

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONCLUDED.]

GETTING hold of fish and meat tins, cleaning them up, and manufacturing them into toys, is hardly worth all the eloquence spent upon it by Booth's literary adviser. Nor is there much to be said in favor of an Inquiry Office for lost people. If it be true that 18,000 people are "lost" in London every year, it may be assumed that the majority of them do not want to be found, and it is the business of the police to look after the rest. Neither is there any necessity to subvention General Booth to obtain workmen's dwellings out of town instead of ugly, dreary model dwellings in the midst of dirt and smoke. Nothing can be done until provision is made by the railway companies for conveying the workmen to and fro for twopence a day, and when this step is taken, as it must be, private enterprise will construct the dwellings without Salvation charity. With regard to the scheme of the Poor Man's Bank, it would have been but fair to say that the idea is borrowed from infidel Paris, where for many years a benevolent Society has lent money to honest and capable poor men with gratifying results. The giving of legal advice gratis to the poor would be a good thing if it did not lead to unlimited litigation. Of course General Booth does not say, and perhaps he does not know, that Mr. Bradlaugh has been doing this for twenty-five years. Thousands of poor men, not necessarily Freethinkers, have had the benefit of his legal advice. No one in quest of such assistance has ever knocked at his door in vain. Finally with respect to "Whitechapel-at-Sea," a place which Booth projects for the reception of his poor people when they badly need a little sea-air and sunshine, it must be said that this kind of charity has been carried on for years, and that Booth is only borrowing a leaf from other people's book. In fact, the "General" collects all the various charitable ideas he can discover, he dishes them up into one grandiose scheme, and modestly asks for a million pounds to carry out "the blessed lot."

Singly and collectively these projects will no more affect "the unemployed" than scratching will cure leprosy. Every effect has its cause, which must be discovered before any permanent good can be done. Now the causes of want of employment (if men desire to find it) are political and economical. The business of the true reformer is to ascertain them and to remove or counteract them. Pottering with their effects, in the name of "charity," is like dipping out and purifying certain barrels of water from an ever-flowing dirty stream.

At the very best "charity" is artificial, and social remedies must be natural. Work cannot be provided. People have certain incomes and allow themselves a certain expenditure. If they give Booth, or any other charlatan, a hundred pounds to find work for "the unemployed," they have a hundred pounds less to spend in other ways, and those who previously

supplied them with that amount of commodities or service will necessarily suffer. Shuffle one pack of cards how you will, the hands may differ, but the total number of cards will be fifty-two.

General Booth talks infinite nonsense about the "failure" of Trade Unions because they only include a million and a half of workmen. Rome was not built in a day, and even the Salvation Army, with God Almighty to help it, is not yet as extensive as this "failure." Nor does the world need Booth to tell it the benefits of Coöperation. He looks to it as "one of the chief elements of hope in the future." So do thousands of other people, but what has this to do with the Salvation Army?

The only part of Booth's scheme which is of the least value is the one he has borrowed from a Freethinker. The Farm Colony is suggested by the Ralahine experiment associated with the name of Mr. E. T. Craig. But that experiment was a co-operative one, while Booth's is to be despotic. He proposes to put the unemployed at work on a big farm, and afterwards to draft them to an Over-Sea Colony, where the reformed "thieves, harlots, drunkards, and sluggards" are to lay the foundations of a new province of the British Empire. Something, of course, might be done in this way, but it is doubtful if Booth will get hold of the right material to do it with, or if his Salvation methods will be successful. Much greater effects than "charity" could realise would be effected by a wise alteration of our Land Laws, which would lead to the application of fresh capital and labor to the cultivation of the soil.

In any case, a reasonable person would ask—What are the qualifications of a religious body like the Salvation Army for carrying out such a scheme? Admitting the cleverness of the "General," is he such a universal genius as to "boss" everything, from playing tambourines to making tin toys, from preaching "blood and fire" to the administration of a big farm, from walking backwards for Christ to a gigantic emigration agency? Is the ordinary Salvation Army captain equal to these things? Booth himself admits that "the new sphere on which we are entering will call for faculties other than those which have hitherto been cultivated" in the Salvation Army. True, but will those faculties answer when you call? Will men of the required stamp of ability and character enrol themselves under the despotism of General Booth? And if they did, how long would he be able to hold them together?

Lady Florence Dixie has pointed out, with her accustomed courage, that Booth's scheme would, if successful, increase the pressure of population in the worst way by multiplying the unfit. Booth does not believe in celibacy; on the contrary, he proposes to set up a Matrimonial Bureau and bring marriageable persons together; and as the marriages he is likely to promote will, of course, be chiefly among the classes he will try to reclaim, the prospect is anything but pleasant to those who understand the population question, and especially to those who understand the philosophy of Evolution. On the whole it seems

pretty plain, as Huxley remarks, that if Booth does sixpennyworth of good he will do a full shilling's worth of harm.

Except for the Farm Colony, which we do not see how Booth is to manage successfully, we are able to perceive nothing in his scheme which really touches the heart of the social problem; while as a remedy for the "unemployed" it seems to us perfectly ridiculous. The whole project, at bottom, is a new, gigantic device for furthering the interests of the Salvation Army, and if the other Christian bodies do not see this they must be lamentably deficient in insight. It is all very well to say that no pressure will be put upon the men and women in the Refuges and the Colonies, for they will be subjected to the omnipresent influence of the Salvation Army which is to carry out the scheme to its minutest details.

Unless we are greatly mistaken, this truth is very apparent to General Booth. He insists on having absolute control of the funds and the arrangements, and although he may have no mercenary motives, he is doubtless seeking to gratify his ambition and love of power as well as to promote the "salvation of souls."

On the whole, however, we shall be glad to see the "General" get the money he is soliciting. The cash he collects will probably be diverted from other religious enterprises, and in this respect a Freethinker need not be in the least afflicted. His experiment will, in our opinion, do a real service to society. It will demonstrate before the very eyes of people who know next to nothing of history or economics the absolute futility of religious efforts to reform the world. When it is discovered that the poor rates, the statistics of drink, the number of the unemployed, the condition of the very poor, and the miseries and degradations of what is compendiously called the social evil, are not perceptibly affected by General Booth's efforts, the very dullest will see the deception of such enterprises, and turn their attention to the scientific aspects of the great social problem. This will be a great gain, and we think it will amply compensate for the waste of a hundred thousand pounds. G. W. FOOTE.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL*

IN the Bampton Lecture for 1890, Archdeacon Watkins attempts to supplement the defence of Bishop Lightfoot against the author of *Supernatural Religion* by a comparison of modern criticism of the fourth gospel with what he considers the proof of its antiquity and genuineness. The case against the gospel ascribed to John needs no big book for its statement. A few facts will suffice. John is said to have been a fisherman of Galilee, the rudest portion of Palestine. He and Peter are expressly said (Acts iv. 13.) to have been "unlearned and ignorant men." Yet the gospel is written in the best Greek of the New Testament and abounds in the terminology of a master of the Alexandrian philosophy, while the Revelation of St. John the Divine is written in barbarous Greek. In the middle of the Second Century Bishop Papias, who is said to have been a hearer and disciple of John, set himself to discover the genuine traditions of the faith. Yet he makes no mention of John's gospel. Nor do any of the apostolical fathers, though every one of them ought to have mentioned it had they been acquainted with so important a document.

