

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. X.—No. 47.]

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1890.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONTINUED.]

WITHOUT going through all the insane theology of this book we may—nay, we must—give a crowning instance of it (p. 257). The language, we take it, is Booth's own.

"I am quite satisfied that these multitudes will not be saved in their present circumstances. All the Clergymen, Home Missionaries, Tract Distributors, Sick Visitors, and everyone else who care about the Salvation of the poor, may make up their minds as to that. If these people are to believe in Jesus Christ, become the Servants of God, and escape the miseries of the wrath to come, they must be helped out of their present social miseries. They must be put into a position in which they can work and eat, and have a decent room to live and sleep in, and see something before them besides a long, weary, monotonous, grinding round of toil, and anxious care to keep themselves and those they love barely alive, with nothing at the further end but the Hospital, the Union, or the Madhouse. If Christian Workers and Philanthropists will join hands to effect this change it will be accomplished, and the people will rise up and bless them, and be saved; if they will not, the people will curse them and perish."

Did ever a human brain excogitate such blasphemous nonsense? God is openly declared to be a passive spectator of the great struggle between good and evil. At the end of it he will save the succeeders and damn the failers; although, according to Booth's own admission, hosts of both classes are what they are through the pressure of circumstances. Compared with such a God the bloody Moloch was a respectable deity.

Four men are living within sight and sound of each other, and one of them goes to the bad. Thereupon it is the duty of Smith, Jones and Brown to rescue Robinson. If they succeed, God will give him a seat in Heaven; if they fail, or neglect their duty, God will cast him into Hell. Thus Robinson's fate depends upon the sympathy, self-sacrifice, and wisdom of Smith, Jones and Brown. Want of heart on their part, and even want of sense, are alike fatal to his chance of salvation. God lets them do their best; if they do nothing he is just as serene; and at the day of judgment he sends Robinson to bliss or damnation, accordingly as Smith, Jones and Brown—separately or collectively—have succeeded or failed in keeping him out of the gutter.

What a view of God! And what a ghastly, round-about way of stating the truth that religion is powerless to save the fallen, that men and women can only be elevated by secular agencies!

This truth has always been proclaimed by Freethinkers. It is a commonplace of their teaching. Yet the Churches have ignored or denied it. Here is General Booth, however, announcing it clearly enough to all who will take the theological wadding out of their ears. True, the discovery is late, but better late than never.

It is upon this truth that Booth's scheme is founded. Sometimes, indeed, he forgets it, and talks as though the preaching of Christ and him crucified were enough to regenerate society. But this truth, that

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man is very largely the creature of circumstances, and that evil circumstances should be changed if there is to be any improvement, is the governing idea of his project.

No doubt the "General" seeks an escape from the logical consequences of this truth. He says, for instance, that (p. 286) "to me has been given the idea," as though God *had* intervened and selected him as the human agent. But this is all nonsense. In the first place, if God gave Booth the idea, he might as well have given him the cash. In the second place, the idea—or, rather, the set of ideas—is by no means a revelation. Every part of Booth's scheme has been advocated by other men, and several parts are already reduced to practice, though not on the gigantic scale he contemplates. His Farm Colony is admittedly borrowed from Mr. E. T. Craig, a veteran Freethinker, who was the soul of the Ralahine experiment. With this gentleman Booth has had interviews; indeed, the "General"—perhaps, with Mr. Stead's assistance—has simply picked other men's brains, although he takes care to conceal his indebtedness.

Naturally, too, the astute leader of the Salvation Army recognises the necessity of a *pious* appeal to wealthy Christians. He therefore "asserts in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving souls" that he "seeks the salvation of the body" (p. 45). And he declares (p. 3) it must not be supposed that he is "less dependent upon the plans" or that he "seeks anything short of the old conquest." At the same time (p. 279) he "does not think that any sectarian differences or religious feelings whatever ought to be imported into this question." Is it not better, he asks, that miserable crowds of men and women should have work, food, clothes, and a home, even with "some peculiar religious notions and practices," than that they should be "hungry, and naked, and homeless, and possess no religion at all"? Put in this way, of course, the question admits of only one answer. But this way of putting it begs the wider question between Christianity and Secularism; for it does not follow that Booth's is the only possible scheme of social reform, or that it is even calculated to succeed.

The real fact is, disguise it how he may, that Booth's scheme is only an extension of the Salvation Army. He promises that there shall be no compulsion, that the poor he gets hold of shall not be pressed into any form of faith, that religious freedom shall be respected. But what will the promise avail? The whole scheme, from top to bottom, is to be worked by the Salvationists; every penny is to pass through Booth's hands, and every order is to issue from his brain. Outsiders are only wanted in the shape of subscribers. It is not idle, then, to suppose that the scheme will, in practice, be anything else than a huge recruiting system for the Salvation Army? We venture to say that if Booth's *first* thought were for the poor, he would invite the formation of an influential Committee, and not seek the monopoly of all the cash and credit for his own sect.

Let us turn now to the scheme itself. Let us see what evils are to be remedied, and the nature of the remedy proposed.

In the opening chapters, written almost exclusively by Mr. Stead, there is a vivid, but of course exaggerated, picture of the diseases of society. The writer has walked through the "shambles of our civilisation," until "it seemed as if God were no longer in this world, but that in his stead reigned a fiend, merciless as Hell, ruthless as the grave." Of course the grave is neither ruthless nor tender; and of course it is not Hell, but the God of Hell, that is merciless. But, apart from these criticisms, it is evident that Mr. Booth-Stead or Mr. Stead-Booth, is aware of much preventible evil; nor are we disposed to quarrel with him for calling it "a satire upon our Christianity," although we might suggest the impossibility of satirising a creed which has to make such shameful confessions after so many centuries of wealth, power and privilege, and such a supreme opportunity of cleansing the world if it had the capacity for the task. This Christianity has failed—disastrously and ignominiously; yet has it played the dog in the manger, and refused to allow Science and Philosophy a trial; and even now, when condemned and self-condemned, it only whines for another chance, like an old offender for the hundredth time in the prisoners' dock.

Eighteen centuries after the advent of "the Redeemer," and in the most pious country in the world, Booth calculates that one-tenth of the population, or about three millions of men, women, and children, are sunk in destitution, vice, and crime. In London alone, the city of churches, where everything but religion is tabooed on Sunday, there are 100,000 prostitutes, 85,000 thieves, and drunkards galore, to say nothing of the paupers, the idle, and the temporarily unemployed. And the disease is getting worse, according to Booth, who declares that something must be done immediately. Well, we will neither dispute his statistics or his forecast, but just take his plan of campaign and see whether it has the remotest chance of success.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

UNITARIANISM.

FOLLOWING the example of the other dissenting bodies the Unitarians are having "a forward movement," displaying renewed activity in placing their views before the masses. Their best paper, the *Inquirer* has for some time been reduced to the popular penny, and they are now seeking by free lectures and the distribution of literature to keep pace with the times.

Probably no Unitarian will deny such a movement was needed. With many converts among the rich and educated, Unitarianism has little hold on the people. For one thing it lacks a popular class of preachers. It has many able, cultured and refined scholars and gentlemen, but no powerful orator capable of attracting the masses. It cannot descend to the brass band and self-advertising methods of "General" Booth and Hugh Price Hughes. It has neither the zeal of the orthodox nor of the unbelievers. We "infidels" have suffered from persecution and it has rendered us sturdy. We have yet to fight for the bare right to exist. In the present century Unitarianism has suffered from respectability. It has been eminently decorous and dull. The *Prospective Review* and the *Theological Review*, two most able magazines, were forced to drop because never dealing with vital points which the people at large could understand and in which they were interested. We are much mistaken if this is not also the case with the *Christian Reformer*, the latest venture of the kind. Worst of all, Unitarianism has suffered from its lack of moral courage

and its tendency to compromise and half measures. It has been felt to be neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring.

