

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## THE CAT IS OUT.

A HUNDRED years ago a great Englishman was writing a famous book, in which he penned the sublime exclamation, "The world is my country, and to do good is my religion." The writer was Thomas Paine, and the book the *Age of Reason*.

Thomas Paine had previously written the *Rights of Man*. That work contained more political philosophy than any other book in the English language. But the wisdom, honesty, and courage of the author brought upon him the bitterest persecution. His mechanical genius had to wait half a century for recognition. Many of his personal friends deserted him. Others, like Burke, turned upon him with malicious fury. Finally, the British government prosecuted him for treason, and he only escaped the gallows by fleeing to France.

That persecuted man's opinions on government are now accepted by the majority of his countrymen. Why then was he hounded out of the land of his birth? Why did he nearly perish as a martyr? These were serious questions, and Thomas Paine pondered them. He came to see that he had begun at the wrong end. He had struck at political tyranny, but it was supported by spiritual despotism, which in turn was supported by priestly imposture. He had chopped at a strong branch of an evil tree instead of striking at the roots. It was clear that the *Age of Reason* must precede the *Rights of Man*.

Paine's theological masterpiece only exasperated the fury of his enemies. Scores of men and women went to prison for selling it. The chief of these was Richard Carlile, who spent nine years in English gaols.

No wonder the clergy and the privileged classes were wroth with this damnable heretic. He had gone to the root of the matter with a vengeance. He saw, like Voltaire, that the only way to destroy the power of priestcraft was to destroy the dogmas on which it rested. The foundation stone of the whole structure was the Bible. Accordingly this keen-witted sceptic made a terrible onslaught on "the blessed book," and he did it nearly as much damage in England as Voltaire had done in France. The only honest reply to him was written by Bishop Watson, but that gentleman's defence of the atrocities of the Old Testament would not be endorsed to-day by any responsible Christian.

Thomas Paine was not a scholar in the complete sense of the word. He was a master of keen, lucid, and vigorous English; but he was ignorant of Hebrew and Greek, and he had only a superficial knowledge of Biblical literature. His attainments and his inclination, therefore, alike led him to deal with the Bible from within. Perhaps his instinct urged him in the same direction. And after all his method was the right one, especially if he wished to reach the people. They are not adepts in Greek and Hebrew. Their faith and their salvation cannot depend on such things. In the main they can only judge of the Bible as they would if it were just now presented for the first time

as a revelation from God. They can only investigate it in the light of ordinary knowledge, common sense, and unsophisticated conscience.

With this method Thomas Paine played havoc with the Bible. He showed the absurdity of the notion that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, or that half the Old Testament books were written by their nominal authors. He exposed the romantic character of Jewish history, and the detestable savagery of the chosen people. He also proved that the prophets gained a reputation for insight by generally prophesying after the event.

What that great man's genius discovered has been slowly admitted by Christian scholars. Mr. Gladstone thinks otherwise, but his defence of Scripture is only fit for a museum of curiosities. Better informed Christians, like Dr. Giles, Canon Cheyne, Archdeacon Farrar, Dr. Robertson Smith, and the editor of *Lux Mundi*, admit between them every essential point in the *Age of Reason*. The Principal of Pusey House not only allows, but emphasises, the "low moral standard" of the Old Testament, which is only a euphemism for the fierce impeachment of Thomas Paine.

Nor is this all. A dignitary of the Church of England, Canon Driver, has just published a book for Bible students, entitled *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. He states nothing which has not been taught for a long time by the great continental critics. But his book is a veritable eye-opener in England. He has let the cat out of the bag, tail and all. True, he keeps hold of the tail, but that is a slippery business, and we may be sure the cat will escape.

Dr. Driver's preface is worthy of a little notice. He seems to be glancing at Mr. Gladstone in saying that "language is sometimes used implying that critics are in a state of internecine conflict with one another." "This," he remarks, "is not in accordance with the facts. There is a large area on which the data are clear, and critics are agreed. And this area includes many of the most important results which criticism has reached." He further tells us that while he "makes no claim to have admitted into the present volume only those conclusions on which all critics are agreed," he has on no occasion "adopted what may be termed a critical as opposed to a conservative position" without "weighing all the arguments in support of the latter," and satisfying himself that "they were untenable."

Canon Driver warns the clergy against their trick of "harmonising" the Bible with the teachings of astronomy, geology, and biology. He tells them that "the conclusions which satisfy the unbiassed and unsophisticated reason of mankind prevail in the end." Nor does he show greater consideration for the theory that the sacred text is merely corrupted by the intrusion of "glosses and marginal additions." Indeed, he calls it "a superficial remedy." He contends that "the traditional view" of the Bible must go. The clergy will have to accept a new theory of Inspiration. God Almighty only inspired the Bible writers in a general way. He simply touched

them with his spirit. They were left to their own resources in regard to the *materials* of their narrative. They were "quickened and sustained by the informing Spirit," but the "human factor" was "never wholly absorbed or neutralised." In other words, the spirit of God was poured into them, but it was a very mixed article when it came out of them. Or, to vary the simile, the tune is theirs and the accompaniment is God's. Or, to vary the simile again, the picture is theirs, but a subtle something about it—a charm of color, a harmony of suggestion, a certain *je ne sais quoi*—is the work of Jehovah.

Thus Dr. Driver keeps hold of the cat's tail. The animal is out of the bag, but as well in hand as ever. She will never run amuck among the Church crockery. Dr. Driver maintains an air of solemn solemnity. But, alas, his fingers are twitching, and there is something very like a tremor about his mouth. The animal is feline, essentially wild, apt to make sudden incalculable dashes. Presently she will make a spring, and the worthy doctor will have nothing but a handful of hair.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

### THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.

Now that we have free education in our London Board Schools, every effort should be made to render them as efficient as possible. The free common school might be the most powerful agent in removing the barriers between class and class. Already it shows a tendency in that direction. Returns having decisively proved that the standard of education in Board schools is superior to that in denominational schools, sensible parents are not deterred from sending their children on the ground that church schools are more select.

The clericals are not content with the outlook. But the apathy of the public is their opportunity. The clerical party on the London School Board have done their worst to thwart the very purpose for which they were elected. Some of their present candidates have boldly put themselves forward on the ground, not that they will do their best to render the Board schools as efficient as possible, but that they will exert themselves for the maintenance and support of the church schools.

On this point we are the only party with a principle. The Nonconformists, who fought against church rates on the ground that the State has nothing to do with religion, want to have in the State-supported schools just as much religion as they themselves agree with. What they call "unsectarian" education means to us the most rampant sectarianism. They think it quite unsectarian to call the Bible God's Word and to describe Atheists as vile and foolish people. In permitting public money, public buildings, public servants and public time to be put to the teaching of religion, they virtually discredit their own arguments against the Established Church, and show that the real basis of their opposition is that they do not share in the plunder.

We say that to endow religion in the school is as unjust as to endow it in the church. It is even more objectionable since it crams the minds of helpless children with dogmas and superstitions they have painfully to unlearn. And to the children of Freethinkers the conscience clause is no protection. To put children apart, in a corner for an hour is but to make them objects of persecution. Whoever else may be indifferent, we at least should not rest content until the public schools are devoted only to that on which the public agree. Without seeking to act as a director of consciences, I may point to the situation in the various constituencies.

In many divisions we have but an inferior choice. Yet even when, as at Greenwich, it almost appears to

be a choice of evils, some attempt should be made to eject such an obscurantist as Mr. Gover. Here Dr. W. E. Ball appears the most promising candidate. In the City, Miss Davenport Hill, though "unsectarian," not "secular," has shown herself a good educationist, and should be supported in preference to the fogies who have showed that their object in obtaining seats is to render the School Board inefficient that children may be driven into church schools. In Chelsea the sitting members have been fairly satisfactory, but the claims of Mr. King as a labor and secular candidate should have first consideration. In Finsbury Mr. Forder has come forward at the last minute, and although some of our friends were previously inclined to support Mr. Baker, we trust every one will consider it their duty to plump six votes for the only candidate who goes in for secular education pure and simple. The delay in attacking this division, for which there are too many Progressive candidates, must be compensated for by the activity of Mr. Forder's many friends. Mr. Forder is not the nominee of the London Secular Federation or of any society; but having come forward independently, it is certain that all Secularists in the Finsbury district should give him the whole of their votes and persuade as many as possible to go and do likewise.

Hackney Freethinkers have hitherto supported the Rev. Stewart Headlam and Mr. James Hart. Now Mr. J. C. Horobin comes forward in the teachers' interest. As there are seven candidates for five seats, Freethinkers should confer whether they can safely divide their votes or plump for Headlam, who goes the whole hog. In Tower Hamlets the Rev. E. Schnadhorst promises to support the secular ticket, and should have a measure of support. Mrs. Ruth Homan comes forward to take the place of Mrs. Besant as a Radical and Progressive candidate. In regard to East Lambeth we have already advised the electors.

Mr. H. B. Rogers is the only candidate at West Lambeth who stands on the secular platform. Here there are too many candidates, and the Diggleites are too likely to win unless some of their opponents retire. In Marylebone, with seven members, the Hon. E. Lyulph Stanley, Mrs. Maitland and Mr. Raphael (a Jew) should retain their seats, and Mr. Baum, the Labor candidate, be elected if possible. In Southwark the Rev. Copeland Bowie and Mr. H. Quelch appear the nearest to our views, while in Westminster an attempt should be made to wrest a seat from the clericals by plumping five for Mr. Bowman Spink. We have an opportunity which will not recur for three years. Every ratepayer, male or female, should feel it their duty to attend at the polling booths and give every possible vote to the candidates who stand for principle.

J. M. WHEELER.

### 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.

A little boy, on returning from Sunday school, said to his mother, "This catechism is too hard; isn't there any kiddy-chisms for little boys?"

## A CRUEL AND DEGRADING FAITH.

The orthodox faith is cruel and degrading, appealing as it does to the worst fears and the most selfish desires of the human race. By some persons it is regarded as a system of love, offering a pleasant future in a far-off world; by others it is looked upon as a system of gloomy forebodings, controlled by a personal Devil who is constantly sowing the seeds of discord and unhappiness throughout society, and whose delight it is to awe and crush the human mind with fear and apprehension. If orthodoxy inspires its believers with hopes of a heaven to buoy them up, it also produces within them the dread of a hell to cast them down. The one is quite as certain as the other, and, according to the New Testament, hell has by far the majority of victims—which, to say the least, is a burning shame. As soon as a child begins to lisp at its mother's knee it is taught that there is a "heaven to gain and a hell to avoid." This false and mischievous notion is encouraged by theological teaching until the victim is made an abject slave to a fancy-created heaven and to an inhumanly-pictured hell.

