

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"The bigots are not to be conciliated; and, if they were—are they worth it?"

—Byron.

THE CAT IS OUT;

OR

AN EYE-OPENER FOR THE ORTHODOX.

III.—CONCLUSION.

THE old divines used to say that Moses wrote the book of Job, as well as all the Pentateuch except the account of his own death and burial. But this theory has long been exploded. The book of Job is not even Jewish in its origin. All its imagery is taken from beyond Palestine, from the great Arabian desert, and from pastoral life. Its actual author will never be known. Perhaps the very finest writing in the Bible is thus impossible to be assigned to any "inspired" penman. "It is not possible," Canon Driver says, "to fix the date of the Book *precisely*; but it will scarcely be earlier than the age of Jeremiah, and belongs most probably to the period of the Babylonian captivity."

No scholar imagines Job to have been a real personage. The book is a dramatic poem, and the author was a sort of Semitic Ibsen. His object was to present a certain view of Providence. The old idea that virtue must be rewarded and vice punished by the upper powers; that the good necessarily prosper on earth, and the wicked come to grief; this idea the writer refutes, not by direct argument, but by the indirect moral of his poem. He does not, however, offer a new solution of the problem of evil. He destroys the old one, and leaves the problem to be faced in a fresh light.

Relatively, therefore, the book of Job was a sceptical production, and this did not please the orthodox custodians of Jewish literature, who interpolated the speeches of Elihu, and thus removed a scandal to faith in Jehovah as a moral governor. Canon Driver frankly admits that the Elihu speeches are "an addition to the original poem." The writer wished to supplement points in which the poem was "defective." He wished to "emphasise, more fully than Eliphaz had done, the disciplinary function of suffering"—in short, to justify the ways of God to men. And in doing this he "accommodated" his tone and style to that of the poet he was correcting.

According to the literary morals of our age this would be a forgery. But such a word is too harsh for Canon Driver. He objects even to "interpolation" as a "disparagement." The second writer was as honest as the first; he composed a "valuable supplement," and gave prominence to "real and important truths." His additions are "inspired" *precisely* like the original poem; a statement in which we cordially concur.

Many competent critics contend that the doctoring of Job has been imitated in Ecclesiastes. Canon Driver shrinks from admitting this, but he allows that there is a dissimilarity between the conclusion

and the body of the work. The conclusion is a pious homily, enunciating the doctrine of a future life; while the body of the work is sheer Epicureanism, containing "nothing of a future life," and expressly treating it "as unproven." With respect to the two verses on a future judgment, Canon Driver goes to the length of saying that if they really mean that, they *must* be an interpolation.

Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon, and no one knows who did write it. Dean Plumptre fixes it at 200 years B.C.—six hundred years after Solomon's time. Certainly "it is not earlier than the later years of the Persian rule, which ended B.C. 332." Canon Driver places it somewhere—that is, anywhere—between those dates. "Of course," he says, it was not "really the work of Solomon." Nor was Proverbs or the Canticles. The former "must have been formed gradually," and Solomon's authorship of the latter is "evidently out of the question."

The unconsciously jocular divines who put the headings to the chapters of our English Bible reached their climax of absurdity in the Song of Solomon, which is *not* Solomon's. When a young lady's nose is likened to the tower of Lebanon that looketh unto Damascus, and a luscious inventory is given of her most secret charms, we are told that "Christ speaketh unto his bride the Church." Against this Canon Driver protests. "There is nothing in the poem," he says, "to suggest that it is an allegory; and the attempt to apply it to details results in great artificiality and extravagance." Henceforth the song is a mere amorous poem; very fine in some parts, at least in the English version; but where on earth are we to find the "inspiration"? Apparently the Hebrews had their Ovid, and his poem is as much the Word of God as the *Art of Love*.

The book of Isaiah, as every critic knows, is the work of at least two writers. Chapters forty to sixty-six are "not the work of Isaiah." Who wrote them then? God only knows. Are they inspired? Of course they are. They are in the Bible, and that settles it. *O sancta simplicitas!*

The book of Daniel is blown to smithereens by Canon Driver. He accepts the conclusions of the great continental critics. "The opinion that it is the work of Daniel himself," he says, "cannot be sustained." It "*must* have been written not earlier than about 300 B.C. in Palestine; and it is at least *probable* that it was composed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 168 or 167." Thus we see what a knowing old bird was the author of Daniel. He was not such a fool as to prophesy beforehand. He prophesied many generations after the events took place, and made sure he was right before he issued his Almanack. Good old "Daniel"!