The Unitarian congregation is a most heterogenous mixture. All shades of belief are found, from Arians who simply cannot stand the Athanasian Creed, to Agnostics who think chapel-going lends an air of respectability to heresy. One man may be a materialist follower of Priestley, the next a spiritist believing that Jesus was the first of mediums. Out of such elements an effective organisation is impossible. Indeed, the best prospect ministers like Page Hopps and Jas. Martineau look forward to is to make the Church of England broad enough to include *them* while excluding all non-Christians.

The old school of Unitarianism, based on rationalising Biblical exegesis, is dead. James Martineau, the ablest exponent of the least advanced school of modern Unitarians, confesses it. "The Seat of Authority in Religion" can no longer be found in the Church, its records or its miracles. Lardner, Priestley and Belsham no longer suffice. Theodore Parker long since superseded Channing. The Unitarians excommunicated him when alive, and have sought to adopt him since his death. But even Parker, though in advance of his time, came before the modern era of evolution.

Critically, the position of the old Unitarians, who were content with denying the supreme deity of Christ, was strong, as may be seen by any one who will take up such works as Wilson's *Scripture Proofs and Illustrations of Unitarianism* or Yates' *Vindication of Unitarianism*. The doctrine of the Trinity was doubtless an aftergrowth, derived from the contact of Judaism with Paganism. Unitarianism can fairly claim to represent the early Judaic element of Christianity. But it must never be forgotten that it was orthodox Christianity which triumphed. It was the belief in the man-god and his atoning blood, the near approach of the end of the world and the dreadful prospect of eternal torments, which won Europe to the Christian faith. In lopping off what they called the corruptions of Christianity, Unitarians destroyed its roots; what they took for excrescences being really vital outgrowths, not to be removed without injury to the structure. Christianity is nothing if not dogmatic, and Coleridge, who had been a Unitarian, was quite right in denying that they are Christians at all.

The break up of old Unitarianism came in three directions:—1st, Critical. The Improved Version, edited by Belsham and others, began by questioning the authenticity of the two first chapters of Matthew, and when this was endorsed by Prof. Andrews Norton, Unitarianism was embarked on the critical path, bound not only to discard the last verses of Mark, but the whole gospel of John, discredited by Dr. J. J. Tayler and Ezra Abbot, among the best scholars in the party. When Prof. Noyes demonstrated that the Messianic prophecies did not apply to Jesus, it was felt that Biblical infallibility must go. 2nd, Sentimental. The spread of universalism forced Unitarianism into opposition to the orthodox notion of hell as much as into opposition to the orthodox notion of the Trinity. But here it was found that the scriptural authority for the former was far stronger than for the latter. When the Unitarian comes to ask himself "Should I believe in eternal torments even though it were taught in the Bible?" he is bound to decide the question between reason and authority. 3rd, Scientific. Darwin, Spencer, Huxley and others have replaced the anthropomorphic Father of the old Unitarians by an impersonal force, and made more difficult the belief in the supernatural.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin called Unitarianism a feather-bed for a falling Christian. He has to fall before he reaches it. In giving up the Church he is logically forced to resign much that the Church is the main authority for, and this includes the Bible. Having

gone so far, he is compelled to go much further. The hope for Unitarianism is to frankly recognise that dogmatic theism will have to be dropped as much as dogmatic theology. The fruitful service of man will have to be substituted for the vain worship of God. Then may Unitarian ministers hope to hold their own so long as people feel a necessity for moral teachers. Meanwhile their best function is that of serving as stepping-stones to ford the stream which separates the land of authority from the realm of reason.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE EVIL THE CHURCH DOES.

By HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(From the "Twentieth Century,"
(Continued.)

A CLERGYMAN may be intelligent, devout, stainless in his character; he may be as brave as a man and as tender as a woman; he may be as pure as a maiden and as good as a god should be; but if he reaches intellectual conclusions contrary to the statements of the creed, he is doomed to suffering, perhaps to poverty, perhaps to death; doomed by the Church, which arrays herself with the garments of an angel, but scratches with the claws of a cat.

On the other hand, a clergyman may be intellectually feeble, mechanically conventional in his piety, unsavory in reputation, weak in character; he may be a moral coward and harsh in nature; he may have an impure mind and gross instincts, but if he is orthodox, any position the Church has is open to him, he may become a father of Israel, living in luxury and dying in all the odors of sanctity.

What I have said may be repeated thus: The Church is a curse to the world because it rewards mediocrity, coupled with conformity, and punishes superiority, coupled with independence and originality; because its policy paralyses the brain.

Involved in this charge against the Church is a third: It is a curse to the world because it encourages mental dishonesty. By rewarding faithful adherence to the creed and punishing expression of doubts, the Church encourages clergymen to preach what they do not believe, or at least to conceal what they do believe, when they no longer believe the creed. The clergyman knows the Church cannot control his thoughts and has no punishment for heretical opinions, unexpressed. He knows that he may be as heretical as he likes provided he does not repeat his heresies. He knows that if he offends by preaching his heresies he can retain his salary and position by recanting or keeping silent. That is to say, he knows that if he preaches his doubts, as every honest man should, he will lose his position in the Church, but that if he is a hypocrite, as every one who pretends to believe what he does not, or conceals his true opinions through fear of suffering or poverty, is, he cannot retain his position in the Church.

The direct and necessary result of the policy of the Church is to make clergymen mentally dishonest, and I have no doubt that, with the possible exception of politicians, no class of men on earth are more dishonest in their public utterances than clergymen.

I presume that, to a greater or less extent, most clergymen are hypocrites. The constitution and necessities of the Church are such that, unless a clergyman is more or less of a hypocrite he cannot remain a clergyman. A clergyman must hang to one or the other horn of a dilemma: He must have no doubts, in which case he is an imbecile, or he must conceal his doubts, in which case he is a hypocrite.

There may be exceptions to the general statement that all clergymen are imbeciles or hypocrites. It is said that there are exceptions to all rules. I am willing to allow that there are exceptions in this case, but it is my deliberate opinion that there are no

clergymen who have no doubts, and that there are none who preach all their doubts, without sooner or later ceasing to be clergymen. The inevitable conclusion is that all clergymen, who are not rapidly on their way out of the Church, are to a greater or less extent hypocrites. But whether that is true or not, it certainly is true that the policy of the Church is exactly calculated to make clergymen either imbeciles or hypocrites.

Most of you know that I was a clergyman for about fifteen years. The question will naturally arise in your minds: Which was I, an imbecile or a hypocrite? My reply is that I was neither. There was never an hour when I did not have some doubts; therefore I was not an imbecile. There was never a period in my clerical career when I did not preach my doubts; therefore I was not a hypocrite. I came very near not being ordained because I was a heretic. I never was recognised as being a "safe" man. My doubts grew more and more numerous, and as they grew, I preached them, until I preached myself out of the Church.

Many estimable clergymen have convinced themselves that it is wise and right for them to conceal their doubts, believing that truth is dangerous unless it is generously mixed with error. And so they are conscientious hypocrites. They believe it is their duty to God and man for them to be hypocrites. But a conscientious hypocrite is a hypocrite all the same, and I am not sure that he is not the most dangerous species of the genus. I have no doubt that the hypocrites who crucified Christ were conscientious, and I presume he knew they were, but he did not hesitate to brand them as whited sepulchres.

In the fourth place, the Church is a curse to the world because with all its might it bolsters up a false system of morals, and by doing so harbors and clothes with respectability some of the vilest persons in the community, together with many who not very good, but who are not as bad as some of its prominent members.