Christians frequently assert that to deprive them of their hope in heaven would be to rob them of their principal consolation. If this is so, it proves the degrading nature of their faith. Better have no consolation than derive it from a creed which condemns to eternal punishment the great majority of mankind. There is no doubt that to secure heaven is the great aim of Christians; for if they sincerely believe what they profess, the most devoted of them can obtain comparatively little pleasure from the joys of this world. They can derive no satisfaction in benefitting their fellows independently of theology. Virtue with them can have no charms if not prompted by the "love of God." Nobility, heroism, generosity, and devotion are partially or entirely ignored, unless such virtues are stimulated by the hope of future bliss. When the ordinary Christian feels satisfied that his faith will conduct him safely to the "next world," its effects in this life are considered as being only of secondary importance. Thus, if we may judge from the conduct of its professors, selfishness is the great characteristic of the Christian religion. Even their desire for heaven is largely diminished by their dread of hell. The smoke from a brimstone fire is more potent with them than the fragrance of their supposed Elysium. The groans from the "lost souls" command their attention more than the "angelic music" of the "celestial inhabitants." Sensational preachers recognise this; hence they delight to treat upon such cheerful subjects as the "wrath of God," "eternal perdition," and the "devil and his angels." The most successful Christian advocacy is that which frightens rather than that which persuades. Fear is truly the principal commodity of orthodox believers, and they use it to a terrible extent.

Persons invariably picture their heaven in accordance with the creed or belief in which they have been trained. Thus we find that the wild Indian expects that his heaven will be an "everlasting hunting-ground," where he will have unlimited sport in chasing savage animals; the African supposes his heaven will be a locality where he can have plenty of food, a comfortable home, and a happy circle of friends; the Asiatic entertains the idea that his heaven is to be remarkable for the presence of charming young ladies. Now, in these prospective residences there are features of healthy exercise, comfort and fair companionship, a marked improvement on the imagined orthodox heaven, which we are told is the abode of "the souls of those who had been slain," and a kind of receptacle for all sorts of characters, including criminals and oppressors—men who were considered too bad to live on earth, and whose exit to heaven was a decided advantage to those

left behind. The orthodox faith frequently excludes from its "celestial city" the brave, the noble, and the patriotic—men who have resisted the tyrant, and who have fought for liberty and freedom of thought. A permanent sojourn in a place where the purest and best of the race are not allowed to enter, cannot be desired by anyone who is not either a moral invalid or an intellectual mendicant.

Although the clergy are constantly talking about heaven and hell, they have not the slightest knowledge where such places are situated. True, they say that the one is "above" and the other "below." But as the earth revolves upon its axis, what is above at one period will be below at another, and thus it is exceedingly difficult to be sure when one would arrive at a final elevated destination. We find a very curious account given of heaven by St. John the divine, who professes to have looked in at the door, and whose testimony may, therefore, be regarded as that of an eye-witness. He informs us that he was in the spirit, but it is possible that the "spirit" was in him, for a more incomprehensible and absurd jumble of nonsense than that contained in the record of the vision reported in the twenty-two chapters of the book of Revelation it would be hard to conceive. St. John had most singular ideas both of artistic beauty and of pictorial theology. He says that God was like a jasper and a sardine stone; the rainbow round about him was the color of an emerald. This sparkling Deity was surrounded by four and twenty elders, their heads being adorned with crowns of gold. Before the throne were a sea of crystal, and seven lambs, which were the seven spirits of God. Then there were beasts "full of eyes before and behind." These must have been wide-awake animals, for we are told they were "full of eyes within." Of course no one would attempt to get at the blind side of such heavenly companions. One of these beasts is said to have been like a lion, another like a calf, the third like a man (possibly a gorilla), and this curious tribe amused themselves by making a tremendous noise, singing through all eternity, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." This would not be the most suitable place for a person of a serious and quiet turn of mind to find himself located for an indefinite period. If we believed in the efficacy of prayer we should earnestly supplicate from such a heaven as this—"Good Lord, deliver us."

This is a specimen of the future home of the "righteous" as taught by orthodox Christianity. If we are faithful to the end, we may dwell in this wonderful museum and behold this remarkably "happy family," but if we refuse to believe that it is true, then, according to the same book, we are to be punished in a manner that is horrible to contemplate. Amidst the eruption of mountains, the flashing of lightning, and the roar of thunder; while the stars are descending, the sun darkening, and the moon being converted into blood; suffocated by the fumes of a burning brimstone lake, and bewildered by the groans and lamentations of the damned, the majority of mankind are to be exposed to the severest torture that it is possible for the most barbarous nature to conceive. Well might Dr. Colenso report that the introduction of this belief among the heathens caused them to be most unhappy. To seriously regard such teaching as real is to destroy the sunshine of life and to convert the human race into a tribe of the most "miserable sinners" whose existences were overblighted by a cruel and relentless theology.

Secularism allures with no offers of a fantastic heaven in another world; it threatens with no hell to appal, no Devil to torture, and no fire to burn. It suggests that those who desire a heaven should try to realise one for themselves on earth; that those who wish to avoid hell should seek to get rid of shams and superstitions that too often make a "hell upon earth." It teaches that vice ought to be shunned

because indulgence in it is a wrong both to the individual and to society at large; that virtue should be practised because it is the duty of all to do what they can to alleviate human woe, and to assist human progress. If such healthy teaching as this fails to win patronage; if such virtues as these command not approval; if such an incentive to useful conduct is powerless unless it is accompanied by the hope of permanent joy or the fear of everlasting misery hereafter—then the welfare of the human family will be sacrificed to the influence of a mind-degrading theology. Having, however, faith in the power of intellect and in the humanising influence of morality, we believe that the orthodox figments of heaven and hell will cease to mar the mental glory and happiness of man, and before the advancement of thought freed from the trammels of the church, the errors of theology will recede, and reason surrounded with a halo of freedom will hold its sway, imparting a healthy force to action and an ethical dignity to belief.

CHARLES WATTS.

### ABOUT COLONEL INGERSOLL.

(By "Lophos" in the *Boston Advertiser*.)

MAX O'RELL, in his little book, *Jonathan and his Continent*, says that Robert Ingersoll "is a personality apart." To this I subscribe. But he also says that "Americans are unanimous in admitting Ingersoll's extraordinary talents." If this be so, it must be an "admission by default," for comparatively few Americans know anything at all about him. Ingersoll is better known as the "great Infidel" than as anything else, and knowing him as such, the average American wishes to seek no further. I think it safe to assert that the vast majority of Americans have no idea of what a marvellous mind is running its course among us in this latter part of the nineteenth century. If anyone doubts this, let him inquire how many of his immediate circle are familiar with the writings of Robert Ingersoll. You will find few, I think, who have done more than cast a furtive and timid glance at some of his tracts on religious or irreligious subjects.

Very many people, far from being familiar with Ingersoll's writings, are ignorant of the fact that he has written anything other than polemics. It is not uncommon to receive this answer, "No, I have not read Ingersoll's writings, and I do not want to." And this, perhaps, is only another proof of the truth of Lord Houghton's observation that "It is remarkable how few people have 'grown-up' minds."

Robert Ingersoll must be described by the word "genius," for by no other word can this strangely contradictory character be explained. The mental equipment of this man is that of a logician, a philosopher, a poet, and an artist in the most general sense of the word.

Robert Ingersoll possesses in its most perfect form the charm of personal magnetism. All who come in contact with him, no matter how deeply prejudiced at the outset, leave him with kindlier feelings, and the wealth of his brain obscures all those minor traits of mind, and renders insignificant all those trivial personal habits which go far in forming our opinion of the mediocre man.

In the first place, Ingersoll is a brilliant conversationalist, or perhaps I should say, "monologist," because when he begins to talk most people are charmed into silence. He talks with ease and grace upon subjects of which you would suppose him ignorant, often amazing a specialist with his knowledge of the specialty. An omnivorous reader, he has the faculty of digesting a book, of getting at and retaining its salient points to the exclusion of the padding and the unimportant. Scarcely anything in the line of realising escapes him. Novels, history, poetry, the Koran, and yesterday's trash, he has

read them all. His memory is marvellous. "I have what I call 'The Fool's Memory,'" said he to me one day; "I can remember the number of a page on which I saw certain sentences, and can often tell whether it was the right or left hand page, and how many lines from the top or bottom."

His memory for the works of Shakespeare is particularly noticeable. Quotations from the great dramatist, always perfectly apt and correct, he has at his tongue's end. Indeed, Shakespeare is his Bible, and in Colonel Ingersoll's opinion no other writer, and, I might almost say, no other man, deserves to be mentioned in the same breath with Shakespeare. I remember once hearing Colonel Ingersoll say that he never heard of Shakespeare until he was about twenty years of age, when a chance incident happened to put him in possession of a copy of "King Lear," and the reading of that play marked the beginning of a passionate love for its author which to-day amounts almost to worship. He is a great admirer of the writings of Charles Dickens, and in this connection it is interesting to note that when Dickens was in America, Ingersoll was invited to meet him at dinner and flatly refused to do so, being greatly offended by the caricature of America and Americans drawn by Dickens in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The colonel told me that he had never ceased to regret missing this opportunity of meeting the great novelist, and remarked that he now enjoyed the description of "the flourishing town of Eden and its inhabitants" as much as anybody. Victor Hugo is another author with whom Colonel Ingersoll is wonderfully conversant.

I once had a talk with Ingersoll on novels, and in the course of it asked him which of the novels he had read he considered the greatest. *Les Miserables*, he answered without a moment's hesitation. "It has no equal. But a *Tale of Two Cities* would be perhaps my second choice." Colonel Ingersoll is a very observant and sometimes a very severe critic. I will own that he has spoiled several things for me by pointing out faults which otherwise I should probably never have noticed. Of Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg he said: "What a pity Lincoln put seven useless 'heres' in those wonderful lines." I now see those 'heres' glaring at me every time I read that speech. And of Bryant's "Thanatopsis" he said: "How do you suppose Bryant ever fell into the error of saying: 'Thou go not like the quarry slave at night scourged to his dungeon.' No quarry slave ever needed scourging to drive him from his work at night to his dungeon. What Bryant must have meant was—'at morn scourged from his dungeon.'"

I have spoken before of Colonel Ingersoll's faculty of digesting his reading. This I consider is due in great measure to the wonderful mind concentration of which he is capable. Of this I have seen many evidences, and in this connection I am reminded of an incident that happened in one of the branches of the now celebrated Bell telephone case. Colonel Ingersoll had been retained to make the oral argument before the supreme court of the United States. For weeks the various counsel had been trying to make appointments for the purpose of coaching Ingersoll on the fine points of the case. Failing in this they engaged a compartment in the parlor car which was to take them down to Washington, intending thus to utilise the journey to prepare their orator. Unfortunately for their plans, the colonel walked through the smoking car, and seeing an old acquaintance, dropped into an adjoining seat, and that was the last the anxious lawyers saw of him until Washington was reached. At Washington a bath and dinner occupied the most of the evening, and it was well on to midnight before the refractory colonel was corralled and coached by his junior counsel. Imagine any subject being elucidated by three or four lawyers at once! Least of all the intri-

cate subject of telephone law. The wee sma' hours saw the colonel escaping from his instructors. The case was argued in the forenoon of that morning, and I have heard it said by those who listened to the colonel's speech that the law of telephones was never before so clearly stated—not a salient point had been neglected. He had won that case in the smoking car from New York to Washington.

