who made the false doctrine of the Fall of man one of the pillars of his great "Scheme of Redemption." (As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.) On it, as our author observes, he "founded that doctrine of the Atonement which, the same in substance though slightly different in form, was passed on from himself to St. Augustine, from St. Augustine to Calvin, and from Calvin again down to the orthodox believer of our own time; and it is only within recent years [and through the efforts of Freethinkers, Dr. Crozier] that this harsh and gloomy doctrine, which overshadowed the Christian conscience for centuries, has been discarded by the best minds in the Church, and allowed quietly to drop into oblivion." Here, as in so many other cases, we have "Providence," or the "genius of the world," permitting a falsehood to endure till it perishes of its own rottenness.

Dr. Crozier admits that very much of the morality of Christianity had been taught previously by Buddhism, but without the husk of supernaturalism, which he deems necessary to preserve the kernel of ethics. Our contention is that supernaturalism ever warps natural morality. The spread of Christianity was, in some respects at least, disastrous to the race, and the historical fact is that its triumph was followed by the decline of science, art, and learning. The success of the Christian Church was the advent of the Dark Ages. On the one hand, Christianity withdrew the thoughts of its votaries from the things of this world, and left the race impoverished by retiring the most refined natures from a secular to a celibate life. On the other, its claim of being a divine revelation made it intolerant of all opposing systems, and of all free criticism within its own ranks. Persecution of heretics and Jews, Crusades and wars of religion were the natural result of its claim to the exclusive possession of divine truth. From the beginning it warred against the secular spirit and free inquiry, and it is to these factors rather than to supernaturalism that all progress is to be ascribed. The belief in gods and devils, in heaven and hell, has ever been a curse to humanity, keeping up a vast black army of parasites on the commonwealth, and absorbing time, money, and devotion that would be better utilized in the direct service of Humanity.

J. M. WHEELER.

Digitized by Google

CHRISTIANS IN CONGRESS.

MUCH capital is sought to be made, by some professing Christians, of the differences of opinion which obtain among Freethinkers upon questions of policy and methods of organization. Such differences are cited as furnishing an argument against the efficiency, or completeness, of Secularism as a philosophy of life. A little reflection, however, upon the part of impartial observers will show how fallacious such a conclusion is. As Secularists, we do not indulge in the error that all persons can agree upon details. There is much truth in the words of Calamy—namely, "That all men should be of the same mind, and agree in the same conceptions and apprehensions of things, is impossible, and no more to be expected in this life than that all men's faces and complexions should be alike." But, be it observed, the points of disagreement with Secularists in no way affect the truth of their philosophy. The avowed object of every member of the National Secular Society is to combat the evils of theology, to supplant ignorance with knowledge, to vindicate the right of mental freedom, and to recognise the possibility of properly regulating daily conduct by purely natural means, without the aid of the professed supernatural religions of the world. In reference to these features of Secular propaganda, there is no conflict of opinion among the members of our Society. But, of all persons, Christians should not urge or make such an accusation against their opponents. The various Christian sects are actually based upon disagreement, and that not merely upon minor points. They differ among themselves as to what Christianity really is, what constitutes the true Church, the position of the Bible and the meaning of its teachings, the nature and mission of Christ, the requirements of salvation, the freedom of the will, and man's condition after death.

Persons who desire to be reminded of the indefinite and contradictory character of Christian teachings, and the inharmonious influences those teachings exercise upon those who profess them, should study the reports published in orthodox papers of the various Christian congresses that are held from time to time. From these reports will be seen the dissensions that reign within the Christian fold, the hollowness of the pretension of unity, the lack of consistency between profession and conduct, the despair manifested at the slow "spiritual" progress that has been made, and at the utter chaotic condition of the entire theological organization. If it be true, as stated in the New Testament, that "a house divided against itself shall not stand," then the Christian Church is doomed. Its wealth, its traditional influence over the minds of the weak and credulous, its alliance with the various pecuniary interests of society, which was made in times of mental serfdom and intellectual apathy, and its threats of hell-fire, which still appal those of the masses who are ignorant and non-self-reliant, may uphold the Church for a time; but, to our mind, it is evident that, with the progress of modern thought, the further spread of true education, the continual development of science, and the acquirement of a higher ethical tone, the Church of the past and of the present will be replaced by institutions wherein the secular needs of mankind will be considered, and the religion of humanity expounded. Then we hope and believe the churches will be converted into temples of science and philosophy, and instead of priests, who thrive through appealing to the lowest passions of their victims, there will be honest teachers, whose functions shall be to expound those secular agencies which contribute to personal happiness and the general well-being.

We have been induced to write thus in consequence of reading in that pious Protestant paper, the *Rock*, dated October 22, a report of the meeting of the "National Protestant Congress" held at Blackburn on October 19, 20, and 21. It was attended by clergymen and ministers of various denominations, and the principal subjects spoken to were "The Church of Christ," "The Bible," "The Roman Catholic Church," and "Modern Unbelief." The general tone of the speakers did not, as we shall presently see, verify the avowed object of the gathering, which was said to be a manifestation of "unity" among Christians. The editor of the *Rock*, referring to the Congress, says: "Few have the least idea of how far treacherous or fanatical priests have gone in betraying our Church to the enemy, with the tacit sanction of the Bishops.....The plain fact is that thousands of clergymen of the Established Church are deliberately teaching nearly the whole of the Roman heresy, and scarcely a dogma of the wholesome doctrine of the Church to whose formularies they swore to adhere. The ritual symbolical of these errors is practised, and the bishops not only take no steps, even when their attention is called to it, to vindicate the truth and the laws they solemnly swore to administer, but promote the heresy-mongers." This is a severe impeachment of the honesty of the clergy belonging to the "National religion" of Christian England. If the indictment be true, their faith has not had a very beneficial effect upon their conduct. If such hypocrisy and disregard to oath-taking were found among Secularists, we should have long pulpit exhortations as to the lack of the moral force of our principles.

The chairman of the Congress commenced by avowing that, although the rev. gentlemen present were of different denominations, they were "united on the Scriptural basis of unity." Then he inveighed most severely against the sacerdotalism of the Roman Catholic Church, which he denounced as "a mockery and delusion." This may be true; but cannot a similar charge be urged against the priestcraft of the Protestant Church? It is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. It is clear, according to the rev. gentlemen who composed the Congress, that there is to be no "unity" between the Catholic and Protestant followers of Christ, and, what is more, not much love, for the Catholics and Ritualists are alike condemned as concealing "the cloven foot," as being "false teachers," and "in a thousand ways" spreading "deadly error." We are told that, under their influence, for "four hundred years preceding the Reformation morality and spirituality were at their lowest ebb," and that "no man can be a priest without exercising a pernicious influence." The Rev T. Davis went so far as to say that "he could not conceive a Christian who is not a Protestant." According to this notion, Roman Catholics are not Christians, and in that case the number of the professed followers of Christ is considerably reduced; and as time goes on it will become less and less, for the rapid progress of Catholicism was sorrowfully admitted by more than one speaker at the Congress. A truly "happy family" this Congress presented! Here we have one section of Christians denouncing their co-religionists as hypocrites, impostors, and as teaching "abominable doctrines" which were "a conglomeration of nonsense which could only be written in a lunatic asylum." The amusing feature in this Christian family quarrel is that the Catholics entertain a like opinion of the Protestants, looking upon them as "heretics." The movement which has recently been started by the "Mother Church" for the "conversion of England" to the true Catholic faith is an indication that distrust and the conviction that the other side is in error are not confined to one side. The conflict within the Christian fold must go on, for it is the legitimate outcome of the faith professed by both—a faith minus that cohesive principle which is necessary to establish and promote the real brotherhood of man. So far as we are concerned, we say to each, "A plague o' both your houses."

The subject of "The Church of Christ," as dealt with at the Congress, has but little interest for us except to note that Christians are not in agreement as to what it really means. The Rev. C. F. Ward, of Manchester, alleged that they were "indebted to Holy Scripture for a definition of the Church"; but it is palpable that the definition given there is far from being clear; hence, the rev. gentleman said: "The word Church is one of the best abused, for it can be twisted to the sweet will of each who uses it. The evangelical would regard it as a mystical, spiritual, and, so far as man is concerned, an invisible body. A sacerdotalist would tell you this is too narrow, and that it signifies an outward organized body. If a Romanist, he would add, And we are the Church; while the Ritualist would say, No, *we* are the Church. He advised the use of a new terminology." Why, Christians are not even agreed as to which existed first, the Bible or the Church. Mr. Vernon Staley declares "the Bible is the child of the Church"; while the Rev. Dr. Wright observes: "Historically, as well as dogmatically, the Bible is prior to the Church." If we take the entire Christian propaganda, from the teachings of the alleged fall of man to his supposed redemption through Christ, and the nature of a future state of existence, we find

Digitized by Google

differences of opinion entertained by believers therein as to what should be understood by each doctrine. Recognising this fact, we cannot accept Christianity as a perfect system emanating from an all-wise and all-powerful Being; on the contrary, we regard it as a combination of teachings and doctrines born at different periods, of minds swayed by theological emotions, and deteriorated by priestly influence.

We must defer until next week our comments upon other subjects dealt with at this Congress.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

TO SKY-PILOTS AND DEVIL-DODGERS.

MIRACLES.

LET us examine a few of the most prominent features of your Bible narratives, doctrines, and alleged "Divine Commands." First take *Miracles*. The Bible statements upon which you parsons place so much reliance, as evidences of supernatural interference, to support the truth and authority of various so-called revelations and commands of God, are contrary to all known facts and to the unvarying order of nature, which is the only positive expression we possess of the will or existence of a supposed God, who is said to hide himself behind the phenomena of material existence. Everything else is human, and is produced by and comes to us through human agency, such as scriptures, dreams, visions, and other unreliable and, in their nature, uncertain and illusory operations of the imagination. We therefore decline to believe in the stories of miracles, said to have occurred in the dark, ignorant, credulous, child-like ages of the human race, as we now decline to believe in the miracles foisted upon the world by the Roman Catholic Church, such as the apparition of the Virgin Mary at Lourdes in France. Though there may be scores of fools and rogues prepared to swear to that miracle, or anything else, to support a cherished belief or to make money, no reasonable man, educated on scientific principles, at this era of the world's history, believes that such a phenomenon as a miracle ever existed or ever will exist. Moreover, millions of miracles cannot sustain an evident falsity—such as $2 + 2 = 5$, or justify to man's conscience any outrage on humanity committed by charlatans and oppressors. No miracle can ever excuse or justify palpable moral wrong. The first miracle recorded in your Bible comes under the latter category. The appearance of Satan in the form of a serpent was a rascally and dishonest miracle, performed for the base purpose of seducing Eve, by the unfair employment of a superior intelligence against a weak woman. We therefore say that the legend is a myth and a lie, because a good God could never have permitted any such action against an innocent and foolish creature. As for Balaam and his ass, Jonah and the whale, Samson and his tricks, Noah's Ark, the fiery furnace of Ashach, Meschach, etc., they have been the laughing-stock of the really educated for centuries. So much for your miracles.

. . . . . .

WITCHCRAFT.

The ignorant, blind credulity given to Bible assertions, not only about miracles, but also about many other matters, has produced infinite mischief and misery. Take, for instance, the belief in witchcraft. The Bible says: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii. 18), thereby implying, as a matter of course, the existence of witches as a well-known fact. As killing supposed witches is now fully recognised by all civilized nations as murder, the Bible ascribes the crime of commanding murder to God. The fact is, the Bible only and solely represents the ignorance and brutal cruelty of the persons who wrote it, and this ignorance and brutal cruelty they blasphemously describe as attributes of God. But John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said in his journal under date May 25, 1768: "The giving up of the belief in witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible"; therefore, if John Wesley was correct, we must give up the Bible, for we have given up witchcraft—John Wesley was correct. From the Egyptian magicians, who performed like unto Moses and Aaron with their enchantments, and the witch of Endor, who raised the dead Samuel, to the demoniacs of the Gospels, and the sorcerers mentioned in the fifteenth verse of the last chapter of Revelation, the Jewish and Christian Scriptures abound in references to and stories about witchcraft under all its forms, and injunctions to destroy it. What was the consequence of this absurd belief, and of the wicked command contained in the Bible? The learned Dr. Zachary Grey states that between three and four thousand persons suffered death for witchcraft in Europe from the year A.D. 1640 to 1660. In Leith, Scotland, nine women were burnt together as witches in A.D. 1664. In Italy, in the province of Como, 1,000 persons were executed for witchcraft in a single year. In one province of Sweden 2,500 witches were burnt in A.D. 1670. True accounts of the horrid tortures which accompanied "witch finding" would fill the eyes of any humane person with tears, and excite the most intense indignation against this ferocious, bloodthirsty, monstrous Bible superstition. They can be found in the writings of Dalyell, Lecky, Michelet, and other historians. So much for witchcraft, witches, and the Bible command to kill witches. Is it not disgusting and horrid?

. . . . . .

WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER, RAPINE, AND SLAVERY PERMITTED—NAY, COMMANDED AND ENCOURAGED—AND HUMAN SACRIFICES TO THE JEW GOD NOT FORBIDDEN, IN THE BIBLE.

Witchcraft is not the only superstition in the Bible which the stupid credulity of past ages has turned into an instrument to torture and outrage human beings. Take the institution of bloody sacrifices to the bloodthirsty God of the Jews and the Christians—"the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever"—not only of the first-born and choicest specimens of many species of birds and animals, but also of men, women, and children. You understand that the priests fed on the sacrificed birds and animals after they were cooked, and therefore took very good care to demand from the ignorant people the choicest of what they possessed. Priests have always taken precious good care of their own personal interests and pleasures.

In Judges (xi. 29) Jephthah made a vow to this God of the Hebrews (who was their own counterpart in all their ignorance and brutality), the carrying out of which necessitated the sacrifice, to the Old Testament Deity, of his own daughter. Not a word of disapproval came from this Deity to Jephthah; no refusal to accept this human sacrifice. Smith's *Concise Dictionary of the Bible* has the following: "That the daughter of Jephthah was really offered up to God in sacrifice, slain by the hand of her father, and then burnt, is a horrible conclusion, but one which it is impossible to avoid." Yes, no doubt it is horrible. But the most horrible view is the most probable, for the Bible is so full of horrors that we need never feel surprised at its contents, except when we stumble across a story of mercy. Very few people read the Bible throughout, and with honest, clear, discerning eyes; but those who have done so know that this is the truth.

Is there any cruelty which Jehovah did not commit? He who could drown the whole world was not likely to pity Jephthah's daughter. The God who told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, who murdered the first-born of Egypt for Pharaoh's fault, who commanded the wholesale destruction of the Canaanites, the babes and sucklings of the Amalekites, who stopped sun and moon (what a likely thing to happen, Stiggins!) to enable Joshua to kill innocent people, who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; men, women, and children being whelmed in one horrible destruction—this God would have violated the most prominent element of his character if he had refused Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter. What was that element? I will tell you. It was malignant cruelty. Therefore, your Bible blasphemously insults the Eternal Majesty of the Supreme in ascribing to him the worst of crimes—namely, malignant cruelty.

In Exodus (xxii.) men and animals are alike devoted to Jehovah. "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me" (verse 29). In the time of Micah the horrid practice was dying out, though he evidently was well acquainted with it. In Micah (v.) you have: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with tens of thousands of rivers of

Digitized by Google

oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

Now, a good and holy God would have refused the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, and even prevented by force, if necessary, the murder of a human being as a sacrifice to himself as a deity, because that sacrifice, being accepted by him as God, disgraced for all eternity his character as a benevolent deity. But the Jew-God said nothing, did nothing to prevent it, but silently acquiesced. An innocent maiden was butchered to please the grim and ghastly Jewish Deity, compared to whom the Hindoo God, Juggernaut, was as merciful and peaceful as a lamb. The Bible exhibits its own shame and the character of its authors in every line of the hideous story. VARÓN.

WAS JAHVEH A MOON-GOD?

SOME writers, like S. F. Dunlap and J. D. Parsons, have argued that the God of the Jews was originally a sun-god; but I know of none who have contended that he was a moon-god; though Ignaz Goldziher, in his book on *Mythology among the Hebrews*, has recognised the importance of moon-worship among all Semitic, and, indeed, all nomadic, people. It used to be thought that the superior light and heat of the sun made it a primary object of worship. No doubt it was so when its importance was recognised; but a study of savage mythology shows that it is not the regular and usual which attracted attention, but rather the uncommon and changing aspects of environment. Savages were struck by the phases of the moon as well as by the daily rising and setting of the sun; while an eclipse was a dread and awful event, which registered itself on their minds and in their observances. Beyond the mere day and night the first time-keeper was the moon. Roughly speaking, people in the pastoral stage are moon-worshippers; while early agriculturists are sun-worshippers. Lunar reckoning times the birth of offspring, human and animal, but is not accurate enough for the rotation of crops on which the sun's influence is apparent.

The name of Jehovah, יהוה, has been identified with the Akkadian Hea.* Hea is usually regarded as the deity of the waters. But it is evident he had other attributes, as he is "lord of the harvest" and father of Marduk, or Merodach, the sun-god, who acts as mediator between god and man. The worship of the moon has always preceded that of the sun among nomads, and the moon-god is called the father of the sun-god. There is nothing unusual in transplanted deities taking on new attributes; and as Asshur became the tutelary god of Assyria, and Bel-Merodach of Babylon, so Jahveh became the national God of the Jews.

At Ur of the Kaldees, whence Abram, the father of the faithful, came, the chief worship was that of the moon-god in his temple "of the great light," under the names of Aku, "the disk," Nannar, "the bright one," or Sin, "the shining one"—a name preserved in Mount Sinai, the wilderness of Sin, and in such names as Sennacherib. It is notable that the law of Jahveh, the Enduring or Eternal, was by tradition given from the mountain of the moon.

Here is a portion of an Assyrian hymn to the moon-god, given by Mr. Boscawen:—

Father, longsuffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind:
Lord, Thy divinity fills the far-distant heaven and the widespread sea with reverence.
On the surface of the peopled earth he bids sanctuaries be placed, and proclaims for (each) its name.
Father, creator of gods and men, who causes the shrine to be founded, who establishes his offering.
In Heaven who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!
In Earth who is supreme? Thou alone art supreme!
As for thee, thy will is made known in heaven, and the angels bow down their faces.
As for thee, thy will is made known in earth, and the spirits kiss the ground.
As for thee, thy will is spread on high as the wind, the stall, and the fold bring forth.
As for thee, thy will is declared on earth, and the green herb grows.
As for thee, thy will is made known in the resting-place, and the sheepcote, and all living things increase.
As for thee, thy will has created law and justice, in that man by it has made a law.
As for thee, thy will is as the far-distant heaven and the innermost parts of the earth; no man hath known it.
As for thee, who can explain thy will; what can rival it?

This hymn is sufficient evidence that the moon, to whom it is addressed, was regarded as the being which caused to be, and this, according to some of our best scholars, is the meaning of יהוה. The component Jah is found among the Hittites, and its original meaning is lost in the mists of antiquity.

It is when we look into the structure of the Jewish faith that we may see that, however removed from moon-worship were its later phases, as represented in its written literature, yet luniolatry lay near the base of the faith. The Sabbath is the sacred fourth of a lunation. The earliest Jewish festivals were those of the new moon. In Numbers xxviii. the new moon offerings are prescribed. The sacred Passover begins on the fourteenth day of the first moon, and sacred seven is found everywhere in the Bible.* The Lord of the Sabbath is the moon.

Jahveh Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, is surely the moon, which appears commander of the heavenly bodies. In early times the moon was masculine, as it still is with Hindus and Germans. In nomadic days it was the father and brother of the sun. But in settled communities it becomes the woman's time-keeper, and its worship tends to become feminine. The moon becomes the sun's sister and the queen of heaven. Jeremiah (vii. 18) complains of the offerings to the queen of heaven; but Psalm lxxxi. says: "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon in the time appointed on our solemn feast-day; for this was a statute for Israel and a law of the God of Jacob." Even Paul says: "Let no man judge you in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Col. ii. 16); so that the festival lasted till his time.

The moon, being the first timekeeper of gestation, becomes the deity of growth, as it still is in folk-lore superstitions. Now, Jahveh in the early traditions had the same gynecological functions as Lucina, the moon-goddess, among the Greeks and Romans (Genesis xx. 18; xxix. 31; Exodus i. 17, 21). Note, too, the applicability to the moon of the phrases about dwelling in clouds and thick darkness.

The crescent banner which floats over adherents of Islam takes us back to moon-worship. The Arabic Alahat is a moon-goddess, doubtless allied to the Alytta of Herodotus, and cognate with the words "Elohim" and "Allah." The Elohim, or gods, I conjecture, were the stars (though, doubtless, the term was applied to all that was mysterious); but above the stars was the Lord of Hosts, the eternal God, who appeared in the day as the sun and at night as the moon, the chief lightener of our darkness. In a sultry clime its moon aspect of the sky-god appears the more beneficent, especially when the service of the sun to agriculture was unknown.

It should be understood that this theory is not intended to apply to the Jehovah of the late date when the Bible was composed. It is only held that moon-worship found place among the ideas which lay at the base of the conception of the deity who, gathering up many elements, evolved into the Bible Jehovah. LUCIANUS.

* The Accadians were probably Turanians, and in Turanian language we have Alh and Ai as names of the moon.

THE CHRISTIAN CURSE.

THERE is a tradition that, a year before the conversion of Constantine, the son of the prophetess Sospitra was praying in the Temple of Serapis, when the spirit of his mother came over him, and the veil of the future was withdrawn. "Woe to our children!" he exclaimed, when he awakened from his trance; "I see a cloud approaching; a great darkness is going to spread over the face of the world." That darkness proved a thirteen hundred years' eclipse of common sense and reason. There is a doubt if the total destruction of all cities of the civilized world could have struck a more cruel blow to science than the dogma of salvation by faith and abstinence from the pursuit of free inquiry. The ethics of the world-renouncing fanatic condemned the love of secular knowledge as they condemned the love of health and the pursuit of physical prosperity, and the children of the next fifty generations were systematically trained to despise the highest attribute of the

* See *Bible Studies*, by J. M. Wheeler.

Digitized by Google

human spirit. Spiritual poverty became a test of moral worth; philosophers and free inquirers were banished, while mental castrates were fattened at the expense of the toiling rustics and mechanics; science was dreaded as an ally of scepticism, if not of the arch-fiend in person; the suspicion of sorcery attached to the cultivation of almost any intellectual pursuit, and the Emperor Justinian actually passed a law for the "suppression of mathematicians."

When the tyranny of the Church reached the zenith of its power, natural science became almost a tradition of the past. The pedants of the convent schools divided their time between the forgery of miracle legends and the elaboration of insane dogmas. The most extravagant absurdities were propagated under the name of historical records; medleys of nursery-tales and ghost-stories, which the poorest village school-teacher of pagan Rome would have rejected with disgust, were gravely discussed by so-called scholars. Buckle, in his *History of Civilization*, quotes samples of such chronicles which might be mistaken for products of satire, if abundant evidence of contemporary writers did not prove them to have been the current staple of mediæval science.

When the gloom of the dreadful night was broken by the first gleam of modern science, every torch-bearer was persecuted as an incendiary. Astronomers were forced to recant their heresies on their bended knees. Philosophers were caged like wild beasts. Religious sceptics were burnt at the stake, as enemies of God and the human race. It was, indeed, almost impossible to enunciate any scientific axiom that did not conflict with the dogmas of the revelation-mongers, who had for centuries subordinated the evidence of their own senses to the rant of epileptic monks and maniacs. And when the sun of Reason rose visibly above the horizon of the intellectual world, its rays struggled distorted through the dense mist of superstition which continued to brood over the face of the earth, and was only partially dispersed even by the storms of the Protestant revolt.

The light of modern science has brought its blessings only to the habitants of the social highlands; the valley dwellers still grope their way through the gloom of inveterate superstitions and prejudices, and centuries may pass before the world has entirely emerged from the shadow of the life-blighting cloud which the son of Sospitra recognised in the rise of the Galilean delusion.

FELIX L. OSWALD.

ACID DROPS.

THE Oxford Music Hall management did no good, after all, in engaging Mrs. Chant to spice up the Sunday evening "sacred concert" with a superfluous speech. It only brought the matter before the County Council, and, in consequence of some of the observations made there, the "Oxford" people have decided to stop the experiment. So much for Mrs. Chant's assistance. The lady strikes us as an egotistical busybody. She went off to Greece to nurse the wounded, but we never heard that she got anywhere near the fighting. And as to her boasted "reformation" of the Empire Music Hall, we can only say that her interference has created a fresh nuisance. But every amateur especially among the ladies, fancies it an easy job to supervise and improve public morality.

Rev. Fleming Williams is a member of the London County Council. Ordinarily he is an advanced Radical, and even a bit of a Socialist. But where his own profession is concerned he shows himself a bigot. He waxed wrath over the Oxford "Sunday concerts," and called them "a monstrous defiance of the license."

The Liverpool *Porcupine* relates the following incident. A poor woman's child was dying, and the doctor asked her if it was baptized. It wasn't. So a parson was sent for to sprinkle the little one and make it an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. But before commencing operations he demanded a fee of two shillings. That was the price of a reserved seat in glory. The poor woman said she had only a few shillings in the world, which she wished to pay the doctor with. "Let him wait," said the man of God. So she handed over the two shillings, as it meant heaven or hell for her child; and when the man of God had the money safe in his pocket he baptized the dying infant. *Porcupine* means to keep an eye (*two*, we hope) on that reverend gentleman. It also hopes it will never have the ill luck to consort with him in Paradise.

Mr. Henry George's death, so suddenly and inopportunely, is in its way a tragedy. He was a man of undoubted sincerity, with considerable powers of mind, and a lucid and popular style. Of course, there was nothing new in the general doctrine of his chief book, *Progress and Poverty*, but he carried it home to the mind of the multitude more powerfully than any previous writer. He saw in private property in land the root-evil of civilization. What he proposed was a single tax on land values, and absolute free trade all round in everything else. The second part of his program brought him into hostility with the State Socialists, against whom he vigorously defended himself.

There were two marked peculiarities about Mr. Henry George. One was his utter inability to understand the Malthusian law of population. He refuted it, as he thought, most laboriously, but in reality he never touched its essence. "Everywhere," he said, "the vice and misery attributed to over-population can be traced to the warfare, tyranny, and oppression," etc. What he did not perceive is that warfare, tyranny, and oppression are some of the checks to population. Remove these checks, as they should be removed, and other checks will be necessary; wiser and more humane, of course, but still checks.

The other peculiarity of Mr. Henry George was his natural theology. God intended man to be happy, but injustice had filled the world with misery. God meant the land for the people, but the landlords had been too many for him. This is the substance of Mr. George's theology; and what a pitiful position it puts God in! The Governor of the Universe is everywhere opposed, and his wishes are frustrated, by his own creatures. His goodness remains, but his power has vanished; and, instead of an object of reverence, he becomes an object of compassion. Poor God!

Usually good-tempered, Mr. Henry George lost control over himself in his attack on Mr. Herbert Spencer. The volume entitled *A Perplexed Philosopher* is a bad stain on Mr. George's reputation. There was something peculiarly infamous in the extract from Browning's *Lost Leader* on the title-page:—

> Just for a handful of silver he left us,
> Just for a ribbon to stick in his coat—
> Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
> Lost all the others she lets us devote.

This of Mr. Herbert Spencer! Of the philosopher who has devoted his whole life to his philosophy, losing money year after year on his books, until quite recently, and steadily refusing all the honors and decorations that were offered him. Really it was an outrage.

Towards the end of his book Mr. George declared Herbert Spencer to be "as a philosopher ridiculous, as a man contemptible." This is hitting below the belt, with a vengeance! And it was all because the great synthetic philosopher differed from Mr. George on the practical side of the land question, and had besides the effrontery to differ from Mr. George on the two other questions of a Personal God and Human Immortality. It was the *odium theologicum* again. And no doubt Herbert Spencer smiled at it, as another illustration of what he had called "the religious bias."

Herbert Spencer's health has always been very delicate, and he has had to husband his strength most carefully. Brain work such as he has done is exhausting, and he was bound to find relaxations. "His recreations," says Professor Youmans, "have been systematic—concerts, operas, theatres, billiards, salmon-fishing, yachting, city rambles, and country excursions; and it has been his fixed rule, when work grew burdensome, to strike his tasks abruptly and go away for pleasure, and amuse himself till work itself again became attractive and enjoyable." A most wise policy, we venture to say; and the proof of it is the enormous amount of work Herbert Spencer has turned out, in spite of his delicate constitution.

Mr. Henry George, however, regarded these innocent recreations with puritanic hatred. It was for such things, he urged, that Herbert Spencer had denied the principles of his youth as expounded in *Social Statics*. At this point the polemic was positively comical. It did not seem to occur to Mr. George that any man could honestly alter his opinion in the course of forty years.

But enough of this. Mr. Henry George did a useful work in popularizing one side of the truth on the land question, and his death amidst the fierce struggle for honest government in the new city of Greater New York was a kind of martyrdom. We wish therefore to end with a tribute of respect and a word of regret.

"Citizen Sunday" was in full swing last "Lord's Day." Scores of London ministers were holding forth on the duties of citizenship, which are just as well understood by

Digitized by Google

laymen. As the *Daily News* satirically, and even cynically, remarked, the Church never before took such an interest in a single city since its Founder wept over the whole of Jerusalem.

Emperor William is going to Jerusalem—not Jericho, observe, but Jerusalem. A German band is getting ready to go with him. It is to comprise thirty-six picked performers. We suggest that they should play "Will he no come back agen?" Perhaps this tune, vigorously played on the scene of the Ascension, will precipitate the Second Advent; and William will be there to sail up first to meet the Lord in the air, the leading saint in all the holy aerial procession.

Mr. Macnamara has done good work for the Board Schools, and we should be sorry to depreciate his services. But he is not infallible, and we venture to think he takes a too exalted view of the function of Board School teachers. In opposing the suggestion that ministers should come into the schools and give definite religious teaching to the children, according to their parents' denominations, Mr. Macnamara protests against "the function of the permanent teachers being dwarfed by the removal from their hands of religious instruction." After all, however, the vanity, or self-esteem, or *amour propre*, or whatever you like to call it, of the teachers, is not the principal consideration. They may be better qualified to give religious instruction even than the clergy, though on the face of it that does not look reasonable. But a good many of us don't want either the clergy or the teachers to give religious instruction in the public schools. The teachers are really not inspired, and they had better stick to subjects in which they themselves can be accurately tested—such as caligraphy, arithmetic, geography, history, and elocution. Religious oracles are already too abundant. We don't want them multiplied.

Although the London clericals have, for a while, shelved the question of teaching the Apostles' Creed in Board schools, many of the provincial clergy are taking up the matter, and in some places, as for instance Middlesborough, are putting forward candidates who will support the teaching of that forgery in the schools. Minds brought up to believe in the virgin birth and the descent into hell are just what the parsons require to ensure a continuance of living in clover on other people's toil.

The sacerdotalist party is running candidates in most of the London divisions, and Churchmen are urged to plump for them only. "Capture the Board schools" is now the motto and the great hope of clericalism. But the average voter cares nothing for the sacerdotalist.

The Rev. Canon Haig Brown has dropped into a nice little billet by his appointment as Master of the Charterhouse. That excellent and ancient institution is overdosed with religion, having already a well-paid chaplain, and it was hoped that the Governors would have devoted to the increase of the charity the good round sum which goes to a clerical Master whose sermons are not wanted.

Dr. Johnston, the old-fashioned orthodox teacher of Biblical criticism who, at Aberdeen University last year, was retired by the University Court, insists on going on with his lectures to the undergraduates. The proceedings at the opening lectures were of an uproarious character, and orders were given by Professors Reid and Hamilton to clear the room, and although there was practically no audience Dr. Johnston went on with his address. He claimed his right as a Professor in the University to occupy the class-room, and refused to desist from delivering his lecture. Finally, his MS. was seized by a Professor, and the proceedings, which had been marked by great disorder, were thus summarily terminated.

Professor Johnston appeared to be getting on very nicely, despite the rude interruptions; for, according to the report, he stated that the authenticity of the Pentateuch was proved by the end of Deuteronomy, which tells of the death of Moses, while other books were attested by having their authors' names attached to them. It is a pity that such a relic of the old days should be disturbed.

Professor Leitch, who occupies a similar position at the General Assembly College, Belfast, seems to the full as orthodox. His address, as Moderator of the Assembly, was a protest against Rationalism and the anti-supernatural spirit of the age. He said: "The fact that the most celebrated Biblical scholars of Europe are advocating theories that would destroy the Bible as a revelation of the truth from God is exercising an influence on us all. There are many in the Church to-day who, though unable to adopt these destructive theories, are hindered by them from a frank and hearty acceptance of supernatural teaching of the Bible, and so are giving a feeble and hesitating testimony to the most fundamental facts and doctrines of the Christian faith." He said, further, they should no more be moved by the names of great Rationalists than by those of great popes and cardinals. He forgets one thing: the Rationalists could teach something different, and be just as well off. Not so with popes, cardinals, and Presbyterian professors.

Poor Jesus Christ died, according to the inscription, as King of the Jews, but his throne was a cross. The new Bishop of Bristol, Dr. Forrest Browne, is in a different case. He has just been "enthroned" with much ceremony, and a long report of the proceedings appears in the local press. It took quite half-an-hour to settle Dr. Browne properly in his episcopal chair. Of course there was the regulation speechifying, in which the new Bishop participated. His lordship traced back his ghostly line to Saint Chad 1,250 years ago. Well, there isn't likely to be a successor to Saint Browne 1,250 years hence, nor even 250 years hence. Still, the bishopric will probably last its present occupant's time, and he may consider himself a much luckier man than his unfortunate Master. Jesus Christ *died* upon the cross, and Bishop Browne *lives* upon the cross—which is a vast improvement.

Dr. Brownlow, the Catholic bishop, got his back up over Dr. Browne's enthronement. "You are not the true successor of St. Chad," he says, "for St. Chad was a Catholic." Dr. Brownlow regards himself as the genuine article, and looks forward hopefully (with the aid of prayer, of course) to the Catholic conversion of England. It is a very pretty quarrel as it stands, and 'twould be a pity to spoil it.

"Our prayer is," said President McKinley the other day, "that our heavenly father may have our nation in his sacred keeping." "Our prayer is," says the New York *Truthseeker*, "that our nation may sometime have a president who is not a canting pharisee."

Rev. Dr. M'Connell, of Brooklyn, complains that cycling has "depleted the churches." Good news! Good news!

Providence is afflicting Russia with a failure of crops At New Orleans and Memphis yellow fever has been raging. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

An alarm of fire was raised in a church at Khnieleff, in the Kozloff district, Russia, and in the stampede fifty-four persons were killed and eighty more injured. Even the prospect of going straight to heaven doesn't reconcile Christians to a premature death.

In the Lower Town of Quebec there is a church dedicated to Notre Dame des Victoires. It was so named on account of the defeat of the English expedition in 1690. The Virgin was prayed to for victory, and it was, naturally, ascribed to her, and a well-endowed church built to celebrate her miracle. Of course the English afterwards gained Quebec, so that the miracle-working Virgin fell into some disrepute; but the church is still there to illustrate the way priests work the oracle.

Jose Ruiz y Munoa, the physician of the Spanish line ocean steamer, "Santo Domingo," while suffering under an attack of religious mania, in which he imagined that he saw the Savior of men with his cruel wounds, inflicted the stigmata upon himself with his own lancet, and fought as only a madman can before he was overpowered and taken to the Hudson-street Hospital, New York.

The Presbytery of Kirkcudbright have deposed the Rev. Ireland Gordon. Sixteen charges of drunkenness and impropriety with females were made against him, but only six were declared proven. The rev. gentleman has appealed against the decision.

The Apostolic chief of sinners lays it down that Christians must not go to law with the brethren. "General" Booth, however, has had a case before the Court of Appeal, in which he came off second-best. It seems that his firm, trading as the Salvation Army, made an agreement to purchase, in a period of four years, paper to the value of at least £30,000 from Messrs. Strong and Hanbury, wholesale stationers, and it was not denied that there was a considerable deficiency in the quantity ordered. The arbitrator had been appointed to decide what damages "General" Booth was to pay to Strong and Hanbury on that account. Booth and Co. appealed against having such an arbitrator. The appeal was dismissed with costs.

The Bishop of Coventry attended the meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and when he came to leave he found that his coat and umbrella had been stolen. Instead of giving the thief his apron and gaiters also, he had David William Rees, a local preacher, given into custody.

Digitized by Google

In the church porch at Chesterfield an umbrella was found one Sunday with the touching inscription: "This umbralar has prayed on my kodehens ever since I stole him."

Mr. Nisbet says in the *Referee*: "Religion has a great many lip-servants. There are few who serve her with their hearts. Men, even professing Christians, seldom act as if the prize of eternal life were as real to them as the possibility of a dividend in a mining company. Look at the trouble they are at to get to Klondike. If they would only put forth half as much effort to get to heaven, the churches would have a good time."

No man was more virulent against the claims of Charles Bradlaugh to his seat in Parliament than Sir Hardinge Giffard, the present Lord Chancellor Halsbury. He it was who denounced the *Freethinker* as "spiritual dynamite." What is the opinion of his own profession on this pious patron of the Christian Evidence Society? A correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette*, who made inquiries recently "in and about the Courts," writes: "There seems to be only one opinion on the subject of Lord Halsbury's latest appointment. It is denounced on all sides as a job surpassing any which even the present Lord Chancellor has previously accomplished."

The *Daily News* says: "The Lord Chancellor has signified his occupancy of the Woolsack by a series of personal and political jobs which have earned for him a very disagreeable nickname. But he may now be congratulated upon having surpassed himself, and thrown all his previous performances into the shade. Mr. Darling is not known to have any qualification whatever for the judicial office."

Among the many religious societies which are lamenting a falling off in funds is the Church Association, which puts itself forward as England's bulwark against a reversion to Popery. The Jubilee junketings are, as usual, made responsible for the diminution of income.

The convict Hall, who has been executed at Melbourne for the murder of his wife, showed much contrition and expectation of meeting his victim safe in the arms of Jesus. The chaplain prepared him for glory by administering the blood of the Savior in the form of good red wine. The incident led to the following lines in the *Sydney Bulletin*:—

Penitent, about to swing,
Let us kneel and pray together;
Then a joyful hymn we'll sing.
Ere, with sturdy bonds of leather,
Hangman binds your limbs in union
You'll be fit to "take Communion."

Penitent, about to swing,
Sure salvation you are seeking;
See that to the Cross you cling
(In a pious way of speaking),
Bound of yore for pit infernal,
Now you're booked to Life Eternal.

All through doing what you did—
Murder, followed by repentance.
Swarms of souls on Satan's grid
Envy you your lawful sentence.
Lost are they beyond retrieving—
They lived and died without *Believing*.

The Bishop of Worcester, at the annual meeting of the Birmingham Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, said he wished to lay great emphasis on the fact that the critical study of the Bible, even when proceeding from those who were not believing Christians, had nevertheless contributed immensely to the more intelligent use of Holy Scripture. In plain terms, Freethinkers have compelled Christians to modify some of their absurdities. The Right Rev. Father-in-God went on to state they lost nothing by the new view. He said: "Let it be granted, for instance, that there were two Isaiahs, and that the work of the first stopped at the thirty-ninth chapter, while the rest of the book was written at the time of the exile. We should lose nothing at all. Take Isaiah liii., which seemed to Paley so remarkable that he staked his whole argument of prophecy on that single chapter. That chapter lost nothing whatever of its prophetic force if they put its authorship in the time of the exile. On the contrary, he believed that it gained in force, because the sufferings of the nation in exile were themselves a kind of feeble foreshadowing of the sufferings of Christ."

If what was written long after was ascribed to Isaiah, this shows what little reliance can be placed on the compilers of these documents. Further, the fact that the fifty-third chapter was written in exile suggests its true interpretation—viz., that it has nothing to do with Jesus Christ, but describes the sufferings of Jacob, the servant of the Lord the personified people of Israel.

Some correspondents of the *Times* have been exercised upon the question, "What are the functions of a Bishop?" It seems that the Bishop of Lichfield recently gave a "dispensation" from fasting for one day to those who attended the opening of a new schoolroom at St. Oswald's College, Ellesmere. It is said that Anglican bishops have no claim or power to grant such "dispensations," and this is but another instance of how naturally the sacerdotalists go on the road to Rome.

Among repartees contributed to the *Daily News* there is the old story of a Dissenting minister, the Rev. Matthew Wilkes. Hearing a drayman calling down imprecations on his horses' eyes and limbs, and thinking to shame him, he tapped him on the shoulder. "My friend," said he, "for that cursing and swearing I will bear evidence against thee on the Great Day of Judgment." "Oh yes," was the retort, "I daresay. The biggest rogue always turns King's evidence."

Another is of a Roman Catholic parish priest, who was well known for his efforts in support of temperance principles, and who had frequently had occasion to admonish one of his parishioners for his studious disregard of them. One day he encountered the individual in question as he was "taking the road at right angles." The good priest addressed him with a distressed air and a shake of the head: "Drunk again, Larry." "So am I, your riverence," was the disconcerting reply, delivered in a sympathetic tone, and accompanied by a reciprocating gesture.

Another Irish one tells how Pat, who had some puppies he was anxious to sell, met his priest and thus accosted him: "Does your riverence want to buy any pups, fine and Catholic pups, your riverence?" "No, thank you, Pat. I do not want them." The Protestant clergyman, happening to be a little way behind, overheard the conversation. Presently Pat thought he would try his chance with him. "Does your honor want to buy any pups this marning? Raal and Protestant pups, yer honor." "But, Pat," said the clergyman, "have I not just heard you offering them to the priest as Catholic pups?" "Shure and I did, yer honor; but that was before their eyes were opened."

The recent commission of inquiry into the condition of the Fijians has had the courage candidly to saddle "Christian civilization" with the moral and physical ruin of the race "Paganism *prevented* sexual immorality," and, as Christianity only forbids it, the result is so much human nature that "the chastity which was formerly almost invariable in a bride is now the rare exception." The physical deterioration of the people also is attributed, partly to a filthy habit of living which Christianity doubtless reprehends, but which benighted paganism punished as a crime; and partly to the harder lot of the woman under the "family life," which the gospellers have worked so hard to introduce. Polygamy made it compulsory that an infant-rearing wife should receive the utmost attention from the other wives; the single spouse's maternal duties are so seriously interfered with that the infant mortality rate is now all but half of the birth-rate. The whole miserable business resolves itself into one of two alternatives. Either Christianity—when judged, like other things, by results—is a howling failure, or the Christianity of our sable brother is the merest humbug, and the whole mission business an impudent fraud.—*Bulletin*.

The Rev. C. L. Williams, a Ramsgate vicar, has evidently been reading trashy books. In his sermon on Sunday evening last he told his congregation that he recently bought a book at one of Smith's bookstalls to while away the time during a river trip. After reading it through he was so disgusted with it that he threw it into the stream. Then the seriousness of the act dawned upon him, and, fearing lest someone else should find the book and read it, he fished it out and sunk it in the mud at the bottom of the stream. The rev. gentleman, however, omitted one important point in relating this story, and that was to give the name of the book in question. Probably it was the fear that had he done so his flock would have been shocked at their pastor for having chosen such vile literature that led him to make the omission.

The rev. gentleman expressed disgust that such a respectable institution as Smith's bookstalls should be the means of distributing such rubbishy books, and held that while they continued to do so the moral status of the country would sink lower and lower. He has evidently yet to learn that ninety-nine per cent. of such publications are sought after by members of his own persuasion; and had he had the courage to give the title of that book, the local booksellers would have had such a demand for it during the week that they would have blessed him for the advertisement.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 7, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "If I were God." Morning lecture (free) at 11.30, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, subject, "Church, Chapel, and Common Sense in the Coming School Board Elections."

November 14, Athenæum Hall, London; 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 7, Glasgow; 8, Motherwell; 9, Paisley; 10, Greenock; 14, Edinburgh; 18, Wood Green; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

O. FORD (Derby).—Lecture notices should be sent to the editor.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Shall appear.

LIVERPOOL WORKING MAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

S. G. GRANT.—Thanks for the cutting. See paragraph. Your quotation from Shakespeare is very apposite. The "petty worries" you refer to do not prevent the realization of your good wishes. Mr. Foote does enjoy good health and appetite, and sound sleep.

F. COTTRELL writes: "The Camberwell people had evidently been looking forward to a visit from Mr. Foote, as the hall was crowded last Sunday. The doors were open at 7 o'clock, and we had some good vocal and instrumental music till 7.30, when there was not standing room. We had an extra supply of the *Freethinker*, and were soon sold out. At the close of the lecture we enrolled eleven new members." This is how Branches get on that work instead of grumbling. We congratulate the brave, untiring Camberwell committee on their well-earned success; and we just wish some Freethinker with a little money to spare would send them a cheque for encouragement and extension of their propaganda.

J. CHACE.—See our leading article. We appreciate the trouble you have taken.

J. ROTHWELL.—Certainly it would, as you say, be an eye-opener if all who are virtually Freethinkers, in every class of society, would speak out boldly; but a correspondence in this journal would hardly bring about that desirable consummation. While men are timid, and Christian society is intolerant, a good deal of Freethought will keep itself private. Pleased to hear you hope to do something for the Treasurer's Scheme.

G. BRADY sends another 10s., his monthly contribution towards the Treasurer's Scheme, which he is glad to find is meeting with some measure of success, though not as much as it deserves.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—No one would suspect you of plagiarism. Still, we note that your verses in our last issue were written, exactly as printed, more than three months ago.

H. NICHOLSON.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Watts was in "splendid form" at Stanley, and made such a fine impression; also that there was such a capital attendance on the first night of the debate with Mr. Waldron.

E. H.—(1) We have *not* heard that Mr. Cox was vanquished by an infidel-slayer at Pontypridd. Nor can we give you Mr. Cox's address, as we do not possess it. (2) The so-called apocryphal books of the Old Testament are included in the Catholic Bible. The so-called apocryphal gospels were used in early Christian churches before *the* Church settled the Canon, centuries after the time of Christ.

T. HOPKINS.—Thanks for your subscription, which is properly acknowledged in another paragraph. Thanks also for your humorous letter. As a matter of fact, Mr. Foote doesn't "want £250 a year." That is what the Treasurer proposes to pay the President some day, if possible; but it may be a very stiff and stubborn "if." Mr. Hartmann's scheme has been adopted; it is *his* scheme, not the President's, whose only concern is to give it a loyal support in the interest of the Society. Directly the President is a recipient of a penny under it, the party will be apprised of the fact. At the same time, we do not wish it to be understood that we think the President ought *not* to be paid, if the finances allowed of its being done.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—J. T. Embleton, 10*s. (p)*; Ips, 5s. *(p)*; J. Lambie, 5s. *(p)*; Chatham Branch, £1.

G. R. (per E. Truelove) sends £4, his first year's subscription to the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme. We have also received:—T. Hopkins, £1.

THE HOOPER FUND.—Mr. J. Bellamy acknowledges:—F. C. Adams, 2s. 6d.; W. Garley, 2s.; W. H. Taylor, 1s.; W. Lucas, 1s.; R. W. Dykes, 1s.; C. H. Bull, 1s.; H. Smith, 6d.; R. S. Johnson, 6d.; W. Roberts, 6d.; W. Bryan, 6d.; G. Bryan, 6d.; G. W. Hopper, 6d.; G. Wenborn, 10s.; R. Richards, 10s.; R. Ward, 10s.; H. Paskey, 6s. 5d.; J. Clarkstone, 6d.

A. J. R.—That beautiful passage of Holy Scripture occurs in Jeremiah xxv. 27.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Fria Tankar—Birmingham Post—New York Public Opinion—Freidenker—Lucifer—Cheltenham Free Press—Two Worlds—The Consett Chronicle—Chatham Observer—Progressive Thinker—Ourselves—The New Century—Humanity—Zoophilist—Truthseeker—The Torch of Reason—Dominion Review—Secular Thought—The Northern Whig—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Crescent.

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

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (Nov. 7) in the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "If I were God." This is the title of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's new book, which will form the basis, or at least the occasion, of Mr. Foote's lecture.

Camberwell Secular Hall was crowded to excess on Sunday evening. Such a crush has not been witnessed there for years. Not only was every chair and form on the premises utilized, but people were standing behind the seats right to the door, and several persons stood all the evening at the back of the platform. Mr. Sabine, who took the chair, made the usual announcements, and congratulated all concerned on the progress the Branch was making. Mr. Foote's rising to begin his lecture was the signal for an enthusiastic demonstration. For nearly an hour-and-a-half he discoursed on "God and the Devil" to an audience that was alert and appreciative to the end of his peroration. Punctuations of laughter or applause were made with great frequency. Everybody seemed delighted with the successful evening, and the lecturer was asked to "come again and oftener." In the ante-room, after the meeting broke up, the secretary enrolled several new members.

Now that the outdoor lecture season is ended, the Camberwell Branch is going to carry on free indoor lectures on Sunday mornings in its own hall. Mr. Foote has promised to open the ball this morning (November 7) at 11.30, taking for his subject "Church, Chapel, and Common Sense, in the Coming School Board Elections." Freethinkers in the neighborhood should try to bring their less heterodox friends. There is nothing to pay. It is free salvation this time.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured to a crowded audience in the Co-operative Hall, Stanley, Durham. Quite one-third of those present were ladies. The subject was "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb." It appears to have "caught on," for the large gathering listened with profound attention, and at the close Mr. Watts received quite an ovation. Friends attended from Stockton-on-Tees, Chester-le-Street, and other places within a radius of twenty miles.

The four nights' debate at Stanley, Durham, between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. A. J. Waldron, commenced on Saturday, October 30. There was an excellent audience, and the best of order prevailed throughout the evening. Mr. Jonathan Green, a local Justice of the Peace, presided. The discussion was continued last Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

To-day, Sunday, November 7, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Glasgow, and on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in Paisley, Greenock, and Motherwell. The last three lectures are given under Mr. Hartmann's Propagandist Scheme.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Nov. 7) at Blackburn, in Jubilee Hall, Water-street, morning, afternoon, and evening. We hope the local friends will do their best to crowd the hall.

Mr. Cohen has been lecturing at Stanley again, his meetings resulting in seven new members to the local Society. The *Consett Chronicle* notices his "large audiences" and admits his "eloquence," but thinks he was "too sarcastic." One good Christian, signing himself "Bible Reader," wants to know through the *Chronicle* why such "blasphemy" is allowed in Stanley. "Is there no village pond?" he asks. Perhaps there is, and "Bible Reader" should cool off in it, if he hasn't water enough for the process in his own house.

Digitized by Google

A good deal more correspondence appears on the same subject, much of it abusive. The Christians are evidently feeling the attack on their superstition.

Mr. W. Heaford occupied the Athenæum Hall platform on Sunday evening. He had a good reception, and his lecture on "The Flight of the Gods" was highly appreciated.

Our East London friends have started well at the King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road, where this Sunday Mr. Heaford takes the platform. Friends in the district should attend and support this effort in a densely populated district.

In view of the importance attaching to the question of Prison Reform, our readers will be interested to learn that Mr. Edward Carpenter will lecture on "Prison Methods Now and in the Future," at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Wednesday, November 10, at 8 p.m. Admission free.

Every Secularist who is really interested in the movement should purchase a copy of the *Secular Almanack* for 1898, issued by the National Secular Society. All the work on the Almanack—at any rate at present—including Mr. Wheeler's, which is far the heaviest, is done gratuitously, and every penny of profit arising from the sale will go into the Society's exchequer. Besides some interesting and useful articles by leading Freethought writers, the Almanack contains a calendar of the "saints" of human progress, and much other information of service to Secularists.

Mr. Forder reports a fair sale of the new collection of Ingersoll's pieces under the title of *The House of Death*. This little volume only requires to be known to be in extensive demand. It contains some of Ingersoll's tenderest, wisest, and most beautiful utterances; and it is just the thing for a Freethinker to lend to a Christian friend or acquaintance—of course after reading it himself.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive, is fixed for Monday, January 10, at the Holborn Restaurant. London friends, and perhaps some country ones, will please note.

The American Secularists will hold their Annual Congress this year at New York. It will extend over three days, from November 19 to 21 inclusive. Hardman Hall has been engaged for the occasion. Messrs. Foote and Watts have been invited to send letters of friendship and encouragement, and have done so.

Lucy N. Colman suggests three nominees for the president's chair of the American Secular Union—Mr. Washburn, Mr. Remsburg, and Mr. Steiner. She would be satisfied with either.

Colonel Ingersoll's health appears to be thoroughly restored. His lecturing engagements are published nearly up to Christmas. We hope the Colonel will be able next year to redeem his promise to visit England. The Freethinkers over here are dying to see and hear him.

Our ever-welcome exchange, the New York *Truthseeker*, reproduces our recent article vindicating Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and David Hume, against the malicious falsehoods of Preacher Talmage. It also prints a long letter from Mr. Wheeler in reply to Mr. Conway's arguments in favor of his "Romney" portrait of Paine. We miss George Macdonald's "Observations" in our gallant contemporary. We hope they are not permanently discontinued.

Friends who have promised subscriptions to the N.S.S. Treasurer's Scheme are requested to remit the same, in whole or in part, at their earliest convenience. Mr. Watts, Mr. Cohen, and other lecturers, are doing good propagandist work already under this scheme. Mr. Foote stands aside for the present. The scheme will have to be much better supported before he feels justified in drawing anything from the Society's exchequer. Perhaps it will interest some of our readers to know that Mr. Foote renders unpaid service as president, and does not even charge for his out-of-pocket expenses.

Obituary.

Two Freethinkers of some note have passed away in America—Professor A. B. Severance, who died in North Chicago on October 8, in his seventy-fourth year; and Mr. Graves, the publisher of the *Little Freethinker*.

The Legitimation League holds a public meeting on Monday, November 8, in the Council Chamber, Holborn Restaurant, at 8 p.m., when Mr. William Platt will read a paper on "Natural Love and Spiritual Needs." Admission is free and discussion is invited.

A NEW BIBLE.

A RECENT number of the *Methodist Times* goes into raptures, exhausting, as usual, its extensive vocabulary of superlatives, over what it describes as a "wonderful and delightful" series of the various books of the Bible. It seems that up to now the Bible has been given to us in an "uncouth, artificial, and misleading" form, and that "it will have almost the startling effect of a new revelation to inform the majority of English readers that the various books of the Bible are not only inspired volumes, but also exquisite illustrations of the highest literary form"!

We confess that this information has not had a particularly startling effect on us, because we had always understood that the Bible was so absolutely perfect in every respect, literary and otherwise, that its pre eminence was unquestionable. But, according to the Methodist organ of holiness and hysterica, God has only just "raised up," in the person of a devout Methodist, a gentleman who has licked God's word into literary shape, and thereby "rendered a service of inestimable importance to the English Bible.....which in some respects is not less significant or less likely to produce world-wide effects than the re-discovery of the Bible by Martin Luther in a monastic library." It seems to take God such a long time to move. He has "been and gone" and left a matter of such "inestimable importance" to the human race, and resulting, according to this Methodist scribe, in such "disastrous consequences," for ever so many hundreds or thousands of years, and only just set it right! Is it nothing that he has, to again quote the scribe, "made the Bible an unknown book to numerous persons of culture, refinement, and taste"? The wonder is how such people ever got any culture, refinement, or taste without the Bible! And if they did, and others can, then possibly we could manage to get along without it.

However, it will be all right now. We shall be able to have Job, or Jeremiah, to cheer us up when we are in the dumps, in a nice handy little pocket edition, without carrying the whole family Bible about with us. One or two thoughts are suggested to us by the publication of this improved edition of God's infallible word. If we can only get Christians to grasp the fact that the Bible is not a book, properly speaking, but a collection of books written in different countries, in different ages, and by different writers, and that these books have been bound together irrespective of their chronological order, their literary merit, their historical credibility, or their moral excellence, something will have been gained by Freethought. If we had not been taught that the various books which make up the Bible were inspired, should we ever have guessed it? Had our minds been unbiassed by religious education, should we ever have concluded that Jeremiah was inspired, but that Hamlet was not? Have not Christians themselves disputed as to which of the books of the Bible were or were not inspired? What mark or criterion is there by which we can judge of the inspiration of a book?

Of course the inspiration of the Bible was settled for us some centuries ago by a conclave of divines; but many things have been found out since then; biblical criticism has advanced, science has progressed, and much that is in the Bible has been discredited and shown to be false, and it is about time we took another vote on the matter.

H. JONES.

"Endymion" describes in *Secular Thought* how in the market-place, as he stood between the Salvation Army and a pedlar, who told people how they could save their own souls if only they bought his composition, he caught some terribly sacrilegious combinations, of which we note a few of the least blasphemous: "Salvation is free! free to all!—only twenty-five cents a box." "The Lord is our strength!—There's nothing so strong as this cement." "Accept Jesus now! now! now!—Your soles will last out two pairs of uppers." "Christ offers himself to all, without money and—At ten cents a cake, gentlemen, I offer you—God's only son, our blessed redeemer—Why, it would be cheap at a dollar, but I only ask—Where will you spend eternity, in hell or—This cement is stronger than—The Holy Spirit and all the angels of heaven." This sort of thing was in full blast when the correspondent left, and was still going on when he passed half an hour afterwards.

Digitized by Google

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held at the Society's office on October 26; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. J. Neate, P. Sabine, M. Loafer, W. Leat, E W. Quay, C. Mascall, E. Bater, S. Hartmann, G. J. Warren, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received and adopted. The Treasurer was asked to present a complete financial statement at the next meeting.

As a matter arising out of the minutes, the President reported upon the case of Mr. F. M. Browne. Mr. Forder, who had the matter in hand, was again making a weekly allowance to Mr. Browne's wife and family.

Some discussion arose as to whether the N. S. S. should support the candidature of Mr. Barwick, a member of the Social Democratic Federation, who was running on the Secular Education ticket for the Finsbury division; and it was moved by Mr. Heaford, seconded by Mr. Hartmann, "That, in view of the forthcoming School Board election, this Executive recommends the Secularists throughout the country to support only those candidates who include Secular Education in their program, meaning by Secular Education the exclusion of Bible reading and all other religious instruction from the school curriculum." Carried unanimously.

Mr. Charles Watts reported further correspondence he had received from the Union of Ethical Societies, and the matter was adjourned for further inquiries.

The resolution which was to define the duties of the sub-committee was then considered, and ran as follows: "The sub-committee appointed *re* Mr. Hartmann's Scheme shall be called the Propaganda and Finance Committee. Its duties shall be:—(1) To arrange propagandist work under the Scheme in conjunction with the Secretary, and, when necessary, with the President, who will also deal with any sudden and imperative business that may arise between the Committee meetings. (2) To see that the list of subscribers is duly kept posted up in the Society's books. (3) To consider and recommend to the Executive any fresh extension of the Scheme that may seem financially and otherwise advisable. (4) To look after collectors under the Scheme, and make all requisite arrangements with them through the Secretary. (5) To keep a proper minute book of Committee proceedings, and report same, with any explanations, at every ordinary Executive meeting." After a short discussion, this was unanimously adopted.

The Committee then reported the result of lectures delivered by Mr. Cohen at Gateshead and Felling, and by Mr. Heaford, with assistance from the Scheme, at Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse. They also recommended that, for the present, assistance should be given preferentially in towns where branches already existed or needed re-organization.

The expenditure having now exhausted the funds in hand, the Secretary had been instructed to call up promises as far as possible, and to prepare a list of branches which required assistance.

The Committee minutes were then adopted. Messrs. G. J. Warren (East London), C. Stewart (Wood Green), and O. Ford (Derby) were appointed as collectors in their respective districts.

The Editors reported that the *Almanack* for 1898 was now on sale.

The Secretary read correspondence from Bristol, which was ordered to stand over until next meeting; and also reported that the Annual Dinner would take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 10.

The meeting then adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE (*Secretary*).

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN WOMEN.

IN Pagan Greece woman had better opportunities of self-development than any in distinctively Christian times. Everyone has heard of Aspasia, the consort of Pericles, and of Sappho, whose harmonious verses led to her being designated the tenth Muse. In the literary annals of Greece we read of Aecara Lucana deeply versed in the philosophy of Pythagoras, on which she wrote a treatise; of Areta, the daughter of Aristippus, who was public instructress at Athens, and wrote a life of Socrates and a treatise on the *Miseries of Women;* of Hipparchia, also a writer on philosophy; of Corinna, who in five poetic contests bore away the palm even from Pindar; of Agnocide, who studied medicine, and opened the way for other females to do the like; and last, not least, of Hypatia, the leader of the school at Alexandria, whose skin was torn from her body by a Christian mob hounded on by Saint Cyril. Christianity produced saints and martyrs, but, with a few rare exceptions, we have to come to the days of Freethought to find such women as Harriet Martineau and Mary Ann Evans.

UNCLE BEN.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF HELL.

SPURGEON'S fiery account of the hereafter may be easily paralleled from other noted divines, thus:—Rev. Joseph Benson, Methodist commentator, says: "Infinite justice arrests their guilty souls and confines them in the dark prisons of hell, till they have satisfied all its demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas! they can never do.....He will exert all his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit.....Number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, sand on the seashore; and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and number up the ages of woe. Let every star, every drop, every grain of sand, represent one million of tormenting ages, and know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind these, and so on without end."

Rev. Ambrose, in a discourse entitled "Doomsday," pictures the torments of lost souls thus: "When the damned have drunken down whole draughts of brimstone one day, they must do the same another day. The eye shall be tormented with the sight of devils, the ears with hideous yellings and outcries of the damned in flames, the nostrils shall be smothered, as it were, with brimstone; the tongue, the hand, the foot, and every part, shall fry in flames."

Rev. Mr. Emmons wrote in his series of sermons (sermon xvi.): "The happiness of the elect in heaven will, in part, consist in witnessing the torments of the damned in hell; among these may be their own children, parents, husbands, wives, and friends on earth. One part of the business of the blessed is to celebrate the doctrine of reprobation. While the decree of reprobation is eternally executing on the vessels of wrath, the smoke of their torment will be eternally ascending in view of the vessels of mercy, who, instead of taking the part of those miserable objects, will say, Amen! hallelujah! praise God!"

"When they (the saints) shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than they, it will give them more a sense of wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God in making them so to differ. The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever."

Rev. Jonathan Edwards, in his *Practical Sermons*, says: "The saints in glory will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are; yet this will be no occasion of grief to them, but rejoicing. They will not be sorry for the damned, it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them; but, on the contrary, when they see this sight it will occasion rejoicing, and excite them to joyful praise."

Rev. Thomas Boston, in his *Fourfold State*, informs us that "the godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly husband shall say Amen! to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom! The godly parent say Hallelujah! at the passing of the sentence of their ungodly child, and the godly child from the heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents who begot him and the mother who bare him" (p. 336).

Rev. Thomas Vincent, a Calvinistic clergyman of the past, indulges in the following pleasant thoughts: "This will fill them (the saints) with astonishing admiration and wondering joy, when they see some of their near relatives going to hell, their fathers, their mothers, their children, their husbands, their wives, their intimate friends and companions, while they themselves are saved. Those affections they now have for relatives out of Christ will cease, and they will not have the least trouble to see them sentenced to hell and thrust into the fiery furnace."

Such are the views of some of the teachers of the past.

Prayer Answered.

Dear *Bulletin*,—Prayer for rain does sometimes answer, despite the scoffing of *The Bulletin* and other unbelievers. We had a drought recently in Maoriland—not much of a drought, perhaps, but a very good one for us. One Methodist sect in a Hawkes Bay township proposed having a school-picnic, and a rival Dipper sect prayed for rain—presumably to spoil the show. But the weather kept fine, and as the next best thing the Dippers arranged a picnic of their own for the same day, to keep their people away from the opposition orgy. It was held in a secluded gully, and that afternoon, just as the shivoo was in full blast, it rained like H—anything. The moist saints started for home with torrents rushing off their monkey beards, and as they hoisted the heavy saintesses over streams of rain-water, and feasted their eyes on Sister Mary Hann's muddy underskirts and skinny ankles, they realized the efficacy of prayer, and were not at all comforted.—R. T.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Digitized by Google

THE MODERN SHEPHERD.

THE parson rose from his downy bed at the break of the Sabbath Day,
He dressed himself and decked himself in the chaste æsthetic way—
Lavender-scented was his garb, rings graced his lily hand;
In truth, he was a goodly sight—the parson of the land.

The parson drove to the temple fair, where the Lord of Hosts abode,
And his carriage flew, at a rattling pace, on the wide and dusty road
('Tis true the master went afoot, in the days of long ago,
Nor purse nor scrip His followers bore; but the times have altered so).

The parson rose in the pulpit then and gazed upon his flock—
The big land-sharks and the business men (the Church rests on a rock!);
The big, fat paunch, and the big, gold guard and the broad-cloth, shone so sleek—
'Twas a sight divine, the stately shrine of the Lowly and the Meek.

The parson waved his lily hand and raised his mellow voice:
"The Lord hath been exceeding good. Rejoice, my friends, rejoice!
The oil of gladness hath he poured in fulness on each head,
His little lambs, in pastures green, by running waters led.

"Let the men of substance raise the hymn, the upper orders sing;
Ye bankers! make the holy aisles of the sanctuary ring;
Ye landlords! join the tuneful throng, and laud Him loud who said
The landlords had not left Him where to lay His precious head.

"Lift up the psalm, ye usurers! the New Day doth begin;
Christ turned the money-changers out—but now we take them in;
The creed was somewhat narrow which the Savior preached of old,
The simple Galilean—but we're making wide the fold.

"Lift up your song, ye men of pelf—ye burly men of beer!
And sing, *in soft, respectful tones*, ye poor folks in the rear!
Lo! there be many mansions in the Father's House on High—
E'en the poor man, *if respectful*, hath a lodging in the sky.

"Lord! strike the sons of Belial low who dare to rise and kick;
Lord! smite the Agitator home and touch him to the quick;
Lord! guard full well the powers that be—keep thou our pastures green,
Our people meek and humble, as they hitherto have been.

"Oh, Lord! the discontented—they be many in the land;
They love not us, the sanctified, thine own anointed band.
Make bare thy strong right arm and help thy chosen in this town—
Christ 'stirred the people up' of old—but do thou keep them down."

Lord! Send thy choicest blessings down on all who have a stake
In this Thy blessed vineyard. Let the scoffer fear and quake.
Lord! prosper all our little specs, let corner 'lotments rise;
So shall we win our way at last to "corners" in the skies.

At last the shepherd ended. Then out the bankers hied;
The land-sharks and the usurers they followed side by side;
The fat man with the stake came next, and then the man of beer,
And lastly came the poor man, *so respectful*, in the rear.

Then the parson left the holy place, and gat him home with speed,
And he sate him down to a royal feast (the wine was choice indeed);
And the servants bowed to every beck of the shepherd's lily hand—
In truth, he was a goodly sight, the parson of the land!

—*Sydney Bulletin.* P. LUFTIG.

I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.—*Thomas Paine.*

BOOK CHAT.

MARY BENNETT DUKES, a Christian lady of Kobe, Japan, writes a pamphlet on *Money and the Church*, in which she says: "It is without exaggeration to say that, of every dollar given to the cause of foreign missions in England and America, only ten cents is used for direct Gospel work on the field."

* * *

Miss Constance E. Plumptre contributes to the *New Century Review* an account of the *Tragedy* of Bernardino Ochino (1487-1564), one of the early Italian Freethinkers, who in this work exposed the wickedness of the Papacy. Miss Plumptre recommends its republication. Another article is on the philosophy of Empedokles, so remarkably versified by Matthew Arnold. Mr. W. B. Wallace, who writes the article, contends that Empedokles was an early teacher of the doctrine of evolution. A brilliant sketch of the varied career of the *Saturday Review*, by Dyke Rhode, concludes by observing that the opportunities of the Churchman and theologian seem to have been lost for ever.

* * *

The *Vegetarian* of October 30 gives a portrait of Mr. H. Salt, the author of the *Life of James Thomson*, the *Life of H. D. Thoreau*, *Literary Sketches*, *P. B. Shelley*, *Richard Jefferies*, etc. Mr. Salt is a strenuous literary worker, of clear, logical mind and fine taste, whose services to the Humanitarian League, of which he is secretary, are beyond praise. He has just sent us a reprint of a reply to the Right Reverend Monsignor J. S. Vaughan, entitled *Vaughan on Vivisection*. The Catholic priest gives his pious benison on the practice of dissecting live animals for purposes of research, and the Freethinking *littérateur* exposes his sophistry very ably.

* * *

The article on "The Minor Poets," in the new *Quarterly*, is calculated to make those gentlemen writhe, some because they are, and some because they are not, included. Le Gallienne gets it especially hot. The writer says: "He apes Keats, and disgraces him by rant and frippery that befit a third-rate actor or a second-rate property-monger; his frenzies are those of a penny-reading reciter; he gushes over a picked blossom; he is a mass of sickly affectations. We have waded through them all." As for Alfred the Little Laureate, "he seems to us a lady-like painter in water-colors.

* * *

G. Margoliouth, writing in the *Guardian*, October 27, on Dr. Ginsburg's edition of the *Massoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible*, incidentally mentions some alterations the scribes permitted themselves in transcribing and touching up the words of the Lord. Thus the present reading of Genesis xviii. 22 is: "But Abraham stood yet before the Lord." It is traditionally recorded that the original text had: "But the Lord stood yet before Abraham." The fastidious Soferim thought it would please the deity to transpose them. So in Numbers xi. 15 Moses originally said to Jahveh: "Kill me, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thy sight, so that I may not see *thy* evil." But the Soferim preferred to have it: "That I may not see *my* evil." Another instance is the last clause in Job xxxii. 3. The present text has: "And because they [*i.e.*, Job's friends] had condemned Job." But tradition affirms that the phrase which originally stood in the text was: "And because they condemned God."

BUDDHISM.

THE Buddhists number 400,000,000, or one-third of the human race. Buddha lived about 500 or 600 years before our era. Buddhists do not believe in any god or gods as being pleased or displeased by their actions, and as assigning to the actors their future condition by way of punishment or of reward. The very idea of a God as creating, or in any way ruling, the world is utterly absurd in the Buddhist system. God is not so much as denied; he is simply not known. Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially Atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, by austerity, and by science; and a remarkable indication of this startling fact is to be seen in the circumstance that some at least of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, the Mongols, and the Thibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God. The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned to him by the Ruler of the Universe; but his actions determine it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things, by the blind and unconscious concatentation of cause and effect.

—*Chambers's Encyclopædia.*

Digitized by Google

SECULARISM IN BIRMINGHAM.

THE present session of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. partaking somewhat of the nature of an experiment in propaganda, it may be of interest to Freethinkers generally if I give a short account of the work of the past month.

For some years past the Branch has had to struggle against a difficulty common to our party in many other towns. The only hall available for Sunday lectures was situated on the outskirts of the town, and was not easily accessible to the public. The Committee decided to approach the School Board authorities for permission to use one of the large rooms in the most central school. This having been obtained, Mr. Foote opened our campaign. The large audiences attracted by his well-known ability served as a splendid advertisement. He was followed by Mr. Stephen Armfield, who gave two excellent lectures. Mr. Armfield has a splendid delivery and a good platform style. His services should be utilized by all the Midland Branches.

Mr. Charles Watts, who came next, had crowded houses. He is always a popular visitor to Birmingham. The next Sunday Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, who appeared for the first time as a lecturer for our Branch, had between five hundred and six hundred people to listen to her, and this despite the fact that the Sunday Lecture Society was holding its opening meeting in the largest theatre, where a lecture was delivered on "Our Colonies."

In addition to these meetings, Mr. Watts gave two week-night addresses (under the Treasurer's Scheme), which were well attended, and held a two-nights' debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. The debate was a thorough success in every way, and all our friends expressed the greatest satisfaction at the manner in which Mr. Watts represented our views. The following Sunday Mr. Stanley Jones was with us, and met with a good reception. All the lectures have been thrown open to the public free of charge, and, as a consequence, the sale of literature has been more than doubled. The collections have been good, and the Committee are satisfied with the financial results of the month's work.

If the new scheme of the N.S.S. Treasurer is only supported by the more wealthy members of the party, the experiment of *free* lectures on Sundays could be extended. Judging from the good results in Birmingham, I believe therein lies our greatest prospect of success as a party organization.

C. H. CATTELL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SECULAR POLICY AND THE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Secularists have no cause to uphold supporters of the Compromise. It was formed despite them, and it has been carried out to their disadvantage, leaving them to pay for teaching what they hold to be false and pernicious, and offering the rotten consolation of a conscience clause. The so-called Progressives, having pledged themselves to support the Compromise, are the worst foes of a purely secular education. Better friends are those who re-open the religious difficulty. The experience of the Colonies, and of those countries where secular education prevails, proves that it is the strife of the sects which gives the children a chance of learning what is useful, without their minds being warped by religious lies. Ex-parson Diggle, who is an intelligent man of the world as well as an astute tactician, is aware of this. He has done his utmost to let his fellow Churchmen know it would, in the long run, be a mistake to re-open the controversy. But the average fat-headed parson, whose ignorance is only excelled by his arrogance, elated by dipping his hands into John Bull's pocket for his Church schools, hopes also to capture the Board schools, and have the Apostles' Creed taught therein. I venture to think that the teaching of that forgery would be a sure preparative for secular education. At the same time, I cannot counsel the support of candidates who would do their worst to thwart education, as against those who at least stand for efficient teaching, ample school accommodation, and a liberal life-equipment for the coming generation.

What should Secularists do at this juncture? Evidently what, I understand, is advised by the Executive of the National Secular Society—plump for those only who would exclude Bible teaching and religious education from the schools. It is true most of these candidates are Socialists, which many Secularists are not, and they have a millennial plan of free maintenance with which many disagree. But no such projects are possible until the assent of Parliament is obtained.

I expected the Ethical Culturists would have put forward Mr. Gould and Dr. Coit. But the last-named gentleman says he fears "a century will not be time enough" to bring about his views. If the matter be left in the hands of invertebrate Ethical Culturists, I feel sure he underestimates the time. It seems that even their manifesto is going to appear *after* the election is over! Let Secularists work and vote for those, and those only, who go in for their program. This is the one way for a minority to make its influence felt.

PLAINSPEAKER.

THE SCHOOLS AND POPULAR CONTROL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The age-enduring struggle for national education has been a struggle to compel the interested clergy to allow the children of the nation to be properly educated and able to compete with those of other nations of the earth. The vested interests of the blackcoats made them at first oppose education, and then seek to control it. In 1807 the House of Commons passed a Bill enabling the ratepayers to set up a school in each parish. The House of Lords threw it out on the advice of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The House of Commons then affirmed the principle that the State ought to be responsible for the education of the people, under local public control, while the Archbishops and clergy affirmed their hostility to any national education which was not completely under their own direction. Until 1870 they were successful. Then a national system was started which has virtually made education a great department of the State; the denominational schools, no less than the Board schools, being, to the extent of four-fifths of their income, supported from the national purse. Yet, whereas in every other department of the State religious tests have been abolished, and a Catholic, a Jew, or a Freethinker may occupy the highest positions, the teaching profession is so abjectly under clerical control that in country districts it is considered imperative that teachers shall serve in Sunday-school or play the organ. When will the people awake and claim that all schools shall be under public management? Voluntary contributions to denominational schools, which in 1851 were fifty per cent. of their total, have shrunk to seven per cent.; yet, on the strength of this paltry pittance, the clericals pretend to control education exactly as they like. The immense bulk of the income of training colleges is derived from Government grants; yet each and all have religious tests, straight-waistcoats with which the students must fetter their brains and cramp their consciences. It should be the condition of all Government grants that they should be open to all comers, irrespective of sect or creed. The training colleges should be national institutions, as much as the British Museum, in which nothing save merit is regarded. They should be at least as open as the universities to members of every sect, and of none. Freethinkers should take every opportunity of urging that what is paid for by all should be open to all, and that schools of every kind should be wrested from the management of the clergy and placed under popular control.

L. WILLIAMS.

PROFANE JOKES.

A MAN, in passing a country graveyard, saw the sexton digging a grave, and inquired, "Who's dead?" Sexton—"Why, old parson Prosy, to be sure." Man—"What complaint?" Sexton—"No complaint; everybody's satisfied."

I dearly love the Jews, upon my word;
They played the second part in our salvation.
Had they refused to crucify the Lord,
We sons of Eve had not escaped damnation;
So, having thank'd his Savior, who'd refuse
His thanks to Pontius Pilate and the Jews?

SHOOTING EAGLEHAWKS.—"Oh, daddy, don't shoot straight up; you might shoot Dod!"

Dean Burgon once, in a sermon on the transcendent merits of the High Anglican school of theology, exclaimed, with a fervor which was all his own: "May I live the life of a Taylor, and die the death of a Bull!"

Mr. Anstey Guthrie has some pleasant instances of texts misapplied. He was staying once in a Scotch country house where, over his bed, hung an illuminated scroll with the inscription, "Occupy till I come," which, as Mr. Guthrie justly observes, is an unusually extended invitation, even for Scottish notions of hospitality. According to the same authority, the leading citizen of a seaside town erected some iron benches on the sea front, and, with the view of at once commemorating his own munificence and giving a profitable turn to the thoughts of the sitters, inscribed on the backs:—

THESE SEATS
WERE PRESENTED TO THE TOWN OF SHINGLETON
BY
JOSEPH BUGGINS, Esq.,
J.P. for the Borough,
etc., etc., etc.
"*The sea is His, and He made it.*"

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "If I were God."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road. Ball's Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "John Howard and Prison Reform." November 6, at 8.30, Grand Ballad Concert. November 9, at 8.30, Fancy Dress Ball.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, G. W. Foote; 3.30, General meeting; 7, Dance and entertainment.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 83 and 85, Commercial-road): 7.30, W. Heaford, "Secularism a Better Creed than Christianity."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, J. C. Millington, "Goethe." Followed by an address by F. J. Gould.

KINGSLAND: 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "The Poem of Job."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Men, Women, and Priests."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (341 Harrow-road, near Westbourne Park): November 8, at 9, Business meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Keast, "Secular Reformers."

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, S. Armfield, "An Hour with Christ and the Devil."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, Social gathering.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Charles Watts—11.30, "Sin and Salvation"; 2.30, "The Drawbacks of Christianity"; 6.30, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Recitations and Readings.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Eleanor Marx Aveling, "Christianity, Secularism, Socialism."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, F. Woollett, "The Bible and Modern Science."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "The Frog and Cockroach"—lantern illustrations.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "The Transformation of Christianity." Members' and friends' Social Dance Wednesday evenings at 8.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King's-street): 7, Business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—November 7, Blackburn; 14, Manchester; 21, Huddersfield.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—November 7 to 14, Mission at Plymouth.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—November 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, *p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, *p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "J. W. Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph*.

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

November Number now ready. 28 *pages*, 3*d. post free.*

CONTENTS:—

The Judgment of Paris-up-to-Date. By LEIGHTON PAGAN.
Spiritual Love. By WILLIAM PLATT.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation tory 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W.E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. WHEELER. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason.*) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

SOME GREAT BARGAINS.

36 **GENTS' SCARBORO'-SHAPED MACKINTOSHES,** Black, Navy, Dark Grey, Light Grey, Fawn, and Brown, 50 inches, 52 inches, and 54 inches long, 20s. and 25s. each.

These are at least 25 per cent. under the ordinary price. Give chest, waist, and length measurements.

190 **LADIES' MACKINTOSHES,** Latest Style, Browns, Fawns, and Greys, 10s. 6d. each. *Flowers of Freethought* (2s. 6d.) free with each.

Lot 11.—1 pair all wool Blankets and pair large Bed Sheets, 1 Quilt, and 1 Tablecloth for 21s. carriage paid. John M. Robertson's *Papers for the People* included free of cost with each parcel.

Overcoats, Stock Sizes, Dark Irish Frieze, Youths', 20s.; Men's 25s., wool lined. Give chest measure over vest, and length from centre of back to full length of sleeve.

23 **VERY FINE SABLE NECKLETS,** 17s. 6d., worth 25s.

Large Purchase of High-Class Dress Materials in Black, Navy, Brown, Green, Fawn, Grey, and Heather Mixtures. To make a Speedy Clearance we are making them into parcels containing 3 Full Dress Lengths, all different, for 21s.

30 Yards Remnants all Double Width, first-class Dress Goods for Children's Dresses, for 21s. carriage paid.

Suits to measure ... 35s.
Trousers to measure 10s. 6d.

AGENTS Wanted Everywhere. Write for Terms.

Dresses or Costumes to measure 21s.
Jackets or Capes to measure ... 21s.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28, Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 46. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE BIBLE IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

WHEN a Nonconformist deputation waited on Lord Salisbury, a year or so ago, he told them that he was not surprised at their wishing to maintain the existing religious instruction in Board schools, as it was Nonconformist religion that was taught there. Mr. Price Hughes and other Nonconformist representatives called this a cynical insinuation. Yet it appears to us that Lord Salisbury was essentially right. If it is not exactly Nonconformist religion which is taught in Board schools, it is the religion which it suits Nonconformists to have taught. It is the irreducible minimum on which their various sects are agreed, first as among themselves, and secondly in view of their common enemy, the Church of England. They feel, if they do not see, that if dogmatic religious teaching is once introduced it will soon have a Church of England color, since the Church party is not only overwhelmingly strong in comparison with any single Dissenting body, but probably strong enough to beat them all collectively.

The struggle between "Moderates" and "Progressives" in London, the great centre of this warfare, is in our judgment a fight between Church and Chapel. Of course it would not do for either side to say so plainly, since a large body of outsiders—mere citizens, and persons who will take no part in open religious quarrels—have to be judiciously considered. In this case, as in so many others, the public label does not accurately denote the private intention. One side calls itself "Moderate" because that is a good name with one-half the public; the other side calls itself "Progressive" because that is a good name with the other half of the public. But the "Moderates" do not mean to be moderate, if they have the chance of being otherwise; and the "Progressives" do not mean to progress, for they flatly declare that the Compromise of 1871 is the topmost summit of practical wisdom.

Between or beyond these two great parties, which are undoubtedly at present in possession of the field, stands the much smaller but ever-growing party of Secular Education. This party holds that the State, including the Municipality, should have nothing whatever to do with religion, either by way of support, patronage, or protection. Religion is a private question; besides, it is a matter of opinion, and of infinite diversity of opinion. Once allow religion to be taught by State servants in State institutions, and the question must sooner or later arise, What is the *true* religion? To let the State servants teach what they please is sheer chaos. Now when this question arises, it can only be answered in one of two ways: either by appealing to a clear and universally recognised authority, or by counting heads. The first method is impracticable, because no such authority exists; and the second is a tremendous absurdity. Counting heads is the modern way of deciding what shall be done at a given time and in given circumstances, and what is done by it to-day may be undone by it to-morrow. But counting heads to determine truth and error is the most stupid device that ever occurred to a bovine imagination.

Properly all the Nonconformists should support Secular Education. Dr. Parker still advocates this policy. He sees no difference between established religion in State churches and established religion in State schools. Nor do we, except that the latter is the worse of the two; for the law allows grown-up people to stay away from church, while it compels children to go to school.

The Church party is striving to introduce what it regards as true religion in the Board schools. The Nonconformist party is striving to stave off this difficulty by supporting the Compromise. It wants to keep the Bible in the schools as a religious text-book. But there is just as much disagreement about the Bible as about the various dogmas of Christianity. Those who deny this are reckless or ignorant. One might safely challenge the Christian sects in England to formulate a definite view of the Bible which they all hold in common. Moreover, the Bible is objected to by thousands of Freethinkers as an unfit book for children. Not only does it present false old views of man's origin, position, and destiny, but its morality is often imperfect and sometimes barbarous, while its ethical sanction is entirely supernatural. Further, the Bible contains many passages, and some whole chapters, which no minister would dare to read out to a mixed congregation; passages of gross expression, of bestial narrative, of prurient suggestion. Even if religious teaching were allowable in Board schools on the most certain grounds of fairness and justice to all sections of the community, these objections to the Bible as a text-book would still stand, and especially the last objection, which is the concern of every parent who would guard his children's minds from pollution.

Referring to this matter recently, we pointed out that there are worse things than the Apostles' Creed, inasmuch as bestiality is worse than absurdity. At a meeting of the Metropolitan Free Church Federation, a speech was made by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, in which he accused the Church party of wanting to "divest the religious instruction of its simple Biblical character." Whereupon we expressed an objection to Board school children reading about "Judah and Tamar, and Onan, and Lot and his daughters, and the Levite and his concubine, and the amours of Solomon, and the bawdy adventures of Aholah and Aholibah." Our paragraph met the eye of Dr. Clifford, who has written us the following letter:—

> "SIR,—In reference to your notes on the reading of the Bible in Board Schools, permit me to say that the children are only introduced to 'selections' of Scripture suited to their age and capacity. I enclose a copy of the selections; and I think you will be prepared to allow that they offer some of the finest poetry, of the loftiest ethics, and of the most inspiring history the literature of the world contains. I should resist as strongly as yourself the reading in our schools of the passages to which you refer. Believe me, this is not a quarrel between Churchmen and Dissenters. It is a fight of a 'priest' party against the citizenhood of the metropolis. If I thought I was to gain anything for *myself* by it, I would not utter another word. The aim of the 'priest' party is to destroy the schools of the people; to take away their democratic elements; and that I shall resist as long as I can.—Yours truly,
>
> "JOHN CLIFFORD."

We will deal with the second half of this letter first. We have no wish to suggest that Dr. Clifford desires to gain anything for *himself*. We do not doubt his honesty. But is he absolutely free from the bias of his profession? The doctor who wants to see one's children vaccinated is personally honorable, but he may unconsciously be prejudiced in favor of a lucrative practice. With regard to the "priest party," we have to say that every Christian minister is a *priest* in the eyes of Secularists as far as he aims at a public privilege for his religion. Nor can we quite see how the triumph of the Church party would destroy the "democratic elements" in the "schools of the

Digitized by Google

people," any more than the triumph of the Nonconformist party. In either case, the question of Bible reading *versus* the Apostles' Creed does not seem a particularly democratic issue.

We will now deal with the question of Bible "selections." Dr. Clifford says that they are suited to the children's "age and capacity." But we suspect that this is a euphemism for their "innocence." Anyhow, we must ask why "selections" are necessary, if the Bible is the Word of God—and it is surely presented as such in the religious instruction. Thomas Paine said that no system could be true which shocked the mind of a child; and can a book be inspired if it contains passages that have to be carefully concealed from boys and girls? And, after all, is there any success in this policy of concealment? The Bible is placed in children's hands in its entirety. It is not expurgated. What is not read out to them, they can read for themselves. We dare affirm, not from hearsay, but from personal knowledge, that the more than questionable parts of the Bible are eagerly read and freely canvassed by children. Dr. Clifford was once a boy himself. Let him lay his hand upon his heart, and say whether he admits or contests our affirmation.

Both in America and in England men have been found guilty of obscenity for copying by no means the worst of Bible-texts on postcards. Is it fair, is it honest, is it decent, to place the book containing such texts, and *worse* texts, in the hands of children? We ask for a candid reply.

With regard to the "selections" sent us by Dr. Clifford, we have first to notice that they are printed as a leaflet by the Progressive School Board Election Council. Such a leaflet precludes the possibility of honest co-operation with the "Progressives" by Jews, Atheists, Agnostics, Secularists, and Freethinkers. And if Mr. John Burns is still the president of that Council, as we believe he is, we should like to know how he reconciles this leaflet with his own convictions.

These "selections" are really the Syllabus of Lessons for 1897-98, approved by the London School Board, and "which the Progressives do not wish to disturb." There is a special division for each of the seven standards. Every one of them begins with "the Lord's Prayer." Now on the face of it this is a theological document. Who is the Lord? Jesus Christ? And who is he? The Son of God—or, to put it more technically, God the Son. This is what the "Progressives" wish to teach the children; yet they exclaim against the Church party for wanting to emphasize "the deity of Christ."

"God tempteth no man," we read in one part of the New Testament. Nevertheless, children are to pray to this same God, "Lead us not into temptation." They are told that their father is in heaven, when he is probably at work, earning the family dinner. They are taught to ask God for their daily bread, though thousands attend school with half-filled or empty stomachs. Some of them, too, may read in the newspapers that poor humble Christians, like the Peculiar People, are liable to imprisonment for relying on the efficacy of prayer. And the only part of the Lord's Prayer which has the least ethical pretension is "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"—a principle which Christians do not act upon, and which ought in practice to be beyond the "age and capacity" of Board school children.

These "selections" offer what Dr. Clifford calls "the most inspiring history." Let us see. There are "lessons from the life of Moses," who is probably as legendary as Lycurgus. "Lessons from the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," who are doubtless as legendary as Romulus and Remus. "Lessons from the lives of Samuel and David," when the man after God's own heart was one of the last persons whom we should wish our boys to imitate. On the whole, we consider Plutarch far more "inspiring." And why go back to these ancient, disputable Jews, when there is "inspiring history" enough in the authentic records of more civilized nations?

"Finest poetry" is largely a matter of taste and opinion. We admit that the Bible contains some fine poetry, a good deal of which seems due to the English of the Authorized Version; but we did not understand that it was as a poetry-book that the Bible was introduced in the Board schools.

"Loftiest ethics" is a rather more definite phrase, although the adjective leaves room for great diversity of taste and prepossession. But we must reserve our criticism on this head till next week.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIANS AND HEATHENS.

When very young, I not only held that Britons "never, never, never shall be slaves," but proudly regarded my country as the friend of freedom all over the world. In my idea its mission was that of the humane emancipator and elevator of the race. I rejoiced to think that my heart throbbed in unison with that of my country, with regard to Garibaldi in Italy, and Lincoln in the United States. Study of history brought horror at the shameful treatment of the heathen nations wherever Christian civilization extended its sway. The brutal conduct of the Spaniards in Mexico, the West Indies, and Peru, and of the Portuguese in Brazil and India, might perhaps be accounted for by the fact that they were Roman Catholics. But the Jamaica massacres gave me a rude shock, and *Max Haveluar* opened my eyes to the fact that similar cruelties and injustice had been perpetrated by the Protestant Dutch in Java. Herman Melville's works showed, too, how the missionary business was made the cloak for greed and tyranny in the South Sea Islands. It was with sorrow I learnt, especially from natives of India, that my ideal England was non-existent to the other inhabitants of this globe, and that, so far from being the apostle of freedom, it was regarded as pre-eminently the aggressive spoliator, whose career had been mainly one of force and fraud.

Wholesale accusations of any kind are usually unjust as well as useless; but there is very much in our treatment of the native races which have come under our sway that should make us chary of expatiating on the iniquity of other nations. Quite recently Lord Wolseley declared at Glasgow that "our army, alone of all armies, is almost always at war somewhere or other." And the reason given was that "Year after year the necessities of our empire and the aggressions of frontier tribes force Britain to fight." Our Commander-in-Chief appears to be a subtle humorist, with the picture he calls up of bloodthirsty tribes compelling a peace-loving nation to take their lands in the interests of peace. But what would be the version of the same frontier tribes? Methinks they might give us a picture of a powerful, well-armed people, ever encroaching on other people's lands, ever filching from them fresh territory. Only occasionally does the other side find a voice. In the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr. H. Fox Bourne, author of *The Story of Our Colonies*, a careful and responsible writer, tells of the disgraceful treatment of the natives of Bechuanaland. He declares that, having been expelled from their coveted reserves by force of arms, the majority of the survivors have been left to starve, or die of their wounds and diseases in the inhospitable deserts of the country, while the prisoners have been made virtual slaves, "contracts" having been forced upon them which make them veritable serfs in everything save name. This is not a solitary instance. The treatment of the Kanakas in Australia and the South Sea Islands, where Christian merchants still go "blackbirding"—as the trade in human lives is euphemistically called—the extermination of the Hottentots and Bushmen, the degradation of the Kaffirs in Africa, and the extermination and degradation of the Maories in New Zealand, tell the same tale.