Now for Jonah, sublime Jonah, inspired Jonah. Jonah himself, if we may believe the second book of Kings, lived in the reign of Jeroboam II., and was in the prophetic business. But the book which bears his name, and relates his sub-marine excursion, Dr. Driver tells us "cannot have been written until long after the lifetime of Jonah himself." It is "a

work of the post-exilic period," and "a date in the fifth century B.C. will probably not be far wide of the truth." The book itself "is not strictly historical"—which is a very mild phrase for the biggest lie on record. Canon Driver rejects "the sudden conversion on such a large scale" of a great heathen city like Nineveh, and remarks how curious it is that such a wonderful conversion "should have produced so little permanent effect." The book of Jonah, in fact, must only be read for its moral. It serves to illustrate Jehovah's care—at any rate now and then—for other people than the Jews. Was it inspired? Yea, verily. Is it not in the Bible? And if you cut it out, will there not be a nasty hole in the Blessed Book?

Jonah's excursion never happened. But the story is inspired. That tale of a whale is part of the Word of God. Cursed be the wretch who would remove it! Dull is the brute who cannot see its exquisite lessons! Yet, after all, some of us prefer "Hamlet." We think it is a better story, and contains more poetry and knowledge of human nature. "Hamlet" is only a work of genius and "Jonah" is inspired. Man wrote the one, and God suggested the other. How much superior, then, is the work of genius to the work of the deity!

We have just room for a word in conclusion. Canon Driver has let the cat out of the bag with regard to the Old Testament. He plainly tells the clergy they must accept the established conclusions of criticism of the Hebrew scriptures. He takes the Bible kaleidoscope, gives it a critical turn, and the books fall into a perfect medley. Scholars can see the law of the new combination, but ordinary Christians will be astounded and dismayed. Let Canon Driver do for the New Testament what he has done for the Old, and the cat will not only be out, but over the bills and far away.

G. W. FOOTE.

GIPSY RELIGION.

ENCLOSURE of commons, centralisation of life in great cities, stringent police regulations and School Board demands, are fast obliterating the old traces of the interesting tribe of wanderers found with common language and characteristics in every European country, and here called Gipsies from the mistaken idea that they came from Egypt. These people, now known to have come from India, by way of Persia, Armenia, and Greece, possess a fascination, not only over the romantic and superstitious, but over all students of archæology. Survivals of an earlier stage of human history, they retain in their language, customs, folk-lore, and religion most interesting memorials of ancient times, of which there are no written records. Thanks, then, are due to those who, like Mr. F. Groome, of the Gipsy Folk-Lore Society, Mr. C. G. Leland, who has devoted an important work to *Gipsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling* (noticed in *Freethinker* "Book Chat," Nov. 8), and others who are doing their best to preserve the gipsy contribution towards the history of human culture.

Hobbes said that religion was superstition in fashion, and superstition religion out of fashion. Those who do not see the full force of this pregnant saying may take exception to gipsies being credited with religion at all, for they are usually noted for irreligion. The Spanish have a saying, "The Gipsies church was built of lard and the dogs ate it." Almost invariably they look upon Gaje's or gentile religion as a form of humbug. George Borrow tells how he read the Bible to the gipsies in Spain and set them one and all squinting.*

* Borrow made a version of the New Testament into Rommany, and in 1838 printed at Madrid portions of Luke. Copies were eagerly sought after by the gipsies, not, says Borrow, because of the truths it contained, but from curiosity to see and read their own language in print. He remarks: "The only words of assent I ever obtained, and that rather of a negative kind, were the following from the mouth of a woman: 'Brother, you tell us strange things though, perhaps, you do not lie; a month since I would have sooner believed these tales than this day I should see one who could write Rommany.'"

Grellman, in his learned dissertation on the gipsies, 1787 (still a chief authority), observed that the gipsies "brought no particular religion with them, but regulate themselves in religious matters according to the country where they live. . . . wherefore most writers place them below the heathens." Borrow, too, one of the first to show an intimate acquaintance with them in many countries, says in his *Zincali*: "They brought with them no Indian idols, as far as we are able to judge at the present time, nor indeed Indian rites or observances; for no traces of such are discovered among them. All, therefore, which relates to their original religion is shrouded in mystery, and is likely so to remain. They may have been idolaters, or atheists, or what they now are—totally neglectful of worship of any kind; and though not exactly prepared to deny the existence of a Supreme Being, as regardless of him as if he existed not, and never mentioning his name save in oaths or blasphemy, or in moments of pain or sudden surprise, as they have heard other people do, but always without any fixed belief, trust or hope." Notwithstanding these authors the gipsies have a religion, to be found mixed with whatever accretions they may take on, whether of Christianity or Moham-medanism. And this religion is the old faith which underlies all faiths, the belief in witchcraft and sorcery. Gipsies, as Mr. Leland observes, "have always been the humble priests of what is really the practical religion of all peasants and poor people; that is their magical ceremonies and medicine. Very few have any conception of the degree to which gipsies have been the colporteurs of what in Italy is called 'the old faith,' or witchcraft."