The Archdeacon seeks to make out that Justin Martyr, whose period of literary activity he places be-

tween A.D. 145-147, although it might plausibly be placed between 147-152, included the Fourth Gospel in the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, to which he refers, though he mentions none of our gospels by name, and that his doctrine of the Logos is a consequence of Johannine Doctrine. But Philo and the Alexandrian teachers had taught the doctrine of the Logos in the first century. The fact that Justin did teach a different form of the Logos doctrine, yet never once refers to John, is strong evidence he did not know it. As Dr. Davidson says:

"Had the Fourth Gospel existed, and been regarded as the work of an apostle by Justin, it would have been a welcome production. He would have used in support of his views respecting the Logos, a document which expresses these views distinctly and decidedly."—*Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii, p. 343.

The remarkable miracles of the Fourth Gospel, including turning water into wine for guests well drunk, opening the eyes of one born blind by spitting on them, and raising Lazarus after he was stinking, are unmentioned by Justin, though he tells us Jesus was born in a cave, that a fire appeared in Jordan at his baptism, that he was called a magician, and other particulars not found in our gospels.

Archdeacon Watkins makes much of the alleged testimony of Tatian's *Diatessaron*, or Harmony of the Four Gospels, which he contends was compiled in the interim between Justin and Irenæus, and of which long-lost work an alleged Arabic version has recently been opportunely discovered. Like Dr. Lightfoot, the Archdeacon seems unaware that the first thing necessary is to authenticate this document and prove its identity with the lost work of Tatian, first referred to by Eusebius. The chances are immensely greater that the Arabic documents represent some other of the many later harmonies which have been made. Even if genuine it does not mention John by name, and would only render certain the existence of four gospels towards the close of the second century, a position I do not dispute, agreeing with Dr. Davidson that in the circumstances of the time but a short while was necessary to account for the ready reception by certain sections of the Church of the Gospel ascribed to John.

The first testimony ascribing the work to John is from Theophilus of Antioch, who wrote after the death of Marcus Antoninus, A.D. 180. Then comes Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, the first to mention the four gospels, and the father who asserts, on the authority of all the elders of Asia, that Jesus lived to be fifty years of age. Yet Archdeacon Watkins would have us believe that Irenæus could not have been deceived or deceiving in ascribing this gospel to John. Irenæus has been accused by Mr. George Reber, author of *The Christ of Paul*, of writing the Fourth Gospel himself. Of this the evidence is insufficient, but it is certain that anything coming on his authority demands the strictest investigation.

Few readers can enter into these points, which Archdeacon Watkins descreetly dwells upon, while but barely discussing the internal evidence, the relations of the Fourth Gospel to the other three, to the Apocalypse and to the alleged epistles of John, which all ordinary readers can understand. It is to these points I shall now refer, for they are decisive against the authorship of the Galilean fisherman.

In the first place the gospel is written in Greek, which Josephus tells us was little known to his countrymen. Archdeacon Watkins seems to think our gospel a translation into Greek of the Aramaic memories of John, though it bears every appearance of being an original composition. If Jesus and his apostles spoke Aramaic, why have we not their original utterances instead of Greek translations? What should we think of French stories of miraculous events said to have happened in England, the evidence of which was only found written in French,

* *Modern Criticism Considered in its Relation to the Fourth Gospel*, being the Bampton Lecture for 1890. By Henry William Watkins, M.A., D.D., Archdeacon and Canon of Durham, Professor of Hebrew in the University of Durham, etc. London: John Murray.

while the events were repudiated by the English people?

The internal evidence is sufficient to show it was not written by any Palestinian Jew. Dr. Martineau says:—

"No companion of Jesus could have placed the scene of the Baptist's testimony in Bethany beyond Jordan*—a place unknown to geography; or have invested Annas as well as Caiaphas with the prerogatives of high priest;† or have represented that office as annual;‡ or have so forgotten Elijah and Nahum as to make the Pharisees assert that 'out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.'§ No Israelite could, like the Evangelist, place himself superciliously outside his compatriots, speak of their most sacred anniversaries as 'feasts of the Jews,' and reckon the Jews among the common *ethne* of the world; still less display towards them an ever pitiless and scornful spirit, and treat them as children of the Devil, deaf to every divine voice, and doomed to die in their sins."¶

A Jew could never have called the commandment to love one another "a new commandment" (John xiii. 34). In Matthew xix. 19, Jesus cites the old commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18).

The writer of *The Revelation of John the Divine*, whoever he was, was a fanatical Jew, who looked only for the salvation of the twelve tribes, and abhorred those "which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." To suppose the same writer was the author of the Fourth Gospel is to suppose as great a miracle as any ascribed to Jesus.

(To be concluded.)

J. M. WHEELER.

A HELPLESS GOD.

By HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(From the *Twentieth Century*).

IN the discussion that has been going on ever since human beings began to think accurately, as to whether there is a God or not, I claim that all persons sufficiently intelligent to have opinions worth considering have arrived at certain definite conclusions, namely these: If there is a God there is only one, and if he has any particular name nobody knows what it is.

The Persians called God Ormuzd, the Greeks called him Jove, the Romans Jupiter, and each of the ancient peoples had some particular name for him. All intelligent persons in Christian nations will admit that no God by the name of Ormuzd, Jove, Jupiter, or what not, exists; that no God who said and did the things ascribed to Ormuzd, Jove, Jupiter, or was the kind of person who answered to either of these names, ever did exist. We are all ready to admit that the gods of the ancient peoples were purely imaginary beings.

It is a satisfaction to have arrived so far on the journey of rational thought. So far as we are concerned, the heavens have been swept clean of several thousand small gods, and quite a family of larger ones, who were once believed to inhabit them.

There are still, however, two large gods, with whose names we are familiar: the Mahomedan god Allah, and the Judeo-Christian god, Jehovah. We may safely say, so far as we are concerned, that Allah does not exist. Many of our people believe in God, but none of them believe that his name is Allah. Only one god, therefore, with a proper name, is believed by anybody with whom we have to do, to exist. I mean Jehovah. But Jehovah is rapidly vanishing into the clouds of oblivion that have so

completely enveloped the other national deities, some of whom were his inferiors and some of whom were his betters. You may attend many Christian churches for months, or even years, and never hear any one pray to Jehovah. You are not asked now to believe in Jehovah. You may go to almost any Christian church and say: "I wish to join this church, but I do not believe that God's name is Jehovah," and if you will declare that you believe in God—just God, without any name—the Church will take you in and be glad to get you, if you are not very poor.

I think I am safe in saying that, even among the most intelligent Christians, Jehovah has had his day. And this brings me back to my proposition, that in the discussion of the question concerning the existence of God, all persons whose opinions are worth considering agree that if there is a God he has no particular name; no first name, no last name; he is not Jehovah God nor God Jehovah; he is simply God.

This is a significant point at which to have arrived; for the reason that God is not a proper name. It is a common name, a generic name, which, according to the usages of grammar, should not be capitalised. It is something, in the interests of truth, for which to be thankful, that we have arrived at that stage in our thinking at which when we address an intelligent person, and say: "Do you believe in God?" and he answers, "Yes," we may ask: "Which god?" and he will say: "No particular god, but just God."

Having got so far we are likely to get farther.

Indeed, we are farther, for the sex element has been almost entirely eliminated from the idea of God. If you ask a believer whether God is of the masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, whether God is a he, she, or it, he will tell you that he does not know, and that it does not matter; that God is just God, and that is the beginning and end of the subject.

We are even farther than that, for if you ask an intelligent believer where God is, or of what substance he is composed, or what are the limits of his power, as, for example, whether he can create something out of nothing, or add together five and five so as to make eleven, or square a circle, he will tell you that he knows nothing about where God is, or what he is, or what he can do.