Those who have read the wonderful prose poem, "Life," written by Colonel Ingersoll as a parallel to "The Seven Ages of Man," will scarcely believe that this work was conceived and written in a railroad train on the journey from New York to Washington. But such the author tells me is the fact.

In addition to being an industrious reader (where he gets time for it no one knows), Colonel Ingersoll is a great lover of music and a good judge of it, though he is personally no musician; and using this expression makes me tell a story at my own expense.

One day Colonel Ingersoll said to me, "L—, are you fond of music?" "I am, Colonel," I replied, "but I am no musician." "Well, that's a silly answer," said he; "you might just as well reply, if I asked you if you liked cake, 'Yes, but I'm no cook.'"

Wagner is his favorite composer, as Shakespeare is his favorite author. He idolises both. In a breach of promise case not long ago, the evidence showed that the defendant had taken his alleged fiancée to the German opera—to "Tristan and Isolde" and others. In summing up a rather forlorn hope defence, the colonel said, "Gentlemen, you have heard that the defendant frequently took the plaintiff to the German opera—there to hear the masterpieces of Wagner—those waterfalls of melody. The man who had conferred such a benefit on a woman should not be subjected by her to a suit of this kind. That should absolve him!" Ingersoll is a passionate admirer of the dramatic art, and all his life long has been a champion of the stage. Here, as in many other things, his opinions differ widely from the recognised critics. But his opinions never lack reasons and his reasons never lack force. I have heard him assert time and again, in that dictatorial positive manner which of itself carries conviction, that Julia Marlowe is the greatest living actress, because she acts naturally. "Too much polish," he says, "suggests insincerity." He could not endure the finished acting of Coquelin and Hading. For Edwin Booth and Joseph Jefferson he has expressions of enthusiastic admiration. His standard of criticism here is, as I have said, an individual one, but it is also one of a high order, and few are the actors and actresses of whom I have heard him speak in high terms. A poor reading of Shakespeare irritates him greatly, and I have heard him severely criticise some well-known actors for not studying their rôles sufficiently to enable them to act their characters consistently.

Thus in *Romeo and Juliet*. He says the point is utterly lost by making Romeo and Tybalt fence all over the stage, when a correct interpretation of Romeo's character and the scene would be a frenzied rush, resulting in something like a murder.

There is scarcely a prominent lawyer in New York who has not smarted under the lash of Ingersoll's satire, which, however, is almost always delivered with a smile that takes away much of the sting. "Colonel Ingersoll and I generally differ as to what the law is," sneeringly remarked a well-known member of the New York bar. "Yes," flashed back the colonel, "if we didn't I should have some doubt about my being right."

"I never think of England," said he again, "without being reminded of a burglar with a white necktie."

Master of the art of invective, Ingersoll seldom uses it—holding that "epithets are not argument." But I once heard him at his best, denouncing a

man who had brought an uncalled-for accusation against his wife in a suit for divorce. "Gentlemen of the jury," said the colonel, his eyes flashing with anger and contempt, "I mark out in the plaintiff the meanest man I know. A man so mean that nature wasted her time in making him, and the dirt of which he is composed would have been better employed filling the grave of another such man, if such another live!"

It is at this time impracticable to do more than enumerate some of Ingersoll's writings, which entitle him to rank foremost among American prose writers—exclusive of the polemics which have given him more notoriety than fame. Would it be considered extravagant to say that Ingersoll is one of the greatest Shakespearian scholars in the world? I am willing to abide by the decision of those who have read his essay on Shakespeare, and who are themselves at all familiar with the Shakespearian critics. Is it possible to believe that a complete history of Napoleon could be drawn in less than two hundred lines? If not, read De Bourrienne's three ponderous tomes on the life of Napoleon, and then see what Ingersoll has neglected in his reflections at the tomb of the "man of destiny."

"Life," "Crimes Against Criminals," "A Vision of War," "Henry Ward Beecher," "Roscoe Conkling," "Cuba," "Woman." These are a few of the many essays and prose poems from the pen of this "marvellous, many-sided" man. No one can fully know the possibilities of the English language until he has read them.

#### THE BITTER CRY OF THE BISHOPS.

In your "Acid Drops" for Nov. 8, you say "One of our Archbishops has more than half that income (£70) per day."

Please Mr. Foote we wish it to be distinctly understood  
That we slap and bang the Bible for the proletariat's good,  
And tell him all those tales so tall of which he never seems  
to tire;  
So that we really feel 'tis true "the laborer's worthy of his  
hire,"

It sounds so very humble, "worthy of his hire."

There are those who jeer at us and say we're considerably  
overpaid,  
But they forget the work we do—say when a Bishop's made.  
We have to ask advice from God, and kneel and bow and  
groan,  
So that when we take our quarter's screw we scarce can drag  
it home,  
But manage by exertion to get it safely home.

And they say for men so humble and as meek as good old  
"Mo,"  
That we shouldn't ride in chariots, but foot it as did Jesus  
some little time ago!  
But our work it is so arduous that our strength is quickly  
gone;  
J. C. may have been more muscular or more inclined to bone,  
Or perhaps, his beat was limited and close around his  
home.

Think what we have to suffer when we christen a royal babe,  
There's water from the Jordan to be laboriously faked and  
made;  
Our theatrical apparel cleaned, and concoction of the Host,  
Not forgetting Holy Ghostal power received per heavenly  
post,  
Received direct by telephone from the jolly Holy Ghost.

Would you therefore use your influence to stay the proletariat's  
sneers.  
And remind him we are old old men very far advanced in  
years,  
And as we've shown we work so hard we're deserving of more  
"knickers."  
A rise of screw is what would do, so we needn't pawn our  
"tickers,"

Uncle lends so very little on Waterbury "tickers."

### THE RESURRECTION BONE.

Throughout the middle ages it was believed that there exists in man a bone imponderable, incorruptible, incombustible, the necessary nucleus of the resurrection body. Belief in a resurrection of the physical body, despite St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, had been incorporated into the formula made many centuries after his time and called the Apostles' Creed, and was held throughout, "always, everywhere, and by all." This hypothetical bone was therefore held in great veneration, and many anatomists sought to discover it; but Vesalius, revealing so much else, did not find it, and was therefore suspected of a want of proper faith. He contented himself with saying that he left the question regarding the existence of such a bone to the theologians. He could not lie, he did not wish to fight the Inquisition, and thus he fell under suspicion.

The strength of this theological point may be judged from the fact that no less eminent a surgeon than Riolan consulted the executioner to find out whether, when he burned a criminal, all the parts were consumed; and only then was the answer received which fatally undermined this superstition. Still, in 1689 we find it still lingering in France, creating an energetic opposition in the church to dissection. Even as late as the eighteenth century, Bernouilli having shown that the living human body constantly undergoes a series of changes, so that all its particles are renewed in a given number of years, so much ill feeling was drawn upon him, especially from the theologians (who saw in this statement danger to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body), that for the sake of peace he struck out his argument on this subject from his collected works.—*Prof. White in "Popular Science Review."*

### A CHILD'S VIEW OF HELL.

The children were playing in the yard. Mamma sat sewing by the window, and overheard the following conversation. Charlie spoke first.

"Do you ever feel real mean when you do anything wrong, Helen?"

"I never thought about it," replied Helen.

"Don't you ever feel just kind of hot and on fire from your head clear down to your feet?"

"No, I don't know as I do."

"Well, I tell you I do," went on Charlie reflectively. "First my head gets all hot and my face red, and I feel awfully, as if I was going to burn up; and the feeling keeps spreading and spreading until I tingle clear down into my fingers and toes. And, Helen," he added, after two or three vicious digs into the earth, "I just believe that's hell."

### ACID DROPS.

The Parnellites were beaten at Cork, and of course their defeat was a foregone conclusion. But they polled remarkably well, considering that they fought the priests as well as the anti-Parnellites. Priests were busy during the contest, and on the polling day they swarmed about the voting places. They worked with all their might, and as the *Daily Chronicle* puts it, they have "after a severe struggle wrested even rebel Cork from the secular Nationalist politicians." Their man polled 3,669 votes, but there are 10,267 on the register, and the other Nationalist candidate polled 2,157. After all, then, the priests' victory is not a transcendent one. They have carried the seat, but they have demonstrated the fact that for every 36 men they can bring to the poll there are 21 who will go and vote the opposite way.

Now this is a very significant fact, at least in Ireland, which is the most priest-ridden country in Europe. Another significant fact is that the Parnellite leaders are openly fighting the priests—not as priests, of course, but as politicians. The *Times'* report of the speeches of Mr. John Redmond and Mr. Pierce Mahoney after the declaration of the poll is full of strong denunciation of the tyranny of the priests in secular affairs. It is this that makes the Irish contest so interesting to Freethinkers. If the Parnellites go on fighting, as they promise to, a strong anti-clerical party will be formed in Ireland, and that is the most hopeful feature of a not too pleasant business.

The Irish priests always hated Parnell, though they feared to oppose him openly. Politically he got the Irish people clean away from clerical control. No wonder, therefore, that the Catholic bishops pounced upon him when he stumbled. They have triumphed for the moment, but they have plenty of stiff fighting before them. Meanwhile the cynical bystander, who remembers their assumption of lofty morality in their manifesto against Parnell, will contrast it with their easy tolerance of Tim Healy, who flings one of the dirtiest words in the English dictionary at the prostrate widow of his old leader.

The proceedings at Eastbourne are not very creditable, but it was a very sensible person who cried out to the Salvationists, "Why don't the Booths come to help you?" They set a parcel of helpless fanatics to carry on an illegal fight, and take care to keep out of it themselves. The family keep as much away as the "General," who is abroad. In the army the followers take the kicks and the family take the halfpence.

Bramwell Booth is reported to have told the Mayor of Eastbourne that if the police would let the Salvationists defy the law for one Sunday, their opposition to it might cease. Bramwell is getting a bigger bug than the old man.

The Boothites know how to cadge. One of our readers was stopped in a North London street the other evening by a female Boothite, who begged "a penny to pay for the gas," saying "it would be cut off if it was not paid on Monday."

One of the Booth dynasty, Mrs. Booth-Tucker, is delivering Sunday afternoon addresses at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly. She began last Sunday. According to the *Chronicle*, there was "but a small attendance." Judging from the report, the lady's address was a poor, insipid hash of evangelical commonplaces. The Booths are not persons of ideas. They should always give brief discourses, sandwiched with rollicking hymns. When they take longer flights they are dismal failures.