The further we go back, the more barbarous and blackguardly does religion appear. The early gods were all ugly devils. What depths of savagery were found in religion is known to students of early forms of witchcraft as found in the Voodoo cult in Hayti. Remnants are found among gipsies of the earliest faiths. They have many traces of phallicism found in reverence paid to certain trees and bulbous roots. They have a trace of sun and moon worship in their very name, Zingan, and their legend of the wandering Chen and Kan, the moon and sun. Fire worship is found among the gipsies of Turkey, who keep a fire burning continually in their camp, and thus take us back to the days when the production of fire was sacred. Fetish worship, shells, or other amulets to bring *bakt* or luck, with charms and exorcisms, and ancestor worship, with various forms of *taboo*, form their *cultus*. Dr. Wislocki says that "gipsies are still a race given to Shamanism," the chief feature of which is the exorcism or control of evil spirits, and though they believe in a God or *Devil*, this God is little worshipped, practical devotion being paid to spirits. In this they are not so unlike the monk mentioned by Prætorius, who declared that, though God and Christ should damn him, yet he could be saved by appealing to Saint Joseph.

Philology, no less than philosophy, teaches that God and Devil are one. The gipsy word for God is *Divel*. It is allied to the Sanskrit *Dyaus* and *deva*; Greek *Zeus*, also to the Latin *dies* and *divus*. Like *Dyaus*, it is also the name for sky. A common Rommany greeting is *O baro divel atch pa leste*—"The great heaven be over you." To say it rains he uses the words, *Mira baro diveladela barchindo*—"My great God (or sky) gives rain." *Gureben*, "thunder," literally "bellowing of cattle," is another remnant of nature worship. The name for Devil is *beng*. Both God and Devil are mainly names to swear by.

Gipsies have some idea of transmigration, but hardly any definite belief in immortality. But they all believe in ghosts, though probably, like many savage races, only in the ghosts of those recently deceased. The mixed character of their faith is exhibited by Mr. Jasper Petulengro, who, in Borrow's *Lavengro* or *Rommany Rye*—I forget for the moment which—says when he is dead he is done with, but speaks

with awe of the *dook* or spirit of Jerry Abershaw. The deepest element in their religion is devotion to their dead. Mr. Leland himself, in his *English Gipsies and their Language*, smartly compares them in this respect to the followers of Comte. Living without settled homes among races where every hand is against them, like the Jews, they are fervently devoted to kith and kin. Their most sacred oath is "by the dead," and with it may be classed the equally patriarchal imprecation "By my father's head." Hearing a gipsy swear by his dead wife, Mr. Leland asked if he ever swore by his dead father, to which he said, "Always till my wife died." They have peculiar customs at the death of any of the tribe, holding a ceremony like waking the corpse, and carefully destroying everything used by the deceased—the clothes, bed, and even the cups and other vessels used by them in their illness. They also carefully abstain from and renounce for ever the favorite amusement or delicacy in which the dead relative took especial pleasure. Many a gipsy, too, has been weaned from brandy drinking on the ground that it was the last thing taken by a wife, husband, or father before death. This seems a form of sacrificing to the *manes*, and the taboo is probably connected with an idea of mischief arising from anything intimately connected with the dead. So too with the other curious custom of relinquishing mention of the dead person's name and changing it for some other. "Twould make any man grieve to hear the name of the dead that were dear to him" was explained to Mr. Leland. But we may suspect there was originally the reason that the name was supposed to be intimately bound up with the deceased, and therefore taboo with all else that had brought ill luck.

The belief in amulets, charms, and talismans is general. Among the gipsies of Spain a common superstition is the belief in the miraculous powers of the *bar lachi*, or loadstone. Its property of attracting steel, filling their minds with amazement, invest it with occult powers in their eyes. Borrow says: "They believe that he who is in possession of it has nothing to fear from steel or lead, from fire or water, and that death itself has no power over him." It is also believed to be a protection from the police, and to act as an aphrodisiac in exciting amorous passion. This is only credited of the loadstone in its natural state, and Borrow tells how the gipsies of Spain frequently tried to steal a large loadstone kept in the Royal Museum at Madrid.

Mr. Leland is of opinion that wandering from place to place the gipsies have been the great agents in keeping alive the old superstitions, and that on their wild dance has been founded the belief in the witches dancing at the Sabbath. But the gipsy belief in witchcraft was no such gloomy faith as that associated with the Christian devil. The English word *witch* (Anglo-Saxon, *Wicca*) comes from a root implying wisdom. The reputed witch is still the wise woman. In the old faith, as found among the gipsies, there is no such horrible doctrine as that of Christianity, which persecuted the witch as a person sold to Satan, whose sole will and work is to damn all mankind, already full of original sin, to eternal torture. This delightful conception emanated as the antithesis to the idea of an all-good God, who manifestly does not destroy evil. Mr. Leland says:

"The English gipsies believe in witches among their own people, and it is very remarkable that, in such cases at least as I have heard of, they do not regard them as *âmes damnées* or special limbs of Satan, but rather as some kinds of exceptionally gifted sorceresses or magicians. They are, however, feared from their supposed power to make mischief. Such a witch may be known by her hair, which is straight for three or four inches, and then begins to curl—like a waterfall which comes down smoothly and then rebounds roundly on the rocks. It may here be remarked that all this gipsy conception of a witch is distinctly Hindoo, and not in the least European or of Christians, with whom she is simply a human devil given over to the devil's desire. And it is very remarkable that even the English gipsies do not associate such

erring sisters—or any other kind—with the devil, as is done by their more cultivated associates."