I am now speaking of what intelligent persons will tell you. There are persons who, if a priest should say so, would believe that in central Africa there are mountains of sugar and rivers of rum; but the opinions of such persons are worth nothing. They are capable of believing that God has a material body. It is of no consequence what they believe or say. There are, however, intelligent persons who believe in God, but who will admit that he is absolutely undefinable; they believe in God without being able to formulate one single conception about him. They have a word of three letters, G-o-d, a word that should not be capitalised, and that is all they have. Reason has scoured the heavens, routed all the gods, stripped them of their proper names, their bodies, and their attributes, reduced their numbers to one, and left nothing of that one but a word of three letters, a word that should be spelled with a small "g."

Now, I contend that that word g-o-d should be dropped from the English language, on the ground that for intelligent persons it has no meaning whatever, and that the ideas which were once involved in it, and still attach to it in the minds of ignorant or unthinking persons, are false, and hence, injurious to the best interests of the human race.

I am aware that Herbert Spencer says there is an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," though, for the life of me, I cannot understand how he knows anything about the infinite or the eternal, or how he knows there is only one energy and not two, or why he should capita-

* John i., 28 (the true reading is Bethany not Bethabara).

† John xviii., 19-24.

‡ John ii., 49, 51; xviii., 13.

§ John vii., 52. See 1 Kings xvii., 1; Nahum i., 1.

¶ Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 212; 1890

lise the words he uses. I am aware that Francis E. Abbot says "the universe is a Person," with a capital P, though for the life of me, I cannot understand how countless millions of chunks of dirt and rocks, and particles of gas and water, can be a Person. I am aware that it is getting to be the fashion to deify nature, and what are called the forces and laws of nature. But I insist that an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," or the universe, or what we call nature, is not God, and that it is an arbitrary misuse of the word God, and a pandering to superstition to apply it to any of these things.

If there is an "Infinite and Eternal Energy," let us call it that; if "the universe is a Person," let us say so; if we mean nature, or force, or law, let us use these terms, and let us stop saying God.

If the word God means anything it means a being who has some particular relation to me; who can hear and answer my prayers; who can do something for me that I or no one else can do. If there is no such being, there is no God; if there is no being who can participate in the affairs of this world, so as to bring his will to pass in a manner other than according to the undeviating action of what we call natural law, there is no God, for a being who is wholly limited by natural law is not God; such a being is subject to a power or procedure greater than himself, the very idea of which ungod him.

After years of careful, and what I know to have been honest, thought, I do not hesitate to say that whatever else there may be in this universe there is no God, unless he is utterly careless of what happens or utterly unable to prevent the most cruel things from occurring.

If you wish to believe that God made this earth and all that pertains to it, and set it all in motion, and then washed his hands and forgot all about it and us; if you wish to believe that God is unjust and cruel; if you can believe that he is weak, weaker than the forces of nature, weaker than men, you can find multitudes of facts to support your beliefs; but if you hold that God is good, and all powerful, I solemnly assert that, in the face of facts, you not only cannot prove it, but that the balance of facts is very strongly against your position. The single stupendous fact that every person, male or female, white, black, red or yellow, single or married, rich or poor, forty or more years of age, and with a mind trained to think, finds it difficult to decide whether life is worth living or not, is sufficient proof that there is no wise, good, powerful God. A God who would create a race of beings endowed with natures and surrounded with conditions which make misery inevitable and happiness impossible is a failure. The fact that all races of men have been obliged to hope for a future heaven to enable them to endure their present miseries is a sufficient proof that if there is a God he is wicked or weak.

The fact that men have been logically forced to postulate a devil to account for phenomena of which an honorable God would be ashamed, proves that there is no God, unless he is bad. The invention of a devil does not help matters, for no sensible or good God would create a devil, or permit one to exist; and if there is a devil, the conclusion is inevitable that he is smarter and more powerful than God; for up to the present time he has had things pretty much his own way. If there is a devil, God is wicked to have created him and given him so much liberty, and having created him, he is too weak to make him behave himself.

But no intelligent person believes in the existence of a devil, and if there is no devil the responsibility for the evils and miseries of life is thrown back on God, and you are obliged to conclude, as before, that God is iniquitous or impotent.

(To be concluded.)

Professor Rhys Davids, an acknowledged authority, says Buddhism "ignores the existence of God, and denies the existence of the soul."

PARNELL AND KING DAVID.

At the present time when nearly every Christian in Britain is on the trail of Parnell sleuth-like, and seeking to compass his political death, may it not be well if Freethinkers take this opportunity to remind their Christian friends that in acting thus they are guilty of gross inconsistency? Parnell is to be hounded out of public life because he has been guilty of adultery with the wife of his friend, and this offence, we are told by these moralists, is unpardonable. Now it seems to me, that while Secularists are quite free to hiss and sneer at the Irish leader if they are so disposed, Christians have not the slightest shadow of a justification for their present baying. All Christians—Catholics and Protestants alike—hold up King David as a model man; and yet alongside of the "man after God's own heart" Parnell is pure as an angel of light. Parnell sinned with a woman who was as ready and as weak as he, but the same cannot be said for the King of Israel, as Bathsheba was powerless to oppose the despotic king, however strongly she may have desired to do so. Captain O'Shea is still alive and hearty, but Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, was foully murdered by the Jewish king. Parnell has always been a patriot, and his pole-star has been the welfare of Ireland; but David offered to fight with the Philistines against his own people Israel. And, moreover, broken promises, thefts, lying, and subterfuge were such prominent characteristics in the life of the Bible saint that he carries the palm for villany against all comers. Secularists should not lose sight of these things just now, but should press them home.

Within certain limits, and with more than one addition, we may apply to the Christian's model the words applied by Byron to George III. :—

From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.
He even warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found him their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as this one is
With national and individual woes.

R. M. R.

ACID DROPS.

The inauguration of University Hall took place on Saturday, November 29. Mrs. Humphry Ward, the honorary secretary of the enterprise, was present on the platform. According to the Rev. Stopford Brooke, the president, the whole scheme originated with that lady, whose novel, *Robert Elsmere*, "did what a host of theological and other books had never done." Mr. Brooke said it had "reached the hearts of a vast number of persons whose misgivings upon matters of vital import had plunged them into miserable doubts because they were unable to solve the problems by which they were perplexed." Mr. Brooke, apparently, did not say how Mrs. Ward's novel had solved these problems. For our part we did not find any solution in her pages. She has broken away from orthodox Christianity, but her own religion is as dogmatic, and irreconcilable with fact, as that she has abandoned, nor is it any the more satisfying to the intellect for its dash of sentimentalism.

Mr. Brooke explained that the religion of University Hall would be "the religion of Jesus," but "without the supernatural and miraculous garments which men have manufactured." This is pretty and plausible, perhaps, but at bottom it is mere intellectual trifling. Nothing is idler than to suppose that the world will go on adoring Jesus as a man. Strip away his divinity, discard the miracles, and the residuum will never support a popular cultus. University Hall will only be a half-way house to perfect Freethought, but as such we give it a cordial welcome.

The screaming of clericals like Price Hughes and Dr. Parker are calculated to make a good many disgusted with "virtue." They could not have screamed worse if Mr. Parnell were the vilest of the vile. Their judgment displays the usual imbecility of religionists. It does not occur to them that a man is to be judged morally by his whole career.

and not by a single act offensive to their canons of conduct and taste. These screaming pietists have created the worst difficulty of the situation. They have, in our opinion, roused all the antagonism of a proud nature. Mr. Parnell seems to say to them and their like—"Well, since you shriek and rail so; since you hound me down as though I were worse than Judas; since you show no consideration for all my public service to Ireland; since you fling stones enough to bury me—have at you! I can fight as well as you. You show no mercy and I will give no quarter."