It is far more true to say that Christianity exterminates the heathen than that it converts and civilizes them. It insists on habits which are unsuited to them. They are compelled to wear clothes; become no whit more modest, but do become more susceptible to cold and disease. It introduces virtues and vices with which they were before unacquainted. The virtues are hard to acquire, but the vices are easily picked up. Missionary reports are full of assurances of the prevalence of piety and the signal triumphs of divine grace among the converted heathen. But secular travellers tell another tale. Their testimony in India, Africa, and Australasia is that a Christianized native is a native spoiled—one who is pretty sure to have acquired Christian vices, while losing simple native virtues. In parts where the Anglo-Saxon can colonize the natives are being exterminated by disease and drink. The process seems one which it is difficult to avert, but it is nonetheless deplorable. Sir Richard Burton, and many other eminent African travellers, have given their testimony that the evils of the slave trade were not greater than those produced by drink introduced by Christian traders; that Islam with temperance and the curse of slavery is not so bad as

Digitized by Google

Christianity with the curse of drunkenness. In China the inhabitants at least ascribe the curse of opium to Christian influence. Wong Chin Foo, the Chinese writer of "Why am a Heathen" in the *North American Review*, said :—

> "When the English wanted the Chinaman's gold and trade, they said they wanted 'to open China for their missionaries.' And opium was the chief—in fact, only—missionary they looked after when they forced the ports open. And this infamous Christian introduction among Chinamen has done more injury, social and moral, in China than all the humanitarian agencies of Christianity could remedy in two hundred years. And on you Christians, and on your greed of gold, we lay the burden of the crime resulting; of tens of millions of honest, useful men and women sent thereby to premature death after a short, miserable life, besides the physical and moral prostration it entails, even where it does not prematurely kill! And this great national curse was thrust on us at the points of Christian bayonets. And you wonder why we are heathen!"

Dr. Robert Needham Cust testifies in the current *Asiatic Quarterly Review* that the condition of the people of Africa under the discreditable game of grab, carried on, at their expense, by France, Germany, and England, has been such that "the sufferings of Armenia under the Turk are as nothing in comparison." The entire population of at least one hundred and thirty millions has been injuriously affected. But I must cite Dr. Cust, and let him take the responsibility of his own words :—

> "Attila and Genghis Khan could not have done worse than these nominal Christian states. Murder, confiscation, rapine, have been the results. Deception and diplomacy have been the machinery. Lust of land and gold have been the motive power. What a mockery it seems with one hand to stop the deportation of slaves, and with the other to introduce millions of casks of alcoholic liquors! One missionary reports his landing from a ship with ten thousand gallons of alcohol. Lord Salisbury is credited with the assertion that the settlement of religious missionary bodies in a region to which they had come to preach the gospel helped to make up the proof of the occupation of the region, which was required to justify a claim to its sovereignty! Treaties were made by missionaries, scientific explorers, designing speculators, and the chief who put his mark to a treaty knew not what he was doing; the brandy bottle was placed generally by his side, and the pen put in his hand: he often, in ignorance, assigning the same lands to rival adventurers.
>
> "Throughout there was an utter neglect of the interests of the unhappy population; they were to be saved indeed from deportation across the Atlantic to a country into which men of the same blood have developed into nine millions of freed men (citizens of the United States) in a stage of European culture; they were to remain at home and be slaves there, to see their lands and cattle confiscated, their villages destroyed; their chieftains, like poor Bushiri, hung by the Germans; their women, as in the Cameroons, flogged by the 'most cultured' Europeans, or worse. The missionaries of different churches and denominations flock in, and become a portion of the conquering race; one missionary near Lake Nyanza is said to have actually hanged a man—another missionary near Victoria Nyanza to have burned a village—some sections of Christians actually wage war with other sections. Things are done which would be deemed to be impossible out of Pandemonium; and yet this is complacently described as the advance of civilization and Christianity."

The pretext of colonization can no more apply to Central nd Northern Africa than to India. We can neither kill ut nor replace the dark races in torrid regions. But we an make their lives miserable, or help to make them righter. It is in vain to speak of the benefits of colonization in equatorial regions. But that is no reason they hould not have the benefit of civilization. The national onscience needs quickening in this matter. There used o be a British and Foreign Aborigines Protection Society; ut I have seen no evidence of its existence for a long time. Races that have for ages elaborated a social polity of their wn are being stamped out before even an attempt is made understand them. Our missionaries go to them with an intolerant faith, claiming exclusive possession of truth, and ith a fetish book which warrants the extermination of olaters. What wonder that the heathen are treated as ttle better than noxious animals. How different it ight be if missionaries were simply bent on improving e secular lives of the heathen, instead of preparing them r kingdom come.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIANS IN CONGRESS.

(Concluded from page 708.)

FROM what we wrote in our article upon this subject last week, it will be seen that the "National Protestant Congress" was composed of the usual self-satisfied believers in Christian theology. They seemed to be impressed with the notion that their views of Christianity must be correct, and that those who entertained opposite opinions were necessarily wrong. This has been the great mistake always made by the orthodox party. Its members have assumed that they possess "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." Throughout the entire proceedings of the Congress these enthusiastic Protestants claimed to be the only true interpreters of Christ and the Bible, while they condemned Roman Catholics, in language both offensive and unjust, as being in error without one redeeming feature, and as carrying on a propaganda cruel and pernicious. Now, who made these Protestants the sole judges of what Christianity is? Have not Roman Catholics, or Secularists, a right to form *their* opinions as to the meaning of the Bible, and the teachings ascribed to Christ? True, the Catholics say that the Church is necessary to explain the Bible, and that priestcraft is indispensable to their religion. And they consistently act upon their avowal. The Protestants deny both of these allegations, and yet they act upon them. Priestcraft has shown its "pernicious influence" among the followers of Luther; and their Church has more than once dictated what were the doctrines of the Bible. Within the Protestant ranks personal opinion has often had to yield to ecclesiastical decisions.

The fact is, "private judgment," with Protestants, means *their* judgment; and sad indeed has been the fate of those who differed from them. Buckle has stated that in Sweden, "which is one of the oldest Protestant countries in Europe, there is not occasionally, but habitually, an intolerance and a spirit of persecution which would be discreditable to a Catholic country." The same might have been said of Scotland before Freethought exercised its humanizing influence upon the orthodox mind there. The Christian writer, Dr. Dick, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, writes: "Notwithstanding the unjust and cruel sufferings which English Protestants endured from Popish priests and rulers, a short period only elapsed, after they had risen to power, before they began, in their turn, to harass their Dissenting brethren with vexatious and cruel persecutions, and fines and imprisonments, till they were forced to seek for shelter in a distant land" (pp. 367 and 368). In 1611 two men—Legat and Wightman—were publicly burned by English bishops for holding heretical opinions, (Buckle, vol. i., p. 316). Passing over the horrors of the Star Chamber, the murder of Servetus, the persecutions in Switzerland, the imprisonment by Protestants in the seventeenth century of sixty thousand of their co-religionists, we come down to our own times, when Freethinkers, such as Carlile, Hetherington, Watson, Southwell, G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, and others, were imprisoned for exercising the right of private judgment. Truly did Buckle write: "The Protestants, who professed to take their stand on the right of private judgment, became early in the seventeenth century more intolerant than the Catholics, who based their religion on the dictates of an infallible Church. This is one of the many instances which show how superficial is the opinion of those speculative writers who believe that the Protestant religion is necessarily more liberal than the Catholic."

These facts—and there are many more of a similar kind that could be cited—ought to convince the members of the Protestant Congress of the folly of indulging in such dogmatic statements as they did at Blackburn. Judging from the speeches made at that assembly, the rev. gentlemen had no special intellectual qualifications to justify the superior attitude they assumed. The language used was not that of scholars or dispassionate reasoners, but rather the declarations of local preachers, and the exultations of contented believers in things as they are. All progress in Biblical criticism was ignored, and all scientific discoveries were discredited. For instance, the Rev. J. Urquhart, in speaking of the Bible and science, said: "God has been wonderfully confirming the Bible, for many discoveries show that it is the Bible which is scientific, and these scientists are unscientific." To support his allegation this

Digitized by Google

Rev. "Second Daniel" contended that the Bible statement as to the Flood and the age of man upon the earth is perfectly true. He says there was "a great flood over the whole earth, and of recent date"; and that "many eminent geologists" put the age of the human race on the earth to about "seven thousand years." This is the kind of milk which these clerical nurses provide for their theological babes. It is fortunate that, as he says, "the Higher Criticism is undermining the faith of many." And such erroneous statements as those made by the rev. gentleman will not stop the process. We should be interested, however, to know where are the records of "a recent great flood that was over the whole earth"; also, who are the "eminent geologists" who allege, as a fact, that man's first appearance on the earth was "seven thousand years ago." These are the wild imaginations of men whose theology is more potent than their regard for historical and scientific evidence.

We have not space in the present article to deal with the question of Bible and science, further than to say that we are prepared to demonstate that the antiquity of man has been proved to be considerably greater than the Bible alleges; geology has demonstrated that the world existed thousands of years before the time of creation as stated in the Jewish account; the theory that all mankind descended from one primeval pair is now given up as unreliable; the astronomy of the Bible has long been exploded; the universal flood as mentioned in Genesis finds no scientific supporters; the possession of devils by the human body, as believed in by Christ, is regarded as an exploded superstition; the teaching of the New Testament, that the world and its contents are to be destroyed by fire, has but few believers; a burning hell for the "wicked souls of the departed" is deemed too revolting and absurd to be regarded as more than a fiction; hence science has practically killed the belief in the Devil, and firmly closed for ever his supposed illuminated habitation. The Bible teaches that mankind has degenerated from a state of perfection; science, on the contrary, indicates that the career of man has been progressive, and that each age, profiting by experience, has been superior to its predecessor. The Bible affirms that at a certain command the sun and moon stood still; science declares that such an event could never have happened. The Bible asserts that all the kingdoms of the world were visible from a certain high mountain; geography teaches that there are many parts of the world totally invisible from any one elevation. The Bible says that an iron axe floated on the surface of the water; experience proves this to be impossible. In almost every field the "sacred writings" appear to be the very antithesis of the teachings of science.

There were a few important concessions made at the Congress which we think will not be appreciated by the Christian exponents who have been recently debating the claims of their faith. The Rev. Dr. Wright stated: "The point we stand on is that Christ endorsed the Old Testament." This is more than Christ's polemical defenders of to-day have the courage to do; for in all our discussions with Christian ministers they have insisted that the Old Testament should not be brought into the debate. The book is regarded by them to be good enough to preach from; but to attempt to discuss its contents in connection with Christianity is too much, even for them. And yet it is the basis of the Christian faith, for without it Christianity falls to the ground. The Rev. Dr. Giles observes, in his *Hebrew Records:* "Christianity and Judaism are inseparably united; neither can exist without the other; .....they must maintain their ground or fall together..... All that gives to it [Christianity] the character of a Divine revelation becomes destitute of meaning until they are explained by the antecedents of the Jewish Scriptures, concerning the temptation of Eve, the fall of Adam, and his rejection from Paradise" (Introduction, pp. 18, 19).

Again, at the Congress the Rev. D. M. B. Chapman alleged: "There is probably no one who knows better the value of the Bible than the Devil. He has ever stood against it. He cannot stop it spreading now, so he tries to nullify it." This is a frank admission of the existence of a personal Devil—an admission, by the way, that will not, we venture to think, be endorsed by the more "advanced" Christians. Probably it is true that, if the Devil exist, he does not know the value of the Bible—at least, to him. Its perplexing and contradictory character is so difficult to understand that but few, if any, can grasp its meaning; and, therefore, if belief in it is necessary to salvation, the Devil has no fear that the book will deprive him of many residents in his warm habitation. Another peculiar statement at the Congress was made by Dr. Grattan Guinness who, in speaking of the Christian Church, said that before the time of Luther the "Church was where it ought to have been—in the wilderness." Now, the Rev. T. Theodore Hitchens, referring to the unfortunate period of "the Dark Ages," pointed out that "it was found in the history of those four hundred years preceding the Reformation, when the Church was paramount, and popes ruled Europe's kings and people, and the Bible was hidden in dusty libraries, comparatively unknown and unread, morality and spirituality were at their lowest ebb." It appears strange to us that God should have allowed the "true Church" to have remained in the "wilderness" doing nothing, while a "false Church" was producing such disasters among his people. But "God's ways are not our ways," and it is fortunate for the world sometimes that they are not.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE SCHOOL BOARD "COMPROMISE" AND MORAL INSTRUCTION.

EXCEPT for the sake of convenience in public discussion, it is absurd to speak of the School Board "Compromise." The system of teaching known as the Compromise is not a middle way between opposed methods. It is not a treaty of peace between rivals. It is Christian orthodoxy, naked and unashamed. It embraces objectionable ethics, out-of-date sociology, ignorance of history, ignorance of science, and ignorance of the true character of the Bible. Whoever supports the Compromise supports a bad plan of education. The Moderate party supports this bad plan; and so the Progressive party supports it. The Moderates and the Progressives fight each other with toy swords. They are practically united in the interests of a common folly. Neither party deserves the vote of rational electors. If Mr. Athelstan Riley were again standing as a candidate and if I lived in his division, I should feel half inclined to plump for so frank and honest a Churchman. He believes in the Christian religion, and wants it taught in the most finished ecclesiastical form. I am quite sure some of the Progressives do not believe in orthodox Christianity. Yet they are maintaining orthodox teaching. They have neither Mr. Riley's faith nor his sincerity.

The only effective means of ending the wrangle over the Compromise consists in the secularization of the schools. All the school time should be placed under the control of the Education Department. Nevertheless, the *old* issue between Christianity and purely secular instruction is likely to yield to another phase of agitation. The Moral Instruction party has appeared. Of course, the movement is too young to appreciably affect the current School Board contest. But it will assuredly grow, and, in due time, will change the balance of educational parties. This new party says that morality should be the chief aim of the school life. It demands that ideas of duty and of citizenship should form the centre-point of the teaching, and that theology should be shut out. In other words, it works for such a system of secular and moral teaching as might obtain the assent of all members of the commonweal whether Freethinkers, Churchmen, or Dissenters. It ought to obtain their assent because it will encircle elements of ethics common to all schools of thought. These elements are self-mastery, self-reliance, truthfulness, gentleness, good habits, industry, honesty, honor, justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, art, music, and refinement of pleasures.

With all its faults, it may be admitted that the present plan of religious teaching does comprise good moral features. In a haphazard way the children are already taught certain useful moral lessons. The good portion of the instruction is too small, and it is more or less spoiled by conjunction with a hopeless theology. But the question arises, Ought the Moral Instruction party under any circumstances to maintain the Compromise on account of its moral elements? In giving an answer to this question I speak only for myself. My answer is: No; under no circumstances ought we to support the Compromise. If I suppose advanced Churchmen should attempt to introduce a more highly developed system of dogma. Suppose it were desired to add the Apostles' Creed, etc., to the Co-

Digitized by Google

mise. Ought not the Moral Instruction party to stand for the present system as better than a more sacerdotal ? I say, No; one system is as bad as the other. Both lude belief in miracles; both found morality upon ine commandments; both imply the false principle of ration through a Messiah, instead of through self-cipline and social co-operation. In the presence of such ring errors we ought not to display a shadow of concern the nominal differences between the Apostles' Creed rty and the "unsectarian" party.

But does not the Moral Instruction party advocate a adual introduction of the secular ethical lessons? Yes, does. And why gradual? Why not immediate? cause such a sudden reform is both impracticable and lesirable. It is undesirable in view of the fact that chers are not yet prepared to undertake the proposed thod. For centuries past children have been educated a theistic basis. Not all at once can educators throw er old traditions. We must give them opportunities for aining. And again, the immediate abolition of the Com-mise is impracticable. The public does not care much theology, but it will not yet consent to fling theology t of the school, because it imagines theology is necessary morals. Very well, we must begin converting the blic; we must convert the teachers; we must convert School Board. Freethought will do this. Orthodoxy il invoke the name of God, and will lose. Freethought ll invoke the name of Humanity, and will win.

For the sake of argument, however, let us assume the ompromise could be all at one stroke voted out of istence. Would moral instruction be in peril? No; r at once all good educationists would turn to the lucation Department. Not many people seem to see the gnificance of the fact, but it is undoubtedly the case that ne Government Code already provides for non-theological hical teaching. Article 101*b* of the Code states that the spector, in recommending grants, "will have special gard to the moral training and conduct of the children." n the "Revised Instructions" to Inspectors (1897) various natives are catalogued as having prompted alterations in ecent annual Codes, and among these is named the llowing: "To emphasize, by means of a special and graduated grant for discipline and organization, the mportance of conduct and moral training as essential ctors of the success or usefulness of a public elementary hool." That is the key to the situation. Our object ust be, step by step, to drive out theology; and, step by ep, to build up a sound ethical system upon the founda-ion already laid in the Codes which the Department, year y year, presents to "both Houses of Parliament by mmand of Her Majesty." I am very well aware that he Inspectors, perhaps acting under the impression that h theological instruction amply secures moral training, ave hitherto given inadequate attention to the ethics of h schools. If it were not so, there would be no need or a Moral Instruction League. But my point is that, ven if the Compromise were to disappear to-morrow, the cular Education Code provides the germs of the reform hich we desire, and which we shall some day secure.

F. J. GOULD.

TO SKY-PILOTS AND DEVIL-DODGERS.

n the Old Testament there was no revelation to the Jews bout a future life; it was a matter still in doubt at the me of Christ's advent on the stage of earth. The harisees and Sadducees were divided on this point; the rmer asserting, the latter denying, a future life. It was served for what is now styled the Christian dispensation distinctly assert the reality of a future life in another istence after death.

In early youth I was compelled to listen to, and sorb as my natural food, the story of the fall of man, of herited original sin, of the consequent inherent and iversal depravity of the human race; the statement that all men are sinners"; that "there is none righteous, no t one"; that "all men have come short of the glory of od." What a reflection on the character of the power at created them all—bad to start with! I was told that l mankind was, in consequence, condemned to eternal estruction in a place called hell, expressly prepared for eir accommodation by that old Jew God, now appearing a new character as the Christian God. I thought I ought to have been consulted before I was born as to whether I cared to put on this mortal coil, and to exist in a universe under the tyranny of such a deity.

Now, as I was saying, this old Jew-God comes out again in a sort of second edition in the New Testament, considerably changed for the worse; for, not content with ill-using his creatures in this life, this New Testament Deity superadds the misery of a future existence. You understand, having created them, he knew how they would behave, and so got hell ready for them. What a monstrous outrage on common sense is this silly priest's story! What a palpable lie! Don't you think, if this story were true, or if Christians really believed it, that every Christian married couple begetting a child commit a crime, knowing the child might go to hell?

Even death, we are told, came into the world only by sin. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans v. 12). This text has long ago been proved to be false by geology, which shows that man has lived and died on this earth during hundreds of thousands of years, and that other animals, birds, reptiles, fish, and still lower forms of life, have lived and died, in countless myriads of millions, many hundreds of thousands of years before man appeared on this earth. Had man and all the lower forms of life not successively in their generations disappeared, there would have been no room left for the existence of their progeny; and, also, a most fatal bar to improvement, both physical and mental, would have existed, which, by the law of death, is effectually removed.

In Genesis iii. 16 we are told that the pains of childbirth are a direct consequence of Eve's transgression; and so, when chloroform was first used in midwifery, its employment was denounced by the stupid priests and parsons of that day as an attempt to thwart the divine will. Is not all this disgraceful ignorance and fanaticism, and also inhuman and revolting?

. . . . . .

BOARD SCHOOLS.

How dare you put this Bible, containing all these horrid dogmas about miracles, witchcraft, human sacrifices, hell, etc., into the hands of young children? How dare you commit the vile outrage, which you do commit when you insist upon your atrocious, cruel, and absurd superstition being forced upon the tender, unformed mind of youth? How dare you put the Bible, without any reserve, into the hands of those who are not old enough to think for themselves, and therefore totally unable to defend their innocent ignorance and simple intelligence against all the absurd nonsense and all the obscenities contained in your so-called sacred Scriptures, you being perfectly aware all the time that such stories as that of Lot and his two daughters abound in that savage, barbarous, old collection of books called the Bible, and that such phrases as "he went in unto her, and she conceived and bare a son," etc., abound in the Old Testament? As some of your parsons are sufficiently impudent to deny the facts above stated, I must refer the reader to the following passages as samples: Leviticus xviii. 6–23; Numbers xxv. 6–8; Deuteronomy xxii. 13–30. Numbers xii. describes a gross injustice done by God to Miriam; Aaron, equally guilty, escaping. Deuteronomy xxv. 11 and 12; Judges iii. 15–22. Really there are some very peculiar—not to say comically gross and dirty—stories in your Bible. Finally, we have a very peculiar command in Deuteronomy xxiii. 1, which has the flavor of a bad oyster.

Were it not for the astounding ignorance of the masses of the people in this country, and the brutal apathy of their spiritual guides and of the so-called upper classes, this fearful abuse and outrage on the innocence of childhood would not be permitted to exist another hour.

So much for your Bible in connection with the Board schools, or any other schools. It is true that there is a Conscience Clause which permits parents, on behalf of their children, to decline your *religious instruction*, as you call it; but you do everything in your power to prevent the free use of this constitutional right by petty persecution of the poor children; as, for instance, putting all those who refuse to listen to your humbug apart in a corner, as though they were lepers, thus exposing them to the gibes and sneers of their school-mates. In country villages and hamlets, which are generally under the despotic rule—

Digitized by Google

socially speaking—of the squire and the parson, you make it as "hot" as you can for those parents who conscientiously refuse to allow their children's minds to be distorted and crippled by your horrid superstition, with all its brutalizing beliefs and terrors and obscenities.

VARÓN.

ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury is an astute gentleman. Being asked to subscribe for the wives and children of the unskilled laborers thrown out of employment in the great Engineering quarrel, His Grace replied that to give money to either party would be to take a side in the dispute. "I pray God," he concluded, "to open the eyes of both." If God hears that prayer, how he must smile!

Dr. Walsham How, the late Bishop of Wakefield, left a big pile of money behind him—not being able to take it with him to the place of his destination, where perhaps it would have melted. He took care, however, in his will to explain that this money was not saved out of his episcopal income. It came to him from his father and his wife's parents. Dr. How states that one-fifth of his episcopal income was spent every year in charity. He also states his opinion that "there is no class which approaches that of the clergy in self-sacrifice." No doubt this is a professional view of the matter.

What is "the most important command in the Bible"? According to the Rev. Beauchamp Stannus, rector of Arrow, Alcester, it is to "preach the gospel to every creature." Those who cannot do it themselves must pay for those who can; hence, if you don't subscribe to a Missionary Society it is useless to "hope for heaven." The golden gates of the New Jerusalem must be lubricated with subscription oil.

Parson Stannus, in his parish magazine, points out that in heathen lands there is "only one missionary for one million." How deplorable! especially where the heathen have contracted a taste for broiled missionary. What is one among so many? This is a matter that ought to be seen to immediately.

At the annual meeting of the American Board of Missions it was announced that the expenditure exceeded the income by £9,000. The treasurer informed the Board that, for the work to be kept up, £26,000 more income must be raised in the coming year than was at the disposal of the committee during the past year.

Cardinal Vaughan's latest letter on the coming School Board elections is straight and emphatic. He has a definite policy, and he sticks to it, which is one of the ways to success. It was said of Alcibiades that he always knew what he wanted, and thus succeeded when men of greater powers of mind failed. Cardinal Vaughan insists that public elementary education for Catholic children must be "distinctly and frankly Catholic." "The Catholic demand," he says, "is Catholic education given by competent Catholic teachers to Catholic children." He declines to have anything to do with "partial Christianity" as embodied in the Compromise. "Better a thousand times," he exclaims, "purely secular instruction, supplemented as best may be elsewhere, than unsound and faulty instruction in the truths of Christianity." This is an attitude which commands our respect. We are as much opposed to Cardinal Vaughan as possible, intellectually speaking; but the position he takes up is logical, and it is well that the Education battle should be fought upon the solid ground of a clear and definite issue.

G. Leonard, professor of occult science, Chicago, has predicted that Colonel Ingersoll will visit that city in the near future and preach a sermon endorsing Liberal Christianity. "He will tell that there is a God; that the Bible tells the truth; and that all should believe and teach it." Prophet Leonard is evidently one of those who predict what the people would like, for "Liberal Christianity," blessed name, is in the ascendant at Chicago. Were Calvinism to the fore there, he might have added that the Colonel would come to believe that hell is paved with infants not a span long.

Body-stealers will not have much chance with the corpse of the late George M. Pullman, the Chicago millionaire. It is thoroughly walled up in Graceland Cemetery. The coffin was first encased in asphalte an inch thick, and lowered eight feet on a concrete flooring. A fresh mass of concrete was built up all round to the height of an inch above the coffin, which was then bolted down with eight heavy steel rods. More concrete was laid above that, and George M. Pullman is safe from all the body-stealers in the universe. But how on earth will he get out when Gabriel blows the resurrection trumpet?

The degradation of Captain Dreyfus was a horrible affair. We even venture to call it infamous. It was a bestial vengeance, and not a just punishment, to subject him to such treatment. The officers and soldiers who took part in it must have felt half-sick when it was over. As a matter of fact, it was Dreyfus himself who went best through the ordeal. Whether innocent or guilty, he bore himself proudly and defiantly. And now they are declaring in Paris that he is an innocent man after all. Supposing, however, that a fresh trial proves him not guilty—what atonement can be made for the public indignities that were heaped upon him? Such gratuitous cruelty is foreign to the spirit of Humanity. It is a legacy from the old days of savage ethics, based upon the supposed commands of a savage God.

Trusting to Providence when you are ill is a species of suicide. We have the word of a London coroner for it. Down at Silvertown a member of the Peculiar People, an aged widow named Caroline Benton, died without medical attendance, and twelve men sat upon her corpse to find out the cause of her decease. One witness testified that the poor old woman was asked whether she would have a doctor, and she replied: "No, Jesus is my doctor." Dr. Fairfax, of Barking-road, deposed that if medical aid had been called in the deceased's life might have been prolonged for several years. Whereupon a juror remarked: "You can't compel a person to have a doctor." "No," said the coroner, "but in my idea it was a species of suicide." There, now! Just fancy it! That coroner probably goes to church on Sundays. But when he gets outside church, and talks like a man of the world, he declares that it is a species of suicide to trust in Doctor Jesus. We quite agree with him. Only it sounds odd from the mouth of a Christian.

A peculiar notion of Providence is displayed by the reporters who tell of "Providential escapes" from accidents which take many lives. Another curious illustration is supplied by the clerical writer of the *Humorous Side of Clerical Life*, who tells how his parish clerk said "one day, when I happened to remark on the number of burials, that it was quite providential, as he wanted some extra earth for banking up in another part of the cemetery." The same worthy remarked: "I often thinks to myself, at the Resurrection, when all these folks get up, what a 'um there'll be."

There are 13,800 benefices in the Church of England. Of these only thirty-four are in the hands of the people themselves. A far larger number are in the hands of each archbishop and bishop, and of some of the sporting members of the aristocracy, not to mention the Lord High Jobber.

According to the *Daily News*, Mr. F. D. Perrott, formerly vicar of Ixworth, near Bury St. Edmunds, had the strange idea that it was the parson's business to be the people's friend. He ought to have known from history that it is the chief function of the Church to keep the masses submissively content, and direct their minds to another world. He tried to get the housing of the Working-Classes Act put in force to provide a few cottages, but brought such a hornet's nest about his ears that he was compelled to give up the living. He is now studying for the less questionable and more independent profession of the law.

Under the caption, "A Clerical Casino at Newark," the *Nottingham Daily Express* remarks that "visitors to church bazaars are becoming accustomed to the use of racing machines and lotteries of various kinds; but this form of gambling was indulged in at the bazaar organized by the clergy and congregation of St. Leonard's, Newark, on a scale altogether unprecedented in the locality. Articles from the various stalls, which could not be sold in the ordinary manner, were put up as prizes for the racing machine. Visitors backed the horse they fancied with stakes proportionate to the value of the article put up, and the gambling fever—especially among ladies and young people—reached an intensity which could scarcely be surpassed at the gaming tables of Monte Carlo." The vicar won a pig in a raffle.

The *Express* observes: "The love and longing for gambling, once inculcated, is not easily eradicated; and at whose door shall the blame be laid if some of those young persons who gambled at the St. Leonard's Church bazaar with such eagerness shall henceforth become inveterate devotees of the gaming table? Intemperance, too, is censured in the pulpits of the Church, and the growth of the liquor traffic is deplored; and yet last year the promoters of the Newark St. Leonard's bazaar applied for a license to sell intoxicating liquors at their function. This was very properly refused by the Mayor remarking that the granting of such a license

Digitized by Google

would practically place the bazaar on the same footing as a common public-house. But who shall speak against that which is done in the name of religion, and under the protecting wing of Holy Church ?"

A correspondent of the *Woolwich Herald* sends the following story of Bible instruction in that town: "Told to write a sketch of Moses, a little fellow wrote: 'Moses was a very naughty boy. His mother spanked him, and spanked him, and spanked him, and when she could not spank him any longer she put him in among the reeds in the river.' The teacher or examiner was at a loss to understand how the little man had got astray, and took up his Bible to read again the lesson to discover how this perverted reading had been arrived at. He speedily perceived where the boy had gone off the tract when he read, 'And when his mother could no longer hide him.....' The rest of the story was drowned in laughter."

Roman Catholics like Mr. Mivart and Father Zahm take to themselves a large liberty in dealing with the Bible to make it accord with modern science and criticism. In his Encyclical of November 8, 1893, however, the Pope laid down the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture in express terms. He wrote: "It is absolutely wrong and forbidden either to narrow inspiration only to certain parts of Holy Scripture, or to admit that the sacred writer has erred." Since then the Holy Father has laid it down that the manifest interpolation in 1 John v. 7 must not be questioned by any Catholic.

When the Jews have freedom they depart considerably from orthodoxy. This is specially seen in America, where many Jews are on the platform of the Ethical Culturists. The Reformed Jews in the States have eliminated from their prayer-book every reference to the restoration of sacrifices, the rebuilding of the Temple, and the return to Zion. They have ceased to pray for the advent of a personal Messiah. This has given place to the doctrine of a Messianic age. "Not a Jew" (to quote Dr. Philipson), "but *the* Jew, is the Messiah. Israel is the Messiah of the peoples of the earth." The Reformed Jews admit proselytes; some without circumcision.

Dr. Andrews, the president of Brown University, Chicago, has given great offence to the pious Christian world by stating that the Armenians are far less trustworthy and noble than the Turks. But in this matter Dr. Brown finds plenty of travellers to bear him out.

In an address to the students Dr. Andrews gave it as his belief, based on personal observation, that "in the East the Crescent is in the ascendant over the Cross, and Mohammedanism is making greater advances than is Christianity. Common report agrees in the statement that Mohammedan and Buddhist missionaries in America and Europe are making more converts to their faith than are Christian missionaries in Asia and Africa." This does not say much for a faith supposed to be divinely revealed.

The average Christian knows as much about the evidences of Christianity as a blind cat knows about astronomy. And it is pretty much the same with the average journalist. Here is a newspaper like the *Standard*, the first Conservative organ in England, and a very ably conducted one too, letting its Rome correspondent write a lot of rubbish about the alleged discovery in the Vatican archives of a communication addressed by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius respecting the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The editor of the *Standard* ought to know that this is a very ancient chestnut. That alleged letter from Pilate to Tiberius used to be one of the stock pieces of Christian Evidence, but every scholar knows it to be a ridiculous forgery, and it has long been abandoned.

It is almost needless to say that no Roman historian ever heard of this alleged letter. It was first referred to by Justin Martyr in the second century. This "father" is described by Jortin as "of a warm and credulous temper," by Mosheim as "wholly undeserving of credit in much of what he relates," and by Middleton as the author of many "silly writings." Justin's legend passed through many later hands, including those of the astute and unscrupulous Eusebius, and became embodied in the so-called *Acts of Pilate*. This is now commonly printed with the "apocryphal" gospels and other rejected writings of the early Christians.

The *Tablet* (November 6) says the papers in the Vatican archives referred to were "not the originals [no, indeed!], but some papers referring to a documentary report, sent by Pontius Pilate to Tiberius immediately after the commencement of the Christian era"—that would be thirty years before the crucifixion. The *Tablet* adds that they are of no authority.

Another precious forgery of the same character is the alleged correspondence between Jesus Christ and Abgarus, Prince of Edessa. Eusebius, who stuck at nothing, or at very little, professed to have translated this correspondence, or had it translated, from the archives of that city. Jortin did not go to the length of saying that Eusebius forged it himself, but he did not hesitate to say that "there is abundant reason to account it a forgery, and a foolish one too." Addison was the last eminent writer who was imposed upon by it. Lardner finally settled its claims to authenticity, and it has disappeared from Christian Evidences ever since.

The *South Wales Echo* says that the rector of St. David's Church, Neath, appealed to his congregation to send him on the morrow £18 to pay off a debt contracted for the supply of surplices to the choir. He then went on to declare that his text was from Matthew vi. 34, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

The attempt by that good man Stead to reincarnate old ghostism and occultism in *Borderland* has not brought in the return expected, and the good man announces its suspension. There is still much fascination in mysteries, but Stead's news from the other world was so palpably news from nowhere that we do not wonder at *Borderland* sinking into merited oblivion. Mrs. Piper is nearly played out.

That pretentious preacher, Dr. Horton, in his *Women of the Old Testament*, has a pathetic picture of how Mrs. Potiphar "awoke to find herself bound to a man it was impossible for her to love.....the volcanic nature of the woman was as yet untouched," and young Joseph unsuspectingly caused an explosion. Another beautiful study is on Rahab the harlot, who, we are told, "if we cannot claim her as a prophetess, as Clement does, we are at least forced to recognise that she turned from this life of shame uncontaminated, to become a mother in Israel." In regard to the Queen of Sheba, Dr. Horton betrays his ignorance by saying: "No tradition preserved the notes of what passed between the King and the Queen." On the contrary, tradition has preserved the curious riddles she is said to have asked him. As for the Shulamite of the erotic Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's, the Hampstead divine says: "From that delicious fountain of waters, so modestly concealed, only he can drink." He also treats us to a dissertation on the wife of Hosea, whom God told to marry an adultress. Fie for shame!

A pious and poetic vagrant recently wrote in a Sunderland police-cell:—

> Here I am to-day;
> Where to-morrow I cannot say;
> Durham or where, I do not know—
> Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

This individual seems to have some of the true spirit of early Christianity; and yet even he takes a little more thought for the morrow than the lilies of the field.

Here is another brace of repartees from the *Daily News*: Bishop Warburton was holding forth to Quin, the actor, in behalf of prerogative. "Spare me, my lord," cried Quin; "you are not acquainted with my principles. I am a Republican, and perhaps I even think that the execution of Charles I. may be justified." "Ay," demanded Warburton, "by what law?" Quin replied, "*by all the laws that he had left them.*" This was admirable; but the bishop, we are told, "would have got off upon judgments," and charged Quin to remember that all the regicides came to violent ends. "That, if I am not mistaken, my lord," was the actor's reply, "was also the case with the twelve Apostles."

One of Voltaire's many repartees is better worth recording than most of those preserved in the *Daily News*. He was highly praising Heller to a Swiss gentleman, who observed: "I'm surprised to hear you speak so of Heller, as he invariably disparages you in most abominable terms." "Ah, yes," said Voltaire with a leer; "I'm afraid we each entertain very false impressions of the other."

Janet MacMurdo, tried at the Ruthin Assizes for the concealment of the birth of her child, had a sad tale to tell of her seduction by a Nonconformist minister under promise of marriage. She had been a Sunday-school teacher, and was let off with one day's imprisonment.

Marylebone Presbyterian Church was startled last Sunday morning by an explosion. It was nothing very serious, only a "bust-up" of one of the pipes connected with the heating apparatus under the floor. But the worshippers were dreadfully anxious to avoid going to heaven, and there was a scene of wild excitement, with a great rush to the exits. Happily no one was killed or seriously injured, but several female candidates for heaven fainted.

Digitized by Google

The *Northern Daily Telegraph*, in an article on the Browne case, admits that the Old Testament "now and then speaks with a literalness to which we are now unaccustomed." "Nothing else," it goes on to say, "could have been expected, and yet the places in the Old Testament where this is done are, as every reader knows, very few." "Very few" is scarcely correct. There are, it has been reckoned, about three hundred chapters in the Word of God which contain words of indecent signification.

The Rev. Father Halst was defendant in a proceeding in a Long Island City court last week, charging him with the conversion of money entrusted to him, by a widow now deceased, for the benefit of two infants. The priest stated that a large part of the money had been spent on masses for the repose of the soul of the widow and her husband.

The spiritual adviser of Mrs. Mary Johnson, a wealthy but ignorant and bibulous woman of New York, worth a half-million, induced her to will the whole of her fortune to the Catholic Church. Mrs. Johnson had forty-three cousins, and they are fighting the will in the courts, alleging drunkenness on the part of the woman, and undue influence on the part of the priest.

The West Rand has become the peculiar South African home of religious—or should I say irreligious?—humor of late. An amusing story of mistranslation is now reported from the Krugersdorp district. A European minister was preaching recently at a native church. The pastor did not sufficiently understand Kaffir to express himself in that tongue, and further complications were introduced owing to the fact that the flock required two or three interpreters, as they used several dialects.

Each interpreter translated what the chief one had given as his version of the preacher's thought. All went well until the rev. gentleman exclaimed in impassioned tones: "Sin may be sweet at first, but it is bitter at the end." This, at its third translation, was given to one tribe as "Sin may be bitter at the first, but it will be better by and bye." This consoling doctrine hugely commended itself to the congregation, and the preacher wondered at the evident joy of a large section of his hearers.—*African Critic.*

Booth understands the virtue of the big drum in religion. Herein he only copied savage Shamans, a chief item of whose cult is making a big noise, the original idea being to scare away evil spirits, as wild beasts are frightened off by noises. The *African Critic* claims that the South Africa native can beat Booth hollow. The other day an Afrikander gentleman heard a fearful din in a location, and went there to quell what he thought a riotous outbreak. He found a prayer-meeting in full swing, the leader thereof beating an oil-can with a hammer, for all he was worth.

Those who have read the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, edited by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler—also called *The Jewish Life of Christ*—will remember that one passage is printed in Latin, instead of in English. It is really no more crude than scores of passages in the Authorized English Version; but as there is one law for Christian publishers, and quite another law for Freethought publishers, it was thought advisable to veil that particular passage in a dead language. Over in America, however, even this device would scarcely be safe; for we see that Anthony Comstock, the great smut-smeller of the United States, is prosecuting a Jewish bookseller named Meyer Chinsky for selling the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* in the original Hebrew. We also see that the great smut-smeller made himself so officious in court that the judge ordered him outside the place reserved for lawyers, and made him sit still. Comstock treated this as a deadly insult, and swore to be revenged on the judge—that is, if he ever has a chance, which is very problematical.

John Wannamaker, the pious millionaire Philadelphia Universal Provider, undertakes also to decide what the people shall not be provided with. The Board of Education, which he is said to boss, will not allow any portion of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* to be used as a French text-book in the Philadelphia High School for Girls.

At the Truro Diocesan Conference one reverend gentleman protested against the Committee "investing Christian money, raised for the House of God, in any security of a Mohammedan Government." It was pointed out that the Church Building Society also invested in Turkish stock, and that "the Jews were allowed to borrow from the Egyptians." In this case the borrowing meant "spoiling."

The Rev. A. W. Jephson, of St. John's, Walworth, is scarcely the sort of person we should recommend to instruct people in the duties of citizenship. Preaching on Citizen Sunday, he said: "If this life was all, then let a man grab everything he could get hold of and stick to it." If this is his notion of natural morality, we should say that, however excellent he may be as a sky-pilot, as a citizen of this world his ethics are not to be trusted.

Mr. Howard Evans, of the Liberation Society, makes public a few questions and answers prepared by the Rector of Canton (a suburb of Cardiff) for use in the Church Day Schools: "Who alone is the true ruler of Christ's Church in this diocese? Answer—The Bishop of Llandaff. How are we to know when men are true or real pastors? Answer—They must be priests or deacons, ordained by the Bishop or Chief Pastor. Are Dissenting ministers ordained? Answer—No. Would it, then, be right to join any of their congregations? Answer—No; it would be very foolish and wrong."

Mr. Evans notices that the expenditure of these schools was £1,047, of which only £178 was voluntarily contributed. Under the new grant of last year these schools will get £137 more. So that, for a paltry sum of £40 contributed by his flock, the rector is able to teach this intolerant rubbish to more than five hundred children at the expense of the nation.

An action for $25,000 damages has been instituted against Mrs. Hannah V. Ross, a prominent Spiritualistic medium of Boston, and her divorced husband, Charles R. Ross, of Providence, R.I., by Mrs. Eliza B. Dean, of Onset, Mass., for the purpose of recovering bonds and cash aggregating over $8,000, which the medium and her husband are alleged to have obtained from Mrs. Dean, formerly a well-to-do resident of Washington, D.C., but who claims to have been stripped of all her possessions by the "spirit controls."

Bishop Joseph Richter, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, has been arraigned on a charge of perjury preferred by Rev. Father Augustin Slorsizk.

The Rev. P. Szulerecki, pastor of the St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church, Milwaukee, has been sued for $10,000 damages by John Gleyzewski, a mechanic, who charges the priest with alienating the affections of his wife.

The Rev. Frank H. Cummings, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Geneseo, New York, has just fallen from grace together with two of the young female members of his congregation.

God's pretty little house at Oldbury-on-Severn was laid in ruins by a fire on Sunday morning. It is only about a dozen years since the church was thoroughly restored. The insurance will not cover half the loss, so Providence has been very negligent of its own.

The *Church Times* regards the Sunday-school as a great source of mischief to public worship, of which it is regarded as a form. Children, it is urged, ought to go to church with their parents. Instead of this, both are satisfied with Sunday-school, and when they grow too big for school they "chuck" it and church together.

Newspaper boys are often run in for crying their wares on Sundays. But there is no remedy for the jangling and the clanging of discordant church bells, for which there is not the same excuse. The boys are earning their living, and apprising some inhabitants of what they want. But church bells are an unmitigated nuisance, unneeded by churchgoers, and detested by non-churchgoers, who in all large towns are a majority.

The High Church conscience has been outraged by the refusal of the Bishop of Liverpool to license the Rev. Morley Richards, curate of St. Bartholomew's, Brighton, to the living of St. Thomas, Toxteth, to which he has been presented by Mr. Gladstone, unless he gives a written guarantee not to hear confessions. Mr. Richards drew the attention of the Bishop to the countenance giving to confession and absolution in the Prayer-book; but Bishop Ryle is not a man to be moved by Ritualist arguments, and, being within his right, the High Churchman will probably have to confess the girls of Brighton instead of th Lancashire witches.

In the *Nineteenth Century* Sir Joshua Fitch warns the clericals that every supporter of the teaching of the creed in the schools, and all who seek by means of the "Orpington" or other device to secure the introduction of the clergy and sectarian teachers into the schools, will, in the first place, be raising expectations they will find themselves powerless to fulfil, and in the second will be doing something to make the present compromise less easy to maintain, and so to bring nearer the adoption of an absolutely secular system.

Abel Andrew says in the *Universal Republic* that we go to church and sing "Behold, behold the Lamb!" and then go home and eat the lamb with mint sauce.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "The Philosophy of *Hamlet*."
November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. C. Watts's Engagements.—November 14, Edinburgh; 18, Wood Green; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

W. Hopkin.—Thanks for paper. See "Acid Drops."

Newark Friend.—You were quite right to be discreet in such a hotbed of superstition. Christians would ruin you if they could, if they only knew of your unbelief.

R. W. Chainey (Boston).—Thanks for your marked copy of the *Investigator* for October 23. We do not care to reproduce all the flattering things you say about us. Some day we hope to meet you and Mr. Mendum again in your own city.

Sunderland.—All Freethought literature can be obtained from Mr. J. Carr, bookseller, 8 Villiers-street.

J. W. B.—Mr. Forder will gladly hear from any one likely to purchase Browne's pictures for the benefit of his family.

J. K. Maagaard.—Kindly send the conclusion. We like to see the whole of the copy before insertion.

Bloomfield Stevens.—Received on Tuesday. Will be read in a day or two with a view to publication.

N. L. Howe.—We had already written a paragraph on the late Bishop of Wakefield's will. We note your promise of 5s. to the N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme. Glad to know you spend many pleasant hours in reading the *Freethinker*.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—*Per C. Watts:* W. McLean, Dundee, £1.

R. Forder, hon. sec. N. S. S., acknowledges the following subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme:—Mrs. Small, 10s. (*p*); J. Brierly, 10s. (*p*); W. Cross, 4s. 4d. (*p*); E. S., 1s. (*p*); "Freethinker" Subscriber, 4s. (*p*); J. Barry, 3s. (*p*); W. Barks, 5s. (*p*); A. C. Browne, 10s.; W. H. Putz, 5s.; H. Barrow, 5s.; E. Baynes, 5s.; W. Pike, 2s. 6d.

C. Cohen acknowledges the following subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme: J. Umpleby, £5 (*p*); J. Harley, 1s. 6d. (*p*); J. Titherington, 10s. (*p*); J. Leach, 5s. (*p*); R. Ashworth, 2s. 6d. (*p*); J. Howarth, 5s. (*p*); T. Hampson, 5s. (*p*); Mrs. Knowles, 5s. (*p*); H. Jones 5s. (*p*); N. Ashworth, 5s.

Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges on behalf of the Treasurer's Scheme:—Netherfield and Carlton Branch, 5s. (*p*); G. Smith, 10s. (*p*); Scotius, 5s. (*p*); W. Waymark, 5s. (*p*); M. L. (Glasgow), £1 (*p*); F. G., West London, 5s. (*p*); Mrs. Henderson, 5s. (*p*).

Alert.—Thanks for cuttings. The inquiry into the condition of the natives of Fiji was, we believe, instituted by the new Government of the Island. What is certain is that the Wesleyans made a lot of money out of Fiji cocoanuts, and that the native inhabitants, who in 1859 were 200,000, are now less than half that number.

F. Cottrell writes: "The Annual General Meeting of the Camberwell Branch instructed me to convey to you the thanks of the members for your kindness in lecturing for the Branch gratuitously on Sunday morning. Everyone would be pleased to see you again at the earliest opportunity. Your last two visits have brought us seventeen new members."

H. Taylor.—Glad to hear the Failsworth Bazaar was so successful.

J. Umpleby, a veteran Freethinker, and one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, promises to give £50 to the Treasurer's Scheme if fifty others will do the same. We fear this is too large a number to expect, but we should like to hear from all who are willing to take up this challenge.

The Hooper Fund.—Mr. J. Bellamy, 6 Thoresby-street, Sneinton, Nottingham, acknowledges:—H. Dodsworth, 2s. 6d.; G. C., 2s. 6d.; B., 2s. 6d.; R. Jones, 2s. 6d.; D., 1s.; J. Ross, 1s.; Dalmer, 6d.; Gilbert, 6d.; Hammond, 1s.; Allen, 2s.; Howard, 1s.; J. W., 1s.; Davies, 1s.; J. Brown, 6d.; C. Stocker, 6d.; J. Clarkson, collected at Sneinton Market, 2s. 9d.

Papers Received.—Scraps—Yarmouth Independent—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Sydney Bulletin—Liberator—Two Worlds—Isle of Man Times—Lucifer—Freidenker—Fria Tankar—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Torch of Reason—Portsmouth Evening News—De Dageraad.

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote opened the Sunday morning lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall with a talk on "Church, Chapel, and Common Sense in the Coming School Board Elections." There was a very good attendance, Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford being among the audience; and an excellent collection was taken up in aid of the Branch work. In the evening Mr. Foote lectured at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Mr. Le Gallienne's new book entitled *If I were God*, which will form the subject of an article in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote lectures again at the Athenæum Hall this evening (November 14), taking for his subject "The Philosophy of *Hamlet*: Glimpses of the Thought of Shakespeare." This lecture will be illustrated with special passages. It should be interesting to all Freethinkers, and perhaps to many others.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow. Mr. Black presided on each occasion. The audiences in the morning and afternoon were not so large as they generally are at Mr. Watts's visits, but in the evening there was a splendid gathering, the hall being full. Mr. McLean came all the way from Dundee on purpose to hear the lectures; and one working man *walked* ten miles to hear Mr. Watts, and he proudly said that he "would do it again." The lectures were enthusiastically received, and many friends expressed their pleasure at listening to three new lectures in one day.

During the past week Mr. Watts has been lecturing in Scotland under Mr. Hartmann's scheme. In our next issue will appear an account by Mr. Watts of his "Fortnight's Work in the North," including special reference to his debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at Stanley.

To-day, Sunday, November 14, Mr. Watts lectures afternoon and evening in Edinburgh.

Mr. Forder visits Birmingham on Sunday after a long absence, and will be glad to have a chat after the lectures with friends on the Treasurer's Scheme and other matters.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, of the Gillingham School Board, has a very good letter in the *Chatham and Rochester News* on the case of Miss Alice Hill, who was rejected as a paid monitress on account of her father being a Freethinker, as adverted to in our issue of October 31.

Mr. C. Harwood, secretary of the Edmonton Branch, sends us an encouraging report of Freethought work there. Open-air lectures throughout the summer and autumn have been attended by large and orderly audiences. Quite lately the Rev. Tom Collins, "the dosser parson," has opened a Church school for lectures and discussions. He invited the Branch to arrange one, and Mr. Ramsey lectured on "Why I am a Secularist." Mr. Ward lectures there on Sunday, November 28, at 3 o'clock.

That our Camberwell friends are looking up is sufficiently shown by the fact that, although the Branch three months ago was about £20 behind, it now has a balance on the right side. At the annual General Meeting last Sunday afternoon Mr. S. Hartmann was re-elected president, Mr. F. Cottrell secretary, and Mr. P. Sabine member on the Executive Council. A strong committee was formed, including two lady members.

In the evening about three hundred attended a most enjoyable dance and entertainment, contributed to by Mrs. Maclean, the Sisters Roberts, Mr. H. Lindsey, Mr. C. Chapman, Mr. C. Conyers, and Mr. E. Pack. It might have done Sabbatarians good to have witnessed the enjoyment of the dancers; though, had they seen the sleight-of-hand entertainment of Mr. John Warren, they would, perhaps, have been confirmed in the delusion of Satanic agency. Five working vice-presidents of the N. S. S. were present, and that these social evenings help the cause was proved by the enrolment of half-a-dozen new members.

The current number of the *English Historical Review* has an article on "The Unstamped Press, 1815-1836," by J. Holland Rose. It was Freethinkers who were foremost in maintaining this. Wooler with his *Black Dwarf*; Carlile with his *Republican*, *Deist*, *Lion*, *Prompter*, and *Gauntlet*. Then there was *The Theological and Political Comet*, and, finally, Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian*. Hetherington Mr. Rose calls "the father of the free press"; but the title is no less deserved by his forerunner, Richard Carlile. Mr. Rose shows that the Chartist demand for universal suffrage, short parliaments, vote by ballot, and no property qualification was voiced by the *Poor Man's Guardian* in its early issues.

Digitized by Google

Godly Sabbatarian Glasgow is to be afflicted with a Sacred Concert Company, which designs to supply an orchestra of twenty-five musicians for Sabbath performances. As the managing director took a leading part in the obnoxious Sunday steamer-traffic, it is feared that the concert may be more in evidence than its sacredness.

Among candidates who support Secular Education are C. Davis, Marylebone; W. J. Barwick, Finsbury; H. Quelch, East Lambeth; F. P. Cambridge, B.A., West Lambeth; and G. Pearson, Tower Hamlets. The last-named gentleman is recommended by the East London Branch of the N. S. S.

The Bradlaugh Club commemorates George Eliot's birthday on Sunday, November 21, with a tea, dramatic performance, etc. Tickets one shilling.

Mr. C. Cohen will pay his first visit to Chester on November 17. We have not received particulars of his lecture, but friends in the district will look out for the local advertisement and give Mr. Cohen a hearty reception.

A meeting for the purpose of reorganizing the North Eastern Secular Federation will be held at Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, Newbridge-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Wednesday evening, November 17, at 8 o'clock (first floor upstairs). Branch secretaries, delegates, vice-presidents, and others interested, are specially requested to attend. Correspondence to be sent to J. G. Bartram, 117 Morley-street, Heaton.

Saturday, October 30, saw an enthusiastic crowd of people at the opening of the Bazaar which has been held in the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school to provide the funds required for the necessary enlargement of the school buildings. During the opening proceedings the chair was taken by Mr. Thomas Hayes, of Crumpsall, and the Bazaar was opened by Alderman Healey, Mayor of Heywood. Lot Hilton, Esq., C.C., moved the vote of thanks to Mr. Healey for his kindness in opening the Bazaar. At the second day's proceedings, on November 1, the Bazaar was opened by Mr. James Aldred, of Stockport; the chair being taken by Mr. Councillor Hilton. The Bazaar realized the sum of £300, for which excellent result the best thanks are due, not only to the earnest workers and friends in connection with the school, but to those gentlemen who kindly gave their presence and support at the opening ceremonies.

The East London Branch started last Sunday evening upon its winter campaign at the King's Hall, 83 and 85 Commercial-road, E. Mr. Heaford was the lecturer, and was in good form. The hall was filled to its utmost seating capacity, about 120 persons being present. The committee were highly satisfied, and so was the audience, judging by frequent applause and a good collection. Six new members were enrolled after the lecture.

Mr. Heaford lectures three times next Sunday at Sheffield and it is hoped the local friends will rally around him then On Monday he goes to Netherfield, under the Treasurer's Scheme.

The Liverpool Branch is assisting in a practical way to get S. Reeves elected on the School Board. To say that Mr. Reeves is in favour of teaching children "manners and morals" instead of theology will be sufficient to induce all Freethinkers not only to plump for him, but also to prevail upon other voters to do the same.

The Evangelical Pulpit.

In the face of physical science, of modern Biblical criticism, and of all the light which history and comparative mythology have of late years thrown on the genesis of religions, the old theory of verbal inspiration, the old methods of Biblical interpretation, and the pre-scientific conception of a world governed by perpetual acts of supernatural interference still hold their ground in the Evangelical pulpit. The incursions of erudite science have been met by the barrier of an invincible prejudice—by the belief, sedulously inculcated from childhood, that what are termed orthodox opinions are essential to salvation, and that doubt, and every course of inquiry which leads to doubt, should be avoided as a crime. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but it is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not. The knowledge that many about him will regard any deviation from the traditional cast of opinions as the greatest of calamities and crimes seldom fails, according to the disposition of the inquirer, to drive him into hypocritical concealments, or into extreme and exaggerated bitterness.—*W. E. H. Lecky, in "History of Eighteenth Century."*

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XII.—Christ's Allegorical Teaching.

We are told in the Gospels that "God so loved the world" that he sent down "his only begotten Son," in order that through him all mankind might "have eternal life" (John iii. 16, 17), and that this Son, who was named Jesus, "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10). The object here attributed to the Almighty was, no doubt, eminently praiseworthy; but, unfortunately, the Savior whom he sent had not the smallest idea how to set about the work entrusted to him.

In the first place, this Savior confined his teaching (if his utterances can be dignified by such a name) to one small province in Palestine, and no one in any other part of the Roman Empire appears ever to have heard of him, or to have known anything about his divine mission. According to Mark (i. 14, 15), "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and *saying*, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.'" One can hardly conceive of a sane teacher going about repeating these bald, stereotyped sentences, and never attempting, or deeming it necessary, to explain them. The expression, "kingdom of God," is used more than a hundred times in the four Gospels; but never once did Jesus inform his hearers what he meant by it; neither did he say why they were to "repent," nor what they were to repent of; nor did he tell them what was the "gospel" they were to believe to obtain the promised "eternal life," nor even what was meant by the last-named term.

In the next place, this Savior wrote nothing for the benefit of future generations, not even the conditions of God's plan of salvation; nor does he seem to have seen the necessity for a written gospel. A more incompetent messenger could scarcely have been chosen. Also, according to the Fourth Gospel, this divine Savior spent the greater part of his time in wrangling and quibbling with the scribes and Pharisees, and senselessly employed silly, metaphorical language which his hearers could not understand. He was a Good Shepherd, a Door, a Vine, living Bread, living Water, the Light of the World, and goodness knows what; and the Jews were to eat his flesh and drink his blood, and be born again, and believe on him—though what they were exactly to believe concerning him is not stated. A more absurd and illogical messenger of salvation it is scarcely possible to imagine.

In the Synoptical Gospels this most ridiculous Savior is represented as teaching the people by means of allegorical stories called "parables," or rather as narrating to the multitude these supposititious stories, without explaining the hidden meaning. These parables, which number thirty-one, are thus recorded:—

Matthew, Mark, Luke		3
Matthew and Luke		2
Matthew	only	11
Mark	„	1
Luke	„	14

From the foregoing it will be seen that twenty-six out of the thirty-one parables are vouched for by only one evangelist, who places them in the mouth of Jesus without saying from what documents he took them; it will also be seen that Luke, who tells us in his Preface that the matters he records had been handed down to his time, gives fourteen parables of which Matthew and Mark appear never to have heard. When, further, it is borne in mind that Matthew and Luke, who are responsible for twenty-five of these parables, have been convicted of fraud and misrepresentation, the probability that Jesus really gave utterance to these allegorical stories is very small indeed. Assuming, however, that he actually did so, no instruction could have been derived from them by his hearers.

As already stated, Christ related only the narrative portion of the parables to the people, not the meaning which was intended to be drawn from them. As an example, I take the first of these similitudes:—

> "The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed some fell by the way-side; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of heaven devoured it. And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it

Digitized by Google

and choked it. And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth a hundred fold" (Luke viii. 5-8).

This is a sample of the fables which Jesus is said to have narrated to the multitude, and we may safely say that, after hearing it, the people were just as wise as they were before. It is simply impossible they could have known the lesson intended to be taught by it. When Christ was alone, it is said, "his disciples asked him what this parable might be," whereupon he gave them the key to the enigma:—

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart," etc.

The next parable is the Tares, after the delivery of which "he left the multitudes and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field" (Matt. xiii. 36). With this reasonable request Jesus graciously complied: "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it: and without a parable spake he not unto them: but privately to his own disciples he expounded all things" (Mark iv. 33, 34). It would thus seem that one reason why Christ explained his parables only to his disciples was that the minds of the learned scribes and lawyers were not "able to bear it," their intelligence being not of such a high order as that of the fishermen Peter, Andrew, James, and John. But this was not the main reason why only the husks were given to the public and the kernels to the disciples, as will be seen from the following passage (Mark iv. 10-12):—

"And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him [the explanation of] the parables. And he said unto them, Unto you is given the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest haply they should turn again, and it should be forgiven them."

Here the reason is plainly stated. Jesus did not expound his allegories to the common herd because he did not wish those people to understand; for, had he done so, some of them might have repented, and have obtained forgiveness. He came only to save a select few. We are told, it is true, that it was "not the will of the Father" that any one should "perish" (Matt. xviii. 14); but "the Father" evidently reckoned without "the Son," who, though he may have said that he "came to seek and to save" those who were "lost," had no intention of saving many. This fact is also evident from his prediction that "wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction," and "narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and *few be they that find it*" (Matt. vii. 13, 14).

But why, it may be asked, did Jesus waste his time in going about telling the people unintelligible stories, without explaining what the stories were intended to teach? The answer to this question is thus stated by Matthew (xiii. 34, 35):—

"All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them: *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world."

According to this passage, Jesus spoke to the people in parables because an ancient Hebrew prophet had predicted that the Jewish Messiah should employ this method of teaching. The statement, however, rests solely on the authority of Matthew, who, it has been shown, was not particularly noted for veracity. It will therefore be necessary to verify it. The quotation is from the 78th Psalm, which, if we believe its inscription, was composed by Asaph, one of David's choir leaders. This singer, whom Christ calls a "prophet," says (1-3):—

"Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. *I will open my mouth in a parable.* I will utter dark sayings of old: which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us."

Here the first point to be noticed is that it was the writer himself who was to open his mouth in a parable; he does not predict that another person, in a later age, should do so.

In the next place, the word "parable" in the passage does not mean an allegory or a short fictitious story, like the parables in the Gospels. Only two such allegories are found in the Old Testament—Jothan's fable of the trees and Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb. The word "parable" in the Hebrew Scriptures means an oracular saying or speech, a song, or the poetic recital of a number of events. Thus it is said of the prophet Balaam: "And he *took up his parable* and *said*, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor," etc. (Num. xxiii. 18). In the 78th Psalm the word has the last-named meaning, and is employed merely as an introduction to a recital of the wonders which were said to have been wrought by the God Jehovah on behalf of his chosen people. These wonders were not matters which had been "hidden from the foundation of the world" (as stated in the Gospel); they were events which the Jews of that time "had heard and known," and which "their fathers had told them." The writer of the Psalm begins by saying he is about to recite "the dark sayings of old"—*i.e.*, the mighty acts of the Hebrew deity—and then proceeds to do so. He continues his narration through a long chapter of seventy-two verses, and recounts all the signs and wonders which he had heard ascribed to Jehovah. He says, for example (13-16):—

"He clave the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. In the daytime, also, he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. He clave rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink abundantly as out of the depths. He brought streams also out of the rock," etc.

This Psalm, it will be seen, is not in any sense an allegory; it is given as a historical narration of well-known facts. It is, in fact, a Hebrew pæan—a song extolling the wonderful doings of the God Yahveh. Thus the statement of Matthew, that Jesus went about telling the people little allegorical stories in order to fulfil a prediction in the Old Testament, is shown to be false. There is no such prediction in the Hebrew Scriptures. Matthew's statement is but another sample of that unscrupulous perverter's systematic misrepresentations.

Bearing the latter fact in mind, it is really amusing to note the cool assurance with which the great Dean Farrar says (*Witness of History to Christ*, p. 54):—

"To the blank Atheism and credulous incredulity of those controversialists who deny to religion all objective truth, and are not ashamed *to accuse the Evangelists of deliberate and conscious fraud*, we need no reply. The dignity of controversy is lost if she can descend to enter the arena with the coarse gladiators of an *offensive infidelity*."

Judging by his admissions in his recent works, this arrogant Churchman is himself an example of "deliberate and conscious fraud" in defending what he must know to be fraudulent. According to this upholder of error, the truthfulness and honesty of the evangelists are not to be questioned. Those writers might, possibly, be grossly ignorant and inordinately superstitious, and they might sometimes, perhaps, be mistaken as to matters of fact; but to tell a lie, or be guilty of "deliberate and conscious fraud"—no, never! Not one of them would utter a falsehood to save his life—not even for "the glory of God," or to gain converts to his religion. All the admittedly lying narratives in the Apocryphal Gospels were written by Pagans; or, if they were not, the evangelists who concocted them must not be accused of "deliberate and conscious fraud"; or, if it be admitted they were guilty, this does not affect the compilers of the canonical Gospels; for the latter were incapable of misrepresenting or fabricating any of the matters they record. To accuse them of doing so, even when the fact that they *have* done so is proved beyond all doubt, would be to exhibit a "coarse and offensive infidelity" subversive of "the dignity of controversy." This is probably the reason why the clergy can so seldom be induced to discuss the question of the truth or falseness of the Gospel narrative.

ABRACADABRA.

Men of thought, with iron nerve,
Fronting error take your stand;
Never from your purpose swerve
Till it cease throughout the land.
Long and dread the strife may be;
Ye yet shall have the mastery. —*W. S. Landor*

Digitized by Google

RELIGION *v.* RELIGION.

[The Archbishop of York said the other day, in St. Paul's, to a congregation of medical men: "Yours is a religious calling."]

THE founder of "the only true religion"
Prescribes for all diseases one specific,
Dispensed by an assistant ghost, or pigeon,
To anyone—except the scientific.

To get it, simply pray with true intention,
And "laying on of hands," or some such caper;
"No coupon is required," you merely mention
The Doctor's name; but, mind! don't name this paper!

'Tis silly to prefer man's costly guesses
To costless certitudes of one far wiser,
Who freely cures diseases and distresses—
For testimonials, see His *Advertizer*.

His freely-offered ghostly panacea
Condemns the doctor's art, by implication;
Opposing Doctor Jesus of Judea
Is blasphemous in ev'ry Christian nation.

Though Christ thus works, a bishop honorific
Says doctors' work is verily religious!
Thus, Christless substitutes for Christ's specific,
Though *anti*-Christian, yet, are *pro*-, prodigious!

This palaced vicar of the Gospel gipsy
Is not a simple bishop, but an "arch" one;
And yet his words are words of one that's tipsy,
Dishonest, or as mad's a hare—a "march" one.

"'Tis Pray'r!" the true religion's aye asserting;
"'Tis Pills!" say true religion's lauded leeches;
Religion, thus, Religion is subverting!
'Tis odd! Thus, nathless, true religion teaches!

The Church tells all to lay on Christ their sorrows,
And do whate'er the blessed Bible bids them,
While she, for love of God, their lucre "borrows,"
And humbly, in the name of Jesus—"kids" them!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

WATTS AND WALDRON DEBATE.

HIS debate, which took place in Stanley, Durham, on October 30 and November 1, 2, and 3, seems to have been successful. The *Consett Chronicle* of November 5 gives a four-column report, and "Free Lance," who is understood to be the editor, has the following comments upon the discussion. Considering the *Chronicle* is a very religious paper, the report and comments are very fair. "Free Lance" says:—

"During the current week the chief, almost the sole, topic of conversation in and around Stanley has been the great debate, between Messrs. Waldron and Watts, regarding the relative claims of Christianity and Secularism, or 'this and any other life.' The debate proper opened on Saturday evening, and, though the spacious Co-operative Hall was not absolutely crowded, as some had anticipated, the attendance must have been satisfactory to the promoters of the affair. Mr. Green, as chairman, had an easy time, for the respective champions appeared well aware of the rules of the debate, and adhered to them. Interruption, I am glad to say, was conspicuously absent, and both gentlemen were allowed to state their cases free of interruption. As an orator, Mr. Watts is perhaps a trifle ahead of his opponent; but the Christian champion was worthy of his steel, and he not only stood manfully to his colors, but gave quite as many blows as he received. The discussion was carried on with the greatest good humor and courtesy. I do not think that these discussions are likely to benefit anyone. I certainly prefer a debate between gentlemen than one in which discourtesy and rudeness are prevalent, and where personalities are ever present.

"Mr. Watts presents an imposing platform appearance, and Mr. Waldron appears to be an attractive personality. As a specimen of his ability in the way of repartee, I may quote a very smart hit which he made on Saturday evening, and which was enjoyed by both Mr. Watts and the audience. The venerable Secularist had just referred to terms of condemnation to the saying of Jesus, 'Blessed are ye poor,' and had expressed himself rather forcibly on the matter. Mr. Waldron, on getting his innings, gently suggested that there was no reason why the poor should not be blessed. The audience was convulsed with laughter at his smart turning of the tables.

'Mr. Watts occupied the Co-operative Hall platform on Sunday evening, when he delivered an impressive lecture on 'The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb.' At the conclusion of the lecture Mr. William Simpson, of the Air Pit, ascended the platform and debated for a few minutes with Mr. Watts. I have not the slightest wish to say anything in disparagement of Mr. Simpson, who is, I feel sure, an excellent and well-meaning man; but I aver most emphatically that for a gentleman of his debating abilities to get on a platform to oppose Mr. Watts shows more zeal than judgment."

BOOK CHAT.

Modern Rationalism, by Joseph McCabe (Watts & Co.; 2s. 6d.), describes itself as "A Sketch of the Progress of the Rationalistic Spirit in the Nineteenth Century." The title at once suggests the work of Mr. Lecky, who, in his *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe*, had a wider field, and in the treatment of the decay of supernaturalism with regard to witchcraft and miracles had at once more vividly interesting topics and a brighter style. Nonetheless, Mr. McCabe's work is of much interest to all concerned in the growth of Rationalism. He traverses a good deal of ground, and gives, on the whole, a very fair idea of the conquests achieved by the new spirit.

* * *

Mr. Joseph McCabe, who, we understand, had fourteen years of Roman Catholic monkery before he found his way to Rationalism, gives the following account of the position he expounds: "All systems to which the name is applied accepted as their primary and fundamental principle that reason is the supreme criterion of all truth, whether in secular or religious, natural or supernatural, spheres. Any thesis, on whatever authority it may be asserted, which violates the dictates of reason must be rejected. On that test were rejected, first the mysterious rites and dogmas of Christianity, then its sacred literature, and, finally, even the positions of natural theology."

* * *

Mr. McCabe first deals with "Rationalism in Theology," tracing point by point how the Church has surrendered to what it once denounced as infidelity. He says: "The century opens with the apparent triumph of theologians over the Deistic school, the last embodiment of Rationalistic inquiry. A storm of vituperation greets the appearance of *The Age of Reason*. By the middle of the century a book, virtually containing the same principles, is published by a group of professed theologians at Oxford [*Essays and Reviews*, 1861], acclaimed by half the nation and sanctioned by the highest tribunal of the land. The end of the century is in a fair way to accept even the conclusions of Paine on dogma and scripture." Mr. McCabe traces the growth of the Broad Church, and points out how Freethought criticism has dissolved the old doctrines of eternal torments, original sin, predestination, the merit of faith, and restricted the activity of that important figure in Christian theology—the Devil.

* * *

The author traces the Rationalistic spirit in Biblical criticism, in comparative religion and mythology, in philosophy, in the controversy between religion and science, and, finally, in ethics. Going over so wide a field, it is not surprising that on some few points we find ourselves in disagreement. On one point we must mention our dissatisfaction. Magnifying our own office—that of making the conclusions of the eminent known to the bulk of the people—we are disappointed to find that while the name of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a thorough Christian, is included among those who "represent uncompromising scepticism," the efforts of the Owenites, the early Rationalists, and fighters for free press—like Hetherington and Watson—of Mr. Holyoake and the writers on the *Reasoner*, Mr. Bradlaugh and the writers on the *National Reformer*, are not as much as mentioned. The last two are barely mentioned in connection with the substitution of the affirmation for an oath.

* * *

The only paragraph devoted to those who have borne the brunt of the struggle which has enabled Rationalists to voice their sentiments with impunity is the following: "In 1819 Richard Carlile was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and £1,500 fine for selling Paine's *Age of Reason*—merely a Deistic publication. Many other severe prosecutions followed for a similar offence, and most of the leading Secularist lecturers have suffered under the blasphemy laws. At the present day the most advanced literature is sold with impunity, and, though Mr. Foote and his colleagues have not sacrificed a tittle of the liberty of speech for which they suffered, the present generation would be startled at any revival of the blasphemy prosecutions. Still, there is much work yet to be done in removing the disabilities of Freethinkers. The grave injuries they are still liable to incur, for instance, with regard to trusts or contracts, or custody of children, or Sunday lectures, etc., reflect deep disgrace upon our legislative machinery.

Digitized by Google

They are the last relics of that sacerdotal tyranny which dreads discussion, and continues to the last its policy of persecution."

* * *

In conclusion, Mr. McCabe points out that the progress of the Rationalistic spirit must be estimated, not only by the novelty and solidity of its achievements, but also by the universality of its diffusion. It affects all classes and all spheres of activity. In our author's words: "The social and humanitarian movements which the time-spirit has evoked are largely characterized by a purely secular character, which contrasts ominously with earlier movements, and which is anxiously deprecated by theologians. Literature is almost universally secularistic—is very largely anti-dogmatic and anti-sacerdotal. Dogmatism is visibly decaying. The Church is appealing to æsthetic, or ethical, or humanitarian influences, and suffering an unrestrained license of thought in speculative regions. In fine, the progress of the Rationalistic spirit in this nineteenth century is indefinitely greater than during the entire eighteen centuries since the Galilean and his followers infused a new life into the Hebrew, Hindoo, and Egyptian versions of the primitive solar myths." The purport of this is so just that we hardly like to come in at the end with our view that the solar myths are not "primitive."

* * *

Our readers will recollect the exposure by the *Athenæum*, that Mrs. McClure, the wife of the reverend secretary of the S. P. C. K., in translating Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*, had taken liberties with the original in the interests of orthodoxy. In a letter to the *Athenæum* of January 9, Mr. McClure said that all the alterations were made with Maspero's knowledge and consent. The controversy has continued, and the secretary of the S. P. C. K. has sent out a "*true* statement," which has by no means bettered his case; for it now appears, from the statement itself, that some of the alterations were made not only without Professor Maspero s consent, but without his knowledge, and that he complained of them as "not corresponding to his thought."

* * *

"Verax," in the *Guardian*, states the case very plainly against the S. P. C. K. He points out that Maspero is a Rationalist, who, in the parts of his volume dealing with the history of the Jews, adopts quite clearly and unambiguously the view taken by modern critics, and, in his notes, refers frequently with express approval to critics and their work. In the translation, without a word in any part of the volume to indicate to readers that they are not reading Professor Maspero's own words, all this is altered by slight but very ingenious and effectual changes in the text. Maspero is made to teach the ordinary view of the literature and history of the Old Testament. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge remains convicted of an impudent pious fraud. If they could not endorse the views of Maspero, they ought to have left his book alone, and not have put forward a version which makes him hold conclusions he repudiates. In putting it forward without any mention of alterations, they showed themselves desirous of using the reputation of a Rationalist to support their irrational dogmas.

* * *

Mr. Herbert Spencer has passed through the press a small volume entitled *Various Fragments*. It will be issued by Messrs. Williams and Norgate as soon as the American edition is ready.

* * *

The *Adult* is in its fourth number. The November issue contains some lively reading for those who are fond of sexual discussions. The best thing in it is a paper on "Spiritual Love," by William Platt, who administers a deserved rebuke to those who treat the love of man and woman as though it were no more than the crossing of flies in the air—to borrow a strong expression from Wordsworth.

Two Quatrains.

(*Translated from Omar Khayyam by F. York Powell, in the "Pageant," 1897.*)

The heart wherein Love's wick burns clear and well,
Whether it swing in mosque, or shrine, or cell,
If in the Book of Love it be enrolled
Is free from hope of Heaven, or fear of Hell.

Of duty towards God let preachers whine,
But do as I command, and Heaven's thine;
Give freely, slander not, be kindly still;
That done, have thou no fear, and call for Wine!

"What is faith?" inquired an examiner in "Pass-Divinity." "Faith is the faculty by which we are enabled, to believe that which we know is not true," replied the undergraduate.

Anthropomorphism.

Anthropomorphism was from the first, and still remains, the inherent vice of thought. The natural illusion which compelled man to regard himself as the centre and end of all things obliged him also to make the world in his own image, to endow things, then groups, then the universal aggregate, with intentions, will, design, whence gods, forces, Providence. Man projected himself, his life and his intelligence, into a nature indifferent to all these things; he attributed passions to phenomena, thus personifying them. Bowing down before these factitious beings, whom he had invested with authority, "fearing the hatred and the wrath of the gods whom he had invented," he wasted thousands of centuries in regulating imaginary relations between them and himself. Clever knaves, half dupes to their own devices, constituted themselves the interpreters and ministers of these powers, making them speak, and selling in their name fancied favors in this life as well as in the next; profiting on earth by the caprice of events, in heaven by the presumptuous credulity of man. Promises, whose fulfilment could not be verified, became articles of faith, axioms, principles, which logic has pretended to deduce from and base upon experience.—*Andre Lefevre.*

Mercenary Missionaries.

The late Professor Froude, the historian, is credited with the remark that "missionaries spoke in the past and future, but never in the present indicative." It would be more correct to say that they spoke in the future imaginative. It was recently announced from the pulpit of Christ Church that the success of missionary effort was such at Jebu that the doors of the church had to be thrown open to give admission to the rush of converts. More recently it was announced from the same place that the Hinterland was greatly in need of *female workers*. Now, while these beguiling statements serve their purpose of adding piquancy to the reports sent to England to replenish the coffers of the missionary exchequer, it is nothing short of outrageous to address them to an audience who have a knowledge of the facts, and whose minds are not clouded with the visionary fallacies of a mercenary calling.—*Lagos Weekly Record.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BROWNE CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your readers will remember that the poor ma Browne, for whose wife and children a small fund wa subscribed, was sentenced to six months' imprisonmen three weeks ago. His wife informs me in a letter that h has been declared insane, and has been removed to th County Lunatic Asylum. He has written to her explain ing his advantages there—better food, better attendanc more freedom; but still declaring he is quite sane. H has now his *pallette*, and other things requisite for pro ducing pictures, and he hopes to produce pictures whic his wife will sell during his detention. I am still assistin his family, and have yet a small balance in hand. Som correspondents have complained that he was not provide with counsel at his trial; but this he resolutely refused t accept, preferring to defend himself. Mrs. Browne's elde daughter (sixteen years of age) would like a situation; any of our friends need a girl for housework.

R. FORDER, *hon. sec. N. S. S.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"THAT will do," said Balaam; "you've talked enough "Yes," retorted the ass; "I've talked enough to hand yo down to immortality." And the patient animal never spol again.

Deacon Grimes—"I saw you at our church Sunday. Th was a masterful arraignment of Satan that Mr. Texter ga us, wasn't it?" Fogg—"Yes, it was simply awful. But, you know, I have made it a rule in life not to make up m mind upon any matter until I have heard both sides."

Young Parson—"Yes, sinners shall be washed white snow." Granny—"But not them as truly repents, I hop sir."

"The contribution box will now be passed round for th heathen fund," announced the minister. "Why, pa, yo put that bad half-crown on the plate," whispered Mi Bagley. "That's all right," replied the father; "you don suppose a cannibal knows the difference between that a a good half-crown."

"Dose Puritans vas no goot," said Mr. Isaacheimerstei "Vhy?" asked his partner. "Vhen dey burned dose vitch dey did not have dem insured."

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Philosophy of Hamlet."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Is Paul an Historic Personage?" November 9, at 8.30, Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Sunday Sanctity"; 7, Musical selections; 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Other Religions."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 108 Mile End-road): 8, W. J. Reeves, "Faith or Reason."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "How Far Does Nonconformity Tend Towards Progress?" 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Children's Notions of God."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Children's Notions of God."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 5, Tea and Concert.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): R. Forder—11, "Playing with the Bible"; 7, "The Gospel History."

BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 8, Discussion Class—Leon Dornbush, "How Bad Jews are Made Worse Christians."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, A. G. Herzfeld, "Belief and Morals."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Vocal and Instrumental Concert by Mr. Lowe and party.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Smith, "The Word and the Spirit—John xvi. 68."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "Ethics and Economics"; 3, "Is there a Future Life?" 6.30, "The Priest and the Child."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "Freethought at the Church Congress"; 3, "Old Idols and New Ideals"; 7, "The Evolution of the God Idea." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Address on "The Spread of Secularism."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.— November 14, Manchester; 21, Huddersfield.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—November 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 82, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

SITUATION WANTED by Freethinker in any capacity. Address, W. J. Andrews, 15 Paved-court, Richmond, S.W.

THE REVOLT OF THE CLERGY! The Clergy and the Devil Against the Impregnable Rock! See *The Triumph of Mammon*, by Mme. STELLA BRATTIN, Radcliffe-on-Trent. 2½d. post free.

Ingersoll's Latest Popular Lectures.

About the Holy Bible. 6d.

The Foundation of Faith. 3d.

The Coming Civilization. 3d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

NO. 4 NOW READY.

CONTENTS:—

The Judgment of Paris-up-to-Date. By LEIGHTON PAGAN.
Spiritual Love. By WILLIAM PLATT.
The Last Citadel of Authority. By ROBERT BRAITHWAITE.
Sex Love and Mutability. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, O.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE NOVEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS :—

Popular Religious Fallacies.
Dogma Enthroned.
Twilight Moods and Melodies.
In the Rationalist Vanguard.
From China to Peru.
Mrs. Besant's New Book : *The Ancient Wisdom.*
A Disciple of Nietzsche.
Rationalism and the Church Congress.
Literary Chats.—XI. With Mr W. Swan Sonnenschein.
Rationalism in the Magazines, Jottings, etc., etc.

London : Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.
THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.
CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.
SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.
AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.
A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERTS "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.
THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.
THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.
EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.
HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.
SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.
BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.
SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.
SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.
IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.
SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.
WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.
EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.
THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.
THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.
CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are :—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS :—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS :—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

LOT 11. **21s.** **Carriage Paid.**

1 Pair All-Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Bed Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 White or Colored Tablecloth.

OVERCOATS

For the Million at Keen Cutting Prices.

Well Cut, well Made, Lined with Check Wool Linings. MATERIAL SMART AND TOUGH



Prices for Stock Sizes—25s., 30s., and 35s.
Prices to Measure—27s. 6d., 32s. 6d., and 37s. 6d.

STOCK SIZES.

Size ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Breast over Vest	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Length from Centre of Back to full length of sleeve ...	30	30½	31	32	32½	33	33½	34

Measurement Form for Overcoat Made to Measure.

	Inches
Length of Waist	
Full Length	
Half Width of Back	
Centre of Back to Elbow	
Centre of Back to Full Length of Sleeve.....	
Round Chest, close to armpits	
Round Waist	

Take breast measurement over Vest.

Materials for above include Irish Friezes, Grey, Fawn, or Heather; Meltons in Black, Navy, or Brown; Serges in Black, Navy, or Mixture; Tweeds, Checks, or Mixtures.

Patterns Post Free to any Address.

AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY TOWN.

Working Men can increase their earnings 10s. to 30s. per week.

NEW WINTER PATTERNS

In all Classes of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Materials. Sent to any Address Post Free.

Ladies' Cosutmes to Measure 21s.

A splendid assortment of Patterns and Self-measurement form Post Free.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents :—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 47. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE BIBLE IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

(Concluded from page 722.)

IN criticising this London School Board syllabus of religious lessons from the point of view of the "loftiest ethics"—to use Dr. Clifford's expression—we will take it standard by standard, in order that we may do it the fullest possible justice.

Standard One comprises very young children. These are first to learn the Lord's Prayer, which we have already dealt with, its ethical value to little boys and girls being quite infinitesimal. Next they are to learn the twenty-third Psalm. Now, from a child's point of view, the only merit of this Psalm is its brevity. It contains nothing suitable to a little child's comprehension. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," which is the opening verse, is a strange irony, or a strange optimism, to din into the ears of all the half-fed children in the first standard. Even in the ears of the well-fed ones it can have but little meaning—their knowledge of shepherds being mainly confined to rough men who drive sheep through the streets with the aid of a dog and a stick. And what can a first-standard child make of the fifth verse?—"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." This is what Dr. Clifford calls the "loftiest ethics." In truth it is nothing of the sort, nor is it intelligible to little Londoners who have just left the infant school. The only other item in the syllabus for Standard One is "Leading facts in the life of our Lord, told in simple language." Upon which we have to say (1) that the ethical value of this cannot be estimated without at least a sample of the "simple language" which is prescribed and expected, and (2) that nearly every leading fact in the life of Jesus Christ is a miracle.

Thus far we have not found the "loftiest ethics." Let us now turn to Standard Two. Here again we have the Lord's Prayer and the twenty-third Psalm. These are followed by the Ten Commandments. Now, the major portion of this code is ecclesiastical, such as worshipping Jehovah exclusively and keeping the Sabbath holy. And as for the ethical part, does Dr. Clifford really believe that second-standard children should first of all be told not to thieve, not to kill, and not to commit adultery? Are these the failings most common to their "age and capacity"? As for the Beatitudes from Matthew (v. 1–12), they are good in their way, but, unfortunately, every moral injunction in them is coupled with a bribe. The proper ground and sanction of morality are not indicated. The ethic throughout is personal, selfish, and supernatural. And the concluding promise, "Great is your reward in heaven," is at an infinite distance from earthly welfare and human solidarity.

This is followed by another portion of Matthew (xxii. 35–40), in which Jesus tells the lawyer that the first commandment is to love God, the second to love one's neighbor as oneself, and that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. But supposing Theism be true, is this the proper order of teaching for small children? Can a child *begin* by loving God? Does not the love of father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and relatives and friends, come first? Then again, is it *possible* to love one's neighbor as oneself—meaning by "neighbor" any person with whom one comes into any sort of contact? Can love be taught at all? Can love be commanded? Is it not a spontaneous emotion? Will it ever heed the prescriptions of moralists and pedagogues? And if it cannot be forced in any case, how doubly absurd it seems to teach people to love indiscriminately, even to the extent of loving a stranger as well as themselves. Is not this *lofty ethics* in the sense of being transcendental, impracticable, and therefore not sublime, but ridiculous?

The next item is "Lessons from the Life of Moses." Now we have said that Moses is in all probability a legendary personage. But even if he be an historical character, what lessons are derivable from his career to a little child? His public career, beginning at eighty and ending at a hundred and twenty, was a long record of warfare and massacre. Goethe's opinion of him is well known, and should be refuted before his life is held up to children in public schools, supported by those who agree with Goethe as well by those who differ from him. Moses gave the following order as to the disposition of female and youthful captives: "Kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves" (Numbers xxxi. 17, 18). Is this one of the lofty ethical lessons for the children in Standard Two?

"Simple lessons from the life of our Lord" is the only other item in the syllabus for this standard, and this has already fallen under observation. We therefore turn to Standard Three. Here we have the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments again, with the two selections from Matthew. These are followed by this item: "Learn Deuteronomy xxviii., verses 1–14." We have read those fourteen verses carefully, and we should like to examine the bumps of the man who finds any "lofty ethics" in them for third-standard children in London Board schools. The whole passage is without appropriateness except to the ancient Jews, and only to them in view of the insulating character of the so-called Mosaic law, and of the national necessity, real or presumed, of making Jahweh-worship their universal religion. If the passage *has* any relevance to English boys, its morality is of the "Rule Britannia" order. "God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." "The Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail." "Thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow." "The Lord shall cause thine enemies to be smitten before thy face." All this stuff is on a par with the wretched language of our National Anthem, which as literature and morality is a disgrace to our civilization.

The next item is—"Lessons from the lives of Samuel and David, together with the story of Ruth." Now we admit that lessons *may* be derived from the lives of Samuel and David, but they are mostly of a negative character. Just because David was pious, and Jesus is called the son of David, the Christians have been religiously blind to his intrigues, his duplicity, his sensuality, and his cruelty. Nor is the story of Ruth quite the most decorous in its implications for Board school girls. Her adventure in the barn is at least ambiguous, and if it was legitimate enough in ancient Palestine, it would hardly be proper in England in the nineteenth century. Adults may admire the pathetic and idyllic aspects of the narrative, but it is not in any sense a book for children.

Next we have "lessons" drawn from six "parables"—"The Talents," "The Good Samaritan," "The Lost Sheep," "The Lost Piece of Money," "The Prodigal Son," "The

Digitized by Google

Pharisee and the Publican." We are not told what the lessons are. The teachers are to deduce them themselves. And as far as they do contain moral lessons, they might just as well figure in a collection of parables from various sources. As they stand, however, three of them (the first, third, and fourth) are strictly religious. The fifth is far from being beyond ethical criticism. The sixth teaches humility, at the cost of the Pharisees, who have been insulted and traduced by Christianity and its Scriptures, so that their very name has become a by-word of contempt. The second, the Good Samaritan, is a beautiful story, but it also is marred by further contumely on the religious adversaries of Jesus Christ—men whom he denounced (as Professor Newman observed) with a savage bitterness that outdoes the most passionate invectives of Tacitus and Suetonius.

Standard Four syllabus contains some fresh items. The first is "Learn St. John xiv., verses 1-15, and Psalm cxxv." Now let any candid reader turn to the indicated portion of the Fourth Gospel and see whether he can find in it any ethical lesson whatsoever. It is a curious conversation about the deity of Jesus Christ. It does not contain a single moral idea from beginning to end. As for the indicated Psalm, it was presumably chosen for its brevity. Its five verses could be easily learnt—and as easily forgotten. Once more we ask the candid reader to say what ethical lesson it contains for Board School children.

Another fresh item is "Lessons from the Pentateuch," with special reference to the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. These personages, we have already said, are in all probability as legendary as the personal "founders" of other nations. But whether they are so or not, we fail to see what ethical lessons, suitable to children, can be derived from the Bible story of their careers. We had said enough about Moses. Let us now say a little about Abraham. This patriarch twice passed his wife off as his sister, and made a handsome profit on each transaction. He turned his boy and his mother out into the desert to live or die as it happened. He raised the knife to kill another son, preparatory to offering him as a burnt sacrifice to the Lord. As for Isaac, he was a chip of the old block, with the hereditary trick of wife-juggling. Jacob was a terrible sneak and a desperate coward, though God "loved" him and "hated" the brave, magnanimous Esau. Joseph's story is more interesting, but he was only on trial once in his life, and that was with a passionate and impetuous lady enamored of his charms. He resisted her temptation, which is narrated with great crudity, and his virtue may be intelligible enough to adolescents. But can it be made intelligible to fourth-standard children? And if it could be, is it worth while to begin their sexual education so early? For our part, we do not want Board School teachers to be engaged in teaching the young idea how to shoot in this particular direction.

The next item is "the teaching of the Law of Moses"—which was *not* the Law of Moses—with reference to the poor, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow, parents, and children. This is an extensive subject, and we prefer to pass it by, only saying that the so-called Law of Moses is not the Law of England, and that domestic and social duties should be taught with a view to the existing conditions of human society.

"Lessons from the Gospel according to St. Luke" is too general for criticism. We therefore proceed to Standard Five. This syllabus includes a good deal of that of the other standards. The first new item is "Learn the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians." Here at last we come to a real ethical lesson. It is the finest thing in the New Testament. Paul's praise of charity is nobly conceived and splendidly expressed. If the Bible had contained nothing but such writing, there would have been very few sceptics. Psalm ninety-one, however, is purely Jewish. Some of the Proverbs referred to are good in their way, though proverbs are nearly always lost on children. Proverbs xxiii. 20-21 is referred to as teaching temperance, which it does. But suppose the children light upon Proverbs xxxi. 7, and read: "Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." What will become of Bible temperance then?

Standard Six syllabus says: "Learn Isaiah liii." This contains no ethical lesson. It is generally considered a Messianic prophecy. The two Psalms (hundred and twenty-first and twenty-second) are also religious, and not ethical. In Standard Seven we have the first chapter of Hebrews to be learnt. This is a dissertation on the Father and the Son. Other chapters of Isaiah and Jeremiah are referred to, but they have the remotest (if any) connection with child-morality in London. We might also ask what ethical lessons for children are to be found in a "Study of the Acts of the Apostles." Standard Seven syllabus has but one fresh item, besides more references to Isaiah and the Psalms—namely, "Lessons from the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah." Now, we beg Dr. Clifford to show us the "loftiest ethics," especially for London children, in these rather dreary books.