Their ordinary palmistry and fortune-telling they know well to be humbug to deceive the *gajes*. The real secret is finding out what kind of person they have to deal with, and then by flattery and promises impress them by smart thrusts and suggestions. The fortune-teller's is an easy calling, requiring, as Mr. Leland says, "no property or properties, neither capital nor capitol, neither shiners nor shrines wherein to work the oracle." But, like other trades, there is more in it than is seen by outsiders. The childlike calibre of these migratory priests of the old faith is best shown in their one "great trick," the *hakkni panki*, or *dudikabin*, repeated with variation in all parts of the world. It is so simple it is amazing that people can be taken in by it. It consists in telling people of some treasure to be obtained by depositing gold or silver in a safe place, "For gold, as you sees, draws gold, my deari; and so if you ties up all your money in a pocket handkerchief an' leave it, you'll find it doubled." The doubling, however, consists in the substitution of another handkerchief for the one containing the valuables and the retreat therewith of the magician. The hanky panky trick of the gipsy fortune teller and of the Christian priests are but variations of one and the same great confidence trick, the *hokkano boro*. Yet the poor gipsy sorcerer is run into jail, while the Christian mystery man, who takes equal care to have money down for post-mortem promissory notes, is regarded with reverence and lives in luxury.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE BIBLE AND MODERN PROGRESS.

DURING the recent School Board elections—more particularly in the provincial towns—the old orthodox delusion that the Bible has been the one great cause of modern progress has been extensively proclaimed. Bishops of the Church of England, ministers of various dissenting sects, and laymen of all denominations have repeated again and again the allegation that the secret of the advancement of the nineteenth century is to be found in the acceptance and in the practice of Bible teachings. It does not appear to have occurred to these Bible idolaters to ask themselves the question: If the Bible has been so potent for the purpose they allege, how is it that general progress was so long delayed? Why is it that the last and the present centuries—the most sceptical and Bible-disbelieving epoch of the Christian era—have been the most progressive periods since the Bible has been known? What is the explanation of the fact that when the people professed to believe the Bible implicitly and attempted to obey its injunctions, the elements of modern progress were either comparatively unknown or entirely ignored? Is not the answer to be found in the reason given by J. S. Mill, in his work upon "Liberty," when he said: "Other ethics than any which can be evolved from exclusively Christian sources [the Bible] must exist side by side with Christian ethics to produce the moral regeneration of mankind?" In the words of Buckle: "The more we examine the great principle of scepticism, the more distinctly shall we see the immense part it has played in the progress of European civilisation." Unquestionably the voice of history affirms that our national progress has been proportionate to the spread of scepticism and to the decline of bibliolotry. And yet, despite this fact, no matter what improvement may be cited, whether it be the development of civil and religious liberty, the partial political emancipation of the masses, the democratic recognition of social rights, the equitable relations between labor and capital, a higher educational status, the discovery of printing, the establishment of the electric telegraph, the more just position accorded to Freethinkers, or the decay of theological domination;

all such incidents of modern improvement are claimed by orthodox Bible believers as being the legitimate outcome of the teachings of the "Holy Scriptures."

Of course it is not difficult to understand why this absurd demand is continued to be made upon human credulity. The Bible has been for centuries an instrument in the hands of priests and political despots, with which they have crushed the minds and oppressed the bodies of their unfortunate victims. Claiming the "Word of God" as their authority, ecclesiastical and law-making tyrants have blighted the noblest aspirations of mankind, preventing them from having their social rights and their political freedom. To deprive, therefore, these usurpers of their chief weapon of oppression is to divest them of a power which has hitherto enabled them to rob the human race of those benefits which, as a rule, co-exist with unfettered thought and true individual and national independence. The Bible has been the magic charm which has stifled the reason, captivated the imagination, and secured the abject submission of the ever-ready-to-believe followers of an unscrupulous priesthood. To lose such a powerful and, to them, profitable influence over the thoughtless multitude must necessarily be a severe blow to their supremacy, and, therefore, these exponents of dogmatic teaching are striving hard to maintain their former position, and cling with persistent tenacity to the old theological notion that the Bible is the real cause of modern progress. To this glaring assumption and audacious statement we give an unqualified denial.