Wicked and foolish as Mr. Parnell may have been in his relations with Mrs. O'Shea, what man, or what woman, is in a position to pronounce an absolute judgment? So much depends on circumstances that outsiders cannot know, and the very absence of any defence in court may have been dictated by a chivalrous regard for Mrs. O'Shea. *May be*, we say, and no more. We do not know, but we have a right to surmise, and who is not aware that there are generally two sides of such a case if they could only be seen? Still, Mr. Parnell would probably have done well to retire for the present from the leadership of the Irish party. But the screaming pietists would not give him a minute's grace to retire with dignity, although they knew the invincible pride of his nature. "Go, wretch, go!" they shrieked, and it was only natural for the proud man to turn and defy them.

Well does the *Speaker* say, in the only wise article we have seen on this painful subject, that the sentence on Mr. Parnell has not been tempered by the least show of mercy. Yet he deserved it. For see what he has done for his cause, whether it be right or wrong. "He found our people," says Archbishop Walsh, "politically dead. He put life and hope into them. He took them out of the hands of unsafe guides. He brought back to them their lost trust in peaceful, lawful, constitutional methods. He built up for them a Parliamentary party that could at any critical moment be counted upon to act as one man. He has kept that party together for years with its unity unbroken." That is what Mr. Parnell has done, and all this counts for nothing with the screaming pietists.

Dr. Parker, indeed, goes to a well-nigh incredible length. Preaching in his gospel-shop on Sunday morning, he declared that "As for Home Rule, as we have known it, it is dead and gone." Surely any lunatic let loose from Bedlam might talk more sensibly. One Irishman commits adultery (of course no Englishman does), and the whole Irish nation is to lose what a month ago Dr. Parker maintained to be its rights! Is it not better to be a dog and bay the moon than such a preacher?

Of course the *Freethinker* is not a political journal. Its editorial policy is to keep aloof from party strife, and we only speak out now and then when serious interests and great principles deeper than party division are imperilled by mere passion, cant, hypocrisy, and pious clamor. Whatever side they take in politics, it is the duty of Freethinkers to think and keep their heads cool.

We have no concern with Mr. Parnell's manifesto, or Mr. Gladstone's and Mr. Morley's letters. These things are purely political. Our real point is that the screaming of certain Christian preachers has grievously aggravated this crisis. It was a time for temperate if firm speech; and nothing but mischief could be wrought by popular preachers calling the Irish "an obscene race" because they did not discard their leader in five minutes.

A new Church of God, about the five hundredth, has started up in America. One of its distinguishing rites is that the brethren—and, we suppose, sistren—wash each others' feet. This observance was strictly enjoined by J. C. on his disciples (John xiii., 14), but it is one which they quietly discard. Cleanliness comes before godliness, and we hope the new Church will find salvation with soap as well as water.

Wemyss Reid's *Life of Lord Houghton*, and Mr. Gladstone's article on that worthy, recalls some anecdotes of Carlyle and Houghton. The best known is Carlyle's saying, that if Christ came to earth again Milnes (Lord Houghton) would invite him to breakfast, and the clubs would all be

talking of the good things Christ had said. This, or something like it, is earlier than Carlyle, but the following is more original. Milnes was disappointed that he was offered no post in Peel's ministry. "No, no," said Carlyle; "Peel knows what he is about; there is only one post fit for you, and that is the office of perpetual president of the Heaven and Hell Amalgamation Society."

The Rev. Ralph Doyle, of St. John's, Wynberg, will not permit the following lines to appear on the tombstone of a soldier who was killed on the railway:

Of death he had no warning.

On no sick bed laid he;

But, Lord, we have the feeling

That he is now with thee.

Does he find some recondite blasphemy in the lines, or is the poor rhyme a desecration?

Spurgeon, who is at Mentone, and taking carriage exercise every day, has special prayers offered for him at the Tabernacle. The prayers, the warm climate, sea air, and carriage exercise, should have some effect, but he complains that he is "brought very low," and cannot write.

Mr. Augustus Harris offers to subscribe to General Booth's fund, and to give him the free use of Drury Lane Theatre, if he will let the fund be "vested in trustees for the benefit of the poor." Booth's reply is not yet published. We guess it will be "D'ye see any green?"

It is amusing to note the multitude of ministers in all directions who are trying to make a little capital and cash out of Booth's scheme. It is so well advertised that, despite the onslaught of Huxley and the Charity Organisation Society, Booth has nearly got his hundred thousand pounds, and will have to make a start while appealing for the other odd nine hundred thousand.

We have received a report of the London Congregational Union's "Outcast London Fund." This agency seems to be doing in its way, and according to its means, the very work which Booth promises to do with that £100,000. Grand Old Showman! He writes as though nothing, or next to nothing, were being done by other bodies.

James Joseph Barrett's poems in brochure form are sent to us by his publisher, 52 King Henry's Walk, London, with a circular stating that the said J. J. B. is "the grandest poet, the real poet laureate." Here is a sample:

The world is filled with darkness,

And bad Satan hath full sway,

But we Christians wait for Jesus

And the dawning of Christ's day.

Tennyson slinks away before Barrett.

Is it true that sky-pilots are allowed to enter the new General Post Office in London and harangue the men during their dinner hour, thus stealing a portion of their hard-earned rest, besides compelling them to stand shivering in the cold? We hope we are misinformed, for such antics on the part of the higher officials would be a gross outrage on English liberty.

The Government have carried the second reading of the Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill on most illogical ground, Mr. Raikes arguing that tithes cannot be considered as national property. Why, then, should the nation make special laws for their recovery?

The *Echo* of last Tuesday, in its Portrait Gallery, gives a column to Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the veteran advocate of women's rights in America, without giving any hint that Mrs. Stanton is an advanced Freethinker, regarding the Church as the greatest obstacle to woman's elevation.

According to a writer on London Beggars in Tuesday's double *Star*, professional beggars exhibit a survival of fetish worship in carrying a piece of coal for luck. Good church-goers exhibit a similar survival in the mysterious efficacy they attribute to the Sacrament, and the Bible is no better than a fetish to the majority of believers.

Roulette tables have been set up in Tangiers by an Anglo-American company. The Sultan of Morocco will go shares in the gambling profits, but with commendable zeal for

female propriety he wanted to exclude all ladies. A compromise, however, has been effected, in virtue of which Christian ladies are to be admitted to the gambling hell, while Muslim ladies are excluded.

The Rev. Edward Gough's *The Bible True from the Beginning*, a ponderous work in four sixteen-shilling volumes, is said by the *Scots Observer* to be "impregnated with a deep evangelical spirit." As a matter of fact Mr. Gough contends that Jesus never lived on earth at all, and that the Gospels are not in any sense historical. If this is "evangelical" that good old word has undergone a serious change of meaning.

Ah distinctly I remember,
It was in the bleak December
That in church a portly member
Sat where none had sat before ;
And while he had there been seated
The new varnish had got heated,
For the work had been completed
Only two or three days before ;
And the ladies near him seated
Say the portly member swore.
May he do it "Nevermore."

What a fine old crusted humbug is Christianity! When the Temperance movement began in England the clergy were nearly all against it. They pointed out, with great truth, that the Bible was anything but a teetotaler's handbook. But now that the Temperance movement is powerful the clergy, or at least a lot of them, join it and promote it with their usual intemperance. What are the causes of drinking? is a question they have no sense or patience to investigate. All they see, in their purblind fashion, is this, that if there were no drink nobody could drink it. So they cry out for Prohibition, and that prince of shriekers, Hugh Price Hughes, shrieks over the whole blessed chorus. If he gave himself time to think, he would discover two things; first, that Teetotalism is no part of Christianity, though it is of Mohammedanism; second, that wherever Prohibition obtains drink can be got in any quantities by persons who will have it.

The *Methodist Times* pretends that the Bible is on the side of total abstinence. Price Hughes does not argue the matter—he asserts; and he has face enough to assert anything. Mr. Wheeler's tract, *The Bible and Teetotalism*, should be extensively circulated to correct this sinister fraud of the Gospel Temperancers.