(To be concluded.)

THE BIRTHDAY OF PIERRE BAYLE. Nov. 18, 1647.

By JULIAN HIBBERT.

SPIRIT that looketh lovingly on all,
Nor with least love on misled hearts and frail;
Sweet Charity! This day from out the pale
Of the dull common place thy voice doth call!
The natal day of one who did install
The world with happy truths, though Might turned pale
And trembled as he saw the cherished veil
Of Falsehood—touched by one Freethinker—fall!
Mother of Toleration! searching Doubt!
Twin born of Freedom! Still our cause avail;
Help us to put to flight the goblin-rout,
That chain men's thoughts in Custom's dreariest jail;
And onward as she goes, bid Reason shout,
Tocsin of deathless power—the name of Bayle.
—From "The New Moral World."

BLESSED BE YE POOR.

The following items are gleaned from a New York paper:—
Dr. Morgan Dix, rector of Old Trinity, has \$15,000. His assistant has \$3,000. Of the chapels belonging to the parish, Trinity Chapel yields \$3,000 to Dr. Swope, and the assistants in charge of the others have \$4,000. Dr. Huntingdon, rector of Grace Church, has \$15,000 and a house the rental of which is worth at least \$5,000 more. St. Bartholomew is said to pay \$19,000 to its rector, Dr. Cress, who, being wealthy, retains nothing for himself. Dr. Brown, of St. Thomas, receives \$15,000. Dr. Rainsford, of St. George, has \$10,000, and, being well to do, is said to give it all away. A dozen other Episcopal parishes in the city pay from \$4,000 to \$3,000 a year. The Bishop receives \$15,000. Among the Presbyterians, Dr. John Hall draws \$20,000; Dr. Paxton is reported to receive \$10,000; Dr. Parkhurst, \$3,000. Rev. Robert Collyer, Unitarian, has \$10,000. The pastor of the largest Methodist church has \$5,000 and parsonage, the Methodist bishop also has \$5,000. In Brooklyn, Dr. Talmage is said to receive \$12,000; Dr. Abbott, \$3,000. It may be added that in Dr. Paxton's choir one soprano singer receives at least \$4,000.—
Christian World.

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

Intending subscribers to the Forder Testimonial Fund will, I hope, remit as soon as possible. I should like to present the Testimonial at the annual dinner of the London Secular Federation in January. There must be hundreds of Secularists who know Mr. Forder and what he has done for the cause, and who have not yet contributed to this fund. May I ask them to consult their exchequers and act as handsomely as they can?

I have said in the N. S. S. Almanack, now on sale, that the Freethought party is everywhere showing signs of renewed activity. Our financial position is improving and an unusual number of new members have lately been enrolled. Mr. Bradlaugh has had splendid audiences at his recent Freethought lectures in the Hall of Science, and I also find larger audiences than ever in all the towns I visit. It is a source of gratification, too, that the sale of our literature is constantly increasing.

While we are pushing ahead, however, we should exercise some discretion. When a lecture list has to be made up I fear the Branches sometimes jump at offers that they should decline. No one should be allowed to lecture on the Freethought platform whose antecedents are unknown. New comers are generally zealous, but they should serve a reasonable probation before they occupy any representative position. The credit of the party is far more important than the momentary convenience of a single Branch.

My attention has been called to a Mr. Long who is in the November lecture-list of the West Ham Branch. I make no charges against him, but I am obliged to say it is injudicious to put him forward as one of our advocates. If my warning is neglected by any Branch I shall have to lay the matter before the Executive. This is one of the unpleasant duties of my position, but I took the presidency "for better or worse."

Unfortunately I am not so well as I could wish, and the questions on the Blasphemy Laws for parliamentary candidates must wait until next week.

At the December meeting of the Executive I shall have to submit proposals for carrying into effect the Conference resolution as to centralisation of the lecture-system. Meanwhile I shall be glad to hear from any workers in the party who have suggestions to make

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIAN WARS.—Prof. Leoni Levi, the statistician, has calculated that since the commencement of the Christian era there have been 286 great wars in which Christian countries have engaged. Classified as to cause they are as follows:—Forty-four wars of ambition, to obtain extension of country. Twenty-two wars of plunder, tribute, etc. Twenty-four wars of retaliation or revenge. Eight wars to settle questions of honor or prerogative. Six wars arising from disputed claims to some territory. Forty-one wars arising from disputed titles and crowns. Thirty wars commenced under pretence of assisting an ally. Twenty-three wars originating in jealousy of rival greatness. Five wars which have grown out of commerce. Fifty-five civil wars. Twenty-eight wars on account of religion.—*The Truthseeker.*

Mr. J. M. Robertson pays Birmingham his first visit next Sunday (Nov. 30). He lectures three times in Baskerville Hall. We hope our Birmingham friends will give him a hearty reception.

A Mr. Cohen, the name is a common Jewish one, sought to avoid paying his dentist on the curious ground, for a Jew, that much of his work was done on a Sunday. Judge Bayley remarked that the defence was a shabby one, and decided that dentists did not come under the Sunday Observance Act.

ACID DROPS.

"Commissioner" Tucker, with his wife, one of Booth's daughters, recently paid Bournemouth a visit. In the course of her speech, Mrs. Booth-Tucker said that the Hindus were giving up their idols, and "too many of them, particularly in the colleges, were following Bradlaugh." We are delighted to hear it. They had better follow Bradlaugh than Booth.

The Dean of Worcester has been lecturing on "Joseph Barker the Infidel." Why not lecture on the death of Queen Anne, or, better still, on Bradlaugh the Infidel? This is a subject that would make a demand on the Dean's intelligence, if he has any, which seems dubious from the report of his lecture.

After denouncing gambling at the Church Congress the clergy have gone home to the congenial occupations of organising church bazaars and lotteries, and playing whist for threepenny points.

The *purity* of the Bible was dwelt on by the Rev. W. R. Thompson, of St. Nicholas's Presbyterian Church, Shrewsbury, in a sermon on the text "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" Unfortunately the report in the local press does not give us full particulars of this interesting discourse. We are told what Mr. Thompson said about Bible science, but not what he said about Bible *purity*. Did he explain the exquisite delicacy of the stories of Judah and Tamar, Lot and his daughters, the Levite and his concubine, etc., etc.? Did he give a literal translation, instead of a semi-decorous paraphrase, of certain parts of Ezekiel and the Song of Solomon? These are the points we are curious about, but the report is silent. Perhaps the editor reflected that his paper went into family circles; perhaps he feared a prosecution for obscenity.

The relatives of the late Mr. Wood, a respected parishioner of Hucknall-Torkard, desired that he should be buried with a Nonconformist service. The vicar, the Rev. J. E. Phillips, informed them that unless he officiated he could not be buried in the same grave as his wife, and this condition was reluctantly assented to. The instance is one of many showing the disposition of the clergy to frustrate as far as possible the intentions of the Burials Act of 1880.

The Archbishop of Canterbury having been so long delaying to give judgment in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln, we will, at the risk of being included among the prophets, predict that the judgment will be more conciliatory than convincing. It will seek to harmonise the oil of Ritualism with the water of Puritanism, and will succeed in settling nothing. So far from bringing peace to the Church, it will increase strife, and so far as it seeks to stay Ritualism will be unheeded.

This prophecy is inspired. If anyone doubts it the proof is that the doubter will be eternally damned. Amen.

The Bishop of Sinesius is accused of employing the captain of his bodyguard to murder a Greek priest named Stojan.

"One Who Knows" writes in the *Echo* that one of the results of General Booth's shelters is the increase and spread of vermin.