At Westminster Abbey on Sunday morning the Rev. E. Husband pleaded for the exclusion of the Athanasian Creed from the Prayer Book. He expressed his dislike of its "damnatory clauses," which disgust "thousands of loyal and faithful laymen." But if the Prayer Book is to be revised, why not do the work thoroughly? Do not half the clergy, to say nothing of laymen, disbelieve half the Thirty-nine Articles? Nay, if the Prayer Book is to be revised, why not revise the Bible too? It sadly wants bringing up to a civilised standard of sense and decency.

In America, Seventh Day Adventists who believed in keeping the Sabbath of the Lord on the day originally appointed, are being continually persecuted by their fellow Christians for working on the day of the sun. In Tennessee they have been both fined and imprisoned.

The bigots have triumphed at the Stoke Newington Library. They have kicked out the whole of the books presented by Mrs. Samson. In their indiscriminating fury they have actually ejected Mr. Holyoake's book on Co-operation. The taint of his name is on the title-page, and perhaps it would disturb the orthodoxy of the readers "under twenty" if they found that a Secularist could write a good book.

One letter-writer in the *North London Guardian*, signing himself "Jupiter," has the reckless impudence to state that Mr. Foote was imprisoned for "blasphemy and indecency." Mr. Foote has written a correction of this infamous libel, which will probably appear in the next number of the same journal. If it does not, he will instruct his solicitors to take immediate action.

The Rev. J. Simpson, rector of Castleford, Yorkshire, is perpetually squabbling with his congregation. He is now accused of bruising the arm of the church cleaner, whom he sought to eject, and who has summonsed him for assault. He charged her, in turn, with vexing him by working during service, and the poor woman's summons was dismissed.

The wife of the Rev. John A. St. Clair, lately minister of Melville Parish Montrose, has obtained a divorce from her

husband who left her to go and sleep with the servant, and finally left his parish with her.

M. Oftedal, a popular orthodox Norwegian priest politician, celebrated for his moral discourses, has made a sensation throughout the country by denouncing himself for immorality from his own pulpit at St. Peter's Church, Stavanger. Pressure had been put on him from the bishop, to whom his clerical colleagues had sent anonymous letters. Here is a new subject for a play by Ibsen or a novel by Bjornsen.

Says the *Progressive Thinker* of Chicago: "A Rev. Mr. Bell, of Lexington, deserted his wife and five children, took up with another woman, and then went to Dalonega, Georgia. He cut a considerable swell holding revival meetings."

The wife of Mr. Hounsell, a Wesleyan local preacher of Weymouth, has obtained a judicial separation. The man of God was in the habit of visiting the bedroom of his servant—a girl of fifteen—every Sunday before proceeding to his devotions.

The wife of George Carter a laborer, of Great Wakering near Rochford, accused of misconduct with the lodger, stated that as she belonged to the Peculiar People she thought it her duty to love everyone. The law ever looks doubtfully on these early Christian privileges.

Mary Ann Howard Myserson, a draper's saleswoman, lately residing at 18 Shirland-road, Paddington, cut her throat. Evidence was given that she was of a deeply religious turn of mind. On a table various papers were found, upon which she had written various pious expressions, such as "Act as in God's sight," and "God will give you rest." The verdict was "Suicide while of unsound mind."

Twenty-five pounds damages have been accorded to the Rev. A. Lawrence in his action for libel against the Rev. Wm. Gill, who accused his brother in the Lord of being suspended for extreme and shameless debts. The Rev. Mr. Lawrence admitted he owed a widow £152 for meat, and that he borrowed money from a builder to pay the bailiffs out when he was holding a garden party; but the jury held that nevertheless his fellow clergyman was guilty of libel.

The Rev. S. J. Cotton, of Carogh orphanage, is now charged with manslaughter arising from the death of a child, who it is alleged was given a cold bath and left to sleep in the frosty air with only a sack around him.

Parson Batson, of Great Ringstead, ran up a bill at the Grand Hotel, London, and being sued for the amount, he pleaded that he couldn't get his tithes in till Christmas. Of course it didn't occur to him to postpone the spree till after Christmas. Nor did he remember the blessings of poverty when he ran up a bill of 33s. for a single dinner.

Celestine Edwards, the negro preacher, has a lively imagination. The other day he told a north country audience that he and his friends were supporting an East-London Atheist, who was deserted by his fellow unbelievers. Of course the fiction was circulated a long way from the place where it could be refuted. More recently he told another provincial audience that he had destroyed the Free-thought meetings in Victoria Park by drawing away all the audience—which is news indeed! Later still, at Wood Green, he announced that Mr. Bradlaugh did not die an Atheist. He also stated that the Secularists had lost Mr. Bradlaugh, although he was a member of the National Secular Society to the day of his death.

Mr. Edwards is described by the *Wood Green Star* as a "powerful exponent" of Christianity. Perhaps he is. But his forte lies in another direction. He might earn a good living by writing penny novels, or even ten-a-penny tracts. It would be easy to find some one to touch up his English.

Some wicked wag in Ayrshire gave the Bible carriage people some trouble by demanding the committee to pay £2 for a hawker's licence together with a police certificate, that the Bible hawker was of good character.

A correspondent asks us what reason lay behind the avidity shown by the natives of Uganda for the Bible.

Perhaps they wanted copies for useful domestic purposes, but more probably it was represented to them as a sacred fetish or charm book which would bring luck to the possessors.

Mr. Arnold Foster, of the London Missionary Society stationed at Hankow, protests in a lengthy paper in the *Christian* against the indiscriminate circulation of the Bible in heathen lands without elucidatory notes, or apart from the oral instruction and explanations of the missionary. The benighted heathens find confirmation of their own devil worship and sanction for their polygamy and barbarity in the sacred scriptures. When Ulfilas translated the Bible for the Goths, he is said to have left out the historical chapters lest they should further excite their sanguinary dispositions.

The Christian Vernacular Education Society of India could not raise the money it required, and has changed its name to the Christian Literature Society for India. It complains that tares are sown more than wheat among the natives. There is a wide field for Secular literature in the East.

Devils it appears are still exorcised by the power of the gospel. At least the *Reaper* for November reports the exorcism of one by an evangelist in China.

Roman Catholic countries are everywhere the most illiterate. According to the *Catholic World* this is the best condition. It says: "The best-ordered and administered State is that in which the few are well educated, and the many are trained to be obedient, and willing to be directed, are content to follow, and do not aspire to be leaders." In other words, it proposes freedom and dominion for the priests, slavery for the masses.

The late Thomas Melville Russell, of Bromsgrove, left £90,000 to the Mildmay Mission to the Jews. The will is contested by a niece, who alleged that for more than fifteen years before his death he suffered from religious delusions, believed to be the effects of sunstroke. If the Mildmay Mission get the money it should convert perhaps fifty bad Jews into worse Christians, and keep a few missionaries in comfort.

In the *Expositor* for November, Prof. J. T. Marshall reverts to his theory of a common Aramaic Gospel as the foundation of the Synoptics, and adduces many passages which he concludes show indications of being translations. This view, which first found expression in the Wolfenbuttel fragments, edited by Lessing, is making its way even among orthodox scholars. But they must then face the question, Why are the originals of God's revelations lost while nothing remains but translations?

A professor at one of our colleges started out in life intending to enter the ministry, and after a course of study was being examined for ordination before a congregational council. Being asked the question: "Are you willing to be eternally damned if it is God's will?" he replied: "No, I'm not; but I'm perfectly willing you should."

The cup of the blessed sacrament has frequently been used for poisoning, and is sometimes pernicious by reawaking the thirst of a drunkard. But a new danger has been found in the communion cup. The deadly microbe has been found lurking near the body of the Lord, and correspondents of the *Glasgow Herald* have been sounding a note of warning. One writer, describing his fellow communicants, says: "One, of unquestioned orthodoxy, was also a strong believer in short twist, and on communion occasions had a quid secreted between his molars as usual. I knew it from his coolly expectorating over the pew door. I have sat with others whose breath was like that of a charnel-house; and with another, a lady this time, who wiped the rim of the cup with her handkerchief! Moreover, I have seen a mourner, with moustache almost as flowing as the emblem of woe on his headpiece, seek surcease of sorrow from a black cutty to within a few yards of the church door."

Another writer says: "It is scandalous that people will be sitting drinking from the same vessel who are suffering from some specific and infectious disease, or with diseased lips, palate, or throat, and that ever and anon you can hear the deep hollow cough or 'clocher' of some one struggling hard with the bacillus of consumption."

Cleanliness is sometimes very far from godliness, according to the statement of one writer. He says: "Lately an old snuffer sat not very far from me with a very large drop at his nose, and a few brown granules of 'taddy' hovering around. I watched these carefully before and after he partook of the cup, and there they remained, but had they disappeared whilst he was partaking of the cup I had my mind made to pass it." Even the bread which represents the body of the Lord is said to be sometimes handled with dirty fingers, and so passed from mouth to mouth.

Even the Savior ceases to be relished when he is passed from a person suffering from disease of the lips or palate, and one correspondent seriously suggests that the Savior's blood ought to be done up in antiseptic capsules and so swallowed like a pill.

Dr. R. Welsh has addressed a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, replying to the Primate's misstatement that the Irish Protestants were but a tenth of the population. This misstatement was made with a view of minimising the example of the Disestablishment of the Church in Ireland. Dr. Welsh shows that this was not true at the time of the Disestablishment, and now the figures are: Protestants, 1,156,306; Catholics, 3,549,856. The Catholics of Ireland are decreasing through emigration, while the Protestants, and with them a little leaven of Freethinkers, are increasing.

The Rev. F. W. Clarke, of Frome, in holding a thanksgiving for a bad harvest and flooded country, said that national prosperity and national piety went together. He more than hinted that the breaking of the Sabbath was the cause of misfortune. Perhaps this led to the unfortunate end of Jesus Christ, for he was a notorious Sabbath breaker. Then there was unbelief. "Why should God answer the prayers of people who only half believed in him?" It appears that like other ghosts he only manifests himself to believers. How truly Christian of Mr. Clarke to suggest that the infidels are responsible for a bad season, while for a good one gratitude is due to the prayers of the sky-pilots.

H. O. Pentecost, editor of the *Twentieth Century* (New York), concludes a series of paragraphs on Mrs. Besant's Theosophy as follows: "We have seen that Mrs. Besant set out to hunt for the 'essence of things'—something that exists, so far as we know, or can know, only in the imagination—and because Materialism could not show her this chimerical 'essence' she went in a 'new road,' and has ended in believing, on the authority of certain mahatmas, whom she never saw, and whom probably not more than two of her friends ever saw, doctrines that are inconceivable and stories that are incredible. She has not demonstrated the truth of either the doctrines or the stories. She has simply accepted them on the authority and testimony of very few persons. There should be no doubt that Mrs. Besant is entirely truthful and sincere in all she has written in her interesting pamphlet, but it is probable, after all, that the real, underlying reason, why she became a Theosophist was because Materialism did not satisfy certain well-known 'yearnings' which, to a greater or less extent, we have all inherited from our superstitious ancestors, and she has satisfied, or tried to satisfy, her 'yearnings' with a delusion. Delusion is the food that 'yearnings' feed on. But demonstrated facts are the most wholesome food for the mind."