The Jews are likely to be expelled from the Caucasus, because it is said they carry on active proselytism among the Soubotnikis, a sect of Christians who keep the seventh day, and who are probably descendants of Jews converted by force. In Russia for a Jew to become a Christian is his only chance of secular salvation. To attempt to turn a Christian into a Jew is a frightful crime.

Buffalo Bill has gone to Sitting Bull's camp at the instance of the U.S. Government, to investigate the Messiah craze among the Indians. If Government would send someone to investigate the Messiah craze in England, almost as bad superstition and fanaticism would be found as among the Sioux.

Consider, for instance, the credence given to the charlatans who predict that the world will shortly come to an end, and who, like Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald* and author of *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*, shift the date a little further off as the predicted time approaches.

Almost as absurd as the fanatics who fancy the world is soon coming to an end are those who worry themselves because it is calculated that the heat and light of our sun may not be maintained much more than twenty million years, or because there is one in 280 million chances that we may collide with a large comet. When these people set up their frightful jeremiads we feel inclined to ask if they refuse to eat their dinners because they know they have got to die.

The poor old Pope spends his leisure concocting encyclicals. He has already issued more than any three of his

predecessors. His latest utterance is to be on the social question. No doubt he will try to pat democracy on the back in such a way as not to offend his monarchical supporters.

The Bishop of Lincoln will, it seems, submit to the Archbishop's judgment. But the High Church *Guardian* lays it down that it affects nobody but Bishop King, which is as much as to say that the clergy can disregard the law until called upon individually to obey it. A curious doctrine for a law and order paper.

The Nonconformist press generally regard the judgment as impelling the Anglican Church a day's march nearer Rome.

A Baptist missionary has put forth a pamphlet, *Shall Islam Rule in Africa?* He admits that practically it does rule in the northern part of that continent, where it has seventy-five million votaries, while the converted Christians are comparatively few.

The Rev. James Butler, of the Methodist Church at Dunlop, Tennessee, is in jail. He sloped with a parishioner's wife and stole his horses. In Tennessee they might condone an elopement, but they stand no nonsense when horses are concerned.

A statue to Horace Greeley has been unveiled before the Tribune office. The ceremonies were begun with a prayer by Bishop Potter. It's a wonder, if spirits can make their presence manifest, that Horace did not hit the bishop a whack alongside his head. Think of the incongruity of praying for the memory of the first president of the Manhattan Liberal Club.—*Truthseeker*.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward has been lecturing at the Portman Rooms on the new Elmsmerian University Hall, which is to be devoted to religious teaching and reverential criticism—that is, we suppose, criticism which only concerns itself with the outworks of religion.

A debate on the question whether the Church of England teaches auricular confession has taken place at Brighton Dome between the Rev. C. H. Wainwright, Evangelical, and the Rev. H. N. Thompson, Ritualist. The former showed that confession was a cover for immorality, and the latter that it was authorised by the Prayer-book.

George Chainey, it appears, still only wants money enough, and he will go to Palestine and unfold the true interpretation of the scriptures. Just to think, lack of incidental travelling expenses may deprive a perishing world of precious truth. We sincerely wish he may raise the cash and go to Jericho.

A fierce gale off the Norwegian coast has destroyed a large fishing fleet and several hundreds of lives. Many of the survivors are suffering from exposure and starvation, for He doeth all things well.

The mysterious stone-throwing attributed to a ghost in Rochester Row is said to have ceased since a neighbor has been summoned.

The whole talk of the poor insane woman who was accused of infanticide at Wood Green was of the Lord. Doubtless her mind had been unhinged by religious teaching.

The clergyman who said: "How wonderful is the comforting and sustaining power of the Word of God!" doubtless refers to that part of it which says: "Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Prov. xxxi., 7).—*Boston Investigator*.

Last Sunday Dr. Talmage delivered in the Brooklyn Academy of Music the first of his series of lectures on his recent trip to the Holy Land. The partition wall between the good Doctor's memory and his imagination is said to be in a state of very bad repair, and he ought to attach an affidavit of accuracy to each of these lectures.—*Sunday Gazetteer*.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 7, The Alhambra, Station Street, Portsmouth; at 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "A World Without God."

Dec. 14 Manchester; 21 and 23, Hall of Science, London.

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. 8d.; 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.

DEIST.—According to a pamphlet published by James Watson in 1847, the bones of Thomas Paine were then in the possession of a Mr. Ilwyn. We do not know what became of them afterwards. Perhaps Mr. Conway may trace the matter out.

H. S. GUBBINS.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder.

J. CROUCH.—Thanks for your interesting letter. After all the honest old name of Atheist is best.

B. HARRIS.—Will consider it when it arrives.

ISCA.—We don't know how many apples Adam and Eve ate off that tree. Probably twopence would have paid for the lot.

J. NEATE.—It is a matter for the East-End Freethinkers. They should get someone to oppose.

T. PHILLIPS.—Mr. Foote shares your hope that his visit in February will do good in the Spennymoor district. The matter of handbills shall be seen to.

W. FRANCIS.—It is hardly worth while to spend any more time on the tract you enclose. Nine out of every ten Freethinkers are converted Christians.

No. 12.—We share your opinion. The *Freethinker* would need no pushing if newsagents would only do it justice.

R. W. WELLINGS.—The poem is too well known.

A. M. WACKERBARTH.—Your question is practically answered in the reply to Mrs. Besant.

A. FRENCH.—You are correctly informed. The debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. G. B. Shaw will take place at the Hall of Science, London, in January.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Shall appear.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following: E. P. (Leicester), 2s.; W. Clarkson, 5s.; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s.; A Friend, £1; F. Smallman, £1; Louisa Sansom, 2s. 6d.; Miss and Mr. Belford, 5s.

W. JAMES.—Full of copy at present, but will try to find room.

C. TURNER.—Greg's *Creed of Christendom* is published by Trubner in two volumes at 12s.

C. E. SMITH.—Received with thanks.

TOLEMAN-GARNER thanks the Berlin Freethinker who sent a parcel of literature for distribution.

A. B. MOSS.—Article received. Too late for this week at least.

H. ROWDEN.—(1) Certificates, for framing, are issued to all new members of the N. S. S. (2) Such a prosecution would fail. (3) There is no special word for it in Latin.

JOSEPH BROWN.—The dates are booked for the N.E. Secular Federation. Glad to hear the Spennymoor, Sunnyside, and Sunderland Branches have joined you. We know nothing as to Mrs. Besant's lecturing in your city in March for the Sunday Lecture Society. Why not inquire of the local secretary?

A. WRIGHT, who inquired last week for a newsagent's address near London Bridge, is informed that this journal can be obtained at Noble's, 91 Bermondsey Street, S.E., or at Davis's, New London Street, Mark Lane.

A. FLINDLE.—We have no connection with the firm you mention.

J. GORDON.—Mr. Bradlaugh's criticism on the Almanack was based on a misapprehension. See the reply to Mrs. Besant's letter in another column.

—JACKSON.—There is a Turnagain Lane near Farringdon Station.

J. WITTERING.—Glad to hear the sale of the *Freethinker* has increased in Grimsby since Mr. Foote's late visit. Your correspondence in the *News* must be of service to our cause.

H. SMITH.—No. It must have miscarried.

G. DOEG (Liverpool).—We hope the Hall Company will be pushed forward vigorously. Now is the time or never. Every Freethinker in your city should see what he can do.

G. FRASER.—We do not think of reprinting our Booth articles. Glad to hear you appreciate them. Mr. Foote will see about a date for Reading about the end of January.