The Newcastle Board of Guardians have been squabbling over a boy who was taken from the workhouse and indentured to a Baptist. It appears that the boy was to attend a Church of England gospel-shop, but he crawled off to a Baptist establishment; a fact which so roused the ire of the Rev. J. M. Lister that he moved that the indentures be cancelled. But more sober counsels prevailed, and the master undertook to see that the boy did go to church. Still, holy Mr. Lister is hardly satisfied. He means to keep an eye on the boy, for the Church is not to be cheated of even a poor little pauper apprentice.

Principal Caird is an intelligent man as well as an eloquent preacher. But even intellectual preachers talk nonsense

when they select the subject of the Trinity. In a sermon on "God Manifest in the Flesh," fully reported in the *Scottish Pulpit*, he contends that the doctrine of the Trinity "enables us to think of our God as one, without thinking of Him—being constrained to think of Him as solitary." Principal Caird goes on to eloquently show that from the life of a God existing alone through an eternity of idleness before the creating fiat went forth, all elements of nobleness and blessedness known to man are excluded. But then it appears God the Father had God the Son and God the Holy Ghost with him, and that we suppose proved a satisfactory party. But we cannot conceive of a son of the same age, or eternity, with his father—and Principal Caird tells us that "He is described as the only begotten Son, which was—that is anterior to his earthly history—formed and constructed in the bosom of His Father." So that anterior to this the Father must have been alone with the Ghost, and since all three are one, the Trinity must be just as solitary and wretched as Principal Caird represents the Unitarian and Theists' God to be. A man doesn't get any additional company by saying he is composed of body, soul and spirit.

We have great sympathy with the temperance movement as long as it is a temperate and not an intemperate movement. We see no other necessity for so much gospel cant being mixed up with it than the necessity for modern sky-pilots showing some concern for secular well being. Yet here is the *Temperance World* calling it a "Christian movement," while at the same time it records that "the drink traffic in India is condemned both by the Mohammedan and the Hindu religions, and that the honor of starting the temperance movement in opposition to drinking customs imported by Christians is due to a Bengal gentleman, the late Prof. Peary Churn Sicar.

The *Christian at Work* vigorously says: "Only the judgment day will reveal the egregious blunders and the tergiversation and downright lying resorted to make the Bible by turns a sin-to-drink-a-glass-of-wine book and a boiled-grape-juice book." The fact is, that from drunken Noah to Jesus Christ—who turned water into wine, instituted a wine sacrament, and promised his disciples new wine in his kingdom—there is more countenance given to drinking than to teetotalism in the Bible.

"A. M. B." (a clergyman, we believe) writes a foolish letter on Hospitals to a Glasgow paper. He does not seem to have heard of pre-Christian hospitals in Greece, and earlier still in Egypt, to say nothing of India. A plentiful lack of knowledge is too common in these champions of "the faith." "A. M. B." should read a little history, or cease writing to the papers and "play the fool nowhere but in his own house."

The *Flaming Sword* of Chicago (Nov. 1) has an article on "God the Mother," who, it is said, has yet to appear. Jesus Christ, it says, was God the Father, but God the Mother has yet to display herself. We should have thought she must have displayed herself before there could be any God the Son.

How efficacious the Christian oath is may be judged from the statement of Judge Bedwell, at Hull, that he had for some time ceased to make out commitments for perjury, as he found that he should be flooding the Assize Courts if he did so.

The Portsmouth Protestants are up in arms against the spread of Ritualism and the offerings of masses for the dead, etc. But the churches must make themselves attractive somehow. The more its doctrines are discredited by reason the more must the churches appeal to the senses and the sentiment.

The *Western Daily Mercury* reports an interview with Mrs. Gould, mother of one of the survivors of H.M.S. *Serpent*. "It's God's work; oh, I know it's God's work," repeated the woman; "for I had been praying to God for the safety of the ship ever since she went away." She thinks God has concerned himself for the safety of her son, though he has swept almost all the rest of the crew to destruction. How typical is this of the whole effect of

religion and of the illogical means by which it retains its power.

An interesting article on South American Republics, contributed by Dr. Felix Oswald to *Open Court*, illustrates the baneful effects of religion in those parts. Of the influence of the priests in Ecuador he says: "By a thorough monopoly of education institutes, by a jealous control of the press, and of what might be called the vocal instruction of the masses, a million descendants of Inquisition-ridden ancestors have been kept from as much as suspecting the fact that the night of mediæval insanity has anywhere been broken down by the dawn of a new era." On the other hand, a brilliant future is predicted for Chili, where, as far back as 1856, a scholar and Freethinker, Don Manuel Montt, was elected President, and where the education of the young has been wrested from the hands of priests.

Sir R. Temple, who has long resided among the heathen Hindus, says there is "no misery on earth like that of London." What a comment on English Christianity!

Pious Billy, Emperor of Germany, has "invited" Lieutenant Colonel Von Egidy to resign his commission. This gentleman's crime was the authorship of a sceptical volume called *Serious Thoughts*.

Our Work, referring to education in Germany, says that "After devotion to God, the chief thing taught the scholars is devotion to the Emperor." If this is so, Germany must be fully half a century behind France in the matter of education.

A Nonconformist minister having purchased the title of LL.D. from a small university at Athens, Tennessee, U.S.A., a brother minister passed round the following at the next church assembly:

"Made of Athens, ere we part,
Can you tell to us the art
How to gain an LL.D.,
Fresh from Athens, Tennessee?"

A pamphlet called *A Vision of the Future* predicts that "All mankind is to acknowledge one God, profess one Religion, and submit with a wise joy to one just and all-comprehending Governments." The writer doesn't fix the date, so it will be useless to try and prove he is wrong. All we can say is substantially the same prophecy was made over two thousand years ago, and it has not come to pass yet.

The *Christian World* protests against Mr. Stead's claiming Mr. John Morley as "a great religious teacher." "That he is a fervent moralist," says the *C. W.*, "no one can doubt, and that his moral standard is higher than that of many who have professed to base their morals on religion must be admitted. But if he is 'a great religious teacher,' it follows that religion is wholly included in morality; and this, we need hardly say, no Christian can admit."

Writing on Sir W. Scott's *Diary*, the *C. W.* regrets that he does not seem to have been "penetrated and transfigured by passionate acceptance of Christ." Well, what man of such genius ever was warped by "passionate acceptance" of another man, whether Jesus of Nazareth or any other person?

The Rev. G. S. Reaney, a popular Congregational preacher, has left that body, the reason he assigns being its isolation and overwork of its ministers. It is expected he will secure a more comfortable berth in the Church of England to which he has "verted."

By the way, the *Christian World* discounts Mr. Reaney's passage from Congregationalism to the Church of England. His present secession is "not the first in his history," and "his tendency is migratory." Perhaps so; but Freethinkers always said the same of Joseph Barker, who was everything by turns and nothing long, yet Christian journals did not consider that this affected his secession from Freethought.

The parish priest of Cronstadt has a reputation for working miracles. He prays over the sick, and they are said to recover from chronic diseases, after being given over by the physicians. This wonderful gentleman recently visited

St. Petersburg, where he stayed at one of the most fashionable houses in the city. When the sick heard of his presence they flocked in such numbers that the thoroughfare was blocked. They wanted to get near him, if only to touch or kiss his robe, and it was with great difficulty that he could be conveyed to his carriage.

What a picture of superstition! The crowd of fools, such as lived in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago; and the miraculous man of God, staying at a swell house, and riding in a carriage.