As a matter of fact, the progress of a nation cannot be truly ascribed to any one thing or to any one age, but rather to a combination of circumstances which have been in operation during many ages, correcting old fallacies, creating new ideas, and giving birth to fresh truths. For instance, had it not been for the scientific discoveries of the last century, the application of those demonstrated facts for the general good would not have been so easily accomplished as it has been in the present day. But for the great French Revolution, probably freedom from monarchical depression would not now exist in France. It is equally true that for the increased freedom from religious intolerance which we now enjoy, we are indebted to men like Franklin, Paine, Hone, Hetherington, Watson, Southwell, and others in the past, as well as to their representatives in the present. So it is with national progress. Its growth cannot be traced to any one particular source; it is rather the development of a variety of agencies which time and human requirements called into operation as the result of the assiduous study of the potency and manifold resources of natural phenomena. Now, so far as the relation of the Bible to this advancing process is concerned, it has been one of constant impediment. Wherever strict adherence to its teachings has been observed, attention to mundane affairs has been more or less neglected; and in order to see that this must logically be the case it is only necessary to glance at some of the principal elements of modern progress, and to ascertain if they find their sanction in the Bible.

Among the prominent causes of the present advanced condition of society the following may be mentioned. (1) The development of mental faculties. Intellectual force is becoming more and more the ruling factor of the world. (2) The expansion of mechanical genius, which provides the means for satisfying the increased and ever-increasing needs of the human race. (3) The extension of national commerce, which affords an opportunity for the better interchange of ideas between nations. (4) The invention of printing, which enables brain-power to be widely circulated. (5) The influence of climate, which largely affects the health of the body and, therefore, the condition of the mind. (6) The knowledge and

application of the sciences, which reveal the power and value of natural sources. (7) The practical recognition of political rights, which constitute the basis of just government. (8) The desire for the social equality of woman with man—this, when realised, secures feminine emancipation from theological bondage. (9) The spread of scepticism, which vindicates mental freedom. Briefly, here are nine causes of modern progress, and they involve, supreme attention to the things of this world, equality of the sexes, and the right of scepticism—the three fundamental principles that underlie all real civilisation. Where in the Bible are these essentials endorsed and recommended? Not where it teaches, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," "Labor not for the bread which perisheth," "Take no thought for your life," "Resist not evil," "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called," "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God," "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (food, clothes, etc.) shall be added unto you," "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" "Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward," "But I suffer not a woman to teach. . . . but to learn in silence," "Wives submit yourselves to your husbands. . . . in everything," "Set your affections on things above, not on things below," "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," "For in much wisdom is much grief," "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." From these texts it will be seen how incompatible human progress is with obedience to Bible teaching. Civilisation is the result of heroic labor based on a love for the world; of self reliance and determined endeavors to reach a higher, and still higher, position on earth; of resisting evil and revolting against "the powers that be" which have too often enfeebled the happiness of man; of the acquirement of wisdom, and having faith in the facts of science, and finally of yielding to reason as the safest tribunal to which we can appeal. These are the very essentials of modern progress, and they find their sanction, not in the Bible, but in the progressive nature of the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

A FLIGHT FROM HEAVEN.

(Suggested by Mrs. Graham Tomson's beautiful sonnet "Hereafter.")

Once from the parapet of gems and glow,
An Angel said, "O God, the heart grows cold,
On these eternal battlements of gold,
Where all is pure, but cold as virgin snow.

Here sobs are never heard; no salt tears flow;
Here there are none to help—nor sick nor old;
No wrong to fight, no justice to uphold:
Grant me thy leave to live man's life below."

"And then annihilation?" God replied.

"Yes," said the Angel, "even that dread price;
For earthly tears are worth eternal night."

"Then go," said God.—The Angel opened wide
His dazzling wings, gazed back on Heaven thrice,
And plunged for ever from the walls of Light.

—From the "Academy."

EUGENE LEE HAMILTON.

FREETHOUGHT AND FREE LIBRARIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your readers will probably be interested in learning that all the books lately rejected by the commissioners of the Free Public Library in Stoke Newington have been promptly accepted by the commissioners of the Clerkenwell Public Library.

LOUISA SAMSON.

22 Paget-road, Stoke Newington, N.

INGERSOLL ON THE LIQUOR QUESTION.

COLONEL INGERSOLL, whose views on any subject are interesting, has been interviewed by the *New York World* on Prohibition. We make the following extract, Colonel Ingersoll being the first speaker. He said:

"It has been decided by many courts in various states that the traffic in liquor can be regulated—that it is a police question. It has been decided by the courts in Iowa that its manufacture and sale can be prohibited, and not only so, but that a distillery or brewery may be declared a nuisance and may legally be abated, and these decisions have been upheld by the Supreme Court of the United States. Consequently, it has been settled by the highest tribunal that states have the power either to regulate or to prohibit the sale of intoxicating liquors, and not only so, but that states have the power to destroy breweries and distilleries without making any compensation to owners.

"So it has been considered within the power of the State to license the selling of intoxicating liquors. In other words, this question is one that the States can decide for themselves. It is not and should not be, in my judgment, a federal question. It is something with which the United States has nothing to do. It belongs to the States; and where a majority of the people are in favor of prohibition and pass laws to that effect there is nothing in the constitution of the United States that interferes with such action. The remaining question, then, is not a question of policy, and at the threshold of this question is another: Can prohibitory laws be enforced? There are to-day in Kansas—a prohibition State—more saloons, that is to say, more places in which liquor is sold, than there are in Georgia, a State without prohibition legislation. There are more in Nebraska, according to the population—more in Iowa, according to the population—than in many of the States in which there is the old license system. You will find that the United States has granted more licenses to wholesale and retail dealers in these prohibition States—according to the population, than in many others in which prohibition has not been adopted.