R. J. MURRAY.—We are pleased to hear your account of Mr. J. R. Charlesworth, who is still a member of the Nottingham Branch. His speech at the Congress of the American Secular Union ought to do good. As at present led that Union is of little value to Freethought.

THE paragraphs in "Acid Drops" on the Parnell case are written exclusively by Mr. Foote.

W. R. SMYTH.—In our next.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Portsmouth Evening News—Kidderminster Shuttle—Australian Trading World—Nottingham Evening News—Der Lichtfreund—Wynberg Times—Blackpool Times—Glasgow Herald—Gravesend Reporter—Rochdale Observer. FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

A MISUNDERSTANDING.

MRS. BESANT has addressed the following letter to the President of the National Secular Society:

DEAR SIR,—I am told that my name appears in a list of the N. S. S. lecturers in the Almanack. Will you kindly remove it, as you can have no right to print in such a list the name of a woman not a member of the Society.—Sincerely,

ANNIE BESANT.

Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, as editors of the N. S. S. Almanack, reply as follows. (1) The Almanack is printed and nothing can now be removed from its pages. (2) There is nothing to remove. Mrs. Besant's name is neither in the Calendar nor in the list of the N. S. S. lecturers (p. 41). It is included in a general list of Freethought Lecturers (p. 53), several of whom are not members of the N. S. S. Of course if Mrs. Besant is no longer a Freethought lecturer her name shall be excluded from this list in the next edition of the Almanack.

SUGAR PLUMS.

For the first time for many years Mr. Foote delivered two Sunday lectures at Leicester last week. The audiences were very enthusiastic as well as large. Many persons were turned away from the doors in the evening. Tea was provided at the Secular Hall for a good number of country friends. One Secularist and his wife walked in over the snowy roads all the way from Loughborough. All the stock of the *Freethinker* was sold out at the bookstall (over 100 copies), and this will doubtless lead to an increased circulation of the paper in Leicester.

It is gratifying to hear that the Guarantee Fund of £500 (£100 a year for the next five years), is very nearly raised by the Leicester Secular Society. Mr. Birch sent £5 from Florence and Mr. Wallace £1 from Glasgow. Only about £60 is still required and no doubt it will soon be forthcoming. Intending subscribers should communicate promptly with the honorary secretary, Mr. Sydney Gimson, Secular Hall, Humberston Gate, Leicester.

The London Freethinkers' Ball was a great success. It was at once numerous and select. With the exception of a dozen or two, the whole of the company, numbering nearly three hundred, were members of the Secular party. Dancing went on merrily in the large hall, the principal M.O. being Mr. Fowler; while in the minor hall upstairs an excellent concert was given under the superintendence of Miss Vance and Mr. Guest. During the evening Mr. Foote delivered a brief speech. Everyone present appeared to be delighted, and this social gathering will certainly be followed by many others of a similar character. One result will be a pretty good balance for the Benevolent Fund.

The next Freethought reunion in the metropolis will be the annual dinner of the London Secular Federation. This festive gathering will take place as before at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. The date fixed is Monday, January 5, 1891. Mr. Foote will preside. A full list of

toasts and speakers will be duly announced. The tickets are half-a-crown. No doubt the 1891 dinner will be even more numerously attended than its two predecessors.

On Thursday evening, November 27, Mr. Foote concluded the London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures in the hall of the Peckham Radical Club. Mr. A. B. Moss presided and made a felicitous little introductory speech. There was a much improved attendance, and the lecture on "Heaven and Hell" was heartily applauded. Happily, also, there was a much improved collection. The only drawback was the severe weather. The hall was so cold that the audience, ay, and even the lecturer, would have welcomed a few whiffs from Hades.

The weighty letter of Professor Huxley against Booth's scheme in the *Times* of Dec. 1, is followed by one from Mr. Loch, the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, who convicts Booth of gross exaggeration and garbling of facts.

Mr. Symes, in the *Liberator*, points out that whatever good the Salvation Army is doing is *secular* good, and asks: "On the other side, is the Army doing good? Is it not drawing off from Secular employments an army of men and women who might be usefully engaged? Is it not diverting into improper channels an enormous sum of money, and thus adding to the number of idlers the industrious have to support? These are serious questions. And is it doing any sort of good by crowding our footpaths with comfortably dressed young women, who boldly and impudently push the sale of that unspeakable paper the *War Cry*, and expose themselves to the coarse jests of rude young men? Does this improve the modesty of the young women so engaged? And last of all, is it calculated to improve the morals of the people for Booth and Co. to carry on a giant trading concern, in fact, a giant swindle, under pretence of serving a Christ, who commanded them to renounce the world, to have neither purse nor wallet, to take no thought for the morrow? Surely, the hypocrisy of the proceeding cannot conduce to the morality of anyone concerned."

Our title "The Booth Boom," is placed at the head of some correspondence in the *Leeds Daily News*. We are glad to see that the question is being discussed.

Next Wednesday evening (Dec. 10) Mr. Bradlaugh lectures at the London Hall of Science on behalf of the Forder Testimonial Fund. Mr. Foote will take the chair and a large audience is expected.

The N. S. S. Almanack is still selling well. A larger edition has been printed than last year's, yet we hope every copy will be cleared out before January. Members of the N. S. S. should recollect that the publication is now issued by the Society at its own risk, and that all profit will accrue to the General Fund.

A meeting will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7, at Camden Hall, Liverpool (after the evening lecture) of the members of the New Hall Company, to appoint directors, secretary, etc. The present acting secretary's address is, H. Smith, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Liverpool.

In the December *Church Reformer* Mr. Stewart D. Headlam gives in full his address to his School Board constituents. He says, "Experience on the Board has confirmed me in the opinion which I had formed before, that the definite teaching of the principles of religion ought not to be part of the duty imposed on the teachers in our common schools."

The *Kidderminster Shuttle* gives insertion to a well-written letter on "Professor Huxley and the Pentateuch," from "Agnostic" of Stourport. "Agnostic" says: "Judaism is now disposed of, and Christianity, being built upon it, must necessarily follow."

In the *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee, C. Derossi continues his translations from the *Ideen* of the Dutch Freethinker, Douwes Dekker "Multatuli."

The attempted suppression of Freethought in the country of Goethe, Humboldt and Schopenhauer still continues. Herr Vogtherr, of Berlin, has been brought before the Potsdam magistrate for blasphemy, and cases are still pending

against Drs. Voelkel, Specht, and Frau Hedwig Henrich Wilhelmi, the first-named having had repeated warnings. This petty persecution will only result in increased spread of Freethought.

Mr. Haskett Smith gives, in *Blackwood* for December, an account of "The Druses in the Holy Land." This interesting sect, he declares, has no affinities with either Mohammedanism or Christianity. They believe in ten incarnations neither of which were Jesus or Mohammed.

The second series of lectures given by the Sunday Lecture Society begins on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 7, in the St. George's Hall, Langham Place, at 4 p.m., when Sir James Crichton Browne, M.D., F.R.S., will lecture on "Brain Stress." Lectures will subsequently be given by Mr. Whitworth Wallis, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Eric S. Bruce, Dr. Henry Hoole, Sir R. S. Ball, and Prof. G. S. Boulger.

The Canterbury Freethought Association, Christchurch, New Zealand, is going to send Mr. Foote a frozen lamb for his "Christmas dinner" as a "slight token of regard." Mr. Foote is very much obliged. He cannot promise to eat a whole lamb at one sitting, but he will do his best. He would be still more obliged if the New Zealand Freethinkers could send him *the Lamb* properly frozen, and he would promise it should never be unfrozen.