Canon Scott-Robertson has been reckoning up the sums contributed in 1889 from Great Britain and Ireland towards the conversion of the heathen. His figures are as under:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Church of England Societies | £523,226 |
| Joint Church and Nonconformist Societies | 217,963 |
| English and Welsh Nonconformist Societies..... | 364,652 |
| Scotch and Irish Presbyterian Societies..... | 185,646 |
| Roman Catholic Societies | 9,819 |

Making a total of £1,301,306 wasted in one year on the pretext of bringing the heathen the glorious news of the gospel of damnation and making them incur it by their rejection of the said gospel.

Why do the heathen rage? Because they get so little of the cash subscribed for their benefit.

It will be seen the Catholics do not shell out much for the heathen. They save their money for the conversion of infidel England. Yet they boast too of making as many converts abroad as the Protestants.

Canon Liddon left by will some £47,226 together with a magnificent library. Of such is the kingdom of heaven!

The Jaina sect of Gwalior are in want of a god. They have accordingly petitioned the Viceroy of India to permit their worshipped image, known as Ruth Bima, to be converted into a god. It seems the poor image can only take on deityhood by being carried in public procession, and this needs government sanction. Ruth Bima is likely to be just as useful as Jehovah, Vishnu or any other member of the Pantheon.

An American religious journal is trying to get the hands of law on a clerical contributor, who palmed off a manuscript copy of an English novel as an original story. He probably learnt this business through following the common practice of palming off another person's sermon as his own.

An incident at Vienna is a good illustration of the clerical trade on the fear of death. The pastor of the Protestant church, says the *Daily News*, seemed to fear that Professor Koch's cure for consumption would involve the loss of "one of the great means of influencing his flock. He said that he was surprised to see the great commotion created by the news that one kind of death was about to be done away with, and he reminded the congregation, in the most impressive manner, that whatever Dr. Koch might still discover and invent, he could not drive death out of the world, that even if people did not die of infected lungs, they would be sure to die of something else sooner or later."

There is the secret of priestcraft. "Sinners," exclaims the priest, "you all must die!" That frightens the poor silly wretches, and they crowd around him to be saved from post-mortem evils. As for the priest himself, he might say with Iago, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse."

Hugh Price Hughes wants another £3,000 for his Wesleyan Sisterhood, but gives no assurance of their converting any fresh Atheist shoemakers.

"What do the Ritualists hold?" All the best bishoprics and most of the best livings in England.

Archdeacon Farrar's sermon at Westminster Abbey in favor of General Booth's scheme was heard by a crowded congregation. One part of it is worth notice. "First," he said, "the country is being more and more depleted, the great cities are becoming more and more densely overcrowded, and in great cities there is always a tendency to the deterioration of manhood—morally, physically, and

spiritually. Secondly, our population is increasing at the rate of nearly a thousand a day, and the most rapid increase is among the most destitute and unfit." Precisely so, and General Booth's scheme aims at the more rapid reproduction of these very classes. Oh for some power to silence Christian sentimentalism, and stop Christian philanthropy for a generation or two! We should have a clearer prospect by that time, and the social problem would be nearing a solution on the lines of science and humanity.

M. Faure's proposition for the total abolition of the French Budget for Religious Worship was negatived by a substantial majority. The French Government evidently thinks it is the best policy to pay for the non-interference of the priests in politics.

We see from *La France* that M. Louis Jacolliot is dead. Though only two years in Asia he wrote most successful books of travel and surprising descriptions of India. His most famous book, *La Bible dans l'Inde*, ascribes most of the Bible stories to that land. Whether M. Jacolliot had good grounds for his opinions, or was deceived by the Brahmans, or drew on his imagination for his facts, is still an open question.

It appears that complete liberty of affirmation is not yet obtained in France, a M. Nicolas, of Rochemaine, having been fined 200 francs for refusing to take the oath when called to serve on a jury. A subscription has been started to pay the fine, and the proceeding should strengthen the hands of deputy Forcioli, who has charge of a bill for the entire abolition of the oath. The *N. S. S. Almanack*, by the way, contains a valuable item by Mr. Bradlaugh on the right to affirm, giving the statutory form in which the oath should be objected to.

Those good Christians who object to ridicule should see the pamphlet on man's descent, by the Rev. F. O. Morris. The cover is illustrated with a poor picture of a hideous monkey on a donkey, blowing a trumpet, whence issues the words "Homo Sum." Underneath are the words: "Man is descended from a hairy quadruped, furnished with a tail and pointed ears.—Darwin." This precious production is "dedicated, by permission, to her Majesty the Queen."

Edmund Yates is not a very religious person, yet he says he is constantly thinking of the next *World*.

QUESTIONS.

By the sea, by the desert midnight sea,
Stands a youth,
His heart full of anguish, his head full of doubt,
And with sullen lips he questions the waves:

"Oh, solve to me the Riddle of Life,
The painful primordial riddle,
Which already has racked so many heads,
Heads in hieroglyphic caps,
Heads in turbans and black berrets,
Heads in wigs, and myriad other
Poor perspiring human heads;
What is the meaning of Man?
Whence comes he? Whither goes he?
Who dwells there above in the golden stars?"

The waves murmur their everlasting murmur,
The wind sweeps, the clouds scud,
The stars glitter indifferent and cold,
And a fool awaits an answer.

—Heine.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (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) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 23, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne Street, Liverpool; at 11, "A World Without God"; at 3, "Mistakes of Jesus"; at 7, "Heaven and Hell."

Thursday, November 27, Radical Club, Peckham, at 8, "Heaven and Hell." Admission free.

November 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

S. S.—Ingersoll criticises the Mosaic story as it stands. He does not necessarily commit himself to a belief in the existence of Moses, and he is well aware of the late date of the Pentateuch.

G. W.—Blushing is the result of too much self-consciousness. Try to fix your attention on what is going on and forget yourself.

NAMELOT.—Will try to find room.

T. A. H.—We note your explanation.

ARCHIE THOMAS.—Most of your questions are dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Christianity and Progress*.

W. GILMOUR.—We are obliged.

J. B.—"Let it sleep in the shade." It is hardly worth a dissection. We believe there is a strong undercurrent of Free-thought in Scotland, but we do not know enough of it to write on Scotch Agnosticism.

J. BLAND.—Your letter is interesting. We respect all honest differences of opinion.

H. G. S.—See "Acid Drops." Yes, Ingersoll's pamphlets are right things for Christians. The Colonel draws out their teeth—we beg pardon, their superstition—with such a winning smile.

R. NICHOLLS.—Mr. Foote feels the want of a little rest and change. Glad to hear your own circle is in good health.

H. R. CLIFTON.—The practice was common in Ireland. You are welcome to distribute the extract from our article on Booth's Book.

J. WELBUM.—Orders for literature should be sent to Mr. Forder as above.

V. F. T.—Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C., will send you a complete catalogue on application. Cassell's *Religions of the World* may be recommended.

R. H.—Something will be done at Bristol shortly. If half a dozen Freethinkers on the spot will put their hands to the work, Mr. Foote will come and lecture and start a Branch.

T. PHILLIPS.—If your new Branch has only ten members the local sky-pilot need not crow so lustily. Jesus had not one member left when the police ran him in. There were just twelve before, of whom one ratted, and the rest skedaddled.

Y. S. T.—Dr. Lunn is very likely as truthful as Price Hughes. Hughes says it was Sister Beatrice who converted the Atheist Shoemaker, and now Lunn says it was Sister Lily. One is as true as the other.

M. KELLY.—We acknowledge what we receive. Papers sometimes go astray. You will see our address at the head of this column.