In the whole mountain of this Syllabus we have dug out but one piece of "loftiest ethics"—St. Paul's panegyric on charity. All the rest might be dropped with considerable advantage. It is perfectly idle to put the Bible forward as a text-book of morality for England in the nineteenth century. Scientific and secular ethics cannot be taught from it at all. And the cultured "Progressives" must be well aware of the fact. In supporting the Compromise, they are maintaining the Bible in the schools, not really as a text-book of ethics—which it never was, and never can be—but as the sacred Scriptures of the Christian religion. This is what they are doing, and in the case of Agnostic Fabians, like Mr. Graham Wallas, it is a flagrant intellectual dishonesty. In the case of Nonconformist ministers, like Dr. Clifford, it is more intelligible and even more excusable. Nature has endowed every species, including preachers, with the instinct of self-preservation. By keeping the Bible in the Board schools, Christian ministers secure a fine start in the handicap. Instead of persuading grown-up people to become Christians, they have merely to receive ready-made Christians from the elementary schools. It is impossible for them to be blind to this great advantage, and it is natural that they should strain every nerve to retain it.

G. W. FOOTE.

A WALK THROUGH HIGHGATE CEMETERY.

I HAVE no morbid delight in grave prowling. All that I cared for in the dead is not to be found in cemeteries or recorded on tombstones. Yet do I sometimes stroll through Highgate Cemetery partly because it is near and lies between Waterlow Park and Parliament Hill, at either of which places I would far rather see living children at play than indulge in meditations among the tombs; partly perhaps because I used to go thither when young with my own mother, who was buried there, and because I have attended there the funerals of several Freethinking friends. Here were deposited the remains of Austin Holyoake, one of the hardest working of the band who helped first his brother, the still living Nestor of Secularism, and after Charles Bradlaugh, its indomitable Achilles. Ever willing, ever active, Austin's life was truly given for others. How I recall his telling me of the incessant pressure of editorial work. He died young, worn out by service. That same grave, eight years later, I saw reopened to receive the corpse of another I knew and esteemed in life—the ill-fated genius, James Thomson. I saw the author of *The City of Dreadful Night* only in his happy moods. Well do I remember how sunny and pleasant the sombre poet of pessimism could be. Yet as I think of his end I cannot avoid repeating his lines:—

> Weary of living isolated life,
> Weary of hoping hopes for ever vain,
> Weary of struggling in all sterile strife,
> Weary of thought which maketh nothing plain,
> I close my eyes and hush my panting breath,
> And yearn for thee, divinely tranquil Death,
> To come and soothe away my bitter pain.

What a contrast was my old friend, Ernestine Louisa Rose, who, loving America, her adopted country, yet stayed in England to be placed with her devoted husband in a grave hard by. This brave woman, who had preached Freethought and woman's emancipation in the pioneering days, had denounced slavery in the slave-holding States. I knew her only in age and infirmity. Yet how her kindly face lighted when she spoke of the past, and said, a little before her death, "I have lived." The thought takes me to the grave of William Kingdon Clifford, another brave and ardent Freethinker. How touching and meaning-fraught, to those who knew his gallant spirit and brief career, are the words which form his epitaph: "I was not,

Digitized by Google

and was conceived; I loved, and did a little work; I am not, and grieve not." Clifford, devoted to the exactest of the sciences, never stood aloof from humanity. He linked science with love of truth and mental emancipation. Truth he proclaimed from the housetops, and burnt with apostolic zeal to carry its gospel to the benighted. Not far off is the obelisk over the remains of "George Eliot," laid to rest near the grave of her first husband, George Henry Lewes, the acute critic, philosopher, and historian of philosophy, and since joined by her friend, Dr. John Chapman, long-time editor of the *Westminster Review*. On George Eliot's stone may be read her lines:—

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence.....
.....feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty,
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

But I wish to join the choir visible, or at least to listen to the birds and the young children. So Hey for Hampstead Heath!

J. M. WHEELER.

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT."

THERE are three important facts in connection with Christianity which must necessarily limit its power and the number of its adherents. These facts are:—Its vague and indefinite character, its compulsory belief, and the threatened penalty for rejecting its demands. When the consequences of not accepting a faith are as serious as those which are taught in the New Testament, the nature of the faith should be quite clear, and its meaning apparent alike to all to whom it appeals. That this is not so with Christianity is evident from the hundreds of different sects existing in the Church, the members of each professing to be the true followers of Christ, although they are unable to agree among themselves as to what Christianity really is. Shall we peruse the history of the early Church, in which the most violent disputes and bitter persecutions were carried on by its various members in consequence of the difference of opinion as to which garb Christianity should wear? If a Protestant's attention is drawn to the long catalogue of black crimes which were practised in the name of religion during the Middle Ages, when the vilest deeds were considered justifiable, so long as they tended to advance the faith and uphold the Church; when murder was a virtue, and lying a creditable accomplishment, what is his answer? "Oh, that was not Christianity." It was, however, unfortunately, the Christianity of that day. Like Proteus, Christianity has changed since that time, and now wears "a new garb in which it may be more acceptable to the people." In fact, no sooner do we catch hold of the Christian's garb to examine its texture than, *quick, presto*, it is transformed into something else. If we show the absurdity of supposing that a few drops of water sprinkled on a child's face can purify its heart, we are told by the Evangelists that this is no part of Christianity. Point out the ridiculous character of immersing an adult female in a bath as an initiation into the Church, and the Independents, Wesleyans, and Churchmen state, That is not Christianity. Attack the horrible doctrines of eternal torments, and the Universalists exclaim, That is not Christianity. Demonstrate the irrational nature of the Trinity, and the Unitarians answer at once, That is not Christianity. Portray the horrors of war, the Quaker asserts that Christianity is peace, and that all war is anti-Christian. Avow that sometimes war has a high and noble mission, that of destroying despotism, breaking up long-standing tyrannies, and freeing down-trodden peoples; intimate that any religion which would stand in the way of a battle fought for truth and freedom cannot be good, and we shall instantly be told that Christianity does nothing of the kind, but that, on the contrary, it sends its disciples to fight, appoints chaplains to the army, and consecrates the weapons of destruction. Thus, at whatever point we attack this system, its adherents shift their ground.

The same perplexity obtains in reference to the means to be employed to secure Christian salvation. It is said that we should "strive to enter in at the straight gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke xiii. 24). "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew xxii. 14). We are also told in Ephesians that some were predestined to be the children of Christ; and in Romans (ix. 22) it is said that others were made "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." In the Seventeenth Article of the Church of England it is stated: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his council, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind." We are also informed "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves" (2 Corinthians iii. 5): "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above" (James i. 17). "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians ii. 13). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans iii. 28). "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians ii. 8, 9; see Galatians iii.). A still greater difficulty is presented in the Gospel ascribed to St. John. There we read (xiv. 6): "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" [Christ]; and in chapter vi. 44 it is stated: "No man can come to me [Christ] except the Father draw him"; which amounts to this: If the Father draw us, we must go; and if he does not draw us, we cannot go, and then we are to be damned for not doing what God has prevented us from accomplishing. This is "glad tidings" with a vengeance! Briefly, the matter stands thus: We cannot do good if we would, for there is no help in us; we cannot be saved unless we have faith; but we cannot have faith unless we pray for it; but we cannot pray unless we have grace; but we cannot have grace unless God gives it; but he will not give it unless we ask it; and we cannot ask it unless he inclines us to do so.

This is the kind of faith which Christianity tries to enforce upon us all, despite our inability either to understand it or to endorse it. "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). Upon the question of belief the New Testament is emphatic. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "Neither is there salvation in any other [than Christ]; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). It is said that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. i. 7, 8). A humane gospel truly! And in Revelation, chapter xxi., verse 8, we are informed that the "unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Is it not a farce to call such teachings as these "a gospel of salvation"? It is, in fact, a gospel (to use a Scriptural phrase) of "damnation." This penalty, be it observed, is to be inflicted upon those who cannot believe in this orthodox conglomeration of nonsense, cruelty, and injustice. It is a fact that thousands *cannot* believe this Gospel, and to damn them for not doing what, to them, is impossible is revolting, and the faith that teaches it deserves our severest condemnation.

No wonder that Christianity has made such slow progress among the nations of the world. It is stated by the Christian author of the *Conquests of the Cross*, "that up to the present time the professed Christians of the globe number, all told, 415,000,000; while non-Christians number 1,047,000,000" (p. 542). The following figures, published in *The Coming Day*, edited by the Rev. John Page Hopps, for September last, are very significant: "The earth's computed population to-day is 1,400,000,000 or 1,500,000,000. 400,000,000 are Buddhists; 250,000,000 are Brahmins; 110,000,000 are Mohammedans; 8,000,000 are Jews; 150,000,000 are termed idolaters; 62,000,000 are classed as various; 175,000,000 are set down as belonging to the Roman Catholic Church; 110,000,000 are accredited to belong to the Protestant denominations; 90,000,000 are classed as Greek Catholics, and are sometimes called the old Greek Armenian Church—and the religion, or the prevailing religion of Russia, is of this Greek Armenian persuasion, and it is contemporaneous with the old Roman Catholic Church which uses the same Bible; 25,000,000 are classed as various again. So you can really see that out of this 1,450,000,000 of a population there is only one-fourth that are 'nominally' Christians,

Digitized by Google

and there is only one-fourteenth that are 'nominally' 'Protestant' Christians. The one-fourth that are called nominally Christians are made up by counting the whole population as Christian wherever the Christian religion has a foothold. For instance, take the population of the United States and Canada; the population is estimated at 72,000,000, and, in making up the one-fourth and one-fourteenth as being Christians, this whole 72,000,000 is counted in, while the last estimate of the Catholic Church only claims between 9,000,000 and 10,000,000 of an actual membership in the United States, and Protestants claim 12,000,000 to 15,000,000 actual membership; so that actual count only shows about one-third of our home population as actual Christians. And this proportion would not hold good in any other country but this one. The intelligence of our home country really does not make a favorable showing for the Christian religion, and leaves but very few Christians among us."

CHARLES WATTS.

CHAPLAIN AND PATIENTS.

REVERTING to some experiences of mine in a great West-end hospital, I am surprised—the more I think of it—at the amount of persecution to which the poor patients were subjected—not by the doctors to whom they had gone, but by the "spiritual pastor and master" who, uninvited, came to them. It might have been thought that these caged and helpless sufferers had enough to endure in their mere physical ailments. But apparently it was deemed necessary by the hospital management to badger and bewilder them with theological dogmas and creeds, about which nine out of ten patients knew little and cared less. The system, as carried out, resolved itself into a form of gratuitous torture. There was little to distinguish it from aimless vivisection.

At some hospitals, I believe, the army of district visitors and Bible readers are let in without restraint. Like vultures, they pounce upon the occupants of the sick-beds, whom they smother with tracts, adjuring them to "Prepare to meet thy God," or otherwise to anticipate a speedy end, which the intrusion often accelerates. At the particular hospital I speak of the fanatical crowd are excluded, but it is only, I verily believe, to give the salaried Church of England chaplain a clear field and undisputed sway.

The performances of that zealous servant of the Lord engaged a great deal of my attention—when I was able to attend to anything at all. The interest I took in him might, had he known of it, disturbed a less complacent man. He was a study, a problem, a type; and his movements and utterances became, in time, a daily source of wonder and surmise. As he flitted about the ward during the day, I found my eyes instinctively following him; at night he haunted me in my dreams. I have not yet made up my mind about him. I am still undecided whether he was a sadly-misguided enthusiast, blind to the real effects of his ministrations, or a functionary stonily indifferent to consequences in the fulfilment of his office. Though personally inoffensive, and less obtrusive than the hospital regulations would have allowed him to be, he was still a nightmare on the institution, and I fear was actually, though not of course wilfully, the means of undoing some of the good the doctors had achieved.

Heine has said that the era of the Cross of Christ will eventually be recognised as the "hypochondriacal period" in the world's history. The sermons of our chaplain were mostly on the Cross, on the Calvary sufferings, on the Blood of the Lamb, on its sin-cleansing qualities. There was a great deal, of course, about the love of God, the tender mercy and care of the Father for his children—which the patients could appreciate by looking at their own sorry plights. But, somehow or other, we always got back to the old painful and repulsive topic—the Cross and the Blood. Apparently, it was of no consequence to the chaplain that this surgical ward and its adjoining operating theatre were reeking with the sanguineous fluid. There must be constant references in prayers, hymns, discourses, and tracts to "the blood," which references were still further emphasized on certain occasions by celebrations of the Holy Communion, when such patients as were willing made up for their lack of the vital current by imbibing the blood of Jesus. This, and constant allusions to Eternity, and our problematic fate when launched therein, tended, in the chaplain's idea, to serenity of mind and the peace which passeth understanding. But the doctors, I fancy, thought differently.

Some of the patients, during these religious exercises, saved themselves from hypochondria by sleep.

The bulk of the inmates of the ward who came and went during a period of five months exhibited no overpowering desire for the rev. gentleman's ministrations. In regard to the exceptions, I hope it is not uncharitable to mention the fact that they seemed very anxious to secure ultimate transference to the Convalescent Home to which the chaplain's good word was a safe passport. These patients, and one or two who were undoubtedly disinterested and sincere, so exerted themselves at morning and evening prayers as to give to the ward what might be considered a devotional tone. The majority, however, regarded the services as a daily infliction necessary to be borne like the bodily aches and pains which had brought them thither. Some of their comments were amusing, and occasionally more forcible than polite. "Why," queried one patient after a Sunday sermon, "does the chaplain walk out of the ward so quickly?" "Because," said another, "he is ashamed of the lies he has been telling us."

The bedside visitations of the rev. gentleman seemed not to be productive of better fruit than his formal discourses. From some special knowledge of his own, he informed me that my ailment was a "visitation of God." I suggested that that was not the diagnosis of the surgeons. If he would look at the inscription on the head-board, he would see what it was. As, in some further conversation, he found that I was endeavoring to convert *him*, instead of allowing him to convert me, he passed on to a more tractable patient, whose powers of assent were not limited by any preconceived opinions.

In adding, as I believe he did, to the income of the institution from general sources by securing legacies from the piously-disposed—who might or might not have desired their promised "hundred-fold" reward—the chaplain, no doubt, rendered good service. Possibly this was the secret of his appointment by the business men who constituted the Board. It may also be added that probably his ministrations were acceptable to the few devout members of his church who found their way into the institution. But, with every desire to credit him with all that was fairly due, it was but too painfully evident how largely his usefulness was impaired by an overweening desire to sprinkle about the "mummy-dust of dogma, instead of those kindly words of human sympathy, counsel, and encouragement which would have been more acceptable, and would have done infinitely more good.

Inseparable from a consideration of hospital life, in its broader aspects, are several serious speculations. Here, in these institutions, we are brought immediately in contact with what theologians are pleased to call the "problem" of pain, the "mystery" of evil. A little reflection, however, will show that there is no mystery, no problem, except such as theologians make themselves. Pain, or—to speak more widely—evil, is traceable to natural and well-understood causes. It is only when the theologian asserts the existence of a deity with attributes of omnipotence and benevolence that mysteries and problems and difficulties arise. Then it is that we have to cajole ourselves into believing that evil is not evil, but good; that, contrary to all our natural instincts and feelings, pain is not pain, but something entirely different; and that, in short, there is no meaning in the words we employ, but all is confusion, obscurity, and darkness. That is the "explanation" which theology affords, and for which we are expected to be grateful.

Surely it is the veriest mockery in the world to tell any one of these unfortunate sufferers, lying in a hospital bed, that his illness is some special visitation from on High for some mysterious purpose unknown to him, and that it is all for his good. He knows it is not. He knows it has arisen from natural causes, and that he would be quite as good, and better, without it. That, indeed, is why he is trying to get rid of it; that is why he is in a hospital bed.

Doubtless, suffering has, in some cases, a chastening, refining, sweetening effect; and so has the sympathy it excites. But it has entirely opposite results in others, and where does its salutary influence come in when, in so many instances, it almost immediately wipes the sufferer out of existence?

Digitized by Google

Not only are chaplains and other Christian ministers mistaken in their theories as to the origin and nature of the forms of evil which hospitals endeavor to alleviate and cure, but they are mistaken in their remedy. They know that, according to their Scriptures, the remedy is prayer, and they try it, but with so little faith in its efficacy that they are obliged to add physic to the treatment; and few of them now-a-days are so devoid of common sense as not to be fully aware which is really the active healing agent.

FRANCIS NEALE.

IN THE DEN OF THE CRITICAL LIONS.

OH those Logia! What a Daniel come to judgment they are proving themselves to be to those Christian scholars and critics who have undertaken to maintain the early date and genuine authorship of the Canonical Gospels, and the historical fidelity of the Christ who is their subject. Here is Professor Harnack, the great continental critic, lacerating himself terribly in the effort to raise the stone and cleave the wood, that obscure for him the meaning of Logion 5. Again do I, a Freethinker, chivalrously enter the lists to defend the honor of Ecclesiastes against the imputations cast upon it by those who should have been its friends. In my last article I exposed the Rev. Mr. Haweis's egregious misinterpretation of the disputed text in Ecclesiastes x., and I showed, by comparison with its context, that its writer was quite innocent of the charge foisted upon him. As Professor Harnack is in the same case with Mr. Haweis, I propose to make a further analysis of this ecclesiastical chapter, in order to show how heavy the bill of damages really is which Ecclesiastes is entitled to present against these gentlemen. But, pending this, it may be interesting to examine into the logical validity of the thesis which Harnack and Haweis are by implication concerned to defend. That thesis apparently is that there need be no danger of injury in raising stones and cleaving wood if the persons engaged in such occupation only remember that the Lord is present with them in their work. Now, whatever interpretation be put upon the words of Ecclesiastes, it is undeniable that in alluding to the *danger* of handling wood and stones he was merely stating *fact*. Did Christ mean, and do Harnack and the rest intend to represent him as meaning, that the knowledge of his presence in the stone and the wood would constitute a guarantee against physical injury? If this is not the contention, then the assurance of the Christly presence was hardly worth the having. It would be poor consolation to the man who had been fatally injured to be told that the Lord was present in the stone that had mutilated him beyond the recognition of his beloved mother.

But if Christ really wished to paralyze the influence of the supposed erroneous teaching of Ecclesiastes, he could have done so by rendering stone-lifting and wood-chopping innocuous as to danger; but, as we know that accidents have happened, and will continue to happen, the supposed case of Ecclesiastes stands good, and anyone is entitled to shirk his share of stone-lifting and wood-cleaving, on the ground that, though Christ may be present, the danger is still more tangibly in evidence. Will the belief in Christ's presence obviate the necessity of taking care? Who is likely to be the more immune from danger—he who is wisely careful in his work, or he who is so abstracted by thoughts of the Lord's goodness and mercy as to make a false stroke and come within an ace of chopping his digits off? And will it be seriously contended that this obscure little text in Ecclesiastes was exercising such a pernicious influence upon the working men at the time of Christ (in the direction of inducing them to remain idle for the rest of their lives) that it was conceived necessary to stigmatize it then and there? But if there is no reason to suppose that working-men were less industrious then than at any other epoch, there was no reason for Christ to go out of his way to condemn a teaching that had no more effect upon men than though it had never been uttered. By calling attention to it he would probably have caused the very mischief he was trying to counteract. Even if Christ did intend by this saying to antagonize Ecclesiastes, he failed to alter the *status quo*, which was, and is, that the occupation of wood-cutting and stone-lifting is attended with considerable danger. Had he done that, it would have been more to the point than giving an assurance which was wholly useless. These considerations show that, from whatever point of view we regard it, this thesis fails to bear inspection. *A nos moutons.*

In a article on the Logia, in the current number of the *Expositor*, Professor Harnack, expatiating on Logion fifth, delivers himself thusly: "At the right moment Dr. H. Lisco has drawn my attention to the words in Ecclesiastes (x. 9): 'If he breaks stones, he shall be wounded of them; if he splits logs, he shall be in danger of them.' Our text cannot be without some connection with this passage, and *clearly it is an intentional antithesis to it.*" Note those last words—"clearly it is an intentional antithesis to it." Professor Harnack hasn't any doubt about it. Not the slightest glimmering of an idea has he that his conclusion is based upon false premises. In no way must Christ be associated with Pantheism; perish the divinely-inspired book of Ecclesiastes rather than that. But I hardly think Harnack's devoutly-wished consummation will arrive. Ecclesiastes will stay on, while a vacant place will be left in Professor Harnack's reputation for critical acumen. And it was Dr. H. Lisco who first drew his attention to Ecclesiastes' contumacy. But for that, the preacher might positively have escaped scot free! "And as," says Harnack, "the pessimistic preacher says that a man will find pain and danger in his work, Christ says that he shall find in them himself." Does the Professor really mean that Christ is in the *pain* and *danger*? If he does, then it only makes this mystical muddle more mystifyingly muddlesome. "It is remarkable that in a gospel—in a saying ascribed to Christ—the preacher is referred to," etc. It would indeed be remarkable if it were so, but as the supposed reference has no existence outside Professor Harnack's head (except in Mr. Haweis's), we must reserve our transports of astonishment for something genuinely remarkable when it offers itself.

It is curious, and also vexing, that in the first part of this, the most significant of these Logia, certain words and letters should be missing, which fact renders it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get at its real meaning. Professor Harnack gives a general rendering of what appears to him to be the sense of the whole saying, to the effect that wherever the disciples may be they shall not be without God, and wherever one is working alone Christ will be with him as certainly as the object of his labor is beside him; and he says this rendering excludes any pantheistic interpretation, as well as any interpretation which regards the stone lifting and the wood hewing as anything else than the rough and solitary labor of the day." Still haunted by the fear of this terrible bugbear of Pantheism, you see.

BLOOMFIELD STEVENS.

(To be concluded.)

TRIED AND FOUND WANTING.

CHRISTIAN atonement has been tried and found wanting. From Constantine to the fall of the Byzantine Empire, Christianity had supreme control, and its fruits were the Dark Ages, ignorance, superstition, and crime. It has opposed science and progress and human liberty at every step. It propagated its tenets with the aid of the dungeon and fagot, thumbscrew and torturing rack; inventing and using no less than thirty-five of the most cruel instruments of torture for heretics that the minds of Christian monsters could conceive. It has sacrificed more lives, shed more innocent blood, than any other system of error that has ever cursed the world. Judaism slayed its thousands. Christianity has slain, according to good authorities, thirty millions. Whatever may be said in defence of some of Christ's teachings, the best of which were uttered before his day, the bloody atonement dogma is vicious and degrading, a product of ignorance and barbarism. Every drop of blood that has been shed for so-called atonements, or to support religious dogmas, was a crime against humanity, justice, and truth.

The expanding intelligence of humanity now demands something more rational and elevating than creeds of savagery, the voice of vengeance, or the barbarous echoes from Calvary's bloody brow. Man has atoned or suffered for mistakes and ignorance in all the bloody past. He has paid the debt himself; all the debt he owed. Man is a product of conditions, a creature of environments. All rational

Digitized by Google

hope of happiness, all improvement and elevation of humanity, must come of necessity, not from blood atonements of bulls, and goats, and mythic Christs, but from more intelligence, better environments, improved conditions here and now. We do not need blood atonement for our souls. What the toiling and oppressed masses need and demand is bread-and-butter salvation for their bodies. Take good care of the body, and the soul will take care of itself. If one-half the talent and wealth now wasted to perpetuate this barbarous and degrading superstition were expended to emancipate the industrial slave, it would chase away the wolf of want, bring relief and joy to the lank and pleading horde of unrequited toilers, paint athwart the storm clouds of strikes, injunctions, and industrial unrest that threaten the stability of our free institutions, the seven-hued bow of promised relief. It would reveal to our anxious and inquiring gaze into the mists of the future the purpling domes of great possibilities.

GEORGE W. TURRELL.

—*Freethought Magazine.*

PANTHEISM.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul."
—POPE'S *Essay on Man.*

POPE'S authority, then, is in favor of the idea that *nature* is the universe's *body*, and *God* is its *soul*. Odd doctrine. Alarming as odd to the orthodox. One of the conclusions to which it impels its believers is that matter eternally existed. Now, the eternity of matter is a notion which leads directly to the door of Atheism. The idea of an eternal universe is incompatible with the idea of an eternal God, the co-eternity or even co-existence of a "stupendous whole," with anything else, amounting to an *impossibility*. The universe may be an intelligent being—which, of course, may receive names by the score; but it is *impossible* that there can be a God in, out of, or apart from the universe. The whole includes the whole, and is the whole, or there is no sense in language; yet, in the teeth of that truism—a truism standing in no more need of proof than the truism that a triangle is not a square—pantheists gravely assure us matter is the body, God is the soul, of the universe, which amounts just to this: matter is everywhere; God, though not matter, is everywhere too.

The ablest writer may be defied to make clear a philosophy which is obscure by nature. Such a subject is pantheism. It is necessarily obscure, because based on principles purely assumptive, and dark as assumptive. It is necessarily absurd, because all its conclusions are drawn from premises positively false, or, at best, purely imaginary. It is necessarily mischievous, because falsehood is invariably so. Pantheism is, in truth, a senseless superstition; and pantheists may, without injustice, be ranged in two great sections—one of honest simpletons, the other of dishonest Atheists.

C. SOUTHWELL.

ACID DROPS.

ATHELSTAN RILEY says all children are liars and robbers. He would, therefore, have them instructed from the book which teaches that the Lord sends lying spirits and commanded his chosen people to spoil the Egyptians.

Three Middlesborough sky-pilots, of the Church of England species, sign a long-winded public appeal in favor of the School Board candidate who would dose the children with the Apostles' Creed. These gentlemen are horrified at what goes on now. "We can prove a case," they say, "where a child was taught in one of the Middlesborough Board Schools that St. Joseph was Our Lord's *natural father*." The italics are their own, and we can imagine how they are shocked. Still, they might remember that other people may be shocked at having to pay for children to be taught who was "Our Lord's" *unnatural* father. Fancy a young lady teacher having to explain this biological mystery to a class of little girls! But there is nothing which a parson will not face, and make other people face, in the interest of his dogmas—that is to say, in the interest of his profession.

At every School Board election it is only a fraction of the people who trouble to record their votes. The clericals rely on the apathy and indifference of the electorate to "capture the Board schools." The party most active at present is that which has long been working to undermine the Protestantism of the Anglican Church. The priest is naturally a sacerdotalist seeking his own power through the subordination of women and children. And this is done in the name of religion.

Is it the doctrine of the Trinity which makes so many people confused in their arithmetic? The *Westminster Gazette* gravely prints a grave letter from a correspondent who wishes to set the world right on the question—the silly, addle-pated question—of when one century ends and another begins. This gentleman informs the public that the year 1900 begins the twentieth century, which is as reasonable as saying that Tuesday begins at eleven o'clock on Monday night. Ninety-nine years don't make a century. *Viola tout.*

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes gives a regular Sunday entertainment at St. James's Hall. He calls it a religious service. But what's in a name? Bands and choirs and platform addresses are just the same, whatever you label them.

Mr. Hughes's entertainment last Sunday included a speech against Sunday entertainments. It wouldn't do for him to say plainly that he objects to scientific, philosophical, and literary lectures on Sunday, or even to high-class music. That would look too professional. He takes the ground, therefore, that these things ought not to be allowed for gain—as though that made any difference; as though an act should be made lawful or unlawful according to the motives of the person who performs it. And, after all, what the deuce does Mr. Hughes preach for on Sundays except to gain his living? He may say he does it for the love of Christ, but take away the salary, and how long would he keep at the job?

Mr. Hughes, by advertisement, invited the public to what he facetiously called a "Conference" on Sunday amusement. Mr. Mark Judge attempted to speak after Mr. Hughes had done, but was informed that at the St. James's Hall conferences there was only one speaker. Mr. Judge wrote to the papers and to Mr. Hughes, who made his reply at the last Sunday Conference. He made at least one grave mis-statement of fact, saying it was not fair to be harping upon the Act of George III., as "the Committee of the House of Commons had more recently declared that the law as it stands substantially represents the wishes of the English people." It was a Committee of the House of Lords which made the report which Ananias foisted upon his Conference as from the Commons.

Talmage has a sermon in the *Christian Herald* on Lies and Liars. He is an authority on both.

The Rev. W. Mantle, of Devonport, preaching last Sunday before the Mayor and Corporation, reminded them that their town was the worst in England for overcrowding. Not three hundred yards from the church there was a room in which a bed-ridden girl had been lying for five years. Her mother's corpse had occupied for four days a corner of the same room, and two adults tried to sleep in the same room every night. In Darkest Africa, the preacher said, they would not find so much disrespect and disregard for the feelings of humanity as in Devonport—which we daresay is a good deal truer than the Gospel.

Mr. Mantle is to be commended for speaking out thus boldly. But his boldness is not due to his creed; it is due to his natural manliness. This is a Christian country, and Christianity has long had possession of wealth and power, and control over education; yet there is more vulgarity and degradation here in England than in any "heathen" country in the world. The fact is, we want less religion and more common sense; less kingdom-come and more common humanity.

The Rev. S. C. Walley, vicar of Kirkthorpe, near Wakefield, said a woman came to him and said that she had had twenty-two children, and six were living. "That woman was practically a murderess of sixteen children. It was impossible for one woman to rear such a large number. It was ridiculous for people to imagine that they could breed healthy children more than once in three years." As the men of God become forced to attend to the things of this world, we shall hear less outcry at the Freethinkers who have given grave attention to the population question.

The "strike of a sex" is reported from Nebraska. It differs from the strike treated of in a book having for a title the words quoted, as in this case it is accompanied by a boycott. The Methodist women of Nebraska announce that they are determined to have a voice in the administration of the affairs of their Church commensurate with the amount of service which they perform, and that they will absent themselves from meeting until the general conference accedes to their demand. The loss will not be theirs if they conclude to make the boycott permanent.—*Truthseeker.*

Digitized by Google

The Churches still have the prestige of wealth and the appearance of power, but candid religionists confess that the secular spirit is getting too strong for the faith. Church-going hardly holds its own by attractive services, but private family worship is almost entirely given up. In nearly every family Sabbath recreation is indulged in on some part of the day, and the good old days when secular papers, magazines, and books were carefully collected on Saturday evening and laid away, have departed never to return. At which we heartily rejoice.

The Protestants of France are wealthy and influential out of all proportion to their numbers. In the large towns to be a Protestant is to share in numerous chances of charity, and as in India and China there are "rice" Christians, so in France there are "dole" Protestants. Thus in some measure the spirit which is excited against the Jews, also falls on the Protestants, who, because they have protested against the high-handed doings of the Jesuits in Madagascar, are held up in Catholic journals as representing the interests of Britain. Religion is such a benevolent promoter of humanity.

The Rev. Arthur Ritchie, rector of St. Ignatius Protestant Episcopal Church, New Oregon, in his organ, *The Catholic Champion*, asks: "Could anything be more utterly contemptible than the great American sects—such low, time-serving, ignorant superstitions as the Baptist Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the like? In the East these parvenu folk do not dare to raise their heads, or, if they do, they are laughed at for their pains. But no doubt in the West it is different, and quite possibly there a Baptist minister or a Methodist minister may consider himself as on an equality with the Church clergyman."

The *Manxman* thus alludes to the recent grand Church bazaar in Douglas, Isle of Man: "Truly, gambling under the guise of raffling attained to a fine art at St. Matthew's bazaar. Christianity! what crimes are perpetrated in thy name!" The extraordinary thing to the Islamic mind is that Christian editors write such paragraphs as the above (with which we cordially agree), and yet the writers thereof remain professing Christians!—*Crescent.*

The words of Jesus, "To him that hath shall be given," are often fulfilled in the Church. Thus the Rev. E. A. Stuart, the vicar of St. Matthew's, Bayswater, whose living is worth £1,699, has just received the appointment of the Jones' Lectureship of the Haberdashers Co., with a stipend attached of £150 per annum.

Mr. A. Benjamin writes to *The Jewish Chronicle* exposing the shady character of alleged Jewish converts to Christianity. He says: "I have repeatedly challenged in print the London, British, and Mildmay head missionaries to produce a single worthy convert they secured during the past two years in return for the £120,000 they received during the same period."

The Berlin Supreme Disciplinary Court for the Colonies has finally found Dr. Peters guilty of having feloniously caused the death of a young native woman with whom he had formerly had sexual relations. He is dismissed from the service. Let us hope the verdict may do something to protect the heathen from Christian brutality.

Vorwärts, surveying "Christian Europe," says: "In Russia the trinity which rules is the knout, *vodka*, and the priesthood. Its work has been to destroy Poland and a dozen other nations, to persecute Catholics and Stundists, and drive out the Jews. Then England's Christian work consists of the coercing and enslaving of Ireland, and the spoliation of India. France massacred thousands for believing in liberty and equality. Germany has her anti-Socialist laws and militarism; Austria, the cat-and-dog life between several nationalities; Italy, persecution and robbery. Spain slaughters her ignorant, starving subjects, and revives the torture."

Curiously similar is Japanese opinion, as given in the English columns of the *Yorodzu Choho*, of Tokio, which says: "In the long history of Christendom we know of not a single case of a country saved by it. With Montezuma's Mexico and the Inca's Peruvian empire the course of Christendom was absorption, destruction, annihilation. It has killed India—politically, at least. It has killed Burmah and Annam. It has killed Hawaii, after keeping it alive some forty years. It has killed Madagascar, and it will yet kill Abyssinia, Egypt, and Morocco. What security have we that Christendom will not kill China, Korea, and even Japan, if the opportunity offers?"

Mrs. Flora Annie Steel, who has spent twenty-five years in India, where she has been an inspectress of girls' schools, expresses some opinions which are calculated to abate the pride of the pious and virtuous Briton who subscribes towards missionary societies in that great peninsula, with its nearly three hundred millions of inhabitants. Interviewed by Mrs. Tooley, in the *Humanitarian*, Mrs. Steel says that "marriages in India are singularly happy. There are fewer cases of unkindness and violence than in this country. The Hindu has a finer idea of marriage than we have." How strange this sounds when we recollect the loud talk in Christian England about the need of the gospel to elevate the women of India.

Marriages are made in heaven and paid for on earth. A member of the C. of E. Assembly in Melbourne last week tried to secure the reduction of church marriage fees from three guineas to half-a-sovereign. The mover declared that existing fees were so high that church members could not afford to pay, and were forced to go elsewhere to be married. The motion was lost, it being held that the Church could not afford to extend its blessings at less than three guineas a go. So marriages made in heaven will continue to pay big profits to the importers.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The Fijian is dying out. The epidemics of civilization-*cum*-Christianity are the cause of his extinction. So, at least, says S. M. Herald, who with the next breath observes that, from the missionary point of view, Fiji is the greatest triumph of the century! Cadmean sort of triumph! Eh? Some eighteen hundred years ago a carpenter with the gift of prophecy explained in vigorous speech how the missionary would act; also how said missionary's work would pan out—sea and land compassed to make a proselyte, and the proselyte once made rendered twofold more the child of hell than the missionary. Yes, than the missionary! Irreverent carpenter! —*Ibid.*

Last Sunday one of the pipes in connection with the hot-water heating apparatus for the comfort of the worshippers at the fashionable Marylebone Presbyterian Church, through some diabolical device, burst during prayers. The aspirants for heaven stampeded in panic, and in the crush one person was thrown down, trodden on, and hurt. "Providentially" the others were saved, and some few of them remained to the conclusion of divine service.

One hundred and thirteen persons perished in the recent catastrophe in the church at Chmelevo, in the district of Kosloff, Russia, caused by a false alarm of fire. Life is sweet, and when death is in front the instinct of self-preservation shows the impotence of religion. Mothers and fathers may be excused, but what shall be said of celibate priests, dedicated to God? At the awful fire at the religious fancy fair at Paris in the beginning of the year, where the victims were nearly all women, quite a number of clerical hats, more or less damaged, were found among the ruins. Their owners all escaped, and were invited to get their hats, but, for reasons best known to themselves, did not care for these relics.

The Church Army now has forty-three vans to evangelize the rural districts. Who will provide for the spreading of Freethought in the same clergy-cowed quarters?

The theme discussed by the Illinois Conference of the German Evangelical Lutheran Synod, at Bloomington, Ill., recently, was "Life Insurance in the Light of the Holy Scriptures." Many of the speakers expressed the view that life insurance is not in accordance with the Scriptural teaching.

The speakers were correct. Nothing was more clearly taught by Jesus than "Take no thought for the morrow"; "Lay not up treasures upon earth"; "Take no thought saying what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed"; "Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not better than they?" The climax of the whole matter was: "Lay up your treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break in and steal."

Jesus never taught industry, thrift, or the accumulation of capital. How can a Christian, placing trust in the "dear Master," whose words are substantially as quoted, invest in insurance of any kind? The facts are, if he taught anything, Jesus taught that the end was nigh, even at the door within the lifetime of the then generation, some standing near him who should not taste of death until the end comes; then why provide for a period that lay beyond that event? Every true disciple is still expecting the fulfilment of this prediction at any moment. Then why lay up earthly treasures? Those who bank or insure their lives betray, as the good Lutherans declare, a lack of trust in Divine Providence.

The late Mr. Morton, of Leadenhall-street, put a deal of money by for post-mortem fire insurance. He has left the Moravian Church about a quarter of a million. The people

Digitized by Google

who labored for him week in week out from morn till night get nothing. Even his confidential manager, who served him many years, is in the same case. His secretary (lucky man), however, is not forgotten, for he gets £10, and his cook has as much as twice that sum. His widow, benefiting on the higher scale, has no temptation to extravagance in an annuity of £500. And this clod was almost a millionaire. His annuitants are to have their allowance forfeited if they become bankrupt. But the philanthropist made a very handsome provision for evangelizing the Chinese, and a number of rice-Christian chows may hear of his pious munificence. "These be your gods, O Israel."

We know nothing of the business dealings of Mr. Morton. He was doubtless eminently respectable, "good" on change or in chapel. But his will tells his character. We should like to be able to trace whence came the means for his notable philanthropy reaching to far Cathay, but reckless of those around him in London.

According to *Tit-Bits*, sixteen City of London churches, with yearly revenues amounting to £25,000, cost £12 10s. a year for every member of their congregations. It is doubtful whether some of these expensive souls are worth saving at the price.

In a case heard at Sheerness Police-court it was alleged against the Rev. E. Masson Baston, of Stevenhage, Herts, who is Bishop-designate of Burmah, that he had taken out a marriage license to unite himself with a Miss Gilbert, wherein he described himself as a widower, well knowing that his wife was living. The case was one of assault, the reverend having used his stick on a police-sergeant who was employed to keep him out of the house where his intended resided. He was fined ten shillings and costs for the assault, and the magistrate ordered that the marriage license should be impounded and laid before the Public Prosecutor.

Some time ago we drew attention to the case of Antonia Texeira, a girl who was outraged while in service at Baylor Baptist University at Waco, Texas. W. E. Brann, of the *Iconoclast*, an adept in scathing language, severely roasted the authorities of the University. For this a mob of armed divinity students entered his office, and took him, with drawn revolvers, to the university campus, where, under threats of bodily injury, he was compelled to sign a paper that he would leave the city in twenty-four hours. He went back to his office to indite another scathing attack. In a day or two he was attacked from behind, and brutally treated by some more Baptist ruffians. The upshot of the affair is thus expressed in the *Independent Pulpit*: "Baylor University has suffered irreparable injury, the Baptist Church is in disgrace, shame has been brought upon our community; while Mr. Brann is still on deck, with his pencil in hand, and the *Iconoclast* was never so much in demand."

A colored exhorter, while holding a meeting in Georgia, says the Atlanta *Constitution*, solicited a special collection to defray the expense of the meeting. "We'll pass roun' de hat," he said, "endurin' de singin' of de hymn on page 205—'On Jordan's Stormy Banks.'" And then he proceeded to "line out" the hymn; but so intent was he on the collection that he forgot whole lines of it, and supplied others, with the following result:—

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
  En cast a wistful eye
To Canaan's fair en happy land—
  (Don't let dat hat pass by!)

O de transportin', rapturous scene
  Dat rises to my sight!
(Drap in dat nickel, Brudder Green!)
  En rivers of delight!

Could I but stand whar Moses stood
  En view de landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, or death's cold flood
  (We want ten dollars more).

A little while ago, at a church in Georgia, the congregation adjourned for ten minutes to lynch a negro. After jerking the negro to Jesus, they returned to pray and preach as if nothing uncommon had happened. Probably they had an increased sense of devotion.

Q. Meteorologist Wragge is not satisfied with having definitely nicknamed the Almighty the "Infinite Dynamo." After dealing out various smaller baptismal certificates, he has now re-christened Him (or It?) "the great Ego Sum." This is retracking on the trail of the Hebrew. Why not break out into new fields? The "Great Go Forth," the "Pervasive Ubi," the "Infinite Inertia," the "Logoocosm," the "Sempivibrant," the "Whatnot Is," or beautiful appellations of that sort? All the same, Wragge had better look out that the Almighty, or someone, doesn't rechristen him, for playing chuckstones with the names of the variant Joss. "For yet they are not three Josses but one Joss," and a patent trade-label is badly needed, to have force throughout the world.—*Bulletin*.

"Resist not evil" is attributed to Jesus. Few are so foolish as to attempt to follow it out. The Doukhobortsi, or spirit-wrestlers, of Russia, unquaking Quakers, who seem to have been Tolstoists before Tolstoi, like the Peculiar People of England attempt to live literally according to the precepts of the New Testament. They hold their goods in common, and refuse to bear arms. In consequence they have been relentlessly persecuted by the most Christian Government of the Czar. Their homes were broken up, and they were deported to Transcaucasia. Since 1895 they have been drastically dealt with—hurried by Cossacks, dispersed among strange villages, banished to Siberia, and placed on the penal battalions. It is hard lines trying to be a Christian under a Christian Government.

Dr. Browne, in his address on Faraday, said that his life was a proof that the deepest science was not incompatible with true Christian belief. But the force of this statement disappears when it is known that Faraday refused to think about his religion at all. He positively refused to reason about it as he reasoned on matters of science. He received Christianity on faith, and he held it on faith, regardless of whether it squared with science or anything else. All this may be learned from Dr. Jones's *Life of Faraday*, and to put one part of the case without the other is a fraud upon the public.

Madame Amy Sherwin, the Tasmanian Nightingale, told a Melbourne *Herald* interviewer that she saw President Kruger while in South Africa. Asked whether he was an enthusiast on music, she replied: "No; but he is an enthusiast on religion, and he would not go to an entertainment of any sort." President Kruger's religion, however, does not interfere with his making the best of this world from a more solid point of view. He is said to have made a tremendous pile.

At Manchester municipal elections every member of the retiring Watch Committee, with one exception, was defeated; while the chairman of the Parks Committee, Mr. Needham, a prominent local Tory, who was mainly responsible for the prosecution and imprisonment of open-air speakers at Boggart Hole, Clough, was soundly beaten in his own stronghold by Mr. Brocklehurst, the Socialist, the chief prisoner in the campaign. This is a magnificent vindication of the right of free speech.

The plague is still prevalent in India. At Poona the hospitals are full, the city deserted, and some of the principal streets closed. The Lord's mercies are over all his works.

The mortality of Spanish soldiers in Cuba has been excessive. According to the official figures, 50,000 have either been killed or invalided; 40,000 more are in hospital; another 90,000 are scattered throughout the island, and respecting this latter number the *Imparcial* significantly remarks that they are distributed among detachments and garrisons of which no particulars are known.

In Tibet, where the Mahatmas come from, according to W. W. Rockhill, the traveller, the women have to do all the hard work from childhood. They are more muscular than the men, and work with the right side of the body completely exposed. The children usually go naked, or with only a pair of boots on, except in the coldest weather.

The article on "Monkeys" in the current *Quarterly Review* concludes that man has not been evolved from any existing form of ape. Nevertheless, the orang, gorilla, chimpanzee, and gibbon each present such specific human characteristics that we should look for the brute ancestor of our species in some form of ape from which they also have been derived, and are thus led to regard, as the original home of our species, some South Asiatic region.

As paradoxical as it may seem, we have good Christian authority that there is not a real Christian in the United States. The Methodists, and others with whom we have conversed, claim that the Catholics are not real Christians, and the Catholics claim that the Protestants are children of the Devil. Adventists, Unitarians, and Universalists are called infidels by most other Christian denominations, and we know of no Christian sect that is not far from being Christian according to some good Christian authority. Brothers and sisters of earth, there is too much to do here to bother about the old dogmas any longer. Let us all help each other to become good, honest, wise men and women. Let us all be Secularists.—*Torch of Reason*.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 21, Town Hall, Porth, South Wales: 10.30, "Prayer and Providence"; 2.30, "Will Christ Save Us?" 6.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

Tuesday and *Wednesday*, November 23 and 24, Pontypridd: Public Debate.

November 28, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—November 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. J. THURLOW.—We are overset for this number. Your letter shall appear in our next.

V. PAGE.—We do not recollect any debate between Charles Bradlaugh and the Rev. Arthur Girdlestone, either at Stourbridge or elsewhere. That Mr. Bradlaugh "left the platform thoroughly beaten" is too absurd even for contradiction. Christians were always fond of inventing such stories.

DONALD BLACK.—Pleased to hear Mr. Watts had enthusiastic meetings under the new Scheme at Paisley and Motherwell. He has himself written upon his Northern Lecture Tour. We cordially reciprocate your good wishes.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Sorry we have no room for a discussion of the merits and demerits of opium.

E. J. LEES.—It is against the general rule of practice to say anything about particular cases coming under the notice of the National Secular Society's Benevolent Fund Committee. The Committee exercise their own discretion, and relieve distress without publicity. But since Mr. Haslam publicly states that he applied in his necessity for assistance and was refused, he has only himself to thank for the following announcement. Mr. Haslam has never, we believe, been a paying member of the N. S. S. Nevertheless, he has been assisted from the Benevolent Fund at various times for many years. The last time he applied for aid, in November, 1896, he received a grant. Unfortunately, these grants have never deterred Mr. Haslam from defaming the Society which assisted him.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—*Per C. Watts:* A. Ralston, 10s.; J. Ralston, 10s.; George Colquhon, 10s.; Daniel Watt, 3s.

N. S. S. FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION SCHEME.—Mr. C. Cohen acknowledges the following promise:—A Bradford Friend, £2 2s. (annually). *Per Miss Vance:* Tom Beach, £1; E. L., £5; David Hughes, 5s.; Jas. Thomas, 10s.; A. J. Marriott, 7s. 6d.; James Fulton, £1 5s.; Crewe Friend, 5s. *(p).*

J. H. FOSTER sends us £1 in redemption of his promise in aid of the new Scheme.

THE HOOPER FUND.—*Per C. Watts:* W. McLean, 5s. *Per Thomas Bellamy:* E. Lawson, 10s.; Anonymous, 5s.; J. Scott, 1s.; W. B. Coppock, 1s.

M. E. PEGG.—Date booked.

A. E. E.—Thanks for cuttings. We return (as desired) your extract from *Great Thoughts*. It was George Standring who wrote that unfortunate passage about the superiority of Salvationism over Secularism in its message to the ignorant and degraded. We replied to it at the time, in the *Westminster Gazette*, if we recollect aright—or it may have been the *Pall Mall*.

H. CLOUGH.—Thanks for a copy of the Failsworth Bazaar Program. Glad to know that £300 was realized. We hope the £50 worth of unsold stock will yet bring in its value to the Fund.

A. G. LYE (Coventry) wishes to know what Public Libraries allow the *Freethinker* to be placed on the reading-room tables. We should be glad to receive information on this point from our readers in various parts of the country.

A. HURCUM.—You are about right. Please send orders for books or pamphlets to R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Perhaps you would find something to your purpose in our little book on *Infidel Death-Beds*.

W. CABELL.—Our attention has been drawn to your letter. We do not wish to be unnecessarily unpleasant, but the least we can say is that you have been inaccurate and inconsiderate. Had you supplied us with the more definite information you now disclose, the matter could have been traced and dealt with satisfactorily—which is now done. We regret that you regard yourself as having lost £1 in connection with the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund. We had two guineas of our money in the same subscription, for we *gave* something, unlike others who gave nothing and make a great noise at the same time. We are ready to cover your "loss" out of our own pocket and remove your grievance altogether, if you are willing to be so recouped.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The People's Newspaper—Blackburn Times—Consett Chronicle—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—The Truthseeker—Two Worlds—Liberator—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—Blackpool Gazette—Fria Tankar—Boston Investigator—Ourselves—Freidenker—Lucifer—Free Thought Magazine—Open Court.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

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

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half year, 5s. 3d.; Three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an excellent audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Philosophy of Hamlet" was listened to with deep and flattering attention, while his rendering of illustrative selections was warmly applauded. Mr. White occupied the chair.

In response to repeated and pressing invitations, Mr. Foote is paying a flying visit to South Wales. He delivers three lectures to-day (November 21) in the Town Hall, Porth, and on Tuesday and Wednesday he holds a public debate at Pontypridd, returning to London on Thursday in time for the monthly N. S. S. Executive meeting.

Mr. Charles Watts gives a free lecture at the Secular Hall, New Church-street, Camberwell, this Sunday morning (November 21), subject, "The School Board Fight: A Final Appeal." In the evening Mr. Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, subject, "Christian Tactics Exposed."

That plucky veteran, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, speaks out in the *Arena* against Bible-teaching in schools. True morality, she contends, cannot be learned in our schools by reading the Old Testament, "containing as it does a very revolting history of tribes always at war, of arbitrary rulers, and of men and women who violated all the moralities in ordinary life."

Mrs. Stanton cites "the Devil scare" at New York as a lesson to Bible teachers. She contends that neither the Old nor the New Testament is suitable as a text-book. Neither in spirit, letter, nor example are children taught in either book to reverence the mother of the race. "In all the revisions of texts and discussions on translations the degraded position of women has thus far had no notice. I doubt whether a theological student ever arose from the study of the Scriptures with a higher respect for women than he found in ordinary life, or in the laws and constitutions of the state."

Our French Freethought friends discussed at their annual Congress their *rôle* in the approaching elections. The Congress was presided over by M. Durandel, of Dreux, and delegates were present from Bordeaux, Lille, Lyons, Rouen, Nancy, Nimes, Orleans, and other towns.

The *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, in its November number, gives as frontispiece a very life-like portrait of Moncure D. Conway, and in the magazine is a good sketch of that gentleman's career, from the pen of Thaddeus B. Wakeman, which he describes as "a most interesting pilgrimage of one of the clear-brained and true-hearted men from Methodism to Unitarianism, thence to Straussism, thence to pure Theism, thence to Humanitarianism, leading to the broader Evolutional Rationalism." Among other notable articles are "Theology: Its Origin, Career, and Destiny," by D. K. Tenney, and an account of Stephen Girard, the Freethinking philanthropist.

We are pleased to note that the *Little Freethinker* is to be revived, and published by H. L. Green, of Chicago.

This Sunday Mr. Forder occupies the King's Hall, Commercial Road, E., where he lectures on "Gospel History."

Mr. Cohen's lectures in the Jubilee Hall, Blackburn, were fairly reported in the local press. He was opposed by the Rev. Mr. Fox. In the *Consett Chronicle* a deluge of correspondence has followed Mr. Cohen's debate with Mr. Waldron, and the editor says: "Twelve columns of letters stare us in the face."

Digitized by Google

Mr. C. Cohen lectured to improved audiences at Manchester on Sunday. There were good meetings in the morning and afternoon, and the hall was full in the evening. Several new members were enrolled. Mr. Cohen lectures at Huddersfield to-day (November 21).

A correspondent calls our attention to a new Spanish Freethought paper published in Valencia. It is entitled *La Conciencia Libre* (Free Conscience), and has for its mottoes "War on Hypocrisy and Ignorance" and "Walk with Science and Truth."

Referring to the attempt to introduce religion in the Victorian schools, Mr. Symes says in the *Liberator:* "It used to be the Bible in the schools, the whole Bible; but Freethinkers have made it impossible for the clergy to plead for that now. They urge that selected portions of 'God's most holy word' shall be used in schools, not all the God of holiness and purity inspired! Oh, no! 'God' never had the advantage of good society, you understand, and so inserted pages and pages of Billingsgate, of pothouse and street-corner slang and ribaldry, into his book of morals (!). The clergy are not ashamed, of course, of what 'God' wrote; still, for trade reasons, they will not recommend it at present. We have made that impossible for them, and we shall make the Bible and the holy quacks themselves impossible before we have done with them."

A FORTNIGHT IN THE NORTH.

I HAVE just spent a fortnight of "active service" in the North of England, and in Scotland. During that time I have debated four nights and delivered ten lectures. All my evening audiences have been exceedingly good, and the meetings have proved successful in every particular. There is, beyond doubt, more activity being displayed in the Secular movement at the present time than I have observed for the last four or five years. At least that is my experience at the places which I have recently visited. There are two pleasing features in connection with our Societies that appear to me to be very encouraging, affording as they do grounds for hope for the permanent success of Secular propaganda. These features are, the acquisition to our organization of intelligent and earnest young men, and the co-operation of thoughtful and energetic women. The services of men who are advanced in life are, of course, desirable, inasmuch as the advantages of their experience, when judiciously rendered, are most valuable. But more than that is required in our active movement—namely, the alliance of the energy of youth, and the inspiring influence of wives, daughters, and sweethearts. And this is just what we are rapidly securing, not only in London, but also in many of the provincial towns. At Stanley and in Glasgow the women were well to the front, aiding, by their presence and practical work, the efforts of their respective societies. In Paisley, Greenock, and Motherwell the propaganda is carried on principally by young men, who seem to me to be exceedingly thoughtful, and who regard their work as a labor of love. If any of our friends are inclined to despair, they should visit the brave workers in the North, and the activity in local propagandism which is there going on ought to be sufficient to remove any gloomy apprehensions that may be felt in consequence of a lack of knowledge as to what is really being done.

While what is here stated is quite accurate in reference to the places mentioned, it is only fair to say that there are other towns where improvement is necessary. Just now, through special causes, much apathy prevails in Edinburgh, Dundee, and Aberdeen. Freethinkers are numerous in each of these places, but they lack cohesion of purpose, and while one party is waiting for others to do something, nothing is done. Unfortunately, those who are willing to work lack the means to carry out their desires, and many of those who could give pecuniary help are indifferent in the matter, and thus the cause suffers in consequence. Still, there is no reason to despair at this drawback, for with the aid of the Treasurer's Scheme it will be overcome. I am very pleased to record the fact that, without one exception, at every place I have visited during this tour all friends agree that the Scheme is a good one, and that it deserves the hearty support of the entire Freethought party. In this I entirely concur, and it is to be hoped that those who can will send their subscriptions at once. Within the past fortnight I have received contributions in aid of the Scheme, and many other friends have promised further donations. It will be pleasing to me to see the promises fulfilled at an early date. So convinced am I of the utility of the Scheme that I venture to assert that, if funds would permit, branches of the N. S. S. could be formed and placed in a flourishing condition in every principal town in the North of England and in Scotland. The material is there waiting to be utilized, which can only be done by propagandist efforts, supplemented by proper organized work. My lectures at Paisley, Greenock, and Motherwell were given under the Treasurer's Scheme. The audiences were excellent, and the lectures highly appreciated. At Greenock and Motherwell the halls were filled, and the utmost enthusiasm was evinced at the marked success of the meetings. Many were the inquiries: "When are you coming again?" The local friends have promised to proceed with organization in all earnestness. There was but little debate; many questions, however, were put, which indicated the interest taken in the subjects dealt with. At each meeting the best attention was given, and the strictest order was observed. Mr. Lindsey, the local newsagent in Glasgow, attended each meeting, and had a capital sale of Freethought literature. Those staunch workers in the cause, Messrs. Black and MacLish, presided at Paisley and Motherwell.

My four nights' debate at Stanley was, to me, highly satisfactory. The audiences were good, and, with one exception, those present showed by their conduct that they came to hear both sides. The one exception was on the second night, when the members of the Salvation Army mustered in force. My opponent, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, had preached for them on the Sunday night, and, upon the principle that "one good turn deserves another," a crowd of these disciples of the Cross attended the debate the following evening and responded to Mr. Waldron's appeals to the emotions in a style more enthusiastic than discreet. However, they ultimately cooled down and listened with a patience that evidently taxed their religious power of endurance. The last audience was the best of the four, and all parties appeared pleased with the encounter. The Secularists were clearly so, and not without reason, for twelve new members were added to their Society. The local clergy and ministers were opposed to the discussion, and not one of them supported Mr. Waldron by appearing with him on the platform. The Primitive Methodist minister attended the first night, which, I presume, was too much for him, for he did not put in a second appearance.

Mr. Waldron behaved in a gentlemanly manner on the whole, although, like most Christian defenders, he preferred resorting to the emotional, rather than confining himself to argument. He did one very undignified act. One of our young Freethought lecturers has written a pamphlet upon Atheism, and Mr. Waldron, with a view of showing there was "nothing in it," had removed the inner pages, and put in their place blank leaves. He then exhibited the sham pamphlet to the audience, saying to them: "Do you want to know what argument is here? Here it is—*nothing.*" This was gaining applause at a cheap rate; and so the thoughtful part of the audience thought. Apart from this "playing to the gods," my opponent fought better in this debate than in any of the previous encounters that I have had with him. The two pleasing features of the discussion were the good feeling exhibited on both sides, and the opportunity it gave me to show professed Christians the weakness of their faith and the nature and force of Secular principles. Christian disputants have of late changed their tactics in controversy; and I intend to deal with this subject in my lecture at the Athenæum Hall, London, this Sunday evening, November 21.

Having given two lectures last Sunday at Edinburgh, I returned to London on Monday, having done a fairly hard fortnight's work. CHARLES WATTS.

There are a good many people who think it obvious that Christianity also inherited a good deal from Paganism and Judaism, and that, if the Stoics and the Jews revoked their bequest, the moral property of Christianity would realize very little. And if morality has survived the stripping off of several sets of clothes which have been found to fit badly, why should it not be able to get on very well in the light and handy garments which science is ready to provide? —*T. H. Huxley.*

Digitized by Google

THE ORIGIN OF ALL THINGS.

EARLY man found himself surrounded on every hand by the mysteries and manifestations of nature, which were to him totally inexplicable. He saw the mighty forests with their majestic trees reaching—so it seemed to him—to heaven; with their resounding echoes, sublime quietude, mysterious animals, and creeping serpents. To him they often formed hiding-places in war or bad weather; they furnished fuel for the winter, and protection from heat and cold. In winter they threw off their garments, and resumed them, more beautiful than ever, in spring. It was but natural for the savage, with these phenomena before him, to bow down in reverence and awe, and worship the great unseen power. He looked at the sea with its hidden and immeasurable depths, its diving monsters, and good and bad luck when he was engaged in fishing, its wild fury or serene calmness, and its prey upon human life. And he was overawed, and prayed. And again he observed how, when the sun hid its countenance behind black clouds on the western horizon, everything became dark, cold, and damp; the flowers bowed their heads and closed, or dropped their crowns, the birds were silent, and nature slumbered, but resumed her activity and normal condition at the reappearance of the King of Day.

He noted how it grew colder and colder as the sun retreated towards the southern hemisphere, how nature gradually went to rest, the earth growing bare, until all life finally lay as in a trance during the long winter months beneath a pall of ice and snow; and, as he observed how the whole nature slowly awakened as the sun returned, what wonder, from his standpoint, that he fell prostrate and worshipped the great, golden Sovereign, the giver of life, the source of light, warmth, and growth! It was entirely excusable, his experience being but scanty, and his reasoning faculty being almost *nil*. His nature consisted but of animal instincts and passions, hope, fear, and the sense of imitation; and anything living, which was greater than him, or not subject to his control, he considered to be a personal entity, as he himself was, only greater, wherefore he deemed it wise to solicit its sympathy. Having no resource in science, and being ignorant of the nature of the phenomena around him, they seemed mysterious to him, and he was overawed. Our early ancestors personified the elements and prayed to dead objects. They worshipped the real; their deities were tangible and visible. The modern Christian says, How absurd! leaves the real alone, and grasps after the shadow of it. His deity is an intangible, invisible, abstract, airy phantom of the imagination.

Then came a time when our early forefathers began to conjecture as to the cause of phenomena, and thus originated all our religions. In our Bible we have a good summary of these conjectures, and some fine specimens we have of them. Take, for instance, the following free quotation: "Once upon a time there was but one people with one language. So they said one to another, 'Lo, we will never part, but we will build a tower which shall reach unto heaven, and we will live in it as one people.' They started the job, and got a good way up above the earth, when God got news of the matter, and he murmured to himself: 'What the deuce are the miserable ants up to? Lo and behold! They want to get into heaven that way, contrary to my pronouncement for Eve's eating the apple in olden time. That won't do.' And God, who knows everything, did not know that there is no air above four miles over the earth; God, who is everywhere, came down to see what his people were doing, and, perceiving that there was something wrong, caught hold of a brilliant idea. He confounded the people's tongues, and so, when one shouted for bricks in Latin, the other swore in Hindustani, and brought up the mortar in Dutch; and this is why we speak German, French, English, and Danish to this day."

This might be credible enough if it were not for the similarity of this tale with another one which I read in a school-reader when a child, but which I was not asked to believe in. It ran as follows: "Once upon a time, in the midst of winter, being a very frosty day, a hungry bear met a fox, the latter having a stolen fish in his mouth. 'Hullo,' said the bear, 'how came you to that? I wish I could make a catch like that. I haven't had anything to eat for three consecutive days.' 'It's easily done,' said the fox; 'come with me, and I'll show you.' And he took him out on a frozen pond, where a hole had just been made in the ice. 'Here,' said the malicious vagabond, 'I put my tail down this hole, and the fish clung to it. You do likewise; but don't be too hasty, for they don't bite immediately.' Mr. Wily went his way, the credulous bear did as he had been told, the water froze around his tail, and when he noticed it he tried to pull it up, and lost it in the effort. And the bear walketh the earth without a tail unto this day."

These two fables are so much alike that whenever I think of one I cannot help thinking of the other also. They each profess to explain the origin of a certain phenomenon, and each has been written after the phenomenon originated. One is as erroneous and ridiculous as the other, and the only difference is that one appears in "Holy Writ," and is being taught to the child as God's word under pains of eternal damnation for disbelieving it, and the other is in a common school reader. A man who has the least acquaintance with the pages of history, and who says that language has arisen in the manner described in Genesis, must be deliberately lying. Language is as much a growth as anything else. As far as history carries us back we can trace the development, step by step, of every tongue on the face of the earth, as now every schoolboy knows. The evolution is still going on, and it has been estimated that the English language adds on the average a hundred words per year.

The Christian accounts for the existence of the universe by saying "God made it," and he argues that, as clocks and chairs and tables are made, everything is made; as man's handiwork could not make itself, neither could man himself make himself, therefore there must be a creator, with a still greater intelligence than ours, who has made us. But there he stops, and leaves it to me to take up the chain of logic; and I will do so, by saying (by the same mode of reasoning): And as God is so infinitely great that he can make wonderful man, there must be a being infinitely greater still to make him. If not, why not? It is just as logical to say that the universe has always existed as it is to say that God has always existed. And so we might go on *ad infinitum*. But if God made everything, everything includes time and space, and if not, why the rest? Can our Christian friends imagine a time when there was no time, and a place where there was no space? Let them exert their unpractised reason and dull imagination a little upon this.

"Oh, but there must be some being who regulates the planets and balances them in their orbits, who makes nature's laws." Incidentally spoken, "law" is in that sense a misnomer; it should be "order." But let us for a moment consider the so-called "laws of nature." Let us take the (to us) simplest we know of. Two and two make four. Can anybody make it more or less? Can any Christian conceive a time when two and two made five? No, it is so by the very nature of it, and it could never be otherwise. Take half a cup of milk and pour it into half a cup of water, and what is the result? Why, milk and water. Put oxygen and hydrogen together, and you have water. Certain chemical substances together produce a certain mixture. Certain causes combined under certain circumstances will have a certain effect. But these simple natural laws only appear to us easy to comprehend because they come within our daily experience. The greater and more incomprehensible laws only seem mysterious because we know less about them.

The Freethinker's position concerning this is quite clear. He has learnt at least one thing more than the religionist. He has learnt to confess his own ignorance. He has learnt to pronounce the sentence, "I do not know," at the right time, and at the right place; and that is something. Where he knows nothing he seldom guesses, and when he does he says so honestly; he certainly does not threaten with eternal damnation in case people do not believe his theories; and last, but not least, his conjectures are generally based upon scientific research.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

ASSYRIAN HYMN TO THE SUN.

THE Rev. H. M. Baum, editor of *Monumental Records*, translates the following psalm from one of the Nineveh tablets. Some of its expressions may remind us of the compositions once ascribed to David:—

O Lord, Illuminator of the Darkness, opener of the face of the sky.
Merciful God, who setteth up the fallen, who keepeth the weak,
Into Thy light turn the great gods.
The spirits of earth gaze towards Thy face,
The tongues of the hosts, as one cry: Thou rulest.
Smiling, they turn their faces toward the light of the Sun.
Like a wife Thou art: glad and making glad.
Thou art the light in the vault of the far-off heavens.
Thou art the eye-centre of all the wide-spread lands.
Men from far and near behold Thee and rejoice.
The great gods smell the sweet savor, the food of the smiling heavens.
He who hath not turned his head to sin, thou wilt prosper;
He shall eat of Thy food and be blessed by thee.

'Tis well, sometimes, for man to be at bay;
Cornered, bereft of friends, or hope, or faith.
Thrown sheer on one's own self; the voice which saith:
"Courage, fight on, 'tis best to die this way."

Digitized by Google

WILLIAM PLATT AND HIS MESSAGE.

I owe the *amende honorable* to William Platt, author of *Women, Love, and Life*. Noticing a single poem of his in our number for July 25, I said: "The writer of *Hope's Brotherhood* can evidently do something still better. He should be able to soar away from all suspicion of belonging to the erotic, neurotic, and tommyrotic schools, and become himself an inspiration of love, trust, and high endeavor to others." This was not unkindly meant. But the silly words used in the attempt to be smart have made me smart since. Levity in connection with Platt's work is impudent and unjust. I tender my apology. This is the more necessary, as a careless reader may fancy flippant words hit the mark; nay, think that impure, insane, and decadent which I find pure, sane, and wholesome. Why I say this now may be worth the telling, if but as a caution *re* critics and new poets.

In July I had seen none of Platt's work save the short poem sent for review. I noticed "its frankness and originality," its "flaming light and aspiration, love of nature and love of humanity." I said of the author: "He is evidently endowed with the poet's master-keys of sympathy and melodious expression." But I fancied an air of juvenility, and flung in a word of warning which, had I known his other work, would have been impertinent. Glancing afterwards at *Women, Love, and Life* (Hirsch, 1895), I was slightly "scunnered." My eye caught an attack on Shelley, an attempt to wrestle with Shakespeare in "Goneril's Defence." When I read in the Introduction, "A stronger pulse beats in these pages than ever did in your heart," I smiled. The book has since wrung the tribute of my tears. I turned to the end:—

Look!
I have writ a rich book—
Verse with the spring of the lion,
Prose with sinews of steel!
So!
Great is the show!
As I think! as I feel—
Raptured and ringing and real!

That, methought, might be left for some other first to say. *Now*, I would I were that other—able to express my thought as finely. A glimpse at *Women, Love, and Life* gave the impression of juvenile power seeking to force attention by singularity, posing as a lion at bay, perhaps ready to shatter nerves in a vain attempt to get from Long Acre to Westminster Abbey. I thought of the sad fate of a singer intense, proud, sweet, and true—the living Anarchist poet, John Barlas ("Evelyn Douglas"), a little-known genius who outstripped most contemporaries, and bade fair to be a poet of all time.

A sense that I had not been quite just to the young egoist of my fancy made me gladly go last week to hear William Platt lecture before the Legitimation League on "Natural Love and Spiritual Needs." Of course I took my wife. The flaunting poet turned out to be a modest, grave, plodding, little man of perhaps thirty-five, who, in a crowd, might pass as insignificant; though, when he lighted up, he was anything but that. His speech, from its opening words, "Woman is the altruist of the race," to its abrupt but eloquent close, was significant enough. He spoke frankly, fluently, fervently of the sublimity of building up a new race, of the immeasurable meaning of fatherhood and motherhood, of the necessity of a high ideal of honor and constancy, of subordinating all for the children. Love must be free from baseness, before it could be freed from legal ties. He preached the beautiful building of the race by men and women who had learnt to live, not by external laws, but by their ideals. His utterance had the ready serenity of one who had long thought and deeply felt on sexual problems; nervous sensibility impelled his hand to wander as over the keys of an invisible instrument, but there was no affectation. Strenuous sincerity was the keynote of the man. He was most severely criticised in discussion. Socialists, Individualists, Anarchist-Communists, Freelovers, Conservatives, were dissatisfied. Some titterers had come to scoff. Platt did not writhe under the lash, but smiled lovingly, as with a heart big enough to understand them all. I thought the poet the sanest of the speakers, and wished to take his hand; but I felt that I, too, had done him an injustice, and must first make public reparation.

I am thus personal, for personality gives life to dry bones. The man gave me the key to his work. I went home and read it through, mostly aloud to my wife. A friend who spoke described it as "idle." We found it beautiful, vibrant with one vital and vitalizing idea—Love as the pivot of the world's onward course. The evident purpose of every page is to ennoble life by intensifying generous emotions. If this be idle, all art is idle. Here is an extract, showing less of the artist than his dominant motive. Let the reader judge:—

> "I dream of a world built of Love, well built (a nation and a nation's purity and a nation's honor depend on this) and if men regarded it as their duty of duties to leave behind them children better than themselves had been, were not a nation then at once saved—all politics, ethics, science, and whatsoever you will of no potency to the potency that love can wield!"

William Platt, if I understand him—it still is an *if*—is one who has been stripped of every faith but just this. In human love, deriving all its law from what is necessary to the children, he finds philosophy, art, science, ethics, and religion. He would place our most imperious instinct under severest self-control; raise love so high it cannot be base, make it so ardent as to burn out all brutality, lust, and selfishness. He would make it do for every individual what in the long run it is doing for the race. He would have children nobly conceived, nobly born, and nobly bred, and birth and its cause ever worthily spoken of. With Walt Whitman, he regards every inch of the human body as holy, and, above all, reverences woman and motherhood. What child of woman can sneer at such a faith? To mock at it were to despise oneself. When amid the battle of life, bloody and brutal, a passionate figure is seen bearing proudly the pure white flag of love, may my face lie buried in the mire ere I fling mud at such an ensign. Poet, dreamer, idealist, I do not jeer; I think nobly of you.

J. M. Wheeler.

BOOK CHAT.

It is stated that there are 3,000 languages into which not even a fragment of the Bible has been translated. Most of these are decaying dialects. On the other hand, the Bible has been translated into several languages of which the speakers are all extinct.

* * *

In the library of Glasgow University there is a rhyming Bible, the work of the eccentric old divine, Zachary Boyd. He conceived the idea of rendering the sacred book in rhyme, a task which had to some extent been undertaken by several writers, among whom may be mentioned the Saxon Cædmon, and Tate and Boyd's rhyming version of the Psalms. Zachary Boyd gave full reign to his imagination, and produced a work of much interest and curiosity, though it has never yet been printed.

* * *

The American papers are making much fuss over Miss Ellen Glasgow, a young Virginian, whose anonymous novel, *The Descendant*, is said to show Freethought proclivities.

* * *

In the *Positivist Review* Frederic Harrison writes on the late F. W. Newman, who is compared at length with the Cardinal. Mr. Harrison remarks: "The elder brother mounts on the top of the wave of Catholic reaction, and becomes a foremost pillar of a vast religious organization. The younger brother leads a far-reaching movement of thought which is destined in one form or other to undermine the very foundations of that Church; he ends in obscurity, and with hardly any personal following or influence. Yet the Cardinal represents only a discredited Past, and Francis did something to bring us nearer to a Greater Future." A notice of Professor Newman is also given in the *Vegetarian Messenger*.

* * *

In Commander Bacon's *Benin, the City of Blood*, one may read many horrors of the bloody sacrifices perpetrated in the name of religion. A not uncommon form in some parts is for a chief at times to kill a slave to take a message to his father, or some reverenced person, in the land of shades. On these occasions a slave is sent for and given the message, and told when he gets to the next world to give it to the chief's father. The slave repeats the message, absolutely believes that when he dies he will find the old chief, give him the message, and then enter his service in the far-off world. He is then killed quite willingly and peaceably, for the confidence of the black slave in his chief is unbounded.

* * *

Theosophy has changed its name to *Universal Brotherhood*. It is under the editorship of Mrs. Kate Tingley. The alteration of title is significant.

* * *

Ourselves, which calls itself "The People's Theosophic Monthly," has a sensible article on "Religious Instruction in Schools." It remarks on the absurdity and worse of Bible teaching, imposing upon the child's mind the *words* of a book which in many parts is as unintelligible as the Greek language would be, and tells of a teacher who dilated on the horrors of the fiery serpents which bit the children of Israel, to a class of infants. The writer says: "One teacher has a class of ninety girls whom she has constantly to put off with a subterfuge, because she dare not avow her real opinion on a question of 'belief.' And another, who conscientiously teaches the Christian faith, confessed to me in a private

Digitized by Google

conversation that she often wished she had been born a heathen, because then she could have followed *her own* conscience."

* * *

The *New Age*, noticing volume iii. of the Humanitarian League's publications, says: "Mr. G. W. Foote has a really eloquent plea for universal peace. If the appeal could only have been made to the nations, how many of our European wars of the last fifty years would have taken place?"

* * *

Mr. C. W. Heckethorn's standard work on *Secret Societies* has long been out of print. He has replaced it with a new and fuller one, entitled *The Secret Societies of All Ages and Countries*, which is now published by Redway.

* * *

In noticing Dr. C. P. Tiele's lectures on *Elements of the Science of Religion*, delivered under the terms of Lord Gifford's will, the *Academy* is constrained to ask: "What about the Gifford bequest, which was not to be used for the teaching of the creed of any Church or sect?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

CLERICALS AND TOLERANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The following personal incident, I think, will be of interest to readers of the *Freethinker*:—At Birmingham, last Monday evening, I went with a Freethought friend (Mr. H. Lees Sumner) to a meeting held by the Church party in the St. James's Schools, Aston, in support of their local candidate for the coming School Board Election. The chair was taken by a Rev. Mr. Orr, who opened and closed the proceedings with prayer. About seventy persons were present, including half-a-dozen clergymen. At the conclusion of the speeches I asked permission to speak for a short time. This request the chairman readily granted. The audience received me with hearty applause, evidently thinking that it was my intention to support their candidate. I began my remarks by saying that, although my views differed from those of most present, I had no doubt that they would show towards me that spirit of fairplay for which Englishmen in general, and Christians in particular, were so famous. I then went on to say that those impressions made on the child's brain in its earliest years were, as a rule, the most lasting and the most difficult to remove. This statement was applauded. They evidently knew its truth too well. I then said that, to my mind, it was *cowardly* of them to take a mean advantage of the innocence of childhood by endeavoring to cramp the young mind by theological dogmas; that if their religion was true there would be no need for them to resort to such despicable trickery. This remark was more than Christian flesh and blood could endure. The rev. chairman and another rev. ambassador of God jumped up as though they had suddenly sat down on "the business end of a tin-tack." I was politely told to resume my seat. I had "injured" the "feelings" of those present, and could not expect that mine would be respected; but if I wished I could "ask a question." I then said: "The candidate has asked what better book could be put into the hands of a child than the Bible; I should like to know what *worse* book could possibly be given to a child." This question was met by derisive laughter. Some enthusiastic Churchman yelled, "Turn him out." One kind-hearted God-supporter shouted, "Lynch him." The chairman considered the question "blasphemous." The candidate, the best behaved among the lot, like his master on a particular occasion, answered not a word. Before I sat down, however, I said that if the conduct of those present was a specimen of the effect Bible-teaching produced on the mind, it did not say much for its value.

And yet there are a number of Freethinkers dreaming away their time in a fool's paradise, fondly imagining that the persecuting spirit of Christianity is dying, and that the time for iconoclastic work has gone. Let them attend some Church-meeting, similar to the one my friend and I visited, and in a courteous manner endeavor to express their honest thought about religion. Their apathy would receive a rude awakening, and perhaps they would not be so ready afterwards to condemn the "mere puller-down."

H. PERCY WARD.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—*Apropos* of your remarks on Dr. Clifford's letter, I would like to mention an incident which occurred some years ago in the family of a friend of mine. His daughter attended a local school (not a Board school), and the story of Joseph was the religious subject for study. Each girl in the class was given a few verses to write out as a home lesson. An innocent inquiry made by my friend's child at home led to the discovery that her section included Genesis xxxviii. 9; and on inquiry at the school it transpired that the pupil teacher had carelessly apportioned the thirty-eighth chapter among two or three of the girls. The teacher was, of course, severely reprimanded for her thoughtlessness; but as this chapter is sandwiched in between two others relating to the story of Joseph—a narrative which is continually being put before children—it is to be feared that it does something to counteract the "lofty ethics" (!) of this "inspiring history."

CH. EDWARDS.

THE VOICE FROM OVER YONDER.

"DID she care as much as I did
When our paths of Fate divided?
Was the love, then, all onesided—
Did she understand or care?"
Slowly fall the moments leaden,
And the silence seems to deaden;
And a voice from over yonder answers sadly:
"I've been there."

"Have you tramped the streets of cities
Poor? And do you know what it is—
While no mortal cares or pities—
To have drifted past ambition;
To have sunk below despair?
Doomed to slave and stint and borrow;
Ever haunted in your sorrow
By the spectre of To-morrow?"
And the voice from over yonder answers sadly:
"I've been there."

"Surely in the wide Hereafter
There's a land of love and laughter?
Say: Is this life all we live for—
Say it! think it, if you dare!
Have you ever thought or wondered
Why the Man and God were sundered?
Do you think the Maker blundered?"
And the voice, in mocking accents, answered only:
"I've been there."

—*Sydney Bulletin.*

HENRY LAWSON.

THE INNOCENTS.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER—"Who was king after Saul?" Scholar—"David." S. S. T.—"Who followed David?" S.—"Solomon." S. S. T.—"And who came after Solomon?" Little Girl (out of turn)—"Oh, please, miss, I know." "Who, then, Dottie?" "The queen of Sheba."

The conversation among the older people was in relation to heaven, and some asked the little miss if she did not want to go to heaven when she died. The young girl turned, looked at her father, and said: "No; I don't want to go to heaven. I want to go where papa goes."

Nurse—"Good-bye, Freddy; I am going to church. Freddy (aged three-and-a-half years)—"Tell God I was a good boy." Nurse—"But I cannot; you were not a good boy." Freddy (after meditation)—"Well, fool him!"

"Mother, I wish I was God!" "Why, my dear?" "I would say, 'Let there be oranges,' and there *would* be oranges!"

The Evangelical Clergy.

In the face of physical science, of modern Biblical criticism, and of all the light which history and comparative mythology have of late years thrown on the genesis of religions, the old theory of verbal inspiration, the old methods of Biblical interpretation, and the old pre-scientific conception of a world governed by perpetual acts of supernatural interference, still hold their ground in the evangelical pulpit. The incursions of erudite science have been met by the barrier of an invincible prejudice—by the belief, sedulously inculcated from childhood, that what are termed orthodox opinions are essential to salvation, and that doubt, and every course of inquiry that leads to doubt, should be avoided as a crime. It is a belief which is not only fatal to habits of intellectual honesty and independence in those who accept it, but is also a serious obstacle in the path of those who do not. The knowledge that many about him will regard any deviation from the traditional cast of opinions as the greatest calamities and crimes seldom fails, according to the disposition of the inquirer, to drive him into hypocritical concealments, or into extreme and exaggerated bitterness.—*W. E. Lecky, "History of the Eighteenth Century," vol. ii., pp. 640, 641.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C Watts, "Christian Tactics Exposed."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): George Eliot's Birthday—Tea at 6, Speeches at 7 30, Dramatic Performance and Dance at 9. November 23, at 8.15, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Theosophy in its Bearings on Life." November 27, at 8 30, Concert and Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, C. Watts, "The School Board Fight: A Final Appeal"; 7, Musical selections; 7.30, E. Pack, "The Curse of the Cross."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road): 7.30, R. Forder, "The Gospel History: Is it True?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "The Value of Discussion"—opener, V. A. Cope; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Children's Fear of Hell and Hope of Heaven."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Heaven and Hell as Motives for Children."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, G. Standring, "A Freethinker's View of the Bible."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 11, Committee meeting; 7, W. J. Russell, "Comrade Jesus."

BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 3, Discussion Class—J. Keast, "Philosophy of Secularism."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, Stanley Jones, "What is Christianity?"

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—"The Bible and Witchcraft"; 6 30, P. McGivern, "Christianity and Secularism."

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trades' Societies' Hall, Northumberland-street): C. Cohen—11, "Why Should we Follow Jesus?" 3, "The Priest and the Child"; 6 45, "Christ and Democracy."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, F. H. Perry Coste, B.Sc., "The Christian Worship of Brute Force."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, "The Meaning of Anarchism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "Flowering and Flowerless Plants: A Study in Development." Lantern Views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Henry George: His Life and Work." Members' and friends' Social Dance, Wednesday evenings at 8.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Special meeting; important business.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—November 21, Huddersfield; 28 and 29, Birmingham; 30, Derby. December 3, Preston; 5, Bradford; 8, Blackburn; 19, Leicester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oreden-road, London, S.E.—November 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—November 28, a., Edmonton; e, Bradlaugh Club. December 12, Sheffield. January 30, Stanley.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, O.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

FOR SALE (Cheap) Books, Pamphlets, etc. Useful to Freethinkers. Also small Walnut Bookcase. Letter for particulars.—C. Chapman, 75 Mansfield-street, Kingsland-road.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 22, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 2s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s; painless by gas, 5s.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Ingersoll's Latest Popular Lectures.

About the Holy Bible. 6d.

The Foundation of Faith. 3d.

The Coming Civilization. 3d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

No. 4 NOW READY.

CONTENTS:—

The Judgment of Paris-up-to-Date. By LEIGHTON PAGAN.
Spiritual Love. By WILLIAM PLATT.
The Last Citadel of Authority. By ROBERT BRAITHWAITE
Sex Love and Mutability. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LOT 11. 21s. Carriage Paid.

1 Pair All-Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Bed Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 White or Colored Tablecloth.

OVERCOATS

For the Million at Keen Cutting Prices.

Well Cut, well Made, Lined with Check Wool Linings. MATERIAL SMART AND TOUGH.



Prices for Stock Sizes—25s., 30s., and 35s.
Prices to Measure—27s. 6d., 32s. 6d., and 37s. 6d.

STOCK SIZES.

Size ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Breast over Vest	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Length from Centre of Back to full length of sleeve ...	30	30½	31	32	32½	33	33½	34

Measurement Form for Overcoat Made to Measure.

	Inches
Length of Waist	
Full Length	
Half Width of Back	
Centre of Back to Elbow	
Centre of Back to Full Length of Sleeve	
Round Chest, close to armpits	
Round Waist	

Take breast measurement over Vest.

Materials for above include Irish Friezes, Grey, Fawn, or Heather; Meltons in Black, Navy, or Brown; Serges in Black, Navy, or Mixture; Tweeds, Checks, or Mixtures.

Patterns Post Free to any Address.

AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY TOWN.

Working Men can increase their earnings 10s. to 30s. per week.

NEW WINTER PATTERNS.

In all Classes of Ladies' and Gentlemen's Materials. Sent to any Address Post Free.

Ladies' Cosutmes to Measure 21s.

A splendid assortment of Patterns and Self-measurement form Post Free.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 48. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE BIBLE FOR CHILDREN.

OUR recent two articles on "The Bible in Board Schools" were written in full reply to a courteous letter we received from the Rev. Dr. John Clifford, one of the most vigorous leaders of the Congregational Church. Dr. Clifford's letter was occasioned by a former paragraph of ours, pointing out some of the unpleasant and nasty things that must meet a child's eye if an open, unexpurgated Bible is placed in his hands. We also said that the Nonconformists supported "the Compromise" in the Board schools because it served their turn, giving just as much Christianity to the children as was *politic* in existing circumstances. To this Dr. Clifford replied that the children are only introduced to "selections" from the Bible, and that these selections (according to the London School Board syllabus) offered fine poetry, lofty ethics, and inspiring history; also that the present School Board contest was not a struggle between Churchmen and Dissenters, but a fight between priestcraft and citizenhood. We answered this at considerable length and with much carefulness, going through the syllabus standard by standard, and showing its monstrous inadequacy from the point of view of history and ethics. Finally, we argued that the Bible was really not introduced in the schools as a book of history, a book of poetry, or a book of ethics, but as the sacred Scriptures of the Christian religion.

Without waiting to read our second article, Dr. Clifford has sent us a letter upon the first, and we gladly give it publicity. We do not shun discussion—we court it; feeling sure that, whoever loses, truth has everything to gain.

Dr. Clifford's letter is as follows:—

"*To the Editor of the 'Freethinker.'*

"SIR,—May I offer one or two remarks on your interesting article on 'The Bible in Board Schools'?

"First, I am glad to say the 'unexpurgated Bible' was the companion of my youth, and that in it I found my first lessons in reading, my first stimulus from history and biography, my first appreciation of the charms of English prose; and I must add that, so far as I know, no harm reached me from its contents. If I were to say what I owe to it—of enlightenment, of ethical stimulus, and altruistic inspiration—you would probably write me down 'a misguided enthusiast.' But I must say that it was not 'the questionable parts of the Bible' that fascinated me as a boy. Indeed, I have no recollection of making the acquaintance of the parts referred to before the period of youth was passed. Mr. Riley's estimate of children is not borne out by my observation or experience.

"Next, let me say, I have given my children an unexpurgated Bible, just as also I have introduced them to an 'unexpurgated' Shakespeare. I often wish I could persuade men to be as fair to the Bible as they are to Shakespeare; and I never ask for any other treatment for the Bible than what sincere students are prepared to give to Shakespeare, and, indeed, must give if they are to understand and enjoy him.

"In answer to your statement, that the 'co-operation of Jews, Agnostics, and Secularists' in the maintenance of the principle of using selections from the Bible in Board schools is impossible, I only have to say that the facts are against you. Such persons do co-operate.

"Permit me to urge your readers to vote for the Progressives on Thursday next, and so help forward the cause of a thoroughly efficient training for London's children.—I am, truly yours,

"Nov. 19, '97. "JOHN CLIFFORD."

No one can find any fault with the *tone* of this letter. Dr. Clifford is a courteous disputant, and we hope he will not deny us the same character. What we think of the *substance* of his letter will appear in the following rejoinder.

Dr. Clifford's second letter does not appear to harmonize with the first. At the outset he put it as a favorable point that Board School children were only introduced to "selections" of Scripture "suited to their age and capacity." "I should resist as strongly as yourself," he said, "the reading in our schools of the passages to which you refer." Now, however, he rejoices in having read the Bible, the whole Bible, the unexpurgated Bible, in the days of his childhood. The same unexpurgated Bible he places in the hands of his own children. Well, it is not placed in the hands of ours. There are crude, brutal, and disgusting passages in the Bible which we would not wittingly allow to pollute the minds of our little ones. We cannot help what they hear in the streets, or in other casual ways; but at least we can refrain from giving them dirt with the hand of parental authority. It is idle to say that this dirt is innocuous. Dr. Clifford cites his own experience, but we also spoke from knowledge. Here and there a child is extraordinarily incurious, but it is the average child we have to consider. We know what boys picked out from the Bible when we went to school, and boys must have changed very much if they don't do the same thing now. It is not necessary to regard them as little devils, on this account. We do not share Mr. Riley's ideas of human nature. But boys are boys, and the best of them have "a spice of the devil." It is the old inherited savagery of the race.

The great Bishop of the Goths would not translate the history of the wars of the Jews for his people, lest it should incense their sanguinary passions. Is it strange, then, that other parts of the Bible should be kept from the minds of children? Does not Dr. Clifford know—it has been admitted by Dr. Farrar—that some parts of the Bible are veiled by euphemistic translations. Were they translated literally—that is, honestly—expurgation would be indispensable, or every father would be obliged to keep the Bible under lock and key.

After all, if the unexpurgated Bible is such a blessing, why does Dr. Clifford go in for "selections" in Board Schools? Why not give the children there what he gives to his own children at home? Why does he "resist" the reading of the passages to which we refer? Ought one to give a child to read by himself what it would be a shame for him to read aloud? And is it in an "inspired" book that one should expect to find these difficulties?

Dr. Clifford's remarks about Shakespeare seem to us irrelevant. In the first place, there is no School Board fight over Shakespeare. No one proposes that a classic like the Bible shall not be printed accurately for adults; and we extend the same consideration to other classics. In the second place, Shakespeare is not claimed as an "inspired" author. His works are not authorized by law as a text-book of religion and morality. He stands (and *can* stand) upon his own merits. In the third place, Shakespeare is far from being as unclean as the Bible. He is wonderfully pure in comparison with nearly all his dramatic brethren of the great Elizabethan age. In the last place, Shakespeare *is* expurgated for school purposes. Very little expurgation is needed in his masterpieces, but where it is needed it is done. This is true even of the "Select Plays" so finely edited by Clark and Wright for the Clarendon Press, and intended for older students than those in elementary schools.

Digitized by Google

We venture to think that the Bible is not expurgated for school children (though such an edition is published by Cassell) because everybody would see what rents and chasms the process would make in the Word of God.

With regard to Dr. Clifford's statement, that Jews, Agnostics, and Secularists *are* working for the "Progressives," we know that he is right to a certain extent; indeed, we have already admitted it. Some men stick to their political party through thick and thin, others may choose what they think the less of two evils, and others are deceived by catch phrases and election shibboleths. But it is not true that the majority, or anything like the majority, of Jews, Agnostics, and Secularists are supporting the "Progressives." And the minority who are doing so now would gladly welcome the opportunity of voting for candidates who support Secular Education, wherever there was the smallest chance of making a tolerable impression on the electorate. We have no fear that Dr. Clifford's advice to our readers, even if it were in time, would make them swerve from allegiance to their convictions; and the fact that he gives it only shows that he has not thoroughly grasped the meaning of the issues in this educational struggle. Behind every other objection to the Bible as a text-book of morality lies the supreme objection that its sanctions are all supernatural. The object of the Secularist, at any rate, is to place morality upon a natural basis, guarded by natural sanctions, governed by natural principles, and animated by a natural inspiration. Between him and the Christian there can be no sincere or durable alliance. They are opposed at every point. And even if their battle is carried on without abuse and personalities, it must be fought out to the bitter end. One or the other must be defeated; one or the other must be victorious.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE BIBLE AND MODERN THOUGHT.

THE worst of slavery is that it unfits for freedom. Europe was so long chained by the authority of the Catholic Church that, even when the right of private judgment had been proclaimed, the Bible was preserved as an authoritative standard in all disputes, and was erected into an infallible oracle and fetish. It became, as Erasmus said, a veritable nose of wax, moulded to suit all idiosyncrasies. Some found therein salvation by faith, others salvation by works; some monarchy, others democracy, others theocracy. Some made it the charter of freedom; others, of authority. Any and every varied phase of faith could, by some dexterous twisting of texts, find sanction in "the Word of God." For, although each one, exercising his own judgment, came to a different conclusion, it was still agreed that the book, which had come down through the hands of a corrupt Church, was, nevertheless, wholly divine. But the assertion of Protestant freedom did some good. By dividing religionists, it made them less powerful for evil. It stimulated free inquiry in secular affairs, and this, in time, reacted on religion. It was the *renaissance* of pagan learning rather than the reformation of religion which led to progress. Astronomy extended the bounds of the universe beyond the conception of any Bible writer; geology proved a greater antiquity than Bible chronology allowed; biology taught that man was not created, but has evolved; the study of ancient nations and other faiths showed that Christianity was but one of many religions that have gathered up the devotions of men, and that both its ethics and its doctrines can be paralleled in faiths that are older, but not less lofty. In fine, a habit of investigation and criticism, known as the scientific spirit, was brought about, which only has to freely play on religion to dissolve it into its native elements of ignorance and credulity.