Our antipodean friends are also going to send a lamb to Mr. Bradlaugh, who still eats meat, and to Mrs. Besant, who is a vegetarian.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Nov. 26, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Baker, Bater, Bentley, Heaford, Ivatts, Killick, Larkin, Moss, Roger, Reynolds, Smith, Samson, Truelove, Warren, and Forder, secretary. The minutes having been read, and the finance report received and adopted, the secretary presented the Organisation Committee's report which included, among other matters, permission to form branches at Tow Law and Spennymoor, grants to the East London and Westminster branches, and the sending of Mr. Robertson as a special lecturer to Nottingham. Mr. Larkin moved and Mr. Moss seconded "that the report be accepted"; carried. The secretary presented the report on the Almanack and announced that half the edition had already been sold. The financial report on the Almanack was ordered to be presented at the next meeting. A communication was received from the council of the International Federation of Freethinkers applying for the annual subscription for the affiliation of the National Secular Society. Mr. Warren moved and Mr. Bater seconded "that two pounds be sent"; carried. A circular from the Joffrin Monument committee was considered, and Mr. Samson moved and Mr. Truelove seconded "that one pound be voted to that object"; carried. Applications asking permission to form new branches at Leyton, Essex, and Nelson, Lancashire, were unanimously agreed to. A discussion ensued on Freethought organisation, resulting in Mr. Foote giving notice to the Executive, that he would at the next meeting produce a plan dealing with the Society's lecturers.

BENEVOLENT FUND.

Collection at Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture at Hall of Science on Nov. 23, £7 10s. 0d.; E. Truelove, 10s.; Heckmondwike Branch, 6s.

R. FORDER, Secretary.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

Per John Simpson: A. Frame, 10s.; J. Walker, 3s.; Wm. Macneill, 2s.; G. Ramsay, 1s.; J. Ralston, 1s.; A. Buchanan, 1s.; J. Terris, 1s.; J. Simpson, 3s.; J. Johnstone, 6d.; Wm. Taylor, 1s.; T. Muir, 1s.; J. Menzies, 1s. F.S. (Northampton), £2; W. P. Ball, 5s.; Wm. Davey, 2s. 6d.; Diabolos, 10s.; T. Noble, 2s.; A. H. Guest, 10s. 6d.; J. H. E., 10s.

Collecting lists sent on application.

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

OBITUARY.—William Bell Scott, the sculptor, artist, and poet, who died last week in Ayrshire, was, as his volumes of poems prove, a decided Freethinker. He came of a gifted and original family.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON GENERAL BOOTH
AND SALVATIONISM.

The following letter from Professor Huxley appeared in Monday's *Times*. It is a very important utterance, and our readers will be glad to have it *in extenso*.

"IN DARKEST ENGLAND."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—A short time ago a generous and philanthropic friend wrote to me, placing at my disposal a large sum of money for the furtherance of the vast scheme which the General of the Salvation Army has propounded, if I thought it worthy of support. The responsibility of advising my benevolent correspondent has weighed heavily upon me, but I felt that it would be cowardly, as well as ungracious, to refuse to accept it. I have therefore studied Mr. Booth's book with some care, for the purpose of separating the essential from the accessory features of his project, and I have based my judgment—I am sorry to say an unfavorable one—upon the *data* thus obtained. Before communicating my conclusions to my friend, however, I am desirous to know what there may be to be said in arrest of that judgment; and the matter is of such vast public importance that I trust you will aid me by publishing this letter, notwithstanding its length.

There are one or two points upon which I imagine all thinking men have arrived at the same convictions as those from which Mr. Booth starts. It is certain that there is an immense amount of remediable misery among us; that, in addition to the poverty, disease, and degradation which are the consequences of causes beyond human control, there is a vast, probably a very much larger, quantity of misery which is the result of individual ignorance or misconduct and of faulty social arrangements. Further, I think it is not to be doubted that, unless this remediable misery is effectually dealt with, the hordes of vice and pauperism will destroy modern civilisation as effectually as uncivilised tribes of another kind destroyed the great social organisation which preceded ours. Moreover, I think all will agree that no reforms and improvements will go to the root of the evil unless they attack it in its ultimate source—namely, the motives of the individual man. Honest, industrious, and self-restraining men will make a very bad social organisation prosper; while vicious, idle, and reckless citizens will bring to ruin the best that ever was, or ever will be, invented.

The leading propositions which are peculiar to Mr. Booth, I take to be these:—

(1) That the only adequate means to such reformation of the individual man is the adoption of that form of somewhat corybantic Christianity of which the soldiers of the Salvation Army are the militant missionaries. This implies the belief that the excitement of the religious emotions (largely by processes described by their employers as "rousing" and "convivial") is a desirable and trustworthy method of permanently amending the conduct of mankind.

I demur to these propositions. I am of opinion that the testimony of history, no less than the cool observation of that which lies within the personal experience of many of us, is wholly adverse to it.

(2) That the appropriate instrument for the propagation and maintenance of this peculiar sacramental enthusiasm is the Salvation Army—a body of devotees, drilled and disciplined as a military organisation, and provided with a numerous hierarchy of officers, every one of whom is pledged to blind and unhesitating obedience to the "General," who frankly tells us that the first condition of the service is "implicit, unquestioning obedience." "A telegram from me will send any of them to the uttermost parts of the earth"; every one "has taken service on the express condition that he or she will obey, without questioning, or gainsaying, the orders from headquarters" (*Darkest England*, p. 243).

This proposition seems to me to be indisputable. History confirms it. Francis of Assisi and Ignatius Loyola made their great experiments on the same principle. Nothing is more certain than that a body of religious enthusiasts (perhaps we may even say fanatics) pledged to blind obedience to their chief is one of the most efficient instruments for affecting any purpose that the wit of man has yet succeeded in devising. And I can but admire the insight into human nature which has led Mr. Booth to leave his unquestioning and unhesitating instruments unbound by vows. A volunteer slave is worth ten sworn bondsmen.

(3) That the success of the Salvation Army with its present force of 9,416 officers "wholly engaged in the work," its

capital of three-quarters of a million, its income of the same amount, its 1375 corps at home and 1499 in the colonies and foreign countries (Appendix, pp. 3 and 4), is a proof that Divine assistance has been vouchsafed to its efforts.

Here I am not able to agree with the sanguine commander-in-chief of the new model, whose labors in creating it have probably interfered with his acquisition of information respecting the fate of previous enterprises of like kind.

It does not appear to me that his success is in any degree more remarkable than that of Francis of Assisi, or that of Ignatius Loyola, than that of George Fox, or even than that of the Mormons, in our own time. When I observe the discrepancies of the doctrinal foundations from which each of these great movements set out, I find it difficult to suppose that supernatural aid has been given to all of them; still more, that Mr. Booth's smaller measure of success is evidence that it has been granted to him.

But what became of the Franciscan experiment? If there was one rule rather than another on which the founder laid stress, it was that his army of friars should be absolute mendicants, keeping themselves sternly apart from all worldly entanglements. Yet even before the death of Francis, in 1226, a strong party, headed by Elias of Cortona, the deputy of his own appointment, began to hanker after these very things; and within 30 years of that time the Franciscans had become one of the most powerful, wealthy, and wordly corporations in Christendom, with their fingers in every sink of political and social corruption, if so be profit for the order could be fished out of it, their principal interest being to fight their rivals, the Dominicans, and to persecute such of their own brethren as were honest enough to try to carry out their founder's plainest injunctions.