"These facts tend to show that it is not enough for the legislature to say: 'Be it enacted.' Behind every law there must be an intelligent and powerful public opinion. A law, to be enforced, must be the expression of such powerful and intelligent opinion; otherwise it becomes a dead letter; it is avoided; judges continue the cases; juries refuse to convict, and witnesses are not particular about telling the truth. Such laws demoralise the community, or, to put it another way, demoralised communities pass such laws."

"What do you think of the prohibitory movement on general principles?"

"The trouble is that when a few zealous men intending to reform the world endeavor to enforce unpopular laws they are compelled to resort to detectives, to a system of espionage. For the purpose of preventing the sale of intoxicating liquors somebody has to watch. Eyes and ears become acquainted with keyholes. Every neighbor suspects every other. A man with a bottle or demijohn is followed. Those who drink get behind doors, in cellars and garrets. Hypocrisy becomes substantially universal. Old-fashioned sociability becomes impossible. Hundreds of persons become suddenly afflicted with a variety of diseases, for the cure of which alcohol in some form is supposed to be indispensable. Malaria becomes general, and it is perfectly astonishing how long a few pieces of bark will last, and how often the liquor can be renewed without absorbing the medicinal qualities of the bark. The State becomes a paradise for patent medicine—the medicine being poor whiskey with a scientific name. Physicians become more popular in proportion that liquor of

some kind figures in the prescription. Then in the town clubs are formed, the principal object being to establish a saloon, and in many instances the drug store becomes a favorite resort, especially on Sundays.

"There is, however, another side to this question. It is this: Nothing in this world is more important than personal liberty. Many people are in favor of blotting out the sun to prevent the growth of weeds. This is the mistake of all prohibitory fanaticism."

"What is true temperance, Col. Ingersoll?"

"Men have used stimulants for many thousand years and as much is used to-day in various forms as in any other period of the world's history. They are used with more prudence now than ever before, for the reason that the average man is more intelligent than ever before. Intelligence has much to do with temperance. The barbarian rushes to the extreme, for the reason that but little, comparatively, depends upon his personal habits. Now, the struggle for life is so sharp, competition is so severe, that few men can succeed who carry a useless burden. The business men of our country are compelled to live temperate lives, otherwise their credit is gone. Men of wealth, men of intelligence, do not wish to employ intemperate physicians. They are not willing to trust their health or their lives with a physician who is under the influence of liquor. The same is true with business men in regard to their legal interests. They insist on having sober attorneys—they want the counsel of a sober man. So in every department. On the railways it is absolutely essential that the engineer, that the conductor, the train dispatcher, and every other employee, in whose hands are the lives of men, should be temperate.

"The consequence is that under the law of the survival of the fittest, the intemperate are slowly but surely going to the wall—they are slowly but surely being driven out of employment of trust and importance. No man, if he knows it, will employ an intemperate coachman, an intemperate butler. As we rise in the scale of civilisation we continually demand better and better service. We are continually insisting upon better habits, upon a higher standard of integrity, of fidelity. These are the causes, in my judgment, that are working together in the direction of true temperance."

"Do you believe the people can be made to do without a stimulant?"

"The history of the world shows that all men who have advanced one step beyond utter barbarism have used some kind of stimulant. Man has sought for it in every direction. Every savage loves it. Everything has been tried. Opium has been used by many hundreds of millions. Hasheesh has filled countless brains with chaotic dreams, and everywhere that civilisation has gone the blood of the grape has been used. Nothing is easier now than to obtain liquor. In one bushel of corn there are at least five gallons—four can be easily extracted. All starch, all sugar, can be changed almost instantly into alcohol. Every grain that grows has in it the intoxicating principle, and as a matter of fact, nearly all of the corn, wheat, sugar, and starch that man eats is changed into alcohol in his stomach. Whether man can be compelled to do without a stimulant is a question that I am unable to answer. Of one thing we are certain. He has never yet been compelled to do without a stimulant. The tendency, I think, of modern times is towards a milder stimulant than distilled spirits. Whiskey and brandies are too strong—wine and beer occupy the middle ground. As I have often said, wine is a fireside, whiskey a conflagration.