Under the influence of scientific criticism a school of compromise has arisen, well represented by the well-paid Farrar. It allows that the Bible has some errors, but it is still God's revelation. The immoralities and incredibilities of the Old Testament are given up, and those of the New glided over. The book is inspired everywhere in general, but nowhere in particular; and it is left to the fallible individual to pick out which is God's divine word, and which the interpolations and errors of the scribes. All sorts of tricks are adopted to get the new wine into the old bottles, that the bottles may remain in clerical custody. The secret is too apparent. It won't do. The fact is, the Bible was written in days of semi-barbarism, when people did not know what they know now. It was used when people were uneducated, as a means of keeping them in subjection. Once they are free, its pretences as a divine revelation will have to go, whether the sky-pilots like it or not. The fundamental dogmas founded on the book are false. The Fall of Man is a fable. The Redemption is a fiction. There is no more finality in Christianity than in Judaism. The belief in supernaturalism arose in ages of ignorance, and is discredited with the advance of knowledge. With supernaturalism eliminated from its pages, the old collection of not-easily-dateable documents would be like *Hamlet* with the character of the Prince of Denmark omitted.

What, then, remains? Why, the books themselves, with whatever literary and ethical value they possess. No one wishes to destroy them, but only to put aside the absurd reverence which has made their dicta a check upon every advance of human thought, and an appeal to their authority a sufficient excuse for suppressing every free development of the human spirit. There the books are, and anyone with eyes can see they represent various ages, and are of very various values. It is well to have the literature of an ancient people thus collected. The records of their earlier and more barbarous history, their semi-savage laws, their poetry, proverbs, and wild, prophetic aspirations, all are of worth as throwing light on human evolution. But to maintain them as God's word, to impose them upon the minds of little children as an authority which they dare not question, is a tyranny and an abomination against which Freethinkers do well to fight till every vestige of bibliolatry is destroyed.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE "FREEWILL" FALLACY.

IN my recent debates with the Rev. A. J. Waldron he charged Secularism with being immoral, because it was opposed to the theological teaching of man's responsibility and "freewill." He repeatedly urged that Secularists consider man to be an irresponsible being, a mere machine destitute of all freedom of volition, and therefore powerless to prefer good to evil. That this is a perversion of the Secular position everyone should know who is acquainted with our philosophy. Secularists most certainly admit man's responsibility, when that term is properly defined and understood. The question, however, is, To whom are we responsible? We cannot say to God, for with him we have no *known* relations. Besides, if he made us, we are not responsible for our nature; and, according to the New Testament, we are denied the right to complain. St. Paul says: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" (Romans ix. 20, 21). Secularism teaches that our responsibility is to man and to general society, inasmuch as from both of these we receive advantages, and therefore we hold it to be a duty to acknowledge such, and to render in return all possible service for benefits received, with a view of contributing to the welfare of the community.

In my pamphlet, *Morality without Religion*, I have written thus: "Virtue and vice are not mere accidents of the time, but are as much the consequence of the operation of natural laws as the falling of a stone or the growth of a flower." This appeared to trouble Mr. Waldron very much, for he would insist that my statement destroyed all distinctions between man and the stone or flower. But why I failed to see, as I informed him that in each case the act was the result of natural law. If not, I inquired, what other law controlled the acts? Further, I urged that the falling of a stone may be rendered subservient to human advantage by the proper application of the force displayed; but the whole is law, notwithstanding. Laws cannot be put aside, whether in the physical or the intellectual world; but they may be rightly directed in both. We do not, it is urged, call the falling of a stone "a vicious deed." No matter what we call it, we endeavor, as far as we can, to prevent it doing any mischief as it falls, and on the

Digitized by Google

same principle we adopt means to prevent human actions being so misdirected as to produce harm in society. The course of action that we take in the two cases will differ only in consequence of the difference in the law that is in operation, and the complication of the forces in the one case above those of the other. But in both instances we endeavor to make the forces of nature subservient to human benefit, and to prevent them from effecting mischief to society. Hence punishment can only act as one of the agents in the entire scheme. If we punish a man for a vicious act, and not a stone for falling, it is simply because this course of procedure is considered to have an advantageous effect in the one case, as a motive power or force, which it could not do in the other. To this explanation Mr. Waldron was silent.

The doctrine of "freewill," as taught by certain Churches, appears to me to be an absolute fallacy. It assumes a cause which is not an effect. But we know nothing of final causes. The truth of the matter, as it commends itself to my judgment, is this: The "will" is an effect as well as a cause. It certainly counts for something, indeed for much, in human actions; but then it has itself sprung from, and is conditioned by, organization, environment, and other causes which the individual is powerless to control. Man's motives do not arise from his volition; on the contrary, they govern the will. Man is free, of course, in a sense—that is, he is free to act in accordance with his desires; but these desires act independently of volition. And that is all the freedom that is possible, and it is all that any rational person should demand. No man wants freedom to do that which he has no inclination to do, or to act contrary to his desires. His freedom lies in his capacity to obey his impulses; but these impulses the "will" has no power to create. The "will" is not an originating cause, but itself an effect, the result of a complication of circumstances, such as external surroundings, the condition of the brain, temperament, age, sex, and heredity. To say that the "will" is free, in the sense that Armenians hold it to be, is to state that which is paradoxical. For, if a person has the power to call up a desire by the will, it is certain that some prior desire induced him to do so. What, therefore, caused that desire? Suppose one individual says he wills to do a thing, and he does it; he must have had an inclination, or he would not have thus willed and acted. Some inclination must, therefore, precede the "will," and, clearly, the "will" cannot be the cause of that which precedes itself in point of time, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence. All our thoughts are conditioned, and if the laws of cause and effect apply to man—which they certainly do—then free agency in matters of opinion is a misnomer. The term "will" I do not regard as an entity which enables us to accept or to reject any particular faith. If we choose wrongly, it is our judgment, and not our "will," which is at fault. Volition, I repeat, is a mental condition, depending for its manifestation upon such conditions as birth, climate, education, etc. Even Dr. McCann says: "I acknowledge that man is in some degree necessitated, but he is also in some degree free.....I acknowledge that man is in some degree necessitated by the circumstances of his birth, his surroundings, and his education" (*Debate with Mr. Bradlaugh*, p. 21). To this I assent; hence a man is free to accept one thing and to reject another, according to his volition, which has been formed by his moral perceptions, the result of his training. These are factors in his environment.

If it be immoral to reject the orthodox view of "freewill," then such professed Christians as St. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Jonathan Edwards, also the Churches of England and Scotland, and St. Paul, were and are immoral, for they all reject this "freewill" fallacy. In articles 10 and 17 of the Church of England it is said: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God—wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ, preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will. Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his councils, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind," etc. And in the "Confession of Faith" we read: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and some angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. .....As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto.....The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice" (chapter iii., sections 3, 4, 6, and 7.) St. Paul says of God: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Romans viii. 29, 30; see also ix. 23). It would be interesting to read Mr. Waldron's answer (which has not yet been given) to these extracts from Christian official sources.

It must not be understood that I regard St. Paul's notion of predestination as being analogous with the fact of philosophical necessity. The doctrine of Predestination assumes that men are born with a certain fate arranged for them by God, and that nothing can change their fixed destiny. Philosophical necessity, on the other hand, alleges that training and general environment will modify and change the proclivities born with the child. It may be that a thoroughly bad character will not be entirely transformed into a good one, but by careful discipline, and by the surroundings of superior conditions, the worst nature can be greatly improved. As Miss C. E. Plumptre aptly puts it: "A stinging-nettle will never be turned into a rose; but the fragrance and size of the rose depend much upon the soil it is in, and the amount of water and sunshine it receives." To my mind, it is the freewill doctrine that is immoral, for it offers a premium to indifference and delay. If "will" can be exercised at any time, repentance for wrong-doing, and the resolve to do right, can be postponed to the death-bed, when it will be too late to compensate society for wrong done towards it. Further, if I am "free" to act as I choose, is it not unjust to punish me for so acting? Besides, is not the very threat of punishment a factor tending to destroy freedom?

CHARLES WATTS.

INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

LIKE the most of you, I was raised among people who knew—who were certain. They did not reason or investigate. They had no doubts. They knew that they had the truth. In their creed there was no guess—no perhaps. They had a revelation from God. They knew the beginning of things. They knew that God commenced to create one Monday morning, four thousand and four years before Christ. They knew that in the eternity back of that morning he had done nothing. They knew that it took him six days to make the earth—all plants, all animals, all life, and all the globes that wheel in space. They knew exactly what he did each day, and when he rested. They knew the origin, the cause of evil, of all crime, of all disease and death.

They not only knew the beginning, but they knew the end. They knew that life had one path and one road. They knew that the path, grass-grown and narrow, filled with thorns and nettles, invested with vipers, wet with tears, stained by bleeding feet, led to heaven; and that the road, broad and smooth, bordered with fruits and flowers, filled with laughter and song, and all the happiness of human love, led straight to hell. They knew that God was doing his best to make you take the path, and that the devil used every art to keep you in the road.

They knew that there was a perpetual battle waged between the great powers of good and evil for the possession of human souls. They knew that many centuries ago God had left his throne and had been born a

Digitized by Google

babe into this poor world; that he had suffered death for the sake of man—for the sake of saving a few. They also knew that the human heart was utterly depraved, so that man by nature was in love with wrong, and hated God with all his might.

All who doubted or denied would be lost. To live a moral and honest life—to keep your contracts, to take care of wife and child—to make a happy home—to be a good citizen, a patriot, a just and thoughtful man—was simply a respectable way of going to hell.

God did not reward men for being honest, generous, and brave, but for the act of faith—without faith, all the so-called virtues were sins, and the men who practised these virtues, without faith, deserved to suffer eternal pain.

All of these comforting and reasonable things were taught by the ministers in their pulpits—by teachers in Sunday-schools, and by parents at home. The children were victims. They were assaulted in the cradle—in their mother's arms. Then, the schoolmaster carried on the war against their natural sense, and all the books they read were filled with the same impossible truths. The poor children were helpless. The atmosphere they breathed was filled with lies—lies that mingled with their blood.

In those days ministers depended on revivals to save souls and reform the world.

In the winter, navigation having closed, business was mostly suspended. There were no railways, and the only means of communication were wagons and boats. Generally the roads were so bad that the wagons were laid up with the boats. There were no operas, no theatres, no amusement except parties and balls. The parties were regarded as worldly, and the balls as wicked. For real and virtuous enjoyment the good people depended on revivals.

The sermons were mostly about the pains and agonies of hell, the joys and ecstasies of heaven, salvation by faith, and the efficacy of the atonement. The little churches in which the services were held were generally small, badly ventilated, and exceedingly warm. The emotional sermons, the sad singing, the hysterical amens, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, caused many to lose the little sense they had. They became substantially insane. In this condition they flocked to the "mourner's bench," asked for the prayers of the faithful, had strange feelings, prayed and wept, and thought they had been "born again." Then they would tell their experience—how wicked they had been, how evil had been their thoughts, their desires, and how good they had suddenly become.

They used to tell the story of an old woman who, in telling her experience, said: "Before I was converted—before I gave my heart to God—I used to lie and steal; but now, thanks to the grace and blood of Jesus Christ, I have quit 'em both, in a great measure."

Of course, all the people were not exactly of one mind. There were some scoffers, and now and then some man had sense enough to laugh at the threats of the priests and make a jest of hell. Some would tell of unbelievers who had lived and died in peace.

Well, while the cold weather lasted, while the snows fell, the revival went on; but when the winter was over, when the steamboat's whistle was heard, when business started again, most of the converts "backslid" and fell again into their old ways; but the next winter they were on hand, ready to be "born again." They formed a kind of stock company, playing the same parts every winter and backsliding every spring.

The ministers who preached at these revivals were in earnest. They were zealous and sincere. They were not philosophers. To them science was the name of a vague dread—a dangerous enemy. They did not know much, but they believed a great deal. To them hell was a burning reality. They could see the smoke and flames. The Devil was no myth. He was an actual person, a rival of God, an enemy of mankind. They thought that the important business of this life was to save your soul, that all should resist and scorn the pleasures of sense, and keep their eyes steadily fixed on the golden gate of the New Jerusalem. They were unbalanced, emotional, hysterical, bigoted, hateful, loving, and insane. They really believed the Bible to be the actual word of God, a book without mistake or contradiction. They called its cruelties justice, its absurdities mysteries, its miracles facts, and the idiotic passages were regarded as profoundly spiritual. They dwelt on the pangs, the regrets, the infinite agonies of the lost, and showed how easily they could be avoided, and how cheaply heaven could be obtained. They told their hearers to believe, to have faith, to give their hearts to God, their sins to Christ, who would bear their burdens and make their souls as white as snow.

All this the ministers really believed. They were absolutely certain. In their minds the Devil had tried in vain to sow the seeds of doubt.

I heard hundreds of these evangelical sermons, heard hundreds of the most fearful and vivid descriptions of the tortures inflicted in hell, of the horrible state of the lost. I supposed that what I heard was true, and yet I did not believe it. I said, "It is," and then I thought, "It cannot be."

These sermons made but faint impression on my mind. I was not convinced.

I had no desire to be "converted," did not want a "new heart," and had no wish to be "born again."

But I heard one sermon that touched my heart, that left its mark, like a scar, on my brain.

One Sunday I went with my brother to hear a Free Will Baptist preacher. He was a large man, dressed like a farmer; but he was an orator. He could paint a picture with words.

He took for his text the parable of "The Rich Man and Lazarus." He described Dives, the rich man, his manner of life, the excesses in which he indulged, his extravagance, his riotous nights, his purple and fine linen, his feasts, his wines, and his beautiful women.

Then he described Lazarus, his poverty, his rags and wretchedness, his poor body eaten by disease, the crusts and crumbs he devoured, the dogs that pitied him. He pictured his lonely life, his friendless death.

Then, changing his tone of pity to one of triumph, leaping from tears to the heights of exultation, from defeat to victory, he described the glorious company of angels who, with white and outspread wings, carried the soul of the despised pauper to Paradise—to the bosom of Abraham.

Then, changing his voice to one of scorn and loathing, he told of the rich man's death. He was in his palace, on his costly couch, the air heavy with perfume, the room filled with servants and physicians. His gold was worthless then. He could not buy another breath. He died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in a torment.

Then, assuming a dramatic attitude, putting his right hand to his ear, he whispered: "Hark! I hear the rich man's voice. What does he say? Hark! 'Father Abraham! Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my parched tongue. For I am tormented in this flame.'

"Oh, my hearers, he has been making that request for more than eighteen hundred years. And millions of ages hence that wail will cross the gulf that lies between the saved and lost, and still will be heard the cry, 'Father Abraham! Father Abraham! I pray thee send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my parched tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.'"

For the first time I understood the dogma of eternal pain—appreciated the "glad tidings of great joy." For the first time my imagination grasped the height and depth of the Christian horror. Then I said: "It is a lie, and I hate your religion. If it is true, I hate your God."

From that day I have had no fear, no doubt. For me on that day the flames of hell were quenched. From that day I have passionately hated every orthodox creed.

(To be continued.)

IN THE DEN OF THE CRITICAL LIONS.

(Concluded from page 741.)

WE may say at once that if Ecclesiastes were the cultured he is represented as being, then it were useless to attempt to extract any pantheistic essence out of the saying. But is he guilty—this dear, deceased, gentle, mournful, pessimistic anatomist of melancholy of ours? While there is undoubted reason for believing that his liver was out of order, the encouragement of idleness was as far removed from his intention as the encouragement of Atheism from Professor Harnack's. It is as well to remember in this connection that the division of the books of the Bible into chapters and verses is quite arbitrary. It was not

Digitized by Google

feature of the original literary form of the document, so that any obscurity or apparent violent tilting against common-sense notions may be attributable to the sudden interruption of the flow of thought, or sequence of ideas, involved in chopping the work up into chapters, and in a modified degree into verses. Bearing this in mind, the tenth chapter of Ecclesiastes becomes a continuation of the matter of the thought of chapter ix. We shall see how this last chapter bears on the matter in hand when a little further attention has been given to chapter x. If Ecclesiastes was recommending a lackadaisical abstention from stone-lifting and wood-chopping on account of their dangers, why does he in verse 10 say that wisdom is profitable to direct "when the iron weapon used is a blunt one"? If the thing is to be abstained from altogether, why this supererogatory advice? Verse 18 says: "By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." Could there be a more triumphant vindication of Ecclesiastes than these words? Can you build a house, or rehabilitate a collapsing one, without raising stones and cleaving wood? Does not this verse amount to a distinct injunction to raise stones and cleave wood? Why, of course it does. Oh, Dr. H. Lisco, why did you tempt Professor Harnack to eat of the fruit of your study of Ecclesiastes, when but for that he might still have been sunning himself in the Eden of an undimmed reputation for critical lucidity?

But what does this alleged work-shirking old sinner, Ecclesiastes, say in verses 9 and 10 of chapter ix.? Listen: "Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and *in thy labor* which thou takest under the sun." "*Whatsoever thy hand* findeth to do, do it *with thy might*; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Now let us "hear the conclusion of the whole matter" by turning to the thirteenth verse of the last chapter of this blessed book, which is: "Fear God and *keep his commandments*: for this is the whole duty of man." Is *this* the man who was advising working men to go in for a universal strike against work, and leave their wives and families to the tender mercies of the Jerusalem workhouse? Whatever your labor may be, do it with a light heart, and joyfully, is the advice offered by Ecclesiastes. Keep the Commandments, says he; and the third of those Commandments is: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." And we are asked to believe that the man who enjoined the working for six days of the week was at the same time advising men to do nothing the whole of the seven! Oh, Messrs. Harnack, Lisco, and Haweis, "perhaps you were right in dissembling your love; but why do you kick him downstairs?"

But if there ever had been the slightest vestige of a case for the interpretation of Harnack and the others, it would have been destroyed by the rendering of Ecclesiastes' words given by Dr. Lisco: "If he breaks stones, he shall be wounded of them; if he splits logs, he shall be in danger of them." Nothing about raising the stone and cleaving the wood here. No room for mysticism, but just a plain statement of facts which brings the scene of the flying fragments of stone and the splinters of the split logs vividly before the imagination. But if one wanted to put the mystical idea of Pantheism in concrete phrase, what could be more arresting than the Logion: "Raise the stone, and there you will find me; cleave the wood, and there am I"? Now, why is it that these unfortunate blunders in criticism have been made by Professor Harnack and other Christian critics of his ilk? This: Because the premises from which they outlook life are unsound and untrustworthy. They have embraced the belief in the historical existence of a Christ who comes into violent collision with the fundamental facts of human experience, and when they are confronted with a document or a tradition claiming authenticity, which is incompatible with their erroneous ideal, they mentally turn themselves inside out to effect a reconciliation. The men who lived, and the conditions which obtained, two thousand years ago were in their broad essentials the same as those of the present generation. There are men who are seized with an uncontrollable impulse to work for the good of the race to-day, as there were then. There were religious and philosophical speculation, and personification, and idealization, then as there are to-day; and the practice of putting formal literary conversations in the mouths of such personifications obtained then as it obtains now. People do not talk in ordinary life as they are made to do in books. And Jesus Christ, as he is presented to us, never had an historical existence; he was the hypostatized Logos of whom we read so much in connection with Philo and the Gnostics, and into whose imagined and capacious mouth you could put whatever you chose, so long, of course, as you did not violate the unity of the philosophical idea which it personified. This is the key to the situation, and it is for the want of this key that Professor Harnack has wounded Ecclesiastes in the house of his friends. The Book of Ecclesiastes is literature. It is laden with that sense of sadness which, as an element of beauty, as Poe says, is inseparable from every true work of literary art, and in reading it one is conscious of emotions cognate with those inspired by the works of the world's great literary masters, whose function it is to extract sunbeams from moral cucumbers. To judge this work of Ecclesiastes from the ferociously practical standpoint of the moral precisionist (even if there were any just ground for doing so) would constitute a literary outrage, and it is the commission of this outrage which Professor Harnack desires to father upon Jesus Christ. But this must be classed with the other hallucinations of the apologetic mind up to date.

BLOOMFIELD STEVENS.

RELIGION AND CHARACTER.

RELIGION degrades and debases character, because it ignores the natural and teaches the abnormal and unnatural. It teaches nonsense and despises sense. It turns its attention to an imaginary future life and mythical God, and ignores the facts of this life. It teaches dependence on God, and belittles manhood and self-reliance. It asserts that the natural is not sufficient to explain things, and then invents the unnatural and impossible, and calls on everybody to fall down and worship. It bases happiness on blind, unreasoning faith, and despises facts, science, and reason. It exalts something called the spirit or soul, of which we know nothing, and belittles the mind and body. It says to all, "Believe, or be damned." It teaches that a good, all-wise, all-powerful God creates us, knowing beforehand just what we will think and do. If we sin, it is because God wants us to, as he knew before he made us that he would, and he made us of his own freewill. It teaches that an all-powerful and all-good God allows the Devil to live to seduce and destroy our souls. In this respect the Church is not like God.

According to believers, God is all-powerful, and yet he allows the Devil to live. He creates souls that sin and cause others to sin. He has the power to stop this, but does not. He makes the good and the bad. He creates the dove and the rattlesnake. He causes the sun to shine on the just and the unjust. He does not prevent murder, outrage, or war. He does not silence the liar, the profaner, the blasphemer, or the Atheist. He apparently smiles on swindling and gambling. The Church does not do as it claims God does. It covets power, and when it obtains it, then the power is used to coerce people into observing religion, whether they believe it or not. In all these acts religion is a debaser of character. It weakens the mind by teaching a belief in God, hell, heaven, etc. A mind that has been weakened by such teaching is more apt to believe other lies than a mind that accepts nothing without reason. Religious teaching destroys self-respect and self-confidence. Its doctrine of damnation destroys and blunts human sympathy. That is the reason that most criminals are religious. That explains why preachers, as a class, are more immoral and have less character than any other class of men. Statistics of jails and prisons will prove this. Study them up, and you will see that I am right. More preachers are convicted of crime every year in proportion than any other class of men. The more orthodox furnish the largest numbers, and as they become more liberal, the crime rate decreases. Orthodoxy produces more criminals than heterodoxy; Theism more than Atheism.

I will now mention a few fairly well-known characters who were very pious. To begin with, Adam tried to lay all the blame on the woman, and religious people ever

Digitized by Google

since that time have followed his example. The common remark now is, "There is a woman in it." Lot was a drunkard and committed incest. Abraham was a liar and an adulterer. He turned his concubine and child out of doors to starve, and showed his willingness to become a murderer of his own son. Isaac was a liar and a foolish dissembler. Jacob was a trickster, a liar, a swindler, a fraud, and a polygamist. Reuben was more or less like his father. Judah was a chip from the same foul stump. Moses was a murderer, a bigamist, a thief, a planner of wholesale robbery, a slaughterer in cold blood of thousands of women and children, and he turned over thirty thousand virgins to the lusts of his brutal soldiers. He also married a negro. Samson was a murderer and a thief. David was like the rest, and in order to get another man's wife he had the man killed. God was so angry at this that he could not keep from giving punishment, but, instead of giving it to David, who was the guilty party, he smote the babe who was the product of David's lecherous acts. Absalom, Solomon, and their brother were more or less like their father David. Remember that these were the ancestors of Jesus. Can we expect good fruit from such a source? Peter was guilty of lying and treachery. Paul lied for the glory of God. Henry VIII. burned men and women at the stake and killed his wives. John Calvin was a tyrant and a murderer. This list could be carried out to great length, but space will not permit.

I wish that all readers of this article would read up the characters of the godly Bible women. If the women will do this, they will be the first to demand its removal from the schools, and instead of having it adorn the centre table they will keep it where the children cannot find it. Eve and Vashti were about the only decent characters. Study these characters, and see what a bad lot they were. Search the Scriptures.

The Freethinker studies nature. He loves truth. He says: Use your own minds and govern yourselves. He preaches self-reliance and self-esteem. He says: Be honest, kind, merciful, loving, upright, cheerful, and moral; not because of any future life of rewards, but because this is the ground-work of happiness here. Reason says that the best possible preparation for a future life, if there be one, is to live properly here. We preach the gospel of one world at a time. Our gospels are five in number. They are "good living," "cheerfulness," "intelligence," "justice," and "liberty." Get these cardinal points well in hand, and the battle against superstition is won. The religion of believe or be damned will vanish, and man will emerge from the slime of superstition and begin to perfect his character. G. S. LINCOLN.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

THE FUTILITY OF PRAYER.

(To the tune of "Vilikins and His Dinah.")

It's really no use for a fellow to pray;
For Jesus and Mary are both at the play,
And God and the Holy Ghost playing at bowls—
So all are too busy for saving of souls.

They've shut up the shutters, they've shut up the shop;
St. Paul and a cherub have gone on a hop.
St. Peter is drunk, and the dissolute mob
Are stealing a watch from his sanctity's fob.

St. Michael has ruddied an archangel's nose,
And Raphael has stripped off Ithuriel's hose;
The seraphs are singing a music-hall tune,
And the band-master's stopping his ears with the moon.

The prayers are all filed on a bit of bent wire
That once was a chord in Uraniel's lyre;
And many are torn, for the reprobate crew
Has used them for marking its winnings at loo.

It's really no use for a fellow to pray;
For Jesus and Mary are both at the play,
And God and the Holy Ghost playing at bowls—
So all are too busy for saving of souls.

W. W. S.

Priests may justly be regarded as an invention of a timorous and abject superstition, which, ever diffident of itself, dares not offer up its own devotions, but ignorantly thinks to recommend itself to the Divinity by the mediation of his supposed friends and servants.—*David Hume.*

ACID DROPS.

DR. GUINNESS ROGERS, speaking on behalf of the "Progressive" candidate for the School Board at Battersea, stated that "he had been fighting against priestcraft all his life, and by God's grace would do so not only in the present election, but to the end of his days." This statement elicited loud cheers—which shows how easily the public are gulled. Dr. Rogers fights against one form of priestcraft—namely, that of the Church of England. But he fights for another form of priestcraft—namely, that of his own Nonconformity. We have often asked these Dissenters to answer a simple question. What is the real difference between established religion in State churches and established religion in State schools? We invite Dr. Rogers, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Price Hughes, and all the rest of the Nonconformist fraternity, to give an honest reply.

The Roman Catholic candidate for the Birmingham School Board came in at the top of the poll. The Liberal eight were all returned, but the Trades Council lost their one member on the old Board by running two candidates. We regret this, as the member in question supported Secular Education.

Mr. W. Mansfield, a member of the Orpington School Board, says that the parson-advocated "Orpington Scheme" became ridiculous in its native place. By sending circulars to selected parents the vicar got a number to ask that their children should have religious instruction from their own clergyman. This was allowed. But the highest number he ever got was eighteen, and this soon dwindled to five, and the scheme collapsed.

At a meeting of the Aberdeen School Board the Rev. Alex. Webster, Unitarian, chairman, submitted a motion that a committee be asked to consider the propriety of recommending the use of the Revised Version of the New Testament in Board schools for religious instruction. In the course of a speech in support of his motion, Mr. Webster remarked that much had been said about the manners and morals of young Aberdeen, but there could be no difficulty in attributing the excessive profanity indulged in by boys and girls to the fact that the Authorized Version of the Scriptures was in use in schools, containing as it did frequent repetition of such words as "damnation," "hell," and "Devil." The motion was defeated by twelve votes to three.

A correspondent (the *Daily News* says) sends us a still further example of those terribly Godless Church schools: Teacher—"Now, boys, who was Absalom?" Boy—"The son of David, sir." Teacher—"Can you tell me anything about him?" Boy—"Yes, sir; he wore long hair." Teacher—"Come, come; can't you tell me anything else?" Boy—"Yes, sir; he was a very bad and wicked son, and caused great worry and trouble to his father." Teacher—"Quite right. Now, can you tell me anything very special that David said to him, to turn him from his wicked ways?" Boy—"Yes, sir; he said, 'Get your hair cut.'"

Another child was asked, "Who came after David?" "Solomon," he said. "And who came after Solomon?" No answer. "I know, sir," said a little girl. "Who was it, then?" "Please, sir, the Queen of Sheba."

The Free Churches (heaven save the mark!) are making a fresh appeal on behalf of Sunday closing, in which they refer to "the awful mischiefs arising from the Sunday trade in intoxicating drink." Considering that public-houses are already closed all Sunday morning, and most of the afternoon, besides being open for a shorter time than ordinary in the evening, such language is nothing but hypocritical nonsense. Those who want to stop the liquor traffic altogether have a definite principle, but those who want to stop it on Sunday are mere Sabbatarians.

The Free Church appealers talk about "the observance of the Lord's Day" as "one of the glories of our land." We say it is one of the dishonors of our land. The dull, stupid English Sunday is the chief cause of the brutalization of our lower classes, as it is the chief cause of the stupefaction of our middle classes. The upper classes keep Sunday in a freer and easier fashion, yet they think any restrictions are quite proper for the multitude.

What a lovely world this would be if the preachers could run it according to their will. All the week would be employed to get ready for Sunday, and everybody would go to church to hear what the clergy have to tell about Gaud and his purposes. This would be so much better for them than bicycling, or visiting libraries, museums, and art galleries, that who can wonder at the Lord's Day Rest Association appealing to all the truly religious to stop the growing profanation of the Lord's Day.

Digitized by Google

Bobadil Wilhelm expounded to his army at Berlin the whole duty of man: "Whoever is not a good Christian is not a good man, nor is he a good Prussian soldier." Wilhelm the Little forgot he numbered among his ancestry one known to history as Frederick the Great. Much mud must have mingled in the line of that veritable descent. But note the ascending scale of the Emperor's dictum. Be a good Christian first, then may you have a chance of becoming that superlative of excellence, a good Prussian soldier. How other?

The question of teaching Scripture in State schools is only half-discussed, while the rights of the teacher are ignored—as in that respect they usually are. Alongside the argument as to the injury which may be done to the child-mind, by forcing or inducing it to listen to erroneous or inefficient explanations, runs the argument that it is unfair to place a teacher where his conscience will be strained to state as an explanation what his own intelligence rejects.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Rev. Rouse, orating at the Baptist Annual Assembly in Sydney, asserted that, as the Hindu woman who becomes a Baptist is thereby cut off from her family, it is doubtful whether, in these circumstances, the converts should be baptized at all. In other words, the alleged divine necessity of baptism to salvation is a patent-raversible contrivance, as all such dogmas are. A dogma must either reverse on occasions—or bust.

In bygone years, when saintly men
Desired to change the sinners' lives,
They roped them up in public; then
They split their ears with holy knives.
That custom old with us remains,
For when the pious man appears
To drive into unwilling brains
His theories grim—he splits our ears.

We see an announcement that at the West London Theatre the author of *Thy Devil shall be My Devil* will discourse on "The Suicide of a Soul." The names of soloists, duettists, organist, and choir conductor are given. And yet some people prefer to pay to go to the theatre on week-days.

The *Daily News* of Nov. 20 gave the translation of the alleged official report of Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius, on the trial and conviction of Jesus Christ, just produced, for some good reason, from the Archives of the Vatican. In a leader on the subject it says that it has no sign of authenticity, and does not, if the English translation be correct, strike one as even a clever forgery.

The document begins with an absurdity. Pilate says: "I am astonished at the sensation created in Rome by the trial of Jesus Christ." Well he might be had it been true. But what reason is there to suppose that the events alleged in the Gospels did disturb the minds of the authorities at Rome? The tone is modern throughout, and only a modern Roman would make an ancient Roman governor say, as this document does: "After every effort to save the man from the clamors of the crowd, I was forced to submit, and in deference to their religious ideas I condemned him, while at the same time I declined all responsibility, saying it was nothing in which the Government had any part, and the man was sacrificed to the religious principles of the people." Such a confession of incapacity would have meant Pilate's instant recall.

This document betrays itself by merely going over the ground of the Gospel story. It has no more claim to be considered historical evidence than Tennyson's *Idyls of the King* to be a real account of Arthur and his Court. The *Daily News* believes in the Gospel history, which we do not, but it says: "Pilate behaved with miserable weakness, and committed a judicial murder of the most infamous kind. But he would not have addressed the Emperor in a style of didactic criticism upon Liberalism, Conservatism, and Social Democracy. Nor is it conceivable that this document should have been kept for ages at the Vatican without the existence of such a priceless treasure being known."

The new newly-discovered letter has, then, even less claim to being an authentic document than the *Acta Pilati*, the Gospel of Nicodemus, the letter of Publius Lentulus, and the other fraudulent works with which the great Christian Corporation has sought to bolster up its fictions.

The *Chronicle*, too, plucked up courage enough to call the alleged newly-discovered letter from Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius a foolish forgery, and the *Westminster Gazette* says ditto. This latest Vatican discovery is not nearly so clever as the old forgeries. What could be more absurd than to make Pontius Pilate talk about Conservatives and Liberals and Socialist agitators? Evidently the composition is quite recent, perhaps not three months old. No doubt it is a kind of "Kite" from the famous ecclesiastical forging-house of Rome.

The Rev. Madison C. Peters pronounces the bicycle to be the chief agent of the Devil in wrecking the Church. "Why is the house of God forsaken?" (Neh. ii. 13) was his text, and he answered the question by saying that Sunday bicycling was doing the business. Mr. Peters can't change the day on which he carries on his preaching business, or he evidently would do so; for, as he found that most of those who were ceasing to attend his Wednesday evening prayer-meeting alleged as an excuse that that day was the chief one for social functions, he announced that in future his prayer-meeting would be held on Friday evening. Then he denounced those "who about nine o'clock on Sunday morning began to be afflicted with a headache that usually lasted until nine o'clock at night." These people, he said, took no pride in their church or their God!

The Lord sent hornets among the Canaanites, and last Sunday he sent bees into the parish church of Bishopstone, Wilts. They made it expedient for the worshippers first to change their seats, and finally to stampede. The vicar, the Rev. Herbert Ault, was stung, and had to retreat from the pulpit; and the service was brought to an abrupt conclusion. These bees may give some people an excuse for staying away from church for the rest of their lives.

The Dean of Norwich says that recently an American called upon him, and, pointing to the Cathedral, asked him how much he would take for "the whole blessed concern." But the Dean was above temptation, and did not try to dispose of the national property. All honor to him!

According to Lord George Hamilton, the triple visitation of famine, plague, and earthquake in India, combined with the victories of the Turks over the Greeks, have roused Moslem and Hindu fanaticism. A writer in the *Madras Review* contends that the Government plan of non-interference makes both sects think themselves within their rights when outraging feelings, whether by Moslems killing cows near Hindu temples, or Hindus carrying their gods past Moslem mosques. The law punishes for only breaches of the peace, and often has to punish both sides. The Salvation Army has stimulated the use of religious processions, and every sect claims the right to the highway with as much pomp, finery, and foolery as it can flaunt.

At an inquest on a suicide at Elland, the jury in a body objected to kissing the Bible provided, on the ground of fear of microbes. The coroner said: "You can kiss the inside; take a nice chapter." But the foreman asked to affirm. The coroner boggled, and said he would inquire whether the Scotch oath was allowable. He ought to know that it is, and that he has not to inquire into the reasons why the claim for affirmation is made.

Among the Bible-believing Puritans of New England the belief in witchcraft seems to be not yet extinct. They hold with John Wesley that the giving up of witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible. A sect in Lyme, Connecticut, is known as the Holiness Band; or, vulgarly, the Holy Ghosters. They recently nearly knocked a poor old woman to death, and a half-a-dozen prominent citizens have been arrested for so doing. They said they were trying to drive the Devil out of her.

Canon Bardsley, at a meeting of the S. P. G., at the Parochial Hall, Huddersfield, quoted the following verse:—

The heathen perish day by day,
Thousands and thousands pass away;
Oh, Christians, to the rescue fly,
Preach Jesus to them ere they die.

Just fancy the Divine Father letting his heathen children perish for want of hearing of his illegitimate son. Thousands must be going to hell headlong who never had a chance of hearing of him. The Canon funks this, and says they will be judged by the light of nature, so he urges subscriptions to missions to give them a better chance of damnation by rejecting the blessed gospel, for they do reject it. The light of nature tells them that children without fathers are in no way supernatural. The really divine ones have no mothers.

Jezreel White, of the Latter House of Israel, who built an asylum for 144,000 idiots prepared to meet the Lord at Gillingham, is to be outdone in America by W. S. Densickr, the latest prophet, who locates at Lebanon. Densickr has had a revelation from the Redeemer to build him a temple of pure gold, twelve miles square and sixty thousand feet high, as a start for the New Jerusalem. Densickr works the snowball racket that has brought so much grist to cadgers on the evangelical lay.

This worthy is like the pious Jabez Balfour—a Napoleon

Digitized by Google

of finance. He is working what he calls a "church chain"—all for Christ. He writes a letter asking you to contribute five cents to the cause, and thereby obtain the blessing of God. He requests also that you send an exact copy of his letter to three of your friends whom you deem most likely to invest their small change in heavenly grace. The "chain" of letters runs from 1 to 100, and a gentleman who was "touched" figures it out that the 25th number means more than 282 billion letters, and more than 21 billions of money, if every sucker bites at the bait. If the "chain" doesn't break before the 100th number is played out, it will corral all the wealth of this world. Mr. Densickr hath a great head. No wonder Jesus Christ has made him Lord High Treasurer of the New Jerusalem. Baxter will have to look to his laurels.

One of New York's orthodox ministers lately gave notice that he would preach a sermon entitled "Hell is Wide Open." The notice added in letters of equal prominence, "All are Welcome."

Three hundred clergymen applied not long ago for one vacant chaplaincy in the army. There were never so many ministers out of a job as at present, and the religious papers publish numerous advertisements of preachers who are willing to work for low wages.—*Truthseeker.*

Onset Bay, Massachusetts, is a colony of Spiritists and Theosophists. Some one lodged odious charges against H. B. Foulke, one of the claimants to Blavatsky's smirched mantle. Thereupon Mme. Diss de Bar, once a medium and now a Theosophist, lodged information with the authorities at Onset Bay, the Theosophical headquarters, that has led to the granting of warrants for the arrest of thirty-five men charged with immoral conduct. The proceeding indicates that Onset Bay has some of the local features which distinguished the ancient cities of the plain.

The Rev. Philip S. Gibson, pastor of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, at Plainfield, New Jersey, was arrested on a complaint made by the overseer of the poor, to whom his accuser, Miss Lucy Swain, had made an appeal a short time previously. The young woman stated that up to the previous week the reverend gentleman had written several letters to her in which he implicates himself.

The Rev. J. E. U. Cook, pastor of the Baptist Church at Newmarket, O., has been found guilty of unministerial conduct, having been charged by a young woman with having committed assaults upon her on three occasions; and he has been dismissed from his pastorate.

The Rev. T. N. Raymond James, rector of Luckington, is a worthy disciple of the Lord. He sued a poor woman, who was in receipt of parish relief, for a guinea, as his fee for her having put a single stone on her mother's grave. The poor woman was deaf and dumb, and had paid no attention to the man of God's demand. The magistrate at Malmesbury County Court made an order for defendant to pay 1s. 6d. a month. Several persons who were in the court handed her money to meet the instalments, which, it is to be hoped, the worthy rector will profit by.

The Rev. J. Slattery and the Rev. J. Connellan, two converted Roman Catholics, have raised considerable commotion by lecturing against their former faith. Mrs. Slattery, too, who is said to be an escaped nun, lectures to women only. At Manchester one of their meetings, which was to have taken place in the Christian Association Hall, was prohibited by the police, who declared it would be the occasion of riot.

The eccentric Rev. John Robertson, who seceded from the Gorbals Free Church, Glasgow, and started the City Temple there with a Baptist tank, has intimated his retirement to America, where he will enter on a revivalist career.

The Pope is not satisfied with the Laurier Compromise in Canada, and exhorts the faithful not to use the public schools, but to support their own separate school system when the State refuses to assist.

Paul said that women should be covered in church because of the angels, who, it is well known, came down to see that the daughters of men were fair. In America, however, there is a movement to make the ladies take off their bonnets in church as well as in theatres. Some men having complained to the Rev. Dr. Carroll, of the Hough-avenue Congregational Church, New York, that they could not enjoy his sermons because they could not see his face for the ladies' hats, he issued a request for ladies to be in future uncovered.

They have abundance of poverty, especially among the Catholic population of New York, yet they are spending an enormous sum of money on the new Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, which will enclose an exact reproduction of every detail of the miraculous grotto. The New York *Herald* says: "Here all will be represented; from the frowning rocks surrounding the grotto to the life-sized statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, standing to the right a little above the floor of the cave, in a deeper recess, where, according to the story, the Virgin stood and announced to the child, 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' Above the statue will appear these words in the language in which they are said to have been spoken: '*Je suis l'Immacule Concepcion.*'"

We gather from a Spiritist contemporary that spirits appear in clothes by the power of their wills, because they desire a covering for their nudity. Sometimes they are clothed, and at the same time not conscious; then they take on automatically the clothes they were used to wearing in earth life—soldiers in red, and sailors in blue. The idea of a ghost of a coalscuttle bonnet and a crinoline may astonish you at first, but you get used to it, like eels to skinning.

From a missionary in Basutoland Mr. Bryce had an amusing anecdote. A Basuto had returned to his native country from the diamond mines. He described to the missionary his experiences there. On one occasion his eye had fallen on a valuable diamond in the clay he was breaking into fragments. While he was endeavoring to pick it up, he perceived the overseer approaching, and, having it by this time in his hand, was for a moment terribly frightened, the punishment for theft being very severe. The overseer, however, passed on. "And then," said the Basuto, "I knew that there was indeed a God, for he had preserved me." Such are the consolations of religion to a successful thief!—*Daily News.*

Our pious Lord High Chancellor says that "there are from forty to forty-five thousand Jews at this moment in Jerusalem, the whole population being about sixty thousand, so that about two-thirds of Jerusalem was now Jewish, and the far greater mass of the Jewish population were what might be called paupers. What their occupations were, and how they lived, he had endeavored to ascertain; but he believed it was as great a mystery to those familiar with Palestine as it was to him."

A writer on "Christian Unity" in the Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen* acutely points out that the modern position on the Bible leads to each emphasizing as the divine portions those which most accord with his own personal tastes and aspirations. He adds: "Until the supernatural elements in the conception of Christ are reduced to an unimportant minimum, or eliminated altogether, the idea of re-union of the sects of Christendom is little more than a vain dream."

From time to time the *Crescent*, of Liverpool, reports conversions from Christianity to the faith of Islam. Is there a single instance of a Moslem in England being converted to the belief that Mary's son was God?

Dr. G. M. Fortune, who has resigned his position as a Baptist pastor, at Paris, Texas, asks: "Who are in control of the vast body of Baptists in Texas to-day? You know it is that portion of the people who have made the least progress in moral development, and who have religiously abstained from eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. They have governed with the iron hand of the zealot, and dictated the thought of their fellows with the confidence of infallible knowledge. To consort with them is to surrender your manhood to the dictates of blindness, and concede the soundness of a system whose forms of belief cover, but do not conceal, a multitude of moral obliquities."

The Rev. Father F. M. Wyndam returns in the *Weekly Register* to the charge that Freemasonry is "seriously bent on destroying every form of religion, be it Christian or non-Christian." He holds that the French and Italian Masons have worked out the logical consequence of Masonic doctrines.

The *Church Times* will not have it that Board School religion is distinctively Christian. It says: "If any Christian man were asked to state in what primary doctrine the Christian religion differs from every other, he would unhesitatingly name the belief that our Lord is Very God of Very God. Many religions teach some of the moral and religious precepts inculcated by the gospel, but not one of those other religions acknowledges the doctrine of Christ's Godhead."

Reconcile the various counter claims of thought and passion, adjust your desires to the inevitable conditions of your lot, cultivate some genial occupation, cherish a disinterested affection for your race, a sublime enthusiasm in contemplation of the universe; and you shall find no hour in life without a glad inspiration, no spot on earth an unwelcome solitude.—*W. R. Alger.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 28, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester; at 11, "The Philosophy of Hamlet"; at 6.30, "God and the Devil."

December 5 and 12, Athenæum Hall.

January 2, Birmingham; 9, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—November 28, Athenæum Hall, London. December 5, Manchester; 12, Camberwell.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

T. SEARLE (Devonport).—We have never heard the allegation of your kind, Christian friend, that Richard Carlile had been three times in a lunatic asylum; and we do not believe it. Possibly he means in gaol for his opinions. As for Voltaire causing loss of life by his writings, your friend should read them. Voltaire wrote against war, violence, and torture, when these instruments of tyranny were sanctioned and instigated by the priests.

C. WRIGHT notices that, while the figures from *The Coming Day* give the number of Jews at eight millions, their own year-book gives it at thirteen millions.

V. TEJEDOR.—The address of *Las Dominicales* is 104 Calle Claudia Coello, Madrid; of *La Conciencia Libre*, 25 Calle de Emban, Valencia.

MAGNIFICENT.—Mr. Foote replied to Miss Weston's tract several years ago.

W. TURNER.—Robert Browning's poems have for some time been published in a handy two-volume edition. Mrs. Browning's poems are just published in one volume at 7s. 6d.

MOST of the correspondence stands over till next week, owing to Mr. Foote's being occupied in South Wales.

R. JOHNSON.—Mr. M. D. Conway is now settled permanently, we believe, in America, residing at present in New York. His *Life of Thomas Paine* is certainly an excellent piece of work. We only regret that its high price makes it inaccessible to the general Freethought public.

C. H. CATTELL.—Being overset, we have had to condense your well-written letter on the Birmingham Election. See "Sugar Plums."

F. H. PERRY-COSTE, 13 Fernshaw-road, Chelsea, S.W.—Your address comes too late for the list of Freethought lecturers in the *Secular Almanack*. We gladly give it here.

SNELL.—Canon Taylor's article on "The Great Missionary Failure" appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1888.

F. WOOD.—The extract originally appeared in the *Daily News*, and was copied without acknowledgment by the *Evening News*.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

THE HOOPER FUND.—Mr Thomas Bellamy acknowledges:—Mr. McLean (per C. Watts), 5s.; T. W. G., 1s.; M. Bywater, 1s.; H. Lyon, 1s.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Mr. R. Forder acknowledges:—W. H. Wood, 10s. 6d.; J. Barry, 2s. (should have been 5s. instead of 3s. in last acknowledgment). Per C. Burgess, Rangoon, 7s.

W. BRADBURN.—Cuttings, etc., welcome.

D. MACKINNON.—*Faith and Fact* is published at 28 Lafayette-place, New York. George Eliot's translation of Strauss's *Life of Jesus* is now out of print.

E. H.—(1) Certainly the twelve labors of Hercules are mythical, though many heroic men may have contributed to the formation of the myths. (2) *J. S. Mill*, a criticism by Professor Bain, gives the best account of his life apart from his own autobiography. (3) R. D. Owen's *Moral Physiology* is on the population question, and still can be obtained from Mr. Truelove.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Two Worlds—Fria Tankar—Progressive Thinker—Las Dominicales—Watford Leader—Independent Pulpit—La Conciencia Libre—Open Court—The Adult—Clarion—Daily Mail—Isle of Man Times—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker—Chester Chronicle—Liberator—Glasgow Herald—New York Herald—New York Public Opinion—Torch of Reason—Echo—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Mind—Chatham Observer—Pacific Theosophist—Crescent—Aberdeen Journal—Oxford Times—New Century—Barnet Press.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

SPECIAL efforts were made by the religious bodies to spoil Mr. Foote's meetings at Porth on Sunday. The faithful were warned against hearing the "infidel," and prayers were offered up to the Lord against his success. But they were not exactly efficacious. The morning attendance was moderate, but there were good audiences afternoon and evening, and the lectures were followed with gratifying interest and appreciation. Ample opportunity was given for questions, but the few that were put were not very important. The chair was occupied in the morning by Mr. Martin, the Pontypridd Branch secretary; and in the afternoon by Mr. Cox, whose Freethought lectures have caused a good deal of stir in the district. Mr. Foote was much pleased to make Mr. Cox's acquaintance. He is tall, well-built, handsome, and a good speaker. Unfortunately, he has suffered in business from the boycott consequent on his bold avowal of Secularism.

On Monday evening Mr. Foote lectured at Pontypridd. He debated at the same place on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings with Mr. W. T. Lee. A further notice of these meetings will appear in our next issue from Mr. Foote's own pen, among "Notes on Freethought in South Wales."

To-day (Nov. 28) Mr. Foote delivers two lectures, morning and evening, in the Secular Hall, Leicester. His subjects are varied and interesting. In the morning he discourses on "The Philosophy of Hamlet," and in the evening on "God and the Devil."

Last Sunday morning Mr. Charles Watts gave a free lecture in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, on behalf of the local branch of the N. S. S. His subject was "The Board School Fight." There was a good audience, and the applause was most hearty throughout.

In the evening Mr. Charles Watts gave his new lecture, "The Tactics of Christians Exposed," to an enthusiastic audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. Mr. Thomas, of the North London Branch of the N. S. S., made an excellent chairman.

On Wednesday Mr. Watts addressed a crowded meeting at the Camberwell Baths in favor of the candidature of Mr. Quelch, who stood for East Lambeth in the School Board Election. Mr. Quelch advocates Secular education, and is opposed to the Bible being introduced into our public schools.

This Sunday evening, November 28, Mr. Watts again occupies the platform at the Athenæum Hall, taking for his subject "Can God Do Wrong?" This will be another new lecture, dealing with the oft-repeated statement of the Christians, that "the Supreme Ruler of the Universe must be just and do right."

Last Thursday week Mr. Watts gave the Wood Green Branch of the N. S. S. a free lecture. This being the first of a week-night course of lectures, the audience was not large, but it was exceedingly appreciative. The veteran Freethinker, Mr. E. Truelove, was present. There was no debate.

At Birmingham the Church party were completely roused. The Bishop of Coventry got elected, but three of his nominees got left in the cold. The Liberal Education Eight, which consisted of five Unitarians and three other Nonconformists, were all elected.

The local branch of the N. S. S. supported the two Labor candidates, who declared themselves in favor of a purely Secular Education, and the members of the committee worked hard for their success. Unfortunately, they did not get returned, although their joint votes reached a total of 33,353, only 227 less than the number polled by the Bishop himself in the division he contested, the total number of votes for the seven Church candidates being only 203,487. Had all the Labor and Secular votes been given to one candidate, he would have been placed fourth on the poll.

In London the Moderates and Clericals have let "I dare not wait upon I would"; and while the Church papers, and the *Times* and *St. James's Gazette*, have sniffed at Mr. Diggle and recommended the candidates of the Voluntary Schools' Defence Union, most of the Conservative journals have recommended Mr. Diggle as a safer leader than Mr. Evelyn Cecil, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* has gone over to the Compromise. We go to press before the elections begin, but expect to record a Progressive majority, with a strong increase of the Socialist vote, made up by those who see the one solution is Secular Education.

Mr. Joseph Symes says in the *Liberator*: "When the

Digitized by Google

time comes for the real history of the Newman brothers to be written, it will be openly and generally acknowledged that the one just dead did his best to urge on the course of thought, truth, and liberty; and that his Popish brother expended his best powers to roll back that course, and to lead or drive the world back into the unutterable darkness of the Middle Ages. One can hardly believe that John Henry ever felt happy in his Popish slavery, although he voluntarily put on the shackles. He had to blind himself to many a fact in history in order to swallow the Popish lie; and one may feel sure he never digested it. On the other hand, Francis William, like his brother, grew out of his earlier superstition: but he had the sense and the self-respect not to adopt any other, and especially not to adopt an infinitely worse one."

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XIII.—The Gift of the Holy Ghost.

One of the matters which tend to show that the accounts given by Matthew and Luke of the supernatural birth of Christ are later additions to the Gospels, is the story of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan. This story, as we have seen, was in the Gospel of the Hebrews, and it is also one of the incidents recorded by all four evangelists.

According to Luke (iii. 21, 22), "Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Some of the early Christians believed that Jesus was a mere man, the Son of Joseph and Mary, and that at his baptism a spirit, or æon, called Christ, descended upon him, and gave him wisdom and power to work miracles. It was only *then* that God adopted him as his "Son." This view is confirmed by the announcement of the voice in the Hebrew Gospel: "Thou art my son; *this day* have I begotten thee." It is obvious that, had Jesus been a divine personage begotten by the Holy Ghost, as related in the two Gospel accounts of his miraculous birth, the descent upon him, later on, of an emanation from that Holy Ghost would not have been needed. Hence Marcion, who believed Jesus to be a heavenly being, had no dove-and-voice story in his Gospel.

In one matter, however, all the Gospels are agreed—viz., that Jesus, whether God or man, was filled with a holy "Spirit" which came from God, and, in consequence, that he "spake as never man spake." This being the case, it was but natural that Christ, before leaving the world, should give a portion of this sacred "spirit" or "wind" to his disciples. And here it may not be out of place to point out that the word translated "spirit" *(pneuma)* means primarily "air" or "wind," though it is also used to denote breath, respiration, animating spirit, and a spiritual being. The following is an example from John iii. 8: "The *wind* bloweth where it listeth.....so is everyone that is born of the *Spirit*." The original in both cases is *pneuma*—without a capital letter.

We find from the Fourth Gospel that Christ promised to fill his disciples with a Holy Wind, which, when they had been properly inflated with it, would cause them to remember all the things he had said to them during his ministry. Here are two of these promises:—

> "But the Helper, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, *he shall teach you all things*, and *bring to your remembrance* all that I have said unto you" (xiv. 26). "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he shall guide you* into all the truth" (xvi. 13).

Here is clearly set forth the doctrine of inspiration, as well as the effect to be produced by the Holy Wind, which in one of the passages is misnamed "the Spirit of truth." This air or spirit was to recall to the disciples all they had heard Jesus say during the time they were with him; it was also to "teach them all things," and to guide them "into all the truth." As a matter of fact, this divine afflatus did none of these things. Our examination of the Gospel narratives has proved conclusively that the evangelists, if guided by any "spirit" at all, were directed by what one of the Old Testament writers calls a "lying spirit," and so far from the Gospel writers knowing "all things," or even having some small knowledge of "the truth," they were far more ignorant and credulous than their Pagan contemporaries. This precious "Spirit"—to take but one example—did not bring to Matthew's remembrance the long discourses put in the mouth of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel; neither did it recall to the memory of the author of the latter Gospel the three chapters of sayings which Christ, according to Matthew, delivered upon an unnamed Mountain.

We have two accounts of the giving of this promised "Spirit" to the apostles—one by the author of the Fourth Gospel, the other by the compiler of the Acts of the Apostles. These accounts are quite independent of each other, and, as a consequence, they contradict each other in every particular.

The Fourth evangelist describes this "inspiriting" as taking place on the day of the Resurrection, in a room in Jerusalem where the disciples had assembled and were sitting with closed doors. On this occasion, according to this veracious writer, Jesus suddenly appeared before the apostles, and filled them with the Holy Wind by the simple process of breathing on them.

> "Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, *he breathed on them* and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit:* whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (xx. 21 23).

This "Spirit" which was to guide the apostles "into all the truth" and to "teach them all things" was also, it appears, to give them power to discriminate between those who really believed and those who did not, so as to enable them to proclaim forgiveness to the faithful only. At any rate, the disciples were now fully inspired—that is, all except Thomas Didymus, who was, unfortunately, absent. This, no doubt, accounts for the fact that the "Gospel of Thomas" contains bigger lies than any in the canonical Gospels.

We come next to Luke's account of the gift of the Holy Ghost. According to this evangelist, Jesus remained on earth for forty days after his resurrection, and on the fortieth day, just before he ascended to heaven, he promised his apostles that they should receive the Holy Spirit "not many days hence" (Acts i. 5). Apparently he had quite forgotten that he had already given them this "Spirit" thirty-nine days before, and, what is more astonishing, the disciples had forgotten it too. Anyway, ten days after Christ's ascension, when the apostles were sitting together "in one place," the Holy Wind came upon them with an immense rush (Acts ii. 2-4):—

> "And suddenly there came *from heaven* a sound as of the rushing of *a mighty wind*, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit, and *began to speak with other tongues*, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Thus, for the second time, the disciples were inflated with a holy wind, which, this time, came in a gust (the holy gust or ghost), and "from heaven." The apostles knew it came from heaven, because it "filled all the house *where they were sitting*." There appeared, also, in the room forked tongues of flame which rested upon them, the tongues being symbolical of the effect produced by the "Spirit." This was, that the apostles were now able to speak in languages previously unknown to them, without having gone through the drudgery of learning them. This wonderful gift of "tongues," we are told, greatly astonished the strangers "from every nation under heaven" who were then in Jerusalem; for the newly-inspired men went out that very day, and commenced to chatter like magpies in every known dialect. These wonder-stricken foreigners are represented as saying (Acts ii. 8-11):—

> "And how hear we, every man in our own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God."

But this great miracle does not end here; for this gift of "tongues" was not only possessed by the apostles, but the latter had the power to bestow it on new converts. The gift, in fact, is represented as a special mark of conversion

Digitized by Google

which followed the laying on of hands by the apostles. The following are examples :—

> "While Peter yet spake these words, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them* which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed.....For they heard them *speak with tongues*, and magnify God" (Acts x. 44-46). "And when Paul laid his hands upon them, *the Holy Ghost came on them*; and *they spake with tongues* and prophesied. And they were in all about twelve men" (Acts xix. 6).

In the latter case the converts, before meeting with Paul, were in such a deplorable state of ignorance that they "did not so much as hear whether there is a Holy Ghost." The question of the reality of the power to speak with "tongues" comes properly under the head of Miracles. Sufficient it is to say here that it can be shown beyond all reasonable doubt that the early Christians possessed *no* such power.

Leaving this matter, it will be seen that we have two distinct and contradictory accounts both of the giving of the Holy Ghost to the apostles, and of the effects alleged to be produced on the recipients of the "Ghost." Assuming that Christ was really a divine personage, and was himself full of this Sacred Wind, and that he, further, possessed the power to impart it to others, the most natural way of doing so would be that described in the Fourth Gospel—by breathing or blowing the Holy air into the bodies of these who were to receive it. The narrative in the Acts of the rushing wind, the fiery tongues, and the gift of languages is the crudest nonsense it is possible to imagine.

The account in the Fourth Gospel is, however, completely ignored by Christian commentators, teachers, and apologists, almost without exception. But will any orthodox Christian dare to maintain that after Jesus had breathed on the apostles, and had given the command "*Receive ye* the Holy Spirit," no effect followed, or that the Holy Ghost did not come upon them? The answer cannot be doubtful. Had the "Acts of the Apostles" suffered the fate of many of the other second-century books, and either been "lost" or suppressed by the Church, it is beyond question that the story in the Fourth Gospel would be received by all Christians as the true and only account of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

But some may, perhaps, say that the apostles were twice inflated with the Holy Wind, and that the author of the Fourth Gospel describes the first blowing out, and Luke the second. This attempted reconcilement is doubtless ingenious; but it is excluded by the promise in the Acts (i. 4-8), which plainly implies that no "spirit" had been given to the disciples up to the day of the Ascension. On that day Jesus "charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father"—*i.e.*, the promised gift of the Holy Ghost, which they should receive "not many days hence"—and he says, when taking leave of them, "But ye shall receive power *when* the Holy Ghost is come upon you." There cannot, then, be the smallest doubt that in each of these accounts this wonderful "Spirit" is represented as given for the first time. And this being the case, one of the narratives is undoubtedly false, if not both. To those who feel it a duty to believe one of them, I would recommend the sacred method of casting lots; or, if there be any uncertainty as to the proper method of doing this, the simple toss of a halfpenny will decide the matter equally well.

ABRACADABRA.

Clear thinking is quite as important as correct living; and the man who helps to make men think aright thereby helps to advance not only intellectual, but *moral*, progress, and to augment the sum of human happiness. He, on the contrary—however unexceptionable his conduct and pure his motives—who helps to befog, mystify, and confuse the minds of men by his shallow, dreamy thought, is quite as much the enemy of moral as of intellectual advancement. Slovenliness in thought is certain, in the long run, to result in slovenliness in morals. Thought cannot be divorced from conduct, even though the thought, true or erroneous, of one generation shows itself most conspicuously in the conduct of succeeding generations. A teacher of error may be sincere; but his sincerity in no way severs the connection between cause and effect, and therefore in no way diminishes the results of the error. Indeed, intellectual error is dangerous and harmful in proportion to the sincerity of its adherents, upon which its growth depends.—*B. F. Underwood.*

THEOLOGY EXPLAINS NOTHING.

If we would believe the adherents of religion, nothing could be explicable in the world without it; nature would be a continual enigma; it would be impossible for man to comprehend himself. But, at the bottom, what does this religion explain to us? The more we examine it, the more we find that theological notions are fit but to perplex all our ideas; they change all into mysteries; they explain to us difficult things by impossible things. Is it, then, explaining things to attribute them to unknown agencies, to invisible powers, to immaterial causes? Is it really enlightening the human mind when, in its embarrassment, it is directed to the "depths of the treasures of divine wisdom," upon which they tell us it is in vain to turn our bold regards? Can the divine nature, which we know nothing about, make us understand man's nature, which we find so difficult to explain?

Ask a Christian philosopher what is the origin of the world. He will answer that God created the universe. What is God? We do not know anything about it. What is it to create? We have no idea of it. What is the cause of pestilences, famines, wars, sterility, inundations, earthquakes? It is God's wrath. What remedies can prevent these calamities? Prayers, sacrifices, processions, offerings, ceremonies, are, we are told, the true means to disarm Celestial fury. But why is heaven angry? Because men are wicked. Why are men wicked? Because their nature is corrupt. What is the cause of this corruption? It is, a theologian of enlightened Europe will reply, because the first man was seduced by the first woman to eat an apple which his God had forbidden him to touch. Who induced this woman to do such a folly? The Devil. Who created the Devil? God. Why did God create this Devil destined to pervert the human race? We know nothing about it; it is a mystery hidden in the bosom of the Deity.

Does the earth revolve around the sun? Two centuries ago a devout philosopher would have replied that such a thought was blasphemy, because such a system could not agree with the holy book, which every Christian reveres as inspired by the Deity himself. What is the opinion to-day about it? Notwithstanding the divine inspiration, the Christian philosophers finally concluded to rely upon evidence rather than upon the testimony of their inspired books.

What is the hidden principle of the actions and of the motions of the human body? It is the soul. What is a soul? It is a spirit. What is a spirit? It is a substance which has neither form, color, expansion, nor parts. How can we conceive of such a substance? How can it move a body? We know nothing about it. Have brutes souls? The Carthusian assures you that they are machines. But do we not see them act, feel, and think in a manner which resembles that of men? This is a pure illusion, you say. But why do you deprive the brutes of souls, which, without understanding it, you attribute to men? It is that the souls of the brutes would embarrass our theologians, who, content with the power of frightening and damning the immortal souls of men, do not take the same interest in damning those of the brutes. Such are the puerile solutions which philosophy, always guided by the leading-strings of theology, was obliged to bring forth to explain the problems of the physical and moral world.

JEAN MESLIER.

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.

(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.

(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.

(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.

(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

THE *Open Court* for November gives a portrait of Euler, the mathematician. Professor Cornill, writing "The History of the People of Israel," notes that the bull-cult, existent in the time of Elijah, was never rebuked by him. The Professor says: "When he denounces Baal in Samaria and Israel, he is simply advocating the 'calves of Dan and Bethel' as the only customary form of worship in the kingdom of Israel, which he himself did not attack." Mr. James Odgers puts forward as the religion of science "the worship of beneficence." How about the practice? The article on "Death in Religious Art," by the editor, is well illustrated from Greek and Roman sources. But has he read W. Simpson's *Worship of Death?*

* * *

Appleton's *Popular Science Monthly* has a sketch and portrait of Karl Vogt, the German scientist and Freethinker. It has also an interesting account of the scientific researches in Australia of Dr. Richard Semon, a pupil of Ernst Haeckel, and, like his master, an enthusiastic evolutionist. The Negritos, or native Australians, who still live in a state of culture similar to that of the Stone Age, are described, and there are some admirable reproductions of photographs. According to Dr. Semon, the only religion of the Australians is a fear of the spirits of the dead, who, not having been properly buried, are doomed to walk the night. But, however great the terror inspired by these nocturnal spooks, the easiest way of warding off their attacks is to huddle as closely as possible round the camp fire. Disease and death are not regarded as natural events, but dreaded as the work of the sorcerers of hostile tribes, whose influence can be counteracted only by sorcerers of their own tribe. In some parts a slightly higher stage has produced a vague sort of demonism, with a crude cosmology, in which the founder of the tribe figures as the creator of the world. Here ancestor-worship marks the transition from demonism to deism. They deal with the population question by killing or exposing a certain proportion of infants, or by the castration or hypospadic mutilation of a percentage of the boys before puberty. In some tribes every father of a family voluntarily submits to one of these radical operations after the birth of his third child. Personal sacrifice for public good could not well go further.

* * *

We have not yet seen Mr. Joseph McCabe's *Twelve Years in a Monastery* (Smith, Elder, and Co.), but observe that the *Daily News*, writing on it under the heading "Outside View of Monasticism," speaks of it as "a remarkable testimony to Romanist decay."

* * *

Although Mr. Lang is right in refusing a place to Mr. Le Gallienne's *Omar Khayyam* beside that of Fitzgerald—and we even prefer the extract given by us a fortnight ago from Mr. C. L. York—it must be confessed that there are some of the Persian poet's thoughts finely versified. For instance:—

> Mysterious mother substance, who are they
> That flout the earth that made them? Who are they
> That waste their wonder on the fabulous soul?
> I can but choose to marvel at the clay.

In some cases Mr. Gallienne is almost too markedly modern. What Freethinker could not say of the Bible?—

> The Koran! Well, come put me to the test—
> Lovely old book in hideous error drest—
> Believe me, I can quote the Koran, too;
> The unbeliever knows his Koran best.

* * *

Augustine Birrell says: "Bad authors are perpetual—that is to say, there is a perpetual succession of them. The consoling reflection is, that the succession is always changing. There is no accumulation of bad poets, of bad novelists. Twenty years hence people will not be reading the bad authors we are now reading. They will be reading bad authors of their own, and when they are not doing that they will be reading the good authors of our time."

* * *

We gather from the very unfavorable notice of Mr. Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God* in the *Athenæum* that the work is a very heterodox one. We hope to accord it a full notice before long.

* * *

The *Sydney Bulletin* says of our English literary journals that "competition among them is so great that without publishers' advertisements nearly all of them would die at once. So they are forced to temper truth with a great deal of diplomacy, and mislead in order to live.' It makes an honorable exception of the *Saturday Review*.

* * *

If this be the state of affairs, it is small wonder that William Platt, in the introduction to his most strenuous work, *Do We Live—Do We Love?* declares that the work shall not be put before the public, but simply left for those who have found it to bring it before the notice of their friends. This probably is a safer way of reaching those desired than the plan of Robert Buchanan to start a shop on his own account.

* * *

In *The Literary History of the American Revolution*, by Dr. Moses Coit Tylor, Professor of American History in Cornell University, is a full account of the political writings and influence of Thomas Paine in the formation of the American Republic.

* * *

The *Humanitarian* has an interesting account of an interview with Mr. G. L. Gomme on "The Practical Use of Folk-Lore." Incidentally, Mr. Gomme was asked concerning the question of the origin of man. His answer is worth reprinting: "It is indeed a question with which man has always concerned himself. Before Darwin and other naturalists taught us to connect the natural history of man with that of all other animals, we were content to accept whatever early man had allowed his imagination to supply; and we get as a result, not only the myths of ancient Greece, of India, and of the Zulus, but also the myths of the Hebrews, which are so familiar to us as the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible. While the Church is defending with all her strength these ancient ideas as truth, the science of folk-lore proves that the Hebrews, like every other people in the pre-historic ages, thought out for themselves an absolutely unscientific doctrine to account for man's origin. It was an immense step forward for man to take at all, and that the conclusions were not true is due, not to the bad logic of early man, but to his ignorance of facts."

* * *

Comprehensive Cookery, compiled by E. and B. May, is a shilling book containing over a thousand tested vegetarian recipes. Many shrewd observations are interspersed, not the least important of which is on the art of cooking water. So, at least, our feminine helpmate declares.

THE LATE A. TRIPP, OF BRIGHTON.

ON Tuesday, November 16, the late Mr. Arthur Tripp was laid to rest in Brighton Cemetery, at the ripe age of seventy-one. The deceased was well known to all Freethinkers of the South Coast, for his ever active work in all progressive movements; and the large assemblage at the graveside of Secularists, Radicals, and friends testified to the respect which he commanded. There being a doubt if Mr. Holyoake could be present, Mr. G. Ward and I went down to act if needed. Fortunately, Mr. Holyoake arrived, and spoke as follows:—

"We assemble to pay our last tribute to one who desired no personal praise of himself, which shows that he had merits deserving words of honor. His care was for the cause he espoused; he put his principles first, and himself second. One of Shakespeare's characters speaks of Christians who mean to be saved by believing rightly. There are not many Christians who do this. The Churchman means to be saved by Act of Parliament; the Dissenter by believing in the Bible as his minister interprets it; and the majority of persons elsewhere mean to be saved by believing in what other people believe. Mr. Tripp meant to be saved, if saving be necessary, by first saving himself, by thinking for himself, and believing for himself. He adopted the rule of the Emperor Aurelius, who said, 'I seek the truth.' He accepted the saying of Madame de Staël: 'The search for the truth is the noblest work of man, and the publication of it a duty.' This right of publication he maintained—not for himself alone, but for others; not for his own opinions only, but for all opinions that seemed true and useful to those who held them. His aim was to walk, not by the light of faith, which has misled so many, but by the light of reason, which affords the highest security possible in this world, and the best preparation for any other life, if one accrues; truth being the only likely security either here or hereafter. Mr. Tripp had courage and conscience—two great qualities, which do not often go together. Freedom from superstition was a constant pleasure, and gave him peace in death. His abiding consolation was the great maxim of Pythagoras: 'Whatever people may think of you, do that which you think right.' In this manly and intelligent belief he lived, and was always ready to support what he believed. For his example and his integrity all who knew him will hold his memory in honor.'

The writer then said a few words on his public worth and work, concluding by reading a few sentences from the Secular Burial Service. R. FORDER.

I REGRET to announce the death, at two-and-a-half years of age, of the only son of Mr. J. H. Strong, of the West London Branch. A Secular Burial Service was read by the undersigned at the burial, on the 19th inst., at Marylebone Cemetery.—W. HEAFORD.

Digitized by Google

CORRESPONDENCE.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In yours of the 14th inst. Mr. Gould informs us of the advent of the "Moral Instruction party," which is ultimately to change the "balance of the educational parties," presumably by playing a sort of "Jack on both sides" to both. He tells us also: "This new party says that morality should be the chief aim of the school life." We are likewise given to know that the "old issue between Christianity and purely secular instruction" is likely to yield to the agitation of the "Moral Instructionists."

Not even so much as living in the same street with a prophet, I feel that I must leave Mr. Gould's prophecy about this new party's future balancing power to that future, and confine my remarks to its present pretensions.

The tenor of Mr. Gould's article seems to imply that morality, as understood by this new party, constitutes a sort of a connecting link between secular and religious instruction. In the most kindly way that I am capable of, I would fain suggest that there is no such thing as religious instruction. All instruction is necessarily secular. With comparative religion, as a science, this article has nothing to do.

The Christian religion is a system of dogmas, anent the truthfulness or falsity of which the oldest mummy in the British Museum knows as much as Mr. Gladstone. To my poor intelligence, it is just as reasonable to try to imagine a connecting link between life and death, or between something and nothing, as it is to try to bridge over the chasm between that knowledge which deals with the demonstrable facts of life and that faith which has nothing whatever to do therewith.

Mr. Wheeler's article on "Christianity and Heathens," in the same *Freethinker*, is a demonstration of the utter futility of the mamby-pamby method of moral instruction now in vogue to influence human conduct for the better. "Love your enemies," the "Golden Rule," "Blessed are the merciful," are as well known to the cunning rogue, who robs the heathen of his possessions by artifice, as they are to the man who gains the same end by brute force; and they influence the conduct of neither.

In a recent issue of a widely-read daily paper a detailed account appeared of seven learned solicitors struck off the Rolls for malpractices. Would the new party be able to teach those gentlemen anything in the way of morality that they don't know? Let Mr. Gould go into any Coroner's Court and see with his own eyes five or six (or more) morally-instructed Christians kissing and swearing by the very book which they profess to believe to be the word of their own God, which commands them "not to swear at all." Or let him take note of the convictions for wilful and corrupt perjury of those kissers of, and swearers by, the book that tells them in God's name "not to bear false witness against thy neighbor." If these palpable proofs of the utter futility of book- and tongue-taught morality to make us all good do not suffice to convince Mr. Gould, together with the whole school of which he is such a distinguished member, of the necessity that obtains for a purely secular curriculum in our compulsory schools, I fear we must give up their case of "morality on the brain" as incurable.

T. J. THURLOW.

NOTHING IN IT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I be allowed to rectify an error into which I think Mr. Watts has fallen in his reference to Mr. Waldron with regard to Mr. Ward's pamphlet? Mr. Waldron once played this off as an argument in Hyde Park; but, when I got hold of the pamphlet, I found it was dated 1891; evidently published as a skit against Atheism, while Mr. Ward was still a Christian. I was enabled to turn it against Mr. Waldron by using it as an argument in proof of the truth of Secularism, inasmuch as the author had since given up Christianity, and espoused the very cause which he had before denounced, being now one of our prominent lecturers. It is also a proof of the length to which our C. E. S. *friends* will go in their hatred of us and our principles. May I suggest to Mr. Ward that he should publish a second edition of the pamphlet?

R. P. EDWARDS.

Everywhere we find the rule to hold good, "Like people, like gods." The gods cannot be better than the people who make and who worship them. And as all these gods were the product of men or of people in their earlier, more ignorant, crude, and brutal state, it is but reasonable to expect that the gods, creeds, and religious systems of any people will be found inferior in character, more crude, brutal, and irrational than are the people themselves.—*M. Harman.*

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

WHOEVER hesitates to utter that which he thinks the highest truth, lest it should be too much in advance of the time, may reassure himself by looking at his acts from an impersonal point of view. Let him duly realize the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that is, opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes, and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may.—*Herbert Spencer.*

The visible world reminds me of beans in a jar whose number is to be guessed. Any guess is as good as yours until they are counted. Can you count the contents of the universal jar?—*J. Armstrong.*

The world is hardly beyond the beginning of medical discoveries, yet they have already taken from theology what was formerly its strongest province, sweeping away from the vast field of human effort that belief in miracles which for more than twenty centuries has been the main stumbling-block in the path of medicine.—*Andrew D. White.*

A Michigan man, who is said to possess remarkable power in curing disease, asserts that his power to heal comes from Satan. One hears so many unkind things said about the Devil that it is a positive pleasure to be able to announce with some appearance of probability that he has gone into the good work of healing suffering humanity. Under the circumstances, if ever I have said anything to injure his reputation, I hereby take it back. We cannot be too considerate of the feelings of those who demonstrate their inclination to be our friends.—*A. J. W., in "Fresno Republican."*

In no age or country have any sects or factions of religionists dared to "leave their cause to the arbitration of reason." This damning blot disfigures every religional escutcheon. The blood religionists have spilt in defence of their disgraceful impostures the ocean may purge away, but never can bury the remembrance of. The history of their crimes is written on the tablets of human memory in ineffaceable characters. If religionists were united in opinion they would be united in action, and despotism such as prevailed in the Dark Ages would again prevail.—*Charles Southwell.*

Alas for us! this our awful baggage in the rear of humanity, these women who have not moved on their own feet one step since the primal mother taught them to suckle, are perpetually pulling us backward on the march. Slaves of custom, forms, shows, and superstitions, they are slaves of the priests.—*G. Meredith, "Beauchamp's Career," chapter 58.*

The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinions.—*James Russell Lowell.*

What is fanaticism to-day is the fashionable creed to-morrow, and trite as the multiplication table a week after.—*Wendell Phillips.*

PROFANE JOKES.

THERE is a little girl whose ideas of creation are yet crude, but she is very curious. "Is all of us made out of dust, mamma?" she asked the other day. "Yes, Flossie." "Little babies, too?" "Yes." The child was silent for a moment. "Mamma," she said, "heaven must be a drefful dusty place."

"Daddy," asked little Ephraim, "whar did de fust tukkey cum fum?" "Nebbur yo' min' axin' irreligious questions," said the old man. "An' when Pahson Thompson cum fer dinner Sunday, doan' yo' hab ter ax whar dat tukkey cum fum, eider."

Hallelujah Lass (to little gutter-girl who has displayed "a voice")—"Why don't you come and sing for God?" Little Gutter-Girl—"It's manners, mum, to wait till 'E asks me!"

A youthful student of sublime divinity
Could ne'er be taught to understand the Trinity.
When he was asked, "Now, is the Father God?"
The boy replied, "O certainly, or else 'tis odd."
"And is the Son God?" Then the student said:
"Not yet; he may be when the Father's dead."

Old Version—Where was Moses when the light went out? New Version—Where is Moses when the higher critics get hold of him?

In the Near Future. Judge—"Do you know, my boy, where you will go if you tell a lie?" Board-school Boy—"No, sir; but I know the authors of the Pentateuch, and I can refute the errors of Supralapsarianism."

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Can God Do Wrong?"

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, H. P. Ward, "The Greatest Lie in the World." November 27, at 8.30, Concert and Dance.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones; 7.30, R. Forder, "Fun on the Nile."

East London Branch (King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road): 7.30, W. C. Lyons, "How and Why Christianity Spreads."

South London Ethical Society (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "The Origin of Disease"—opener, J. Ellis; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Ethics of Property."

West London Ethical Society (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Inner Sea."

Wood Green (Station-road Hall): 7.30, A. Guest, "The Propagation of the Gospel."

Open-Air Propaganda.

West London Branch (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham (Bristol-street Board School): C. Cohen—11, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future;" 3, "The Priest and the Child"; 7, "The Case for Secularism." November 29, at 8, "Why Should we Follow Jesus?"

Bristol (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 3, Discussion Class—B. Harney, "Mind and Matter."

Chatham Secular Society (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, An Entertainment. Special talent.

Glasgow (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, A. G. Nostock, F.G.S., "Earthquakes and Volcanoes"—with lantern illustrations.

Leicester Secular Hall (Humberstone Gate): G. W. Foote—11, "The Philosophy of Hamlet"; 6.30, "God and the Devil."

Liverpool (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. W. Baylis, B.A., "Theism."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Miss Hodgson, "Should Women have a Vote?"

Newcastle (Newbridge-street): November 29, at 8, Monthly meeting. Important business.

Plymouth (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Members' meeting.

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Ernest Evans—3, "Science and Modern Thought"; 7, "The Frog and Cockroach: A Study in Development." Illustrated by lantern slides. Tea at 5.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Lantern lecture, "Paris."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—November 28 and 29, Birmingham; 30, Derby. December 3, Preston; 5, Bradford; 8, Blackburn; 19, Leicester.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—November 28, m., Camberwell Radical Club. December 5, Mile End; 12, Camberwell Radical Club.

H. Percy Ward, Leighton Hall, N.W.—November 28, a., Edmonton; e., Bradlaugh Club. December 12, Sheffield. January 30, Stanley.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Now Ready. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

By C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. Baldwin, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

Contents:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

Contents:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at one penny, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 33*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made only at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

Beware of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

Look for Autograph Registered Trade Mark

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

In *Red* Ink on each Box, without which None are Genuine.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE DECEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS :—

The Evolution of the Idea of God.
George Meredith's Poems.
The Berkeleyan Philosophy.
Mathematics Metamorphozed.
On the Road to Biblical Criticism.
Montaigne's Influence on Shakespeare.
A Century's Progress in Religious Thought.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
A Gift to our Readers (*Human Interests*, cloth, 164 pp.).
Random Jottings.
Literary Shrines and Pilgrimages—II. In Byron's Country.
Rationalism in the Magazines, etc., etc.

London : Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED, FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.

THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.

SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.

A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERT'S "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.

THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.

EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.

HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.

BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.

SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.

SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.

SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.

WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.

THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 3d., by post 4d.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are :—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

NO. 4 NOW READY.

CONTENTS :—

The Judgment of Paris-up-to-Date. By LEIGHTON PAGAN.
Spiritual Love. By WILLIAM PLATT.
The Last Citadel of Authority. By ROBERT BRAITHWAITE.
Sex Love and Mutability. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

Ingersoll's Latest Popular Lectures.

About the Holy Bible. 6d.

The Foundation of Faith. 3d.

The Coming Civilization. 3d.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents :—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London : R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Cloths Direct from the Warehouse. Any Length cut. Patterns post free. Garments made to measure.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.
INCREASE YOUR WAGES.

All kinds of Heavy Drapery at Warehouse prices, saving at least Two Profits. Price List post free.

Manufacturer's Stock
OF HIGH-CLASS OVERCOATINGS

Bought at less than Half the Usual Price, which we are now making into Overcoats as illustration herewith.



COLORS : Dark Greys, Heather Mixtures, Plain Brown, Blue, or Black.

Price 23s.

Worth at Least 35s.

EACH.

Give Chest and Waist Measure over Vest. Also Length from Centre of Back to full Length of Sleeve.

The Cheapest Parcel on Earth!

LOT 11

1 Pair All-Wool Blankets.

1 Pair Large Sheets.

1 Beautiful Quilt.

1 White or Colored Tablecloth.

All for 21s. Carriage paid.

Mention the *Freethinker*, and for the next Fourteen Days we will include a Grand Little Present in each Parcel.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 49 SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE,

FAILURE OF RELIGION.

IT must be obvious to the impartial observer of the times that what professing Christians term religion has proved a complete failure as a moral, social, and intellectual regenerating force. The crime, hypocrisy, disregard for truth, commercial dishonesty, and lack of fidelity to principle, which exist in our midst, are a standing refutation of the repeated assertion that the religion of the Cross "makes for righteousness." The boast that the glory of the Christian religion consists in its power to reform mankind, and to win adherents who would honestly be guided by its teachings, is shown, by the condition both of the Churches and of general society, to be utterly groundless. St. John exclaims: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (i. 29). But, admitting the advent of Jesus, he did nothing of the kind, for there are more "sins" and greater sinners to-day than there ever were. Let anyone witness the appalling sights to be seen, particularly on Saturday nights, in such cities as Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and then form an opinion as to the efficacy of Christ's mission. What he failed to do in reforming society his followers have also been impotent to accomplish. Although in the places just mentioned churches and chapels abound, with their thousands of clergymen and ministers, drunkenness, dirt, indecency, and the worse kind of every phase of immorality constitute the normal condition of those unfortunate specimens of humanity, whom, we are told, were made in "the image of God."

Before Christian exponents ask, What has Secularism done? they should remember what Christianity has *not* done. For centuries it has claimed to have controlled the nation. It has had unlimited wealth at its command, with fashion and prejudice upon its side, and yet it has failed to remove the vice, inequality, and injustice which are so sadly retarding personal happiness, the development of ethical culture, and national greatness. If Secularism had possessed the advantages for centuries that Christianity has, and had produced no better results, it could then be fairly condemned as being destitute of regenerating power. The truth is that the Christian religion, as a factor in human progress, has been a decided failure. That good has been done by some of its professors may be readily admitted, for there are men and women in whom the love of humanity is so deeply rooted that no theology can prevent them striving to do right. Hence much of the service rendered to the world by religionists is prompted, not by their faith, but by their love for the human family. Christians are continually confessing that their faith fails to inspire them to do the right thing. The Confession may be heard Sunday after Sunday in the churches, when its members acknowledge: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." Such an admission of perpetual wrong-doing is a humiliating reflection upon the influence of their faith. Out of their own mouths, therefore, comes the condemnation of their religion, which I pronounce, upon their own authority, as being a failure.

But the non-success of the Christian religion, as an incentive to right-doing, is not confined to the secular world; it is also a failure within the Church. Its adherents are growing more and more indifferent as to its teachings upon what are called "spiritual" matters. This was granted by Bishop Ryle, who, a few weeks ago, in opening his Diocesan Conference in Liverpool, alluded to what he termed "one very unhealthy and painful symptom which seems to me to characterize the age in which we are living. The symptom I refer to is the increasing indifference to all distinctive doctrines and opinions in religion, in every part of the land. I say emphatically *increasing religious indifference*.....I have not in view those huge masses of people in London, and our large towns, who worship nowhere, and appear to have no religion at all. I refer to those myriads in this age who are to be found in all our churches, who are not communicants, and never exhibit any interest in vital religion.....I declare my belief that the size and rapid growth of the school of indifference is one of the most dangerous signs of the times at the close of the nineteenth century. The multitude who belong to this school are not open opponents of the faith and Christ's cause; but they simply sit still and do nothing for religion at home or abroad. Ask any good clergyman who works his parish, and visits his people, and knows their characters, what is the chief difficulty he has to contend with? I am certain he would tell you that it is neither Romanism, nor extreme Ritualism, nor Erastianism, nor Broad Churchism, nor systematic Scepticism, nor any other 'ism,' but a half-dead torpid indifference about any sort or kind of religion" (*Rock*, November 12, 1897).

Here we have a plain statement from "one who knows," in which he avows his recognition of the failure of his religion to secure the consistent obedience to Christian teaching. In my opinion, the Church has become but little more than a political institution, a home for "spiritual" imbeciles, and a refuge for those who are either too lazy to think for themselves, or too weak to withstand the assaults of "Mrs. Grundy." It is with the great majority of professors of Christianity either a question of obtaining the means of living, or a desire to be in the fashion. Unfortunately, the time is not quite gone when "respectability" is estimated from a theological standpoint. My wish and hope are to see the period arrive when respectability shall be acknowledged as belonging to no creed or avowal of religious belief, but when it shall be regarded as the emblem of truth, honor, and sincerity. Hypocrisy reigns in the religious world to a terrible extent, and nothing will so effectually remove it as practically carrying out the Secular principle, that every individual should be permitted to openly avow his or her views upon religious questions without running the risk of being exposed to social ostracism. No religion ought to be encouraged which tends to prevent a man from saying what he means.

The religion taught by Bishop Ryle does not, it is evident, inspire him to grant this intellectual liberty, which is undoubtedly the birthright of every human being. For in his speech at the Conference, above referred to, he condemns the claim that "all sects should be equal," and that "all creeds should be regarded with equal favor and respect," as "the spurious liberality of the day." To his mind, "the adoption of a general policy of toleration and forbearance within the pale of the Church of England" would be fraught with indescribable danger. He says: 'The mere fact that such a monstrous policy finds acceptance with many Churchmen is, to my mind, one of the greatest perils of the Church of England, and its adoption could only have one result. That result would ultimately be, disruption, disintegration, and disestablishment. You could not possibly have two or three distinct Churches within one communion. It is amazing to me that the

Digitized by Google

advocates of this notable policy of universal toleration do not see that it would infallibly end in our Church being broken to pieces."

If this is the spirit of England's "national religion," the sooner it falls to pieces the better. It has always been a barrier to human progress, and has never succeeded in proving itself a friend of the people. The Bishop, like most of the clergy, is a persistent foe to mental freedom. He would tolerate only those who think as he thinks. Well might Buckle write: "A careful study of the history of religious toleration will prove that in every Christian country where it has been adopted it has been forced upon the clergy by the authority of the secular classes" (*History of Civilization*, vol. i., p. 310). It is worthy of note that the only time the Church opposed the injustice of the Crown was, says Buckle, "when the Crown had declared its intention of tolerating, and in some degree protecting, the rival religions of the country" (*ibid.*, p. 366). But "scarcely had the clergy succeeded in expelling James when the greater number of them repented of their own act" (*ibid.*, p. 369). To the shame of the Church, be it said, its clergy have opposed almost every reform that has tended to promote the happiness of the masses, establish the principle of justice, and enhance the dignity and honor of the nation.

The voice of history and the lessons from personal experience corroborate my allegation, that religion has failed to relieve society of the evils under which for centuries it has suffered. Its impotency is apparent alike in the social, moral, intellectual, and political world. Happily, while this religious decline is going on, there is being consolidated in our midst a power born of human genius, and fostered by human requirements, that shall prove a potent regenerating force. It has made itself felt in the secular ranks of life, it has firmly impressed its influence upon the intellect of the age, and it is now shaking the citadel of theology to its very foundation. It has even penetrated the domain of pious Scotland, where, says the *Rock* (dated Nov. 5), "the Higher Criticism has become firmly rooted in her teaching centres, and a laxity of thought, dangerously approaching Socinianism, if not downright Rationalism, is spreading with considerable rapidity."

CHARLES WATTS.

BUDDHIST AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

IT is an astonishment to many good Christians to learn that over five hundred years before Christ a faith arose in India with many striking resemblances to Christianity. Buddhism taught what are popularly supposed to be the Christian moral monopoly, the mild and unobtrusive virtues of self-control, long suffering, and the forgiveness of enemies. "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality; the liar by truth," was said by Buddha long before Jesus introduced the impracticable precept, "Resist not evil." Nay, more; he sent out missionaries to carry his doctrines to the then known world. My doctrine is like the sky, he said; "it covers all."

In the *Outlook* "The Angarika H. Dharmapala," a Buddhist missionary from Ceylon to the United States, gives his view that Buddhism has the best claim of all faiths to be a universal religion. Buddha alone set up ostensibly as a universal teacher, for Jesus said he was but sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. At the time of Gotama Buddha's birth in Kapilavastu, Northern India, the Jews were returning from their Babylonian captivity. Says the Buddhist missionary:—

> "India with its 300 millions of people, China with its 400 millions of people, and the Greco-Russian Empire with its fifty or sixty millions of people, were outside the influence of Jewish traditions, which were a monopoly of the Jews, who numbered at that period 42,360 men and women, and who had 7,337 men-servants and maid-servants, and 200 singing-men. This was the total population of the Jews at their return from the Babylonian captivity. The God Jehovah refused to recognise the 800 millions of Asiatic Aryans and Mongolians, as the 43,000 Jews were the object of his gracious solicitude. Until the appearance of Jesus Christ, who came to save the children of Israel, the world was left to the tender mercies of Zoroaster, Brahmanical Rishis, Jain Mahavira, Confucius, Lao-tze, and Buddha. Zoroaster's beautiful religion was confined to the empire of Persia, the Brahmanical Rishis had their influence over the twice-born population of Aryan India, the Jain Mahavira had his influence over the Indian ascetics, Lao-tze and Confucius had their mystical spiritualism and moral agnosticism confined to the celestial kingdom. No universalism was to be found in any of these systems, and Jewish dogmas are also exclusive as the Vedas of the Brahmans. Buddha alone has the right to be called the universal teacher, for he was the *first* to break the manacles of priest-theologians."