J. TOMKINS.—Papers and cuttings are always welcome.

H. GRAHAM (Woolwich) writes: "I should like to thank you for a very great benefit. When you lectured here on 'Why I am an Atheist,' I attended, being at that time what is termed a Christian. Since then I have reasoned and read for myself, and I am very happy to tell you I have broken the chains of superstition. I am to-day a better father and a more thoughtful husband than before. I say this, not in praise of myself, but, in the words of my wife, to give the Freethought movement the credit of my bettered condition. I am now a member of the Woolwich Branch."

N. S. S. SPECIAL FUND.—M. Christopher, 2s.

C. H. KELF.—We hope the Newcastle Branch will be able to get better accommodation. Lecture Notices must be sent on separate slips of paper. We cannot undertake to copy them from letters.

YEOVIL FRIEND.—Your anonymity is respected. We are sorry that bigotry is so rampant in Yeovil.

REX REGES.—See "Acid Drops."

JOSEPH BROWN.—The dates are booked. Please send subscription lists on separate slips of paper.

J. BROWN, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following for the N.E. Secular Federation: Chester-le-Street Branch, 5s.; R. H. W., 5s.; Mr. Tullen, 5s.; Mr. Bowen, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Peacock, 1s. 4d.; Mr. Robinson, 2s.; Cramlington Branch, 3s.; South Shields Branch, 6s.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Thanks. In our next.

F. LESTER.—We criticised Miss Weston's *Hard Knots* some months ago in a leading article entitled "Fooling Jack."

F. THORNET.—Yes, Mr. Forder will continue to work for the cause. His heart is in it.

NOVOCASTRIAN—Glad to hear you approve our comments on the Coote and Lunn clique. Thanks for the cuttings.

H. W.—Thanks for your efforts to spread a little enlightenment in that benighted district. See "Acid Drops."

E. G. BILLINGTON wants to know of any shop in Worcester that supplies the *Freethinker*, or of any Secularist in the place with whom he could have an occasional chat.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following subscriptions:—F. Thornett, 5s.; James Moffat, 10s.; A Yeovil Friend, 10s.; A Yeovil Friend, 5s.; K. H., 5s.; J. Brumage, 5s.; R. Nicholls, £2 2s.; Donald James, 5s.; H. L. J., 6d.; E. Oliver, 10s.; S. S., 5s.; J. Unsworth, 2s. 6d.; James Fulton, 5s.; W. Palmer, 1s. Birmingham:—J. H. R., 1s.; J. P., 2s. 6d.; G. Coulton, 2s. 6d.; L. Kuphal, 1s.; W. H. Woods, 1s.; A Lady Friend, 1s.; E. Palmer, 1s.; S. G. Middleton, 1s.; B. A. Millichamp, 2s.; J. Evans, 2s. 6d.; collected Mr. Foote's lecture, 9s. 8d.; D. Baker, 5s.; M. Christopher, 2s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Open Court—Menschentum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Mid-Surrey Gazette—Camberwell and Peckham Star—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Western Daily Mercury—Our Work—Freidenker—Loyal American—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel—Woolwich Gazette—Eastern Argus—Midland Evening News—Bournemouth Guardian—Umpire—Modern Society—Echo—Twentieth Century—Faithful Words—Watts' Literary Guide—Der Lichtfreund—The Flaming Sword—Portsmouth Evening News—Lancashire Evening Post—Eastern Morning News.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

AFTER serving for fifteen years as Secretary to the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder is resigning the post. His best days have been spent in the party's service, and his health is now precarious. In these circumstances, it has been deemed an act of justice to present him with a testimonial in recognition of his invaluable work as a lecturer and organiser, and to assist him in the Freethought publishing business, to which he will devote the remainder of his life. The Testimonial has the hearty support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the Presidency during the period of Mr. Forder's service.

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|-------------------|---|----|----|--------------|---|----|----|
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| A. Poore | 0 | 1 | 0 | | | | |

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the wretched, depressing weather, Mr. Foote had good audiences at Birmingham on Sunday. Mr. Daniel Baker bravely left his home and presided in the morning and evening, Mr. Middleton taking the chair in the afternoon.

The rumpus over Mr. Foote's late lecture in the Birmingham Town Hall has subsided. The Mayor recently referred

to the subject before the Council, and said that the policy of giving the use of the Town Hall once a year to the Secularists would be continued unless the Council passed a vote to the contrary. His worship disclosed the identity of the anonymous correspondent of the *Post*, who began the row. "E. S." was E. Shorthouse, a brother of Mr. Shorthouse the pious author of *John Inglesant*.

Mr. Foote lectures at Liverpool to-day (Nov. 23), and hopes to see a good gathering of the local Freethinkers, whose support will be asked for the scheme to provide the Branch with suitable premises. He will address them specially on the subject after the afternoon lecture. It will be noticed that the lectures are to be delivered in the fresh hall, the Camden Hall being too small, and the Concert Hall being no longer available. Perhaps Mr. Foote's Liverpool friends will do their best to advertise the meetings.

The N. S. S. Almanack is selling well. It is hoped that the whole issue will be cleared out before Christmas. Every member who can afford it should purchase a copy. The President will be pleased if he can report to the Executive next week that the printer's bill is already covered.

The London Freethinkers' Ball takes place next Wednesday. This is the last notice for the dilatory applicants for tickets. There is a capital programme for the non-dancers, and Mr. Foote will deliver a brief address in the course of the evening.

So far the audiences at the Peckham course of Free Lectures have not been satisfactory. Perhaps there will be an improvement at the last lecture, next Thursday, which will be delivered by Mr. Foote. The admission is free, and Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their Christian friends to such meetings.

After Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture at the Hall of Science this evening (Nov. 23) the annual collection for the Benevolent Fund will be made. We announce the fact so that those who mean to attend may take a necessary provision of five-pound notes or coin of the realm.

A special meeting of the Newcastle Branch will be held this afternoon (Nov. 23), at 3, in the rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street. Every member should attend.

The North Eastern Secular Federation's annual Tea and Ball will take place at the Arcade Assembly Rooms, Newcastle, on Friday, Dec. 26. Tickets, 1s. 6d. each, can be had at Peter Weston's, 77 Newgate Street. The number is limited, and those who want them should apply early.

Mrs. Thornton Smith lectures at the Battersea Secular Hall, on Friday, Nov. 23. The subject will be "Secularism." Some tickets (3d. each) will be sold to defray printing and other expenses. It is hoped that Battersea Freethinkers will muster in strong force.

Mr. John Tomkins writes to the *Mid-Surrey Gazette*, commenting on the fact that a copy of the *Freethinker* lying on the table of the Battersea Free Library, had Christian comments written upon it. Mr. Tomkins says: "If I were to write across one of the religious newspapers which lie on the table certain other passages taken from the same book as the words above quoted I could make the cheeks of the individual who wrote the last-named words on the page of the *Freethinker* burn with shame. "Corruption" is hardly the word for a Christian to use at random, and I can safely say that I have never known the pages of the *Freethinker* to contain any freethought sentiment to which that term could apply."

An Agnostic Club has been formed in Boston. Dr. Rufus K. Noyes is president and J. P. Mendum vice-president.

Charles Watts, in *Secular Thought*, tells a story how Prof Goldwin Smith was once waited upon and asked for a donation to help on the work of discovering the lost tribes of Israel. The Professor is stated to have replied: "I can give nothing to aid you in discovering the ten tribes that are lost, but I will give you a big donation when you can manage to lose the other two."

The *Academy* (Nov. 15), reviewing Dr. Watkins' Bampton Lectures, says: "The one thing which may be considered

absolutely certain about the Fourth Gospel is that it is widely separated from the Synoptics, that its Christ is an ideal figure, that its narration is a perversion, in a dogmatic interest, of the genuine tradition, and that its discourses are theological disquisitions freely composed by the author, mingled it may be with some authentic reminiscences."