J. J. B. Coles, M.A., who is to debate Theosophy with Mrs. Besant, promises to use the magic lantern during the performance; and if Mrs. Besant will only produce a Mahatma, or do a few occult tricks, the debate will be lively as well as singular. For the rest, it is hard to see the use of such a discussion, as Mr. Coles has a superstition of his own. Mrs. Besant seems too sagacious to debate with a representative Freethinker.

Mrs. Besant isn't going to India after all. She had bought her ticket for the trip, but the Mahatmas say she musn't go. What is the reason, we wonder? Was it feared that the new High Priestess of Theosophy would hear too much about Madame Blavatsky in India? Or was it pretty certain that the stumping of India would prove a frost?

Theosophy seems to be a paying business while it lasts. Before the *Chronicle* boomed the new craze, Mrs. Besant's audiences had dwindled considerably. Now they have gone

up with a rush. She had a "crowded audience" at Wandsworth the other night, and the seats were one shilling, two shillings, and three shillings. It is all right to make hay while the sun shines, but where does the *brotherhood* come in?

Hugh Price Hughes has brought home a piece of Plymouth Rock, and the American geological specimen seems to inspire him, for he declares he is going to stand shoulder to shoulder with the other folk who help to spend the £8,000 income of the West London Mission "until the curse of drunkenness, and lust, and greed of gain have been banished from our midst, and until London has become the city of God." Fancy a man banishing drunkenness with a Book which relates that God Almighty turned 75 gallons of water into wine to keep a spree going! Fancy a man banishing lust with a Book which tells how an old man lay with his own daughters! And fancy the greed of gain being banished by a fellow who published a paltry little lie at the fancy price of eighteen pence.

Ernest Renan once had occasion to telegraph across the British Channel the subject of a proposed lecture in Westminster Abbey. The subject, as stated by him, was "The Influence of Rome on the Formation of Christianity." It was published in England thus—"The Influence of Rum on the Digestion of Humanity."

The Bradford bigots have stopped the Sunday concerts for the people. Gospel-shops and public-houses will be opened as usual.

The persecution of Protestants at the instance of the Holy Synod continues, the leaders of the Stundists, Armenians, Methodists, and Baptists having been arrested with a view to entirely suppress their ministrations. They have been sent to the frontier near Persia, where their only neighbors will be fanatical Mohammedans. How these Christians love one another.

Mr. Spurgeon telegraphed to his congregation that he had arrived at Mentone none the worse for his journey, but he did not mention Baron Rothschild's saloon carriage. "It is almost miraculous," he concluded, "Hallelujah." He forgot to add "Send on the cheque."

Busy as Mr. Spurgeon is in letting the grace of God work through his raddled constitution, he has found time to write to a Church parson on the London School Board elections. He hopes the Bible reading in public schools will never be abandoned. Then he faces the Secularists with the following remarkable opinion:—"Education from which religion is excluded is infidel education, and thus it is in effect sectarian." Well now, that is logic! Suppose we put Mr. Spurgeon's position in another way. "Politics from which religion is excluded is infidel politics—and thus it is in effect sectarian." Would not every sane elector in the kingdom laugh at such an absurdity?

Secular education is not infidel education. No one proposes to teach Secularism or Anti-Christianity in the schools. The object of Freethinkers is to keep out both religion and irreligion. How hollow then is Mr. Spurgeon's argument; and how foolish, if not malicious, his misrepresentation!

Here is the official report of the destruction wrought by Jehovah's earthquake in Japan:—Deaths, 6,500; injured, 9,000; houses destroyed, 76,000; damaged, 12,000. What a blessed thing it is to have a Providence! The celestial old party gives the earth a kick, perhaps in putting on a tight boot, and 6,000 are killed, while 9,000 injured survivors "praise God from whom all blessings flow."

When it appears we shall notice a new book by the Archbishop of Canterbury on "Living Theology." We suspect that means the theology which gives you a living. A fifteen-thousand-a-year man is a great authority on that kind of theology.

Scene—Scotch grocer's. Time—Sunday. Girl (to grocer): "A fourpenny cake o' soap." Grocer: "I dinna sell soap, my girly, on the Sawbath-day." Girl (annoyed): "But ye sell a pennyworth o' peppermints tae that young leddy." Grocer: "Na doot. Ye can sook peppermints in the church, but ye canna wash yerseel'."



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

*Sunday*, November 15, Secular Hall, Humberston-gate; at 3, "The Follies of Theosophy"; at 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist."  
*Wednesday*, Nov. 18, Secular Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road, Finsbury Park; at 8, "Who Wrote the Bible?" Admission free.

*Thursday*, November 19, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C.: at 8, "Theosophy."

November 22, Wolverhampton; 29, Grimsby.

December 6, Hall of Science; 13, Manchester; 11, Blackburn; 20, Nottingham; 27, Hall of Science.

January 3, Birmingham; 10, Bolton; 17, Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society; 24 and 31, Hall of Science.

February 7, Bradford; 14, Leeds; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

March 6, Morthyr.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—November 15, Birmingham; 22, Portsmouth; 29, Leeds. Dec. 6, Bolton; 7 and 8, Blackburn; 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Leicester; 27, Birmingham. Jan. 3 and 10, Hall of Science; 17, Milton Hall; 24 and 31, Birmingham. Feb. 7, Hull; 14, Glasgow; 15, Hamilton; 16, 17, 18 and 19, public debate in Glasgow; 21, Edinburgh; 28, Birmingham. March 7, Birmingham; 14 and 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Birmingham. April 1, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

MR. FORDER'S central committee-room is 127 Old-street, E.C. Ladies and gentlemen who are willing to canvas should call there. The room will be open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Rock-street Hall, Blackstock-road, Finsbury Park, will be open for the same purpose every evening from 7 till 10. Persons willing to join the committee (only workers are wanted) should see the hon. sec., Mr. Pownceby, at the Hall of Science on Sunday morning. Mr. Foote will speak at the two first meetings announced in "Sugar Plums." Mrs. Besant will speak at the third meeting.

MR. REGES.—Agnostics who talk freely of God as a real being, and even undertake to guarantee his attribute of infinite goodness, are sailing under false colors. They should call themselves Theists.

H. J. (Manchester).—It is hardly worth while to discuss the matter at great length in a journal like this. Mr. Holyoake's view of Secularism is no new one. He advocated it before some of us were born. Secularists may be Atheists, but Secularism is not Atheism. On the practical side, however, the moral Atheist and the convinced Secularist will act precisely alike.

J. R. HOLMES.—You are quite right. Mr. Young was fined for three copies of the pamphlet and a Malthusian article. Glad to have your warm approval.

W. T. LEEKEY.—We should prefer to suppose a better reason for the omission.

MR. DEAN, of Derby, invites the local Freethinkers willing to assist in forming a Branch of the N. S. S. to meet him at Mr. J. Martin's, 41 Copeland-street. Unfortunately he does not mention the time.

T. ATTWOOD.—Thanks for your long explanation. We note your statement that the Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club never really endorsed Mr. Cooper's candidature. The matter, however, is far from being simple. There seems to be a good deal of misunderstanding or hard swearing somewhere. We prefer to let the advice stand as we gave it.

J. WILSON.—Mr. Watts has handed us your letter. There is no need to print the lecture. You will find the substance of it in his two pamphlets on Agnosticism and Christian Theism.

F. J. LAST.—Our last week's advice as to East Lambeth still stands. If Mr. Gibbon is for keeping the Bible in Board schools he is not supporting secular education.

COGITRO.—Received. May be useful.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. B. NICHOLLS.—*Twentieth Century*, 7 Clinton-place, New York, 5 cents, or \$2 for fifty-two weeks. *Boston Investigator*, Paine Hall, Boston, 7 cents, or \$3 per year. *Truthseeker*, 28 Lafayette-place, New York, \$3 yearly. *Ironclad Age*, Indianapolis, \$2.50 yearly. *Secular Thought*, 99 Adelaide-street, Toronto, Canada, 5 cents, or \$2 yearly. *Liberator*, 456 Bourke-street, Melbourne, 3d.—these are weekly. *The Freethinker's Magazine*, 383 Eagle-street, Buffalo (N.Y.), and the *Independent Pulpit*, Waco, Texas, are both monthlies, each \$2 yearly.

G. WISE.—We have not seen the document you refer to.

A. GUEST.—Sorry to hear that the parcel of *Freethinkers* sent you at Preston did not arrive till Monday. It is very annoying, but scolding railway companies is like kicking the pyramids.

LOT HILL.—Celestine Edwards is a follower of Paul in one thing. See "Acid Drops." Sorry to hear your right hand is affected.

J. R. WILLOCK.—See "Sugar Plums." Mr. Foote will write about another date for Manchester.

J. ANDERSON.—It hardly calls for a fresh paragraph unless it takes a fresh development. Thank you for distributing a dozen copies of this journal.

W. P. MURRAY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

DOUBTER.—Read the first and second of Mill's three essays on Religion to ascertain his *mature* thoughts on the subject. The third was not prepared by him for the press, and it was written in the decline of his powers.

J. DOBSON.—Contents-sheet shall be forwarded.

W. JOHNSON.—Dr. E. B. Tylor has just issued a new edition of *Primitive Culture*. We understand that there are some improvements, but the value of the previous edition is not seriously affected.

R. FINCH.—We only know of three Secular Societies in England that are not affiliated to the N. S. S.:—(1) The Leicester Secular Society, (2) The Sheffield Secular Society, (3) The Chatham Secular Society. The last was affiliated until about three years ago, when it withdrew (hastily as we think) in consequence of a misunderstanding with Mrs. Besant.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—The Reaper—Brighton Herald—Brighton Times—Northern Echo—Sacred Melodist—North London Guardian—Countryman—Church Reformer—Modern Thought—St. Barnabas Convalescent Home Report—Somerset and Wilts Journal—Daily News—Tottenham and Wood Green Star—Middlesex County Times—Glasgow Herald—Castleford Gazette—Yorkshire Evening Post—Sheffield Week—Twentieth Century—Norfolk Weekly Standard—Flaming Sword.

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

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.

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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

The circulation of the *Freethinker* is not bounding up as it did during the first two or three weeks after the enlargement; nevertheless it is steadily, if slowly, ascending. Every week shows a slight improvement. We hope our friends will not relax their efforts. It is especially necessary to continue the pressure on newsagents. A sale for the *Freethinker* is found wherever it is given a fair chance.

Sheffield is not a lively place from a Freethought point of view. Secular lecturers never expect large audiences there. On Sunday last, however, Mr. Foote had better meetings than he has ever had before in Sheffield. The enthusiasm also was very marked. There was likewise a good sale of literature—for Sheffield. On the whole we incline to think that the cutlery city might be worked up into a greater care for Freethought. An infusion of younger blood is wanted on the committee of the Secular Society, and it would be well if the society were to join the N. S. S. There is no earthly reason why it should hold aloof, and it would certainly gain by affiliating.