And Buddha declared his gospel was for all—castes and outcasts, for women as well as men, and his ethics were extended to all animal life and carried into all known lands. The rock-hewn inscriptions of Asoka prove that in the third century B.C. Buddhist missionaries went from India to all neighboring potentates, mentioning by name Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Greece. One inscription reads: "Both here and in foreign countries everywhere the people follow the doctrine of the religion of Asoka wheresoever it reacheth." One of the Buddhist sacred books, the *Milinda-panha*, is occupied with a discussion held in Syria between Nagasena, a Buddhist, and Menander, who, we are told, was born at Alexandria, and who became a convert. The *Mahawanso*, old Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon, mentions among those who came from afar to a great celebration (B.C. 157) the Thero of Yona, and thirty thousand priests "from the vicinity of Alasadda, the capital of the Yona country." If this was Alexandria in Egypt, it may serve to explain the rise of Christian monkery.

The Angarika Dharmapala seeks to show that Christianity has only within the last four hundred years become a peaceful, persuasive missionary religion. By the way, it is not always that now, for gunpowder usually closely follows on the Gospel. Prior to that time it usually resorted to force. The cross by which Constantine conquered formed the hilt of a sword. Paganism was overcome by the battle-axe. Cyril hounded the Christian monks on Hypatia. Clovis, Charlemagne, and the Teutonic knights proclaimed to the heathen "baptism or death."

In contrast Dharmapala goes on to say:—

> "Buddha's mission was one of peace and love, and never within the twenty-four hundred years that his religion has existed has there ever been a drop of blood shed in his name for the propagation of the doctrines he promulgated. For over fourteen hundred years it had an existence in India, Afghanistan, and the Bactrian territory, and the early Indian Buddhists carried their mission of peace to the far-distant countries of Burmah, China, Korea, Tibet, Siam, and the Java Islands. In its peaceful propaganda it avoided controversies and abstained from discussing questions which tended not to the edification of the religious mind. Buddha's religion is to ennoble and emancipate the human mind from ignorance. In the Chinese language there is no word to express the conception of a Creator God, and the Christian workers in China are having a difficult time in trying to get a proper term to express the idea. Four hundred millions of Chinese are thus left out from the Jewish theology; and in India nearly three hundred millions of people, over twenty centuries ago, gave up the creative theory of the world and accepted the evolution theory which has been brought into acceptance by the researches of Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and others."

In this respect it must be admitted that Buddhism is the more philosophic faith. This Buddhist holds that Christianity as taught in schools and churches has no place as a universal religion. Buddha avoided all metaphysics, dogmas, speculations, and theologies. He thought it waste of time to go into speculations as to the origin of God, the world, etc.

Says the Singhalese Buddhist missionary:—

> "Buddha was eminently practical and taught all people, men and women, to lead a virtuous life of love, righteousness, charity, and truth, for the emancipation from suffering and misery. He taught that we suffer through our ignorance of the immutable laws of causation, and by ignoring truths of suffering, causes of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the noble way of salvation. Buddha ignored a Creator, as he was the first to teach the principles of evolution, and denied annihilation, as he was the first to discover the great law of causation, with its dependents of twenty-four resultants; and he ignored a separate, permanent ego entity, as he was the first psychologist to discover that

Digitized by Google

everything is undergoing a continuous change in the phenomenal world."

Christianity and Buddhism alike are essentially monkish systems, born rather of despair than hope. They represent the ideals of a world groaning under slavery and oppression, and will be replaced by newer ones when all are free to develop their natures to the uttermost. Buddhism has endured for twenty-five centuries, and probably numbers more adherents than Christianity itself. May it not prove even more elastic in adapting itself to the increase of knowledge and modern reaches of thought? This will be for the future to determine; but at least it is safe to say it will force the younger faith to give up its exclusive pretensions to divine truth, and help to confirm the Freethought position, which holds by the old motto:—

Accept the truth wherever found,
On Christian, heathen, or on sceptic ground.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XIV.—CHRIST'S REJECTION BY THE JEWS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that "God so loved the world" that he sent his son Jesus "to seek and to save" the whole human race, the divine messenger of salvation, we are told, was rejected and put to an ignominious death. This Savior, as we have seen, not only confined his ministry to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but he withheld from these "lost sheep" the spiritual meaning of his allegorical teaching, lest, perchance, too many of them might repent, "and it should be forgiven them." God's free gift of "eternal life" was thus limited to a select few, among whom were, of course, the disciples, Mary Magdalene, the woman who anointed Christ's feet, one of the two thieves who were crucified with him, and certain women who followed Jesus about and "ministered unto him of their substance." That Jesus should reserve all the best places in heaven for his intimate friends, and not care to admit many outsiders, may not, perhaps, be very astonishing; for the condition prescribed for obtaining a seat in the heavenly Jerusalem—viz., simple faith—an article not dependent on the human will—shows the whole plan of redemption to be irrational and absurd. But it is, I must confess, somewhat surprising to find Christ denouncing judgment on the people from whom he had withheld his teaching because they did not "repent." Thus in two of the Gospels (Matt. xi. 22; Luke x. 13) this most illogical Savior is represented as saying:—

> "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sack-cloth and ashes.....It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you."

There is no record of any miracles worked in either Chorazin or Bethsaida, which, further, appear to be purely imaginary places, no one except the Gospel-writers having ever heard of them. In one passage (Mark viii. 23) Jesus is stated to have entered Bethsaida, and to have spat on the eyes of a blind man. Before doing so, however, he "brought him out of the village"; consequently, he evidently did not intend the villagers to see any of his "mighty works." His conduct, then, in pronouncing these anathemas was both ridiculous and inconsistent, and the more so, since he never once visited Tyre and Sidon, where, he states, the people were willing to believe on him.

Again, in the Fourth Gospel it is recorded that Jesus, in passing through the province of Samaria, stayed two days at Sychar, and that "in that city many of the Samaritans believed on him," and said one to another: "This is indeed the Savior of the world" (iv. 39-42). Yet, in sending out his disciples to preach, Christ, with the same inconsistency, "charged them, saying, Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans" (Matt. x. 5). Clearly, then, he had no wish to save any one: the Jews were treated to allegories which they did not understand; the Gentiles were to receive no message of salvation at all. Hence, the verses commanding to go into "all the world" and preach the Gospel to "all nations" (Matt. xxvii. 19; Mark xvi. 15) are obviously later additions to the Gospels. This is practically admitted with regard to the second of these passages (see Note in Revised Version); neither can there be much doubt that the first is an interpolation also.

But that the apostles received no command to preach to the Gentiles is also evident from the fact that they did not attempt to do so. According to the Pauline Epistles, the early Church, as represented by the apostles, confined their ministrations to their own countrymen, and lived together at Jerusalem, without a thought of giving the Gospel to the Gentiles. They were there at the time of the conversion of Paul; they were there when Paul visited Cephas and James three years after that event; they were there when Paul went up to Jerusalem fourteen years later; and they were there just before Paul set out on his journey to Rome (Gal. i. 18; ii. 1, etc.). Further, the apostolic party not only cared nothing for the Gentiles, but they used every means in their power to counteract Paul's work among them, and sent agents to the Churches he had established misrepresenting him and his teaching. They were quite willing, it is true, to receive Gentile proselytes; but the latter had to become Jews by undergoing circumcision, and were to conform to the rites of the Mosaic law. These practices Paul found to be a stumbling-block to the Greeks; he therefore, on his own authority, set them aside. The Apostle of the Gentiles was, however, too formidable an antagonist to be ignored by the apostles at Jerusalem; the latter, therefore, when tired of anathematizing him, gave him their left hands, and requested him to confine his teaching to the Gentiles, while they kept to the Jews (Gal. ii. 9). They had, beyond all doubt, received no command to preach salvation to the uncircumcised.

Returning to the Gospel narratives, we find three reasons assigned for the rejection of Christ by the Jews, two of which completely exonerate that nation. The author of the Fourth Gospel represents Jesus as saying (vi. 37, 44, 65):—

> "All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me.....No man can come to me except the Father which sent me draw him.....For this cause have I said unto you that no man can come unto me except it be given unto him of the Father."

The word "come" in these passages is used in the sense of "to believe"; hence, only those could believe on Christ who were impelled to do so by "the Father." Christ's "mighty works" might just as well have not been performed at all; for those whom "the Father" intended to save would have been saved with equal certainty without them. This statement, making belief dependent on the will of "the Father," not only referred to the Jews in the time of Christ, but it applies to all men throughout all ages. Hence, those Christians who hurl anathemas at unbelievers and call them "Infidels" do not believe the words of Christ.

The writer of the same Gospel says again (xii. 37, 38):—

> "But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him: *that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled* which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

This statement is unmitigated nonsense. There is nothing in the question (Isaiah liii. 1) which shows that anyone disbelieved the "report," and certainly nothing which points to the Jews in the time of Christ. The "arm of the Lord" is merely a figurative expression for the wondrous works of Jehovah; it had no relation to the miracles alleged to have been wrought by Christ.

Lastly, the same veracious writer says (xii. 39-41):—

> "For this cause *they could not believe*, for that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart; lest they should see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and should turn, and I should heal them. *These things said Isaiah* because he saw his glory; *and he spake of him.*"

Thus, though "God so loved the world" that he sent "his only begotten Son" to save his chosen people—for, as we have seen, Christ came not to save the Gentiles—he, at the same time, shut those people's eyes, and closed their hearts, to his message of salvation. Under these circumstances, it must be a matter of the most profound astonishment to ordinary human beings why God took the trouble to send his Son at all. Leaving this enigma, we have two good reasons why Jesus was rejected by the

Digitized by Google

Jewish nation: first, the people were unable to believe, because the Father did not "draw them" to Christ; secondly, they *could not* believe, because God would not permit them to do so. The Father thus appears to have been even more inconsistent than the Son.

That the author of the Fourth Gospel is wrong as to the *reason* why God prevented Christ's hearers from believing is no proof that that evangelist's statement of the fact is false. Possibly, the Father may have entrusted the drawing up of his plan of salvation to the Ghost, and the latter, not knowing exactly how it ought to be done—the chief functions of the Ghost being to inflate mortals with a holy wind and cause them to tell pious lies—made a muddle of it, and so arranged it that the Jews were bound to reject their Savior and secure for themselves eternal damnation. But this view, be it understood, at present lacks evidence.

The quotation in the Fourth Gospel is from Isaiah vi. 8–12, in which the writer says:—

> "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying.....Make the heart of *this people* fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be waste without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land become utterly waste, and the Lord have removed them far away," etc.

Here, it will be seen, the reference is to the Exile and to the people of Isaiah's time. The Israelites were to be deaf and blind to the warnings and exhortations of the prophets, and were to serve the gods of other nations, until they were carried away captive to Babylon, and their land had become desolate. Also, that this blindness and hardness of heart referred to the idolatry of the people of Isaiah's time can be plainly seen by the following passage in the same book (xliv. 9–18):—

> "They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity.....and their own witnesses *see not nor know*, that they may be ashamed.....The carpenter.....heweth down cedars.....he burneth part thereof.....and the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it.....They know not, neither do they consider; for *he hath shut their eyes that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand*.....Remember these things, O Jacob," etc.

It is scarcely necessary to say that in the time of Christ the Jews were firm in their allegiance to Jehovah, and that idols had long been banished from the land. Yet, though Isaiah had no more knowledge of the Gospel-writers than he had of Christ, the above passage describes those writers exactly. They knew not, neither did they consider; their eyes were shut so that they could not see; they understood nothing of what they were writing, and they were not ashamed. The only thing in which they at all excelled was in distorting passages of the Old Testament to make them support the fictitious narratives they were writing. In this matter they were so successful that thousands of unreflecting Christians believe all their perversions and misrepresentations to this day.

But the writer of the Fourth Gospel says, further, that Isaiah *saw* Christ's glory, and so *spake of him*. Here is the "glory" (verses 1–3 of the same chapter):—

> "In the year that King Uzziah died, I *saw the Lord sitting upon a throne*, high, and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full *of his glory*."

Assuming that Isaiah was the writer, and that he actually *saw* what he describes, the "glory" he beheld was that of the "Lord of hosts"—the God Yahveh. Yet the author of the Fourth Gospel has the impudence to say that the prophet saw Christ's glory, and so "spake of him." Here we have another illustration of the fact that the early Christians, whenever it pleased them to do so, had no scruples in ascribing anything stated in the Old Testament of the God Jehovah to Christ. If we search all history, a more dishonest set of writers it is scarcely possible to find.

ABRACADABRA.

The religion of the future is humanity.—*Ingersoll.*

INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

(Continued from page 756.)

FROM my childhood I had heard read, and read, the Bible. Morning and evening the sacred volume was opened, and prayers were said. The Bible was my first history, the Jews were the first people, and the events narrated by Moses and the other inspired writers, and those predicted by the prophets, were the all-important things. In other books were found the thoughts and dreams of men, but in the Bible were the sacred truths of God.

Yet, in spite of my surroundings, of my education, I had no love for God. He was so saving of mercy, so extravagant in murder, so anxious to kill, so ready to assassinate, that I hated him with all my heart. At his command babes were butchered, women violated, and the white hair of trembling age stained with blood. This God visited the people with pestilence, filled the houses and covered the streets with the dying and the dead, saw babes starving on the breasts of pallid mothers, heard the sobs, saw the tears, the sunken cheeks, the sightless eyes, the new-made graves, and remained as pitiless as the pestilence.

This God withheld the rain—caused the famine—saw the fierce eyes of hunger—the wasted forms, the white lips—saw mothers eating babes, and remained ferocious as famine.

It seems to me impossible for a civilized man to love or worship or respect the God of the Old Testament. A really civilized man, a really civilized woman, must hold such a God in abhorrence and contempt.

But in the old days the good people justified Jehovah in his treatment of the heathen. The wretches who were murdered were idolaters, and therefore unfit to live.

According to the Bible, God had never revealed himself to these people, and he knew that without a revelation they could not know that he was the true God. Whose fault was it, then, that they were heathen?

The Christians said that God had the right to destroy them because he had created them. What did he create them for? He knew when he made them that they would be food for the sword. He knew that he would have the pleasure of seeing them murdered.

As a last answer, as a final excuse, the worshippers of Jehovah said that all these horrible things happened under the "old dispensation" of unyielding law and absolute justice, but that now, "under the new dispensation," all had been changed; the sword of justice had been sheathed, and love enthroned. In the Old Testament, they said, God is the judge; but in the New, Christ is the merciful. As a matter of fact, the New Testament is infinitely worse than the Old. In the Old there is no threat of eternal pain. Jehovah had no eternal prison, no everlasting fire. His hatred ended at the grave. His revenge was satisfied when his enemy was dead.

In the New Testament death is not the end, but the beginning, of punishment that has no end. In the New Testament the malice of God is infinite, and the hunger of his revenge is eternal.

The orthodox God, when clothed in human flesh, told his disciples not to resist evil, to love their enemies, and, when smitten on one cheek, to turn the other; and yet we are told that this same God, with the same loving lips, uttered these heartless, these fiendish words: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." These are the words of "eternal love."

No human being has imagination enough to conceive of this infinite horror.

All that the human race has suffered in war and want, in pestilence and famine, in fire and flood—all the pangs and pains of every disease and every death—all this is as nothing compared with the agonies to be endured by one lost soul. This is the consolation of the Christian religion. This is the justice of God—the mercy of Christ.

This frightful dogma, this infinite lie, made me the implacable enemy of Christianity. The truth is that this belief in eternal pain has been the real persecutor. It founded the Inquisition, forged the chains, and furnished the fagots. It has darkened the lives of many millions. It made the cradle as terrible as the coffin. It enslaved nations and shed the blood of countless thousands. It sacrificed the wisest, the bravest, and the best. It

Digitized by Google

subverted the idea of justice, drove mercy from the heart, changed men to fiends, and banished reason from the brain.

In my youth I read religious books—books about God, about the atonement, about salvation by faith, and about the other worlds. I became familiar with the commentators, with Adam Clarke, who thought that the serpent seduced our mother Eve, and was, in fact, the father of Cain. He also believed that the animals, while in the ark, had their natures changed to that degree that they devoured straw together and enjoyed each other's society, thus prefiguring the blessed millennium. I read Scott, who was such a natural theologian that he really thought the story of Phaeton, of the wild steeds dashing across the sky, corroborated the story of Joshua having stopped the sun and moon. So I read Henry and McKnight, and found out that God so loved the world that he made up his mind to damn a large majority of the human race. I read Cruden, who made the great Concordance, and made the miracles as small and probable as he could.

I remember that he explained the miracle of feeding the wandering Jews with quails by saying that even at this day immense numbers of quails crossed the Red Sea, and that sometimes, when tired, they settled on ships that sank beneath their weight. The fact that the explanation was as hard to believe as the miracle made no difference to the devout Cruden.

To while away the time I read Calvin's *Institutes*, a book calculated to produce in any natural mind considerable respect for the devil.

I read Paley's *Evidences*, and found that the evidence of ingenuity in producing the evil, in contriving the hurtful, was at least equal to the evidence tending to show the use of intelligence in the creation of what we call good.

You know the watch argument was Paley's greatest effort. A man finds a watch, and it is so wonderful that he concludes that it must have had a maker. He finds the maker, and he is so much more wonderful than the watch that he says he must have had a maker. Then he finds God, the maker of the man, and he is so much more wonderful than the man that he could *not* have had a maker. This is what the lawyers call a departure in pleading.

According to Paley, there can be no design without a designer; but there can be a designer without a design. The wonder of the watch suggested the watchmaker, and the wonder of the watchmaker suggested the creator, and the wonder of the creator demonstrated that he was not created, but was uncaused and eternal.

We had Edwards on "The Will," in which the reverend author shows that necessity has no effect on accountability, and that when God creates a human being, and at the same time determines and decrees exactly what that being shall do and be, the human being is responsible, and God in his justice and mercy has the right to torture the soul of that human being forever. Yet Edwards said that he loved God.

The fact is that if you believe in an infinite God, and also in eternal punishment, then you must admit that Edwards and Calvin were absolutely right. There is no escape from their conclusions if you admit their premises. They were infinitely cruel, their premises infinitely absurd, their God infinitely fiendish, and their logic perfect.

And yet I have kindness and candor enough to say that Calvin and Edwards were both insane.

We had plenty of theological literature. There was Jenkyn on *The Atonement*, who demonstrated the wisdom of God in devising a way in which the suffering of innocence could justify the guilty. He tried to show that children could justly be punished for the sins of their ancestors, and that men could, if they had faith, be justly credited with the virtues of others. Nothing could be more devout, orthodox, and idiotic. But all of our theology was not in prose. We had Milton with his celestial militia—with his great and blundering God, his proud and cunning Devil—his wars between immortals, and all the sublime absurdities that religion wrought within the blind man's brain.

The theology taught by Milton was dear to the Puritan heart. It was accepted by New England, and it poisoned the souls and ruined the lives of thousands. The genius of Shakespeare could not make the theology of Milton poetic. In the literature of the world there is nothing, outside of the "sacred books," more perfectly absurd.

We had Young's *Night Thoughts*, and I supposed that the author was an exceedingly devout and loving follower of the Lord. Yet Young had a great desire to be a bishop, and, to accomplish that end, he electioneered with the king's mistress. In other words, he was a fine old hypocrite. In the *Night Thoughts* there is scarcely a genuinely honest, natural line. It is pretence from beginning to end. He did not write what he felt, but what he thought he ought to feel.

We had Pollok's *Course of Time*, with its worm that never dies, its quenchless flames, its endless pangs, its leering devils, and its gloating God. This frightful poem should have been written in a madhouse. In it you find all the cries and groans and shrieks of maniacs when they tear and rend each other's flesh. It is as heartless, as hideous, as hellish as the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy.

We all know the beautiful hymn, commencing with the cheerful line: "Hark, from the tombs, a doleful sound." Nothing could have been more appropriate for children. It is well to put a coffin where it can be seen from the cradle. When a mother nurses her child, an open grave should be at her feet. This would tend to make the babe serious, reflective, religious, and miserable.

God hates laughter and despises mirth. To feel free, untrammelled, irresponsible, joyous—to forget care and death—to be flooded with sunshine without a fear of night—to forget the past, to have no thought of the future, no dream of God, or heaven, or hell—to be intoxicated with the present—to be conscious only of the clasp and kiss of the one you love—this is the sin against the Holy Ghost.

But we had Cowper's poems. Cowper was sincere. He was the opposite of Young. He had an observing eye, a gentle heart, and a sense of the artistic. He sympathized with all who suffered—with the imprisoned, the enslaved, the outcast. He loved the beautiful. No wonder that the belief in eternal punishment made this loving soul insane. No wonder that the "tidings of great joy" quenched hope's great star, and left his broken heart in the dark depths of despair.

We had many volumes of orthodox sermons filled with wrath and the terrors of the judgment to come—sermons that had been delivered by savage saints.

We had the *Book of Martyrs*, showing that Christians had for many centuries imitated the God they worshipped!

We had the history of the Waldenses—of the Reformation, of the Church. We had Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Baxter's *Call*, and Butler's *Analogy*.

To use a Western phrase or saying, I found that Bishop Butler dug up more snakes than he killed—suggested more difficulties than he explained—more doubts than he dispelled.

Among such books my youth was passed. All the seeds of Christianity, of superstition, were sown in my mind, and cultivated with great diligence and care.

All that time I knew nothing of any science—nothing about the other side, nothing of the objections that had been urged against the blessed Scriptures, or against the perfect Congregational creed. Of course I had heard the ministers speak of blasphemers, of infidel wretches, of scoffers who laughed at holy things. They did not answer their arguments, but they tore their characters into shreds, and demonstrated by the fury of assertion that they had done the devil's work. And yet, in spite of all I heard, of all I read, I could not quite believe. My brain and heart said No.

For a time I left the dreams, the insanities, the illusions and delusions, the nightmares of theology. I studied astronomy, just a little—I examined maps of the heavens—learned the names of some of the constellations—of some of the stars—found something of their size, and the velocity with which they wheeled in their orbits—obtained a faint conception of astronomical spaces—found that some of the known stars were so far away in the depths of space that their light, travelling at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand miles a second, required many years to reach this little world—found that, compared with the great stars, our earth was but a grain of sand—an atom—found that the old belief, that all the hosts of heaven had been created for the benefit of man, was infinitely absurd.

I compared what was really known about the stars with the account of creation as told in Genesis. I found that

Digitized by Google

the writer of the inspired book had no knowledge of astronomy—that he was as ignorant as a Choctaw chief—as an Eskimo driver of dogs. Does anyone imagine that the author of Genesis knew anything about the sun—its size? that he was acquainted with Sirius, the North Star, with Capella, or that he knew anything of the clusters of stars so far away that their light, now visiting our eyes, has been travelling for two million years?

After I had learned a little about the stars I concluded that this writer, this "inspired" scribe, had been misled by myth and legend, and that he knew no more about creation than the average theologian of my day. In other words, that he knew absolutely nothing.

(To be concluded.)

POST-MORTEM LOTTERY BOOMERS; OR, THE HEAVENLY STOCKBROKERS.

THE time will come—"the writing's on the wall"—
When priests and all the sacerdotal brood
Shall vanish from the earth, for human good,
And men will cease on ghostly gods to call.

The time will come when honest men will treat
The parsons and the priests as rogues or fools;
As rascals, or as rascals' dupes and tools;
As social pests, to shun in house and street.

A thoughtful person knows he can't believe
The fundamental nonsense of the creeds;
But priests—ev'n those with brains—by words and deeds
Profess belief; they, therefore, but deceive.

These knaves inspire the ignorant with trust;
They preach for gain; they sigh and lift their eyes;
They teach, as truth, their silly, solemn lies,
And fill the *thoughtful* thinker with disgust.

They nurse the ancient errors of our race,
And blandly ply their wicked, blighting trade;
They make their bread—how easily 'tis made!—
By scaring fools and children! what disgrace!

The time will come—"'tis written on the wall"—
When thought will force the world to understand
How Bibles, priests, and churches curse the land;
And clearly see that Reason's all-in-all!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM said that no one could be a good soldier without being a good Christian. The famous Berlin comic paper, *Kladderdatsch*, quoted William's words under a picture of Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Alexander the Great, and Leonidas. For this offence the office of the paper was raided by the police. Such is freedom in Germany!

What hypocritical thieves are all the great Christian nations! Just look at the quarrel which Germany is picking with China. A brace of German missionaries got killed over there. They were never invited, they were not wanted, and in fact they were hated interlopers. Being killed, they were martyrs, and of course they are now in heaven—or on the way there. But this does not satisfy the German Government. It seizes upon this incident as a pretext for landing soldiers on Chinese soil. Then it formulates and presents its demands for compensation. These include a tremendous money indemnity for the two missionaries, whose pecuniary value when they were living was never suspected; the erection of a German cathedral; the refunding of Germany's expenses in occupying Kiao-Chow; the degradation of the Governor of Shantung; the punishment of murderers and minor officials; a railway monopoly for Germans in Shantung; and the occupation of Kiao-Chow by Germany as a coaling station. It would be hard to beat this as a blend of moral pretence and greedy selfishness. And this is Christianity!

Chinese objections to Christian missionaries appear to be as strong as ever judging from a placard issued by the people of Yochou, Hunan, wherein the missionaries are accused of all sorts of tricky ways in their endeavors to delude the people.

At a meeting of the Foreign Missionary Society held in Leicester a Miss Taylor told how she had served the Lord in Tibet. Mr. Landor fared very badly in that country; indeed, he has not yet recovered from the wounds of his torture. But it appears that Miss Taylor received divine assistance. Aconite was put in her food, but the Lord saved her from the poison, as he promised to do in the last chapter of Mark. She was also provided with food "in marvellous ways," though it probably did not drop down from heaven. Further, she made at least two converts to Christianity. They were with her at Leicester—going the round as part of the show. One of them told how he was converted. First, his mistress gave him some medicine, which cured him. Then she told him about heaven and hell, and asked him which he preferred going to. His choice fell on heaven, and she told him the way there, and now he worships Jesus. How simple! And how silly! Fancy sending missionaries at great expense to disturb the minds of the "heathen" in this ridiculous fashion! Better leave them to their own superstitions, which are just as good as the supernatural rubbish of the Bible.

The Catholics are never tired of denouncing Freemasonry as the enemy of law, order, and religion. But in England the heir to the throne is year after year elected Grand Master of the Order, and the bicentenary of the building of our finest cathedral is celebrated by a special Masonic service. Either the Papal denunciations are a calumny, or Freemasonry in England is entirely distinct from that in Catholic countries.

In Victoria, it seems, the Roman Catholics are taking steps to put down Orangeism. A Victorian Defence League has been formed which proposes to ask every Parliamentary candidate the following questions: "(1) Are you opposed to any person in the public service, and particularly in the police force, being a member of the Orange Society? If yes, and elected, will you support a Bill to attain this object? (2) Are you in favor of the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the state of Orangeism in the public service? (3) Are you prepared to support a Bill to remove all doubts concerning the illegality of members of the Orange lodges marching in procession wearing the regalia of their Order?" It is said the Orangemen of Australia are taking measures to defeat the schemes of the Catholics.

Ex-Rev. Father Joseph McCabe, writing in the *Echo* on "How I Became a Friar," remarks strongly on the iniquity of allowing boys of sixteen to take irrevocable vows of celibacy. He adds: "And for nuns, who make the vow of chastity at the same age, the pathos of the practice is much deeper. For them there is practically no appeal after the age of sixteen, and, unlike the priests, they are henceforth cut off from all pleasant intercourse with the outer world. The result is, naturally, misery and confusion; evil, solitary habits that lead to an awful premature mortality in nunneries; intrigue, quarrels, a perpetual fret and friction in their domestic life. Such a system could only be chastely and healthily supported by an unusually keen faith in the supernatural; such a faith is rarely found among modern priests, monks, and nuns (though much more among the latter than the former). Hence my previous words, that 'the greatest boon one could confer upon nuns would be to blow up all nunneries.'"

Walton Powell, the author of that infamous libel on the London Hall of Science, for which the printer and publisher were made to smart in the Court of Queen's Bench, was thought to have left the country, but he has turned up again at Bristol, where the magistrates have committed him for trial on a charge of procuration and criminal assault. Of course we have no comments to make upon the case at present. It will be another matter when the trial has taken place.

Since writing the above, and just as we go to press, we read that this scoundrel has been sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment, Justice Hawkins remarking that he did not add hard labor simply because the law would not allow it. Powell made it part of his artful defence that he had opposed "infidelity." We could say much on the doings of this worthy Christian Evidence man were it worth our while.

The Pontius Pilate letter "has *forgery* written plainly across its face," says the Rev. R. C. Nightingale, of Swaffham, in a letter to the *Daily News*. The reverend gentleman, however, refers to the "fact" of Pilate having written a report to the Senate, which "has at least as much authority as nine-tenths of the received facts of ecclesiastical history"—which is no doubt true. Mr. Nightingale alludes to the Apologies of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, in which Pilate's report is mentioned, and adds that "it is hardly possible that these appeals would have been made to persons so well

Digitized by Google

able to prove their valuelessness if they had not been founded on existing records which were both genuine and authentic." But this is a mistaken view of the circumstances. These Christian writers were obscure men, belonging to a comparatively small and despised sect in the empire; and there is no more reason for supposing that the Emperor and the Senate ever saw their Apologies than there is for supposing that the Queen of England and Lord Salisbury would read (and perhaps answer) an open letter written by a Socialist lecturer. Besides, the Christians who forged a letter from Marcus Aurelius could just as easily forge a letter from Pontius Pilate. The Christians were always great forgers, and this new Pontius Pilate letter, which turns up in the Vatican, is the last trick of a very old showman.

Mark Twain has a sly dig at the Fijian missionaries in his new book entitled *More Tramps Abroad*. The natives couldn't swallow the Christian doctrine of the resurrection, and this is how Mark Twain puts it: "It appears that their savage ancestors had a doctrine of immortality in their scheme of religion—with limitations. That is to say, their dead friend would go to a happy hereafter if he could be accumulated, but not otherwise. They drew the line; they thought that the missionary's doctrine was too sweeping, too comprehensive. They called his attention to certain facts. For instance, many of their friends had been devoured by sharks; the sharks, in their turn, were caught and eaten by other men; later, these men were captured in war, and eaten by the enemy. The original persons had entered into the composition of the sharks; next, they and the sharks had become part of the flesh and blood and bone of the cannibals. How, then, could the particles of the original men be searched out from the final conglomerate and put together again? The inquirers were full of doubts, and considered that the missionary had not examined the matter with the gravity and attention which so serious a thing deserved."

Referring to the launching of the new cruiser "Pomone" at Sheerness, the *Daily News* satirically regrets that it was effected without any ceremony. What a pity, our contemporary says, to have no speechifying on these occasions; and it goes on to suggest a suitable form of words, ending in this fashion: "You are a living witness to the piety of our people, for he who is not a good Christian cannot build a good ship. Our glorious forefathers look down upon you out of the heavens—also the statues of the Kings, without whom ye can do nothing. See John xv. 5. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" Of course, this is a slap at pious Emperor William. The text in John begins, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and most good Christians would call the quotation "blasphemous."

Herr Rudolph Falb, the German meteorological prophet, roused the religionists by predicting the end of the world, as a result of the collision of our globe with Temple's Comet on November 13, 1899. It is a comet which travels in the wake of the meteoric swarm of shooting stars, or the Leonid shower, which will be most intense in 1899; and the late Prof. Oppolzer, of Vienna, calculated its return for May, 1899, instead of November. Dr. Falb's sinister prediction has caused Dr. Frederick Bidschof, first assistant at the Vienna Observatory, to make a recalculation of the comet's course, with the reassuring result that on the day in 1899 when it will be nearest to our earth the distance will still be eighteen million kilométres, omitting the odd figures. He gravely assures us that this distance is sufficient for removing any alarm, and gives us further to understand that Herr Falb made an error in his logarithm.

The *English Mechanic*, from which we gather the above item, inserts a good letter from "M. F. T." on the Star of Bethlehem, about which enough nonsense has been written to sink a man-of-war. He observes: "According to the evangelist, the Wise Men came to Jerusalem, inquiring, 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews?' Now, Jesus was never, either in a literal or even figurative sense, King of the Jews. The story itself is a tissue of inconsistencies, and has always been a bone of contention among theologians, and the plain man may well be excused if he ask the preliminary question, 'Is it true, or is it simply one of the many legends that grew up around the infancy and childhood of the great teacher?'"

John Shaw, a painter out of employment and of no fixed abode, was brought before the York magistrates, on the charge of being on the premises of the Wellington Inn for an unlawful purpose, and wanted to know how the disciples who left all to follow Jesus lived. He said: "You gentlemen on the Bench don't know what it is to be in low circumstances. Has a man to go into a low workhouse casual ward, where they starve you, in this disgraceful Christian country? What did the disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ do when they were hungered? Did they not steal?" John was sent up for a month with hard labor.

The Rev. H. J. Clarke offers an occult explanation of the casting of devils from men into swine. His idea is that "the unearthly malignant influence, in quitting the demoniacs, may have found entrance into the herd of swine through cries proceeding from the men, or acts done by them in some terrific paroxysm of fury, just before their restoration to soundness of mind." And this, he says, has "a profoundly valuable lesson, for it opens up to our mental view abysmal possibilities of brutish degradation, loathsome depths into which intellects, noble though they once have been, impotently sink their exalted powers if they engage in a struggle with Almighty God." This is the sort of nonsense that does for a theological monthly.

The Rev. Harry Wilson, a well-known East-end rector, went to Kensington to protest against against Canon Pennefather uniting Mr. Lyon to a Miss Crooke, on the ground that he had a canonical wife. A canonical wife, it appears, is a wife who is recognised as such by the canons of the Church, but not by the law of the land—namely, a *divorcee*. Canon Pennefather had, however, previously declined, and Mr. Lyon found a more obliging clergyman elsewhere. Now, as the *Daily News* remarks, the real question of interest is whether Churchmen can take the freedom of a disestablished Church while enjoying the advantages of an Establishment.

There is a good story told of a Governor of Pennsylvania. A worthy Quaker took a wife without any formal ceremony. The Governor invited them to dine with him, and, in course of conversation, spoke of marriage. A discussion arose, and presently the Governor said: "Seth, I understand thee to say that thou dost consider Hannah to be thy lawful wife!" "Verily I do," said Seth. "Thou wilt cherish her as thy wife as long as thou livest?" "Yea, of a surety," replied Seth, looking proudly at Hannah. Presently the Governor turned to the wife. "Hannah," said he, "thou dost love Seth as thy true husband?" "Yea," said Hannah. "And thou wilt always be a faithful wife to him?" "Yea, verily," was the answer. Then the Governor rose with dignity. "By the authority vested in me as Chief Magistrate of this State," he said, "I pronounce you before these witnesses to be man and wife."

H. C. Richards, M.P., the opponent of Mr. Bradlaugh, has been to Australia, where, we gather from the *Sydney Bulletin*, he was appreciated at his proper merits—very small potatoes indeed. It is satisfactory to learn that, according to Mr. Richards, "the English Church there suffers from dry rot; and," says he, "I cannot escape from the conclusion that the only hope for morals and faith lies in the Catholic Church. It is the light of Australia."

A coroner's jury at Lambeth, investigating the death of George Tothe, a churchwarden, district councillor, and well-known religious worker at High Wycombe, who died in a house of ill-fame, brought in a rider to the effect that the number of prostitutes and brothels in the district was a blot on civilization.

The Lord Mayor and Corporation are going to a special service to be held in the Church of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, in thanksgiving for the preservation of life and limb during the recent fire. One boy lost, much property destroyed, and hundreds of workgirls thrown out of employment do not seem to offer much to be thankful for.

The tender mercies of Providence have been spreading the bubonic plague in India, and the human mercies of the India office have sent out twenty-five more doctors eminent in bacteriology to try and cope with the affliction.

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. In Victoria he has been riding on a dust-storm which has wrecked several towns, many churches and prominent buildings being laid in ruins. One town was damaged to the extent of £50,000. Numerous casualties are reported.

Brazil—where the nuts come from—has lately been disturbed by a religious fanatic who, says the cable, "claimed to work miracles, and was regarded by his followers as the Messiah." There is food for reflection in the cabled news that the Messiah was killed. The Government didn't believe in his miracles, and the chances are against his founding a Faith of the Future. He is possibly a Mahomet, but the time for starting a new religion by peaceful or warlike means is not now-a-days. Try to imagine a successful Messiah preaching the Word at a meeting where newspaper reporters took it down in shorthand, or talking the Word into a phonograph! Absurd idea. If an irreproachable prophet were to try his luck in Sydney to-morrow—well, he would be "obstructing the thoroughfare." His followers—if he "caught on"—would swarm across the tramlines and cause him to get fined forty shillings or a month—an incident quite unsuitable

Digitized by Google

for publication in Holy Writ. Any further manufacture of Holy Writ is out of the question.

The S. M. *Herald* lately published, in its special advertisements' column, the following queer combination :—

"This is God's way. THERE IS NO OTHER. Accept it and be saved for ever; or reject it, or neglect it, and be lost for ever. 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.' 'Believe on the Lord and thou shalt be saved.'

ASK FOR 'RODERICK DHU' WHISKY.

Obtainable in Bulk, Case, ½ bottles, and stone Jorums. Also two and four gallon Jars, specially fitted with electro-plated taps."

The Wages of Sin—and stone jorums!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The American religious papers have been discussing the increase of Sunday bicycling and the decline of public and private worship. Even the Unitarian *Christian Register* remarks: "Religion is getting to be much more of a fag-end affair than it was formerly. Formerly it was the most engrossing object of men's thought and feeling. Hardly did all other things together take up so much of their time and their attention, consume so much of their energy. It is quite otherwise in our own time. However it may be with some, it is true of the majority that religion is their last consideration, not their first."

In our young days we used to be told that every word of the Bible was divine, and was to be believed under penalty of eternal damnation, *nous avons changé tout cela.* Now, the Rev. S. A. Alexander, the Reader of the Temple, addressing a meeting at Torquay on "The Difficulties of the Bible," said "that the Bible was so unnecessary to Christianity that if they were to discover a tissue of difficulties on every page of it, they would not even be approaching the fundamental truths of the Christian faith." To the Reader of the Temple the billet seems to be more essential than the Bible.

Of course, Dr. Alexander went on to say that the difficulties of the Bible were very trivial. To give a picture of deity that cannot be distinguished from the devil is apparently, to Dr. Alexander, a mere trifle. He draws a distinction. "The Bible was the record of the revelation, and was not the revelation itself." So when Christ says, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren, and his sisters, he cannot be my disciple," that is not the revelation, but only its record. So we should think.

The latest American sect has started in Nebraska, and are known as Figgites, after their founder, Louis Figg. The members of the new sect assert a personal inspiration, and stoutly affirm that their bodies are the abode of the deity. If this were all, the Figgites would not differ from a number of other fanatical bodies which at various times have laid claim to divine inspiration; but the Nebraska fanatics go a step further, and maintain that, while they are the mouthpieces of divinity, most other people are possessed by demons. Even this feature would not be especially disagreeable, were it not for the fact that the Figgites claim to be divinely inspired to assault any person in whom they recognise the malign influence; and their belief has taken active form in so many instances that the members of the new sect are frequently compelled to appear in the police-courts as defendants in cases of assault and battery. Figgism seems to be a revival of a deep-seated atavism.

Convalescent homes are admirable institutions, and many of them admirably conducted; yet there are some designed rather to serve the interests of religion than humanity. We have heard of a Catholic institution in Wiltshire, where all females received have, for the first thing, all their hair cut off, and where they are told to prepare their souls for death. We know of one poor woman who went, was unable to take the food, or endure the treatment, and implored her friends to let her come home, as she did, to die.

The case against the fanatic stranglers in Russia has been heard with closed doors. This sect carries the belief in immortality to its logical consequence, and when assured that believers have received divine grace strangle them forthwith, that there may be no relapse. This is making salvation sure. Professor Ivanofski, of the Orthodox Academy at Kazan, was called to give expert evidence concerning this and a kindred sect commonly known as the "Jumpers," but his detailed statements, which occupied the Court for nearly seven hours, were not allowed to transpire. It is understood that the Professor's revelations with regard to the secret practices of the Stranglers will impel the Government to adopt suppressive measures against that and other extreme sects.

The Rev. C. L. Perry, a Presbyterian preacher, known in Missouri and Kansas, was convicted last week at Pawnee, Ok., of wrecking the Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank of that place. He was cashier and president of the bank when it failed eight months ago. Citizens of the Pawnee and Osage nations lost between $40,000 and $50,000 by the failure of the bank, which only had sixty cents on hand at the time. —*Kansas City Star.*

Pastor Gilham, of Mintonville, Kentucky, told his congregation that there was no such personage as the Devil, and his exasperated hearers arose and hurled him through the window, giving him a parting salute of twenty pistol shots as he fled. It was a shame to seek to deprive such good Christians of their consolations.

Unbelieving France has miracles certified to by a doctor one Dr. Boissarie pledging his word that cases of blindness, paralysis, and hernia have been cured at Lourdes. Yet the world shrugs its shoulders. Miracles must be musty with age ere they command respect.

When I was out West (says a business man in *Hardware*) a young man registered at the hotel and proceeded to make things lively. The first night he played poker with the landlord and cleaned him out, the next night he came home drunk and whipped the cabman, the third night he went up and down the halls singing at the top of his voice and daring the chambermaids to come out and embrace him. In the morning they asked for the key of his room, and gave him his bill. He looked it over, and then said, with surprised pathos: "Don't you make any discount for ministers?"

It is proposed to lay a cogwheel railway up the falsely-called Mount Sinai, to give pilgrims (who break "the Commandments") an easy lift to the spot where two Gods, Moses and Jah, confabulated, at the time Jack and Jill went to fetch that pail of water. Professor Sayce—as pious a fool as a scholar can well be—says Mount Sinai is not in the Sinaitic Peninsula at all, at all; but must be looked for in the Mount Sier range, about 120 miles farther to the N.E. There seems no known limit to the madness produced by religion, especially the Judæo-Christian superstition. Pious noodles see no difficulty in the averment that their invisible and infinite God came down from everywhere and stood or sat on a mountain, where he showed his feet to the elders and his face (and back parts) to Moses, and wrote the paltry Decalogue with his finger on two slabs of stone! This absurdity never strikes the worshipper, and he would be terribly agitated if it should. Many a man has considered himself damned to all eternity because a glimpse of some pious absurdity has for once flashed through his brain. However, Christianity is a grand instrument for blinding the conscience to the real duties of life, and awakening it to exquisite sensitiveness over the paltriest of all possible trifles; and it is a splendid instrument for extorting cash from the pockets of fools to enrich the holy sharpers.—*Liberator.*

Edward Marks, of Melbourne, puts forward a sensible religious objection to the marriage of Jews and Jewesses with "Christians of easy faith" who join the Synagogue from purely matrimonial motives. "The evils of indifference and callousness which the Christian Churches are lamenting are equally rampant among certain sections of the Synagogue," says Mr. Marks, "and what can be the result of a commingling of insincere Christians with indifferent Jews?" As a champion of his ancient faith, the worthy Hebrew is naturally alarmed at its gradual decay; but he may at least derive a little racial satisfaction from the fact that, while all religious faiths are dying, Judaism dies gamest of all.—*Bulletin.*

An orthodox correspondent signing himself "Verax," but surely no relation to *the* "Verax," opens fire on Colonel Ingersoll in the Manchester *Umpire.* This person begins by calling Ingersoll "an exploded frost"—whatever that may mean. No doubt something dreadful. Next he denies that Ingersoll can have any morality at all, as "all morality is founded upon the believer's standard." Apart from the cool impudence of this, the question arises, Why is such rubbish inserted in the *Umpire?* How on earth can anything be founded on a *standard?* A standard is for testing or measuring, not a foundation. Lastly, we wish to know if it is any answer to Ingersoll to say that he differs from his father. If this means anything at all, it means that Ingersoll's father was the standard of correct opinion for the whole world—past, present, and future. Could anything be more absurd? "Verax" has mistaken his vocation. He may be fit for some menial employment; he is certainly not fit to criticise Ingersoll; and the *Umpire* must have been short of copy when it inserted his ridiculous letter.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 5, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "Another Converted Atheist."

December 12, Athenæum Hall.

January 2, Birmingham; 9, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. C. WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 5, Manchester; 12, Camberwell. January 23 and 30, 1898, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham. April 29, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

S. G. GRANT.—Thanks for the cuttings from Bristol papers. Yes, it is the same Walton Powell.

A. C.—See paragraph. Thanks. Always glad to receive such cuttings.

HERBERT.—We have written several paragraphs in "Acid Drops" on the "newly-discovered" bogus letter from Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius. It is really not worth a separate article. The fraud is so transparent that no one is deceived. There is no need to worry about killing an abortion.

MISS VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, asks us to announce that she would be glad to receive the private addresses of the following subscribers to the Treasurer's Scheme:—J. C. Banks, W. S. M., Geo. Smith, F. G., W. Marr, M. Ball, M. Duncan, J. G. Dobson, S. Burgon, E. F. B., G. Thwaites, T. Stephens, C. H. Gask.

A LARGE number of members' certificates are lying at the office, returned by the Post Office officials, marked "Gone away." Members of the *parent* Society who have not received certificates should write Miss Vance.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—*Per Miss Vance:* J. Hampson, £1 (*p*); Mrs. Hampson, £1 (*p*); T. Holstead, £1 (*p*); Thomas Reed, £1 (*p*); W. Turner, £1 (*p*); W. Hopper, 10s. (*p*); S. Graham, 5s. (*p*); Dr. W. W. Hardwicke, £1 1s. (*p*); G. L. Lupton, £1 (*p*); H. A. Lupton, 5s. (*p*). *Per C. Cohen:* J. Umpleby, £5. We have received: Joseph May, £1 (*p*).

THE HOOPER FUND.—Mr. Thomas Bellamy acknowledges:—Per J. W. Gott, £5 2s. 3d.; C. Chambers, 1s.; Gustave Smith, 5s. 6d.

GEORGE PROCTOR.—Thanks for remittances. The Secretary will acknowledge formally in due course. This acknowledgment was written for last week, but got laid aside accidentally.

A. B. MOSS.—Lecturing at outside Clubs and Institutes is a good way of spreading our principles.

J. G. DOBSON.—Voltaire never had a printing press himself, so it cannot possibly be used now for printing Bibles; and if it was it wouldn't matter as long as Voltaire's works are still printed and circulated extensively.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Dr. R. Nichols, £1 1s.; A. B. Moss, 10s.

T. BELLAMY.—It is pleasant to know that the subscriptions acknowledged in our columns made poor James Hooper's last days lighter than they otherwise would have been. Your share of the good work must not be forgotten. The obituary notice appears in another column.

W. FROUDE.—Grant Allen's new book on *The Evolution of the God Idea* is an important one. Mr. Foote will make it the subject of his lecture at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday, December 12.

H. BROWN.—Evolution *does* continue in the human race. This is proved in many ways, chiefly by archæology. See the works of Darwin, Lubbock, Tylor, etc.

C. HARWOOD.—See paragraph.

A. KOHN.—Marked papers are always welcome.

A. ESKHOFF.—The placard against "ex-priest Slattery" certainly bears the style of Brann, who, we are have heard, is an ex-Baptist preacher, with a soft side for Catholicism. We know nothing whatever as to Slattery's merits or demerits, but believe in all having a fair hearing.

PLYMOUTHIAN.—Rather broad.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Leeds Daily News—English Mechanic—New York Public Opinion—Glamorgan Free Press—Lucifer—Echo—Gloucestershire Echo—Liberator—New Century—Two Worlds—Crescent—Sheffield Telegraph—Torch of Reason—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (December 5) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, his subject being "Another Converted Atheist."

Mr. Foote lectured twice at Leicester on Sunday. The morning lecture was well attended, and the hall was crowded at night in spite of the stormy weather. Both audiences were enthusiastic. Mr. Gimson presided in the morning, and Mr. Pinder in the evening.

We are happy to learn that the Leicester Secular Society is making good progress. With a view to closer organization and wider usefulness, it is proposed to engage Mr. Harry Snell as a kind of "resident minister" of Secularism. This will not, however, make any difference to the old varied program of Sunday evening lectures. A list of subscribers is being made up for this effort, which should, in our opinion, be successful. Mr. Snell is at present spending his week-ends at Leicester, and a definite engagement with him is contemplated at the end of March.

The terrible gale that visited London last Sunday evening interfered with Mr. Charles Watts's audience at the Athenæum Hall. Those, however, who were present evidently appreciated the new lecture on "Can God Do Wrong?" Mr. Dunn, of the Christian Evidence Society, opposed. The chair was occupied by Mr. Harry Brown in a most efficient manner.

To-day, Sunday, December 5, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Manchester. His subjects are all new, and should draw large audiences.

In accordance with a resolution of a Conference upon Moral Instruction in Schools, a meeting will be held at St. Martin's Town Hall, W.C., on December 7, with a view to the formation of a Moral Instruction League. The National Secular Society will be represented by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Heaford, Moss, Cohen, and Hartmann, and we hope there will be a good muster of Secularists. Mr. J. Allanson Picton takes the chair, and Dr. Stanton Coit, the Rev. J. Page Hopps, and Mr. F. J. Gould are in the list of speakers.

Mr. Thomas Robertson, secretary of the Glasgow Branch, informs us that the receipts from members are considerably in excess of those in the corresponding period of last year, and the improvement is likely to be continued. This is the reward of harmony and devotion.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive, takes place on Monday evening, January 11, at the Holborn Restaurant. The tickets are now ready for sale, price four shillings. Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, Mr. Wheeler, and other well-known Freethinkers, will be present at the dinner.

Mr. Percy Ward lectured on Sunday at Edmonton in connection with the P. S. A. movement. There was a large and sympathetic audience, and the lecturer was highly complimented on his address.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured on Sunday morning at the North Camberwell Radical Club on "Darwin, the Shakespeare of Science." There was a large and appreciative audience, and the lecture was followed by some intelligent discussion.

Mr. J. G. Dobson, having returned to Stockton-on-Tees, determined to reorganize the Freethought movement there. Local friends willing to assist are earnestly requested to meet at No. 1 Langley-street, Stockton, on Sunday, Dec. 5, at 6.30.

The Birmingham Branch has projected a testimonial to its devoted and indefatigable secretary, Mr. James Partridge. Subscriptions should be sent to W. T. Pitt (treasurer) or C. H. Cattell (hon. sec.) to the Committee, at 65 Waverley-road, Small Heath, Birmingham.

Mommsen, the great German historian, whose *History of Rome* is an acknowledged standard, has just celebrated his eightieth birthday. He is still in perfect bodily and mental health. Mommsen is a Freethinker. He has more than one sneer at the absurd history and chronology of the Gospel narrative.

The *Gloucestershire Echo* reports pretty fully a Freethought paper on Immortality, read to the Cheltenham Free Lances by Mr. B. Corke, and the discussion which ensued thereon.

Mr. Foote's article on Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's *If I Were God* has had to stand over. It will appear for certain in our next issue.

Digitized by Google

The *Glamorgan Free Press* reports Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Porth and Pontypridd. Incidentally it remarks that "the price of admission was rather exorbitant." But as the highest price was sixpence and the lowest threepence, it is difficult to understand this criticism. No doubt it would be better to carry on a free-admission campaign in South Wales, but Mr. Foote cannot undertake that on his own responsibility, and the cost can hardly be covered by a handful of Rhondda miners.

The *Free Press* also gives a two-column report of the debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee at Pontypridd. "The large audience," it says, "which included a considerable sprinkling of ladies, evinced great interest in the discussion." After an impartial account of the opening speeches, the *Free Press* says: "The subsequent discussion between the two gentlemen was of a very entertaining order, both speakers showing remarkable aptitude in the art of repartee. The debate was full of brilliant hits, and was highly instructive."

PIONEERING IN SOUTH WALES.

UNTIL recently I had not visited South Wales since the debates I held with Mr. Lee, in the early part of last year, at Cardiff and Swansea. Mr. Cohen paid a flying visit to the district soon after; and a good deal of stir has been created in the Rhondda Valley by Mr. J. W. Cox, whose lectures and debates have attracted large audiences. Mr. Cox would have had a career as a Christian minister had he been able to remain in the pulpit, but his mind became too broad for orthodox dogmas, and he preferred another method of earning his bread. He is a man of fine presence, his voice is powerful, and I should not be surprised if he makes a name on the English Freethought platform. Unfortunately he finds his business suffering from his bold advocacy of our principles, and it is just possible that he may deem it advisable to keep more in the background.

Having been frequently pressed to visit the Rhondda Valley, I determined to spend a few days there and "prospect" the territory. Arriving at Pontypridd on Saturday evening (November 20), I was met at the station by a band of earnest Freethinkers, who conducted me to the house of Mr. Lewis, where I was hospitably entertained. The next morning I went to Porth, about four miles distant, to deliver three lectures in the Town Hall. Special efforts had been made to deter people from hearing me. One wretched emissary of Christianity from London had told them that I was an immoral and even an obscene writer, which I venture to think is a very peculiar description. When I defended myself against the charge of "blasphemy" before the late Lord Coleridge I contended that it was at least *clean* "blasphemy," and I objected to the Christians flinging about the word "indecent." Lord Coleridge said that I was right, and that while I might be blasphemous I was certainly not licentious. "You do not find him," his lordship said, "pandering to the bad passions of mankind." As far as I am aware, I never wrote a line which I should hesitate to read out aloud at any time or any place. Still, the lie about me was abroad, and many of the Porth people regarded me as a monster. My morning audience was scanty, but there was a very good attendance in the afternoon, and a still better attendance in the evening. The lectures were listened to attentively, and there was no lack of applause. Discussion was invited, but was not offered; however, several persons asked questions, some of which were extremely wide of the subjects I dealt with. One gentleman, whose anxiety was pathetic, wanted to know "who made the universe?" I hope he has since recovered.

The friends who came over from Pontypridd had to walk back after the third meeting. Some who came from greater distances, one at least fifteen miles, had to get home somehow. Mr. Cox, who had been obliged to walk ten miles to take the chair in the evening, had to stretch his legs again over the four miles to Pontypridd.

On the Monday evening I lectured in the Town Hall, Pontypridd, to a most courteous and attentive audience on the question of whether Jesus Christ ever lived. It was too much of a staggerer, I fear; another selection would have been more suitable. Some of the questions that were asked showed that some of the audience were positively dazed by the novelty of the subject.

On the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, in the same hall, I debated the relative merits of Christianity and Secularism with Mr. W. T. Lee. The Christians wildly applauded their champion when he first rose, and they treated me with respectful silence. They did not applaud me at all throughout the debate, but their enthusiasm abated as we went along, and it was obvious that the Secular arguments were telling. Mr. Lee had the last speech, but there was no frantic applause at the finish as there was at the commencement. It was not that he did not speak well; it was simply that the Christians felt, in spite of themselves, that there was something in Secularism, after all; something more in harmony with common sense and civilization than they had suspected. And this is really the only use in such debates. They enable a Freethought speaker to address hundreds of Christians who otherwise would never hear him.

I was sorry I could not stay longer in the district. Friends from other parts pressed me to pay them a visit. South Wales presents a fine field for Secular propaganda. Beyond the flourishing towns of Cardiff and Swansea there is a multitude of small towns in which lectures could be delivered night after night for whole weeks at a stretch. The district is notoriously religious, yet Freethought simmers everywhere under the crust of orthodoxy. I wish we had money enough to send lecturers down there in constant succession. Immense good could be done if we only had the means. Freethinkers should really give a better support to the new N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme. Those who cannot share in the fighting ought at least to supply the sinews of war. I ask nothing for myself, as I take the risk everywhere and raise no lamentation when I do not earn my own bread and cheese. It is for other propagandists that I am appealing. I want the Secular party to make good use of its efficient advocates. Meanwhile I desire to express my admiration of the courage and devotion of the Porth and Pontypridd Freethinkers—nearly all working men—who are fighting as best they can for the success of our cause. G. W. FOOTE.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Friday, November 26; the President, G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were present:—Messrs. E. Bater, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, V. Roger, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, Annie Brown, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, J. Neale, P. Sabine, M. Loafer, W. Leat, E. W. Quay, and the secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Secretary's cash statement adopted. Some discussion arose upon the Treasurer's statement, and it was resolved that the President be asked to call a special meeting of the sub-committee, with a view to having the balance-sheet prepared by the next meeting.

It was resolved that a generous gift of £100 to the Benevolent Fund be acknowledged in the *Freethinker* without the name of the donor.

The sub-committee's minutes were then read and adopted; and Mr. Henry Smith, of Stanningley, was appointed as a collector under the Scheme. An application was received from some unattached Freethinkers residing in the West of London for permission to form a branch of the Society, and for its members to pay a reduced fee to headquarters. After some discussion, it was resolved to instruct the secretary to point out that the Executive could not alter the rules of the Society, and to advise the proposers to strengthen the already existing branch in West London.

The forthcoming Moral Instruction Conference was then discussed, and the President, Messrs. A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, J. M. Wheeler, S. Hartmann, and C. Watts, were elected as delegates.

The Secretary reported that members' certificates were now out of print; and, after some discussion as to the advisability of obtaining a new design or reprinting, it was resolved that "we pass to the next business."

An application for assistance to form a branch at Croydon was referred to the sub-committee, and the meeting adjourned until December 30.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

The *Daily News* gives this as another genuine anecdote of a Godless Church school: "Teacher (who is putting the class, boy after boy, piecemeal, through the 'Apostles'' Creed)—'Now, then, your turn.' Pupil—'Please, sir, I'm not the boy who believes in the Holy Ghost. He's at home ill of measles. I'm the one who believes in the Holy Catholic Church.'"

Digitized by Google

IMMORTALITY.

"WHAT a terrible end these Freethinkers must have to look forward to—to die like a dog, to lie in the cold and dismal grave for ever and evermore," I can remember my father saying over and over again when I was a boy; and the Christian Evidence man loves to dwell upon this point, too; while the parson in the pulpit does all he can, Sunday after Sunday, to call forth and sustain the emotions of his congregation by impressing upon it the "consolations" of Christianity, the chief one being eternal life in the presence of Jesus and his host of angels. This betrays the origin of a life beyond the tomb. The wish was father to the thought, as there can be no doubt that dreams helped to form the notion of an immortal soul; and the wish is, if not father, stepfather, to the thought to-day, as sure as dreams form the corner-stone of our nineteenth-century Christianity, which is believed in and accepted as such by intelligent, every-day-life, practical people, if they are sincere. They are right; it would be cruel to be annihilated, to be totally extinguished like a flame, to be snapped from off the earth in the prime of life, and to be cast into oblivion for ever, to behold no more the faces we have loved. It would be hard to some to think of while they live; it will no longer be so when they can think no more. But the question, after all, is not, Would it be pleasant to live on after what we call Death? but, Is it true that we shall? There are many hard conditions and occurrences in this life that we know fall to our lot, which we all wish did not exist, but whose existence, nevertheless, we cannot dispute. There are many who would never part with their loved ones at all, but who would live on in their presence here on earth; this, however, we know cannot be, and we do not hope for it, and so, as a consolation, we grasp after the life hereafter; not because we are certain of it, but just because we are fond of lingering in the hope of something uncertain, which we know can never be ascertained. But if this hope of eternal life proves to be a delusion, it will not be the first time the human race has been cruelly disillusionized. Disappointment is, and always has been, the lot of man—individually as well as collectively—and in the long run it makes us wise. An awakening from a fond delusion brings first despair, then resignation, and at last content. The schooling that humanity has to undergo has been one uninterrupted series of blunders made by itself, rude awakenings and rectifications, and it is the only kind of schooling that would educate a child without a teacher, wherefore we are perfectly justified in proclaiming reason and experience as our only moral guides.

Reverting to the consolation theory, one would imagine Christianity, least of all religions, to be adapted to console a thoughtful and sensitive adherent. You think of the eternal presence of your Lord, the everlasting prayer-meetings, the incessant shouting of "Holy, holy," the curiosity or the hypnotizing stares of the beasts "with eyes without and eyes within," or whatever is your attraction; but look at the other frightful picture! While you go to eternal glory, a hundred others will depart to eternal torment. While you are twanging on your harp and revelling in your ecstasy of bliss, yell upon yell will ascend from the bottomless pit, and the weeping and lamentation will drown the hallelujahs and rejoicing of heaven. While you are engaged in chanting your "Glory! glory!" perhaps you will be startled by a long-drawn moan of a well-known voice in hell, and, turning round, you will perhaps see your old mother, maybe your sweetheart or wife, struggling in the flames, writhing in her never-ceasing death agonies. Say, my Christian friend, could you be happy in heaven, while the very sky is lurid and tinged with the lustre from the fire in hell, and the very air rings with the shrieks of the damned ones? Could you, unless you were transformed into a Satanic monster ten times worse than the Sovereign of the Inferno himself has ever been depicted? You know very well you could not. But in steps the Spiritualist and says: "Oh, but there is no material hell in that sense." There is but the hell which you yourself have made through your own immorality or ignorance, exactly as you do here. There is the hell of remorse, the hell of spiritual misery and darkness, out of which you will have to get through your own effort, and that by incessant work and hard labor, perhaps for ages. And if you have been ever so good, still there is work for you to do for inferior ones, whereby you yourself will be able to rise to higher and ever higher planes of existence. Certainly an infinitely nobler aspiration than the swinish and diabolical ideal of the Christian, and it may be a moral guide and intellectual stimulus to the thoughtless energy of youth; but where is the consolation to those who are on the point of passing over? As the child grows up it steadily increases in physical and mental vigor; its views expand, its aspirations rise, and the castles in the air are often augmented as the years go by. At thirty the nature calms down. The fire of youth cools off, one ideal after the other bursts like bubbles; the sea of passions, the waters of aspiration, quiet down, the man becomes settled, often in the bosom of a happy family life. At forty both body and mind begin slowly, imperceptibly, but surely, to die; and as one glides over into the ever-decaying feebleness of old age, which derides the pleasures and renounces the battles of life, and is only desirous of rest and peace, where is the consolation of knowing that in a short time one has to resume that vitality and energy which was one's only desire a lifetime back, but which one desires no longer?

Now, take a horse, a dog, and a man, and place them in a row. The horse dies. Where is it gone to? Nowhere. It arose from nature, and it is gone home to nature. The dog dies, and it remains in the earth and rots, passes into more and ever more forms of life, till, as it were, it is absorbed in the great cosmos of vegetable life and air. The man dies. Where is he? "Gone to heaven," is the reply. Now, I want to know, what is it that differentiates the lower animals from man to such an extent that they are irrevocably doomed to eternal death, while eternal life is, without asking, thrust upon man? Is it our intelligence that procures for us this preference (?). If so, after all, the difference is only one of degree. All animals reason in their way—that is, they first ponder, and then decide one of two alternatives; and some species of the higher animals, such as the dog and horse, have memory; the fox is, as is well known, cunning, and can pretend to be dead while laying plans of escape; the hare will make side-leaps so as to bewilder the pursuing dogs; while the elephant makes war schemes. The monkey will learn to count, and both that and the dog will learn not a little of the human language. I daresay that the cleverest animals are more intelligent than the most stupid men, for remember that the Christians also claim immortality for idiots. If a donkey could conceive the idea of a god, its deity would probably have fine, long ears; if a monkey could conceive of one, *its* god would undoubtedly possess a splendid long tail. If the animals have a notion of a hereafter, each species presumably arrogates to itself alone eternal life, and why should man be an exception? Indeed, the courageous and faithful dog, who will bring lost objects to its master, and leap into the water to save a drowning infant, would strongly resent the theory of extinction to himself, and immortality to his often harsh and ungrateful master.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

DANIEL.

THE evidences in Daniel that the book was written after the Alexandrian conquest, and after his death B.C. 323, and the division of his empire among his four principal generals, are overwhelming. Three Greek words, the names of musical instruments, occur, "so exact," says the orthodox M. Lenormant, "that they must have been taken from the lips of a Greek, an impossibility before commercial intercourse was established between Greece and Babylonia, after the age of the Selucidae." Alexander's conquest, his death, and the division of his empire among his four generals, are told with such particularity as would be impossible for one not familiar with the history of those events. The ablest critics, who follow the old lines of thought, fix the period when Daniel was written as about B.C. 168, near the close of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. Its purpose was to influence that monarch; and the allusions to him, though in the form of prophecy, were easily understood, because of their directness. Hitzig, a German Biblical critic, found the period when Daniel was written as B.C. 170 to 174. Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* says: "This opinion [of Hitzig] has found, especially in Germany, a very wide acceptance, and Lucke [a German theologian] ventures to pronounce it 'a certain result of historical criticism.'" Again says Smith: "The real grounds on which most modern critics rely in rejecting the book are the 'fabulousness of its narratives' and 'the minuteness of the prophetic history.'" Hitzig says: "The contents of the book are irrational and impossible."—*Progressive Thinker.*

Obituary.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. James Hooper, of Nottingham, after a long illness, which terminated in the rupture of a blood-vessel during a violent fit of coughing. The funeral took place at the General Cemetery, Mr. T. Bellamy reading the Secular Burial Service written by Austin Holyoake. The large gathering of sympathizers at the grave included Councillors H. H. Adams, F. W. Gregory, and E. G. Loverseed, and County Councillor J. R. Anderson. The deceased, as we have recently had occasion to remind our readers, was a stalwart soldier of Freethought in the rough old fighting days. He was a very familiar figure in Nottingham, and was more or less known throughout the Midlands. No one could doubt his earnest sincerity.

The Universe is one. There is no supernatural—all is related. Nothing exists but substance and its modes of motion.—*Spinoza.*

Digitized by Google

THE OLD FAITH AND THE NEW.

In *To-Morrow* William Platt has a brief but telling article on "The Religion of To-day." He points out that a little while ago Darwinism was a little stream, then it became a strong, rapid river; already it has joined a mighty ocean, tireless to destroy old-worn continents, and to build up fresh fertile land. And the destruction of the old creeds is leading to a fuller faith, a nobler practice. "Take first those vague elevating sublimities that bear in especial the title 'Religion'—we are told by the advocates of yesterday that we are losing religion—what are the facts? Just these: that instead of a narrow, miserable view of one earth, a personal deity, contradictory laws, and a vague, vitiated, empty dream of psalm-singing eternity, we have arrived at a glorious conception, breathless in its sublimity, of a timeless, spaceless universe of immensurable force and beauty, supreme in its own unalterable law, the awe of which dazes us while we feel we cannot even say we have grasped it fractionally with our limited understanding; as for eternity, the thought we admit unreservedly to be beyond us, modestly bow before a mystery, the solution of which is infinitely beyond our finite minds. For true religiosity, the old religions are further from modern cosmic religions than a music-hall tune is from a symphony of Beethoven."

From the point of view of courage Mr. Platt holds that we have advanced. "The courage that faces death is the courage of a few moments; the courage that faces life is the courage of our every moment, and *that* is the courage of to-day. The courage that refuses to the mean or animal, sensual or selfish, is a courage that exists to-day more than it ever existed, and which must exist to-morrow more than it exists to-day. And the tender, sensitive love of the men and women of to-day is glorious beyond comparison with the times before. By this test before all others may it be known: that at no other time were children so tenderly and beautifully cared for, understood, and loved as to-day; love that builds the new generation is glorified with gravity and holy beauty; its mystery was never more sublimated. The old religion appealed to self; but modern religion, knowing life to be short, will strenuously refuse to give its moments to squalidity, sensuality, or selfishness."

A WOMAN ON THE BIBLE.

Acceptance of the Bible literally tends to retard the development of both man and woman, and consequently the establishment of their highest and best relation to each other—a relation upon which depends their usefulness to the community.

Both the law of Moses and the teachings of Paul, thus considered, belittle woman more than they exalt her. While words of praise and promises of future place and power are not altogether lacking, this is the impression left upon the mind of the reader who is not able to pass around to the other side and gain another view.

The Bible has been, and will continue to be, a stumbling-block in the way of development of inherent resources, consequently of the truest civilization, in proportion to the strength of its exoteric aspect with the people. It will cease to be a stumbling-block, and become a powerful impetus in the desired direction instead, when its inner meaning becomes revelator, companion, and friend.

In the literal rendering of the Bible woman appears first and above all as man's subordinate; but this inner meaning shows her first and above all as the individual equal with him, and afterwards his complement, or what she is able to be for him.

Portrayed as the mother of the Savior of the world, one woman is exalted above all women when only physical motherhood is seen; and the consequence has been that one woman has been worshipped and the sex has been crucified. This one woman has been lifted above her place; and all women have fallen correspondingly below it.

Ursula Gretfeld.

The British Museum Treasure.

We have already said that Cyril Lucar, the reforming Patriarch of Constantinople, gave the Codex Alexandrinus to Charles I. in 1628. We need not doubt that he brought it with him from Alexandria; and we may think, if we please, that he took it with him to Alexandria. The ownership of A. cannot be traced back beyond Cyril.—*Rev. J. M. Cotterill, "Peregrinus Proteus," p. 329.*

Mr. Oswald Dawson lectures for the Legitimation League on Monday, Dec. 6, at 8 p.m., in the Council Chamber, Holborn Restaurant, on "The Outcome of Legitimation."

BOOK CHAT.

The Humanitarian League publishes a reply by the Rev. J. Stratton to Lord Ribblesdale's book on "The Queen's Hounds and Stag-Hunting Recollections." He thus describes the "blooding" of the hounds: "Eye-witnesses always narrate that cast-off stags used to be turned out in the seclusion of the forest, the hounds allowed to maul them, then they were 'knifed,' and the pack fed on their intestines. When was this last done?" For the law to treat the practically-domesticated stags of Windsor Park as wild beasts is an absurdity. We wonder the humane Queen has not long since got rid of her Buckhounds.

* * *

Sir Edmund du Cane, in his work on *The Punishment and Prevention of Crime*, says: "As a final climax of burlesque absurdity the Bible was made the principal lesson-book (in one prison the solitary prisoners were supplied with nothing else whatever), and a reformatory influence was supposed to be achieved by requiring the criminals to commit large portions of the Testament to memory. This result was figured by one irreverent critic to be so effectively achieved that a felon was said to have been so distressed that the end of his sentence interrupted his studies when he had only 'got as far as Ephesians,' that he came back (under sentence for sheep-stealing) to learn the rest of the Testament."

* * *

Writing on "The Literature of the Rising Generation," "W," in the Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen*, remarks that "the theological element is not nearly so prominent now as it was thirty or sixty years ago. This, of course, only holds with the books published by those firms which have no direct or indirect connection with any religious movement. Many tales are written without the time-honored religious moral, and few popular books for the young have a specifically religious purpose. Writers seem content to let their stories carry their own moral, leaving the work of inculcating theology to other than literary powers. From an artistic point of view, the result seems in every way beneficial."

* * *

The *English Mechanic* is always up to its old high-water mark. There are ever the letters of "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society," full of science and common sense. Dr. Aveling is continuing his contributions on Zoology, and there is an abundance of technical information for workers. The correspondence is always good, and in the December number we find letters on "The Error in the Christian Era" and "The Star of Bethlehem," as well as on a multiplicity of other topics.

* * *

Edward Pickard, of Flushing, near Falmouth, announces the completion of *The Hat Crusade*, in three volumes. It is mainly a work of devotion to the memory of Samuel Fox.

* * *

From the *History of South Africa*, by G. Theal, we learn that the first chaplain of the Dutch settlement was one Erastus Buck. This man was so addicted to intemperance that at times he was unfit to perform his duties. He was repeatedly suspended, on which occasions the fiscal conducted the services; but punishment and disgrace seemed only to harden him. The commander was fearful that his conduct would bring down divine vengeance upon the community, all the members of which, by some method of reasoning, were considered subject to the consequences of his guilt. Mr. Wagenaar's alarm was increased by the appearance of a comet, which for two months was seen nightly in the sky. He and his Council did not doubt that the terrible star with a tail was put there by God as a threat of righteous punishment, and therefore they considered it high time to get rid of the chief offender. A yacht was lying in the bay ready to sail for Batavia. Buck and his family were unceremoniously hurried on board, and the office was once more vacant.

* * *

The *Academy*, noticing Podmore's *Studies in Psychical Research* and Stead's *Real Ghost Stories*, says: "Two known causes explain satisfactorily a large proportion of the phenomena with which the Psychical Research Society has to deal—human fraud and human folly." The American put it tersely who said he had met lots of liars and lunatics, but ne'er a spook or miracle. The *Academy* remarks that "a careful and most impartial analysis of the evidence enables Mr. Podmore to find the operation of these causes in most of the spiritualistic and mediumistic marvels, as well as in the already exploded feats of Madame Blavatsky and Eusapia Palladino."

* * *

The *New Century Review* always shows some sign of the new spirit, and in its December number the review of *Evil and Evolution*, by Arthur Ransom, says boldly that the old difficulty of reconciling evil with perfect power and perfect goodness is "left as unsolved as ever."

Digitized by Google

The *University Magazine* opens with a paper by Dr. de Villiers on "The Progress and Arrest of Cancer." Vaccination Law is opposed by A. W. Hutton. Mr. J. M Robertson has an incisive article on "The Fallacies of Theism," in reply to W. Julius Basil. W. M. Beitt writes on "Is Christianity Scientific?" There are long reviews of Wiseman's *Dynamics of Religion* and Crozier's *Intellectual Development*. Allan Laidlaw writes with frankness and fervor on "The Social Evil Problem."

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREEWILL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wish, with your permission, to comment very briefly on Mr. Watts's article in your last issue on "The 'Freewill' Fallacy."

I do not write to defend Mr. Waldron's arguments, but to state my own position.

If I rightly understand Mr. Watts's view, he is philosophically a *Determinist*. Now, Determinism denies any real choice. Beforehand, you may *think* you can choose this or that; afterwards, you may *think* you made a right or wrong choice; but, *in reality*, Mr. Watts seems to hold there was only one course open to you.

Now, I object to Determinism for reasons—(1) philosophical, (2) moral, (3) practical.

1. The conviction that we really possess a power of choice, however limited, is fundamental in human nature. If you deny the veracity of consciousness as regards this power of choice—*i.e.*, that there are very often two or more courses open to you—you must, on precisely the same grounds, deny the validity of the "laws of thought." Every argument against freewill, whether on philosophical or evolutionary grounds, is (to speak mathematically) only a "function" of the "laws of thought"; and no function of those laws can override what is equally fundamental with those laws—the sense of right and wrong.

2. Determinism evacuates *morality* of all its virtue. By "right and wrong" we mean something absolutely different in quality from happiness or misery, success or ruin. Something we do from pure, unavoidable ignorance may wreck the happiness, or shorten the lives, of many persons. To anyone right-minded that would cause unutterable anguish, but—if he did not lose his sanity and clearness of judgment—not any sense of wrong-doing. If, therefore, Mr. Watts be a Determinist, he is bound, after he has done what, to any ordinary person, would appear a cause of bitter remorse, to view (not the consequences, but) himself with equanimity. *To blame himself would be to believe a cruel and unjust lie*—according to Determinism.

3. Your readers can easily judge what would happen, *practically*, if all men, women, and children saw clearly and accepted Mr. Watts's theory, before acting—and after. Teach this theory to a passionate, lustful, selfish person—or rather teach it to everyone—and see how it will "work."

Fortunately, all language, all laws, and all common sense utterly traverse Mr. Watts's contention.

C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM
(Secretary, Christian Evidence Society.)

MORAL INSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I fancy I am to blame for starting Mr. Thurlow on a false scent. I spoke of the old conflict between the theological system and the proposed "purely secular education." Then I went on to say that this old conflict was likely to be modified into a struggle between the Theological system and the Moral Instruction system. That seems to imply that the Moral Instruction is not to be purely secular. I wish to state, in the clearest possible terms, that I should never be satisfied with anything less than a purely secular method of teaching morality to children.

In speaking of a change in the issue, I meant to say that whereas, in times gone by, Freethinkers simply demanded purely secular education, without demanding a central place for moral training, we of the new party demand a purely secular education, in which moral training shall hold the supreme place. We want the children's intellects disciplined; we also want their character disciplined; we want them to grow up clear-headed men and women, ready to do the business of the world; we also want them to grow up honorable and kind.

I do not understand Mr. Thurlow's condemnation of "book- and tongue-taught morality." I have heard his tongue utter censure of evil-doing; and, in his letter to you, his pen attacks—and very rightly attacks—the rascals who know the Golden Rule and yet cheat their neighbors. I do not see why I may not, as a teacher, do the same as Mr. Thurlow does. I have often told children I thought it wrong to kiss Bibles in the courts of justice, as if a man could not speak the truth on his honor as a gentleman, without the need of any oath. That was tongue-taught morality, but I daresay Mr. Thurlow will agree that I did right.

F. J. GOULD.

"THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In No. xiii. of these very interesting articles Abracadabra says: "The *holy wind*, which in one of the passages is misnamed the *spirit of truth*." Will he be so good as to inform me where this passage occurs, as the four following references have, in the Greek, the full expression?—John xiv. 17, xv. 26, xvi. 13, and 1 John iv 6. I quote from Bohn's edition: "τὸ πνεῦμα της αληθείας"=the wind of the truth. It is the latter part of the expression, I take it, to which he alludes. There are no capitals.

W. W. HARDWICKE, .D.

THOSE BOYS.

THE lesson was from the prodigal son, and the teacher was dwelling on the character of the elder brother. "But amid all the rejoicing," he said, "there was one to whom the preparation of the feast brought no joy, to whom the prodigal's return gave no pleasure, but only bitterness; one who did not approve of the feast being held, and who had no wish to attend it. Now, can any of you tell me who this was?" There was a breathless silence, followed by a vigorous cracking of thumbs, and then from a dozen sympathetic little geniuses came the chorus: "Please, sir, it was the fatted calf!"

The country clergyman was nailing a refractory creeper to a piece of trellis work near his front gate when he noticed that a small boy stopped and watched him with great attention. "Well, my young friend," he said, pleased to see the interest he excited, "are you looking out for a hint or two on gardening?" "No," said the youth, "I be waiting to see what a parson do say when he hammers his thumb."

"Did the baby come from heaven, mother?" "Of course he did." "Well, I s'pose he plumped right down, and that's why he's bow-legged."

It was, of course, an American boy who had teased his father for a watch, until the father in despair had forbidden the boy to mention the subject again. But it was the good custom of that family to repeat a text of Scripture at evening prayers. The day after the edict of silence had been imposed, the boy quoted the following: "I say unto you—watch."

PROFANE JOKES.

"GIB us dis day our daily bred," shouted the colored deacon from the interior of a hired shanty, upon which a generous baker from outside threw a loaf in at the window, accidentally smashing it. "Gib us dis day——dat'll do, good Lord, dat'll do; tupp'ny loaf right fro a ten-penny winder."

Pious Grandmother (wearisomely dealing out religious instruction to cute six-year-old Ada)—"Yes, my dear, all our good thoughts are suggested to us by God, and all our wicked thoughts come from Satan." Little Ada (brightening up)—"Grandma, do you know what Satan is telling me to say to you?" P. G.—"What is it, my dear?" L. A.—"He is telling me to say 'Shut up, Grandma,' but God won't let me say it."

Crotchety Bachelor—"They have had a blind man and a cripple before the court for begging. How is it you lady beggars escape?" Lady Beggars—"Indeed! we are not begging—we are *collecting funds* to purchase a bicycle for our curate!"

Infallibility.

Human infallibility, avaunt!
  The claim is impious wheresoever made;
Whether by Papist or by Protestant,
  Rivals in pharisaic robes arrayed,
No one is more, and no one less, than man;
  Where all are equal, who shall claim control
Over the conscience, or put under ban
  The free, outspoken, independent soul?
There is no heresy in honest doubt,
  Or strong dissent, where demonstration fails;
Or non-conformity, however stout;
  For thus the righteous cause at last prevails.
Begone! Popes, Cardinals, Councils, Bishops—all
Who seek to hold the human mind in thrall!

—*William Lloyd Garrison.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30 G. W. Foote, "Another Converted Atheist."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "Some Plain Words about India." December 4, at 8 30, Concert and Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Things Worth Remembering"; 6, Tea; 7, Dance and Entertainment.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road): 7.30, A. B. Moss, "What do Christians Believe?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "Tendencies of the Ethical Movement"—opened by Miss Florence Law; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Theism and Ethics."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, F. W. H. Myers, M.A., "The Poetry of William Morris."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, A lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): E. J. Sale—11, "What is Religion?" 7, "How God was Made."

BRADFORD LABOUR CHURCH, Peckover-street: C. Cohen—3, "Crime and Criminals"; 6 30, "The Fight for the Schools."

BRISTOL (St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street): 3, Discussion Class—J. Watts Treasure, "Was Christ a Socialist?"

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, J. J. Taylor, "Rome or Reason?"

CHESTER (Labour Club, Watergate-row, Watergate-street): 7, Meeting of members and friends.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, Mr. Whitewell, A Reading.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Harry Snell—12, "What is the Bible?" 6.30, "Egypt and the Dawn of History"—with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Christian Errors and Secular Antidotes."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Hammond, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Watts—11, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb"; 3, "The Triumph of Reason over Faith"; 6.30, "Christian Tactics Exposed."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Members' meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Ex-Priest Slattery: A Side-light on Catholicism."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Important meeting. Federation and other business.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—December 8 Preston; 5, Bradford; 8, Blackburn; 19, Leicester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Cordon-road, London, S.E.—December 5, Mile End; 12, Camberwell Radical Club; 19, Camberwell Secular Hall.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—December 12, Sheffield. January 30, Stanley.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

SELLING RAPIDLY. *ORDER AT ONCE.*

THE AGNOSTIC ANNUAL: 1898.

(64 pages, price 6d., by post 7½d.)

Containing articles by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Edward Clodd, Miss Constance E. Plumptre, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. Charles Watts, and many other well-known writers.

The best number yet issued.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 61*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 8s. 6d., 4s. 6d and 3s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices pos. free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4d. each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6d.

Bible and Beer. 4d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 3d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 3d.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price 6d. paper, 1s. cloth.

The Jewish Life of Christ.

SEPHER TOLDOTH JESHU.

WITH NOTES BY

G. W. FOOTE & J. M. WHEELER.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1896.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

DECEMBER NO. NOW READY. *Second Edition.*

CONTENTS:—

Dress and Sex. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
The Liars; or, Marriage at the Criterion Theatre. By SAGITTARIUS.
The Poetry of the Passions. By HENRY SEYMOUR.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.
May also be had of Robert Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Ladies' and Gentlemen's Cloths Direct from the Warehouse. Any Length cut. Patterns post free. Garments made to measure.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE.
INCREASE YOUR WAGES.

All kinds of Heavy Drapery at Warehouse prices, saving at least Two Profits. Price List post free.

Manufacturer's Stock
OF HIGH-CLASS OVERCOATINGS

Bought at less than Half the Usual Price, which we are now making into Overcoats as illustration herewith.



COLORS: Dark Greys, Heather Mixtures, Plain Brown, Blue, or Black.

Price 23s.
Worth at Least 35s.
EACH.

Give Chest and Waist Measure over Vest. Also Length from Centre of Back to full Length of Sleeve.

The Cheapest Parcel on Earth!

LOT 11

1 Pair All-Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 White or Colored Tablecloth.

All for 21s. Carriage paid

Mention the *Freethinker*, and for the next Fourteen Days we will include a Grand Little Present in each Parcel.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE By

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow "Weekly Citizen."*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 50. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE

IF I WERE GOD.

COLONEL INGERSOLL was once asked what change he would commence with in the universe if he had control of it. "Well," he replied, "I would make health catching instead of disease." It was a splendid answer, going to the very roots of physical evil, which in the long run determines moral evil. There is enough in it to furnish material for whole volumes of criticism on theology. But every publicist is not an Ingersoll, and it is not exactly surprising that Mr. Richard Le Gallienne makes rather a poor mess of his new excursion into the territory of religion. Under the title *If I were God*—suggested by a line in Martin Elginbrodde's epitaph—this young poet follows up his former volume called *The Religion of a Literary Man*—a title, by the way, which suggests the question, Why may we not have "The Religion of a Pork-butcher," or "The Religion of a Chimneysweep"? since literary men are not a special variety of human nature, with a naturally peculiar way of envisaging the problems of existence. But this is merely a passing reflection. Mr. Le Gallienne's first religious essay was not without merit. On the whole it was very unsatisfactory, but it contained some good passages, especially on the question of immortality. His new volume, however, is poor and thin, even in comparison with its predecessor. It is more or less graceful trifling. The sentences are carefully filed, but the thought is a feeble echo of the commonplaces of Christian divinity.

Mr. Le Gallienne's book is mainly a conversation between a young man and a young woman. They met by appointment "on a still summit of the Alps one August afternoon," and they "talked of God." In such a romantic situation it is a pity they had not something better to talk about. The young man is one of the worshippers of beauty. He has suffered a great grief, and "the blow had driven him away from God, broken-hearted and blasphemous." The young woman has suffered too, but sorrow had only brought her nearer to God. What an interesting conjunction! But instead of mutual consolation, there is nothing but a theological debate.

As the young man sat there with the sweet, good young woman, the "old philosophy" came "very appealingly" to the door of his heart. Of course it did. Since "gospel light first dawned from Bullen's eyes," that sort of thing has been common enough. And equally of course the young woman gets the best of the discussion. The Roman philosopher could not argue with the master of forty legions, and how can a young man win in debate with a pretty young woman? He might stop her mouth with a kiss, if he had the right to do so; but short of that she is bound to have the last word, and the man is finally silenced. And if his arguments cause her "pain," what on earth can he do but draw them as mildly as possible, or let them go to the devil altogether?

Mr. Le Gallienne's young man met Mr. Le Gallienne's young woman apparently at one of Mr. Lunn's religious picnics in Switzerland. She and her companions all had a certain expression. On her face it was particularly bright. The young man called it, half playfully, "the *Early Christian* look." We are not told what it was precisely. Perhaps it was the look sometimes to be seen at prayer meetings, and as often in lunatic asylums. At any rate, these people believed in prayer:—

> "Yes! there were people in the world who still went on praying, in spite of a literary criticism that had long since relegated God and His saints to the museums of mythology, in spite of a scientific criticism that had proved their cosmogony a child's dream of the world—unconquerable idealists whom no theories of the dust might dismay.
>
> "Accustomed so long to bring all experience to the test of the senses and the everyday reason, it was strange to mark them, in all their speech, in their simplest acts, implying an invisible reality, a transcendental responsibility. Could it be possible that they had not heard!—not heard that this faith of theirs was all a dream, a beautiful dream faded and fled at the daybreak of science?
>
> "O yes! they had heard all that—and they smiled to themselves sweetly, indulgently, a little sorrowfully, a little humorously, as they thought of it. You see—they *knew*. By some grace of God, of nature if you will—but still of God—it had been given them to see. It was but natural that those who had not seen should deny the Vision, but the Vision was none the less real for that."

This is really amusing in face of the recent prosecution of the Peculiar People. Not one of these Swiss-picnic religionists with "the Early Christian look" has raised a voice against the harrying of those sincere believers in prayer. They indulge in "Oh's" and "Ah's" and exclamatory sentences terminating with big notes of admiration, but they go no further, they stake nothing on their faith, and they have no sympathy with those who do.

"Intellectual criticism," says Mr. Le Gallienne, either personally or on behalf of his young man, "was clearly irrelevant, impertinent here." The young woman saw with other eyes than his, and then "it must be something worth seeing that made her face look like that."

The young man worships beauty, and the young woman goodness. Let them join, and the result should be perfection. Instead of that, they jaw and jaw and jaw, on that romantic Alpine summit. She says that the message of beauty is the goodness of God, and he replies that the world is ugly as well as beautiful. This affords Mr. Le Gallienne an opportunity for a bit of dainty writing, though rather fantastic and not too sincere.

> "Behind the green mask of the spring, is there not a lonely monster gnashing his teeth, with beauty for his snare; and all this green so delightful to our eyes, what is it but the vivid green of a gigantic grave, the plague-pit into which humanity has been thrown century after century? The green world! Yes! the beautiful green grave of humanity, kept tidy by the sexton sun, and prettily set out with those tall daisies we call stars."

"You are sad," the young woman says gently; "your soul is sick." But instead of asking her to play the doctor he sneers at "the green world"—which is green indeed to afford a good market for Mr. Le Gallienne's philosophy. She replies that God knows the meaning of sorrow, and therefore he smiles, and his smile is beauty. "If we knew why graves grow green," she says, "we should know the beautiful meaning of death." What exquisite absurdity! Graves grow green because grass spreads over them, and it doesn't matter to the grass whether it is the grave of a man or a dog, a saint or a murderer. It is a way grass has—a way it had before man existed on this planet.

The rest of the conversation is really too absurd for comment. The young woman recommends prayer, the abnegation of reason, and trust in mystery; and the young man thinks if he were God he would create more such

Digitized by Google

women to make men believe in him. He returns to his own people, the lovers of beauty, but they were not satisfying.

"Sometimes he found himself wishing to be back once more among those gentle, humorous people, with the kind ways and the happy, lighted faces. Sometimes he craved to hear again those quaint childlike turns of phrase, to listen to their strange little stories of answered prayers, to heal his heart with their wise simplicity. Sometimes—he—almost—prayed."

This is a doddering conclusion. The very language is tipsy. The reeling words have to be fastened together with hyphens. Yet after all the young man only "almost" prayed. He didn't lose his reason altogether. Let us hope that by this time he is fully recovered.

Mr. Le Gallienne's book is dedicated to "Sister Lily." Is this one of Mr. Price Hughes's young women, one of the heroines of "The Atheist Shoemaker" story? If so, we understand Mr. Gallienne's aberration.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL.

On November 28 the Rev. J. P. Bannin preached at St. Peter's Italian Chapel on "What does Secularism Offer?" I did not hear Father Bannin, but am told his answer was: "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." The familiar phrase runs glibly. Let us look at its items.

The World. Yea, verily, Secularism stands for the world, and means to make the best of it. Here we are, and this world is awhile our home; and it is real. A poor hut gives more shelter than a castle in the air. Better to dig for coal than seek to transmute the mountains of the moon into gold. We gain by concentration on the actual. Performance of the duty nearest hand is the best guarantee that other duties will be met as they arise. One world at a time. Here are sufficient motives for our aspirations, and scope for all our energies. Had the devotion spent on another world been given to this, we might lament less over our "vale of tears," which, with all its drawbacks, is improvable.

Is it so small a thing
To have enjoy'd the sun,
To have loved light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
To have advanc'd true friends, and beat down baffling foes;
That we must feign a bliss
Of doubtful future date,
And, while we dream on this,
Lose all our present state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?

Perhaps by "the world" you mean only the struggle to crush down others in a mad rage for pride or pelf. Surely that is not the best use of this world. To gather possessions and divide ourselves from our fellows, to think more of place and position than honor and self-respect, to prefer a hoard of gold to the smiles of children, is as paltry a worldliness as that of your Church, which, pointing above, has ever taken care to grasp the earth beneath; with its priests in gold-embroidered garments, and its worshippers in rags; with images bejewelled, and beggars grovelling before them; with wealth and art lavished on a god who needs them not, and the people kept hungry and ignorant. We look forward to a world where the vain worship of God shall have given place to the needed service of man; and already the hilltops are gladdening in the dawn.

The Flesh. Yes, gravely, the flesh. 'Twere absurd to accept the world and deny that whereby life lives. We have bodies; let us respect them by facing the fact and putting them to the highest use.

Let us not always say:
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground
Upon the whole."
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry: "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more
Now, than flesh helps soul!"