We also know what has become of Loyola's experiment. For two centuries the Jesuits have been the hope of the enemies of the Papacy, for whenever it becomes too prosperous they are sure to bring about a catastrophe by their corrupt use of the political and social influence which their organisation and their wealth secure. With these examples of that which may happen to institutions founded by noble men, with high aims, in the hands of successors of a different stamp, armed with a despotic authority, before me, common prudence surely requires that before advising the handing over of a large sum of money to the general of a new order of mendicants I should ask what guarantee there is that, 30 years hence, the "General" who then autocratically controls the action, say, of 100,000 officers pledged to blind obedience, distributed through the whole length and breadth of the poorer classes, and each with his finger on the trigger of a mine charged with discontent and religious fanaticism; with the absolute control, say, of eight or ten millions sterling of capital and as many of income; with barracks in every town, with estates scattered over the country, and with settlements in the colonies—will exercise his enormous powers, not merely honestly, but wisely? What shadow of security is there that the person who wields this uncontrolled authority over many thousands of men shall use it solely for those philanthropic and religious objects which, I do not doubt, are alone in the mind of Mr. Booth? Who is to say that the Salvation Army, in the year 1920, shall not be a replica of what the Franciscan order had become in the year 1260?

The personal character and the intentions of the founders of such organisations as we are considering count for very little in the formation of a forecast of their future, and if they did, it is no disrespect to Mr. Booth to say that he is not the peer of Francis of Assisi; but if Francis's judgment of men was so imperfect as to permit him to appoint an ambitious intriguer of the stamp of Brother Elias his successor, we have no right to be sanguine about the perspicacity of Mr. Booth in a like matter.

Adding to all these considerations the fact that Mr. Llewelyn Davies, the warmth of whose philanthropy is beyond question and in whose competency and fairness I, for one, place implicit reliance, flatly denies the boasted success of the Salvation Army in its professed mission, I have arrived at the conclusion that, as at present advised, I cannot be the instrument of carrying out my friend's proposal.

Mr. Booth has pithily characterised certain benevolent schemes as doing sixpennyworth of good and a shilling's-worth of harm. I grieve to say that, in my opinion, the definition exactly fits his own project. Few social evils are of greater magnitude than uninstructed and unchastened religious fanaticism; no personal habit more surely degrades the conscience and the intellect than blind and unhesitating

obedience to unlimited authority. Undoubtedly harlotry and intemperance are sore evils, and starvation is hard to bear or even to know of; but the prostitution of the mind, the soddening of the conscience, the dwarfing of manhood are worse calamities. It is a greater evil to have the intellect of a nation put down by organised fanaticism, to see its political and industrial affairs at the mercy of a despot whose chief thought is to make that fanaticism prevail, to watch the degradation of men, who should feel themselves individually responsible for their own and their country's fates, to mere brute instruments ready to the hand of a master for any use to which he may put them.

But that is the end to which, in my opinion, all such organisations as that to which kindly people, who do not look to the consequences of their acts, are now giving their thousands, inevitably tend. Unless clear proof that I am wrong is furnished, another thousand shall not be added by my instrumentality.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
Eastbourne, Nov. 27. T. H. HUXLEY.

TEN LITTLE PARSONS.

(Ten recent incidents of "clerical error" may be briefly summarised.)

Ten little parsons, preaching love divine,
One kissed his servant girl, then there were 9.

Nine little parsons, preaching sinners' fate,
One kissed his neighbor's wife, then there were 8.

Eight little parsons, smoothing paths to heaven,
One kissed his boarding-mistress, then there were 7.

Seven little parsons, exposing Satan's tricks,
One starved the children, then there were 6.

Six little parsons, preaching Christ alive,
One got slinging arsenic, then there were 5.

Five little parsons, preaching sin no more,
One fought his sexton, then there were 4.

Four little parsons, preaching Calvary,
One got horsewhipped, then there were 3.

Three little parsons, preaching Christ as true,
One cut his baby's throat, then there were 2.

Two little parsons, following the Son,
One beat his child to death, then there was 1.

One little parson, just for pious fun,
Eloped with a deacon's wife, then there were none.

BENEFICENT DESIGN.—There is in tropical Africa an insect which is for all the world like a little bit of twig broken off from a tree. Another insect is so like the tree which it inhabits that it takes an expert to tell the difference. The puff-adder, again, is so colored to resemble the sward upon which it lies that an unsuspecting traveller will sit down upon it unawares, and, as Professor Drummond observes in one of his books, to sit down upon a puff-adder is to sit down for the last time.

PROFANE JOKES.

The man who scoffs at the idea of purgatory may go farther and fare worse.

Bellows: "Do you suppose our ancestors were such inveterate gossips as we are?" Fellows: "Yes, for according to Darwin they were all tale-bearers."

"This bell," said a well-meaning sexton when showing the belfry of an interesting village church to a party of visitors, "is only rung in case of a visit from the Lord Bishop of the diocese, a fire, a flood, or any other such calamities."

Patrick (just recovering from the effects of ether in the hospital): "Oh, where am I? Where am I?" Dr. Sawbones (with a wink): "In heaven." Patrick (looking around): "Then I'd like to know phwat you're doing here."

Little Boy: "Papa, did you say that God could do anything?" Pious Father: "Yes, my boy, with God all things are possible." Little Boy: "Could God make a two-year-old colt in two minutes?" Pious Father (after slight pause): "Yes; of course he could." Little Boy: "If God made a two-year-old colt in two minutes, would the colt be two years old?" Pious Father: "Don't ask such questions, sir; you'll be a second Ingersoll."

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. C. J. Hunt, "Heaven and Hell."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Is Christianity True?" Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. E. B. Pease (Fabian), "An Eight Hours' Bill, and why it is Necessary." Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Negro Slavery and the Christian Church."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Salvationism and Darkest England." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "Christianity and Secularism."

Finsbury—Loyal United Friends' Hall, Banner Street, St. Luke's, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "The Bible—is it True?"

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 11.15, Mr. Herbert Burrows; 7, Mr. T. Parris, "The Christ Myth."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, debate between Rev. S. Brennan and Mr. C. J. Hunt on "Does the Bible Teach a Personal Devil?"

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 7, a meeting of members and friends to transact important business.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Dreams: their Nature and Causes." Monday, at 8.30, social gathering. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Alexandria"; 7, Mr. A. Lovell, "Jesus." Tuesday, at 8, Mr. G. Cave-Hill, "Historical Jesus and Mythical Christ."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "In Prison for Blasphemy—Nine Months in Holloway Gaol."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates. 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Old Testament Miracles—are they True?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, a debate between Messrs. Keen and Lockyer.

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "The Events that Caused the Protestant Reformation."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, 5, tea; 7, miscellaneous entertainment.

Chester-le-Street—West Pelton Co-operative Hall, 6.30, Mr. W. Carter, "Bible Proofs for the Existence of God." Free.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, reading by a member.

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. John Grange, 3, "Why I am a Home Ruler"; 6.30, "Religion and Scepticism: their Influence on Character Contrasted."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11.30, committee meeting; 3, debate between Mr. Monks and Mr. Behricksen on "Is Morality the Outcome of Christianity?"; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Be ye Content with your Wages"; afterwards meeting of New Hall Company to elect directors, etc.

Manchester N. S. S.—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Making of Judaism"; 3, "The Law of Population: its Meaning and its Menace"; 6.30, "What has Christianity Done?" Wednesday, at 8, dancing (sixpence).

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Appleby Stephenson, Esq., M.D., "Charles Kingsley and his Teachings"

Portsmouth—Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Mistakes of Jesus"; 3, "Heaven and Hell"; 7, "A World Without God."

Reading—Forester's Hall, West Street, Mr. Toleman-Garner, 3, "The Lord's Prayer"; 7, "In Darkest Christendom and the Way Out."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. E. Stanley Jones, 3, "Has God Revealed Himself to Man?"; 7, "The Struggles of Science."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 10.30, general meeting; 6, Mr. J. Rothery, a reading from Samuel Laing.

Stalybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street, 7, committee meeting.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. King, a reading.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Dec. 28, Camberwell.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 7, Liverpool. Jan. 11 (1891), Liverpool.

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

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

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