We agree with all this except the last which indeed does not run on all fours with the rest. If the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is an ideal figure and the speeches attributed to him were composed by the author, as is evident from a comparison with the epistles attributed to John, the "authentic reminiscences" are a may-be without any logical warranty.

According to *Two Worlds*, the Rev. Edward Gough of Barrowford, says "Jesus was no more crucified by literal Jews than he is crucified by all wicked men everywhere." What is this but giving up the literal truth of the gospels?

La Verité Philosophique presents its readers with a portrait of Mr. Foote, together with an account of his life, translated from Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Copies may be obtained of Mr. Forder.

G. E. Macdonald says in *Freethought*: "Out this way the Holy Ghost is looked upon as a played-out Eastern product, which our residents do not take kindly to. California is a state of great resources herself, and if we conclude that we want holy spirits we can raise them here. We know there is soil somewhere between Crescent City and San Diego where they will do well, and if we once get the industry started and have the McKinley bill to shut out foreign competition, we shall be sending them East in tanks and on platform cars before the presidential election of 1892."

The *Christian Register*, of New York, says that to-day "Parker is honored with Channing and Emerson among the prophets of Unitarianism. How is this? Channing believed in miracles, in the literal resurrection of Christ, in the pre-existence of Jesus, in future punishment, in the divine and miraculous revelation of Christianity. If Channing was a prophet, Parker and Emerson were false prophets. If Unitarians have come to acknowledge Parker and Emerson as their prophets, they have come to ignore miracles, to degrade Jesus to the level of a man, to deny the existence of a personal God. They have abandoned Christianity and come to the borders of Pantheism."

At a meeting in the Vestry Hall, Camberwell, called to consider the proposed Sunday opening of the Free Library, opposed by the Revs. Kelley, Roberts and Thorpe, and supported by Messrs. Ramsey, Jones, Ben Ellis, and Mrs. Seal, was carried by 135 votes against 76.

Some one has sent us a copy of the *Cape Register*. It contains a queer editorial on "Freethought." The editor has been told that every sixth man at Cape Town, capable of thinking, is a Freethinker; but he doubts whether many men are capable of thinking, and anyhow he can't give space for controversial letters. Still, the article shows there is a decomposition of "faith" going on in South Africa.

We have but brief accounts as yet of the Congress of the American Secular Union at Portsmouth, Ohio. It appears that Dr. R. B. Westbrook has been re-elected President, and Miss Ira C. Craddock, secretary. Addresses were delivered by Judge Waite of Chicago, Thaddeus B. Wakeman, Voltairine de Cleyre, Dr. Paul Carus, Charles Watts and others.

The *Progressive Thinker* of Chicago, Nov. 8, is almost entirely taken up with a laborious attempt to prove that the American Jesuits were party to the assassination of President Lincoln. The accusation is founded on Father Chiniquy's *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome*. Father Chiniquy claims to have warned Lincoln before his death.

Ingersoll's oration on Walt Whitman will be published by us next week in pamphlet form. It was delivered in the Horticultural Hall to a crowded audience, Whitman himself occupying an arm-chair on the platform. A handsome sum was realised for the venerable poet. Ingersoll's oration was a splendid effort.

MIRACLES.

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS.

[CONTINUED.]

THE result of human experience or science is that all things work by law, or rather methods, which like those of the Medes and Persians, alter not, which are seen and known in their effects, the sum of which forces constitutes nature or existences. Geologists say these laws have been in existence for thousands or millions of years, and may, for all they know, have been in operation for ever. Although astronomers say that this so solid-seeming earth and these "everlasting hills," were at one time incandescent and a part of the sun, together with the other members of the solar system, yet they can with reason uphold this view without presupposing the existence in past ages of laws which now are relegated to the domain of nothingness. The latest teaching of science is that nature is an aggregate of laws, forming one great primary law "Evolution." Speaking of Evolution in his "Essay on the Use of the Imagination," Professor Tyndall says in his fearless way: "The essence and core of this hypothesis is that not alone the more ignoble forms of animalcula or animal life, and not alone the nobler forms of the horse and the lion, not alone the exquisite and wonderful mechanism of the human body, but that the human mind itself, emotion, intellect, will and all their phenomena, were once latent in a fiery cloud." We may not agree entirely with the hypothesis of evolution thus so strongly stated, but that evolution does exist, everyone gifted with intelligence must admit. Evolution is but growth. We see it in the development of the child from the primary life-cell to the perfected and reasonable man; we see it in the growth of ideas, in Christianity itself, in everything that is borne to our knowledge through our senses. We find this to be the case with the solar system, and galaxies and systems almost beyond our ken seem to obey the imperial sway of laws united in the one grand principle of evolution. What place then have a few paltry miracles to fill in this grand scheme of nature opening everywhere beyond our expanding gaze? Why should the eternal laws of matter be broken for the sake of a few poor cripples, or for the raising men and women from the tomb to wend once more their weary way across this troubled earth, or for the sake of strengthening a crowd in its folly because it has been so foolish as to follow an ascetic into the desert without making provision for hunger. Modern science utters her judgment when she declares miracles do not happen, and have not happened; that nothing has interfered with the orderly progression and working of the mechanism which forms our universe.

But it may be urged by the believers in miracles, who like the drowning man clutch at anything, if scientific men at the present day see no evidence of the miraculous, still men have existed in bygone ages, who may have been witnesses to isolated facts and events, which have left no trace behind them, save the recorded evidence of those who witnessed them and the influence they exerted upon those who believed in them, and this brings us to the historical aspect of the question. We have the declaration of the greatest historians, that that which has once occurred in the domain of history can never be known, pure and simple, as it occurred. No two human beings view the same object or event with the same eyes, nor do they draw the same conclusions. Complete ignorance and complete knowledge are the two poles between which opinions gyrate. To the audience seated before a conjuror, the feats he accomplishes are unaccountable from any knowledge they possess, and are really to them miraculous, but they do not name them miracles, simply because they have the conviction that these feats admit of natural explanation, and are effects of adequate causes which can be grasped by the human intellect. Hundreds of miracles have lost their reality to the people of England to-day simply because, if they think about the matter at all, they are convinced they may be either traced to natural causes or have had no existence save in the brains of those who retailed them for our edification. Yet the Christian population of England, to-day, believe in miracles, many of which have been disproved and all of which stand upon insufficient evidence. This is the opinion of Mr. Froude, whose historical knowledge, few who know his deep research into past events will dispute, although his accuracy in reporting occurring events has been laid open to severe criticism. Mr. Froude declares the miracles contained in the four gospels are as totally unprovable as any other so-called miracles contem-

poraneous with the period in which these gospels were written, or succeeding that period.

GEORGE ARMATAGE.

(To be concluded.)

THE DAWN OF ETHICS.

BY EDGAR FAWCETT.

(The heart of a tree. A man-ape, a woman-ape. It is early twilight, thousands of years ago.)

MAN-APE.

You know that huge tree by the small stream's edge,
Where dwells, with two weak babes, the pair we hate?

WOMAN-APE.

I know.

MAN-APE.

To-night both sire and dam will join
The great dance in the valley at moonrise. I
Shall not mix with them, this once, nor do thou.

WOMAN-APE.

Why thus resolve? The Moon-God may be wroth
If we shriek not his praise and gash ourselves
On this the sacred night when he beams full.

MAN-APE.

'Tis a mild god. His wrath we need not fear.
He is not like the Sun-God, who darts death,
Nor like the erratic lightning, nor its mate,
The August thunder—nay, nor like those gods
Of snow, flood, pest, grim powers we dare not slight.
Stay thou, as I have bid thee. When those babes,
Left all alone, are slumbering, seek their sides,
Leap at their throats and choke them. Afterward
Bring me their corpses to that cave whose mouth
Is bearded thick with vines—you know the spot.
There shall I feast that have not sucked man's blood
For days, but starve lean-lipped on herb and root.