Perchance you mean by "flesh" the despoiling and degradation of woman for the sensual gratification of man. Then, assuredly, I do not mean what you mean. Oh, fie! I, who am not a wee bit shocked to know that all of us are naked under our clothes, yet think foul scorn that any son of woman dare deem that the best use of this world! We are the product, not simply of epidermal contact, but of the tender devotion of countless mothers, the fidelity and care of countless fathers. Passion without love, like your celibacy, leads to extinction; that is its sufficient condemnation. The truth is so simple and obvious it might pass unsaid, but that priests and hypocrites decry the body and stigmatize its most sacred function, compelling the retort that the history of sacerdotal celibacy shows how flesh can have its revenges. Those who put aside love may succumb to lust, the body stunted in its finer issues run to heavy jowl and paunch, and celibate ears itch for the confidences of the bride, or delight in pruriently probing the pure longings of the maiden on her knees at the confessional.

The Devil. No, priest, decidedly we have no Devil! A bogie to frighten women and children, and sanctimonious sinners lying on their death beds, belongs exclusively to your black business. The Secularist offers facts, not fictions. We love the world, reverence the flesh, and deride the Devil. Now, have you not heard that your scapegoat is defunct?

Il est mort! disent tous les moines
On n'achètera plus d'*agnus*.
Il est mort! disent les chanoines;
On ne paira plus d'*oremus*.
Au conclave on se désespère:
Adieu puissance et coffre-fort!
Nous avons perdu notre père.
Le diable est mort, le diable est mort.

Dead did I say? Nay, ascended into heaven. You may read the record in *The Breviary of the Brave*. 'Tis as true and as inspired as your sacred books. Since 'tis likely to be on your *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, I will tell it:—

"Cloyed with honeyed anthems, Jesus was a-weary in heaven. Angels, tired of unheeded adulation, moulted and moped. A shriek from hell had pierced the skies. A saintly mother sobbed, 'My child, my child!' The heart of Jesus filled with tender yearning. In his eyes there shone a strange delight. He descended into hell. The asbestos gates flew wide at his approach, and all the little devils scuttled out. Penetrating the lowest depths, calling the foulest fiends, he spoke: 'Brothers, you have been cruelly used. Suffer no more. 'Tis I must bear your woe. The doors are open. Satan, go you first, and take my place.' The rebel stood silent, proud. Jesus said, 'I will bear eternal torment so that you be free.' Satan did not budge. Jesus wept. The angels above burst into tears, which, dropping, put out all the fires. Jesus said, 'Hell is no more. Brother, let us ascend.' And they arose together, the Savior and the saved."

"Blasphemy!" you cry in horror—you who doom all outside your pale to endless woe. Blasphemy! Must I remind you of the human bodies burnt under pretence of saving souls from hell; of the women—aye, and children—put to death because alleged to be in league with the Devil. A poor celibate can hardly be expected to recognise the essential impiety of abusing the world with all its promise and potency of life, of contemning our goodly tabernacle, the body, with all its joy and anguish, or of—worse than all—putting out the eyes of the mind of little children with incredible creeds begotten of fear, instead of teaching them the natural foundations of human love.

J. M. Wheeler.

THEOLOGICAL DELUSIONS.

Christian theology is based upon, and supported by, delusion. Its expounders seem to be impressed with the mistaken idea that they have the intellect of the world upon their side; and in the preaching and debating they are constantly taunting Secularists with being unable to produce the names of great men who have worked in the Freethought cause. Even if such an allegation were accurate, it would not prove that Christianity was true, or that Secularism was false. Names of great men of the past can be cited in favor of the most palpable errors that ever deluded the human mind. Take, for instance the belief in witchcraft, in the earth being flat, and in the existence of devils in the human organization as the cause of disease. For centuries these delusions were entertained by the greatest men both in and out of the Christian Church. They taught that these delusions were

Digitized by Google

sanctioned by the teachings of the Bible. But to-day no one but suitable candidates for a lunatic asylum would be found endorsing such gross errors. Besides, men may be great upon one subject, and at the same time no authority whatever upon others. An opinion is only valuable in proportion as it has been formed after careful and unbiassed study, and in so far as it can be supported by facts.

There is no subject upon which great men's opinions are of less value than that of Christian theology, for this reason: they have either been induced from the morning of their lives to give it merely a passive acceptance, or they have been too indifferent to investigate its claims. Moreover, it does not follow, because eminent persons have allowed themselves to be regarded as Christians, that they have therefore permitted the Christian faith to influence their actions in daily life. It should be remembered that, when the Church was in full power, it was almost impossible for an avowed disbeliever in the Christian faith to have his genius acknowledged either in philosophy or in science. At that period, if a man were known to be sceptical, he was denounced by the Church, and ignored by the "powers that be." Still, in spite of all ostracism that has been enforced by professed Christians, Sceptics have appeared and left an impress of true greatness upon the age in which they lived. This was evident to the observing mind of J. S. Mill, who, in his work *On Liberty*, wrote: "It is historically true that a large proportion of Infidels, in all ages, have been persons of distinguished integrity and honor.....Persons in greatest repute with the world, both by virtues and attainments, are well known, at least to their intimates, to be unbelievers.....It can do truth no good to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teachings has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith." This is quite true, for some of the noblest men and women who have adorned the history of their times, and given to the world a record of the most useful deeds, have been unbelievers. Lucretius, Spinoza, Goethe, Humboldt, Dr. Priestley, Newton, Voltaire, Paine, Robert Owen, Lyell, Clifford, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, and Harriet Martineau, are prominent in the Pantheon of the world's reformers; and these were all unbelievers, from the orthodox standpoint.

Christians, who delude themselves by supposing that the use of the names of great men enhances the value of Christianity, should note the fact that it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the exact attitude which many of those men assumed towards the Christian religion. It is unfortunate that, through the persecuting conduct of Christians, the possession of genius has been found not incompatible with an evasive manner concerning views upon religious questions. This avoidance of candor and outspokenness was felt to be necessary, inasmuch as a frank avowal of disbelief in Christianity would probably have entailed the infliction of penalties by the pious followers of "the meek and lowly Jesus." The same evil obtains at the present time to a large extent. Although many eminent men in the scientific, political, and educational world will not allow any theological teachings to interfere with their useful work; still, they are compelled in many instances to refrain from proclaiming their disbelief in the Christian faith, knowing that, if they avowed their opinions, their public services would be impaired. It has ever been so, more or less, since the inception of the Christian Church—a fact which is a standing disgrace to the Christian party.

True, in all ages there have been found a few men and women who were able to show the courage of their convictions, and thus defy the power of the Church and the malice of the priests. The names of Bruno, Vanini, Descartes, Spinoza, Voltaire, Paine, Kant, Volney, David Hume, and, more recently, Carlile, Watson, Southwell, Hetherington, Holyoake, and others, recall to our minds a muster-roll of brave Sceptics who labored outside of Christianity in vindication of the principles of personal right and mental freedom. These Freethought pioneers, be it remembered, emphasized the fact that disbelief in traditional faith has generally been followed by progressive results. Martin Luther disbelieved in the mysteries and mummeries of Roman Catholicism, and the result was what is called the Protestant Reformation. Copernicus and Galileo disbelieved in the Bible cosmogony, with its theory of the heavens and this scepticism gave birth to correct views upon the great science of astronomy. Modern geologists reject the Bible story of creation, and the consequence is a more extensive faith in Nature's records. In philosophy the same thing has occurred. Thus the Christian delusion, that the Church since its advent has monopolized all the great men of the world, has no foundation in fact. On the contrary, unbelievers have been the promoters of improvement, while theologians have been persistent upholders of superstitious conservatism, which eschews advancement, frowns down new discoveries, and keeps its anchor firmly fixed in the errors of the past.

The theological delusion, that the belief in Theism is necessary to good character and to the performance of moral actions, prompts its believers to exclaim: "Where are the Atheists among the great men whose deeds are recorded in the pages of history?" Now, the truth is that nearly every man mentioned above was an Atheist to the Christian's God, and therefore their deity is not required to ensure intellectual greatness and ethical conduct. Besides, all scientists, as such, are Atheists, for, as the Bishop of Carlisle admitted, "science is Atheism; all physical science, properly so-called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God." Then take Buddha and his more than 400,000,000 followers, all of whom were practical Atheists. *Chambers' Encyclopædia* says: "Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially Atheist." And Max Müller, in his *Science of Religion*, writes: "As regards the denial of a Creator, or Atheism in the ordinary acceptation of the term, I do not think that any one passage from the books of the canon known to us can be quoted which contradicts it, or which in any way presupposes the belief in a personal God or a Creator" (p. 139). "Buddhism..... which, in spite of all its merits, culminated in Atheism and Nihilism" (*ibid*, p. 133). Yet allied with this Atheism were greatness of intellect and sublimity of character which have never been surpassed. Max Müller also says that the religion of Buddha possesses "a vitality which has made its branches to overshadow the largest portion of the inhabited globe" (*ibid*, p. 35). Again he remarks: "One hardly trusts one's eyes on seeing Catholic and Protestant missionaries vie with each other in their praises of the Buddha; and even the attention of those who are indifferent to all that concerns religion must be arrested for a moment, when they learn from statistical accounts that no religion, not even the Christian, has exercised so powerful an influence on the diminution of crime as the old, simple doctrine of the Ascetic of Kapilavastu" (*ibid*, p. 132).

CHARLES WATTS.

INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

(*Concluded from page 774.*)

THEN I studied geology—not much, just a little—just enough to find in a general way the principal facts that had been discovered, and some of the conclusions that had been reached. I learned something of the action of fire, of water, of the formation of islands and continents, of the sedimentary and igneous rocks, of the coal measures, of the chalk cliffs, something about coral reefs, about the deposits made by rivers, the effect of volcanoes, of glaciers, and of the all-surrounding sea; just enough to know that the Laurentian rocks were millions of ages older than the grass beneath my feet; just enough to feel certain that this world had been pursuing its flight about the sun, wheeling in light and shade, for hundreds of millions of years; just enough to know that the "inspired" writer knew nothing of the history of the earth—nothing of the great forces of nature—of wind and wave and fire, forces that have destroyed and built, wrecked and wrought, through all the countless years.

And let me tell the ministers again that they should not waste their time in answering me. They should attack the geologists. They should deny the facts that have been discovered. They should launch their curses at the blaspheming seas, and dash their heads against the Infidel rocks.

Then I studied biology—not much—just enough to know something of animal forms, enough to know that life existed when the Laurentian rocks were made; just

Digitized by Google

enough to know that implements of stone, implements that had been formed by human hands, had been found mingled with the bones of extinct animals, bones that had been split with these implements, and that these animals had ceased to exist hundreds of thousands of years before the manufacture of Adam and Eve.

Then I felt sure that the "inspired" record was false—that many millions of people had been deceived, and that all I had been taught about the origin of worlds and men was utterly untrue. I felt that I knew that the Old Testament was the work of ignorant men—that it was a mingling of truth and mistake, of wisdom and foolishness, of cruelty and kindness, of philosophy and absurdity—that it contained some elevated thoughts, some poetry—a good deal of the solemn and commonplace—some hysterical, some tender, some wicked prayers, some insane predictions, some delusions, and some chaotic dreams.

I gave up the Old Testament on account of its mistakes, its absurdities, its ignorance, and its cruelty. I gave up the New because it vouched for the truth of the Old. I gave it up on account of its miracles, its contradictions; because Christ and his disciples believed in the existence of devils, talked and made bargains with them, expelled them from people and animals.

This, of itself, is enough. We know, if we know anything, that devils do not exist—that Christ never cast them out, and that, if he pretended to, he was either ignorant, dishonest, or insane. These stories about devils demonstrate the human, the ignorant origin of the New Testament. I gave up the New Testament because it rewards credulity and curses brave and honest men, and because it teaches the infinite horror of eternal pain.

Having spent my youth in reading books about religion—about the "new birth"—the disobedience of our first parents, the atonement, salvation by faith, the wickedness of pleasure, the degrading consequences of love, and the impossibility of getting to heaven by being honest and generous, and having become somewhat weary of the frayed and ravelled thoughts, you can imagine my surprise, my delight, when I read the poems of Robert Burns.

I was familiar with the writings of the devout and insincere, the pious and petrified, the pure and heartless. Here was a natural, honest man. I knew the works of those who regarded all nature as depraved, and looked upon love as the legacy and perpetual witness of original sin. Here was a man who plucked joy from the mire, made goddesses of peasant girls, and enthroned the honest man. One whose sympathy, with loving arms, embraced all forms of suffering life, who hated slavery of every kind, who was as natural as heaven's blue, with humor kindly as an autumn day, with wit as sharp as Ithuriel's spear, and scorn that blasted like the simoon's breath. A man who loved this world, this life, the things of every day, and placed above all else the thrilling ecstasies of human love.

I read and read again with rapture, tears, and smiles, feeling that a great heart was throbbing in the lines.

The religious, the lugubrious, the artificial, the spiritual poets were forgotten, or remained only as the fragments, the half-remembered horrors of monstrous and distorted dreams.

I had found at last a natural man, one who despised his country's cruel creed, and was brave and sensible enough to say: "All religions are auld wives' fables, but an honest man has nothing to fear, neither in this world nor the world to come."

I read Byron—read his *Cain*, in which, as in *Paradise Lost*, the devil seems to be the better god—read his beautiful, sublime, and bitter lines—read his *Prisoner of Chillon*—his best—a poem that filled my heart with tenderness, with pity, and with an eternal hatred of tyranny.

I read Shelley's *Queen Mab*, a poem filled with beauty, courage, thought, sympathy, tears, and scorn, in which a brave soul tears down the prison walls and floods the cells with light. I read his *Skylark*—a winged flame—passionate as blood, tender as tears, pure as light.

I read Keats, "whose name was writ in water"—read *St. Agnes Eve*, a story told with such an artless art that this poor common world is changed to fairy land—the *Grecian Urn*, that fills the soul with ever eager love, with all the rapture of imagined song—the *Nightingale*, a melody in which there is the memory of morn, a melody that dies away in dusk and tears, paining the senses with its perfectness.

And then I read Shakespeare, the plays, the sonnets, the poems—read all. I beheld a new heaven and a new earth. Shakespeare, who knew the brain and heart of man—the hopes and fears, the loves and hatreds, the vices and the virtues of the human race; whose imagination read the tear-blurred records, the blood-stained pages of all the past, and saw, falling athwart the outspread scroll, the light of hope and love. Shakespeare, who sounded every depth, while on the loftiest peak there fell the shadow of his wings.

I compared the Plays with the "inspired" books—"Romeo and Juliet" with the Song of Solomon, "Lear" with Job, and the Sonnets with the Psalms—and I found that Jehovah did not understand the art of speech. I compared Shakespeare's women—his perfect women—with the women of the Bible. I found that Jehovah was not a sculptor, not a painter, not an artist; that he lacked the power that changes clay to flesh—the art, the plastic touch, that moulds the perfect form—the breath that gives it free and joyous life—the genius that creates the faultless.

The sacred books of all the world are worthless dross and common stones compared with Shakespeare's glittering gold and gleaming gems.

Up to this time I had read nothing against our blessed religion except what I had found in Burns, Byron, and Shelley. By some accident I read Volney, who shows that all religions are, and have been, established in the same way—that all had their christs, their apostles, miracles, and sacred books—and then asks how it is possible to decide which is the true one. A question that is still waiting for an answer.

I read Gibbon, the greatest of historians, who marshalled his facts as skilfully as Cæsar did his legions, and I learned that Christianity is only a name for Paganism—for the old religion, shorn of its beauty—that some absurdities had been exchanged for others—that some gods had been killed, a vast multitude of devils created, and that hell had been enlarged.

And then I read the *Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine.

The *Age of Reason* filled the hearts of those who loved their enemies, with hatred, and the occupant of every orthodox pulpit became, and still is, a passionate maligner of Thomas Paine.

No one has answered—no one will answer—his argument against the dogma of inspiration—his objections to the Bible.

He did not rise above all the superstitions of his day. While he hated Jehovah, he praised the God of Nature, the creator and preserver of all. In this he was wrong, because, as Watson said in his Reply to Paine, the God of Nature is as heartless, as cruel, as the God of the Bible.

I read Voltaire—Voltaire, the greatest man of his century, and who did more for liberty of thought and speech than any other being, human or "divine." Voltaire, who tore the mask from hypocrisy, and found behind the painted smile the fangs of hate. Voltaire, who attacked the savagery of the law, the cruel decisions of venal courts, and rescued victims from the wheel and rack. Voltaire, who waged war against the tyranny of thrones, the greed and heartlessness of power. Voltaire, who filled the flesh of priests with the barbed and poisoned arrows of his wit, and made the pious jugglers, who cursed him in public, laugh at themselves in private. Voltaire, who sided with the oppressed, rescued the unfortunate, championed the obscure and weak, civilized judges, repealed laws, and abolished torture in his native land.

I read Zeno, the man who said, centuries before our Christ was born, that man could not own his fellow man.

I compared Zeno, Epicurus, and Socrates—three heathen wretches who had never heard of the Old Testament or the Ten Commandments—with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—three favorites of Jehovah—and I was depraved enough to think that the Pagans were superior to the Patriarchs, and to Jehovah himself.

My attention was turned to other religions, to the sacred books, the creeds and ceremonies of other lands—of India, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, of the dead and dying nations.

I concluded that all religions had the same foundation—a belief in the supernatural—a power above nature that man could influence by worship, by sacrifice and prayer.

I found that all religions rested on a mistaken conception of nature; that the religion of a people was the

Digitized by Google

science of that people—that is to say, their explanation of the world, of life and death, of origin and destiny.

I concluded that all religions had substantially the same origin, and that, in fact, there has never been but one religion in the world. The twigs and leaves may differ, but the trunk is the same.

The poor African that pours out his heart to his deity of stone is on an exact religious level with the robed priest who supplicates his God. The same mistake, the same superstition, bends the knees and shuts the eyes of both. Both ask for supernatural aid, and neither has the slightest thought of the absolute uniformity of nature.

Long before our Bible was known, other nations had their sacred books.

The dogmas of the Fall of Man, the Atonement, and Salvation by Faith are far older than our religion.

In our blessed Gospel—in our "divine scheme"—there is nothing new, nothing original. All old, all borrowed, pieced, and patched.

Then I concluded that all religions had been naturally produced, and that all were variations, modifications of one; then I felt that I knew that all were the work of man.

Then I asked myself the question, Is there a supernatural power—an arbitrary mind—an enthroned God—a supreme will that sways the tides and currents of the world—to which all causes bow?

I do not deny. I do not know.

Is there a God?

I do not know.

Is man immortal?

I do not know.

One thing I do know; and that is, that neither hope nor fear, belief nor denial, can change the fact. It is as it is, and it will be as it must be.

We wait and hope.

THE RELIGION OF SHAKESPEARE IN THE LIGHT OF HIS SONNETS.

"With Wallace, Raleigh, Sidney, Vane,
All to the axe's bloody stain."
—JAMES THOMSON.

THERE have been many guesses, founded mainly on passages in his plays, concerning the speculative belief of our greatest poet. But such guesses generally turn out to be akin to the religion of the guesser. Atheist, Monotheist, Tritheist, Polytheist—each can quote proofs in favor of his views; for the simple reason that Atheist, Theist, and the rest are to be found among Shakespeare's numerous creations. No doubt Shakespeare's own belief is there among the many other beliefs; but who shall identify it beyond dispute? So, also, pessimist, optimist, and meliorist are there; but which of the three can establish an undisputed claim to Shakespeare's subscription to his creed?

Had we only his plays to turn to, it were perhaps futile to be assertive as to Shakespeare's speculative opinions. Luckily, we have a clearer source from which the Swan of Avon's views on the destiny of mankind can be drawn. His sonnets, up to number 126, are the most intimate self-expression we have of Shakespeare's. In them he unlocks the "inmost citadel of his soul," and through them runs an intensity of emotion almost unparalleled in the wealth of its imagery, and a beauty of thought unsurpassed in our mother tongue. To whomsoever these 126 sonnets were addressed they breathe a passion so absorbing, so pure, and so "straight from the heart to the heart"; so supernal in its power, and so almost idolatrously tender, that their very height of beauty saddens and thrills, while it enchants us, in such a way as we are enchanted, saddened, and thrilled, with a "yearning half kin to pain," by some masterpiece of Greek statuary, some master sonata by old Beethoven. Many questions have these sonnets raised; perhaps one they may lay—the question of their author's belief. Throughout the whole series, in which love and death and fame are the themes, we find no mention, direct or indirect, of any of the Christian Gods—Jehovah, Mary, Jesus, Satan, the Holy Ghost. No mention of Christian dogma of any kind! The only God mentioned is Eros. Heaven is the presence of his loved one; hell is absence from the loved one.

Sad sonnets there are, as where death is invoked in sonnet 66:—

Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,

and terminating with the lines:—

Tir'd with all these, from these would I begone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.]

Or as in the one beginning:—

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.

Neither for himself, nor for his Love, does he suggest any immortality, other than that through children:—

And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence,
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

And again:—

Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
To be Death's conquest, and make worms thine heir.

Or again:—

Then what could death do if thou should'st depart,
Leaving thee living in posterity?

It is true, one other qualified immortality—of fame—does our poet promise his Love, and promise it repeatedly; but never with a sadder loveliness than in this sonnet:—

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn,
When hours have drain'd his blood, and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night;
And all those beauties, whereof now he's king
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding Age's cruel knife
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life;
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

. . . . . .

This is a mere notelet on a subject which has often recurred to me. Let those who care go to the sonnets, and see what they can make of Shakespeare's religion from the one intimate and unperplexed revelation of himself which he has made to us. Let them, then, consider that all around him Christians were burning each other, or joining to burn those others who differed in speculative belief from Christians; that any openly-expressed Atheism or Naturalism would have meant a fiery death (was not Shakespeare's poet-brother, Marlowe, threatened?) amid a howling crowd of the brutal ignorant and a gloating circle of official priestly murderers. Then let him consider how this greatest Englishman, who emptied his most inmost utterances of all supernaturalism, can be considered as other than our greatest Atheist—a man who would have grasped old Omar's hand in a glorious fellowship, and have heartily endorsed the great Persian's line:—

God, Devil, Heaven, and Hell are all in thee.

D. M.

THE JEWISH FAITH.

THE language of the Jews was the same as that of the other inhabitants of Canaan, and it seems probable that their religion also was originally the same. This view appears more likely and more consistent with analogy than the supposition that the Jews, having set out with tribal monotheism, fell away from it to fetishism, idolatry, and to the worship of the powers of nature, with sensual rites. We are told, in fact (Joshua xxiv. 2), that the ancestors of Abraham served other gods. How, or by what influences, whether those of individual reformers like the prophets, or of general circumstance, the nation rose from fetishism and nature-worship to tribal monotheism of an eminently pure and exalted type, seems to be a historical mystery. Higher than to tribal monotheism it did not rise; at least, it advanced no further than to the belief that its god was supreme in power as well as in character to all other gods, and thus Lord of the whole earth. He was still the God of Israel, and the Jews were still his chosen people. Judaism, therefore, never reached the religious elevation of some chosen spirits among the heathen world, such as Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus; although the Jewish belief was more intense than that of the philosophers, and extended not only to a select circle, but to a portion, at least, of the people.

—*Professor Goldwin Smith.*

All the long years of Christianity have come to this—All the preaching and the prayers and the psalm-singing of centuries have come to this—All the rapt outpourings of the soul to God, and hidden yearnings of ages, to this? —The Church is dead. Snow covers the ground. Snug in their firelit homes, with closed shutters, and surrounded by every luxury, the wealthy, the pious, and the respectable sit—And without the people are dying of cold and starvation.—*E. Carpenter, "Towards Democracy."*

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

The London City Mission is making a "Special Appeal" for funds. "There never was a greater need for the work, nor has it ever been more signally owned and blessed by God," but the subscriptions are falling off. In 1891 the number of missionaries at work was 504; it is now only 470. During the past five years the expenditure has exceeded the income by more than £26,000. The deficiency has been met by the selling out of capital. Meanwhile the metropolis is growing, and the Committee sadly confess that "at least three millions of its inhabitants are reckoned never to enter a place of worship."

The Archbishop of Capetown believes there is no more promising field of mission work in the world than is to be found at the present time in Mashonaland. He evidently forgot England.

In the *Daily News* of one day last week there actually appeared the following advertisement: "Wanted, an earnest Christian Evangelical governess. Must be out and out for the Master, and thoroughly efficient," etc. We would have thought she ought to be "out and out for the mistress," or for the children; but perhaps the master (naughty man!) put in the advertisement unbeknown to the missus!

Perhaps after all we should be thankful and not disgusted at the absurd interfering attitude towards the re-marriage of divorced persons that clergymen are adopting. It will have a very beneficial result—many people will be obliged to be married at registry offices, and thus the fashion may spread, and the absurd barbaric fuss of a church ceremony be gradually given up.

Sada Bailey Fowler, a daughter, we believe, of Fowler the phrenologist, says in *Lucifer* that "the philosophies and religions of the world have been based on *he*isms." When woman comes to the front a masculine god will be dispensed with.

Dr. Horton thinks that the decay of the masculine element in religion, which is so marked in Protestantism, is partly due to "the loss of the prophetess in the Christian Church." We wonder what Dr. Horton would say if a prophetess arose in his church at Hampstead.

"England would be a beautiful country," says Herbert Casson, "if it were not for the English. It would be a prosperous place if it were not for business. It would be a noble country if it were not for the nobility; and a moral country were it not for the churches."

Now that the wretched "infidel-slayer," Walton Powell, is doing his fifteen months' imprisonment for "conspiring to procure" young girls for immoral purposes, we take the opportunity of stating that we were frequently asked, and often by Christians, to expose this fellow's abominable conduct, but we always replied that it was *their* business to expose him, and not ours, as it was their side that he was advocating—and disgracing. Fortunately the scoundrel is now caught, and it is scarcely credible that he will ever again be able to impose upon Christian credulity, at least in this part of the world.

It was the dirty imagination of this fellow Powell which invented that unspeakably filthy libel on the Freethought party in London. He started the libel with characteristic effrontery, and ran away from defending it with characteristic cowardice—for the fellow was a mere bully, who always showed the white feather when real danger was approaching. Another anti-infidel crusader, however, protested that the libel should be proved up to the hilt, but he also backed-down when the case came before a judge and jury, and the poor publisher was left to bear the brunt of the battle. This particular anti-infidel crusader, by the way, is almost as reckless and foul-mouthed as Powell himself.

Powell's recklessness was simply amazing. No doubt he felt that the average Christian Evidence audience had a big swallow and a powerful digestion. At Ryhope, where he spent some time and bled several well-to-do Christians, he solemnly assured the people that Mr. Foote was the author of a certain sociological work, which is half the stock-in-trade of anti-infidels, and which was actually published when Mr. Foote had only recently left his cradle. He also assured the people that Mr. Foote was living with another man's wife, besides other slanderous delicacies which will hardly bear repeating. Further, he openly advised them, if Mr. Foote came to Ryhope, to treat him with physical violence. Mr. Foote did go to Ryhope and faced the mob excited by this blackguard. They tried to howl him down, and couldn't. Then they turned the gas out and put the hall in darkness. A lot of them waited outside, but as Mr. Foote walked straight at them, they showed their cowardice by parting like the Red Sea, and when they came together again "the infidel" was out of their reach in a hospitable miner's cottage.

We repeatedly warned the Freethought party against Powell. We advised them to let him severely alone, to refrain from attending his meetings, and to let him shout himself hoarse. This was because we knew his character. Many took our advice; but there are always some who are above advice (or below it), and they helped to swell the fellow's meetings and bring grist to his mill. When he first spoke in any place his audience was a handful, but as unwary Freethinkers opposed him he gradually got a crowd.

Mr. Justice Hawkins presided at Powell's trial at Bristol. His lordship called it "a filthy, wretched case," and the evidence was so clear that the jury only deliberated for a few moments.

So much for one "infidel-slayer." When he comes out of prison he will not be the only one who has "done time." It is to the credit of the Christian Evidence Society, of which Mr. Engström is secretary, that it never had any connection with these scamps; at least there was no connection that we knew of, and it is just as well to be fair, and if possible considerate, towards our opponents. But we are bound to say, on the other hand, that those whom the Christian Evidence Society feels bound to disown are precisely those who are most admired by the Christian mob up and down the country.

In reply to the assertions of the Victoria Scripture League, the electorates have returned fifty-one members dead against Bible-reading in schools, twenty-four nominally in favor (with about eight separate and irreconcileable "views" as to brand and method), and twenty who have not declared either way. Thus, so far as State authority goes, the youth of Victoria are safe from contamination by Onan, Lot, David, Mrs. Potiphar, and Co.—*Bulletin*.

The Rev. Charles Parnell—no relation to *the* Parnell—died at Brighton, leaving a fortune of over £100,000, the bulk of which will be devoted to the service of the High Church. This is the way that corporation thrives.

Bishop Walsham How, of Wakefield, left £135,000; Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, £85,000; Wordsworth, of Lincoln, £86,000; Jackson, of London, £72,000; Jackson, of Chester, £65,000; Baring, of Durham, £120,000; Sumner, of Winchester, £80,000; Auckland, of Bath and Wells, £120,000. For of such is the kingdom of heaven!

The Evangelical Alliance has again issued its invitation for a Week of Universal Prayer at the commencement of the year. Telephonic communication is to be established direct with the celestial court, and a shower of blessings is expected to follow.

Mr. Rouse sends a story to the *Literary World* anent the late Professor Robertson Smith in connection with Grant Allen's *Idea of God*. Smith is alleged to have said: "I can trace the development of religious thought among the Hebrews clearly enough, all except one thing. Where they got their idea of 'One God' from I cannot make out, unless it was really some kind of revelation." Did it need a revelation to tell that every family tribe and nation in a state of warfare had one chief?

Germany, where every Christian man must be a soldier and every soldier a Christian man, is vastly enlarging its navy to carry out schemes of *Weltpolitik*. This is the sort of Christian example it offers to the world, and of course the other Christian nations will speedily follow suit.

Emperor William's brother, who is perhaps as pious as the boss himself, has gone off in command of the German squadron in Chinese waters, and the Emperor is quite pathetic over the fact that he has taken leave of his wife and mother. It does not seem to have occurred to Emperor William that other sailors have done the same thing. In imperialist philosophy there appears to be something peculiarly poignant in the adieus and tears of royalties.

The world is moving. Here are the American Baptists, in Congress assembled at Chicago, giving up the necessity of baptism. A leading speaker parodied Paul and said: "To the unimmersed man who keeps the law of life unimmersion is reckoned immersion." So there's a chance of heaven yet without a prior sprinkling or ducking. But what will become of the holy Christian sacraments if such ideas prevail?

The Church is moving a little. Bishop Jayne, of Chester

Digitized by Google

allows Sunday tennis and golf, provided church is not missed, and here is the Bishop of London actually acknowledging that ignorance is not the best protection of purity, and admitting that "among all Christian denominations there is a conspiracy of silence," but they had now reached a time when silence was no longer possible. The Bishop, too, pointed to Jewish children as sent into the world protected by adequate knowledge, and said he: "The Jews led the purest lives."

The National Church Union represents the Broad Church party in the Established Presbyterian Church of Scotland. At its recent Conference in Glasgow a resolution was passed: "That this meeting resolves to bring the question of the modification of the terms of subscription required for ministers before the General Assembly, and remits to a committee to draw up the terms of an overture to the Assembly that might be submitted to the Presbyteries." Election, Reprobation, and Blazes are beginning to weigh heavy on the minds of the once Calvinistic Scotch. We know one well-paid Established Kirk minister who said the Westminster Confession could be interpreted as meaning anything you like. But the trouble is that the congregations begin to speak about the ministers swearing belief in creeds which they palpably neither preach nor believe.

Christianity, which thrives in contact with savage idolaters, generally by exterminating them, scarcely holds its own against the civilized faiths like Buddhism, Confucianism, Parseeism, Islam, or Judaism. In London the Moslems are bent on having a mosque and a propaganda of their own. The *Echo*, noticing a recent Mohammedan meeting, remarks: "It is well to remember that while Roman Catholicism has withered and is withering in Italy, the cradle and home of the Papacy; in France, which for centuries boasted to be 'the chief daughter of the Church,' and in Spain, now hopelessly declining, though for centuries the chief bulwark of the Church; though the Roman Church is losing ground in these and other nations in Christendom, the Mohammedan religion shows no signs of decay, and is as strong and as active as it has been for centuries."

The *Clarion* of December 4 has a stirring article on the missionary business. It says: "Here in our own country, while we are sending armies of missionaries to lie to the blacks, here in our midst we have slavery and murder and immorality, and we have them legalized and accepted by the Church, the State, and the better classes."

Our Catholic friends are much disturbed that the Freemasons should have had a field day at St. Paul on the bicentenary of its opening. The *Weekly Register* has an article on the subject. It sneers: "Very various and curious would have been the replies made to any Catechism questions addressed to that motley congregation of Masons." At least the Masons know the master-word, which the Church has forgotten—Fraternity.

The publication of Mr. Wilfred Ward's bulky *Life and Times of Cardinal Wiseman*, in which he gives a very different version of many affairs to that in Mr. Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning*, reminds us that we have heard that the latter book has been bought up wholesale by Catholics in order to be destroyed. Those with copies should carefully preserve them. Mr. Ward's book is described in the *Times* as a tissue of polemics and apologetics.

Despite Vaughan's bounce, it looks as if Catholicism was stationary. Out of every 1,000 marriages in England and Wales, forty-one are Roman Catholic, the same number as ten years ago. The number has been as high as fifty-one in 1853, while so lately as 1881 and 1882 it was forty-five; for the last ten years it ranges between a maximum of forty-three and a minimum of forty—a very narrow limit, which seems to indicate that Roman Catholicism, if it holds its own, does not do anything more.

The Pope, it is said, is anxious not to die before he has canonized Joan of Arc, and the proceedings are being hurried with, after four hundred years' delay. The priests in one age gave her over to be burnt as a witch whom another is ready to acclaim a saint. But it is France, and not the Papacy, that can rightfully claim the Maid of Orleans.

At a Conference of the Evangelical Free Churches of Durham, Northumberland, and Cleveland, held at Stockton, the education question was largely discussed. The feeling was expressed that recent legislation had dished the Nonconformists in favor of the Church, and the Rev. J. H. Clarke, M.A., indicated a solution of the problem. He said the religious training of the children of those who were in their churches laid in their hands, but they could not expect the State to do that work for them, and they must face the question in a far broader way than they had done heretofore, and must do their utmost to hasten the day when they would have the State doing its own work in its own way, and the Church doing its work. This, if it means anything, means secular education.

The Rev. R. T. Talbot, vicar of St. Thomas's, Sunderland, said that some years ago, when going through Consett Ironworks with some friends, they were shown the puddling furnace, so fierce, hot, and blinding that they could scarcely look at it. "That, sir," said a puddler, "is hotter than the place you preach about." The man of God repudiated having a hell half as hot.

The well-advertised new *Sunday Special* has a decided Semitic flavor. Three columns are given to a letter of Mme. Dreyfus, and over six columns to money matters. Mr. Louis Zangwill has a well-written column and a-half on "The Beth Book," and the suppressed cartoon in the *Kladderadatsch* satirizing the Emperor William saying, "He who is not a good Christian cannot be a good soldier," is reproduced. Evidently the *Sunday Special* is not one of the new papers to be run in the interest of the German Emperor, of which we have heard so much and seen so little.

Mr. Bernays, in his "Humors of Clerical Life" in the *Cornhill*, tells of a vicar who, soon after his arrival in the parish, placed a new cloth upon the altar, upon the centre of which was embroidered a large cross. Such strong opposition was raised to this Pagan Christian symbol that the vicar gave way before the storm and had the initials I H S substituted. A parishioner who was not at all in favor of the change, on being asked the meaning of the letters, replied: "Why, don't you know what it means? It means, 'I Hope you're Satisfied.'"

Macmillan notes a number of amusing press errors which occasionally arise. Thus, in a newspaper, the late Sir Robert Peel was described as "with a party of fiends shooting peasants in Ireland." Nor is this the only occasion on which the "r" in the word "friends" has accidentally dropped out with some injury to the sense. It is not many years since the readers of an obituary notice were startled to find appended to it the note, "Fiends will please accept this intimation."

Some errors are the result of faulty construction, as in the case of the reverend gentleman discoursing of the evils of intemperance, who said: "It was only last Sunday that a young girl fell from one of the benches of this church, while I was preaching in a beastly state of intoxication." Others arise from mixes. Thus an Irish journal's description of the labors of Roman Catholic missionaries in Central Africa ended by saying: "They are accustomed to begin their work by buying heathen children and educating them. The easiest and best way to prepare them is to first wipe them with a clean towel, then place them in dripping pans and bake them until they are tender. After which cut them in slices and cook for several hours."

A writer, reviewing a "South America" book, wrote: "The countless attractions of virgin forests are considerably discounted when they are found to be swarming with a thousand varieties of insects and animals." The compositor set up "priests" for "forests."

In our own experience we have come across a few blasphemous and many amusing misprints. An old sermon was printed "Sins of the Creator." It should have been "Creature." A restaurant once put on its bill "Fried God," and in the *Ironclad Age* we once read that Zoroaster was an obscene (obscure) writer.

A respected D.D. wrote an account of his holiday tour to an Edinburgh newspaper. During part of his journey he told that he had the company of "a very agreeable person, a lighthouse keeper." He was horrified to find his companion printed down as "a light housekeeper."

A Presbyterian church in the north of Scotland was reopened after having been gutted out and reseated. The local newspaper is reported to have said that the infernal (internal) arrangements of the church were now all that could be desired by any Christian congregation.

A writer in *Science Siftings* repeats the assertion of "A Bostonian Professor of Theology," that the great fish that swallowed Jonah was "one of the larger sea-dogs." True, Jesus is reported as calling it a whale (Matthew xii. 40); but, then, Jesus did not speak Greek, and it is uncertain what word he did use or what sea-monster he meant. Perhaps he intended to convey that it was the *Canis Carcharias* which accommodated the prophet with temporary lodgings.

The writer says: "Blumenbach, the eminent German

Digitized by Google

zoologist, in his *Manual of Natural History*, is authority for the statement that sea-dogs have been taken weighing five tons, and that a horse has been found whole in the stomach of a sea-dog." After this, who can have any doubts as to the literal accuracy of the Bible story?

Dr. Wilkinson, the Catholic Bishop of Newcastle, who is an Anglican convert, introduced "God Save the Queen" into the musical accompaniment of a religious procession in St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle. This, it appears, is condemned by old Roman Catholics as a covert attempt to introduce into their Church the Anglican doctrine of the Royal Supremacy. It is declared to be a case of a bishop, who is a convert from Anglicanism, still clinging to one of the cardinal tenets of the heresy that he has formally abjured.

We see that at the trial at Gratz, on December 6, of Dr. Bruno Wille, a well-known Berlin Freethinker, charged with having, at public meetings in Vienna and Gratz, attacked the Christian and Jewish religions, an attempt was made to exclude the public from the court, which was overturned by the counsel for the defence. We shall probably have to call our readers' attention further to this case in our next number.

Captain Wm. Hooper, a United Methodist Free Church local preacher, closed the chapel service at Meragessey, Cornwall, on Sunday with a prayer and benediction. He then fell forward and died in chapel. Now, the simple Cornish people are inquiring if it is "of the Lord."

Anthony Comstock's prosecution of Meyer Chinsky for putting forward the Hebrew version of *The Jewish Life of Christ* did not turn out exactly as the agent of the Vice Society desired. One version of the passage about Miriam and Pandera, made by Comstock's agent, made it highly indecent. Another translation was offered by the defence which was less objectionable than the first chapter of Matthew. The judge ordered an impartial translation to be made, and peremptorily ordered Anthony of the Vice Society to "sit down."

Catholics and Orangemen are loving each other like true Christians at Wigan. Mr. David Hyslopp, Church Association lecturer, had to be escorted from the market-place by the whole available police. One of the instruments an opponent hit him with was an iron bar, warranted to send any good Christian to heaven, hell, or purgatory, if it only lighted on the proper spot. Very amusing, is it not? Only, at the same time, it is so melancholy.

Miss X., the alleged clairvoyante friend of W. T. Stead, writes in the final number of *Borderland*: "I have never been to a professional seance that was not dull or vulgar, or both. I have seen tricks which one would not have supposed could deceive a schoolboy. I have never seen or heard any so-called phenomena which I thought convincing of anything but an impudent faith in the weakness of human nature, and a melancholy experience of its follies: I do not particularize further than by saying I have made it my business to interview most of the prominent professional mediums accessible to me."

The Rev. Leonard Klamborowski, rector of Chedburgh, Suffolk, did not gain much by suing Mr. W. Ambrose Cooke, the chairman of the Parish Council, for libel. It was all over ten shillings which the man of God distributed to the poor, but which Mr. Cooke properly contended should have gone through the hands of the trustees. The clergyman sued for libel, and the jury gave him a farthing damages. As the defendant had paid £5 into court, judgment was entered in his favor for £4 19s. 11¾d. with costs.

At the St. Pancras coroner's court a juryman drew attention to the fact that in two of the cases infants had died from pneumonia after being taken to church to be christened. He thought that in the case of very young children mothers ought to be cautioned against taking their infants out into the cold for such a purpose. Foolish friends sometimes think that cold water sprinkling is good for the soul, when it certainly is not good for the body.

William Booth's Farm Colony at Essex suffered much from the recent gale and tidal wave. A quarter of a mile of railway embankment, running from a wharf on the river side to the extensive brick fields of the Colony, was swept away. Horses and other live stock were drowned, and hundreds of pounds' worth of movable plant destroyed. Hundreds of acres of crops were washed out, and the sea wall was broken, besides serious damage being done to buildings.

Christian Life, known among advanced Unitarians as "Christian Strife," begins a recent leader by saying: "The immediate and startling collapse of the Secularist movement throughout England, which followed immediately upon the death of the late Mr. Bradlaugh, and shows no prospect of being reversed, is a significant sign of the times." This is on page 583. On the opposite page is a photograph, entitled "Our Closed Chapels—Prescot." The cream of the joke, however, is that the Rev. Robert Spears, the editor of "Christian Strife," said exactly the same kind of thing about the Secularist movement when Charles Bradlaugh was alive.

The *Sydney Bulletin* thinks it a pity the cinematographe was not invented earlier, in order that we might have had cinematographic views of the Creation; or, for that matter, of the chaos which was before the Creation.

If those who have a poetical picture of Jesus and his disciples in mind could get their real photographs, they might be astounded.

The *Christian Herald* recently had a yarn of an Infidel lady who yet constantly attended church. She was taken ill, but recovered sufficiently to go and hear an Infidel lecture. This so affected her that she went home and died, calling out "Heaven! Hell!" A correspondent wrote to the *C. H.* asking for names, etc. Although he enclosed a stamp, no reply was given.

The winter number of the *Methodist Recorder* has a tale of an old Yorkshire Methodist who "often in Huddersfield and elsewhere debated with Atheists. On one occasion the Infidel was so beaten and confounded that he could do nothing but 'burst into a fit of crying.'" This may be taken as conclusive proof that Christ sent devils into pigs.

An odd story about Prince Bernadotte of Sweden and his wife (who was Miss Ebba Munck) has reached the *Daily Chronicle* from Stockholm. They are said to contemplate devoting their lives to missionary work in Africa. I advise them to stay nearer home, and be really useful.—*African Critic.*

Professor Mahaffy was once travelling in England, and in the same compartment with him was a melancholy gentleman dressed in black, who inquired of the doctor if his soul was saved. "Yes," was the answer; "but it was a very narrow squeak, and I don't like talking about it."

The *Missionary Review* says: "An honest man pays his debts. Jesus worked a miracle to pay his taxes!" We have been told time out of mind that "Jesus paid it all," though, as a matter of fact, not one cent of a man's debts has ever been known to be paid by Jesus. Considering, however, what an easy thing it was to create enough money to pay his own taxes, one would think that, if Jesus really wished us to believe in his existence, he would perform just one little miracle to-day to pay our taxes, even if our debts are too big to be settled in this way.—*Secular Thought.*

Don Carlos, it seems, is ready to find his opportunity in his country's disaster, and Mr. Cranstoun Metcalfe and the Marquis de Ruvigny write on him as the coming savior of Spain in the current *Fortnightly*. That he has the support of "the clerical party" will be no commendation to enlightened Europe.

Not only is the old gospel worn out and inoperative, but the old gospel methods are equally out of date. They used to preach "Christ and him crucified"; Hell-fire; the Judgment Day; the blazing earth and sea and sky; the resurrection of the dead; the wailing of the swarms and shoals of the damned, and the howling of the devils; the antiphonetic shouts and triumphant mockery of the saints, etc. Now the clergy have dropped all this heavenly apparatus, and go in for music, theatricals, sensational stuff of the music-hall types, "Christian Endeavor" and "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," with now and then a Judge or a travelling Labor Leader to give them a speech, *à la mode*. It will not be long ere they ask some Atheist to give them a helping hand, pleading as an excuse that "all things are the Lord's." There is nothing—short of honest candor—the clergy will not resort to in order to keep their trade going; and I do not feel at all sure that they would not even employ truth and candor both for the same ends, if they ever found one or the other necessary. We are all things to all men, ladies and gentlemen, is their constant attitude, if not their cry. And seeing that all their tricks and dodges are for God's glory *alias* their own advantage, we may be sure they will never be called to account for it. As they have no conscience, except their purse, and nothing to fear in a fabled future state, they are not likely to drop their nefarious trade so long as the gulls will support them. —*Liberator.*

There is an old saying, that "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Since a thing has grown so plain that even fools can understand it, it must be plain indeed.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 12, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "The Evolution of the Idea of God."

January 2, Birmingham; 9, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 12, Camberwell Hall, London. January 23 and 30, 1898, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham. April 29, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

ABRACADABRA thinks Dr. Hardwicke a trifle too sharp. In writing that the Holy Ghost was "misnamed the spirit of truth" Abracadabra was referring not to the words of the text, but to the effect on those who are said to have been inflated by the ghost, judging, of course, by the samples of this inspiration which we possess—the New Testament, and more particularly the Gospel narratives.

NORTH LONDON FREETHINKER.—The accident at Wood Green arose through Mr. Foote not having been personally apprised of the date and subject of his lecture. Mr. Moss kindly took his place on that occasion. Mr. Foote has given the Wood Green Branch another date, Thursday, January 13, when he will lecture on "Man's Origin and Destiny."

H. G. BARNES.—The financial result of the South Wales lectures will enable you to judge of the colossal fortune which certain fools and rogues represent Mr. Foote to be making by Freethought propaganda. It is gratifying to learn that his lectures have "created a great stir amongst the working classes at Porth and Pontypridd," and that the "saints" are all anxious for another visit.

A. E. E.—There is some justice in your criticism, but the matter is hardly worth recurring to after such an interval. Thanks for the copy of your leaflet on Christian Foreign Missions. It is lively reading, and should do good locally.

E. PARKER.—We agree with you that it is time the West Ham Secularists tried to reorganize themselves. Those who are willing to take part in forming a new Branch of the N. S. S. there should send their names and addresses to Miss Vance, N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand, W.C. The old Branch was broken up a few years ago by a few cantankerous malcontents. They were going to do wonders apart from the N. S. S., but it all ended in smoke—the usual fate of secessions.

JOSEPH MAY.—Buddhism, as originally taught by its founder, is rather a philosophy than a religion. Buddha's teaching was ethical. He turned away from the old doctrines and disputes about gods and supernaturalism.

J. ROTHWELL.—Why not try to form an active N. S. S. Branch at Oldham? That is the only thing we are interested in.

J. STOCKWELL.—The paper you refer to is beneath notice.

THE HOOPER FUND.—T. Bellamy acknowledges:—Collected at Mr. Cohen's Birmingham lectures, 15s. 6d.; Manchester Branch, £1.

W. J. MACFARLANE.—Thanks for the Ruskin letter. It may be useful some day. Glad to hear you have tired out the fanatic who removed the *Freethinker* from the Club reading-room, and that the paper is now eagerly sought for by the readers.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—J. Unsworth, 5s. *(p)*.

T. C. BLANCHARD.—Secular lectures ought not to be delivered in public-houses.

WE have received another letter ostensibly from Dr. John Clifford, but as it is not in his handwriting we have written to ask whether it is really his. If it be so, it will appear in our next issue.

THOMAS MACLEISH.—Glad to hear you have obtained another situation, though sorry you have to come South for it, thus leaving your work for the cause in Glasgow, where your services will be missed. We shall always be glad to hear from you.

R. MELLOR.—Order for books or pamphlets should not be sent to Mr. Foote, but to Mr. Forder. Violation of this rule only causes trouble and delay. Mr. Foote was absent from London, and could not transfer your order to Mr. Forder until his return.

J. KEAST.—Thanks, though the report had already reached us through another channel.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—De Dageraad—Isle of Man Times—Glasgow Herald—Birmingham Mercury—Two Worlds—Lucifer—Humanity—Free Society—Truthseeker—Chat—Mind—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—Crescent—Liberator—New York Public Opinion—Zoophilist—People's Newspaper—Echo.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured on Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall on "Another Converted Atheist." It was a criticism of Alice Dale's new novel entitled *Marcus Warwick, Atheist*, which we shall have something to say about in the *Freethinker* shortly. Mr. Percy Ward occupied the chair, and opposition to the lecturer was offered by two courteous speakers, one a Theist and the other a Christian.

This evening (Dec. 12) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Athenæum Hall on Mr. Grant Allen's important new book on *The Evolution of the Idea of God*. No doubt there will be a large attendance.

Mr. Charles Watts had capital audiences in Manchester last Sunday, where he lectured three times. In the morning the gathering was good, in the afternoon much better, and in the evening the hall was filled. Friends were present from Bolton, Oldham, Hyde, and Accrington. Some questions were asked after each lecture, but no debate worth mentioning took place. It was pleasing to see so many ladies at all the lectures.

Mr. Watts speaks in the highest terms of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. The members are carrying on a vigorous propaganda, and the Branch appears to be in a better condition than ever it was. The hall has been renovated with great taste at the cost of over a hundred pounds. Its present condition is a credit to all concerned.

This Sunday evening, December 12, Mr. Watts lectures in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, upon his new subject "Christian Tactics Exposed."

The Roman Catholic, Dr. St. George Mivart, contributes some memories of Professor Huxley to the *Nineteenth Century*. He remarks: "He hated injustice and loathed insincerity." Can this be why he fell out with Dr. Mivart?

New Zealand, under Sir Robert Stout, and with several Freethinking members, among them friend Collins, has been the first of the Colonies to pass an Act for Old-Age Pensions.

From the last number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand we see that the Freethought Congress at New York has passed off successfully. It was held in Hardman Hall. The ladies laid their hands upon the place and trimmed it up tastefully. National colors predominated on the stage in honor of the cosmopolitan character of Freethought. In the centre was a large photograph of Samuel P. Putnam, draped with the Stars and Stripes. The Secretary's report referred to the visit of Messrs. Foote and Watts from England as "one of the grandest events in the history of Freethought." "We have added," Secretary Reichwald went on, "thousands of new members to our list." Letters were read from Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts, and one from Colonel Ingersoll, who said: "Of course my sympathies are with the Secularists. Secularism is the only true religion. It is for this world, and embraces everything that touches the welfare of human beings." All the old officers were re-elected, and the new President to succeed Putnam is John E. Remsburg, of Atchison, Kansas, of whom an excellent portrait is given in the *Truthseeker*. We did not have the pleasure of meeting Mr. Remsburg last year, but we know from his writings that he is a man of ability, and we wish him all success in his new office.

Friends of education may rejoice at the inauguration of a Moral Instruction League. Despite the wet weather, a large, earnest, representative, and unanimous meeting was held in St. Martin's Town Hall on December 7. Mr. Allanson Picton, one of the three members of the first London School Board who voted against Bible reading, presided. Miss Zona Vallance detailed the steps taken in the movement. The chairman, Mr. Stanton Coit, the Rev. J. Page Hopps, Mrs. C. Swann, Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. Paul Campbell, Mr. Standring, and Mrs. Adams, the new member for Greenwich, each spoke from their respective points of view. Mr. Foote said that as a Secularist he rejoiced at the prospect of a citizen's party as distinct from a church party or a chapel party, and engaged that, if true to their principles, the League should have the support of Secularists. We shall write further on the matter next week.

Digitized by Google

Some of our older readers will doubtless remember the verses that used to be contributed to the *Freethinker* years ago by "Ex-Ritualist." We have just heard from this gentleman again. He is recovering from a severe illness, during which he was face to face with death. He had no desire whatever for the "consolations" of religion, and no sort of apprehension as to the future. "This visitation," he writes, "has made me think seriously, and I don't think I can do better than enter the pale of the one true church"—to wit, the National Secular Society. He asks for a proposal form of membership, and promises twelve shillings annually to the new Treasurer's Scheme. He also sends some verses, which will appear in our next issue.

Mr. J. W. Cox is following up Mr. Foote's lectures at Porth. He discourses in the Town Hall there to-day (Dec. 12), morning, afternoon, and evening, and we trust he will have good meetings.

A handsome room in the Holborn Restaurant has been engaged for the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner on Monday, January 10, and the tickets (4s.) are now on sale. Branch secretaries and other friends who can help to circulate them are requested to communicate direct with Miss Vance, N. S. S. Office, 376-377 Strand, W.C. We hope to see a large assembly of Freethinkers at this function. Mr. Foote will be in the chair, and will be supported by Messrs. Watts, Wheeler, Forder, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, and other well-known colleagues.

The Birmingham *Weekly Mercury* gives a long account of a local Secularist meeting addressed by Mr. Percy Ward, who told them how he advanced from the Wesleyan pulpit to the Secularist platform. The reporter seems to have been much interested in Mr. Ward's discourse, and he describes the audience as "a little more reverent perhaps" than ordinary congregations.

Mr. Watts, having been out of town, did not see Mr. Engström's letter in time to reply to it in this week's *Freethinker*. He will do so next week.

Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, a special edition of which is issued by the Humanitarian League, is eulogized by Mr. A. E. Fletcher in the last issue of the *New Age*, in connection with the Sermon on the Mount! "I am bound to acknowledge," Mr. Fletcher says, "that many so-called Atheists have proved themselves to be far better Christians in their denunciation of war than have many of the professed followers of Jesus." This is of course well-meant, for Mr. Fletcher's sincerity and integrity are beyond question; but, after all, is it not somewhat absurd to claim avowed and reflective Atheists as unconscious Christians? Would it not be just as easy for us to say that Mr. Fletcher is an Atheist without knowing it, and that it is not his Christianity, but his humanity, which prompts him to champion the cause of the poor and the oppressed?

Mr. Fletcher "strongly recommends every Christian man and woman" to buy and read Mr. Foote's pamphlet—which we hope they will do, if only for the sake of the Humanitarian League. Mr. Fletcher calls it "one of the ablest expositions of the Christian doctrine on the subject of war," and "really a masterful commentary on the fourth beatitude." This is unstinted praise, but it is rather embarrassing. Mr. Foote put his head and heart (such as they are) into that pamphlet, but he didn't know that it would ever give him a place among the Christian commentators. However, we don't want to fall out with Mr. Fletcher, who is a man of admirable parts and character; only we should like him (as a Christian) to look at the following facts. This very pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, given by Mr. Foote to the Humanitarian League, has been studiously ignored by the very papers that have noticed the rest of the League's publications. And why? Simply because the writer is an Atheist. His work may be "able" or "masterly," or anything you will, but he must be ignored, for it won't do at any price to give any sort of credit to the "infidel." The same silence, for the most part, has been maintained concerning the essay on "Animals' Rights," which Mr. Foote contributed to the Humanitarian League's book called *The New Charter*. Not that *he* cares a jot personally; but how it accuses the bigotry or meanness of ordinary journalism! It is at least to Mr. Fletcher's credit that he scorns to participate in this despicable conspiracy. And, after all, manliness is of greater importance than mere opinion.

The *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, and edited by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, is selling fairly well, but a good supply still remains in the publisher's hands. This is a publication which all Secularists should purchase and keep by them. It contains some readable articles and much other useful and interesting matter. Whatever profit is realized from the sale accrues to the National Secular Society.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XV.—The Gospel Events Unhistorical.

We are told in the Gospels that Jesus went about from place to place working miracles wherever he went; consequently, there could be no excuse for the Jews not believing on him. It is also said that those people rejected him because his kingdom was not of this world, and that his rejection and crucifixion were both the subjects of prophecy. Needless it is to say that not one of these statements is supported by evidence. On the other hand, there are passages in the Gospels which plainly imply that Jesus worked no miracles at all. Such, for example, are the following:—

> "Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of Jonah the prophet," etc. (Matt. xii. 38, 39). "The Jews therefore answered and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us?.....Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John ii. 18, 19). "They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee?" (John vi. 30).

Now, since the Gospels were made up from a number of independent stories pieced together, the foregoing passages, taken by themselves, clearly indicate that Christ's questioners had witnessed none of the marvellous cures which were attributed to him in some of the other stories. They might, possibly, have heard speak of some of those wonders, but they had not beheld any themselves. If such were the case, there was nothing unreasonable in their asking for a "sign." But Christ in each instance flatly refused to gratify them. Instead of performing one of his vaunted "mighty works" before them, he called them "an *evil* and *adulterous* generation," and mystified them by speaking of his body as a "temple." The only sign they were to have was that of "Jonah the prophet"—viz., they should see him alive three days after his death—which "sign" they never saw, for he only showed himself to his disciples, and that by stealth.

On certain other occasions, it is also said, the Jews asked for a sign "tempting him," or "in order to prove him" (Matt. xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16). The Gospel writers in these cases imply that all the inhabitants of Palestine had witnessed Christ's miracles, and therefore knew perfectly well that he was a divine being. It is also implied that it would be undignified, if not positively wrong, for Jesus to work a miracle merely to convince doubters. Now, if we set aside the stories ascribing miraculous works to Christ—for, be it remembered, we do not possess the testimony of a single witness to the actual performance of one of them—we behold in these passages the sorry figure of a man who, while claiming to be the Messiah, refuses to give the people a sign by which they might recognise the long-looked-for Savior. He thus falls to the level of the various religious impostors who appeared in Judea in the first century.

It is, however, in the highest degree improbable that the historical Jesus to whom were ascribed the silly fictions in the Gospels laid any claim to the Messiahship, or that he professed to be able to work miracles. These were simply claimed for him by another generation. It is far more likely that the real Simon Pure was a harmless fanatic, who was known to few beyond the members of the sect to which he belonged (the Essenes), three of these members being his brother James, Cephas, and John the author of the "Revelation." And this being the case, there was no rejection of him by the Jewish nation, for the simple reason that the great majority of those people had never even heard of him. This view is confirmed by the fact that the Jews have no account of the pretentious miracle-working Jesus of the Gospels. They evidently knew nothing of such a wonderful personage until Christianity had been firmly established. Then, not being able to identify the real Jesus, or to disprove the stories related of him by a later generation of Christians, they invented the ridiculous story, which dates from the time of Celsus (A.D. 177), and is still preserved in the "Sepher Toldoth Jeshu."

In any case, the Gospel story of a great teacher and

Digitized by Google

healer of diseases being rejected and crucified by the Jews is, on the face of it, fictitious. It is beyond doubt that all four Gospel accounts of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Christ were taken from copies of an earlier document, each evangelist merely altering or adding to the narrative as he thought fit. The original concoctor of the story is unknown, and, we may safely say, will remain so. Could a sharp cross-examining counsel get hold of him, and press him closely as to his authority for the matters he has recorded, he would, I venture to say, pass a bad quarter of an hour, and would doubtless be forced to admit that his account was founded on mere hearsay stories, which had never been investigated by anyone.

According to this writer, the Jews, being subject to the Romans, were afraid to put Jesus to death themselves; they had to bring him before Pilate, and the latter had to go through the farce of a regular trial. But, as a matter of history, we find the Jews often took the law into their own hands, and, in a question relating to their religion, they would not have thought twice about stoning anyone whom they considered guilty of blasphemy. We are told in the Acts (vii. 56–58) that when Stephen, addressing the Jews, said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," his hearers were roused to such a pitch of frenzy or righteous indignation that they "cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him." It does not appear to have entered their minds, even for a moment, to take the offender to the Roman procurator for trial; they settled the matter then and there themselves. This incident, whether historical or not, describes accurately the character of the impulsive and fanatical Jews in matters affecting their religion. Had Jesus really addressed the following words to the scribes and Pharisees of his day, as alleged, he would, beyond a doubt, have been stoned as a blasphemer and a calumniator:—

> "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for *I came forth, and am come from God*.....Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning..... It is my Father that glorifieth me; of whom ye say that he is your God; and ye have not known him; but I know him; and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar" (John viii. 42, 44, 54, 55).

This language is ten times more blasphemous than that attributed to Stephen, besides being mendacious and insulting. If the Jews gnashed their teeth at the words of Stephen, they would have gone stick-stark-staring wild upon hearing these, and the result can easily be imagined. It is also equally impossible to conceive of Jesus uttering the following invectives without receiving summary chastisement on the spot:—

> "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.....Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell" (Matthew xxiii. 15, 33).

We have no evidence that the scribes and Pharisees in the time of Christ were either "hypocrites" or "sons of hell," or even that any of them were such systematic perverters of the truth as the evangelist Matthew, who ascribes the foregoing libellous words to Christ. If we take Philo and Josephus as samples of educated Jews of the first century, the latter were immeasurably superior, both in intelligence and honesty, to any of the Gospel writers.

But, from the Jewish standpoint, Jesus was a false prophet and an innovator, who went about declaiming against the most respectable, the most influential, and the best educated of the nation, and was followed wherever he went by a multitude drawn chiefly from the lower classes. And this hostile demonstration continued, according to the Gospels, for two or three years. Now, if we read "Jesus" instead of "Theudas" in the following account by Josephus, we shall see that the whole of the Gospel narratives relating to the alleged public ministry of Christ are, as a matter of probability, entirely fictitious:—

> "Now it came to pass, that while Fadus was procurator of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them, and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem" (*Antiq.* xx. v. 1).

The same unique method was employed by the Governor Felix when "there came out of Egypt to Jerusalem one that said he was a prophet, and advised a multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives." Against this pretender Felix sent "a great number of horsemen and footmen," who "attacked the Egyptian and the people who were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred of them alive. But the Egyptian himself escaped" (*Antiq.* xx. viii. 6). Now, if Jesus really appeared in Judea in the time of the procurator Pilate, and, after proclaiming himself a prophet, chose twelve disciples with whom he went about the country orating, and was followed wherever he went by multitudes of the lower classes, there cannot be the smallest doubt that Pilate would have cut short both his ministry and his person with "horsemen and footmen." Moreover, the disciples would have suffered the same fate, as accomplices. We have thus presumptive evidence that the public ministry of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, is pure fiction.

Again, where was Pilate when Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding on an ass at the head of a shouting multitude? In Matthew's account we read (xxi. 2, 11):—

> "And the most part of the multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'.....And when he was come into Jerusalem, *all the city was stirred*, saying, Who is this? And the multitudes said, This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."

No Roman governor who was responsible for the order of the province committed to his care would have permitted any self-styled prophet to create such a disturbance. I therefore ask again, Where was Pilate? Josephus tells us (*Wars* ii. xii. 1) that the Roman cohort stationed near the cloisters of the temple "were armed and kept guard at the festivals, to prevent any innovation which the multitude, thus gathered together, might make." According to the Gospels, Jesus, upon entering Jerusalem, "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold the doves." This was an innovation with a vengeance, and the poor, spiritless Jews bore it like lambs. Those who, later on, pounded Stephen to a jelly because they did not agree with something he had said had now not a word to say for themselves. This occurred, too, but a few days before the Passover, when people were coming from all parts into the holy city to keep that festival. Assuming, then, that the Jews did not stone the aggressor "between the temple and the altar," as is stated of a certain Zachariah, where was the Roman cohort? We are told in the Acts (xxi. 32) that the officer commanding this band rescued Paul from the hands of the Jewish populace when they were about to kill him, because it was thought he had brought Greeks in the temple. Where was this cohort when Christ drove the people out of the sanctuary with his "scourge of cords," and set the whole city in an uproar? Where, too, were the high priest and his officers? And where, above all, was the procurator Pilate?

If this much-maligned Governor was at his post, as history asserts, then this story, like all the other stories related of Christ's alleged public ministry, is neither more nor less than a Christian fabrication.

ABRACADABRA.

The world is governed by law. From the tiniest mote that rides the sunbeam dancing on the waves of summer seas to the mightiest constellation that sweeps, in everlasting flight, the boundless fields of space, necessity reigns supreme.

On Friday, December 10, Mr. Ernest Bell, the treasurer of the Humanitarian League, will lecture in the Arbitration-room, 63 Chancery Lane, on the subject of "Christian Cruelties." Professor B. Mayor will preside.

Digitized by Google

WHAT IS RELIGION?

RELIGION is the inherited fear of the world. It began in man being afraid of his own shadow. The religious man is a coward. His God is simply the object of his dread. Worship is the expression of man's fear. Ask a man why he worships God, and, if he is intelligent and honest, he will say, "Because I am afraid of something." Ask him what he is afraid of, and he must answer, "God." A religious person is a person who is afraid of God. Ask him what this God is that he fears, and he does not know. Ask him where he is, and he does not know. Religion is fear of the unknown. There cannot be a more ridiculous thing than religion.

If religion were fear of what we know to be injurious, and worship was the effort to rid the world of these bad and evil influences, there would be some sense in being religious. But to be afraid of what we know nothing about is to be afraid of nothing. Religion is a product of darkness, ignorance. It came out of the shadows. One man got scared, and he scared another by telling him what he got scared about, and the perpetuation of this scare is seen in the religions of the world.

Religion dies just as soon as science is born. Man's cowardice flees when the sun of truth rises. Persons who have knowledge, who have courage, who are not afraid of their own shadows, are not religious. It is not necessary for the feet to surrender to the knees.

We do not deny but what there are things in nature which are enemies to human life, but such things we are not to worship; we are to evade or destroy them. If man is afraid of God, he had better get rid of him. Where there is no fear of God there is no religion.

—*The Boston Investigator.*

FERVOR OF LIFE.

'Tis given to us to live; to see the skies
Grand with huge, bounding, myriad, timeless worlds
That palpitate with life. 'Tis given to us
To love; thus in the rapture of creation,
Pressed to a lover, heaving with that heart
Build holily the life that is to be.
'Tis given to us to see the little children,
Each more delightful than a century's flowers,
Growing and shaping into higher forms,
More sentient, capable, as accumulate
The lores of things and idealities—
Thus ever mounts the race. Then, when our time
Grows over-long, we kiss our Mother Death
Upon her dusky, naked, swollen breasts,
And then we sleep.

—*William Platt.*

BOOK CHAT.

A SAMPLE of the Bible in "guid braid Scots" has been going the rounds. The specimen chunk is from the Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's: "Set me as the seal upo' thine hairt, as the seal upo' thine airm; for luv is straing as deith; jealousy as cruel as the grave; the coals thereo' are coals o' fire bleezin' wi' a maist awfu' lowe. Mony watters canna slocken luv'; neither can the spates droon it; gin a man wad gie a' the haudin's o' his hoose for luv', they wad be a'thegither scorned." The *Sydney Bulletin* calls it the apotheosis of the Kailyard plague.

* * *

Those who know Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* —and everyone should know that genuine outburst of manliness—should be aware of his readiness ever to be the voice of the voiceless, the advocate of the despised and downtrodden. He is brave enough to write of *An Unknown People* (Bonner; 6d.), the so-called "Urnings," or men with feminine disposition, and females who are masculine in character. He shows they deserve study and sympathetic consideration. This he brings to all his touches. Yet are we constrained to say that the race must be continued by the men who are masculine and the women who are feminine; and from its standpoint androgynes are abnormalities of comparatively slight importance. Probably most of those set down as of the "Urning's" temperament are only people endowed with keener sympathies, enabling them to enter more readily into the thoughts and proclivities of the opposite sex.

* * *

Admirers of Browning can now get all his earlier poems, from "Paracelsus" to "Men and Women," in one good-sized volume at a moderate price. The account of the poet's life, by Oscar Browning, makes the introduction.

* * *

An American religious book, entitled *The Mystic Book of God Unsealed; or, The Banished Angels and their Penitentiary*, by R. V. Millard, Bishop and Founder of the Church of Redeemed Israel, claims that we on this earth are the fallen angels who were driven out of heaven, and are now imprisoned in this purgatory or penitentiary until we shall be "redeemed" by Christ (who is Michael, the archangel who fought against the dragon). God lives in the Pleiades, and all the rest of the orbs of the universe are peopled with God's angels. The "redeemed" of this solar system will return to God in the seven stars when the end comes; but we poor unrepentant fellows will be burned up and annihilated, world, devil, and all. This is the latest revelation, and it induces the reflection: "You never know your luck."

* * *

Mr. Hodgson Pratt, the president of the International Arbitration and Peace Association, in a little pamphlet on *International Arbitration*, contends that this is quite feasible. The majority of international disputes can be settled without war, and a tribunal to settle such disputes can be erected. Its desirability should need no demonstration.

* * *

Humanity for December contains a good report of the lecture by Edward Carpenter on "Prison Methods: Now and in the Future." It also announces the formation of the Romilly Society, the purposes of which are stated to be: "To review the laws in force for the repression and punishment of crimes, misdemeanors, and offences of every kind; to abolish or modify antiquated, barbarous, or excessive punishment, or penalties; to provide for and secure fairness in prosecution, mercy in judgment, and all proper defence to the accused, and compensation to the innocent wrongly accused and convicted; to procure the creation of a Minister and Department of Justice; to obtain the right of appeal on matter of fact as well as law in all criminal cases; to improve the administration of prisons and penal servitude by improved regulations according to humane and merciful ideas, so that the reform of the convict, and not his punishment, shall be regarded as the most important object." *Humanity* also contains an account of the late E. Maitland, a report of Miss Greg's address on "The Cattle Trade," and two good letters on "Catholics and Vivisection."

* * *

Satan's Invisible World Displayed is an old theological witch-finding title adapted to a new social work. It is an exposure of the malgovernment of New York. Mr. Stead is so famous for his hectic sensationalism that we would fain hope his description of corruption is exaggerated.

* * *

In *The Journals of Walter White* he tells of Kingsley having once said: "Think of 15,000 clergymen having to stand up Sunday after Sunday with nothing to say. Ah! the Reformation has much to answer for." Turning to Carlyle: "You and your Puritans have much to answer for. Those men first started the notion that the way to heaven was by infinite jaw; and see what infinite jaw has brought us to." "Ay," said Carlyle, "'tis wonderful how men will go on talking with nothing to say."

* * *

The *Daily News*, noticing Captain Trotter's *Life of John Nicholson*, the Savior of Delhi, refers to the curious episode of Nicholson's elevation to divine honors. A fakir saw in Nicholson, the abolisher of anarchy, an incarnation of the deity. The new creed made its way; "the sect of Nikalsainis became an historical fact." Whereupon the god Nikalsain, rising in his indignation, thrashed his worshippers. But the more he whacked them the more they gloried in their martyrdom, and grew steadfast in the faith. We believe the Nikalsaini sect exists to this day.

* * *

Mr. Walter Welsh, in his *Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, says that "at present the Church of England is literally honeycombed with secret societies, all working in the interests of the scheme for the Corporate Reunion of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. These secret plotters are the real wirepullers of the Ritualistic movement." One of the most important of these is the Order of Corporate Reunion, which has had three of its members consecrated bishops by Roman, Greek, and Armenian bishops. One of them, the Rev. F. G. Lee, vicar of All Saints, Lambeth, is said to have *validly* ordained eight hundred Anglican Churchmen, so that a body is growing which the Pope would have to recognise. Another secret society, that of the Holy Cross, came into undesired notoriety twenty years ago by publishing *The Priest in Absolution*. A copy came into the hands of the late Lord Redesdale, who was horrified to find the extreme indelicacy of the questions put to married and unmarried women and children. He brought the matter before the House of Lords, and great excitement in ecclesiastical circles was the result.

Digitized by Google

Louis Becke, in his *Wild Life in Southern Seas*, which has just reached a second edition, says of the Pacific Islanders: "Taking their present condition and comparing it with their past, one cannot but regretfully conclude that civilization and Christianity have done them much physical harm, and but little moral good."

* * *

An Italian metrical translation of Shakespeare's *Venere e Adone*, by Professor G. Tirivelli, has been published by G. Bobbio, Director of the Printing Office of the Senate, Rome.

* * *

David Nutt publishes Sixty-four Sonnets from the Portuguese of Anthero de Quental, who is a Freethinker as well as a poet. They are translated by Edgar Prestage.

* * *

The *Academy*, in an article apparently from the pen of F. B. Jevons, joins in the onslaught on Mr. Grant Allen's *Evolution of the God Idea*, which appears to be rather too thoroughgoing for the exponents of orthodoxy.

* * *

Andrew Lang has lost no time in pitching into Mr. Grant Allen's heretical book, which will be noticed in our columns shortly. The work is a bulky one, and deserves careful attention.

* * *

The reviewer of the *Church Quarterly Review* has most thoroughly exposed in the *Guardian* the tactics of the S. P. C. K. in putting forward perverted renderings of the works of foreign critics like Maspero and Hommel.

* * *

Fisher Unwin issues *A Selection from the Poems of Mathilde Blind*, edited by Arthur Symons.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—"Moral Instruction," as enunciated by the "Moral Instructionists," in the person of your correspondent, Mr. Gould, seems to me to be of a piece with the would-be building up advocated by a small but not uninfluential section of the Secular party. The idea that it is incumbent upon those who labor to destroy the huge superstitious imposition known as Christianity, to put something in its place, underlies and permeates both the Moral Instructionists and the above-mentioned section of Secularists. For Mr. Gould and his colleagues, personally, I have nothing but the most kindly feelings, because, while I feel quite sure that their policy is wrong, I am equally sure that their object is right. What I demur to is that they (the Moral Instructionists) invest their "morality" for our Board schools with a sort of superhuman sanctity, which, to my mind, will tend to make it as great a bone of contention among our educational authorities as is the religious embroglio to which they, in common with the Secularists, would fain put an end.

Speaking for myself, I have no desire to see our Board school teachers turned into a corporation of *moral parsons*. I am not so sure that they would be any improvement on present moral conditions as to make me enthusiastic for the change.

When Mr. Gould intimates that the present staff of teachers are not competent to impart this moral instruction to the children, I cannot but opine that he does his erstwhile colleagues scant justice. That those ladies and gentlemen know as much about teachable morality, and how it should be taught, as does Mr. Gould himself, I don't think that gentleman would deny. I would even go as far as to say ditto of the "man in the street." Moral truths, as far as they are teachable, are the common property of mankind. Book or code morality, as the learned Mr. Buckle proves up to the hilt in his *Civilization in England*, is, and has ever been, the same the world over. Voltaire affirms that the ideas of justice and injustice in the child's mind are co-existent with its capacity to add two and two together to make four. We no more require schools to teach our children this than we do to teach them how to use their eyes, ears, hands, and legs.

Let me hazard the opinion that the real moral improvers of mankind are your inventors, the products of whose genius bring more and more within the reach of the ever-increasing masses of the people the possibilities of a nobler and more desirable life than was ever possible before. To those inventors we very largely owe the wealth that enables us to build and to efficiently support our Board schools. In all that we are better morally than past generations, we owe it to the cultivated intellects of our race. Let our Board schools, then, be devoted to the improvement of that faculty to which we owe so much. Fertilize the budding intellect with all the useful knowledge of which it is profitably capable. This is the acme of our duty, as it relates to our efforts and the welfare of the children. Having done this thoroughly, we may safely leave them to work out their own moral salvation—that is, if it is needed.

T. J. THURLOW

THOSE GIRLS.

A LITTLE girl, four and a half years old, lately said: "Papa, who made Mary and Joseph?" "Why, God, of course." "Oh, no, papa, that could not be; for, if Jesus is God, and Mary is Jesus's mother, how could God make his own mother?"

"Well, Edie, what did you see at church?" "A man came in with his nightgown on, and he was so 'shamed he hid his face in his hands 'fore he could say a word."

"Teacher, did Solomon have three hundred wives?" "Yes." "What, all at once?" "Yes." "Then why does it say he slept with his fathers?"

"Minnie, what makes you such a bad girl?" "Well, mamma, I s'pose God sent you the best he could find, so if I don't suit it ain't my fault."

"You're a sweet little darling, Katie." "I s'pose God put some sugar in the dust."

"Do babies come from heaven, mamma?" "Yes, dear." "Well, I shouldn't want them there either if I was the angels."

Cora—"How lamblike the minister is!" Dora—"And what sheep's eyes he casts at us girls!"

"Shall we have clothes in heaven, mamma?" "No, child." "Won't it be fun to see the fat cook waddling about in heaven?"

Little Susie H. (poring over a book in which angels were represented as winged beings) suddenly remarked, with much vehemence—"Mamma, I don't want to be an angel when I die, and I needn't, need I?" "Why, Susie?" questioned mamma. "'Cos I don't want to leave off all my clothes, and wear fedders like a hen!"

PROFANE JOKES.

A CERTAIN Freethinker is mildly severe upon professors of religion. He should remember that it is only by professing religion that a man can enjoy his portion of iniquity in any kind of peace.

If a jackass were to describe the deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail. Man's ideal is the higher and truer one; he pictures him as somewhat resembling a man.

"Why are Calvinists' minds so stunted and undersized?" "I suppose it's because they are brought up on the Shorter Catechism."

It is wicked to cheat on Sundays. The law recognises this truth, and shuts up the shops.

"Mamma," said little Mabel, who had just come home from church, "what made that man in the corner say 'Amen' so often while the preacher was talking?" "I know," said Willie confidently. "Well, Willie," said his mother, "why is it?" "It's a way he has of calling time on the preacher."

A clergyman was questioning his Sunday-school about the story of Eutychus, the young man who, while listening to the preaching of the Apostle Paul, fell asleep, and, falling down, was taken up dead. "What," he said, "do we learn from this solemn event?" "Please, sir," replied a little girl promptly, "parsons should learn not to preach too long sermons."

Renunciation.

Wakeful I lay at night, and thought of God,
Of heaven, and of the crowns pale martyrs gain,
Of souls in high and purgatorial pain,
And the red path which murdered seers have trod.
I heard the trumpets which the angels blow,
I saw the cleaving sword, the measuring rod,
I watch the stream of sound continuous flow,
Past the gold towers where seraphs make abode.
But now I let the aching splendor go,
I dare not call the crowned angels peers,
Henceforth I am content to dwell below
'Mid common joys, with humble smiles and tears,
Delighted in the sun and breeze to grow
A child of human hopes and human fears.

—*W. M. W. Call.*

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Evolution of the Idea of God."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Theosophy: Is it Wisdom or Folly?" December 11, at 8.30, Concert and Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "Christian Tactics Exposed."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (103, Mile End-road): W. H. Harris, Shakesperean Recitals.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "The Ethics of Epicurus"—opened by H. O. Newland; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Ethics of Punishment."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Sidney Webb, LL.B., "Democracy."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Book of Jonah in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, T. Norbury, "Russian Diplomacy."

BRISTOL (St James's Hall, Cumberland-street): November 10, at 8, Business meeting—at Mr. Leaker's house. No meeting on Sunday.

CHESTER (Corn Exchange): C. Cohen—11, "Why Should we Follow Jesus?" 3, "Secularism a Better Creed than Christianity"; 7.30, "Is there a God?"

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, Mr. Whitwell, A reading.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Harry Snell—12, "Was Jesus a Socialist?" 6.30, "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist and Reformer"—with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, L. Small, B.A. "Concerning the Origin of Life."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington square): 7, The Secretary, "The Jesus of the Gospels."

PORTH (Town Hall): Mr. Cox—11, "The Sermon on the Mount"; 3, "The Lord's Prayer"; 7, "Does God Care?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): H. Percy Ward—11, "Shall we Live After we are Dead"; 3, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity? A Secularist's Answer"; 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Adjourned discussion, "The Educational Question."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—December 19, Leicester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—December 12, Camberwell Radical Club; 19, Camberwell Secular Hall.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—December 12, Sheffield. January 8 to 12, Mission to Stanley. 23 and 30, Manchester.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct gold, 15s; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

WANTED, BY MRS. CHARLES WATTS, the week after Christmas, a GENERAL SERVANT. Small family; no children; heavy washing sent out. Every comfort and consideration. 81 Effra-road, Brixton, S.W.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'welp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 22*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow 'Weekly Citizen.'*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

Contents:—

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 82 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. In parts 4*d.* each.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1*d.*

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2*d.*

Philosophy of Secularism. 3*d.*

Atheism and Morality. 2*d.*

The Bible God. 2*d.*

Interview with the Devil. 2*d.*

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1*d.*

Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2*d.*; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1*d.*; (3) Cain and Abel, 1*d.*; (4) Noah's Flood, 1*d.*; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1*d.*; (6) Lot's Wife, 1*d.*; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1*d.*; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1*d.*; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1*d.*; (10) God in a Box, 1*d.*; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1*d.*; (12) Bible Animals, 1*d.*; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1*d.*; (14) The Resurrection, 2*d.*; (15) The Crucifixion, 1*d.*; (16) John's Nightmare, 1*d.*

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3*d.*

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4*d.*

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2*d.*

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2*d.*

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2*d.*

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2*d.*

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2*d.*

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2*d.*

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2*d.*

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1*s.*; bound in cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.*

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6*d.*

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Wilson Barrett's Play. 48 pp., beautifully printed and elegantly bound, 6*d.*

Bible and Beer. 4*d.*

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2*s.* 6*d.*

Letters to the Clergy. *First Series*, 128 pp., 1*s.*

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1*s.*; superior edition, in cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.*

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8*d.* On superfine paper, in cloth, 1*s.* 3*d.*

Darwin on God. 6*d.*; superior edition, in cloth, 1*s.*

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. 8*d.*

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6*d.*

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. [Written in conjunction with J. M. Wheeler.] Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2*s.* 6*d.*

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

DECEMBER NO. NOW READY. *Second Edition.*

CONTENTS:—

Dress and Sex. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
The Liars; or, Marriage at the Criterion Theatre. By SAGITTARIUS.
The Poetry of the Passions. By HENRY SEYMOUR.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.
May also be had of Robert Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

MANUFACTURERS' REMNANTS.

TONS in WEIGHT at LESS than HALF PRICE.

For Fourteen Days Only.

We are making these wonderful Goods up into Parcels containing not less than 33 yards all Double Width. Sent to any address carriage paid for

21s.

Ladies' DRESS MATERIALS in every Conceivable Color and Design.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE DECEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS :—

The Evolution of the Idea of God.
George Meredith's Poems.
The Berkeleyan Philosophy.
Mathematics Metamorphozed.
On the Road to Biblical Criticism.
Montaigne's Influence on Shakespeare.
A Century's Progress in Religious Thought.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
Literary Shrines and Pilgrimages—II. In Byron's Country.

SPECIAL.—*A copy of a useful work ("Human Interests," cloth, 164 pp.) [is being presented to subscribers to the "Literary Guide" who remit four stamps to cover cost of postage. Free to personal applicants.*

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are :—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SELLING RAPIDLY. *ORDER AT ONCE.*

THE AGNOSTIC ANNUAL: 1898.

(64 pages, price 6d., by post 7½d.)

Containing articles by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Edward Clodd, Miss Constance E. Plumptre, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. Charles Watts, and many other well-known writers.

The best number yet issued.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

Ingersoll's Latest Popular Lectures.

About the Holy Bible. 6d.
The Foundation of Faith. 3d.
The Coming Civilization. 3d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 51. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

A CONVERTED ATHEIST.

CONVERTED Atheists are very rare in real life. They are more often converted when they are dead. The process is then easier. It is less difficult to tell lies than to produce convincing arguments. Indeed, the conversion of Atheists belongs mostly to the domain of fiction. Sometimes the fiction is pretended as reality, as in the case of Mr. Price Hughes's story of the *Atheist Shoemaker*, which we had the pleasure of exploding. Sometimes the fiction is honest in its way, because it does not pretend to be anything more than fiction. But in this case it is essentially foolish; for if one novelist writes a story, with selected characters and arbitrary incidents, to exhibit the conversion of an Atheist to Theism, another novelist may just as well, and just as successfully, pursue the same method in the opposite direction, and exhibit the conversion of a Theist to Atheism; and if both stories were written with equal skill and power, which is certainly conceivable, they would just exactly cancel each other.

One of this class of works is Alice M. Dale's new novel, *Marcus Warwick: Atheist* (Kegan Paul and Co.). It is not badly written; in some respects it is *well* written, for the narrative is by no means devoid of interest, the style is fairly good, and here and there a character is sketched with some skilfulness. Had the last part been a natural development from the two preceding parts, and the catastrophe been worked up as a logical climax, the book would have been in its way a triumph. But in the third part the authoress takes to miracles, which is a cheap and easy way of surmounting difficulties and avoiding artistic obligations. We perceive exactly what is coming next, and the worst of it is that we know such things do not occur in life itself. The lady, in short, ties a very pretty knot, but she does not untie it with the patient fingers of naturalism, she cuts it with the blade of the supernatural.

It is obvious from a certain conversation (pp. 379-80) between the heroine and the Rev. Mr. Mayne that the writer is not a Christian. It is plainly hinted that orthodox Christianity is unacceptable by anyone "trained to the most careful weighing of the value of evidence," that its "stupendous dogmas" rest on "evidence so contradictory, so obscure, and known in many cases to be deliberately forged." But it does not occur to the writer that her own Theistic doctrine is equally stupendous and contradictory to the plainest facts of human life and history. It is always thus with theologians. They are keen enough in seeing each other's errors, but quite incapable of seeing their own; and they never understand the thorough-going Freethinker who admires their attacks and smiles at their defence.

Marcus Warwick, the hero of this story, differs greatly from the old fictional idea of an Atheist, which was a mixture of the refuse of a lunatic asylum and the off-scourings of a gaol. He is a fine handsome fellow, with a clever brain, a keen tongue, and a noble character. He loves justice and mercy, and his only fault is that he does not walk humbly with his God. He does so at last, however, and this is how it happens. The woman who loves him, and whom he finds that he loves when it is too late, is married to another man, who wastes her money and brutally ill-treats her. Marcus Warwick warns the wretch that if he does not treat his wife better he will kill him in six months. At the end of that time, finding the wretch has continued his ill-usage, and actually beaten her within an inch of her life, Marcus Warwick meets him on a cliff overlooking the sea, and tells him that he is going to his last account, but offers him a fair fight for his life. The coward whines and prays, struggles and collapses, and Marcus Warwick picks him up a helpless heap and drops him over the cliff. It appears that the wretch was really dead when he was dropped over, for the medical men at the inquest testify that he died from heart disease, and that his external injuries were inflicted after death. Marcus Warwick escapes scot free through a verdict of "accidental death," and he has no compunctions, for he does not believe in God, and he holds that he has done a righteous deed on behalf of a tortured woman. Soon afterwards he marries Hildegarde himself, and they are intensely happy. Only they are married on a very foggy day, and it was foggy when he killed Cecil Digby. Then, too, the wretch's heart disease was so far developed that he could not have lived more than a few weeks longer, and it looked as though retribution was arranged without the necessity of Marcus Warwick's intervention. Presently a boy is born to the happy couple—the wife, by the way, not knowing what her husband had done. During her pregnancy Hildegarde has a dreadful fit. She feels falling, falling, falling. Her baby-boy has similar fits, and loses his reason. In presence of this calamity the unhappy father feels that the great Avenger is upon his track.

> "He knew that the blinding lightning-stroke of retribution had fallen at last. With a confident assurance he had given a thrust into the darkness that he regarded as tenantless, and now from that darkness he received an answering blow—too accurate in its aim, too vengeful in its stroke, to be consistent with any theory of blind force or unintelligent law. And it seemed to Marcus Warwick that he was face to face with God at last."

Another child is born—a daughter—who also has these horrible falling fits, and dies. Marcus Warwick confesses to his wife, who still clings to him lovingly, and bids him effect a reconciliation with heaven. She feels more than ever that God is love; but her husband, no longer an Atheist, hates the being who tortures him through his innocent wife and children. He regards God as implacable, and under the power of this fixed idea he is smitten down with brain fever. At the same time, the boy who lost his reason falls out of a window, and the real fall cures the falling fits; or rather, it was the hand of God in Marcus Warwick's full conversion, for the father recovers, though slowly and painfully, and his bright, handsome boy is presented to him as a pledge of God's benevolence and forgiveness. The story closes with a picture of Marcus Warwick, convinced and happy, resuming his old work for the people, no longer teaching them Atheism, but carrying to them "the best message of all—a belief in a wise and loving God."

This is Alice Dale's method of justifying the ways of God to men; and, on the whole, if there be a God, he may well say, "Save me from my friends."

We have already remarked that supernatural incidents do not occur in ordinary human experience. Retribution sometimes overtakes a criminal through his being found out, but otherwise he generally settles down to enjoy the fruits of his crime. Look at that smiling, smug, fat Jabez Balfour. All went well with him, and he was positively in clover, until human justice overtook him. But, not to labor this point, which really does not need laboring, let us turn to the *vicarious* plan of Marcus

Digitized by Google

Warwick's punishment and conversion. Alice Dale wreathes her upper lip at the Christian scheme, but her own Theistic scheme is open to the very same objection. Marcus Warwick is plagued though his innocent wife and children. His wife is tortured through her maternity—a most terrible device. Both her children are tortured by frightful convulsions; the boy loses his reason, until the time comes for his miraculous recovery, and the baby-girl dies. "The fits continued," we are told, "and little Myra's strength ebbed slowly away," so that she dies before she has lived a single year. "This world holds many a darker fate than that," says Alice Dale. Perhaps so; but two blacks do not make a white, nor two wrongs a right, nor two mysteries one intelligibility. Nothing could be worse than putting a baby upon the rack, killing it by slow and painful degrees, until it dies of sheer exhaustion. And if this is God's way, the less he intervenes in human affairs the better. Surely a wise and loving deity, with unlimited power, might have demonstrated his existence differently. He might have converted the Atheist by more rational and humane devices; *before* the killing of Cecil Digby, for instance, instead of *after*. But Theism, just like Christianity, always ends in mystery; it perplexes reason, and only satisfies faith, which is another name for prejudice and credulity.

G. W. FOOTE.

SHAKESPEARE AND MONTAIGNE.*

THE question of the evolution of the mind of England's greatest writer must ever have attractions for the student of literature. How from being the writer of *Venus and Adonis* Shakespeare became the author of *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*, is a problem which, could it be solved, would be worthy the utmost attention; and as much may be said for the able attempt at solution in the work before me. Mr. Robertson's thesis, stated broadly—somewhat too broadly, I fear—is that the reading of Montaigne's Essays gave the deepening and expansive movement which can be traced in Shakespeare's work. That he read Montaigne in John Florio's not over-accurate translation, we are quite certain. We have his own copy of the book in the British Museum. To note the many instances in which the French sceptic influenced the English dramatist is itself of great interest, and no one can go through Mr. Robertson's book without acknowledging that Shakespeare used Montaigne, as he did the English Bible and North's *Plutarch*, with a free hand. We may differ as to the extent of his obligation, but it is impossible to deny it totally. Some of the passages, as, for instance, "Hamlet's Soliloquy" and Gonzalo's description of an ideal Commonwealth in *The Tempest*, have been frequently pointed out; but Mr. Robertson has certainly gone into the entire question of Montaigne's influence, both with regard to his thought and his style, more carefully than any previous writer.