"It seems to me that it would be far better if the prohibitionists would turn their attention to distilled spirits. If they were willing to compromise, the probability is that they would have public opinion on their side. If they would say—'You may have all the beer and all the wine and cider you wish, and

you can drink them when and where you desire, but the sale of distilled spirits shall be prohibited, it is possible that this could be carried out in good faith, in many if not most of the states—possibly in all. We all know that the effect of wine, even when taken to excess, is nothing near as disastrous as the effects of distilled spirits. Why not take the middle ground? The wine drinkers of the old country are not drunkards. They have been drinking wine for many generations. It is drunk by men, women and children. It adds to the sociability of the family. It does not separate the husband from the rest—it keeps them all together, and in that view is rather a benefit than an injury. Good wine can be raised here as cheaply as in any other part of the world. In nearly every other part of our country the grape grows and good wine can be made. If our people had a taste for wine they would lose their taste for stronger drink, and they would be disgusted with the surroundings of strong drink. The same may be said in favor of beer. As long as the prohibitionists make no distinction between wine and whiskey, between beer and brandy, just so long will they be regarded by most people as fanatics.”—*N. Y. World*.

FREE DISCUSSION DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

APPEAL TO LOVERS OF LIBERTY.

AT this moment there is a serious danger to the free discussion of social problems. Mr. H. S. Young, M.A., barrister-at-law, is being prosecuted under the Post Office Protection Act, 1884, for sending pamphlets on the Population Question through the post in sealed envelopes. These were broken open at the instigation of the Home Secretary, and confiscated. Mr. Young was then summoned to appear at Bow-street Police Court, where Mr. Lushington sentenced him to pay three fines of £10 each, with costs, for three separate copies of the obnoxious pamphlet. Against this sentence Mr. Young is appealing in the only way open to him, namely, by endeavoring to make the magistrate state a case for the decision of a superior court.

Mr. Lushington admitted that the pamphlet was couched in “inoffensive language.” Not a single expression could be found in it to shock the most sensitive feelings. Nevertheless, the pamphlet was condemned by the magistrate as “obscene,” simply on the ground that he considered the doctrine it advocates as “immoral.”

Unless this legal doctrine of constructive obscenity be condemned in a superior court, it will be possible to suppress, and to brand as “obscene,” any opinions, however soberly expressed, which a magistrate may personally consider false and injurious. The private opinions of one man will thus be made the measure of public freedom.

Nor is this all. The breaking open of letters by the Post Office was long ago censured by Thomas Carlyle, in relation to the Mazzini case, as a species of burglary. It is quite intolerable that those who are employed by the public to convey its letters should spy into their contents. But when the spies claim “protection” against what they could never have seen except by violence and treachery, the absurdity of their conduct is only equalled by its impudence.

This is not the time or place to discuss the soundness of Malthusian principles. It is not this or that view of the social question which is at issue, but the right of ventilating any view, so long as the ordinary decencies of public discussion are respected.

To protect that right, as far as possible, the Free Discussion Defence Committee has been formed. Its immediate object is to assist Mr. Young and harass his prosecutors; but it will extend the same help to any other victims of similar tyranny.

Meetings are being organised in all parts of London, and, if necessary, others will be held in the provinces. Englishmen will be asked whether they are content to have their letters broken open by the Post Office; whether they approve of “inoffensive language” being stigmatised as “obscene”; and whether they will allow the discussion of social problems to lie at the mercy of ignorant policemen and bigoted magistrates, in defiance of the constitutional law of trial by jury, which is the only safeguard of our liberties.

The Free Discussion Defence Committee will be glad to hear from any lady or gentleman willing to take part in this agitation. Subscriptions, which are urgently needed, may be sent to the hon. treasurer, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, F.R.C.S. (Lond.), 23 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, W.

Present Members of the Committee: Dr. Allinson, Mr. Blanchard, Mr. A. P. Busch, Mrs. Busch, Dr. C. R. Drysdale, Dr. Eusoff, M.D., Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. G. A. Gaskell, Mrs. Heatherley, Mr. A. Love, Mr. W. H. Reynolds, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Mr. Geo. Standing, Mr. E. Truelove, Dr. Alice Vickery; H. S. Young (Hon. Sec.).

ACID DROPS.

Booth has had a big reception in Australia, and he appears to have bagged a good deal of cash. One cheque for £10,000 is reported as safe in the General's tenacious fist. But his supporters and applauders, after all, seem to be among the upper and middle classes. The Trade Unionists are beginning to agitate against Booth's over-sea colony scheme. They object to Australia being the dumping ground for the incapable surplus labor of England.

Booth is indignant with the “godless” people who oppose his over-sea colony scheme in Australia. He now thinks of patronising South Africa. Perhaps the “godless” people there will also object, and the poor “General” will be turned into a sort of Wandering Jew (there's a good deal of the Israelite about his nose), seeking all over the globe for a dumping ground for his Salvationised human refuse, who will always be “going, going,” but never “gone.”

Under the heading of “Booth's Blacklegs,” the *London Evening News* deals severely with the General's social scheme as it is being carried out at home. In the wood-chopping department, for instance, it is stated that the hands are very badly underpaid, while the commodity they produce is sold under the market price. At this rate, Booth will be a social curse. He gets his capital for nothing, and if he sweats the worker, and undersells the trader, he will do all the mischief that was predicted.