WOMAN-APE.

I will obey thee.

MAN-APE.

Else, I'll beat thee so

That thou shalt writhe and rave beneath my strokes!
(He goes away, and the woman-ape muses.)

WOMAN-APE.

There, in a covert of cool leaves, with limbs
Laid languid on the bough's clean brawn of bark,
Slumbers my babe. If I indeed should slip
At moonrise to that big stream-bowering tree,
Clutch those two babes and choke them ere they waked,
Hurrying their dead forms to the cave where crouched
My mate, with hunger's glare in his fierce eyes
Between dark fells of hair on brows and cheeks,—
If so I obeyed this murderous hest of his,
*What chance for my poor babe some future eve,
When parents of those twain I late had killed
Should scent my guilt and lust for vengeance dread? . . .*
Nay, I'll not do this work he bade me do,—
Not though he beat me till my yells rang out
Keener than those wild voices that crelong
Shall fill the valley at moonrise, when mad throngs
Tear limb from limb our heaven-doomed captives' frames
And toss their bleeding fragments to the stars!

—*Twentieth Century.*

A BORN INFIDEL.

A little sprite of a girl about four years old was very cross one day, and her mother, reproving her, said, "Nellie, you must not get into such tempers; you must try hard not to." "I do try," whimpered Nellie, "but something inside o' me is wrong, and I feel cross, cross, cross!" "You must pray to God and ask him to take away the cross feeling." "I did ask God, and he paid no 'tention." "You must ask harder," said the mother; "there is another who is trying to get you away from God."

Nellie was very much interested in this "other one," and wanted to know all about him. So her mother told her as simply as she could the old version of the rise and fall of Satan, and that little girls must be good so Satan couldn't get them. Nellie listened, folded her little hands complacently, shook her wee head in a comforting way, and made her mother weep by saying,—*"If God made an angel that lived right in heaven right 'fore his eyes, and the angel acted that way, God can't spect much of me."*—*New York Tribune.*

ANOTHER FORGERY.
(JOHN VII., 53, TO VIII., 12).

THE story of the woman taken in adultery is one of those passages admitted by all the best authorities to be spurious, and added to the Gospel despite the solemn cursings found in the Apocalypse (Rev. xxii., 18). It is abandoned by all critical editors, being wanting in all the earliest Greek manuscripts, not in the Syriac Peshito or Gothic versions, and unmentioned by the earliest fathers. Even Canon Cook's orthodox Commentary says (p. 141), "External and internal evidence combined show beyond all reasonable doubt that this remarkable narrative is not a genuine portion of the gospel of St. John."

The style and language of the passage differ from the rest of the Gospel; but this applies also to the whole 21st chapter. The punishment of death is enjoined for adultery (Lev. xx., 10; Deut. xxii., 22) and the Talmud specifies *strangulation* as the method. Here stoning is said to be the punishment. This shows it was not concocted by a Palestinian Jew, but neither could a Jew have supposed that these were two high priests, and that the office was annual (John xi., 49; xviii., 13, 19, 24).

The story is absurd on the face of it. The Scribes and Pharisees must have either acted by authority of the Sanhedrim or in their private capacity. If the former, they dared not have allowed the adulteress to escape. If the latter, how could they say "Moses commanded us that such should be stoned." It is scarcely conceivable that among such law-abiding people as the Jews and Romans, a woman taken in adultery would have been allowed to escape because a teacher said, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone" a teaching which strikes at the root of all law. Some, indeed, have contended for the original authenticity of the passage on the ground that it got expunged from early manuscripts on account of the supposed licence given by it to sin.

If so important a narrative could be foisted into the Greek manuscripts after the fourth century what guarantee is there that any portion of those manuscripts, which do not date earlier than this, is genuine?

It is said that the divine beauty of Christ's character is so striking that no one could have invented it. We think, on the contrary, this would be a good argument that it was ideal. But here is a story, which perhaps more than any other, if we except the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, has been appealed to as evidence of Christ's divine benignity in refusing to condemn the adulteress, yet which all critics are forced to admit is an interpolation.

Even the famous phrase on the cross "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," is omitted from the Vatican, the oldest of all Greek manuscripts. Little facts like these suggest how much the sacred fetish books, and with them the Christian idol, are a compilation which have arrived at the form we know them in through the labors of many hands.

LUCIANUS.

A STORY TOLD BY A YOUNG RUSSIAN GIRL.—One day while out walking here I saw a little boy crying. Speaking kindly to him I found he was suffering with hunger. He told me a sad story. His father had started out on a tramp to hunt work, and never returned. His mother, who had long supported the family, died of overwork. He was alone and homeless. He had gone to a minister's wife and asked for help—she turned him cruelly from her door. I gave him some money and said: "Pray to God, my lad, and he will help you." "Ah! my dear lady," replied the child, "I have prayed and prayed, but God don't help me." I answered: "Be good and you will go to heaven." "But I don't want to go to heaven," he said; "I am cold, and would rather go to a warm place, so I'll not have to lie in the streets."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. F. Millar, "What is Individualism?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Jehovah's Six Days' Hard Labor." Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Secularism."

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Belief."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "The Beef, Beer, and Tobacco Delusion." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mrs. Samson, "Why Women should be Secularists."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "Our National Expenditure"; 7, "Revelations."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

Leyton—Holly Bush Assembly Room, Grange Road, 7.30, Mr. R. Forder will lecture. Admission free.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Jesus Christ—neither God nor Man." Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Alexandria"; 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "The Resurrection." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. T. Thurlow, "An Hour's Ramble from Genesis to Revelations."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapeau Street, 7, Mr. E. Calvert, "Is Matter able of itself to produce Phenomena?"

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. E. Toleman-Garner, "Man's Soul."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Foolish Sermon."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Sermons from Shakespeare, VI.—'Have I a Tongue?'"

COUNTRY.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. Anderson, "To Whom ought we to Erect Monuments?"; 6.30, Mr. Maclusky, "Natural Rights: what are they?"

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, recitals, to be followed by a tea.

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "Gospel Myths"; 3, "The Law of Population: its meaning and its menace"; 6.30, "The Whitewashing of Christianity."

Hull—Alhambra Music Hall, Porter Street, Mr. A. B. Moss, 10.30, "Bible and Evolution"; 2.30, "Christianity and Evolution"; 6.30, "God and Evolution."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "A World Without God"; 3, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 7, "Heaven and Hell" Mr. Foote will address local Freethinkers after the afternoon lecture.

Manchester N. S. S.—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mr. C. J. Hunt, 11, "Prayer and Miracles"; 3, "History of Priestcraft"; 6.30, "Design in Nature." Friday, at 8.30, a ball; gentlemen 1s. 6d., ladies 1s.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. A. R. Atkey, "Remedies for Poverty."

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Proctor, "The Labor Question in connection with Secularism." Contributions due.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, Mr. Hore, "Salvation"; 7, Mr. Lush, "General Booth's Conversion to Secularism." Music by Miss Stapely.

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street, Mr. F. Haslam, 11.30, "The Bible and Modern Science"; 3, "Miracles of Old Testament"; 6.30, "Who was Jesus, and what did he Teach?"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, 3, "The Duties of Citizenship"; 7, "Thomas Paine: his Life and Times."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, recitations, etc.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. E. Fletcher, "Secular Morality."

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. T. Fox, "Witchcraft: its Relation to Christianity."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14th Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Nov. 26, Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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