After noticing the influence of Montaigne on Pascal, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Flaubert, Emerson, and Thoreau, Mr. Robertson says (p. 127):—

> "After all these testimonies to Montaigne's seminal virtue, and after what we have seen of the special dependence of Shakespeare's genius on culture and circumstance, stimulus and initiative, for its evolution, there can no longer seem to an open mind anything of mere paradox in the opinion that the essays are the source of the greatest expansive movement of the poet's mind, the movement which made him—already a master of the whole range of passional emotion, of the comedy of mirth and the comedy and tragedy of sex—the great master of the tragedy of the moral intelligence. Taking the step from *Julius Cæsar* to *Hamlet* as corresponding to this movement in his mind, we may say that where the first play exhibits the concrete perception of the fatality of things, 'the riddle of the painful earth'; in the second, in its final form, the perception has emerged in philosophic consciousness as a pure reflection. The poet has in the interim been revealed to himself—what he had perceived he now conceives."

The seminal virtue of Montaigne is less likely to encounter dispute than the special dependence of Shakespeare's genius on culture and circumstance, stimulus and initiative. It may be contended that Shakespeare was probably more profoundly influenced by the events of his own life than by any reading. His avocation developed his sympathies and the capacity of interpreting and interpenetrating the thoughts and emotions of others. He had living intercourse with men who were greater than their books, and before he knew Montaigne had touched some of the depths of tragedy in *Richard II.* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The loss of his own son Hamnet in 1596 may well have deepened and intensified his tragic muse. Doubtless he read, assimilated, and utilized all he got hold of, but, whatever it was, he mastered it and made it his own. In the majority of the instances brought forward by Mr. Robertson we may see the thought of Montaigne distilled in the alembic of Shakespeare's own imagination. It would be absurd to deny that he was influenced by the Frenchman; yet it may be very far from correct to suppose that it was Montaigne who made him what he is. His Freethought and sceptical character may easily have come to him far earlier from his contact with Marlowe—if, indeed, it needed other stimulus than the development of his own mind.

Montaigne, despite some reservations, was essentially a Freethinker. His motto, "*Que scay je?*" ("What know I?"), reveals the man's frank instinct for truth. His *Essays* was, as Mr. Robertson says, "simply the most living book then existing in Europe." They are largely so still, and that because the Gascon lord dared to show himself exactly as he was. "I like your book," said Henry III. to him at court. "Then, sir," he replied, "you will like me, for my book is myself." Such a man was bound to be taken by Shakespeare to his heart of hearts. His influence, if subtle, was sure to be far-reaching, and it may be questioned if even Mr. Robertson has hunted it all out. For instance, Montaigne says, at the conclusion of his *Essays*, that the noblest lives are to his mind those ordered after the ordinary human pattern, without miracle and without extravagance. This sentiment, though it might not easily be paralleled in Shakespeare's writings, seems decidedly to have been evidenced in his life. If it stood alone, it would go far to show that Montaigne was, in the happy phrase of Mr. Robertson, "the first of the moderns."

J. M. WHEELER.

* *Montaigne and Shakspere*. By J. M. Robertson. (London: The University Press; 1897.)

REPLY TO THE REV. C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM.

IN the *Freethinker* of November 28 appeared an article of mine under the heading of "The Freewill Fallacy," upon which the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, made some comments in the issue of the following week. Doubtless it has been noticed that in his comments the rev. gentleman entirely ignored my remarks upon man's responsibility, and also my reasons for rejecting the Christian doctrine of "freewill." In my article I stated the Secular view of responsibility, and endeavored to show that, according to the teachings of St. Paul, the Articles of the Church of England, and the "Confession of Faith," what is termed "freewill" is impossible. Further, I put forth some philosophical objections to the doctrine—such, for instance, as that "will" is an effect as well as a cause, and that it was not an entity, but a mental phase, depending for its manifestation upon such conditions as birth, climate, education, and general environment. I put the following case: If a person had the power to call up a desire by the "will," it is certain that some prior desire induced him to do so. What, therefore, caused *that* desire? Suppose a person says he wills to do a thing, and he does it, he must have had an inclination to do it, or he would not so have "willed" and acted. Now, the point here is, that some circumstance must have existed prior to the action of the "will," which influenced it; and surely the "will" cannot be the cause of that which precedes itself in time, and to which, in fact, it owes its existence.

Upon all these points the rev. gentleman is silent. It may be alleged that, before he can fairly assume that he has refuted the positions taken up in my article, he should answer the following questions: What is this much-talked-of "will"? Is it an independent existence, with absolute power to control the thoughts and actions of man? If it be an entity, where is it located, and how are we to learn its nature? On the other hand, if it be dependent upon

Digitized by Google

something apart from itself, how far does that dependence extend? If we are free in any degree, where does the freedom end, and necessity commence? Further, will the rev. gentleman tell me how volition can be "free" if, as the Church of England teaches, "the condition of man.....is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works"? Wherein lies our power to choose salvation if, as the "Confession of Faith" states, some men are ordained to "everlasting death"? Moreover, how can St. Paul's doctrine of Predestination be made to harmonize with man's alleged "power of choice"? If, as the New Testament informs us, we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves," where does the freedom come in?

Another fatal blow to the Christian's idea of "freewill" is the notion of God's foreknowledge. If it be true that he knew from "the beginning" that a proportion of the human race would be lost, then those victims of the "decrees of God" had no freedom of choice. It has been asserted that the events foreknown by God are certain, but not necessary. This, however, to my mind, appears absurd. For, if the existence of a future event be certain, is its non-existence in the course of things possible? If its non-existence is not possible, how is the existence of the event contingent? And if its non-existence be possible, how is the existence of the event certain? And if the existence of the event be uncertain, how can the knowledge of its existence be certain? These considerations are respectfully submitted to the rev. gentleman, if he contends for the absolute freedom of the will against the theory of philosophical necessity. Leaving these general remarks for my opponent to ponder over, his comments upon my article deserve, and shall receive, my serious attention.

He says: "If I rightly understand Mr. Watts's view, he is philosophically a Determinist." That is so, when the term is accepted in the sense in which I understand it. In my opinion, Determinism does not exclude all freedom, neither does it prevent a man choosing. As Calderwood observes: "The Necessitarian doctrine, in denying freedom of will, does not altogether refuse a place to freedom. But the only liberty which it acknowledges is liberty of acting as we will, denominated freedom from constraint or coercion." And Müller, in his *Christian Doctrine of Sin*, admits that from freedom "Determinism is not absolutely excluded, but some truth is recognised therein, and freedom attains its own full recognition and definiteness by blending Determinism with it." My view, briefly expressed, is this: Man has the power, or ability, to "will" or to choose; but as to what he shall "will" or choose depends upon internal and external conditions, which decide the nature of his choice. Karl Pearson, in his work, *The Grammar of Science*, puts the matter thus: "The 'freedom of the will' lies in the fact that exertion is conditioned by our own individuality, that the routine of mental processes which intervenes between sense-impression and exertion is perceived objectively neither by us nor by any one else, and psychically by us alone. Thus will, as the first cause of a sequence of motions, explains nothing at all; it is only a limit at which very often our power of describing a sequence abruptly terminates.....Science tries to describe how will is influenced by desires and passions, and how these again flow from education, experience, inheritance, physique, disease, all of which are further associated with climate, class, race, or other great factors in evolution. Thus, with the advance of our positive knowledge, we come more and more to regard individual acts of will as secondary causes in a long sequence, as stages in a routine which can be described—stages, however, at which the routine changes its at present knowable side from the psychical to the physical. An act of will thus appears as a secondary cause, and no longer as an arbitrary first cause" (pp. 150, 151). Motives govern or control the "will," and "will" regulates action; hence, as Upham says, "Volitions never exist independent of motives" (*The Will*, p. 213).

Mr. Engström supposes that the position I take involves the denial of the "veracity of consciousness." This is not so, for to me consciousness is a fact; but what are its nature and its functions? I do not accept the theory that it is a separate faculty, but, with Professor Ribot, I regard consciousness as a word "which expresses, in the most general way, the various manifestations of psychical life. It consists of a current of sensations, ideas, volitions, and feelings." According to this view, consciousness represents a mental condition which depends for its nature upon influences that differ with time and place. Hence it is not uniform in all men, neither is it in the same person at all times. It may be true that an individual is conscious of a certain thing, but it does not follow that the thing of which the individual is conscious is true. Thus Buckle writes: "Consciousness is infallible as to the fact of its testimony, but fallible as to its truth." Graham also states, in *The Creed of Science*: "There is a thing called consciousness; there is a mass of conscious impulses and principles of action; but all these are themselves products of the physical energies" (p. 120).

My rev. opponent urges that "Determinism evacuates morality of all its virtues," and that the *practical* results of my theory would be most disastrous. But why so? Remembering that man and his actions are potent factors in the determining causes of human conduct, my view of necessity implies the highest morality, which is the endeavor to produce a state of society wherein it shall be almost impossible for man to be depraved. While it is too true that, in accordance with the laws of heredity, some unfortunates are born into the world whose bad and vicious natures have been so determined for them that they remain criminals more or less all their lives, the great majority of men and women enter the world possessing the power of self-improvement. Upon these latter devolves the ethical duty of striving to improve their physical and moral natures, and also their general surroundings, so that thereby higher motives in life may be acquired, and at the same time superior conditions may be secured for the regulation and control of future generations. Herein lie the force of necessity and the power of freedom, as I understand them. In starting in life we are all influenced by the conduct of our predecessors, and we are necessitated or free in proportion as that conduct has been virtuous or vicious.

Finally, the rev. gentleman says: "Teach this theory [that of Determinism] to a passionate, lustful, selfish person—or rather, teach it to everyone—and see how it will 'work.'" It has been taught, and, where properly acted upon, it has been successful. Punitive laws, sanitary laws, and medical science have all for their object the improvement of the environment of the individual, with a view of affording better opportunities for personal improvement. Take the various diseases that "flesh is heir to"; to cure the physical ills we have hospitals, for the mental we have lunatic asylums, and for the moral we have reformatories and other similar institutions. Robert Owen applied this theory in New Lanark, and with what result? The good philanthropist had under his influence nearly two thousand human beings. We are told that "the men were given to drink and dishonesty," but that he succeeded in converting "his domain into a model community." "He attributed his remarkable success," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, to preaching the doctrine that "character is made by circumstances."

The immorality lies with the teachers of the Church's doctrine of "freewill," which tells the "lustful, selfish person" that he can lead a life of crime and sensuality, and that he is "free" at the end of his vicious career to "come to Jesus," and thereby avoid the consequences of his immoral life.

CHARLES WATTS.

WOMAN AND THE BIBLE.

HAVE the teachings of the Bible advanced or retarded the emancipation of woman? Have they dignified or degraded the mothers of the race?

Since it is accepted that the status of woman is the gauge of civilization, this is the burning question that now presents itself to Christendom. If the Bible has elevated woman to her present status, it would seem that in 1,900 years the fact could be demonstrated beyond question; yet to-day the whole Christian world is on the defensive trying to prove the validity of this claim.

Despite the opposition of Bible-teaching, woman has secured the right to education, and to speak and print her thoughts; therefore her answer to these questions will decide the fate of Christian civilization.

In Genesis the Bible strikes the keynote of woman's inferiority and subjection, and the note rings true through

Digitized by Google

every accepted and rejected book that has ever constituted the Holy Bible. In the face of this fact, the supreme effort of the Christian Church has been to inculcate the idea that Christianity alone has elevated woman, and that all other religions have degraded and enslaved her. It has feared nothing so much as to face the truth.

The Bible estimate of woman is summed up in the words of the president of a leading Presbyterian theological seminary when he exclaimed to his students: "My Bible commands the subjection of women forever."

In an address to the graduating class of a woman's college in England, Mr. Gladstone, in awarding the diplomas, said: "Young women, you who belong to the favored half of the human race, enormous changes have taken place in your positions as members of society. It is almost terrible to look back upon the state of women sixty years ago, upon the manner in which they were viewed by the law, and the scanty provision made for their welfare, and the gross injustice, the shameful injustice, the flagrant injustice, to which in certain particulars they were subjected. Great changes are taking place, and greater are impending."

For centuries England has been the light of the Christian world, yet what an indictment is this against Christian England by the greatest living defender of the Bible and the Christian religion.

This one statement of Mr. Gladstone at once refutes the claim that the Bible has elevated woman, and confirms the idea of the president of the theological seminary. Add to these declarations the true condition of women to-day and the testimony the Bible bears against itself, and the falsity of the claim that the Bible has elevated woman is at once established.

If Mr. Gladstone acknowledges the "gross, flagrant, and shameful injustice" to woman sixty years ago in Christian England, what can be said of woman's condition six hundred years ago, when the Bible held greatest sway over the human mind, and Christianity was at the zenith of its power; when it was denied that woman had a soul; when she was bought and sold, robbed of her name, her children, her property, and "elevated" on the gibbet of infamy and on the high altar of lust by the decrees of the Christian priesthood?

If it can be proved that during the last thousand years the Christian clergy, with the Bible in their hands, have pointed out, or attempted to remove, one single cruelty or wrong that women have suffered, now is the opportune time to furnish such proof.

Now, to-day, when woman herself is rising in her mental majesty, and when her wrongs are being righted, Christianity is dead in the strongest brains and most heroic hearts of Europe and America; and now, when the myth and miracle of Bible-teaching have lost their hold on the minds of men, this is the very age when the position of woman is more exalted than it has ever been since Christianity begun.

After nineteen hundred years, no woman's thought has ever been incorporated into the ecclesiastical or civil code of any Christian land. Monogamic marriage is the strongest institution of the Christian system, yet all the men of the Old Testament were polygamists, and Christ and Paul, the central figures of the New Testament, were celibates, and condemned marriage by example and precept.

Monogamy is strictly demanded of Christian women, but bigamy, trigamy, and polygamy are in reality practised by men, as one of the methods of elevating women in Bible lands.

Largely, the majority of men have one legal wife; but, assisted by a small percentage of youths and bachelors, Christendom maintains an army of several millions of courtesans. Thousands of wretched women are yearly driven to graves in the potter's field, while manhood is degraded by deception, drunkenness, and disease, and the blood of the innocents cries out against a system that thus elevates woman.

The Bible records that God created woman by a method different from that employed in bringing into life any other creature, then cursed her for seeking knowledge; yet the Scriptures say: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." "Because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee." "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge"; and knowledge has been the savior of the human race.

Ever since Eve was cursed for seeking knowledge the priest, with the Bible in his hands, has pronounced woman the most unnatural, untrustworthy, and dangerous creation of God; she has been given away as a sheep at the marriage altar, classed with the ox and the ass, cursed in maternity, required to receive purification at the hands of the priest for the crime of child-bearing, her body enslaved, and robbed of her name and property.

The ownership of the wife, established and perpetuated through Bible-teaching, is responsible for the domestic pandemonium and carnival of wife-murder that reigns throughout Christendom. In the United States alone, in the eighteen hundred and ninety-seventh year of the Christian era, 3,182 wives—many with unborn children in their bodies—have been murdered in cold blood by their husbands; yet the Christian clergy are reproving women for not bearing more children, in the face of the fact that millions of the children that have been borne by Christian women are homeless tramps, degraded drunkards, victims of disease, inmates of lunatic asylums or prisons, condemned to the scaffold, or bond-slaves to priests or plutocrats, who revel in wealth at the expense of women, whom it is claimed the Bible has "emancipated and elevated."

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This declaration puts the brand of infamy upon every woman that ever bore a child, and this, it is claimed, elevates the mothers of the race.

The wife who places her destiny in the keeping of the father of her children, bestows upon him the wealth of her affection, who is to bear the blood and name of her husband to conquests yet undreamed of, and to generations unborn, is by divine decree made a fountain of iniquity. Would not men and women rather pluck their tongues out by the roots than brand with infamy the mothers who went down into the valley and shadow of death to give them birth? Place the Bible Trinity—"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost"—beside the Homeric trinity—"Father, Mother, and Child"—and prove that the Bible has elevated woman.

The Homeric conception of woman towers, like the Norway pine, above the noxious growth of the Mosaic ideal. Compare the men and women of the Bible with the stately figures culled from the temple of pagan antiquity. Zipporah denouncing Moses as a "bloody husband"; Abraham sending Hagar and his child into the desert, and pocketing twice over the gains from his wife's prostitution; Lot and his daughters; Judah and his daughter-in-law; Oman, Tamar, the Levite and his concubine, David and Bathsheba, Solomon in the sewer of sensuality; Rahab, Aholibah, Mary of Bethlehem, and Mary Magdalene. Place these by the side of the man and woman, Hector and Andromache, of the *Iliad*, who called upon the immortal gods to bless their child of love; the virgin Isis with her son, Horus; the Vedic virgin Indrance, the mother of the savior god, Indra; Devaki and her divine child, Chrishna; Hipparchia, Pandora, Protegenia, Cornelia, Plotina, Arria, and a host of the noble and virtuous of pagan history.

Prove, by comparing these with the position of woman in Christendom, that woman owes all that she is to the Bible.

Compare Ruth of the Bible with the magnificent pagan, Penelope, who refused the hand of Kings, was true to her love as the star to the pole; who, after years of waiting, clasped the old wanderer in rags to her heart, her husband, her long-lost Ulysses; yet this pagan woman lived ten centuries before the laws of Moses or Christ were promulgated.

While there are millions of Penelopes in Christendom, there are other millions of women, after centuries of Bible teaching, who lie outside the pale of motherhood, and even outside of the pale of swinehood.

Under Bible teaching the scarlet woman is anathema-maranatha; while the scarlet man holds high place in sanctuary and State.

The bye-paths of ecclesiastical history are fetid with the records of crimes against women, and "the half has never been told."

And what of the history Christianity is making to-day?

Answer, ye victims of domestic warfare which crowd the divorce courts of Bible-land. Answer, ye wretched offspring of involuntary motherhood. Answer, ye five hundred thousand outcast women of Christian America, who should have been five hundred thousand blessings bearing humanity in your unvitiated blood down the stream of Time.

Answer, ye mental dwarfs and moral monstrosities, and tell what the Holy Bible has done for you.

While these answers echo through the stately cathedrals

Digitized by Google

of Bible-lands, if the priest, with the Holy Bible in his hand, can show just cause why woman should not look to reason and science, rather than to Scripture, for deliverance, "let him speak now, or forever after hold his peace."

When Reason reigns, and Science lights the way, a countless host of women will move in majesty down the coming centuries. A voice will cry, "Who are these?" and the answer will ring out: "These are the mothers of the coming race, who have locked the door of the Temple of Faith, and thrown the key away; these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the fountain of knowledge."

JOSEPHINE K. HENRY.

IS LIFE WORTH HAVING?

"THAT depends upon the *liver*." This question seems to me one of the most senseless and useless that could be imagined; for no one can ever answer it rationally, simply because the elements and experience necessary for such an answer are wanting. It is like asking, "Would it have been better or worse if nothing had ever existed?" Better for whom, for what? Had nothing ever existed, good, better, best would have had no existence. Good, evil, better, and worse are all relative ideas or experiences; and relative questions cannot be answered except when both sides of the relationship are known.

Is life worth living? That means, Is it better to live than not to live, or to live than never to have lived? How is it possible for anyone to answer this question? To do so we must suppose an impossibility—viz., that the person answering must have had experience of not life as well as of life. Until a person knows two countries, two climates, how can he tell which is the better? If only one country and one climate existed, no comparison could be made, or ever thought of; and even if a great number existed, no one without experience could tell which was the best. Now, how can any man undertake to say if life is worth having? He knows nothing else, he never did anything contrary to living. No person ever experienced non-existence; we have no recollection of times in which we did not exist, for we did not exist then. We never were non-existent, for before we were we had no existence at all; we were not we, and we were nothing else.

Neither has any man an experience of death. No man ever dies. He merely lives; all his experiences are of life, not the contrary. And therefore, having no knowledge of non-being or non-living, he cannot possibly say whether it is better to live than not. We find ourselves living without any previous experience. Life and its changes are all the experiences we get, or ever shall get. And the question is, "Is it worth having?"

The fact that most people live as long as they can shows that life is worth having. Animal and man, saint and sinner, do strive to live as long as possible; and that shows that in all living things, almost, there must be something supposed to be worth living for.

Life itself—its bare self—cannot, I think, be worth having. If life were destitute of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, effort, work and rest—were its experience absent, no one would ask this question, for it is the experience we have that makes life life, and not the bare existence.

I cannot doubt, though I am not able to prove, that it would have been good for many had they never been born—although, of course, we can see what Jesus did not, that that is a bull; for to him that never existed good or evil is impossible. Still, the unconscious joke has point in it, for there are many persons born only to evil, born to life-long sickness, poverty, misery.

No one has exhibited this feature of human life more tragi-comically, more pathetically, than Thomas Hood:—

> What different dooms our birthdays bring—
> For instance, one little manikin thing
> Survives to wear many a wrinkle;
> While death forbids another to wake,
> And a son that it took nine moons to make
> Expires without even a twinkle!
> Into the world we come like ships,
> Launched from the docks, and stocks, and slips,
> For fortune fair or fatal;
> And our little craft is cast away
> In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
> While another rides safe at Port Natal.
>
> What different lots our stars accord!
> This babe to be hail'd and woo'd as a lord,
> And that to be shunned like a leper!
> One, to the world's wine, honey, and corn;
> Another, like Colchester native, born
> To its vinegar only, and pepper.
> One is littered under a roof
> Neither wind nor water proof—
> That's the prose of Love in a cottage—
> A puny, naked, shivering wretch,
> The whole of whose birthright would not fetch,
> Though Robins himself drew up the sketch,
> The bid of a "mess of pottage."
> Born of Fortunatus's kin,
> Another comes tenderly ushered in
> To a prospect all bright and burnished.
> No tenant he for life's back slums—
> He comes to the world as a gentleman comes
> To a lodging ready furnished!
> And the other sex—the tender—the fair—
> What wide reverses of fate are there!
> While Margaret, charmed by the bul-bul rare,
> In a garden of Gul reposes,
> Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street,
> Till—think of that, who find life so sweet;
> She hates the smell of roses!

To one half of the human race, most likely, life is not worth having; and those whom we think the most happy are often the most miserable. Outward appearances are proverbially deceptive; and the probability is that most people experience more pain than pleasure.

Still, we find ourselves living, and the question is, Shall we fret and fume over the misfortune of life, or take it as it is and make the most of it? No doubt many of our evils are imaginary. We are apt to compare and contrast our own lot with that of other people, and thus spoil and poison what we have because it is not something else. This is folly, if it is not madness, and should be shunned by all rational people. Life is life; we did not choose it; we are what we are, and most of us have the chance to make life worth having.

A person that will take the trouble to fill his mind with the best thoughts he may find, and indulge in those thoughts; who will try to be as unselfish as possible, and adapt himself to his surroundings when he cannot change them, will find life worth having—that is, will extract from it more pleasure than pain.

One great thing in life, it seems to me, is to have an aim; a trade, a calling, an occupation—something we may regard as our own particular business; not something we are compelled to do to please a master, or merely to keep the wolf from the door; but every person should have a fad, a something that he delights in for his own pleasure solely. Unselfishness should not go to the extent of self-renunciation—that is madness. Every person should preserve a good sound part of himself for himself; and while he avoids the extreme of living for himself exclusively, he should also beware of ignoring self in living for other people.

Lastly. The hot competition of the present age, the rapid, electric style of living, no doubt creates many evils; and the great question, How to make life more rational and happy for all people? should be faced and studied profoundly; and this can never be done except through the force of general intelligence and general inquiry. Every person, as best he may, should take up this great question, How shall we make this only world of ours as beautiful and useful as possible? This is our only birthright, our only estate. Shall we waste and squander it, neglect its development, to please those who delight in war, in vice, in crime, or to gratify an insane hope of a better world? Or shall we treat this one world as good tradesmen do their business—develop its resources to the uttermost, and so make life, as far as we are able, worth living? If ever life should become what it ought to be, people must become more and more intelligent, more independent; and by their own well-directed efforts so organize the forces of life as to produce the highest good and the least evil.

When as much thought and capital have been expended upon life and its preservation and development as are now devoted to the arts of destruction and agencies of death and of pain, then life will be worth having. At present nine-tenths of its possible good are wasted upon the worst of people and the most detestable objects. And so, what with the folly of the many and the tyranny of the few, it is extremely doubtful if life is not a curse instead of a blessing. Still, people have the remedy in their own hands, and they should have sense enough to apply it.

JOS. SYMES.

Digitized by Google

ACID DROPS.

Dr. Bruno Wille's case has been decided at Gratz. He was charged with having publicly attacked the Christian and Jewish religions. The Provincial Court acquitted him on the count of interfering with the exercise of religion, but found him guilty of holding up to contempt the teachings, customs, and institutions of a religious community recognised by the State. For this awful crime he was sentenced to eight days' imprisonment, which we dare say he will "do on his head." It is not a heavy punishment, but it shows what religious liberty has come to in that part of Europe. Dr. Bruno Wille, however, will not be frightened. He will go on with his Freethought propaganda.

A battle has been going on in Australia, and more battles are to follow. It was between England and the Colonies. But happily no blood was shed. The battle was fought with ball and bats, and the best side won! This is a lot better than fighting with swords and rifles.

Peace Sunday is heralded with petty wars and rumors of wars. Pagan Rome kept the peace of Europe with four hundred thousand troops. Christian Europe has millions in arms, and other millions ready to spring to arms at a moment's notice; each nation vying with the other in increasing the strength and deadliness of its armaments. The Prince of Peace is supposed to have come long since, and the most earnest of his followers think it time he put in a second appearance. Much is heard of the Savior, but little seen of the salvation.

The war between capital and labor, too, is becoming more aggravated than ever. The spectacle of the biggest and best trade union in sore straits—if not defeated—is not an encouraging one for a peaceful solution of the problem, and counsels of violence are heard which but a little while ago would have had no chance of attention.

Mr. Buckmaster, magistrate at Hampton Wick, has been making some severe criticisms on the methods of bodies like the Church Lads' Brigade. He says that a foolish martial spirit is fostered by these drills, marches, and warlike surroundings. One youth got into trouble at Hampton for fighting, and in particular for striking two girls. It was urged in defence that there was some mistake, as he was at Bible-class during the disturbance. "Yes," said the constable in reply, "he doubled back into the Bible-class, your worship." We will not spoil this with any comment. It is too rich as it stands.

There are two hundred regularly ordained women preachers in America—that is to say, in the United States. Paul commanded women to keep silence in the churches. He also suffered not a woman to teach. But the Yankee woman doesn't care the snuff of a candle for Paul, when his opinions clash with hers. "See Jesus, did he? Well, I can see Jesus too if I like." So poor old hook-nosed, bald-pated Paul is shoved aside, and the ladies perorate in the vacancy.

The Archbishop of York is a humble apostle of the poor Son of Man, who had not where to lay his head—who, as Robert Taylor said, lived on the high road and died on the gallows. But the Archbishop makes his humility consistent with the receipt of £10,000 a year, and on that income he preaches the glorious gospel of "Blessed be ye poor." Naturally the Archbishop of York has some personal finery, and among the lot is a valuable diamond ring. This, however, he lost recently at Conisborough. A boy named Senior found it, and the Archbishop's heart was so warmed by its recovery that he rewarded the finder with the magnificent gift of *twopence*. His Grace of York will never die poor.

Rev. W. Whelan, preaching at Little Albany-street Roman Catholic church, said he had coaxed people to come to the House of God, and remonstrated with them for not coming, but all in vain. He feared the only way to bring them to church would be to announce a free supper after the service. Mr. Whelan is evidently doing bad business. We wish the same could be said of all others in the same trade.

A law-suit by a French abbé, Brougidon, against the Pope, in the Italian Court at Rome, for the possession of the church of St. Joachim, has been decided in favor of the priest. The Pope was condemned to surrender the church to the abbé, and to pay heavy costs of legal proceedings. It is considered certain in clerical circles that the Pope will, under the circumstances, place the church, which is not yet completed, under an edict, and excommunicate the abbé, who thus has been the means of placing upon his Holiness one of the worst slights to which he has been subjected since his election to the tiara.

The *Tablet* publishes a Brief by which Signor Giacomo Pecci, otherwise Leo XIII., institutes "the Arch-confraternity of Our Lady of Compassion for the return of Great Britain to the Faith." The members obtain a plenary indulgence at the point of death, and on each of the feasts of St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Gregory, and St. Augustine. The indulgences, too, may be applied to the Souls in Purgatory. The main object of the Confraternity is the return of Great Britain to the Catholic Faith. The chief trust is in prayer and good works. If it be left to prayer, Mary will have to wait long for her "Dowry," as the Pope ventures to call our little isle set in the silver sea.

But the Catholic Church does not trust to prayer entirely. Zealators of either sex are to be appointed, who will act in common for the great end; and these zealators are to meet on one Sunday of each month, "in every church where the Association is erected, for the purpose of praying together, if possible, before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, in order to implore more efficaciously from God the wished-for return of Great Britain to the Catholic Church." The Brief has attached the sounding name of "A. Trombetta, Secretary."

The *Church Times* calls attention to the fact that on Nov. 30 a couple from Yorkshire were married at All Saints, St. Helier's, Jersey, by special license; the bride being sister-in-law to the bridegroom. Many may be glad to hear this, because what one couple has done other couples may possibly do. Such marriages are legal in Jersey, as in most of the colonies; but it is a moot point whether the law is for visitors as well as residents. The Attorney-General lays it down that to have the legal right it is necessary to be domiciled on the island. What is certain is that marriage in Jersey must be recognised throughout the British Empire.

Chancellor Tristram having laid it down that a brass crucifix is a superstitious image, which must be removed from the altar of St. Mark's, Marylebone, the Ritualists are a good deal troubled, for St. Mark's is by no means the only church where the Roman practice is followed.

The Bishop of London has just been presented with a new toy, consisting of burnished ivory, ornamented with plates of pure gold. The technical name of this toy is a mitre. His lordship is said to be very proud of it. "Men are but children of a larger growth."

The *Westminster Gazette* gives the following as a fact:—Ingenuous Young Lady *(whose eye is caught by the score of a current Billiard Contest)*: "Poor Mr. Diggle! I knew he didn't get in on the School Board, but I never thought he'd have to take to playing billiards."

The *Schoolmaster* publishes a list of questions sent by the vicar to the applicant for a teachership in a church school, "salary £60 and half-grant, £45 house and garden": "(1) Do you hold any extreme views as a Churchman? (2) Will you co-operate with me in Sunday school loyally? I am personally superintendent. (3) Are you willing to accept (as quite extraneous) the duties of organist (£5 to start with)? These will be: Two services on Sunday, and a third if called upon. Saints' and Holy Days and Wednesday evenings, and during special church seasons, if required. Also training the choir, and holding practice under my direction personally."

Other questions were: "(6) Are you disposed to interest yourself in the spiritual and temporal welfare of the young men and lads to some degree? (7) Are you willing to abide by the following conditions as to evening continuation school—viz.: No night school to be held on Wednesday and Friday, between 7.30 and 8.30 p.m., nor during hours of divine service in Penitential seasons? The use of school-room to be always conditional on requirements of trustees?" As the vicar evidently thinks most of his Sunday school, one would like to know how much of the salary is fairly chargeable to the day school?

The clerical majority on the Norwich School Board, says the *Chronicle*, in spite of a popular protest insisted upon establishing religious examinations in the Board schools. The first of these took place last week, when the Church party discovered that the public had decided to take a hand in the game by keeping its children away. The schools were more than half empty, in one case seventy-two attending out of 380 on the registers, with other schools in a very slightly larger proportion. The elation of the party at having carried their point in the Board room is now tempered by the sad reflection that the only service their victory has done them is to provoke a strong hostile demonstration.

This illustrates the usual position. Parents are no whit anxious that their children's minds shall be filled with religious nonsense. All the anxiety comes from the party desiring future supporters of church and chapel.

Digitized by Google

The High Church party in Birmingham have been much annoyed by Parliament sanctioning the demolition of several of the city churches. It appears that the trustees of Christ Church, among them the Bishop of Coventry, have sold the site for £65,000, by an agreement, through which an hotel may be erected thereon, provided there is no public drinking bar; whereas the conditions of sale stipulate that no licensed house shall at any time be erected there. The projected "desecration" is said to have excited much virtuous indignation.

"K." calls the attention of readers of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* to the fact that, although the Rev. W. Dale denounced Sunday trading, a religious magazine is hawked about at his chapel. One of the congregation who defends the practice says that it occurred during the pastorate of Dr. Dale.

Edwin Andrews, a gardener, for fourteen years in Mr. Chamberlain's employ, hanged himself in a cowshed. The poor fellow had lost his mother, and found he could not live without her. He had spent fifteen hours without food beside her grave. Not so very long ago, when Christian ideas prevailed, this poor fellow's corpse would have been buried by night at the meeting of four cross roads, with "a stake in his inside," as Tom Hood put it; but now the jury will return the dodging verdict of "Temporary insanity," and the corpse will be decently buried.

Speaking of suicide, is it not strange to find the *Christian World* giving fresh currency to the silly newspaper paragraph, that since Colonel Ingersoll wrote to show that suicide was no sin, five members of his family, or immediate friends, have "acted upon his suggestion"? In the first place, the *Christian World* must be very green to suppose that essays on suicide have anything whatever to do with the fact of suicide. People who kill themselves don't do so for academic reasons. In the second place, no member of Colonel Ingersoll's "family" has committed suicide. Mrs. Cooper was a rather distant relative of his, and she lost her life in watching her daughter who was suffering from religious melancholia—at least, that is how we read the evidence. The fond mother would not send her daughter to an asylum, and one night the demented girl got out of bed, turned on the gas (unlit), and asphyxiated both herself and her mother. These are the plain facts of the case, and we ask the *Christian World* in all seriousness what possible connection it can have with Ingersoll's pamphlet on Suicide.

By the way, if Ingersoll's pamphlet would lead people to commit suicide, it ought to be read by some orthodox journalists. The loss of some of them would neither eclipse the gaiety of nations nor diminish their average intelligence.

Suicide is often attributed to irreligion, but we notice that the letters of suicides very usually teem with religious expressions such as those left by the son of an undertaker in Islington, on whom an inquest was held last week.

Religious and racial hatred conspire to render the position of the Jews in Eastern Europe most uncomfortable. A fresh outbreak in Roumania recalls those in 1872 and 1882, when Jews were hunted wholesale.

Rev. Canon Gordon, head of the Sheffield Catholics, has been fined £1 for beating a schoolboy with a walking-stick. This is how he reads the Gospel texts, "Blessed are the merciful," and "If one smite thee on the one cheek turn unto him the other also." But there always was a glaring contradiction between Christian belief and Christian practice.

The South Shields Christian Evidence Society had to prosecute a colored man calling himself the Rev. J. T. Williams, B.A., for obtaining money by false pretences. According to Sergeant Porter, of Houghton le Spring, Williams had been convicted there of larceny under the name of John James Cole. The prisoner elected to be dealt with by the South Shields magistrate, and was sent to gaol for twenty-one days.

The Rev. Henry Samuel Berry, vicar of Cuckney, was brought before the Consistory Court of Nottingham, charged by his churchwardens with drunkenness. As his intoxication had not interfered with the discharge of his ministerial functions, he was merely admonished.

In the case of the Rev. J. H. Borrer Nigel Neville, a retired clergyman, charged at Dursley Police-court with indecently assaulting a girl of thirteen, an arrangement was come to with the father, and the prosecution withdrawn.

The rector of St. Peter's, Tiverton, and a number of his choir, were summoned by the police for being on licensed premises after closing hours. They pleaded inadvertence, and the case was dismissed, though it is doubtful if the excuse would serve in the case of unreverend persons.

It appears, from a case which came before Judge Bacon at Whitechapel County Court, that some Jews think comparatively little of an oath in a Christian court. The defendant, when reminded of what the plaintiff had sworn, said: "Dat is nodings. Let him go before der Rabbi." Judge Bacon: "What difference is there in taking the oath before the Chief Rabbi or here?" Defendant: "Dere is mooch difference. Der schwear before der Rabbi, dot is terrible. Der schwear here nodings." The Judge said he had often suspected this, but had not heard it stated before with such frankness.

The *Jewish Chronicle*, under the heading "A Premium on Hypocrisy," exposes the methods of the missionaries in making bad Jews into worse Christians. Monetary considerations appear to be the only inducements for a profession of faith, which is repudiated whenever convenient.

Side by side with the statement that some ninety thousand pounds are spent by the London Mission for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, we read that fifty beds have had to be closed at University Hospital for want of means to support them.

Mr. Richard Beale Blaize, a wealthy merchant of Lagos, West Africa, says that the morality of the natives has been greatly impaired by their contact with Europeans. He further contends that the evangelization of Africa would be more effectively accomplished by her own sons than by imported native missionaries. Of course Bishop Tugwell repudiates this.

The *Liverpool Courier*, in a leader on the controversy, says: "It is certainly a significant and painful thing to learn, on the authority of the *Lagos Weekly Record*, and from other sources, that the 'bulk of Central Africa is rapidly coming under the control of Islam. Mohammedanism is knitting together, by religious and educational ties, the large and powerful tribes into a harmonious whole.'"

Hindu students of Bombay University have been agitated by the question whether a Hindu becoming a Christian remains a Hindu. The native Christians maintain that Hindu is a national name, and that there is no such thing as a Hindu religion. The Brahmans maintain that Brahmanism is Hinduism, and this seems recognised by men like Sir Monier Williams, who writes on the native faiths as Hinduism, although there are almost as many varieties of Hinduism as there are of Christianity.

Since 1852 there has been a bishopric at Sierra Leone, but the climate is so unhealthy that no church dignitary would stay there longer than the first return vessel. To wait for a crown of martyrdom is left for curates, and cannot be expected from a bishop. No martyrs being forthcoming, by letters patent dated November 29, 1897, her Majesty has revoked the letters patent which constituted the bishopric.

The Rev. J. Landreth, of Logie-Pert, addressing the Scottish Church Society on the need of catechetical instruction, said: "Dahomey was respectable, compared with our baptised, sceptical, ingeniously naturalistic, and thoroughly sensual British savage." This being the case, the Scottish Church Society wants money for more missions abroad. And religion being so little efficacious at home, the prescription of Dr. Landreth is simply to increase the dose.

Mr. Gomer Williams, in his recent book dealing with the history of the Liverpool privateers and slave-traders, mentions a cargo "shipped by the Grace of God" on the *Mary Borough*, her "master under God" being Captain David Morton, and she herself "now riding at anchor at the Barr of Senegal, and by God's grace bound for Georgy, in South Carolina." The cargo of the good ship thus piously announced consisted of "twenty-four prime slaves, six prime women slaves being marked and numbered as in the margin, the mark being two circles branded on the right buttock." This was the way in which Christianity was abolishing the slave trade a hundred years ago.

The Robert Browning Hall, in York-street, Walworth, commemorated the eighth anniversary of the poet's death on Sunday evening. Robert Browning was not a Christian, but the Warden of the Browning Settlement is the Rev. Herbert Stead, and the institution has a decidedly pious flavor. The proceedings on Sunday evening opened with a couple of hymns and a prayer. An address was delivered by Mr. Augustine Birrell, M.P., who is generally more entertaining in his comical than his serious vein. Mr. Birrell dwelt on Browning's optimism—"God's in his heaven, All's

Digitized by Google

right with the world'; also on his "undying faith in immortality." But what on earth does a poet know about immortality more than other people? Browning knows now, if he knows anything, whether there is a future life or not, but during his earthly existence he knew no more about it than any tramp or crossing-sweeper. And, after all, the importance of a poet, and his value, do not consist in his individual opinions on controverted questions, but in his command over the universal elements of human life and his power of presenting them artistically in musical speech. As a matter of fact, Shakespeare was a far greater poet than Browning, and he had no "undying belief in immortality," unless it was the immortality of his genius in the world's literature.

Regarding the expedition to Ceylon to witness the total solar eclipse of January 21, 1898, Sir Norman Lockyer says: "In India, in 1871, my observations would certainly have been rendered impossible by the smoke of sacrificial fires to frighten away Rahu, the Dragon, who is supposed to cause eclipses by swallowing the sun, if there had not been a strong force of military and police present to extinguish them; and in Egypt, in 1882, without the protection of the soldiers, a crowd of Egyptians would have invaded the camp; as it was, their shouts and shrieks, from a distance of 500 yards, were plainly audible." The Emperor of China is likely to accede to all Germany's demands out of nervousness at the prospect of the forthcoming eclipse, which is taken as a sign of the anger of heaven.

The sun emblem of the Sun Fire office, according to a writer in the *Daily Mail*, used in Germany to be considered as a protection in various ways by the country people. In order to protect the marks from the weather they frequently surround them with a little wooden frame, and in the Catholic districts of Silesia people may be seen kneeling to the figure of the Sun, under the idea that it is dedicated to holy purposes.

Judge Paul, who is already noted for many remarks which permit of no doubt as to his religious beliefs, is thus reported to have recently examined a ten-year-old girl witness in a Brisbane indecent assault case: "Do you know what an oath is?" "No, sir." "You were questioned at the police-court?" "Yes, sir." "Did you kiss the book at the police-court?" "Yes, sir." "What did you kiss the book for?" "To tell the truth, sir." "Oh, she'll do for me. It's no use asking her where she'll go to if she doesn't tell the truth, because *we* don't know."—*People's Newspaper.*

Canon Cheyne's visit to America is much boomed in the press. He is showing Jonathan how a clergyman can now-a-days get £2,000 a year for doing what Thomas Paine received execration for.

"Providence" did not help the poor fellows who put off in the Margate surf-boat to save lives in a shipwreck. Most of them were drowned. No doubt the clergy have an explanation. They always have. It is their trade to show by hook or crook that "He doeth all things well."

The rector of the parish church, Southport, holds that mixed marriages are responsible for Agnosticism; for where parents hold diverse faiths the children run a great risk of lacking all faith and all reverence for sacred things. He would fain have none but sound Anglicans bred in the land.

The Rev. H. J. Taylor has been preaching at the Derby-road Church, Southport, on "The Atheist." He is reported as making some very strange statements. One was the following: "In the commencement of the Revolution the National Assembly of France appointed a committee to inquire whether there was a God. The committee met, and ultimately decided that there could be no liberty on earth while there was a God in heaven; and then, by a bold leap in logic, the committee decided that there was no God, and that death was an eternal sleep." Will Mr. Taylor kindly inform us the date when this committee was appointed, and where the document embodying its decisions can be found?

Mr. Taylor followed the polite example of the Psalmist in calling Atheists fools. "It is the fool who has said in his heart that there is no God. The folly of Atheism is apparent. It says that there is no God behind all in this universe, and yet it cannot give any adequate account of how the universe has come to be." Is not the folly apparent of a person who fancies that Atheists think it necessary to give an account of how that came to be which they cannot conceive as non-existent?

Mr. Taylor wound up by saying: "As long as there is any place in the whole universe unexplored the man who asserts that there is no God may be fitly described, in the language of David, as a fool." Suppose for the word "God" we substitute Devil, Witch, Fairy, Ghost, or Chimera?

"A. G. W." says in the Glasgow *Saturday Weekly Citizen*: "The average elderly man is orthodox in his views; he has at least recognised the value of conformity to the opinion of the majority. The spirit of scepticism is, as a matter of experience, more rife among the younger minds. Unsettled views are regarded as natural to the stage which precedes the acquisition of sufficient experience to provide a foundation for faith."

Several Welsh Nonconformist preachers have lately received offers to confer American degrees upon them at the following prices:—D.D., £21; LL.D., £20; Ph.D., £16; M.A., £12; B.A., £10; Mus. Bac., £10; Mus. Doc. (very cheap), £16; B.Sc., £10; B.D., £10. Dr. Sexton, Dr. Kinns, and many others, own their titles on the same valid ground that the lady owned her hair—by right of purchase.

A local schoolmistress, afflicted with religious mania, was found last week at midnight going along the Kew-road, Richmond, in a costume of Eve before the Fall. She was anxious to set up as a prophetess, having perhaps heard that the Rev. Mr. Horton, of Hampstead, laments the disappearance of prophetesses from the Christian Church.

Here is an advertisement from the *Times* of December 9: "Advowson.—The Patrons of a well-circumstanced London Benefice, in the best part of the West-end, will sell by private treaty. Income capable of large increase. Large church. Prospect early possession." The "income capable of large increase" indicates that the advertiser knows what those in search of "the cure of souls" really desire.

Our Spiritist friends seem as inconsistent as the Christians about death. An obituary notice in the Christmas number of the *Two Worlds* begins: "I regret to have to report the passing to the higher life of Mr.——"

The eloquent Pere Hyacinthe writes to the *Gazette de Lausanne*. In France, out of thirty-six millions [nominal] of Catholics, twenty-five have broken with the Church. He says: "If the Church remains in the road which she has so unhappily taken, Christianity in its Latin form will perish, and our nations probably will perish with it." M. Loyson need not be alarmed. He surely knows that nations with virtues which he can admire have existed, and still exist, apart from all Christianity.

Father Ignatius, preaching at St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, on "The Advent of Christ," said that even Voltaire bore testimony to the universal expectation of that event. We are afraid the holy father is too deficient in humor to understand the great French master of sarcasm.

Councillor D. M. Stevenson, of Glasgow, has had the good sense and manliness to propose that the People's Palace at the east-end of the second city of the empire shall be opened for not less than three hours on Sundays. Of course the interested sky-pilots held a conference, with a view of preserving their monopoly, and invoking the vengeance of heaven on all who would interfere therewith. They raised a rare howl at the increase of Sabbath desecration, as they call recreation; but, as the United Trades Council almost unanimously voted to petition for the Sunday opening, the Town Councillors may do well to pay more heed to the wishes of the people than to those of the sky-pilots.

The Bishop of London has given his sanction to the launching of a large monastic institute by the Cowley Fathers at Westminster. Thus the Romanizing movement goes on apace.

The *Daily News*, noticing a saying of Napoleon, "When I appoint anyone to a place I make one ingrate and ninety-nine malcontents," parallels it with the saying of an English Prime Minister. "It is a strange thing," he said, "but when a man becomes a bishop the first thing he forgets is his maker." This reminds us of an old epigram on a bishop, who went out of church during divine service to wait on the Duke of Dorset:—

> His station despising, unawed by the place,
> He flies from his God to attend on his grace.
> To the Court it were fitter to pay his devotion,
> Since God had no hand in his lordship's promotion.

This calls up another old epigram, as true to-day as when it was written:—

> Various religions various tenets hold;
> But all one God acknowledge—namely, gold.

What others think of thee stay not to ask;
Rather than please the many, serve the few,
Knowing that life's most glorious regal task
Is never quite too hard for thee to do.

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 19, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "God and His Mother; or, The Fairy Tale of the Birth of Christ."

January 2, Birmingham; 9, Manchester; 16, Liverpool.

February 20, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 2, Leicester; 9 and 16, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 23 and 30, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham; February 13, Camberwell. May 1, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

SAM BRIERLEY, newsagent, 49 Chester-road, Manchester, writes: "I placarded the contents-sheet of the *Freethinker*, with six extra copies, and before I could look round I had to refuse six more. Some of my so-called Christian customers take me to task for advertising your horrid paper, but I sha'n't be frightened. Keep on sending the contents-sheet, and let Secularists in this part of Manchester know they will always be able to obtain the *Freethinker* at my shop."

G. J. HOLYOAKE, Eastern Lodge, Brighton, wishes to purchase the volume of the *National Reformer* containing his contributions from January 4, 1862.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—"Bible Bosh" will do capitally for our next number—that for Christmas week.

A. C. DREWRY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. BRADY.—Your fresh monthly subscription (10s.) to the new Treasurer's Scheme to hand. Miss Vance will send you an official receipt in due course. Thanks for your good wishes. Mr. Foote is in excellent health.

T. BELLAMY.—Mr. Gladstone has not translated Homer, but has written a book about him. It is called *Juventus Mundi*.

T. J. HEAD sends us 5s. in redemption of his promise towards the Treasurer's Scheme.

J. H. T.—See paragraph.

J. H. FOSTER.—Order of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—J. Unsworth, 5s. *(p)*; J. Tonge, 5s. *(p)*; W. Early, 5s. *(p)*. *Per C. Cohen*:—N. Ashworth, 5s. *(p)*.

JOSEPH MAY.—We fear we do not quite follow your question. Buddhism in the course of ages has become a superstition, with gods, heavens, and hells. In that aspect, of course, it is open to the same criticism as other superstitions.

H. A. GODDARD.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder, to whom all orders for books, pamphlets, and papers should be sent *direct*.

J. PARTRIDGE.—All right. Please forward copy of the bill in the usual way.

W. WILSON.—Lick, who gave money for the Lick telescope and observatory, was a Freethinker. We believe he gave most of the cost of building the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston. Thanks for your kind offer, but at present we cannot avail ourselves of it in London, not having the orchestra to begin with.

HOOPER FUND.—T. Bellamy acknowledges:—Collection at Motherwell, 10s.

J. WOOD.—We are not able to pay for verses.

REV. DR. CLIFFORD'S letter on the Bible as a Board-school book, together with our reply, will appear in our next issue.

R. S. JENNINGS.—Too late for this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Humanity—The New Century—Crescent—Blue Grass Blade—Two Worlds—De Dageraad—Southport Visitor—Southport Guardian—Daily Chronicle—Birmingham Daily Mail—Newcastle Chronicle—Bury Times—Glasgow Herald—Shields Gazette—Intelligence—The Clarion—Fria Tankar—L'Etoile Socialiste.

IT being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the unpleasant weather, there was a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Evolution of the Idea of God," with special reference to Mr. Grant Allen's new book so entitled. The lecture was listened to with very profound attention, and loud and long applause marked its conclusion. Some questions were asked and answered. Mr. Foote speaks at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (Dec. 19), taking for his subject "God and His Mother; or, The Fairy Tale of the Birth of Christ." As the subject is so seasonable, Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their more orthodox friends to this meeting.

London Freethinkers will remember that their Annual Dinner takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 10. Mr. Foote presides, and is to be supported by Messrs. Watts, Wheeler, Forder, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, Ward, and other Freethought speakers. The tickets are four shillings each, as usual. For this a good repast is provided in agreeable surroundings, and the evening will be made pleasant in other respects. No doubt there will be a large gathering.

Notwithstanding the exceedingly unpleasant weather, Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at Camberwell last Sunday evening. The applause was most enthusiastic in approval of the new lectura, "Christian Tactics Exposed." Mr. Sabine presided, and appealed, but in vain, for discussion.

Mr. A. B. Moss, who was unable to lecture last Sunday in consequence of an attack of lumbago, is happily recovering. We hope he will soon be himself again.

Mr. Cohen is now back in London, after a prolonged tour in the provinces. Last week he delivered the first Sunday lectures ever given at Chester. The meetings were far more successful than was anticipated, and seventeen new members were added to the local Branch.

Mr. Chilperic Edwards is a lecturer we should like to hear oftener from Freethought platforms. His discourse on "Jonah from the Standpoint of the Higher Criticism," at Wood Green, was replete with humour and learning. Next Sunday Dr. Drysdale lectures in the New Hall, Wood Green.

Mr. S. M. Peacock, the president of the South Shields Branch, after an elaborate address upon education and School Board matters, performed, last Sunday, the interesting ceremony of naming Rose, the daughter of the secretary, Mr. R. Chapman, expressing every good wish to child and parents. The annual social of the South Shields Branch is fixed for January 1, at the Baring-street school.

A woman's journal has been started in Paris with the title *La Fronde*. It is written and composed exclusively by females. Some of the leading contributors, such as Mmes. Marya Cheliga, Eugenie Potonie Pierre, and Paul Mink, are well-known Freethinkers.

R. Didden, in the *Westminster Review*, notices the work of Herr von Otto Gaupp on Herbert Spencer, in which he says that the *Synthetic Philosophy* will for all time secure for its creator a place among the intellectual heroes of mankind.

"Nunquam," in the *Clarion*, writing on Mr. John Trevor's new book, which *we* shall have something to say about shortly, once more confesses his Agnosticism. "The quest for God," he says "is an old, old quest, and never mortal yet came back therefrom with anything in his hand but guesses. And if it comes to guessing, I can guess as well as another. But I know—nothing!!"

Colonel Ingersoll is announced to deliver a "Thanksgiving Sermon," and the American Christians are once more talking about his approaching conversion. Haven't they been praying for it, and will not the good God answer their supplications? *They* can't convert Ingersoll, and they know it; but God can, and they are eagerly waiting for him to begin business. But alas and alack! Ingersoll's "sermon" is a Freethought address, after all, and we expect shortly to be able to present it to our readers.

Some time ago Talmage preached on "Lies and Liars," and we remarked that he was a good authority on both. Since then Talmage has stated that Charles Darwin "gave twenty-five thousand dollars to the Missionary Society." Dr. Croffut, of Washington, wrote to Darwin's son for verification, and received the following reply: "My father, Mr. Charles Darwin, did not, as a rule, subscribe to any missionary societies. For some years he used to subscribe

Digitized by Google

£1 (85) a year to a society in the Falkland Islands. He had been in these poor islands, and was interested in them, and an old friend who was there with him asked him to subscribe. This is, no doubt, the origin of Dr. Talmage's romance."

The New York *Truthseeker*, from which we extract this item, points out that Darwin was deceived by this missionary, who really reduced the tribe among whom he worked from three thousand healthy persons to three hundred sickly ones. Darwin seems to have given £5 altogether, and Talmage tacked on three ciphers—a trifle for him.

FREE INQUIRY.

THE right of free inquiry is the first condition of progress, and dogmatists who dispute that right virtually impeach the evidence or the morality of their own dogmas. An exception from that rule may, under certain conditions, be admitted in favor of theological tenets. Unobtrusive mystics have a right to expound the unknowable after their own fashion. The priests of Isis and the adepts of the Eleusinian Mysteries had the privilege to veil the secrets of their sacred rites. The discreet Pythagoreans could not be obliged to explain the bean-law of their master, or their reason for believing in his ghost-stories as firmly as in the evidence of his geometrical theorems. Even nocturnal devil-worshippers may be permitted to mumble about their altars, if they do not dress them at the expense of their neighbors.

But it alters the case if such creeds become aggressive. The right of secrecy does not pertain to religions that have devastated our earth by a series of murderous wars, that have enforced their anti-natural dogmas by destroying the prosperity of whole nations, and their ghost dogmas by the torture and slaughter of millions; religions which, after the loss of their political power, have used all their moral influence to obstruct the progress of freedom and science, to arrogate the education of our children, and to interfere with the recreations of our holidays—all under the pretext of promoting the propaganda of an infallible revelation. The votaries of such creeds cannot plead the privileges of the ancient mystics, for the right to investigate their claims has become a social and religious duty.

—*F. L. Oswald.*

AN INERRANT BIBLE.

THE *Central Christian Advocate*, as a Church organ, gave publicity to the following statement of Professor Wilbur F. Steele, a distinguished Christian scholar, in which he showed up the character of the inspired Bible, "every sentence, word, and letter of which is of God." He says: "In 1848 there was such a confusion in the office of the American Bible Society, and such impossibility of telling what should be the reading in many places, that a man was set to work to bring order out of chaos. He took four Bibles from as many leading Bible houses of England, a copy of the American Bible Society, and a copy of the original edition of 1611, all claiming to be the same. These were carefully compared throughout; every variation, no matter how minute, was noted. The number of these variations was about 24,000."

Suppose an honest comparison had been made with the "Douche and Latyn," from which the Coverdale translation was made; how many additional thousands of errors in this inerrant Bible would have been found?

If "about 24,000" discrepancies were made by printers from 1611 to 1848, a period of 247 years, probably how many occurred in making the Latin translation into Dutch? and how many were made by copyists, intentionally and unintentionally, of that Latin original, claiming to have been translated from the Greek in the beginning of the fifth century by Jerome?

Oh, there is a curious history of that earlier Latin edition, which, says the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "originated in Africa." And it will surprise the world sometime to learn, as they will, that the "original Greek" is only a translation of that old Latin.

"We know how the Bible was made," said the good Father McGovern, in a sermon to a Catholic audience twenty-seven years ago, "and that is why we are opposed to placing it in the hands of the people." Ah, and there are others who have learned how it was made, and they are not disposed to always remain silent.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

THE CHILDREN'S GOD.

O, BABY mine, with golden hair,
And eyes so innocently blue:
So helpless, weak, so dainty-fair,
Who'd have the heart to injure you?
God kills such darlings every day—
It is his dear, delightful way.

In pomp absurd he sits on high,
And strikes our little children down:
To sate his burning lust they die—
His lust for blood, of old renown.
As then, so now he loves to slay—
It is his dear, delightful way.

Their holy blood, like awful wine,
Is daily on his altar poured:
Full sweet their burning flesh divine
Smells in the nostrils of the Lord.
The heavenly Potter kneads his clay—
Just in his dear, delightful way.

Sweet throats he rips with bloody steel,
He tears babes, shrieking, limb from limb:
No thrill of pity God can feel,
Their agony is naught to him.
No prayer his ruthless arm can stay—
He'll have his dear, delightful way.

Babes strangled, poisoned, butchered, drowned;
Blind, maimed, deformed, diseased, distraught!
Thus are his works with mercy crowned:
His deeds, with loving kindness fraught!
His tortures naught but love display—
It is his dear, delightful way.

Then, children, creep beneath the wing
Of God's all-loving, boundless might,
And if you feel the baleful sting
Of him—the way, the truth, the light—
Repine not, O, remember, pray,
'Tis but his dear, delightful way.

EX-RITUALIST.

Signs from the Lord.

The Jewish prophet was an extraordinary being. He was something more and something less than a man. He spoke like an angel; he acted like a beast. As soon as he received his mission he ceased to work. He often retired to the mountains, where he might be seen skipping from rock to rock like a goat; or he wandered in the desert with a leather girdle round his loins, eating roots and wild honey; sometimes browsing on grass and flowers. He always adapted his actions to the idea he wished to convey. He not only taught in parables, but performed them. For instance, Isaiah walked naked through the streets to show that the Lord would strip Jerusalem and make her bare. Ezekiel cut off his hair and beard, and weighed it in the scales; a third part he burnt with fire; a third part he strewed about with a knife; and a third part he scattered to the wind. This was also intended to illustrate the calamities which would befall the Jews. Moreover, he wore a rotten girdle as a sign that their city would decay, and buttered his bread—in a manner we would rather not describe—as a sign that they would eat defiled bread among the Gentiles. Jeremiah wore a wooden yoke [and there was nothing indecent in this] as a sign that they would be taken into captivity. As a sign that the Jews were guilty of wantonness in worshipping idols, Hosea cohabited three years with a—woman of the town; and, lastly, as a sign that they committed adultery in turning from the Lord their God, he went and lived with another man's wife.—*Reade's "Martyrdom of Man."*

War.

Miserable physicians of souls, you declaim for five quarters of an hour against the mere pricks of a pin, and say no word on the curse which tears us into a thousand pieces! Philosophers and moralists, burn your books; so long as the caprice of a handful of men will cause the massacring in all loyalty of thousands of our brothers, the part of the human race which is devoted to heroism will contain all that is most frightful in human nature. What concern to me are humanity, benevolence, modesty, temperance, gentleness, wisdom, piety, so long as half-an-ounce of lead shatters my body, and I die in torments unspeakable, surrounded by five or six thousand dead or dying, while my eyes, opening for the last time, see the town I was born in delivered to fire and sword, and the last sounds that reach my ears are the shrieks of women and children expiring in the ruins—and the whole for the pretended interests of a man whom we do not know?—*Voltaire.*

Digitized by Google

THAT BADGER BOY AT SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

THE LESSON OF BALAAM—OR HIS ASS.

THE teacher read the story of Balaam, which, save for the jackass episode, wouldn't be worth telling to empty benches, that Badger boy at once getting in his hooks, as it were.

"That Balum was a fortune-teller for revnoo only, as pop says, wasn't he, mum ?"

"Yes, James, that was just about what he was."

"Yes'm. He wasn't one of God's profitters, was he, mum ?'

"No, dear, he was not. He was one of Baal's prophets, dear."

"Yes'm. Who was Bale, mum ?"

"He was just nothing and nobody, James ; but the ungodly called him their god."

"Yes'm. He was a noppessition god, wasn't he, mum ?"

"James Badger, don't you dare to talk like that !"

"No'm. Them ungodly folks wasn't ungodly to Bale, was they, mum ?"

"No—yes—well, now you just stop talking anything about it, you boy."

"Yes'm. God told Balum to go to King Boleg, didn't he, mum ?'

"God told him to go to King Balak, you stupid, you."

"Yes'm. What't he git mad for, then ; 'cos he went, mum ?"

"Why God's anger was kindled, I don't know, James."

"No'm. Wonder 'f he knew, mum ?"

"James Badger, that's blasphemy !"

"Yes'm. All the same, it was very funny he told Balum to go up over against Boleg, and then got mad 'cos he went, warn't it, mum ?"

"You horrid boy, you stop !"

"Yes'm. It must a knocked Balum galley west when the jackass spoke out to him, mus'n't it, mum ?"

"You little slang-whangy thing, you ; I don't know whatever you mean, I'm sure !"

"No'm. I mean it must a sot him back, opened his peepers, knocked him stiff, give him "——

"There, you can stop your horrid lingo just where you are. I won't listen to you."

"No'm. If you was ridin' a jackass, mum "——

"You needn't go any further with the supposition, you little badger, you."

"No'm. Was the jackass a talker from Wayback, mum, or for this er'casion only, as pop says ?"

"Of course he spoke only on that occasion ; otherwise it would have been no miracle, you heathen boy, you !"

"Yes'm. Was it a miracle when the jackass spoke, mum ?"

"Of course it was, stupid !"

"Yes'm. Was it when the snake spoke to Eve, mum ?"

"Of course it was, you boy."

"Yes'm. Who done the mirricles, mum ?"

"God, you miserable little heathen !"

"Yes'm. Then it was God that buncoed Eve, and not the snake, weren't it, mum ?"

"Merciful heaven ! James Badger, you go home !"

"No'm please. How obbun yer nice hair—I mean how nice yer obbun "——

"There, that'll do, dear. I'll forgiv you this time. But don't be so wicked again, will you, dear ?'

"No'm. What was the matter with Balum's eyes, mum, that he couldn't see the angel, and the jackass could ?"

"It was God's doing, the whole of it, James."

"Yes'm. Was it God spoke, and not the jackass, mum ?'

"God willed that the animal should speak, James, and it spoke."

"Yes'm. How sot back the jackass must a been, same's Balum, mum ! Did he always talk after that, mum ?'

"Of course he didn't."

"How do you know he didn't, mum ?"

"James Badger, you've said quite enough about the animal, now you stop."

"Yes'm. Why don't you say jackass, mum ?

"Because there's no authority—the Bible doesn't say it, you horrid !"

"No'm. But it says ass, and everybody calls 'em "——

"James Badger, you can go home."

"No'm—please. I'd liked to heard the jackass talk, wouldn't you, mum ?"

"No, I wouldn't ; there now."

"Why not, mum ? It was God's doin', wasn't it ?'

"Of course. And—er—well, we weren't either of us there, James, so say no more about it, please."

"No'm. All the same, it was a big thing, a talkin' jackass, mum."

"James Badger, will you ever stop ?"

"Yes'm. Was the angel gonter kill Balum, mum ?"

"Yes, dear ; and only for the ass he would."

"Yes'm. If the critter hadn't got scart, and had walked over the angel, then Balum would a ketched it, I s'pose, mum ?"

"You suppose, do you ? Well, keep on supposing you little monkey you."

"Yes'm. S'posin' the jackass had brayed at the angel, then the angel would a got on his ear "——

"You horrible James Badger, go home !"

"No'm—please. Would you be scart of an angel, mum ?"

"James, I suppose any of us would be. Don't we read that the men of God were bowed with fear before the angels of the Lord ?"

"Yes'm. And that one must a been a tough lot, mum, that knocked the jackass silly ! What a scarecrow he'd a made in a corn-field, wouldn't he, mum ?"

"Oh ! oh ! oh ! you horrid heathen wretch ! I shall die. Go home—go. The class is dismissed." Then to an untimely end came the séance of Balaam—or his ass.

—*Truthseeker.* SI SLOKUM.

SAVE ME AND DAMN THE REST.

No, not for me the selfish prayer,
"Lord, bless thou mine and me,
Protect me by thy watchful care,
Keep me from evils free !

"Prolong my days, keep Death afar,
Thine angel though he be ;
But when he calls, in some bright star,
Eternally bless me !"

Lo, what am I that I should be
Above my fellows blest ?
That God should from them single me,
Save me—and damn the rest ?

Am I to taste eternal joy,
While friends I loved are lost ?
Shall songs of praise my harp employ,
And they in torment tossed ?

Shall I find joy in heaven's bliss,
In peace one moment dwell,
While lips I loved on earth to kiss
Are parched with fires of hell ?

No, not for me the selfish prayer,
"Lord, bless thou mine and me,
Protect me by thy watchful care,
Keep me from evils free."

But be my earnest labors given
To every effort wise
To make this lowly earth a heaven,
A cloudless paradise.

—*S. J. Macdonald.*

Christmas.

The Rev. Albert Barnes says, in his comments on Luke ii. 8 : "It is also a fact that the Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced. While away in these desert and mountainous regions, it was proper that there should be someone to attend them, to keep them from straying, and from the ravages of wolves and other wild beasts. It is clear from this that our Savior was born before the twenty-fifth of December, or before what we call Christmas. At that time it was cold, and especially in the high and mountainous regions about Bethlehem. God has concealed the time of his birth. There is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been fixed at each month in the year."

Obituary.

GEORGE JULIAN HARNEY, who on February 17 celebrated his eightieth birthday, and was known as the sole survivor of the Chartist Convention of 1839, died at Richmond on December 9. Mr. Harney had been one of those imprisoned for selling Hetherington's unstamped *Poor Man's Guardian*. As a writer and speaker, he did much for advanced political causes. He edited the *Democratic Review*, and, for a while, the *Northern Star*. After the collapse of the Chartist movement he went to Jersey and to the United States, where he was engaged in journalistic enterprises. Since his return to England he had been a contributor to the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. He became somewhat more Conservative in politics, but remained a Freethinker to the end.

The progress from deepest ignorance to highest enlightenment is a progress from entire unconsciousness of law to the conviction that law is universal and inevitable.—*Herbert Spencer.*

Digitized by Google

BOOK CHAT.

Colonel John Hay's speech at the dinner of the Omar Khayyam Club was worthy of his reputation. Here is the conclusion of his eulogy on the great Persian Freethinking poet: "The many cannot but resent that air of lofty intelligence, that pale and subtle smile. But he will hold a place forever among that limited number who, like Lucretius and Epicurus without rage or defiance, even without unbecoming mirth—look deep into the tangled mysteries of things; refuse credence to the absurd, and allegiance to arrogant authority; sufficiently conscious of fallibility to be tolerant of all opinions; with a faith too wide for doctrine, and a benevolence untrammelled by creed; too wise to be wholly poets, and yet too surely poets to be implacably wise."

* * *

In Mr. Wilfred Ward's *Memoir of Cardinal Wiseman* it is gravely recorded how—either when awake or in slumber, it is not quite clear which—the Virgin Mary appeared to the future Cardinal on the night of May 31, 1840. The Cardinal wrote: "I seemed to myself surrounded by waves boiling up, and to see at a great distance the heavens opened and the Blessed Virgin in great glory, pouring from a vessel upon the surface of the sea, which then became calm, and the calm diffused itself until it reached and surrounded me; and I seemed in a mild, pleasant bath, and part of the waters appeared covered over, and changed into gardens." This lets us know how miracles happen—in dreams.

* * *

It seems to be allowed that the reason why a Life of Wiseman only reaches the public so long after his death is that Manning would not permit any biography of his predecessor to appear in his lifetime. There were many little passages best covered up. Since, however, Mr. Purcell ripped some of the old wounds open in his *Life of Manning*, a Memoir of his predecessor became a necessity for the Church, and was commanded by Cardinal Vaughan. Hence these two more bulky volumes.

* * *

Wilfred Ward's *Life of Cardinal Wiseman* recalls an old epigrammatic verse written when the Catholic hierarchy was proclaimed in England under the last Pope:—

With Pius, Wiseman tries
To lay us under ban:
O Pius, man unwise,
O impious Wiseman.

* * *

Aubrey de Vere, in his Recollections, tells a good story of Hartley Coleridge and an Irish enthusiast who was dilating on the errors of Popery. "Sir," he said, with awful solemnity, "there are two great evils in Ireland." "There are, indeed," replied the Irishman; "but please to name them." "The first," resumed Hartley, "is Popery." "It is, indeed," said the other. "Now tell me what is the second great evil." "Protestantism," roared Hartley in a voice of thunder.

* * *

Under the title, "A Roman Catholic University for Ireland," Mr. St. John Morrow sounds an alarm in the current number of *Macmillan*. He contends that in Dublin University the Catholics have an institution to which they can go with freedom to their consciences, without setting up an institution which shall be exclusively Catholic. As a matter of fact, Trinity College is looked upon by Catholics as a Protestant institution. The new University should be before all things a national one. There should be no endowment of theological chairs of any kind, and no paid chaplains.

* * *

In the lengthy notice of the late G. Julian Harney in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* it is stated that while editor of the *Jersey Independent* he received some contributions from James Thomson. We should like to know if among these there were any not elsewhere published.

* * *

Monday, December 13, was the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Heine, one of Germany's greatest poets. Born a Jew, a sham perversion to Christianity left him a real Freethinker. "The Japanese," he said, "hate nothing so much as the cross. I will be a Japanese." Of a preacher of Christianity to the Jews he says: "If he does it from conviction, he is a fool; if from hypocrisy, a rascal." "Judaism," he said, "was not a religion, but a misfortune." "Freedom," he wrote, "is the new religion, and Paris the new Jerusalem. Lay on my coffin a sword, for I was ever an intrepid soldier in the war for the liberation of humanity."

* * *

Heine satirized all forms of religious faith, and became known as the Voltaire of Germany. Matthew Arnold wrote:—

The spirit of the world,
Beholding the absurdity of men—
Their vaunts, their feats—let a sardonic smile
For one short moment wander o'er his lips.
That smile was Heine.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MORAL INSTRUCTION LEAGUE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I fancy Mr. Thurlow slightly misapprehends the purpose of those combining to form the Moral Instruction League which was inaugurated on December 7. I resent as much as he does the idea of "moral parsons" and the insolence of those Ethical Culturists who have the air of saying: "We are the moral instructionists, and morality will perish with us." But it seems to me the League represents a very wholesome reaction against the Church and Chapel parties labelling themselves Moderates and Progressives, of the citizen party who will insist that those things which are paid for by all must be agreed upon by all.

I think Mr. Thurlow will agree that there must be that discipline in every school which the French call *morale*. Punctuality, obedience, common action, prompt response of the right word at the right moment, cleanliness, truth, cheerfulness, and kindness should pervade every lesson, even if no copy-book ethics are agreed on. But I know no valid objection to the inculcation of the uses of the simple virtues on which all are agreed. I object to my children being taught to look to God for support, but not to their being taught to ever tell the truth, and to add to the world's joy and lessen its sorrow.

Personally, I hold that physiology is a sound foundation for morality. But I do not wish it taught as such, since others disagree. But I do wish its facts taught as concerning all who happen to have bodies. So I would not have total abstinence praised or blamed, or vivisection called useful or abominable. But I would have the uses of temperance and of kindness shown, and I would like every child to feel that its character is an object of affectionate care to its teacher.

The subject raises another one which deserves careful consideration. The home has been the great school of morals. Perhaps it is well that parents should let their children's religion be provided for by others, since it shows the parents are indifferent, and the children are all the more likely to be disgusted with the nonsense. But if the State is expected to provide moral training, as well as everything else, the infants will become less the children of their parents, and more the children of the State. Whether this is desirable or not, I do not here discuss. As things are, it seems to me that parents should be considered primarily responsible for the behavior of their children, and any plans for relieving them of that responsibility would need careful examination. But we have not come to that. All we have come to is the substitution of what all are agreed upon for what all are disagreed upon, and this implies the removal of supernaturalism from school teaching. With this, I think, Mr. Thurlow and I agree. When there is a prospect of the State establishment of "moral parsons," Mr. Thurlow's criticism will be to the point, and some may be forthcoming from

Plainspeaker.

MORAL INSTRUCTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Mr. Thurlow raises three interesting points in his last letter:—

(1) Is Secular Moral Instruction intended as a substitute for "the huge superstitious imposition known as Christianity"? Now, I am an Agnostic or Atheist (I care little which name I go by), and I have done my little best to persuade my Christian neighbors to put aside all theological and supernatural doctrines. But I recognise the existence of certain good elements in Christianity. It has upheld many of those moral truths which, as Mr. Thurlow rightly says, "are the common property of mankind." In that sense, Christianity has a claim to be in part retained. In preparing a code of Moral Instruction, therefore, I should feel free to borrow from Christianity on the same terms that I borrow from Buddhism, or Judaism, or the principles of the French Revolution. I cannot agree with Mr. Thurlow that "Book Morality is the same the world over." To take one simple instance: I find in the books of Buddhism a tender thought for the animal world, which I do not find in the New Testament. No doubt, the leading lines of morality—veracity, kindness, temperance, etc.—are to be traced in all ethical codes; but the applications vary. That is why I choose one good point from the Romans, another from the Greeks, a third from the Chinese, a fourth from the Society of Friends, and so on. Having constructed a method suitable to the minds of children, we propose to introduce this secular system into State-aided schools as an improvement on the mythical and imperfect plan now followed under the name of "Religious Instruction."

(2) The capacity of the teachers. Here Mr. Thurlow embarrasses me. If I say I know more about ethical instruction than the teachers with whom I used to work under the School Board, he will call me conceited. If I say

Digitized by Google

I know no more than they, he will ask why I make a stir about the question at all. I will meet the difficulty by stating two facts :—(*a*) Since I left the School Board service I have, by study and experiment, and with the help of French text-books of civic instruction, gained a clearer insight into the nature of sound Moral Instruction than I possessed in former years. So I quote myself as one Board School-teacher who has been glad to improve his capacity. (*b*) A number of Board School-teachers with whom I have conversed have told me they felt the new secular method would be a great advance upon the "Compromise," but they confessed they were not sufficiently familiar with the subject to take it up practically. I do not mean that they have never taught morality. They mean, and I mean, that the systematic teaching of morality as a thing by itself, separated from ideas of God and a supernatural world, is a novelty, and requires some training to put into practice.

(3) The relation between intellectual progress and morality. Mr. Thurlow contends that if we multiply scientific inventions, and bring them to the doors of the people, we may safely leave morality to take care of itself; and our chief aim should be to "fertilize the budding intellect with all the useful knowledge of which it is profitably capable." To this I reply : (*a*) The access to inventions does not of itself moralize people. When railways came in, did they make the British nation more loyal to duty? When torpedoes were invented, did they wean the nations from the wicked lust of war? The engineering trade is the mother of a thousand smart inventions; and yet in this very trade the morality falls short of the level of mutual consideration and justice. (*b*) The moral sense needs fertilizing as much as the intellectual faculty. Was not the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh (I refrain from citing living examples) a teacher of morality? As a social reformer, he did not call upon the people to patent more machines. He called upon them to display sincerity, honesty, mercy, and mutual respect. The whole struggle over the Oath was a moral struggle. His advocacy of Malthusianism was based on moral grounds; he argued that more careful limitation of numbers was necessary for the happiness and comfort of individuals and of the community. Now, just as Mr. Bradlaugh brought moral suasion to bear upon the adult members of society, I want to bring the suasion to bear upon the children. I want them trained in good citizenship. F. J. Gould.

SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I rejoice that, while literary journals and high-class magazines devote much space to discussions as to whether Shakespeare's Sonnets were addressed to Pembroke, Southampton, or some other, and inquisitive inquiries as to who was the other Will, who the dark lady, and such recondite mysteries of little moment, our beloved *Freethinker* has so excellent a notelet on the deepest thoughts of our greatest thinker as that by "D. M." in your last issue. I do not, however, agree that Shakespeare's belief and disbelief may not be drawn from his plays. I have heard you, Mr. Editor, put the matter unassailably. When, for instance, the thought that death ends all is put in the mouth of Shakespeare's most intellectual characters, it is conclusive that he thought this appropriate to them; and what is this but saying that the thought is his own?

"D. M." alludes to the fact that in the Sonnets no other immortality is suggested but that through offspring. Note this in stanza xiii. :—

> O that you were yourself! but, love, you are
> No longer yours, than you yourself here live:
> Against this coming end you should prepare,
> And your sweet semblance to some other give.

One could quote many lines to the same purport. I rather turn to Sonnet xxix., which I wonder "D. M." did not give :—

> When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state,
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
> And look upon myself, and curse my fate.

Who but a Freethinker would have inserted "deaf" before "heaven"? Here we have the same voice which in *The Tempest* makes Miranda say :—

> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd, and
> The freighting souls within her.

One expression in Sonnet lviii. might lead a careless reader to suppose the writer no Atheist :—

> That god forbid, that first make me your slave,
> I should in thought control your times of pleasure.

In some poor editions it is printed "God"; but Dowden properly gives it with a small g. Evidently the god is Love, the only god known to the author. Gerald Massey acutely compares this sonnet with the speech of Rosaline in *Love's Labor Lost* (Act v., Sc. 2). In this same stanza he calls his waiting "hell." In stanza cx. he speaks of "a god in love, to whom I am confined." Massey thinks "'a god in love' is really only warranted by its being addressed to a woman." Much might be said on Shakespeare's application of the language of religion to human love, but I should like to hear others on this point. Auria.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Although I think the study and interpretation of Shakespeare vastly more important than that of the Jew books, it would, perhaps, be trespassing beyond your usual bounds to inquire into the purport of the Sonnets. May I, however, throw out the suggestion that they may be just as dramatic as his plays—that is to say, the interpretation of other people's moods, thoughts, and desires, not Shakespeare's own? J. G. F.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

The American slave-owner could appeal to the Old Testament as a warrant for his institution. Slavery there was everywhere in primitive times, but the Hebrew slave-law is more merciful than that either of Greece or Rome, notwithstanding the ordinance, shocking to our sense, which held the master blameless for killing his slave if death was not immediate, on the ground that the slave "was his money." The belief in witchcraft as a crime to be punished by death, unhappily, is also true, and, though not prominent, gave birth in misguided Christendom to an almost incredible series of atrocities.—*Professor Goldwin Smith.*

The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away before us, and as the mist of his presence floats aside we perceive, with greater and greater clearness, the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure of him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the almost depth of every soul, the face of our father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, "Before Jehovah was I am!"—*W. K. Clifford, "The Bearing of Morals on Religion."*

Did I possess the riches of all the orient lands, or all the crown-decked jewels of all the brainless kings, I would gladly give it all to hear one word from a once-loving mother who now sleeps beneath the starry dome of heaven, and over whose grave for years have crept the trailing vines. Not from one that has passed away, or who sleeps the sleep of death, has ever come one solitary word. Seasons, years, centuries, yes, ages pass, yet no response. The earth in its unweary cycle moves steadily on. The stars and suns keep their courses amid the countless constellations, while the millions of years that pass are as drops of water in a shoreless sea. Generations pass from life to the silent tomb, and there, with all the proof that was ever known, they sleep, "wrapped in the dreamless drapery" of eternal silence.—*W. J. Burns.*

> That work is worship, ancient sages said;
> A truth that seems ill-pleasing to the priest;
> Though worship is the work for which he's paid,
> Work is the worship that he likes the least.
> —*Perry Greg.*

> If four thousand years had to pass ere old Jah
> Could develop from one into three,
> What time must elapse ere the son be a pa,
> And the father a grandfather be?—*G. L. M.*

PROFANE JOKES.

It's just as well, if you're going to talk Scripture, to know something about it. A lady living in Kent, and at some distance from a church, remarked the other day at dinner that she didn't go to her favorite place of worship as often as she should do owing to its being so far off, and added: "I don't think it's right to work my coachman on Sunday." "Certainly not," replied a cheery old gentleman; "and I am delighted, madam, to hear that you have so much respect for the Seventh Commandment."

The following obituary notice appears in an American paper: "The wife of the Rev. J. Dolittle listened to her husband's preaching on Sunday last, and died in convulsions the following Tuesday afternoon."

Mrs. Jonsing—"Am Pahson Jackson ve'y eloquent?" Mrs. Whitewash (ecstatically)—"Am he eloquent? Oh, my—I wish yo' could hab heard his sermon las' Sunday 'bout Balaam an' de ass—yo could almost 'magine yo heard de ass a-talkin'."

"My text, dearly-beloved brethren," said a minister in a Western town enjoying a land boom, "will be found in the gospel according to Matthew, lot six, block ten." And then the congregation settled back to sleep, and dreamed that a railroad ran through the place, and Eastern buyers of real estate were as plentiful as chinch bugs on a Kansas farm.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "God and His Mother; or, The Fairy Tale of the Birth of Christ."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Other Religions." December 18, at 8.30, Concert and Dance.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Tour Through the British Museum"; 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Moral Government of the Universe."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, Mr. Hucklesby, "Tolstoi."

NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Dartmouth Park Lodge, N.W.): 7, B. K. Gray, "The Beautiful and Good."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Discussion, "Theo-Agnosticism *versus* Theology"; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "The Poem of Job."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Bernard Bosanquet, LL.D., "The Return to Nature."

WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, Dr. Drysdale, "Should the Population Question be made a State Question?"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (King's Hall, 83 and 85 Commercial-road, E.): 7, W. Heaford, "Can we Believe the Bible?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): 7, S. Armfield, "The Birth of Jesus Christ."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, R. Forder, "Christmas: its Meanings and Associations."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class: J. Culligan, "The Evolution of the Solar System"; 6.30, A. G. Nostick, F.G.S., "To Switzerland on a Bicycle, *viâ* the Rhine Valley and Black Forest"—with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): C. Cohen—11, "The Origin of Man"; 6.30, "The Case for Secularism."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington square): 7, The Secretary, "The Book of Job."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "The Foundations of Evolution"—lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, "Christianity and the Growth of Civilization." December 29, Members' and Friends' Annual Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5.30.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, Adjourned discussion, "School Boards and Education."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—December 19, Leicester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—December 19, Camberwell Secular Hall.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—January 8 to 12, Mission to Stanley. 23 and 30, Manchester.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin;

Or, Darwin Made Easy.

BY E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required: repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store street, Bedford-square, W.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'welp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

***** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.**

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 22, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN *Red* INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

FREETHOUGHT WORKS.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play, showing its gross partiality and its ridiculous historic inaccuracy, with special reference to the (probably) forged passage in Tacitus and the alleged Neronic massacre of Christians Handsomely printed, 6d.

The Birth of Christ. From the original "Life of Jesus" by the famous Strauss. With an introduction by G. W. Foote. A most thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Rev. Dr. McCann. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. From Adam to Paul. By G. W. Foote. Instructive, interesting, amusing, and honest; in fact, the *only* honest book on the subject. 200 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. By G. W. Foote. An Exhaustive Answer to Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.* 1s.; cloth edition, 1s. 6d.

Will Christ Save Us? By G. W. Foote. An Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. Contains much Historic Information on Slavery, the Position of Woman, General Social Progress, and the advance of Science and Freethought in opposition to Christian bigotry. 6d.

Darwin on God. By G. W. Foote. A full and minute account of Darwin's mental development, with a brief Memoir of his grandfather, the famous Erasmus Darwin; containing all the passages in Darwin's works, and in his *Life and Letters*, bearing directly or indirectly on the subject of religion. Every Freethinker should have and keep a copy of this important little volume. 6d.; cloth, 1s.

Footsteps of the Past. Valuable Essays in the Evolution of Religion and Ethics. By J. M. Wheeler. With a Preface by G. W. Foote. Cloth, 3s.

Infidel Death-Beds. By G. W. Foote. Second edition, revised and much enlarged. Contains authentic details of the last hours of sixty-two historic Freethinkers, and in most cases a sketch of their lives. Precise references given in every instance. 8d.; cloth, 1s. 3d.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. By G. W. Foote. A selection of the author's best satirical writings. *Contents:*—A Sermon on Summer—A Mad Sermon—A Sermon on Sin—A Bishop in the Workhouse—A Christmas Sermon—Christmas Eve in Heaven—Bishop Trimmer's Sunday Diary—The Judge and the Devil—Satan and Michael—The First Christmas—Adam's Breeches—The Fall of Eve—Joshua and Jericho—A Baby God—Judas Iscariot. 8d.

Defence of Freethought. By Colonel Ingersoll. A Grand Speech, occupying four hours in delivery, made in defence of Mr. Reynolds, who was prosecuted for Blasphemy in New Jersey. 6d.

Defence of Free Speech. By G. W. Foote. Three hours' address to the Jury in the Court of Queen's Bench before Lord Coleridge, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy on account of certain issues of the *Freethinker*. Carefully revised, with an important Preface and Footnotes. 4d.

Pagan Mythology; or, The Wisdom of the Ancients. By Lord Bacon. 1s.

Church of England Catechism Examined. A Masterly Work, which narrowly escaped prosecution. By Jeremy Bentham. 1s.

Utilitarianism. By Jeremy Bentham. 3d.

Free Will and Necessity. By Anthony Collins. Reprinted from 1715 edition, with Biography of Collins by J. M. Wheeler, and Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote. Huxley says that "Collins writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning." 1s.; superior edition, on superfine paper, cloth, 2s.

The Code of Nature. By Diderot and D'Holbach. 2d.

The Essence of Religion. God the Image of Man, Man's Dependence upon Nature the Last and Only Source of Religion. By Ludwig Feuerbach. "No one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach."—*Büchner.* 1s.

Crimes of Christianity. By G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authors. An unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

The Jewish Life of Christ. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. Edited, with an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes, by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 1s.

The Mortality of the Soul. By David Hume. Not included in ordinary editions of Hume's "Essays." 2d.

Liberty and Necessity. By David Hume. 4d.

Essays in Rationalism. By Charles Robert Newman, the Atheist brother of the late Cardinal Newman. With a Preface by G. J. Holyoake, and Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s. 6d.

The Rights of Man. By Thomas Paine. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; cloth edition, 2s.

Satires and Profanities. By James Thomson (B.V.). "As clever as they are often profane."—*Christian World.* 1s.

A Refutation of Deism. By Shelley. Really a Defence of Atheism. 4d.

Miscellaneous Theological Works. By Thomas Paine. All his writings on Religion except the *Age of Reason* 1s.

Theism or Atheism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. Well printed and neatly bound, 1s.

Bible and Beer. By G. W. Foote. Showing the absurdity of basing Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Careful, thorough, and accurate. Freethinkers should keep this pamphlet by them. 4d.

The Holy Bible. By Colonel Ingersoll. A Masterpiece of Popular Criticism; one of Ingersoll's greatest efforts. 6d.

The Coming Civilization. By Colonel Ingersoll. An Address delivered in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, Sunday, April 12, 1896, to a vast meeting of Members and Friends of the "Church Militant." 3d.

The Foundations of Faith. By Colonel Ingersoll. Contents:—The Old Testament—The New Testament—Jehovah—The Trinity—The Theological Christ—The "Scheme"—Belief—Conclusion. 3d.

LONDON: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

DECEMBER NO. NOW READY. *Second Edition.*

CONTENTS:—

Dress and Sex. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
The Liars; or, Marriage at the Criterion Theatre. By SAGITTARIUS.
The Poetry of the Passions. By HENRY SEYMOUR.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

May also be had of Robert Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Digitized by Google

MANUFACTURERS' REMNANTS.

TONS in WEIGHT at LESS than HALF PRICE.

For Fourteen Days Only.

We are making these wonderful Goods up into Parcels containing not less than 33 yards all Double Width. Sent to any address carriage paid for

21s.

Ladies' DRESS MATERIALS in every Conceivable Color and Design.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

SELLING RAPIDLY. *ORDER AT ONCE.*

THE AGNOSTIC ANNUAL: 1898.

(64 pages, price 6d., by post 7½d.)

Containing articles by Professor Goldwin Smith, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Edward Clodd, Miss Constance E. Plumptre, Mr. Joseph McCabe, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. Charles Watts, and many other well-known writers.

The best number yet issued.

London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"The principal feature of this lecture is the enthusiastic appreciation which thrills in every line. Sharp, vivid sentences, often eloquent, always forcible, are scattered in abundance. The lecturer has evidently adopted no conventional plan of treatment. He elucidates, as far as possible, the main characteristics of Shakespeare's genius, and quotes with an aptness that many might envy. This lecture is so different in style and matter from any known criticism or appreciation of Shakespeare that it is difficult to estimate its value with reference to the mass of literature about the great poet. It stands quite apart."—*Glasgow 'Weekly Citizen.'*

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.] [Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 52. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1897. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE GOOD OLD CROSS.

CAPTAIN JOHN HAWKINS, the first Englishman who engaged in the slave-trade, sailed in 1562 for Sierra Leone, where he captured three hundred negroes. These he sold handsomely at Hispaniola. In the following year he set sail with five vessels to play the part of a robber and murderer on a grander scale. Finding the natives at Cape Verd to be "of a nature very gentle and loving," he thought to kidnap a lot of them easily, but he was disappointed. Proceeding south to Rio Grande, he went every day on shore, burning and spoiling the villages, and carrying off many of the natives. These he sold in the Spanish American settlements, forcing the colonists to purchase them at his own price.

This slave-dealer was a very pious gentleman. He drew up a set of rules for his men, two of which were "Serve God daily," and "Love one another."

An incident like this shows the sort of connection that usually exists between religion and morality. When it comes to stealing, or any other profitable crime, particularly at the expense of the heathen, your Christian religionist knows how to combine piety with business, and the most beautiful sentiments with the most damnable practices.

The Christian nations are the greatest thieves, liars, and hypocrites on this planet—and John Bull is well to the front in the competition. All over the world they are stealing territory, partly for self-interest and partly for aggrandizement. It is not their plan to go with a straight, bold, blackguard face to the natives, and say: "We want your land, so let us have it, or we'll blow your brains out." That would be too rude, too un-Christian, and positively wicked. So they go to work in another way. They pick a quarrel with the natives about something or other—*anything* will do; then they draw up a document a mile long, proving the natives to be entirely wrong, perhaps perverse, treacherous, filthy, and in every way abominable; and then they appropriate the land they want, and always meant to have, in the name of Christianity and civilization. By and by the natives disappear, and the Christians who fill their places talk about the wicked savages who dwelt there before them, and how Providence swept them away to make room for better people.

Africa is nearly parcelled out already. The leading Christian powers have their "spheres of influence" duly recognised. That is to say, the thieves have agreed not to fight each other if it can be helped, but to let the natives be common spoil for the lot. And now the Christian powers are turning their attention to Asia. Away in the far East lies the huge land of China, with its four hundred million inhabitants—a quarter of the whole human race. But all its resources and all its population do not make China a great power. Her government is too feeble, her disdain of science too lofty, and her energy too unorganized. All this was demonstrated in her late war with Japan. What a fine chance, then, to steal some of her ports and strategic peninsulas! Really it is too good an opportunity to be missed, and the Christian powers see it in that light. China, indeed, lies helpless like a moribund whale, and the Christian powers like sharks are eating into her vitals.

One of these sharks is Germany—and the fact is really tragi-comical. Look at Germany on the map. She is hemmed in on every side: a land power, if ever there was one. And indeed she has an immense, well-trained army, which is required to keep down discontent at home as well as to protect the frontier. But the histrionic young Emperor has a passion for the sea, and an ambition to make Germany a naval power. She is already crushed by a colossal militarism, and a big naval burden is to be placed on top of that. But the Emperor's navy will never be much more than a toy navy. It could only ride the sea on sufferance. The moment England, for instance, meant real business in the way of hostility, she could send the German navy to the bottom as a sort of exercise before breakfast. However, it has not come to that yet, and we hope it never will. Prince Henry's magnificent squadron of two ships will not be molested by an English admiral on its way to the Chinese port which Emperor William has just "acquired."