We hope the existing committee at Sheffield will not feel hurt by our suggestions. We have very great respect for veterans like Messrs. Nelson, Weston and Pearson, who have toiled ungrudgingly so many years for the cause. But if old heads are sagacious, it is the young who must be looked to for energy and "go."

Here is another "wrinkle" for the Sheffield Secularists. Let them put pressure on newsagents to sell and display the *Freethinker*. Fresh purchasers mean, eventually, fresh supporters of the Secular cause. At present we cannot ascertain that any attempt is made in this direction. Freethought literature is sold on Sundays at the Hall of Science, but all the rest of that big town is left a perfect blank. If this state of things were remedied there would soon be an improvement in Sheffield Secularism.

Last Sunday the subtle beauties of Theosophy were disclosed in the Secular Hall, Leicester, by Mrs. Besant. This afternoon (Nov. 15) the Follies of Theosophy will be pointed out in the same hall by Mr. Foote.

A very good audience for a week night attended Mr. Foote's first lecture on Theosophy at the London Hall of Science. His account of Madame Blavatsky's career and writings was followed with marked interest. Questions were asked, but there was no discussion. The second lecture is to be given on Thursday, Nov. 12; the third and last on Thursday Nov. 19. Those who attended the first should give publicity to the others among their friends.

Mr. Foote delivers a free lecture next Wednesday evening (Nov. 18) at the hall of the Finsbury Park Branch, Rock-street, near the Seven Sisters-road entrance to the park. Time, eight o'clock; subject, "Who Wrote the Bible?" Local Freethinkers should induce their Christian friends to come.

A London Freethinkers' Ball takes place at the Hall of Science on Thursday, Nov. 26. There will be a concert in the Minor Hall, beginning at 8.30. Dancing will go on in large hall. During the evening Mr. Foote will present to Mr. Forder the illuminated address that was voted at the N. S. S. Conference. A large gathering is expected. The profits will go to the N. S. S. The tickets are one shilling each. They can be obtained at the Hall, at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from the Branch secretaries.

Mr. Robert Forder is a candidate for the London School Board. He has elected to fight in the Finsbury division. His address is firm and straight on secular education, as well as on other points of the advanced program. We hope he will win, and we shall give him all the assistance in our power. Every Secularist in the division should make it an affair of honor to plump for Mr. Forder and to promote his candidature in every possible way.

Finsbury is a very large division, and the contest will involve considerable expense. A fund is started to provide the sinews of war—The Forder Election Fund. Mr. G. Standing, 7 Finsbury-street, E.C., acts as treasurer. Any subscriptions sent to us will be handed to him and acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. The time is short, and those who will give should give at once.

Messrs. Foote and Wheeler have written a two-paged tract on "Religion in Board Schools," and Mr. Foote is printing 20,000 at his own expense for the London Secular Federation to circulate during the School Board elections. If necessary, he will print another 20,000. The tract will afterwards become the property of the N. S. S. for permanent use.

We are able to announce the following meetings in connexion with Mr. Forder's candidature:—Friday, Nov. 13, Copenhagen-street Schools, Caledonian-road, at 8.30; Monday, Nov. 16, Banner-street Hall, St. Luke's, 8.30; Friday, Nov. 20, Wellington Hall, Upper-street, at 8.30. Other meetings are being arranged.

Mr. James Maitland, a leading Aberdeen Freethinker, who took the chair at Mr. Watts's recent lecture in that city, has been returned to the Council by a very big majority. This has roused the ire of a pious dignitary, who declared that the infidels had put in a man who feared neither God nor the Devil. Well, that is the sort of brave, honest man wanted on every Town Council.

Mr. Stanley Jones delivered three lectures at Nottingham on Sunday. The secretary of the local Branch speaks very highly of these discourses.

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured at Manchester on Sunday. The morning and afternoon meetings were but moderate, but the hall was full in the evening, when he delivered a vigorous reply to Dr. Moorhouse on the question of Religion in Board Schools. The secretary sends us a glowing report of this lecture. Music was introduced before the morning lecture, and the Branch hopes to develop this feature.

Dr. Allinson had a capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. No report has reached us of

Mr. Heaford's lecture in the morning. To-day's lecturer (Nov. 15), morning and evening, is Mr. J. M. Robertson. His subjects are "Bradlaugh as a Politician" and "The Religion of Shakespeare."

On Monday evening, at a meeting in one of the rooms at South Place Institute, a Free Discussion Defence Committee was formed, with power to add to its number. It was resolved to issue a Manifesto on the prosecution of Mr. H. S. Young, and to hold meetings in all parts of London. Further particulars will appear in our next issue.

The Bermondsey Vestry has given the use of its fine hall to the National Sunday League for its Sunday lectures and concerts. Some day or other it may be available for Free-thought meetings.

At Preston, on Sunday last, Mr. A. Guest lectured again in the Market-place, showing by Bible quotations that the book could not have been inspired by a perfect being. Some of the audience appeared to be badly hit. One well-known and earnest Christian hurled the epithet "liar" at the lecturer; and another, who did not know his holy fetish, asserted that Mr. Guest was reading from a specially edited Freethinker's version. A lively discussion ensued. It is hoped the sympathisers present will show practical appreciation of the cause by joining the proposed local Branch of the N. S. S. Particulars and members' entrance forms may be obtained of Mr. Baldwin, 2 Plant-street, Ashton-on-Ribble.

Prof. R. L. Garner contributes a second interesting article on "The Simian Tongue" to the pages of the *New Review*. He finds that apes have distinct sounds for gratification and fear, and says he is able to imitate their voices and make himself understood by them. He holds that signs are the first form of speech, and that sounds are evolved from them. All animals, he says, are capable of expressing as much as they can think.

Mr. Moss's experiment at Deptford is progressing. There was an improved audience on Sunday evening, and a more liberal collection. The Christian opposition was as ill-tempered and insulting as ever. Mr. Heaford occupies the platform this evening (Nov. 15), Mr. Moss having to lecture at Reading. Mr. Heaford's subject is "Secularism superior to Christianity." It may be added once more that these Deptford meetings are held in the Lecture Hall, High-street. The admission is free.

An ex-reverend named Henry Frank is to take the place of ex-reverend H. O. Pentecost as a lecturer in connection with the New York Twentieth Century Club.

In Switzerland the authorities have determined to test the desire of the citizens for Sunday mail delivery, and they do this by preparing "Sunday" stamps for the use of those who do not desire the mail delivered on Sunday. All letters bearing the other stamps will be delivered Sunday, delivery on that day being general in Geneva, Basle, and other cities.

On Sunday morning, Nov. 1, Mrs. Charles Watts occupied the platform at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, when she read Col. Ingersoll's lecture on "Liberty for Man, Woman, and Child." The audience was greatly delighted, and Mrs. Watts was asked to give them more of the "same kind" at an early date. Last Sunday evening, at the same hall, Mr. Charles Watts lectured upon "Ought the Bible to be Read in Public Schools?" The audience agreed with Mr. Watts that it ought not.

The fight in Birmingham, which is now going on between the "Church party" and the "Liberal Eight" for the majority on the School Board, turns upon the one question whether or not the Bible shall be read with or without religious teaching. Both parties are in favor of the Bible being read in the schools, and thus an opportunity is presented for the Secularists of Birmingham to show that both are wrong. Probably it would not be wise for a Secularist candidate to enter into the present contest, but we hope that during the coming three years Mr. Watts will gain sufficient support to enable him at the next election to contest one of the seats on the Board. The Secular element in Birmingham is strong, and it only requires energy and united action upon the part

of the local Freethinkers to give practical force to their principles.

Mr. George Dixon, M.P., who is one of the "Liberal eight" candidates for the Birmingham School Board, in one of his speeches last week is reported as having made the following remarkable statement:—"There was no morality in England that was not based on the Bible, and he defied anyone to point to any morality in England that was not derived directly from the Bible." Surely Mr. Dixon is not in earnest in making this rash assertion. Is it an electioneering bait to catch the theological fish at the coming election? We are glad to learn that Mr. Watts has invited the gentleman to endeavor to make good his allegation in a public debate.

We are pleased to see that Mr. Watts is pushing the question of the federation of the Freethought forces in the Midland district. He is ably assisted by Mr. A. Holland (of Bilston) and other friends. Arrangements are being made for Mr. Watts to visit the principal places near Birmingham, to meet the local friends with a view of completing the organisation. He will also lecture at an early date in Wolverhampton, West Bromwich, and Bilston.

Fund for settling Mr. Charles Watts at Birmingham:—  
W. Hunt, £1 1s.; J. C., 10s. 6d.; R. S., 2s. 6d.

Next Sunday (Nov. 22) Mr. Watts pays his first visit to Portsmouth. We scarcely need ask our friends there to give him a hearty greeting.

The National Secular Society's *Almanack* for 1892 will be on sale next week. Orders should be sent to Mr. Forder at once. The supply is arranged for an increased sale. The advertisement on our back page shows an enticing list of contents. Branches will of course push the sale now the profits accrue to the N. S. S., as the loss will fall upon it if there should be any.

The National Secular Society's Executive, at its last meeting, voted five guineas towards the fund for erecting a memorial over Mr. Bradlaugh's grave.

The *Brighton Times* give a good report of a lecture by Mr. C. E. Ford on "Protestant Persecution of Catholics and Freethinkers."

Mr. Pentecost's *Twentieth Century* is as flourishing as ever, and appears in the glory of new type.

Mr. Thomas King, a working carpenter, is a School Board candidate in the Chelsea division. He is supported by the Social Democratic party, and is in favor of secular education. There is only one point in his program to which we should take exception, and that, in the existing state of the law, is perfectly harmless. Judging from his address to the electors, Mr. King should make a useful member of the London School Board. If the official Liberal candidates shirk *secular* education we should certainly give Mr. King our vote if we had one in Chelsea. His address is 121 Third-avenue, Queen's Park.

The Wolverhampton Branch, which has long been in embryo, is now born and registered. It was ushered into the world on Sunday last at the North-street Coffee House. Eighteen members were enrolled, and it is expected that the number will soon run up to fifty. The secretary is Mr. H. Wooton, 99 Heath-street, Heath Town. Mr. Foote lectures at Wolverhampton next Sunday (Nov. 22), and he hopes, before leaving the town, to see the new Branch strengthened in point of numbers and ready for a good winter's campaign.

#### OBITUARY.

On Sunday last Mr. F. Haslam read the Secular Burial Service over the infant son of Mr. Briggs, a member of the N. S. S. residing at Homerton.

Annie, wife of Mr. Arthur H. Hunter, of 311 St. Ann's Well-road, Nottingham, died on Sunday, October 18th, and was interred in the general cemetery on Thursday, October 22, several friends of the local Branch attending. Mrs. Hunter was a most affectionate wife and mother, and devoted herself assiduously to the discharge of her duties. She was an ardent Secularist to the end.—A. BORN.