The way that port was acquired is very simple. German missionaries, like ours, are advance agents for their own country. Two of them went to that part of China and got killed, for which they ought to be grateful, as martyrs are sure of heaven. But the Emperor made their death a pretext for plunder. China agreed, because she could not help herself, to pay a vast indemnity for these interlopers, to let the Germans have a cathedral built, to give Germany the practical possession of a fine port and a useful strip of land behind it. Of course the "integrity" of China is fully respected. That is one of the tricks of Christian diplomacy. The thief makes his victim say: "You did not steal it, I gave it to you; or rather, it is mine still, and I let you use it."

Well, the Emperor sends out his brother Henry to see to that Chinese port, and before he goes the Emperor makes a speech. It is a way he has. He can't help it. Nature meant him for a showman, and fate (in the form of the hereditary principle) has made him a sovereign. And in the course of this speech the Emperor says he will protect the good German missionaries who do not shrink from "risking their lives in order to carry our religion to foreign lands." First you force your missionaries on the foreigners, then you avenge them if they are injured, and you take care to make the retribution coincide with your own interest. And this is the international ethics of Christianity!

Cardinal Kopp and Archbishop Stablewski both telegraphed to the Emperor that his naval expedition to China was consecrated because it was for "the protection of the Cross." William replied that his brother was indeed going "in the service of the Fatherland and for the protection of the Cross"—a most judicious blend of bigotry and self-interest, though it may be doubted, after all, whether Christianity *is* the religion of Germany, since Prince Henry, in responding to the Emperor's rhodomontade, said that his one desire was "to proclaim and preach abroad [if necessary with ironclads] the gospel of your Majesty's consecrated person."

Oh, that good old Cross! In theory it means everything that is lovely and of good repute; in practice it means everything that is ugly and infamous. To the heathen all over the world the Cross stands for the greed, impudence, and cruelty of alien oppressors—of men who come with sublime sentiments on their lips, and death and destruction in their hands. Of course there is nothing new in Emperor William's policy. The Cross has always been a pirate's symbol. China found that before, and she is finding it again—just at Christmas time, the very season for studying the beauty of Christianity.

G. W. FOOTE.

Digitized by Google

CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

CHRISTMAS celebrates no irrepeatable thaumaturgy of a human child born of a virgin mother, but the regular annual miracle of the sun new born from winter's darkness, the lengthening of days and the renewal of nature in a glad new year. Picture, amid your splendid festivities, our ancestors huddled around a carefully replenished or extinguished fire, in the long gloomy nights of winter, with no other light, or none save a rush stuck into fat, with vegetation dead around, and the light and warmth of life seemingly overcome. With what joy would be hailed the evergreens as proof of the vitality of nature; and how the advent of the longer day would be acclaimed, even as the birth of a new child. This is the real meaning of Christmas, which perpetuates the customs of our ancestors centuries before Christianity was heard of. All nations in cold climates have a great festival at the New Year, whose nativity they celebrate with dance and song, both expressed by the old word, "Carol."

Carol seems derived from the old French *carole*, a ring-dance or fête song. The same word appears in the Italian *carolare*, to sing joyously. Baretti explains it as a dance accompanied by singing. In *Chaucer's Dreame* he says :—

> I saw her daunce so comely,
> Carol and sing so sweetly.

Gower speaks of "The love daunce and the carole." Dr. E. B. Tylor, our great anthropologist, uses the word in its old sense, when he speaks of "a party of girls who were turned into stone for dancing carols on a Sunday." Originally it had no other religious meaning than that of nature worship. As mentioned in *Footsteps of the Past*, the custom of gathering and decorating houses with evergreens, and especially with the holly and mistletoe, whose berries were held to preserve the blood and seed of life from year to year, prevailed long anterior to Christianity. Some early carols still extant were sung to the vegetation itself. Shakespeare preserves an old refrain in "Heighho! the Holly." In Christian Carols the evergreen is sometimes related to the new-born Lord of glory. Thus, in a holly carol, we read :—

> The holly bears a berry
> As red as any blood,
> And Mary bore sweet Jesus
> To do poor sinners good.
> The holly bears a prickle
> As sharp as any thorn,
> And Mary bore sweet Jesus
> On Christmas day in the morn.

The following was written near the reign of Henry II. :—

> I am here, Sir Christmas,
> Welcome my lord Sir Christmas,
> Welcome to all, both more and less,
> Come near Nowel!
>
> God be with you, Sir, tidings I bring,
> A maid hath borne a child full young
> The which causeth me to sing,
> Nowel!
>
> Christ is now born of a pure maid,
> In an ox-stall he is laid,
> Wherefore sing we all at abraid,
> Nowel!
>
> Drink you all right heartily,
> Make good cheer and be right merry,
> And sing with us now joyfully,
> Nowel!

One can see with half an eye that "Christ" is just as historical as "Sir Christmas" or the modern "Santa Claus." Here is another Anglo-Norman one, probably sung by wandering troubadors :—

> Lordings, listen to our lay;
> We have come from far away,
> To seek Yule.
> In this castle, we are told,
> He his yearly feast doth hold,
> This very day.
> Joy descend from God above,
> On all who our Yule-tide love.
>
> . . . .
>
> To English ale and Gascon wine,
> And French, doth Yule-tide much incline,
> And Anjou's too;
> He makes his neighbor freely drink,
> So that in sleep his head doth sink,
> Often by day.
> Joy descend, etc.
>
> Lords, by Yule-tide and the host
> Of this mansion, hear my toast—
> Drink it well—
> Each must drain his cup of wine,
> And I the first will toss of mine;
> Thus I advise.
> Here then I bid you all *Wassail*,
> Cursed be he who will not cry *Drinkhail* !*

Nowel is frequently used in the sense of news. Thus, in "Ane compendious booke of Godly and Spirituall Songs," we read :—

> I came from hevin to tell,
> The best nowellis that ever befell.

"A good old English Carol," given in *Poor Robin's Almanack*, 1695, has no semblance of religion save to those whose god is their belly. It begins :—

> Now thrice welcome Christmas, which brings us good cheer,
> Minced pies and plum porridge, good ale and strong beer;
> With pig, goose, and capon, the best that may be,
> So well doth the weather and our stomachs agree.

It continues in the same strain. Another and far older refrain was :—

> Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale;
> For our blyssed Lady sake, bring us in good ale.

Carols had little natural affinity to "the religion of sorrow." Tusser recommended :—

> Beef, mutton, and pork, shred pies of the best,
> Pig, veal, goose, and capon, and turkey well-dressed;
> Cheese, apples, and nuts, jolly carols to hear,
> As then in the country is counted good cheer.

One precious leaf of carols from the press of Wynkin de Worde, in 1521, contains two carols—"a Carol of Huntynge," and a carol bringing in "ye bore's head," which is still sung in Queen's College, Oxford, every Christmas. This is given in *Footsteps of the Past*. Though carols are now considered peculiarly Christian, like all else pertaining to the ancient festival, they take us back to ideas antecedent to Christianity. There is an appropriateness in considering the season of evergreen and the New Year as especially belonging to the young. And young or old, it is good for all to occasionally unbend and carol, and frolic with the children.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Printed by T. Wright, *Percy Society Carols*.

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS.

PERSONALLY, I wish the readers of this journal, one and all, "a merry Christmas." At this season of the year we strive to divorce ourselves from the cares and anxieties of our ordinary lives, and to realize thoroughly the associations of a happy family. The December saturnalia is a period—all too brief—when worries and troubles should give place to peace and rest. We certainly admire the wisdom of the Pagans in inaugurating this annual festival season, when the brotherhood of the human race is fully enjoyed. The lives of many of us are not too much illuminated with the sunshine of existence. The presence, therefore, of Old Father Christmas in our midst is ever welcome. His magic wand tends to awaken the social virtues of our nature, and to stimulate that sympathy and benevolence which do so much to "cast away dull care." Our gratification should not be merely selfish; but we should think of the comfort and enjoyment of others, and, so far as lies in our power, do what we can to make their relaxation as genuine and bright as possible. Let us by all means be merry; but let our conduct be such that when sitting by the Yule fire, or around the festive board, we shall be cheered by the consciousness that we have not been unmindful of those less fortunate than ourselves.

Our first thoughts at this happy season are that misery and poverty are still abroad to a terrible extent, and that we are not indebted to Christianity for its jovial associations. To us Christ, the Church, and the priests in no way add to the value of this time-honored observ-

Digitized by Google

ance. It is purely secular in it nature, and human in its influence:—

The bells ring out rejoicing. Loud and clear
The tones fall gratefully upon my ear,
Melodious voices mingling among—
The "waits" are carolling the Christmas song.

"A Merry Christmas!" passes glibly round,
And joy awaketh at the welcome sound.
But Misery, where is he on Christmas day—
The merry music drives not him away?
For him it brings no balm, exerts no charms,
He hugs his victims tighter in his arms;
And, while they feel the fierce pangs of want,
The cheerful greeting seems but mocking cant.

"A Merry Christmas!" laughter rings out aloud,
And prattling children round the fire crowd,
And games go round, and fairy tales are told,
And childish sports engage both young and old.
Mirth rules supreme in many an English home;
But how fare England's poor who houseless roam?
How fare those children, hungry and ill-clad,
Out in the bitter cold? Do they feel glad?

"A Merry Christmas!" wherefore merry say?
The snow is deep, the frost bites keen to-day.
And thousands have not where to lay their head;
Thousands are famishing for want of bread.
These suffering wretches for compassion crave;
Let Christ save them, if he has power to save.

These Christmas revels I do not condemn;
I wish that millions more took part in them,
And that each Englishman had his share
In the solid blessing of Christmas fare.

But that "our Savior" on this day was born—
That idle tale I laugh to utter scorn.
If Christ has paid the price for man's salvation,
Whence all this evil, poverty, starvation?
In worlds to come we cannot hope for bliss
From one who winks at misery in this.

Leave priests of Christ, prayer, penitence, to rave;
Let wise men teach mankind themselves to save;
And, when each breast with manly fervor swells,
Chant higher, singers; louder chime, ye bells.

It may not be unprofitable to us, as Secularists, to reflect upon some of the erroneous notions which professed Christians have formed in reference to Christmas and its associations. Apart from the fact that there is no evidence that Christ was born on December 25, but much to the contrary, the Church goes through the farce annually of celebrating this date as the natal day of the "Prince of Peace," who is said to have brought "on earth peace, goodwill towards men." What bitter sarcasm it is for this declaration to be proclaimed from the various pulpits when Europe presents one huge spectacle of military and naval preparation for war, and when the followers of this "Prince of Peace" are carrying fire and sword among those whose only offence is that they desire to have as little as possible to do with their Christian mis-rulers. Lecky truly writes: "When all qualifications have been fully admitted, the broad fact will remain that, with the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of Christendom during several centuries. The military fanaticism they evoked by the indulgence of the popes, by the ceaseless exhortations of the pulpit, by the religious importance that was attached to the relics at Jerusalem, and by the extreme antipathy they fostered towards all who differed from their theology, has scarcely ever been equalled in its intensity, and it has caused the effusion of oceans of blood, and has been productive of incalculable misery to the world." The warlike fever now raging in "Christian" nations is a sad and humiliating comment upon the mission of the "Prince of Peace."

That mission, however, has been a complete failure in other respects. The Church of the Cross is rapidly losing its hold upon the masses, who have become awakened to its false and useless pretensions. This fact is sorrowfully admitted by the warmest supporters of the Church. In an article on "Our Home Heathen," the *Rock* of Dec. 10 says: "When we consider how small and decreasing is the proportion of those in this land who attend a place of worship even once of a Sunday; when we further recognise how true was the Master's striking warning that wheat and tares would grow mingled in the professing Church, so that it is not at all uncharitable to assume that by no means all those who attend church or chapel are really converted, it sometimes fills us with indignation, not unmixed with terror, to contemplate the practical indifference with which even ministers of Christ regard this awful state of things. It is impossible that true Christians can realize what all this means. In this England of ours, at the end of this century, so marked by advance in all directions, there are millions upon millions as utterly unsaved as the wildest savage roaming the forests of Africa. When the joy-bells shall ring out their glad Christmas peals, they will be answered by shouts of unhallowed mirth, and sounds of God-dishonoring revelry, for millions of our countrymen are living without God in the world." The Rev. Moncur Sime, the minister of Holloway Congregational Church, London, is equally as emphatic upon the subject. In a sermon he has just published he states: "It can hardly be questioned that the Church, taking it all-in-all, is losing much of its wonted power, not only over the more intellectual of the people, but over the masses as well. The Church is no longer a terror to the thoughtless, nor is it a centre of real worship to those who are sincerely religious. A formal attachment to some church, for the sake of being counted respectable, or for some equally unworthy reason, is maintained by a good many people; but multitudes of all classes—the educated, the intelligent artizans, those sunk in misery and all evil—stand without the Church, and are wholly uninfluenced by it.....We still see an imperfect and restless humanity, selfish, fiercely struggling for the rewards of life, crowding the weakest to the wall. Sorrow and sin are thick around us. People have left the Churches because professing Christians and regular church-goers have failed to do the work for which the Church of Christ exists. What are the Churches really doing in the solution of the great questions of the day? How far are the members of the Church, as such, in touch with the highest expectations of the times? True, in a feeble sort of way, the Churches profess to try to make the world better; but what abiding success has there been? How much is the Church, as a Church, doing for the oppressed and the fallen? What is it doing to improve the tone of society, to check the madness of fashion, and to put down the worship of the great god—'Money'?"

If Christ were born as alleged, and lived as he is said to have done, the misery, starvation, and injustice by which we are surrounded are standing rebukes to the claims urged on his behalf. The condition of our poor, their physical and mental suffering, and the hardships imposed upon them, supply topics for serious thoughts at this festive season. We have a royal family revelling in wealth obtained from the people; we have an aristocracy living in luxury, which is not the production of their own labor; we have bishops and archbishops preaching "Blessed be ye poor," and receiving an annual income of from £5,000 to £15,000; and in the midst of all this wealth, extravagance, and injustice, we have thousands of those who are compelled to toil night and day to pay for this misappropriation of the nation's money; starving, broken down in health and spirits through the want of the common necessities of life. These unfortunate victims of a world which is said to be governed by the influence of the Cross, wake every morning tortured with anxiety as to how they are to obtain food and fire through the day, and when night arrives they know not where to lay their heads. Let those who have amassed wealth, and who "toil not," ponder over the following facts, which are taken from the *New Age* of December 9, and then try to remember and to do their duty to the poor: "It must be that English men and women do not know; they would never be so cruel as they must be if they did know of the human beings near them, and allowed them to live on as they do. A new inquiry has just been made by the Women's Industrial Council into the condition of about four hundred London women who earn money by working at home. A writer in a contemporary summarizes the inquiry thus: 'Of these four hundred women, taken as they came, without special selection, about nine-tenths were found to belong to sixteen different regular small trades—viz., brushes, umbrellas, matchboxes, beads, sacks, tailoring, shirt-making, fur-pulling, etc. Of these the umbrella-makers earn the most—from 2s. 6d. or 3s. a day to 5s. a week, while deductions run to 9d. a week. At the lowest end of the scale come the fur-pullers—a deplorable tribe. No woman takes to this who is fit for anything else, and

Digitized by Google

those who are driven to it by necessity are anxious to conceal the fact from the prying eyes of the world. These women live in the utmost poverty and filth, in the back kitchens and attics of tenement dwellings in noisome courts and alleys. They work, eat, and sleep in an atmosphere thick with impalpable hairs and tainted with the sickly smell of the skins. They earn about 1s. 1d. a day, and 4d. a week must be deducted for knives, etc. There is little difference in their condition or circumstances; all have sunk to the lowest depth of squalor and misery. They suffer from chronic asthma, and of course the rate of infant mortality is high.'" A sad object-lesson this in "Christian England" two thousand years after the alleged erection of the Cross!

One would suppose that, at this "merry Christmas" time, to shed a ray of the sunshine of happiness into the abodes of such gloom and misery as are here depicted would be deemed a laudable act. But it is evident the Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York, thinks otherwise. This "miserable sinner" would keep others as miserable as himself. For, in proposing to have Christmas Day free from the idea of Santa Claus, he says: "It is a day sacred to the Lord, and there is no reason why any secular idea should be mingled with it. Children will gladly absorb the religious lessons of the day if their minds are not distracted by this notion of Santa Claus bringing gifts, which could as well be given at some other time, if it be really necessary that they should be given at all." We entirely agree with the editor of the *Christian World*, who, in his issue of December 16, writes in reference to the above paragraph thus: "We doubt whether Santa Claus will be frightened away by this deliverance. Christmas was a festival before Christianity came in, and the mirth-making —shall we say the Pagan element of it?—got into the race so deep and so early that it will take a great deal more than the fulminations of the stalwart New York Presbyterian to dislodge it."

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

XVI.—THE STORY OF THE ARREST OF CHRIST.

THERE is, as has been shown, presumptive evidence that the Gospel accounts of the ministry, arrest, and trial of Christ are, as matters of history, in all probability fictitious. But when we come to examine and compare these accounts, we find in them so many contradictions, discrepancies, and manifest absurdities that this conclusion soon becomes the only rational one possible. In order that this fact may be clearly recognised, I will now briefly refer to some of the circumstances of the character named.

(1) We are told in the three Synoptical Gospels that on the evening of "the first day of unleavened bread" Jesus sat down with his apostles to "eat the passover" (Matt. xxvi. 17–20; Mark xiv. 12, 17; Luke xxii. 7, 15). Yet, though this is stated as plainly as words can express, the author of the Fourth Gospel says that this meal was eaten "before the feast of the passover" (xiii. 1, 2, 29), and, presumably, the day preceding the commencement of that festival (xviii. 28; xix. 31). We have thus at the outset two statements completely at variance both as to the night on which Christ is said to have been arrested, and also the day on which he is stated to have been crucified. The Fourth evangelist further represents Jesus, on the same evening, as washing the disciples' feet, and as uttering a long, rambling discourse, extending over five chapters (xiii.–xvii.), neither of which circumstances appears to have been known to the other evangelists.

(2) The last supper over, Jesus, it is said, led the disciples into "an enclosed piece of ground," or garden called Gethsemane, where he "began to be sorrowful and sore troubled." Though he is stated to have come into this world for the express purpose of being put to death to save a few persons whom "the Father" permitted to believe on him, he is represented as praying three times to this Father to "let this cup pass from him," and to save him from the suffering of the cross. Bible commentators explain this extraordinary display of cowardice by asserting that Christ was then bearing the burden of the sins and sorrows of the whole human race—a statement too silly for serious consideration. So great was Christ's agony at the prospect of death that, according to Luke, "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (xxii. 44). In considering the latter statement, it has to be borne in mind that the night was dark (John xviii. 3), and Jesus was removed about a stone's throw from the disciples (Luke xxii. 41), and also that Luke, the only evangelist that mentions the circumstance, lived in post-apostolic times. This veracious evangelist adds, further, that "there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." Matthew, Mark, and John, two of whom are said to have been present, know nothing of this angel. We may therefore put down the incident as one of Luke's little fabrications.

In the Fourth Gospel there is no agony in the garden, and Christ does not pray to have "this cup" taken from him. On the contrary, his question to Peter—"The cup which my Father hath given me, *shall I not drink it?*" (xviii. 11)—implies that it never even entered his head to make such a prayer.

(3) Christ's prayers over, the traitor Judas entered leading "a great multitude with swords and staves from the chief priests and elders of the people." This fact we learn from Matthew and Mark. Luke, however, says that the chief priests and elders came *in person*, and that Jesus spoke to them and reproached them (xxii. 52). Upon one point only do the Synoptists agree—viz., that the people who came to apprehend Christ were Jews.

But even this small agreement is marred by the author of the Fourth Gospel, who represents Judas as accompanied not only by the emissaries of the Sanhedrim, but by a band of Roman soldiers (cohort) commanded by a Chiliarch (xviii. 3, 12). It would thus seem that Pilate, who neglected to arrest Jesus openly when, some days before, that personage rode into Jerusalem at the head of a shouting multitude, and set the whole city in an uproar—when, in fact, it was his duty as procurator to have done so—now entered into a league with the chief priests to apprehend Christ secretly—a fact unknown to the three Synoptical writers.

(4) According to the First and Second Gospels, the traitor Judas, upon entering the garden with his band, "came to Jesus, and said, Hail Rabbi, and kissed him much" (Matt. xxvi. 49, etc.); but, if we believe Luke, this treacherous disciple only "drew near unto Jesus *to kiss him*. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" From this it would appear that the kiss was not given. According to the Fourth Gospel, however, Judas neither kissed Christ, nor attempted to do so; for, as soon as the band appeared, Jesus "went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus the Nazarite. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also which betrayed him *was standing with them*" (xviii. 4–6). This writer also says that at the words, "I am he," the officers "went backward and fell to the ground"—a display of supernatural power also unknown to the Synoptists.

The story of the betrayal by Judas is, of course, fictitious. Paul knew nothing of such an event, nor did the author of the Gospel of Peter. The latter says: "But we, the *twelve* Apostles of the Lord, wept and lamented," etc. If the priests and elders desired to take Jesus, who is said to have taught daily in the temple, they had but to order some of their servants to follow him. Judas was probably introduced in order to fulfil alleged prophecies, which can be shown to have been manufactured like the others we have noticed.

(5) The first three evangelists tell us that "one of them that stood by drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and *struck off* his ear" (Mark xiv. 47, etc.). None of these three writers appears to have known who struck the blow. The author of the Fourth Gospel, however, fills in the names. It was Simon Peter who "cut off" the ear, and "the servant's name was Malchus." It was allowable to invent facts when writing Gospel history, especially at a time when no one was alive to expose the fraud. This is proved by the number of apocryphal Gospels that were written. Such was the opinion of the Fourth evangelist, and such was also the opinion of Luke, for the latter adds a short sentence which damns the whole story. He says that Jesus "touched his ear and healed him" (xxii. 51). The ear had been "struck off" and "cut off," and, of course, lay among the cabbages; consequently, when Jesus touched the stump on the man's head, we are to suppose that a new ear sprouted out like a mushroom. Had Jesus picked up the ear, and, following his usual

Digitized by Google

custom, spat on it, and then stuck it on the stump, the story might, perhaps, not be so outrageously incredible; but for a new ear to grow out of a man's head—such a marvellous fact must be left to the unwavering faith of the Christian Evidence man, who believes every statement found between the two covers of the New Testament.

(6) According to Matthew's account, Jesus, when arrested, declared to his captors that he had but to pray to his "Father" to receive the assistance of "twelve legions of angels"; but, he said, had he taken this means of deliverance, "How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that *thus it must be?*" (xxvi. 53). This question clearly implies that in the Jewish "scriptures" it was predicted that the Messiah, when he came, should be put to death by the Jews. This is another of Matthew's pious misrepresentations; there is no such prediction in any part of the Old Testament. Further, the statement respecting "twelve legions of angels" must be set down as braggadocio; for, judging by the effect of Christ's prayer, three times repeated, to let the cup pass from him, the "Father" would not have sent him a single angel for that or for any other purpose.

(7) According to the three Synoptical Gospels, the disciples, as soon as they saw their Master arrested, "all forsook him and fled" (Matthew xxvi. 56, etc.). According to the Fourth Gospel, however, they stood their ground, and Jesus said to his captors: "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way" (xviii. 8); and the officers, apparently, yielded to this request, and let them go. Being in "an enclosed piece of ground," they could not well have escaped otherwise.

(8) In the Fourth Gospel it is stated that Christ's captors "led him to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was high priest that year" (xviii. 13). The writer then says that Simon Peter entered "into the court of the high priest" during the examination of Jesus. Here Peter, standing by the fire, denied his Master, and here the cock crew. Here, also, Annas, who is called "the high priest," interrogated Jesus; and, the examination over, "Annas sent him bound unto Caiaphas, the high priest"; but Caiaphas, having nothing to say to him, sent him on to Pilate (xviii. 24, 28). The writer evidently thought that Annas and Caiaphas were both high priests at the same time, as did also Luke (iii. 2). As a matter of history, Annas was high priest A.D. 7–15, and Caiaphas A.D. 25–36. Between the two the office was filled by Ismael, Eleazar, and Simon.

In the three Synoptical Gospels Jesus is not taken to the house of Annas at all. According to Matthew and Mark, the emissaries of the Sanhedrim "led him away to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were gathered together," and the examination was held there and then. It was in the house of Caiaphas that Jesus was questioned by the high priest; there it was that Simon Peter warmed himself before the fire, and denied his Lord and Master; there, also, the cock crew, proclaiming the break of day. Then, "when morning was come," the chief priests and elders "led him away and delivered him up to Pilate the governor" (Matthew xxvii. 1, 2).

We have thus two utterly conflicting accounts of the examination of Jesus by the high priest, one being represented as held in the house of Annas, and the other in that of Caiaphas—Peter warming himself and denying his Master, and hearing the cock crow, being the central figure in each. One of these accounts must, of course, be rejected. But when we turn to the Third Gospel we find a fresh contradiction. According to Matthew, Mark, and John, the examination before the Sanhedrim was held at night, and Peter denied his Lord while this was going on. But in Luke's version the priests and elders assembled "as soon as it was day" (xxii. 66), and Christ, who had been in custody all night, was then brought before them and interrogated. When the examination was concluded, "the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate." In this account Peter had to deny his Master before the examination commenced, so as to get it over before the cock crew at dawn.

(9) The contradictions do not, however, end here. In the three Synoptical Gospels Peter is the only one of the disciples who had followed Jesus into the high priest's house; in the Fourth Gospel, Peter is accompanied by "another disciple," who is stated to have been "known unto the high priest," whose influence with the doorkeeper caused Peter to be admitted (xviii. 15). The Synoptists, beyond a doubt, knew nothing of this other disciple, nor is there a single sentence in any of their Gospels which even hints that one of Christ's disciples was a friend of the high priest. There are also several discrepancies in the four versions of Peter's three denials, which I pass over.

But that even one of the disciples was present at the alleged trial of Jesus is disproved by the Gospel of Peter, in which the last-named apostle says:—

> "But I mourned with my companions, and with our hearts pierced through we hid ourselves, for we were being sought for by them as evil-doers."

It will thus be seen that there is scarcely a single statement in any one of the four inspired accounts of the arrest of Christ which is not contradicted in one or more of the other inspired accounts. ABRACADABRA.

BIBLE BOSH; OR, JINGLES OF CHRISTIAN NONSENSE.

THERE once was a party called God,
Whose number and gender were odd;
4000 B.C.,
He, it, they, or she
Was made, but is now 'neath the sod.

There once was a woman who wouldn't
But covet the things that she shouldn't;
When the fruit she did thieve,
She'd have "laughed in her sleeve,"
But, being stark naked, she couldn't.

There was a young woman named Mary,
A wide-awake woman, and wary;
The mate of a pigeon,
A ghost, or pigwidgeon;
By left-handed marriage, a fairy.

Soon after her *liaison* loose,
She tied the legitimate noose
With Carpenter Joe,
A goose of a beau,
Who couldn't say "bo! to a goose."

There once was a Jewish young nipper,
A cousin of Johnny-the-Dipper,
A brother of James,
A darling of dames,
And son of Jehovah-the-Ripper.

This advertised hybrid of Mary—
A cross 'twixt a flirt and a fairy—
At Cana, made sherry
For folk that were merry;
At Cana, they called it *Canary*.

He labored to consecrate fighting,
Yet spouted to deprecate smiting;
"On *earth*, bank no cash, said he,"
While banking his own at *sea*,
In some sort of haddock or whiting.

A "wandering" human hotel
Was lodging a legion, pell-mell,
Which Jesus arointed,
And sent, disappointed,
By sea, *via* porkers, to Hell.

He walked on the Sea, as on ground,
And frightened the billows around;
'Twas a pretty good sign
This corrupter of swine
Had never been "born to be drowned."

This goody young man of Judea
Dispensed a divine panacea,
For sin and for pimples;
'Twas pray'r, without simples,
Or aught from the pharmacopœia.

There once was the son of a ghost,
Whom godly men pinned to a post;
I don't say it's true,
But priests say that you
Have all to believe it—or roast!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Digitized by Google

WHO WAS JEHOVAH?

THE fundamental assumption running through all religions is that power not ourselves manifested around us is power like ourselves. This anthropomorphism is clearly seen in the Bible representation of Jehovah, who is a revengeful and barbarous Jew. Nonetheless, there seems to have been an early philosophy lying behind the conception, and this seems to me to have been expressed in the phrase, "I am that I am." The first philosophical abstraction of the Semitic conception of a power above, and ruling over the world, seems to have been that of vague Time, the enduring, that which was before we were born, and lasts when we are gone. This conception was embodied in the Kronos of the Syrians and Greeks, and the Saturn of the Latins, with whom affinities to Jehovah the Eternal have been pointed out. This Eternal was by no means Matthew Arnold's Eternal that makes for righteousness, but rather, like the Shiva of the Hindus, the enduring one that destroys all alike. "Our God," says Deut. iv. 24, "is a consuming fire," and fire was certainly one of his emblems. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush, led the Jews in their wanderings as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, Nadab and Abihu, Korah and his followers, the fifties sent to apprehend Elijah, by fire, and took the latter prophet in a whirlwind with horses and chariots of fire. He appeared as fire in sacrifices, the fat being specially dedicated to Jehovah. Elijah says, "The God that answered by fire let him be God" (1 Kings xviii. 24). Isaiah, too, tells us that he will come with fire (lxvi. 15, 16), and Paul has the same idea when he says that Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God (2 Thess. i. 8). No doubt fire and light were early objects of human regard, and both sun and moon worship were probably gathered up in the worship of Jehovah. Some have found in Yahu a variant of the Aryan sky-god Dyau, or Ziu.

There is a curious story in Sanchoniatho, who preserved the Syrian traditions, which brings Kronos into line with Jehovah, or perhaps with Abraham. Sanchoniatho, as preserved by Philo Byblius, says that, there being a pestilence, Kronos, whom the Phœnicians call Israel, offered up his only son Jeoud, clad in a royal robe, as a burnt-offering to heaven (Uranus). The story reminds us at once of the legend of Abraham and Isaac, and of the Christian myth of the offering of Christ. Whether the word Jehovah actually means "the Eternal," or "that which causes to be," I must leave to the philologists.

MAHERSHALALHASHBAZ.

CREMATION AND THE CLERGY.

DESPITE a few exceptions, there is no doubt that the weight of our spiritual pastors and masters is put in the balance against the sanitary method of disposing of the dead by incineration. With the Pope, who has authoritatively denounced the practice as non-Christian, they feel it to be heathenish and calculated to destroy the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh. Of course, in reality that dogma is so nonsensical that nothing can add to the superfluity of its absurdity. Only a miracle could get the body together again, whatever its manner of disposal; but the evident reduction of it to ashes would bring this home, as the laying of a corpse in a coffin never can. This is no real reason either for or against the practice. The one question which should determine it is the health of the living. But here the interests of the clericals step in. For burial in consecrated earth they have fees. A crematorium would take away this source of revenue, and they naturally dislike the idea as much as they do that of civil marriage. Priestcraft lives by having its fingers in every man's pie at births, marriages, and deaths, and those who wish to kill priestcraft should see that it does not get its hand in on any occasion.

A. J. NAIGEON.

A few hundred years ago the ancestors of the English-speaking nations were as savage as the savagest; without temples to their gods, in perpetual and bloody war, untamed cannibals; add a few thousand years to the perspective, and man over the whole globe was in the same condition.—*D. G. Brinton.*

ACID DROPS.

COUNT LEO TOLSTOI contributes a long letter "On Marriage" to Mr. Fletcher's *New Age*. It is important as coming from a writer of Tolstoi's eminence, though it contains nothing new, being, in fact, a repetition of the principles and arguments set for by him a few years ago in the *Universal Magazine*. But, although not new in substance, it is new in presentation, and we shall deal with it in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile we have simply to say that when Mr. Fletcher regrets that Count Tolstoi "fails to comprehend the Christian idea of marriage," he is only saying precisely what Count Tolstoi would say of *him*. And the worst of it is that Jesus Christ, on whom they both rely, is dead and incapable of deciding which of them understands him.

"Falling in love, and union with the object of one's love (however verse or prose may seek to prove the opposite), never facilitates, but always impedes, the attainment of an aim worthy of man," is the latest utterance of the Christian, Anarchist, Russian Court. Well, Tennyson, who lived a blameless life, perhaps knew as much on the matter as Tolstoi, for he says:—

> Indeed, I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.

Tolstoi can, and does, cite Jesus Christ in favor of the eunuch's view of life. But this is a subject upon which eunuch's views do not count. They simply leave the world to be peopled by those of a different belief.

Poor Price Hughes has been at it again. We mean that he has once more been displaying his constitutional inaccuracy. In denying the progress of Catholicism in the United Kingdom he pointed out that in 1841 there were 6,958,737 Catholics, while in 1891 there were only 5,047,307, showing a decrease of 1,911,430 in fifty years. This is true enough, but poor Price Hughes forgot the depopulation of Catholic Ireland to the extent of nearly three millions and a half. Allowing for this shrinkage, the Catholics *have* increased relatively. Further, the emigrants from Ireland took their Catholicism with them to America and the Colonies, and there are now a million Catholics in Australia and ten millions in the United States. Evidently the great Wesleyan oracle has studied the Bible too exclusively. We all know that arithmetic is not its strong point.

In Spurgeon's *Autobiography* the great preacher relates his childish wonder at an apple in a phial almost as big as the bottle. At length he saw a phial put on a tree round a very small apple. He makes the reflection, "Nature well known no prodigies remain." He did not venture to apply the thought to Bible miracles. On the contrary, he appreciated mere superstitious reverence of the fetish book, and tells of one of "the old men of the table-pew" who, when near death, was seen counting the leaves of a Bible, and who, being asked why he did that, replied: "I never could read a word of it, but I thought I would know how many leaves there were."

Spurgeon mentions that, in Cambridgeshire, in 1865, a murder was committed which grew out of the popular belief in witchcraft. But he does not notice the Bible sanction of "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii. 18). Spurgeon had the old belief that he would have a happy day if he selected a good text in the morning—a remnant of the belief in Bibliomancy.

Spurgeon says: "In my first pastorate I had often to battle with Antinomians—that is, people who held that, because they believed themselves to be elect, they might live as they liked. I hope that heresy has to a great extent died out, but it was sadly prevalent in their early ministerial days." It is prevalent yet with people who believe that their salvation is sure, or who believe that they are the elect and have God in them. Does not Paul say, "We are delivered from the law," and "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

The great Baptist preacher ridiculed the ecclesiastical twang affected in the Establishment, which he described as "a sort of steeple in the throat grandeur," and illustrated it by the phrase, "He that hath yaws to yaw, let him yaw."

The Catholic Church is slowly climbing to supremacy. The Vatican confirms the report that the Duke of Norfolk has approached Lord Salisbury with the view of obtaining the admission of Cardinal Vaughan to the House of Lords. It may be pleaded that Vaughan has quite as much right

Digitized by Google

there as the bishops. The admission of the Cardinal will be hailed with delight by those who desire the renewal of a certain measure which was passed by the House of Commons on March 19, 1648.

It is not in the least likely that the claim of the Duke of Norfolk will receive any serious consideration from Lord Salisbury. It would make too good a precedent for the admission of other non-Anglicans. We might have Dr. Parker and Ananias Hughes aspiring to a peerage as representative divines.

Mr. F. C. Selous has become an honorary member of the Guildford Natural History Society, which is specially interesting itself in securing Wolmer Forest as a sanctuary for wild birds and animals. In notifying his acceptance, Mr. Selous claims never to have destroyed life wantonly. We were pleased to read this, for Mr. Selous is a Freethinker who has a great reputation as a hunter. But, to the eye of common sense, there is a vast difference between hunting lions in Africa and hunting tame deer in Windsor Park.

One of the gift-books of the season is *An Almanack of Twelve Sports*, heavy drawings by W. Nicolson, and verses by Rudyard Kipling. One of the latter must be quoted :—

SHOOTING.

Peace upon Earth ! Goodwill to Men !
So greet we Christmas Day ;
O Christian, load your gun ; and then,
O Christian, out and slay !

We regret to note that the Glasgow Corporation have decided not to open the People's Palace on Glasgow Green on Sunday. Evidently a good deal of work has yet to be done in godly Glasgow. Seventeen University professors, as well as the Trades Council, petitioned in favor of the measure ; but cant and bigotry proved stronger than the claims of intellect and labor. The *Glasgow Herald* says "the majority may rest assured that time is against them. The triumph of unreasoning panic, of ignorance, and of clerical trade unionism is but a temporary one."

The men of God all cite the commandment, "Remember the seventh day to keep it holy"; yet they dare not defend the legend on which the law was founded, and, instead of keeping the seventh day, when God is said to have rested, they keep the first, on which he began to work.

Father Brady, in a recent sermon, said : "It is well to remind the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all other Christians outside of the pale of Mother Church, that the Bible, the only authority which they recognise in matters of religion, does not support them anywhere in the observance of the Christian day—namely, Sunday. For them to call Sunday the Sabbath, and speak of 'Sabbath-school,' is arrant nonsense. The Seventh-day Baptists are the only ones who properly employ the term Sabbath, because they also observe the seventh, and not the first day of the week, as the day of rest."

That is so. The only authority on which the change to the day of the sun was made is the authority on which Roman Catholics rest prayers for the dead, purgatory, and all the other dogmas which Protestants repudiate.

Among the good things uttered by Sir Frank Lockwood, whose death is being mourned by a large circle of friends and admirers, was his reference to the talk of dissolution towards the close of the last Liberal administration. It is so good that we give it *in extenso* :—"I was cast down when my honorable and learned friend, Mr. Haldane, like one of the weird sisters of Macbeth preaching on some blasted Scottish heath—(laughter)—announced that the day of dissolution was at hand. I don't know whence he owed that strange intelligence, but this speech, if it did not reassure me, I think it did not reassure the party. I remember in a North of England country town there was a prophet—not a racing prophet (there are plenty of them there)—but a real prophet—(laughter)—a sort of man who foretells the end of the world once a week. (Laughter.) Nobody believed him—you could not believe a man who was regularly wrong once a week—but a local coal merchant told me that the number of persons getting in coal by the sacks was phenomenal. It was not because they expected the world was coming to an end, but it would not be well to be left, when it did come, with a stock of coal on hand. (Laughter.) It might be used, possibly, against you. (Loud laughter.)"

The Rev. Dr. Minot Savage, the Broad Unitarian minister in the Church of the Messiah, Thirty-Fourth-street, New York, has been exposing the alleged Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, which, he says, are based, not on truth, but such disproved doctrines as that of the fall of man. He said : "Every one of these Creeds sprang out of a theory of the universe that nobody any longer holds. They are Ptolemaic in their origin, not Copernican. They sprang out of a time when it was believed that this was a little tiny world, and God was outside of it, governing it by the arbitrary imposition of his law. Every one of those Creeds is fitted to that theory of things, and that theory of things has passed away absolutely and forever. Consider for just a moment. Why should we pay such extravagant deference to the opinions of men who lived in the dark ages of the old Church Fathers, of Athanasius, of Arius, of Justin Martyr, of Origen, of Tertullian ?" Dr. Savage might have mentioned that the evidence for the Gospels depended on these same old Fathers.

Dr. Savage has also been arraigning the Old Testament, endorsing the opinion of Professor Goldwin Smith, that the old Jewish books are the millstone around the neck of Christianity. On this point he has been taken to task by Rabbi Maurice Harris, and we confess we think the Jew gets the best of it. The Rabbi says : "The New Testament is largely made up of quotations from the Old. These quotations are not incidental, but vital. They are the Messianic references on which the whole creed is built, and from which the life of Jesus is partly modelled. To cut the Old Testament from the New is to cut the heart from a human being and bid him go on living."

A writer on "The Mystery of Life" in the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* remarks : "It is well known that seeds, when kept in a dry place, are capable of retaining their germinative powers for an indefinite period. The popular idea of the state of the seed during this period of quiescence has been considerably influenced by an unscientific remark in the Gospel according to St. John : 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' With the theological parallel which the writer sees fit to draw we have nothing to do here ; but it is evident to every student of botany that he was not sufficiently inspired to overcome his ignorance of the real state of the case. Inert as the seed seems to be when it is stored in the granary, there are slow chemical changes going on within it, which are evidences of a low state of vitality. They are conservative changes, not the destructive changes which, under the circumstances, would follow death."

An old man in tatters, named John Winter, and his son, Kennett Kerr Winter, were charged at Highgate with sleeping in a field. The elder accused said that "he was guided absolutely at every step as a child would be guided by the hand of its parents, by the Father above from the other side." This is just what Jesus enjoined, but the magistrate said he thought the man was a lunatic, and ordered him to be remanded for medical examination.

A person writes from Nottingham to *Reynolds's Newspaper* : "Religion in most cases is £ s. d. Having been an officer in the Salvation Army five years, my experience was that the most successful officer in the eyes of headquarters was he whose finances increased at each corps he commanded, and the one soonest kicked out was the worst beggar. I also went into training for the Church Army Labor Homes. Their system, if anything, was worse. Briefly it is this : Make those you are trying or professing to raise work like slaves ; feed them on scraps or any refuse you can get. The captain is allowed from 2s. 6d. to 3s. weekly to keep each inmate. Where do the subscriptions go ?"

Worldliness of some sort seems to have infected the Council of the Glasgow Young Men's Christian Association, who have decided, by forty votes to twenty, to attach a smoking room to the institution. No mention is made of the matter in their report, it being probably thought that the action of the Council would be resented by some subscribers.

The *Church Times* says : "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, advertised songs and solos, popular preachers billed far and wide, women speakers, the thousand and one inducements held out to people that they may come and get some enjoyment in the name of religion, all seem to us to put a place of worship on a level with a dry-goods shop, which nobody will patronize without constant advertising. This is especially rich, coming from the organ of the Church party that relies on lights, flowers, music, gorgeous vestments, and tinsel generally.

H. L. Gordon's book on *Sir James Young Simpson and Chloroform* shows how the discovery of that anæsthetic was decried by the clergy, the Kirk elders, and the unco guid generally. The Tories of the profession, bless them, argued that pain at childbirth was "a desirable, salutary, and conservative manifestation of life force." The Holy Willies quoted from Genesis the primæval curse upon womanhood. The incident reminds the *Daily News* of that passage in *Old Mortality* wherein Headrigg remonstrates with Lady Bellenden for her introduction of a winnowing machine

Digitized by Google

"thus impiously thwarting the will of divine Providence by raising a wind for your leddyship's ain particular use by human art, instead of soliciting it by prayer, or waiting patiently for whatever dispensation of wind Providence was pleased to send upon the sheeling hill."

"Hang Theology Rogers," whose portrait has just been presented by Lord Rosebery to the London Court of Common Council, made a neat retort to Lord Granville at a dinner of the City Liberal Club. Her Majesty's minister said: "I will now call upon the Reverend Canon Rogers to say grace." "I beg to state that I am not yet a canon of the Church of England. For what we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful."

Squabbles in connection with the Congregational Church, Coytesville, New Jersey, resulted in the arrest of the pastor, the Rev. Solomon Brown, and two of the trustees.

The Rev. Father Dolje, former rector of the Roman Catholic Church at Abilene, Texas, was arrested at Thurber in that State, his present home, on a complaint sworn out before United States Commissioner Girand, charging him with writing and mailing obscene, lewd, and lascivious letters to the wife of Patrick H. Grady, of the first-mentioned town.

The Rev. W. T. Veale, a Presbyterian clergyman, committed suicide by shooting himself in his room at the Hollenbeck Hotel, Los Angeles, California.

The *Lyttelton Times*, of New Zealand, reports the case of a well-known Evangelist there, one Richard Henry Keast, who is charged with forgery by a person he intended to make his father-in-law.

The *Indian Journal of Education* reports some recondite answers from would-be B.A. natives. Thus the allusion to Noah in Moore's *Paradise and the Peri* was thus elucidated: "Noah was in his ark. He sent first rabbit, then dove, to see whether the God's anger has been appeased. The dove came without putting its leg in the country, for the flood was there. The allusion is to the branch of grapes brought by a hawk to Moses when the whole country was washed off by the sea."

Mr. S. R. Crockett is not a "stickit" minister, but a live one, as well as a Kailyaird author, and in his latest work, *Sir Toady Lion*, gives a boy's prayer when imprisoned by his fellows. It runs thus: "Our Father Witch-Charta-Nevin [this she considered a Christian name and surname, curious, but quite authoritative], help me to get out of this beastly hole. Help me to lick Nipper Donnan till he can't stand, and bust Sammy Carter for running away. For we are all miserable sinners. God bless father and Prissy, Arthur George (I wonder where the little beast went to—guess he sneaked—just wait!), Janet Sheepshanks, Mary Jane Housemaid, and everybody about the house and down at the stables, except Bella Murdoch, that is a clash-bag and a tell-tale-tit. And make me a good boy. For Jesus' sake. Aymen."

We have a sincere regard for Lucy A. Mallory, the editor of *The World's Advance Thought*, of Portland, Oregon. Her journal is the constant advocate of loving kindness to all creatures, and we have heard that she lives on biscuits and raisins, and prints her own paper to practise her principles. But why will she put her new wine into the old bottles? Why does she say, for instance, that one who is cruel "is the worst kind of an Atheist," thus countenancing the false idea that an Atheist is inhumane?

What Lucy really means, unless we mistake, is that a person who owns no God, yet seeks to increase the love and joy and diminish the hate and anguish of the world, is superior to the mere believer without care for other living beings. But, if this be her meaning, why does she not frankly say so?

Lucy says: "The true worship of God is the purification of life by infilling it with love." Now, will Lucy tell us why this is not as possible to the Atheist as to the Theist? We warn her that we shall take it as no compliment to be told that we may be god-worshippers without knowing it. Love to our fellow-beings we understand, but God is utterly beyond our cognisance.

Canon Bardsley, the vicar of Huddersfield, at the Bible Society's meeting at Lincoln, said that Christianity was the only religion founded on fact—such facts, we suppose, as birth from a virgin. There was no history of any kind, he remarked, in the sacred book of the Moslems, or in the sacred books of the world, except in the case of the Bible; and the reason for that was this—because facts and imposture did not agree. Canon Bardsley evidently is not aware of the fact that the Koran gives some of the same history of the Bible, and was itself, if not written entirely by Mohammed, certainly in existence much nearer to his time than the Pentateuch was to the patriarchs, or the Gospels to Jesus Christ.

With the title "Palmistry Extraordinary: A Harmy Sketch," the *Sydney Bulletin* has an amusing sketch of a very fat Salvationist Sal, who is bawling, "'E 'olds me in the 'ollow of 'is 'and."

The same paper quotes the lines from Lawson:—

> It would take a lot of preaching,
> A lot of thumping on the drum,
> To prepare our sinful, wicked,
> Erring souls for kingdom come.

A London clergyman says that the doctrine of endless punishment is a "notion of the past" with English Congregationalists. We fail to see how any part of the authorized creed of a church can be dismissed as a "notion" in the absence of official action, even if every Congregationalist in the world signs something in which he does not believe. Official declaration and private opinion are not one and the same, though most of the more liberal members of the orthodox Churches would make it appear so, were it within their power.—*Boston Investigator.*

Sheikh Quilliam says in the *Crescent:* "To call a follower of the Prophet a 'Mohammedan' is to offer him the same kind of insult that it is to call a devout Catholic a 'Papist.' 'Is it Mohammed?' cried Abu-Bekr, the most faithful of the Prophet's followers, to the fierce Omar, who, in the agony of his grief, swore that he would strike off the head of the first man who dared to say that the Prophet was dead—the Prophet could not be dead; 'Is it Mohammed, or the God of Mohammed, that he taught you to worship?' The creed is not 'Mohammedanism,' but 'Islam'; a verbal noun, derived from a root which means submission to, and faith in, God. And the believer who so submits himself calls himself not a Mohammedan, but a Muslim; a word derived from the same root, and also connected with *Salim* (peace) and *Salym* (healthy)."

A gentleman who is now staying in San Francisco writes of the horrible conditions which prevail in the Chinese quarter, and concludes with the following words: "You may perhaps wonder why the Chinese are so crowded; but when I tell you that one of those miserable cells in the Gibson House rents for ten dollars per month, the whole house bringing in an income of eighteen hundred dollars a month, you will cease to wonder that they crowd together. The landlords are nearly all of the absentee class, and are largely responsible for the condition of the Chinese; and it may be of further interest to know that Mr. Gibson, who built the den which I have tried to describe, was the first missionary who came among them. Such was his work; and that miserable, filthy lodging-house stands a monument to his memory."

They are again discussing the question, "Why go to Church?" One of the best answers we remember was that of a hard-working old Scotswoman, who said: "I se gaed to th' kirk to sleepit."

Over the door of one of the many abandoned churches in the West is this inscription: "This is the gate to heaven"; and just below is the sign: "Closed by order of the American Loan Company."

The Puritans saw that Christmas was Pagan, and abolished it. In the *Flying Eagle*, a gazette of December 24, 1652, we read: "The House spent much time this day about the business of the navy, for settling the affairs at sea, and, before they rose, were presented with a terrible remonstrance against Christmas Day, grounded upon divine Scriptures—2 Cor. v. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17; and in honor of the Lord's Day, grounded upon these Scriptures—John xx. 1; Rev. i. 10; Psalm cxviii. 24; Lev. xxiii. 7, 11; Mark xvi. 8; Psalm lxxxiv. 10, in which Christmas is called Anti-Christ's masse, and those mass-mongers and Papists who observe it, etc. In consequence of which Parliament spent time in consultation about the abolition of Christmas Day, passed orders to that effect, and resolved to sit on the following day, which was commonly called Christmas Day."

After for over a year issuing a garbled version of Maspero's *Struggle of the Nations*, the Literature Committee of the S.P.C.K. has been tardily forced to insert a slip that they "think it right to state that certain passages in this version do not altogether represent Professor Maspero's views on Biblical history as represented in the French edition."

There is not a rite or ceremony yet practised and revered among us that is not the lineal descendant of barbaric thought and usage.—*Edward Clodd.*

Digitized by Google

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 2, Birmingham; 9, Manchester; 16, Liverpool; 23, Camberwell; 30, Athenæum Hall.

February 6, Athenæum Hall; 20, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 2, Leicester; 9 and 16, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road; 23 and 30, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Birmingham; February 13, Camberwell. May 1, Glasgow.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

L. Levine (Charleston).—Papers ever welcome. We wish you the compliments of the season.

C. Wright.—The terms of Stephen Girard's will, endowing Philadelphia College, declared: "I enjoin and require that no ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatever, shall ever hold or exercise any station whatever in the said college; nor shall any such person ever be admitted for any purpose." Yet the will has been overriden, and that largely through the instrumentality of Daniel Webster.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Per R. Forder: A. Hurren, 10s. (*p*) (four quarterly, 2s. 6d.); W. Heath, 10s. (*p*); A. J. Larkin, 5s. (*p*).

J. Dobson.—Received. Official receipt in due course.

J. R. Whitell.—(1) Strauss's *Life of Jesus* is out of print again, but copies are still obtainable for something like 10s. Mr. Forder might be able to get you a copy. (2) Colonel Ingersoll promised Messrs. Foote and Watts that he would come to England, but no time has been fixed for the visit. We hear indirectly that he *may* come next year. (3) Mr. Foote's letters from America have not been published in a separate form, though of course they could be if there were a general desire for their preservation. In that case he would add his impressions of Niagara, which he has never yet found time to write.

Birmingham Freethinker.—Thanks for your amateur photographic group of the Branch members. It is excellent.

Joseph May.—There does not seem much difference between us. What more can we say?

Ex-Ritualist.—Shall have attention immediately after the Christmas holidays.

E. Trueloves (Reigate).—Many thanks for your sensible Christmas card. We have a pronounced taste for apples, probably inherited from Mother Eve, together with (as the Christians would say) a double dose of original sin.

A. B.—Shall appear.

V. Page.—Too late for this week, as we go to press early on account of the holidays.

F. Corbett.—We know nothing of any Atheist called Jim Power converted to Wesleyanism. Let the Rev. Josiah Nix *produce* his convert.

Bradlaugh Club.—Your notice arrived too late for insertion.

Some lecture notices are omitted, as we go to press earlier this week. They should reach us on Monday or Tuesday morning at latest.

T. J. Thurlow.—We are not sure that the controversy is worth continuing on its present lines. However, the matter can stand over for a week.

J. Gair.—Thanks for the report of Rev. W. Griffiths' lecture on the Foote-Lee debate. Will you kindly send us the concluding portion? We can then deal with it in its entirety.

Beelzebub.—See paragraph.

E. Gottheil.—Received. Thanks.

G. Dixon.—It is dangerous to meddle with Christians. Glad to hear you get the *Freethinker* all right.

Old Reader.—Sorry we cannot supply you with the information you desire.

W. McLachlan (Chicago).—Compliments of the season. Pleased to hear from you.

Papers Received.—Hawick News—Church Times—Wood Green Sentinel—Echo—L'Etoile Socialiste—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Mind—Sydney Bulletin—The Temple—Open Court—La Fronde—Boston Investigator—New York Times—Fria Tankar—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Herald—Brooklyn Investigator—Little Freethinker—Torch of Reason.

It being contrary to Post-Office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription is due.

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

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

The Freethinker will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

There was an excellent audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "God and His Mother; or, the Fairy Tale of the Birth of Christ." The subject, and its treatment, were calculated to excite laughter, and there was plenty of it. Mr. White occupied the chair.

The Athenæum Hall will be closed this evening (Dec. 26), owing to the holiday time. On the following Sunday evening it will be re-opened with a lecture by Mr. C. Cohen, who has been away from London for several months. He will be followed for two Sundays by Mr. Charles Watts. On Sunday evening, Jan. 23, the use of the Hall has been granted to the Finsbury Branch for a social gathering The next Sunday is the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh. death, and Mr. Foote will then deliver a memorial address.

Tickets (4/-) for the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner are now on sale, and can be obtained from Miss Vance at the N. S. S. Office, 376-7 Strand, W.C.; from Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.; or from any London Branch Secretary. Mr. Foote will preside as usual, and will be supported by a strong list of leading Freethinkers.

Some people will be pleased to hear that Voltaire's remains were *not* removed from the Pantheon, when Louis XVIII. returned from exile, and buried at night in the unconsecrated part of some unknown cemetery. Not that *we* care very much, for the dust and bones are not Voltaire. Still, it is just as well, perhaps, to have the matter settled, and this was done on Saturday, December 18, at the instigation of M. Ernest Hamel, the historian, and by the order of the Minister of Public Instruction. About 150 persons were present when Voltaire's coffin was opened. M. Berthelot took up the great man's skull and held it high for all to see. It was the exact shape of the head in Houdin's statue. Rousseau's skull was also found in another coffin. Pilgrims who are fond of real relics will henceforth know the actual remains of Voltaire and Rousseau do lie in those two coffins in the Pantheon.

Alphonse Daudet, the great French novelist, just deceased, was well known to the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*, who records that, although he had an æsthetic admiration for the Catholic Church, he was himself a Freethinker. When the death-stroke fell upon him, swiftly and suddenly, his wife sent for a priest as well as a doctor; but that is a way the women have in France, as elsewhere. The same thing was done in the case of Littré, the great Positivist, and the Church had the impudence to pretend that he had recanted. Victor Hugo was more fortunate. His family respected his convictions, and kept the priests from his death-bed. Even the Archbishop of Paris, who proffered his ghostly services, was told politely, but firmly, that he was not wanted. In Daudet's case it is consoling to know that he was quite unconscious, and therefore ignorant of the priest's prayers and benedictions. He had lived a good and hard-working life, loving his wife, adoring his children, and making his own home a heaven on earth, besides charming the world with his beautiful writings. What more can be requisite? Surely such a man was ready for death whenever it came.

Mr. James Hales is a candidate for the Portsmouth School Board. His address to the electors is sensible and well-written. He is strongly in favor of absolute secular education. We hope he will be supported by every Freethinking voter in Portsmouth.

The December number of the *Freethought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives a portrait of Elmina Drake Slenker, of whom a pen-sketch is also given. In the leading article Selden S. Cooke discusses "Is Religion a Superstition?" We are pleased to note that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake will contribute an account of the work of Francis William Newman to the January number.

Open Court, of Chicago, gives in its December number a good portrait of the French mathematician, J. L. Lagrange. There is a readable article on "Animal Worship," and Dr. Cornill continues his rationalistic "History of the People of Israel." The editor's paper on "The Christian Conception of Death" has some good illustrations.

Digitized by Google

The *Torch of Reason* keeps the Freethought flag flying in Oregon. The last number to hand reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "Christians and Heathens."

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, from which we extract an article in this issue, is about to enter upon its fifteenth year. Mr. J. D. Shaw, the editor, has ably sustained the paper amid many trials. We regret to learn that he is unwell, and hope the American Liberals will rally to his support.

The *Sentinel*, of Wood Green, has a kindly word for the local Secularists, and mentions how Sunday's collection, badly needed to meet the hall expenses, was, with something added to it, assigned to meet the pressing need of a sick family. It adds: "A Christian church wouldn't have done more for the door-keeper; it might conceivably have done less."

Before 1897 is ended we beg once more to draw our readers' attention to the *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, and containing much interesting and useful matter. Secularists should support this publication. Every penny of profit on the sale will accrue to the N. S. S. exchequer, and be spent in Freethought propaganda. Those who have not already purchased a copy should order one from Mr. Forder at once.

OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CREED!

AN "INFIDEL" CHRISTMAS CAROL.

OH, what a creed is the creed of the Christians!
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Minds that would fathom it have to be misty 'uns,
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Heads must be duller than water of ditch is,
Thicker by far than the thickest of pitch is;
Sages it sickens, but boors it bewitches—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

Here, in a nutshell, I'll tell it you—listen;
Oh, 'tis a beautiful creed!
Where is there one that is equal to this 'un?
Oh, 'tis a beautiful creed!
Jahveh placed Adam and Eve in a garden;
One of his apples he missed, worth a "farden";
Swore that the stealers he would never pardon—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

Doomed Adam's race after death to be tortured;
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Hell and damnation for robbing an orchard;
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Gave them a chance of salvation—d'ye "cotton"?
Chance of a cool place instead of a hot 'un,
For he begat him an "Only Begotten"—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

Came down and courted a joiner's "intended";
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Basely deceived her and then re-ascended;
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Left the poor girl at the time of her danger,
Failed to provide for the poor "little stranger,"
Left him to lie in a publican's manger—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

Caused him to live all his life as a vagrant;
Oh, what a fatherly deed!
Where's there a case of desertion so flagrant?
Oh, 'twas a dastardly deed!
Then, that his realms might receive a few "trippers,"
Murdered his meekest and mildest of "nippers,"
Furnished a blood-bath for pre-ordained "dippers"—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

Jesus, when dead, took a journey to Hades;
Oh, what a curious creed!
Went to the place where Old Harry's Brigade is;
Oh, what a curious creed!
Came out alive and unsinged from the "crater,"
Went up to heaven, without "elevator";
There he now sits at the hand of his Pater—
Oh, what a comical creed!

Swallow this creed, it will bring you salvation;
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
Daring to doubt leads to hell and damnation;
Oh, what a beautiful creed!
The Lord will return, when we've "snuffed it," to try us,
To heaven to heave, or to Sheol to shy us,
To give us a trumpet and harp, or to fry us—
Oh, what a beautiful creed!

ESS JAY BEE.

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Just delivered at Chicago to 5,000 people.

MANY ages ago our ancestors were savages; they were living in dens and caves. Their bodies, their low foreheads, were covered with hair. They were eating berries, roots, bark, nuts, and vermin. They were fond of raw fish and snakes. They had claws like wild beasts. They in some way discovered fire, and probably by accident; learned how to cause it by friction; found how to warm themselves, how to fight the frost and storm. In a little while they fashioned clubs and rude weapons of stone, with which they killed the larger animals, and now and then each other. Slowly, painfully, almost imperceptibly, they advanced. They crawled and stumbled and staggered towards the light. To them the world was unknown. On every hand was the mysterious, the sinister, the awful, the hurtful. The forests were filled with monsters, and the darkness was crowded with ghosts, devils, and fiendish gods.

These poor wretches were the slaves of fear, the sport of dreams.

Now and then one rose a little above his fellows, used the little reason that he had, found something new—some better way. Then the people killed him, and afterwards knelt at his grave. Then another thinker gave his thought; was murdered; another tomb became sacred, and another step had been taken in advance. And so through countless years of ignorance and cruelty, of thought and crime, of murder and worship, of heroism, suffering, and self-denial, the race has reached the heights where we now stand.

Looking back over the long and devious roads that lie between the barbarism of the past and the civilization of to-day, thinking of centuries that rolled like waves between these distant shores, we can form some idea of what our fathers suffered, of the mistakes they made; some idea of their ignorance, of their stupidity, of their cruelty, and some idea of their sense, of their goodness, their heroism.

It is a long, long road from the savage to the scientist, a long road from a den to a mansion, a good way from leaves to clothes, quite a distance from a flickering rush to the arc-light, from a hammer of stone to the modern mill; a long distance from the pipe of Pan to a violin, to an orchestra; a long distance from a floating log to a steamship, from a sickle to a reaper, from a flail to a threshing-machine, from a crooked stick to a plough, from a spinning-wheel to a jenny, from a hand-loom to a Jacquard—a Jacquard that weaves fair forms and wondrous flowers beyond an Arachne's utmost dream; a long way from a few hieroglyphics on the skins of beasts, on bricks of clay, to the printing-press, to the library; a long way from the cry of joy or pain to words; a long way from words to letters; a long way from letters to literature; a long way from the messenger, travelling on foot, to the electric spark, from knives of stone to those of steel; a long distance from a handful of sand to a telescope; a long way from echo to the phonograph—the phonograph that buries in indented lines and dots the sounds of living speech, and then gives back to life the very words and voices of the dead; a long way from the trumpet to the telephone—the telephone that transports speech as swift as thought and drops the words, perfect as minted coins, in listening ears; a long way from the face reflected in water to a photograph; a long way from a fallen tree to the suspension bridge; a long way from twisted bark, from grape-vine, from the dried sinews of beasts to the cables of steel; a long way from the oar to the propeller, from the sling to the rifle, from the catapult to the cannon; a long distance from revenge to law, from the club to the legislature; a long distance from slavery to freedom, from appearance to fact, from fear to reason, and from superstition to science!

And yet the distance has been travelled by a part of the human race. Countless obstructions have been overcome, numberless enemies have been conquered, thousands and thousands of victories have been won for the right, and millions and millions have died, labored, and lived for their fellow-men.

For the blessings we enjoy, for the happiness, for the freedom, for the prosperity that is ours, we ought to be grateful; our hearts should burst into the blossom of thankfulness.

Digitized by Google

Whom and what should we thank?

No man can afford to be ungrateful. Ingratitude is one of the blackest of crimes.

Whom should we thank? Let us be honest; let us be generous. To whom should our hearts go out? Should we thank the orthodox Church? Let us be honest; let us be generous.

Christianity has controlled Christendom for fifteen hundred years. During these centuries what have the orthodox Churches accomplished for the good of man?

In this life man needs raiment and roof, food and fuel. He must be protected from heat and cold, from snow and storm. He must "take thought for the morrow." In the summer of youth he must prepare for the winter of age. He must know something of the causes of disease, of the conditions of health. If possible, he must conquer pain, increase and ennoble life; he must lengthen his years. He must supply the wants of the body, and if possible he must feed the divine hunger of the mind. And so to-night I ask, What good has the Church done?

Let us be generous; let us be honest.

Has it taught man to cultivate the earth, to build homes, to weave cloth, to cure or prevent disease, to build ships, to navigate the seas, to conquer pain, to lengthen life? Let us be honest.

Did Christ or any of his apostles add to the sum of useful knowledge? Did they say one word in favor of any science, in favor of any art? Did they teach men how to make a living, how to overcome one of the obstructions of nature, how to prevent sickness, how to protect themselves from pain, from famine, from misery and rags? Did they add to the sum of useful knowledge?

Did they explain any of the phenomena of nature, any fact that affects the life of man? Did they say one word in favor of investigation, one word in favor of study, of thought, one word for education? Did they teach the gospel of self-reliance, of industry, of honest effort? Can any farmer, mechanic, or scientist find in the New Testament or the Old one useful fact? Is there anything in the sacred book that can help the geologist, the astronomer, the biologist, the physician, the inventor, the manufacturer of any useful thing? Let us be honest; let us be generous. What has the Church done? because, if I am under obligation to the Church, I am going to thank the Church.

From the very first the Church taught the vanity, the worthlessness of all earthly things. It taught the wickedness of wealth, the blessedness of poverty. It taught that the business of this life was to prepare for death. It insisted that a certain belief was necessary to salvation, and that all who failed to believe, or doubted in the least, would suffer eternal pain. According to the Church, the natural desires, ambitions, and passions of man were all wicked, all depraved.

To love God, to practise self-denial, to overcome desire, to despise wealth, to hate prosperity, to desert wife and children, to live on roots and berries, to repeat prayers, to wear rags, to live in filth, and to drive love from the heart—these, for centuries, were the highest and most perfect virtues, and those who practised them were called saints.

The saints did not assist their fellow-men; their fellow-men assisted them. They did not labor; they were beggars; they lived on the labor of others. They were parasites; they were holy vermin. They were beyond reason. They followed the teachings of Christ. They took no thought for the morrow. They mutilated their bodies, scarred their flesh, destroyed their minds for the sake of happiness in another world. During the journey of life they kept their eyes on the grave. They gathered no flowers by the way; they walked in the dust of the road; they avoided the green fields. Their moans and groans made all the music they wished to hear. The babble of brooks, the songs of birds, the laughter of children, were nothing to them. Pleasure was the child of sin; the happy needed a change of heart. The saints were sinless, and miserable; but they had faith. They were pious, and wretched; but they were limping towards the New Jerusalem.

What has the Church done?

It has denounced pride and luxury; all things that adorn and enrich life; all the pleasures of sense, the ecstasies of love, the happiness of the hearts, of the fireside, the clasp and kiss of wife and child; and the Church has done this because it regarded this life as a period of probation, a time to prepare to be spiritual, to overcome the natural, to fix the affections on the invisible, to become passionless, to subdue the flesh, to congeal the blood, to fold the wings of fancy, to become dead to the world, so that when you appeared before God you would be the exact opposite of what he made you.

What has the Church done?

It pretended to have a revelation from God. It knew the road to eternal joy, the way to death. It preached salvation by faith, and declared that only orthodox believers could become angels, and all thinkers would be damned. It knew this, and so knowing it became the enemy of discussion, of investigation, of thought. Why investigate, why discuss, if you know? Why think, if you are certain? It sought to enslave the world. It appealed to force. It unsheathed the sword, lighted the fagot, forged the chain, built the dungeon, erected the scaffold, invented and used the instruments of torture. It branded, maimed, and mutilated; it imprisoned and tortured; it blinded and burned, hanged and crucified, and utterly destroyed millions and millions of men and women. It touched every nerve of the body, produced every pain that can be felt, every agony that can be endured; and it did this to preserve what is called the truth of God, to destroy heresy and doubt, and to save, if possible, a few shrivelled souls.

It was honest; it was honest. I admit it. But it was necessary to prevent the development of the brain, to arrest all progress; and to do this the Church used all its power. If men were allowed to think and to express their thoughts, they would fill their minds and the minds of others with doubt. If they were allowed to think, they would investigate; they might contradict the creed; they might dispute the words of priests, and they might defy the Church. The priests cried to the people: "It is for us to talk. It is for you to hear. Our duty is to preach; yours is to believe, believe; you are not asked to think."

(To be continued.)

GOD, OR SANTA CLAUS.

"DON'T you believe in God?" asked a pious lady of a bright boy of fourteen years of age, of my acquaintance. "No," he answered, "I have seen no evidence that there is any God—nothing to prove that there is any such being; nor do I see any use that he could be to us, or to the world at large." "But," said the lady, "you cannot prove that he doesn't exist." "No," said the boy; "but that doesn't seem to me to be any reason for believing that there is one. Do you believe in Santa Claus?" "No," said the lady; "Santa Claus is a childish fiction that we outgrow as we grow up." "But," said the boy, "you cannot prove that Santa Claus does not exist." "No," said the lady, "I frankly confess that you have got me there." And this ended the discussion. The lady saw the force of the illustration, and was silent.

Now, can anybody give me any good reason for believing in the existence of God that is not equally good for the existence of Santa Claus? We are told in our childhood that it is Santa Claus who brings our Christmas presents, but as we grow up we watch to see him come, and detect our parents or friends in the fraud they have practised upon us, and our faith is gone. So, in the infancy of the race, we were told that it was God who gave us everything, and made the rain and sunshine, the thunder and the lightning; who made the trees and grass to grow, and the wind to blow, etc. And to prevent us from detecting the fraud as we did that of Santa Claus, they told us that any attempt to do so would be wicked, and would call down upon our heads the vengeance of God, who would strike us dead, and then revive us and make us suffer forever the most excruciating torture that their imagination could conceive of. And if, notwithstanding all these threats of what God would do if any person should dare to question the truth of these stories, any should have sense and courage enough to detect the fraud, they put him to death by the most painful process they could invent; and threatened the same death to anyone who should listen to what he said, or read anything that he wrote. All this has been done to perpetuate the myth of the childhood of the race. Who can doubt that, if the same means

Digitized by Google

had been used to prevent the detection of the fraud of our individual childhood, the great majority would still be believing in Santa Claus, and would be shocked at any expression of unbelief in that myth.

In such a case we should, no doubt, have a large reform association working for a constitutional amendment that should recognise the existence of Santa Claus, and his infinite benevolence in giving us all our Christmas presents and his miraculous power by which he drives a team of reindeers all over the world in a single night, running down every chimney and up again, though it was only a three-inch stove pipe and red hot; the more difficult the feat, the more it would display his wonderful and infinite power. And if any sceptic should question such a performance, it would be considered a sufficient answer to his objections to say: Santa Claus's ways are not as our ways. Some pious superintendent of the mint would stamp all the dollars and half dollars of our daddies with "In Santa Claus we Trust," and all our schools would be opened with an invocation to the same mythical individual. Revival preachers would supplement their whining "Come to Jesus" with a whining "Come to Santa Claus and save your soul," though Jesus and Santa Claus were both equally *non est inventus*.

To come right down to brass tacks, is there any more reason for believing in God than there is in Santa Claus? I asked a pious Christian to give me the evidence upon which he believed in God; and he said he believed because the Bible told him about God. But how do you know that the Bible tells the truth about him? Because, he said, the Bible is the word of God, and therefore must be true. Thus the argument runs in a circle. Two unproved assertions mutually prove each other. And this is the sum of all the evidence upon which hangs the whole fabric of the Christian religion. The man who has sense enough to see the total lack of evidence, but is determined to believe anyhow, owns up like Kant, the German metaphysician, that there is no way to prove the existence of God, but we must believe in him by faith; and faith is the last resort of those who would believe or teach a lie.

By faith we may prove or believe in Santa Claus, as well as in God, or in any other spook whose existence is asserted by any self-constituted agent for him. Faith is all right provided we know enough about the person in whom we place it to inspire faith in him. Faith in God is an impossibility, because we know nothing about him. But, say the priests, we tell you all about him, and the Bible tells you about him; and you must believe what we and the Bible tell you. Then it is not God, nor is it the Bible, upon which we are to place our faith, but upon the priests. If the character of the priests is such as to inspire us with confidence in their word, and in their knowledge of the subject which they pretend to tell us about, then we may have faith enough in them to believe what they say. But, unfortunately, we find upon examination that they know no more about God than we do, and that they are asking us to take their word about a matter of which they know nothing. Besides, the character of priests, as shown by all history and observation, is not such as to induce us to give up our own judgment for theirs in matters upon which we know as much as they do. Again, the stories they tell us are incredible and absurd, inasmuch as they relate to beings that have no existence so far as all reliable evidence goes, and whose existence is contradicted by all human observation and experience. Once more, these priests have a personal motive for trying to make us believe their remarkable and absurd stories, because they hope to win power, wealth, and influence if they succeed.

That priests will lie under the influence of such motives is only to say that they are human, and that they are subject to temptations such as the average human being is likely to yield to. Faith in such men is out of the question, and if we cannot have faith in them, then faith in the God they tell us about is equally out of the question.

It is the same with the Bible. When priests tell us that we must have faith that the Bible is true, it means that we must have faith in the priests who wrote the more or less marvellous stories contained in the Bible. Of course, no man who had average common sense would believe such stories on the strength of the stories themselves; they must be believed—if at all—through faith in the truthfulness of the persons who tell them, and we have seen that such persons are entirely untrustworthy and unbelievable.

Faith is not a quality that comes to a man at his will, nor is it the outgrowth of his hopes or fears, excited by religious frenzy at a revival meeting. It is a plant of slow growth, and comes after a thorough knowledge of the person in which we place our faith; from a conviction derived from evidence, that the person can be relied upon as not only truthful himself, but too intelligent to be imposed upon, and too honest to wish to impose upon anybody else.

If there was any evidence tending to prove the existence of God, we should never have heard of the necessity for faith. Priests would gladly make use of evidence if they had it, but, in the entire absence of evidence, they can only rely upon the credulity of the foolish people to believe in signs and wonders which they do not understand, and so they make credulity the first and highest of virtues, and soften the absurdity of it by calling it faith. And this is why they teach that we must all become like little children—that is, as credulous as children in order to save our souls. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings comes such wisdom as religion inculcates, and to these only has God revealed himself; but to the wise and prudent he makes no attempt to make himself known, knowing well how ridiculous such an attempt would be. If there were any God, would he not show himself to the wise and prudent as the best way to convince the world, including all the fools who would follow the wise if the priests would let them alone, and thus all should know him, from the greatest down to the least? But no; evidently he does not want to be known; the priests pretend to have him behind their curtain, and call upon us to believe that they have got him there, and that he will break loose and damn us all to the everlasting frying-pan if we do not take their word for it.

According to their logic, God conceals himself so that the priests may do a profitable business in telling us all about him. If he was really there, and could hear the nonsense they tell about him, he would hurry up the final crack of doom and proceed to pass judgment upon these pretended agents of his, that they should at once test the reality of the fiery pit that they have invented to scare the ignorant multitude. But no; poor old God! there he must sit away up beyond the clouds, out of sight and hearing, while he is being slandered and maligned by his pretended friends; and he knows no more about it than the fossil man who was dug up on the bank of the Rio Brazos the other day.

How long, O common sense, is it going to take for full-grown men and women to reach the intellectual level of the fourteen-year-old boy who did not believe in any God?

—*Independent Pulpit.* J. P. RICHARDSON.

BOOK CHAT.

In Mark Twain's *More Tramps Abroad* there is a little bit illustrating the faith of an Indian servant with a limited stock of English words: "How did you get your English? Is it an acquirement, or just a gift of God?" After some hesitation, piously: "Yes. He is very good. Christian God very good. Hindoo God very good too. Two million Hindoo god, one Christian God—make two million and one. All mine—two million and one God. I got a plenty. Sometimes I pray all time at those; keep it up; go all time every day; give something at shrine. All good for me; make me better man; good for me, good for my family—dam good."

* * *

Mr. Clemens is a real good Freethinker, and will enjoy reading in the *Atlantic Monthly* the statement by Colonel Higginson, that Darwin heartily enjoyed Mark Twain, and kept *The Jumping Frog* by his bedside for midnight amusement.

* * *

From America we receive the *Exodus*, a monthly journal of a Christian-Theosophic character. From its Bible lessons it seems doubtful if the editress has yet made what Carlyle called "the Exodus from Houndsditch." She is, however, able to spin voluminous cobwebs out of her inner intuitions, into which we shall not venture, lest we get entangled.

* * *

Carlyle called political economy "the dismal science." Theology may certainly be called the dull and deadly nonscience, for the science of God is verily the knowledge of nothing. The worst stock for any bookseller's shelves is the theological department. Every year thousands on thousands

Digitized by Google

of dull sermons are preached, and a lot of them, through vanity, get printed; but who, outside the preacher and his friends, thinks of reading them, and what publisher would think of issuing them if the preacher did not pay the printer?

* * *

The Face of the Poor, by Robert Williams (Reeves, Fleet-street; 2d.), is an eloquent pamphlet exposing the crowding of laborers in London, where some 400,000 of the population are one-room dwellers. The author says the pamphlet was sent to a clergyman, who reported: "There is nothing in the pamphlet which I could put into a sermon, and therefore I do not recommend it." We do.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BIBLE IN BOARD SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In one of your notes you ask for a statement of "the real difference between established religion in State churches and established religion in State schools."

The subject is one of real importance. May I say, briefly, how the difference presents itself to me?

Chiefly, it is in the "content" of the religion established. For the word "religion" is a word of wide and various significance. Sometimes it covers acts perfectly just, and really obligatory on the part of the State towards its members; but at other times it embraces functions which, being discharged by the State, would make it obtrusive upon the rights of individuals, partizan and exclusive in its gifts and advantages.

For example, the State ought to "establish and endow" and carry out that part of "religion" which embraces (1) care for the physical needs and comforts of the disabled, of the unfortunate, and of the honest poor; (2) restorative treatment of those who have fallen into crime; (3) removal of injustices in the world of labor; (4) and the training of its younger citizens in the recognition of civic obligation, in the discharge of all duties towards parents, reverence for the aged, pity for the weak, help to the needy, and other duties of practical and every-day religion.

But, I hold, the State should not "establish" or "endow," control or support, any particular privately-managed society of men and women, such as the brotherhood at Westbourne Park Chapel, which has elected me as one of its teachers, or the society of Freethinkers to which you minister; for the word "religion," in both these cases, has for its "content" a theological or an anti-theological, a credal or non-credal element, about which each individual must be left to form his own conclusions, and to apply them in his own way.

Now, the "religion" of the State school should be exclusively of the former kind; nothing credal or theological should be introduced, but only that which is distinctively ethical. I need not say that the State has gone far beyond this in "establishing" Anglicanism, which is one of the various methods of interpreting the "theological" content of religion.

I have not time to give my reasons for these conclusions; but if any of your readers are curious about them, they will be found stated at some length in the *Contemporary Review*—vol. 67, "Religion and the State," page 433; vol. 66, "The Destruction of Board Schools," page 626; vol. 69, "Primary Education and the State,' page 441.—I am, yours truly,

JOHN CLIFFORD.

[Dr. Clifford's letter displays more ingenuity than ingenuousness. Without so much as mentioning Christianity or the Bible, he tries to justify the introduction of both in State schools by means of a loose and ambiguous employment of the word "religion." No doubt this is a word of "wide and various significance," but it always connotes something supernatural, and the supernatural is a matter of opinion. Anglicanism is indeed a sect of Christianity, but Christianity is a sect of universal religion. Nor is the Church of England a "privately-managed society." It was created, and is controlled, by English law, quite as much as the Board school system. A parson is a public functionary as much as an elementary school teacher. The analogy is close enough for the purpose of our argument, and we repeat that they are illogical who denounce State religion in State churches and uphold State religion in State schools. With regard to the moral duties enumerated by Dr. Clifford, we beg to say that they have no necessary connection with religion, and can be taught and practised without it. The Bible is not really used in our schools as a text-book of ethics, but as the sacred Scriptures of the Christian religion. Dr. Clifford does not notice our careful criticism of the London School Board syllabus of Bible instruction, in which we showed (as we think) the absurdity of the "ethical" plea in favor of retaining that volume.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

SHAKESPEARE'S RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I do not know whether it is desirable to burden your Correspondence Columns with a letter on the above in reference to the communications in your last issue by "Auria" and "J. G. F." I am glad, however, to find that the former thinks, as indeed do I, that the question of to whom the sonnets were addressed is an unimportant one. They were addressed, I am convinced, to one who aroused Shakespeare's ardent imagination to the topmost heights of poignant beatitude, and by one who, in Shakespeare's opinion, was worthy of all, and more than all, the love of his (Shakespeare's) opulently endowed nature.

If Shakespeare, who *knew* to whom he addressed his sonnets, was satisfied with his idol, why should we trouble? At most we could now but learn *the name* of the one to whom Shakespeare penned the marvellous outpourings of his deepest love; we could never have his knowledge, and without that we cannot, except stupidly and gratuitously, impugn Shakespeare's wisdom in his love. As for "J. G. F.'s" suggestion that the sonnets may be "the interpretation of other people's moods, thoughts, and desires, and not Shakespeare's own," I must say that of the first 126 sonnets it would hardly be possible to select half a score which could be said at all to answer the description of "J. G. F." At any rate, I would invite "J. G. F." to give us, or refer us to, some sonnet examples written by other poets which he may consider as representing the moods, thoughts, and desires of others, and not those of the writers themselves. We know what Alfred the Little's contract-poetry was—his birthday odes and other like rinsings of his intellect; and we know too well what the contract-verses of all our Laureates have been from the time of our first Court Rhymer to our present Alfred the Less! So that where "J. G. F." will look for any examples which shall at all help to persuade us that the intense affection which fills these sonnets of Shakespeare's could have been anything less than the deepest self-expression of which he was capable, I confess I cannot guess. Thomson's lines—

> I do not hate a single man alive,
> Some few I must disdain;
> I have loved heartily some four or five,
> And of these there remain
> Just two for whom I would outface
> Death, for the one death, and disgrace—

seem to me to be written in the very spirit of the sonnets. Either my reading of verse is altogether bad, or such poetry can never be a vicarious expression—the personal note pulses through every line, and if in such verse the poet has failed to express himself, then is his hope of ever expressing himself quite extinguished. Further, I let "J. G. F." take the sonnet I quoted, commencing—

> Against my love shall be as I am now,
> With Time's injurious hand crushed and overworn;

and explain it in the light of his suggestion that therein is Shakespeare expressing feelings not his own towards some person not dear to, and, perhaps, not even known to, him.

Indeed, as I see things now, these sonnets, with a very few exceptions, were they proved to be other than autobiographical, would be a most uncanny example of the prostitution of all those most intimate thoughts and emotions, which are about the last things any ordinary man or woman can prostitute, and certainly are the very things that the poet never consents to make a commerce of. To conclude, then, I wish to say that it would have interested me very much if some Christian reader had given us his view of the validity of the conclusions I have drawn from the sonnets as to Shakespeare's religion; and, if he differed from these conclusions, his reasons for so differing. Freethinkers are pretty well agreed as to Shakespeare's religion, I fancy.

D. M.

PROFANE JOKES.

"IT is only the body that they bury, you know," said the Sabbath-school teacher, endeavoring to make clear the idea of the immortality of the soul. "Is that so, ma'am?" asked Johnny Thickhead, with lively interest. "What do they do with the head?"

An old peasant woman in Buckinghamshire, praising her favorite curate to the rector, exclaimed: "Ah, sir, Mr. Drone is quite an angel in sheep's clothing."

Miss Helen Hunt picked up a small Bible lying in the aisle of the church one Sunday morning as she was hurrying out from service. As there was nothing in the book to indicate to whom it belonged, she spoke to the pastor and suggested that he announce the fact of her find on the following Sunday. He did it in this way: "The person who dropped a small Bible, in flexible cover, in the main aisle at last Sunday's service can go to Helen Hunt for it." Then he wondered why everybody smiled.

Digitized by Google

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, E. Pack; 7.30, W. Heaford, "Christmas Comments on Christianity."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Children's Festival

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A lecture.

COUNTRY

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social Meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Musical and Literary evening.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed till January 9, when Mr. Foote will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Attractive Miscellaneous Entertainment in Music, Recitations, etc. December 29, Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5.30.

Lecturer's Engagements.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—January 8 to 12, Mission to Stanley; 23 and 30, Manchester. March 6 to 11, Mission at Derby; 13, Birmingham.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 2.45.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, second Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Ingersoll's Latest Popular Lectures.

About the Holy Bible. 6d.

The Foundation of Faith. 3d.

The Coming Civilization. 3d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

London: R Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE

Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

BY CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C

THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

DECEMBER NO. NOW READY. *Second Edition.*

CONTENTS:—

Dress and Sex. By ORFORD NORTHCOTE.
The Liars; or, Marriage at the Criterion Theatre B SAGITTARIUS.
The Poetry of the Passions. By HENRY SEYMOUR.
Etc. Etc. Etc.

Specimen Copies 3d. post free.

16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.

May also be had of Robert Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

NOW READY. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

BY C. COHEN.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered. Price 1s., post free.

*** In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s. a dozen post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders* should be sent to the author.

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population, p. 32*, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook, p. 51*. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by *some* dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co" and "*J. W.* Rendall," etc., being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell

No. 182,688.

IN Red INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Digitized by Google

FREETHOUGHT WORKS.

The Sign of the Cross. A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play, showing its gross partiality and its ridiculous historic inaccuracy, with special reference to the (probably) forged passage in Tacitus and the alleged Neronic massacre of Christians Handsomely printed, 6d.

The Birth of Christ. From the original "Life of Jesus" by the famous Strauss. With an introduction by G. W. Foote. A most thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Rev. Dr. McCann. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. From Adam to Paul. By G. W. Foote. Instructive, interesting, amusing, and honest; in fact, the *only* honest book on the subject. 200 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. By G. W. Foote. An Exhaustive Answer to Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture.* 1s.; cloth edition, 1s. 6d.

Will Christ Save Us? By G. W. Foote. An Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. Contains much Historic Information on Slavery, the Position of Woman, General Social Progress, and the advance of Science and Freethought in opposition to Christian bigotry. 6d.

Darwin on God. By G. W. Foote. A full and minute account of Darwin's mental development, with a brief Memoir of his grandfather, the famous Erasmus Darwin; containing all the passages in Darwin's works, and in his *Life and Letters*, bearing directly or indirectly on the subject of religion. Every Freethinker should have and keep a copy of this important little volume. 6d.; cloth, 1s.

Footsteps of the Past. Valuable Essays in the Evolution of Religion and Ethics. By J. M. Wheeler. With a Preface by G. W. Foote. Cloth, 3s.

Infidel Death-Beds. By G. W. Foote. Second edition, revised and much enlarged. Contains authentic details of the last hours of sixty-two historic Freethinkers, and in most cases a sketch of their lives. Precise references given in every instance. 8d.; cloth, 1s. 3d.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias. By G. W. Foote. A selection of the author's best satirical writings. *Contents*:—A Sermon on Summer—A Mad Sermon—A Sermon on Sin—A Bishop in the Workhouse—A Christmas Sermon—Christmas Eve in Heaven—Bishop Trimmer's Sunday Diary—The Judge and the Devil—Satan and Michael—The First Christmas—Adam's Breeches—The Fall of Eve—Joshua and Jericho—A Baby God—Judas Iscariot. 8d.

Defence of Freethought. By Colonel Ingersoll. A Grand Speech, occupying four hours in delivery, made in defence of Mr. Reynolds, who was prosecuted for Blasphemy in New Jersey. 6d.

Defence of Free Speech. By G. W. Foote. Three hours' address to the Jury in the Court of Queen's Bench before Lord Coleridge, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy on account of certain issues of the *Freethinker*. Carefully revised, with an important Preface and Footnotes. 4d.

Pagan Mythology; or, The Wisdom of the Ancients. By Lord Bacon. 1s.

Church of England Catechism Examined. A Masterly Work, which narrowly escaped prosecution. By Jeremy Bentham. 1s.

Utilitarianism. By Jeremy Bentham. 3d.

Free Will and Necessity. By Anthony Collins. Reprinted from 1715 edition, with Biography of Collins by J. M. Wheeler, and Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote. Huxley says that "Collins writes with wonderful power and closeness of reasoning." 1s.; superior edition, on superfine paper, cloth, 2s.

The Code of Nature. By Diderot and D'Holbach. 2d.

The Essence of Religion. God the Image of Man, Man's Dependence upon Nature the Last and Only Source of Religion. By Ludwig Feuerbach. "No one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach."—*Büchner.* 1s.

Crimes of Christianity. By G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authors. An unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.

The Jewish Life of Christ. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. Edited, with an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes, by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 1s.

The Mortality of the Soul. By David Hume. Not included in ordinary editions of Hume's "Essays." 2d.

Liberty and Necessity. By David Hume. 4d.

Essays in Rationalism. By Charles Robert Newman, the Atheist brother of the late Cardinal Newman. With a Preface by G. J. Holyoake, and Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s. 6d.

The Rights of Man. By Thomas Paine. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; cloth edition, 2s.

Satires and Profanities. By James Thomson (B.V.). "As clever as they are often profane."—*Christian World.* 1s.

A Refutation of Deism. By Shelley. Really a Defence of Atheism. 4d.

Miscellaneous Theological Works. By Thomas Paine. All his writings on Religion except the *Age of Reason.* 1s.

Theism or Atheism. Public Debate between G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. Well printed and neatly bound, 1s.

Bible and Beer. By G. W. Foote. Showing the absurdity of basing Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Careful, thorough, and accurate. Freethinkers should keep this pamphlet by them. 4d.

The Holy Bible. By Colonel Ingersoll. A Masterpiece of Popular Criticism; one of Ingersoll's greatest efforts. 6d.

The Coming Civilization. By Colonel Ingersoll. An Address delivered in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, Sunday, April 12, 1896, to a vast meeting of Members and Friends of the "Church Militant." 3d.

The Foundations of Faith. By Colonel Ingersoll. Contents:—The Old Testament—The New Testament—Jehovah—The Trinity—The Theological Christ—The "Scheme"—Belief—Conclusion. 3d.

LONDON: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

NOW READY.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SHAKESPEARE.

A LECTURE BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiriting to hear."—*The Stage.*

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 82 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.C.

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, C.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

Digitized by Google

33 yards

of Remnants High-class Dress Materials.

Carriage paid 21s.

250 LADIES' MACKINTOSHES.

Give Bust Measurement and length at back.

12s. 6d. each carriage paid.

LOT 11

1 Pair All-Wool Blankets.
1 Pair Large Bed Sheets.
1 Beautiful Quilt.
1 Tablecloth.

21s. Carriage paid.

A Misfit dark mixture Irish frieze double-breasted Overcoat, 52 in. long. To fit Man 42 chest over vest, 34 in. from centre of back to full length of Sleeve. Made at **30s.**

Will accept **18s.** within 7 days.

500

BEAUTIFUL FUR NECKTIES.

2s. 11d. each,

3 for 8s., or 6 for 15s.

All carriage paid.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 Union Street, BRADFORD.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE

AND RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE JANUARY NUMBER CONTAINS:—

The Parting of the Ways. By Charles E. Hooper.
The Work of Rationalism. By R. Bithell.
The Present Position of the Bible. By F. J. Gould.
The Non-Religion of the Future.
The Greatest of Scientists.
Schopenhauer.
A Library of Great Thoughts.
Signs and Warnings (Gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
Literary Chats. X.—With Dr. W. R. Washington Sullivan.
In Memory of George Julian Harney.
Rationalism in the Magazines.
Short Notices.

Also a 4 page Supplement, entitled "Origin of Sacrifice," being a Summary of J. G. Fraser's "Golden Bough."

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1898.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Poor Devil! by G. W. Foote; Secularism and the Clergy, by J. M. Wheeler; Secularism Vindicated, by C. Watts; Miracle Workers, by A. B. Moss; The Religious Temperament, by W. Heaford; Our Work, by C. Cohen; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

First Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

Second Series (cloth) 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchisedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google