#### A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

##### II.—MR. JOHN PAGE HOPPS AT CAVENDISH ROOMS.

ON Saturday last Mr. John Page Hopps courteously addressed to me an invitation (through the advertising columns of the daily press) to attend at certain services which he proposed to hold in the Cavendish Rooms, Mortimer-street. It is seldom that I venture into the wilds of the West-end, and when I do so I invariably lose myself. But I determined to go, because I had frequently heard of Mr. Hopps as a sound Radical and a man of the broadest views in religious matters. His name was familiar to me as a minister of some kind in Leicester; but I will not here enter upon details, lest a very imperfect knowledge of the facts should lead me into error.

After leaving Portland-road I soon went hopelessly astray in a maze of dimly respectable streets, and, as a last resort, I asked a policeman if he could direct me to Cavendish Rooms. He could. "Do you see them towers?" he asked, pointing to two steeple-like projections. I solemnly assured him that "them towers" had made a distinct impression upon my retina. By the friendly aid of the policeman and "them towers" I soon found myself safely in port.

Cavendish Rooms I at once identified as a hall designed and used for dancing. The floor was covered with a cloth to protect the waxed surface from the contamination of muddy boots. Around all the walls were the huge mirrors which are so dear to the hearts of dancing-masters. The larger of the two rooms is a square compartment, capable of accommodating about eight "sets" (dancers will know what I mean). At the further end is a smaller room, probably devoted on ungodly nights to mild refreshments and milder flirtations. In this holy of holies, on Sunday morning last, were seated the choir, consisting of about a dozen ladies and gentlemen, all of whom sang their music admirably. Mr. Hopps officiated at a table or desk placed in the opening between the rooms.

The audience or congregation numbered about 150 persons, the majority of whom (including many ladies) were past middle-age. The show of bald heads was quite imposing, and gave a certain air of impressiveness to a somewhat primitive "service" held amidst incongruous surroundings. The visitors were nearly all of the "upper middle class," and everything was intensely "respectable."

As I entered the room the choir and congregation were singing a hymn, with pianoforte accompaniment. Then Mr. Hopps, "for our instruction," read a chapter from the Bible, and this was followed by another hymn. Next Mr. Hopps read two poems (one from a newspaper cutting); and then an anthem was sung in excellent style by the choir. This was followed by the address, for which alone I had risked my life in the West-end of London.

But first a word as to the preacher. Mr. Hopps, so far as I could discern him in the murk of a November morning, is a stout, thick-set man. He wears a small moustache of the common or garden kind. He makes no pretension to oratorical display; his address was throughout delivered in an almost conversational tone. In the main it appeared to be based upon very copious notes, and, in fact, was little better than a reading; but at times he rose into genuine eloquence, although such flights were rare and brief.

In the newspaper announcement, Mr. Hopps's morning subject appeared in this somewhat peremptory form: "Where is thy God, O my soul?" The address resolved itself into an attempt to indicate the nature of the Deity in whom (or in which) Mr. Hopps believes. He selected as texts—or, as he preferred to describe them, mottoes—two passages from the Bible—(1) "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (2) "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" These passages, he

said, might at first sight seem contradictory, but in reality they were not so. The most earnest believer might well confess that God was unthinkable. What an advantage it would be if the religious world would only acknowledge this! People are every day drifting into Agnosticism because they are fruitlessly trying to think out God. You cannot think out God, but you can believe in him. If he be a person, then his personality is so different from ours that we cannot understand him; but by an intellectual necessity of our nature we must believe in something which is the equivalent of God.

What progress might be made towards the unification of all religious minds if Christians would only throw over their dogmas, born in ignorance! What barren work is all this talk of *three* Gods, when we cannot fathom *one*! All we can say is that he *must* be. God is the inmost of everything. The secret of a grain of sand, if the grain of sand could tell it, is God. The life of everything is God. On the seashore, in a London slum, in the New Jerusalem—all is God. You lose him altogether if you seek to localise or limit him; you gain him altogether if you regard him according to John Page Hopps. The new religion of Ritualism is losing God; for he needs no priest, no ritual, to bring him into communion with his children. The initial error, the source of all superstition, is the judging of God by the measure of man.

Men have attributed to the Almighty their own passions and failings—self-assertion, anger, arbitrariness, selfishness, cruelty and crass ignorance. Hence the dogmas of the failure of creation, the fall of man, the immoral and tyrannical plan of salvation, as upheld by Augustine, Calvin, and Spurgeon; and the unspeakably hideous doctrine of election and reprobation. All of these absurdities or atrocities were imputed to God by man. There is no safety for the brain or soul of modern man save in the superb idea of God as the inmost of everything. "In him we live, and move, and have our being."

The Agnostic is, without knowing it, the best believer in God, for he (the Agnostic) believes in development and rebels against theological dogmas. The secret of all progress is God. Pope had said, "Look through Nature up to Nature's God"; but he (Mr. Hopps) would rather say, "Look into Nature for Nature's God."

On the following day, God's work would be in full swing. God wanted the carts to be loaded and driven, the shops to be opened, bread to be baked—it was all his work. This brings the idea of God close home to us. Even upon the bells on the carts might be written, "Holiness unto the Lord."

God is best seen in the inner life of the human being: he is the inmost of all things: he is the inmost of *you* (here Mr. Hopps pointed dramatically to his audience, as who should say, "Thou art the man!"). This is what the Bible says, if people only believed it instead of making a sepulchre of it and sitting round it.

The tyrants of earth had suggested the tyrants of heaven and of hell; but the brotherhood of man would dethrone these. Now that we know the history and meaning of the creeds which had invented them, we shall gradually forget theological tyrants, as we are forgetting that political tyrants existed.

The spirit of God is identical with the blessed progressive impulse which drives and urges our race from the brutal to the human, from the human to the angelic, and—who knows?—from the angelic to the divine. This is the answer to the miserable creed-monger. Men are no creatures who will be lost—the Father will find them. However deeply they may sink, his hand will go deeper still and lift them up. He will be better to us than all our hopes or all our fears.

Thus far I have attempted to give a summary of Mr. Hopps's address. The report is, of course, far from complete, and it may in parts inaccurately represent the speaker's views. I have invented for

my own use a system of shorthand, which I can write with great facility: the only trouble is, that when I have written it I don't know what it means. I will venture to affirm, however, that in its main outlines the idea of God as portrayed by Mr. John Page Hopps is here correctly given; and a singularly thin idea it is. So far as I could gather his meaning, the difference between Mr. Hopps and the Atheist is a mere matter of phrases: the latter believes in no God, the former believes in a God who is everything, and who is therefore nothing. The old, fierce, warlike God of the Jews we can understand, even if we cannot admire him; but successive generations of surgeons of the Page Hopps school have amputated his limbs with such effect that nothing but his useless framework now cumbereth the ground.

GEORGE STANDRING.

#### NORTH EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

THE Council of the N.E.S.F. have pleasure in announcing that they have engaged Miss Ada Campbell for a course of lectures, which will be delivered at the following places: Nov. 29, Newcastle; Nov. 30, Middlesborough; Dec. 1, Spennymoor; Dec. 2, Hetton-le-Hole; Dec. 5, Bedlington; Dec. 6, Sunderland. The class for the training of young lecturers, under the teaching of Mr. Dipper, held its first meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 4, in Lockhart's Cocoa Rooms, East Clayton-street, Newcastle. There were eighteen students present, some of whom had travelled fourteen miles to be present. It was decided that the class meet every Wednesday night at 7.30; students wishing to join, please take notice. The class is free, Mr. Dipper giving his services gratuitously. On behalf of the Council, I again make an appeal to our more wealthy friends for financial support. The help we have received from friends outside our active workers is up to the present very small. At present our funds need replenishing if we are to continue the active work of the last six months. We have applications for lectures from districts where a Free-thought lecture has never yet been delivered, and our present financial position hinders us from acceding to those applications. Therefore I hope that Freethinkers who are in a position to help us will do so at once. I have great pleasure in acknowledging the following sums: Martin Bell, 2s. 6d.; Mr. John Humble Wolsingham, 2s. 6d.; J. C. Wolsingham, 6d.; Newcastle Branch, 9s.—JOSEPH BROWN, 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

#### THE EJECTED JONAH.

(From the German.)

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon  
Three days the Prophet drinks,  
Until, as drunk as Father Noah,  
He 'neath the table sinks.

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon  
There cries the host: "I say!  
He drinks of my best Bactrian schnapps  
Much more than he can pay."

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon  
The waiter brings the bills,  
In letters cuneiform on tiles—  
Six bricks the reckoning fills.

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon  
There speaks the guest: "Ah me!  
My ready money's all gone on  
Before to Nineveh."

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon  
The clock strikes half-past four;  
The Nubian chuckers-out chuck forth  
The stranger from the door.

In the "Black Whale" at Ascalon,  
No prophet but's thought bad,  
And who in comfort there would live  
Pays cash for what he's had.

From the *Danube Sentinel*, a paper at Braila, Roumania; signed at foot "W. H. U." Apparently they expect a bit of blasphemous poetry to go down with the English people at Braila. The population is 46 males and 10 females.

## BOOK CHAT.

The eminent French firm, F. Alcan et Cie., have published a work on *La Philosophie du Siècle* (the Philosophy of the Century) by M. E. de Roberty.—M. de Roberty is a Positivist, of a different school and one more positive than Comte. The three typical philosophies of the century he holds to be the Critical School of Kant and his successors, the Positivism of Comte, and the Evolutionism of Mr. Spencer. In each he finds a metaphysical basis. These philosophies, founded on the older Idealism, Materialism, and Sensualism, tend to converge, and may lead to the development of a scientific philosophy in the future. He holds that it is the evolution of scientific ideas which chiefly forwards social evolution.

The Religious Tract Society has published as No. 16 of "By-paths of Bible Knowledge" *The Races of the Old Testament*, by the Rev. A. H. Sayce. This little work is notable for its admission of "the remote antiquity to which we must refer the origin of the various races of mankind." Conclusive evidence of this is given in the most interesting part of the volume, viz., the illustrations, most of which are reproductions of photographs made by Mr. F. Petrie from the ethnographic types found on the Egyptian monuments. Mr. Sayce mentions that "in a tomb at Thebes belonging to Rekh-mâ-Ra, an Egyptian prince who lived a century before the Exodus, we find the races of the known world, each depicted with its own peculiar characteristics. The black-skinned negro, with all the features which still characterise him, is the representative of the south; the white-skinned European and Libyan, with fair hair and blue eyes, is the representative of the north and west; while the Asiatic, with olive complexion and somewhat aquiline nose, comes from the east; and the valley of the Nile is occupied by a race whose skin has been burnt red by the sun, and who display all the traits that distinguished the Egyptian of to-day. Already in the sixteenth century before our era, the Egyptian artist had accurately noted the outward features of the several races of mankind so far as they were known to him."

How this is to be reconciled with universal descent from Adam and Eve, or rather from Noah and his descendants, Mr. Sayce does not pretend to say. In truth, the facts of ethnology cannot be reconciled with the scriptural statements. The dates from Noah to the time of Moses can be determined by the Bible itself. They amount to less than 900 years, or but thirty generations in which negroes, Jews, Europeans, and Asiatics evolved from a common Noachian parentage. If Noah's sons resembled their father in not having children till after they were five hundred years of age (Gen. v., 32), all these differences must have arisen in two generations!

In following the ethnology of the races mentioned in the tenth of Genesis, Mr. Sayce virtually admits that the statements in that chapter are not literally true. He says (p. 40): "When, therefore, we are told that Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth; all that is meant is that the city of Sidon, and the Hittites to whom reference is made, were alike to be found in the country called Canaan. It does not follow that there was any ethnological kinship between the Phœnician builders of Sidon and the prognathous Hittites from the north. Indeed, we know from modern research there was none." This passage well illustrates the methods of those who reconcile the Bible with science. When nothing was known of the relations between the Sidonians and the Hittites, they were, on the authority of God's holy word, declared to have been akin, and both begotten of Canaan. Now research shows there was no kinship, it is said the passage only means that both were inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

So also Mr. Sayce says (p. 64): "The name Lud which follows that of Arphaxad (Gen. x., 22) cannot be correct. The reading must be corrupt, though it is impossible to conjecture what it could originally have been." This because Lud is said to have been a child of Shem, and "Lud or Lydia belongs to a different zone from that of the children of Shem." That the Bible writer made a mistake through ignorance seems never to have occurred to Mr. Sayce. At any rate he prefers to suggest to the reader that the Bible statement would be quite correct if only we had the right reading, though it is impossible to conjecture what that is.

Mr. Sayce, it will be noticed, lets out several little facts incompatible with the views generally drawn from the Bible. One of the most notable of these is that on the Egyptian monuments at Karnac, which record the capture of Palestine by king Shishak, the racial type of prisoner represented is Amorite, and not Jewish. "We must conclude," says he, "that even after the revolt of the Ten Tribes, the bulk of the population in Southern Judah continued to be Amorites, in race, though not in name. The Jewish type was so scantily represented that the Egyptian artist passed it over when depicting the prisoners who had been brought from Judah." To this day the native population of Palestine is not Jewish but Canaanitish.

Those who believe that Christianity is rather derived from Egypt than from Palestine will take notice of the following description of the racial characteristics of the Egyptian. "His disposition is singularly sweet and docile. He is incapable of bearing a grudge, and his cheerfulness under the most adverse circumstances has become proverbial. He is kindly and hospitable, and affectionate in his family relations. Alone of ancient nations, as Sir Gardner Wilkinson has pointed out, the Egyptian considered an act of humanity worthy of record in stone. On the walls of the palace-temple of Ramses III. at Medinet Habu, Egyptian soldiers are represented as rescuing a drowning crew of the enemy. Diodoros remarks that in inflicting punishment, the Egyptians were actuated, not by a spirit of vengeance, but by a desire to reform the offender." On the whole, an examination of *The Races of the Bible* leads to the conclusion that, if the Semites were accorded a revelation in preference to Egyptians and Greeks, it must have been decidedly because they were most in need of it.

*Christianity: Defective and Unnecessary* is the title of a twenty-four paged pamphlet by Mrs. Kate Eunice Watts. It is written with logic and eloquence, and should be very useful in promoting Freethought among women.

*Antidotes to Superstition* by G. H. Martin is a neat half-crown volume published by Watts and Co., London. The author is well read, he wields a vigorous and trenchant pen, and his book only needs to be read to be serviceable in the great fight between Reason and Faith. Mr. Martin, of course, is very decidedly under the banner of Reason.

## LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, held at Hall of Science on Thursday, Nov. 5, Mr. R. O. Smith in the chair. The President was unable to attend owing to Committee business and a lecture. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The report of the Sub-committee on reorganisation was discussed, and, so far as it related to Mr. Moss's motion, accepted; the recommendation being adjourned for discussion till next meeting. The candidature of Mr. R. Forder for the Finsbury Division of the London School Board was next discussed; and on the motion of Mr. J. M. Wheeler, it was agreed that the Federation pledge itself to use its utmost endeavors to forward the return of Mr. Forder. The application of the East London Branch was next dealt with, and the West Ham Branch application referred to the Organisation Committee of the N. S. S. The secretary reported as to the Children's Party, and the financial statement of the Hall of Science lectures was accepted. The Annual Dinner was next considered, and it was decided to arrange for the first Monday in January, the price of tickets, as heretofore, being fixed at 2s. 6d. Detailed arrangements were left to the Sub-committee. Some minor business was discussed, and the Council adjourned.—E. POWNCEBY, Sec.

## THE HOLY COAT.

John H. Becker, who we believe is a German learned in the antiquities of his country and of Scandinavia, sends us a rhyme or saga on Orendel's Shipwreck and Christ's Seamless Coat. It tells the legend how the holy coat was transported from Palestine to Trèves. The pamphlet which is printed, not published, is a curious one, and ends with this curious statement: "The Orendel-Rune is the ancient epos of Cheru-Heaus Sword-God of Germans, Kelts, and Galatians! (you before whose eyes Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you! (St. Paul, Ep. Galat. iii., 1)."

PIOUS PROFANITY.

THE following jokes are all culled from one number of *Sunday Words*. Apparently that pious paper finds a spice of profanity attractive:—

Said a minister once, "So you don't think I practise what I preach, deacon?" "Well," said the deacon, "considering that you have been preaching on the subject of resignation for the past forty-nine years, I don't quite think you do."

A facetious bishop went to preach a charity sermon a short time ago. The resident clergyman, who was very young, received him, and, thinking it necessary to say something, observed: "I am grieved that you should have to come on such a windy day." But he found his grief misplaced when the bishop replied: "Tut, tut, my young friend! Didn't I come to raise the wind?"

A boy at school wrote a pious letter to his brother at home, who was just four years old, expressing in it the wish that his dear little brother might be one of Christ's lambs. The mother, turning to her child as she was reading the letter aloud, said, "Oh, Edward, that would be very nice, would it not?" To her surprise and sorrow, the little boy replied, shaking his head, "No; me not like it at all!" "Oh, Edward dear!" she exclaimed; but the child persisted, "Me not want to be one of Christ's lambs." "Why not, my dear?" she asked; and her little son made the very natural reply: "Me not want to have four legs, and a tail, and eat g'ass!"

Young Man (to sexton, at chapel door)—"Isn't the sermon nearly done?" Sexton—"About an hour yet. He is only on his 'lastly.'" Young Man—"Will it take him an hour to get through his 'lastly'?" Sexton—"No; but there's the 'one word and I am done,' and the 'finally,' and the 'in conclusion' to come yet, and what he will say under each of these heads will run up nearly another hour."

A story is told of Dr. Cushman. He went to a barber and said: "Now, I want you to cut my hair as short as you would like a sermon." On rising from his chair and ruefully surveying his bald and shining head, he was constrained to observe that the barber wanted no sermon at all.

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: 7, Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Food we Eat."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, "Social Limits to Individual Liberty." Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Friday, at 8, discussion class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Origin of Species" (preceded by a musical entertainment). Monday, at 8.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Social Science." Thursday, at 8.30, debate on "Spiritualism." Saturday, at 8.30, social evening for members and friends.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Is there a Moral Governor of the Universe?"

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "The Exodus from Egypt"; 7, Mr. B. Hyatt, "And they Crucified Him." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. G. W. Foote will lecture. Admission free.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Bradlaugh as a Politician" (admission free); 6.45, musical selections; 7.15, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Religion of Shakespeare" (3d., 6d., and 1s).

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Stages of my Growth into Theosophy."

Stratford—Enterprise Hall, Great Eastern-road: 7, Mr. R. Forder, "Signs of the Zodiac."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, The President, "Poverty: its Cause and Cure." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road (close to Latimer-road Station): Friday, at 8.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Limitation of Family to Means."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, Mr. Stanley Jones, "The Problems of Life."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, Captain C. Pfoundes, "Theosophy and Secularism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, Mr. W. Heyford, "The Bible in Board Schools."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. Norrish "The Devil: who, where, and what is he?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Mr. Charles Watts, "Atheism and the French Revolution."

Bradford—Albert Buildings (bottom of Great Horton-road): Mr. A. B. Wakefield, 3, "John Morley: Freethinker and Statesman"; 7, "The Church Congress Proceedings in 1891."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, debating class, Essay; 6.30, Mr. R. Shaw, "Theosophy: its Arguments and Evidences."

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland-street: Mr. F. Haslam, 3, "A Real Radical Program"; 6.30, "Modern Science and Revelation." Admission free.

Leeds—Gladstone Hall, New Wortley: Mr. Touzau Parris, 3, "Why I am Not a Christian"; 6.45, "Theosophy: a Criticism in Reply to Mrs. Besant." Tea provided for friends from a distance.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: Mr. G. W. Foote, 3, "The Follies of Theosophy"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist." Admission free.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class, Mr. Bowles, "How I became an Atheist"; 7, a lecture (probably by Mrs. Parker on "Harem Life").

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: Mr. Sam Standing, 11, "Why Rome Burnt Heretics"; 3, "The God of Battles"; 6.30, "Bible Poison for Beginners."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Mr. A. Dawson, "Why we Reject our Savior."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, Mr. James Hooper, "Some Reasons why Women should Read the Bible."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, Mr. Arthur (of Newcastle), "The Bible and Science."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle (in connection with the National Home Reading Union); 7, Mr. Hore, "Cæsar's Column."

Reading—Forester's Hall, West-street: Mr. A. B. Moss, 3, "The Bible and Evolution"; 7, "The Morals of Evolution."

Rushden—Public Hall: Miss Eliza Hammond Hill, 2, "The Achilles of Our Age"; 7, "Pagan Patches on the Christian Garment."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, musical and other recitals.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Bible Arithmetic."

South Shields—Market Place: 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Nov. 15, Leeds; 22, Hall of Science; 29, Camberwell. Dec. 6, Sheffield.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 15, Reading; 22 and 29, Deptford Dec. 3, Finsbury Park Branch; 6, 13, 20, and 27, Deptford.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Nov. 22, Woolwich; 29, morning, Battersea. Dec. 6, Libra Hall; 14, Woolwich; 21, Chatham.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Nov. 15, evening, Camberwell; 22, evening, Ball's Pond; 29, morning, Hall of Science; evening, Finsbury Park Hall. Dec. 20, evening, Camberwell. Jan. 3, evening, Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Nov. 15, 16, and 22, Libra Hall, Roman-road, Old Ford; 25, Edmonton. Dec. 6, morning, Battersea; evening, Finsbury Park; 20 and 27, Libra Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth-road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 29, Ball's Pond. Dec. 20, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Nov. 14, Westminster; 22, Luton.

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