“F. London,” that is, the Bishop of that ilk, is sending out a begging letter on behalf of the poor clergy who are tired of work and want to retire from it. They haven't been able to make any provision for old age or other incapacity, and the British public is implored to come to their assistance. One of these begging letters has reached us, with a nice directed envelope for us to forward a subscription. Up to the present we haven't resolved to send anything. Our mind is dazed by the wonderful fact that “F. London” subscribes £100 himself. When a Bishop puts his hand in his own pocket, and actually pulls it out with something in it, one almost expects earthquakes.

Rather a funny man, without exactly meaning it, is the Rev. Walter Friend, of Maidstone. In a recent discourse, which is reported in the *Kent Messenger*, he said: “Now, suppose the Gospels were anonymous. Does that destroy their value? If Lord Bacon, not Shakespeare, wrote Shakespeare's plays, or their author was unknown, would they lose their value?” Of course not, most potent, grave, and reverend Friend. A work of imagination is of the same value whoever wrote it. It is art, not history. Do you mean that the Gospels are works of imagination? If not, your analogy breaks down. The Gospels are testimony, and who the witnesses are is of the highest importance. Try again, Friend.

The worthy Friend, in another discourse, took a turn at “infidelity.” He was great on the infidelity of those who “live unholy lives”—something like Captain Verney and the Rev. Dr. Clutterbuck, we suppose. Scepticism, at the very best, he said, was “only a force to pull down; it simply left a black, charred ruin.” But what if the black, charred ruin was a spiritual Bastille? Is it not better in ruins, O Friend, than standing big, ugly, and frowning, a tyrant's castle full of innocent prisoners, a torture-house for the bravest and best of the sons of men?

Ananias was not in it with Hugh Price Hughes. Speaking at Bolton, he said—“Every Sunday I have to hear me 1,200 men—Atheists and Socialists and clubmen and journalists.” These Atheists are of the same species as that Atheist

Shoemaker, who was created, converted, and killed by Ananias Hughes.

Incidentally, Ananias Hughes does tell the truth. He did it once in his Bolton speech. "Anything," he exclaimed, "to get the saints to pay money for the glory of God and the benefit of their own souls." Yes, *anything*.

The Rev. Dr. James Caspar Clutterbuck, a clergyman of the Church of England and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Workhouse Schools, has been let off very mercifully with a sentence of four years' imprisonment for a series of the most barefaced and heartless frauds. Although only charged with swindling to the extent of £16,500 by his pretence that the Chancellor of the Exchequer offered privately from 10 to 20 per cent. for the advance of money, it was stated in court that the money actually obtained amounted to over £35,000, many not liking to come forward to display their own greed and folly, and clergy who constituted a good proportion of the dupes, as one of the witnesses expressed himself, were reluctant to give evidence against a brother clergyman.

Mr. W. T. Stead should enter an action for libel against Mr. Henry Ames, editor of *The Dwarf*, who accuses that good man of something very like blackmail. He says that when remonstrated with for continually attacking Mr. Spencer Walpole in the case of *Wiedermann v. Walpole*, he said, "What will he give to stop my pen?" Mr. Stead seems to take no notice. Perhaps he is too intent on his work of evangelising Liverpool.

At Omaha, one Neil who murdered a family named Jones under circumstances of peculiar atrocity, has been, after due preparation by the Catholic priest, including a night séance, with burning candle, holy water, the consecrated wafer, etc., jerked to Jesus with an hempen necktie. The *Progressive Thinker* inserts the following verses on "Neil in Heaven."

Neil was hung, and he went straight to glory,

Escorted by prelate and priest,

And, surrounded by saints and by angels

Sat down to a heavenly feast.

But hark! There's a shriek of fierce anguish,—

A sound of deep sobbings and groans,

'Tis a wail through the regions of horror,

From Allan and Dorothy Jones.

They were given no time for repentance,—

Their lives were exempt from misdeeds,

They were fed on no sanctified wafer,

And never had counted their beads.

And now, as they drift down the ages,

How sorry they ever must feel

That they had not murdered somebody—

And gone straight to heaven like Neil.

The Rev. Wm. Proctor Swabey, who has nearly £800 a year as rector of Millfield, Sunderland, has been summoned and ordered to pay 1s. 6d. a week for the support of his father, who has been made chargeable to the parish.

Mr. S. Whalley, a solicitor, who carried on business in Blackburn and Southport, enjoyed a great reputation for piety. He always had Christian papers on his table for his clients. Spinsters and widows invested their all in his hands. Now he has departed to join the heavenly choir it is found he gave bogus securities and many families are left face to face with ruin.

Not long ago a confiding dupe went to this pious Whalley to ask him to invest a sum of £500—his little all—which he scraped together during a long life of thrift and toil. Whalley invited him into his private room. "Come in here," he said; "I seldom let anyone enter this apartment. I spend many precious hours here, reading my Bible, and offering up my devotions to the Almighty." The poor man was at the time very much impressed with his solicitor's fervor. Now his little all has been swallowed up, and his faith in mankind is up to the Bible level.

"If a man observes," says *Reynolds' Newspaper*, "he will find that the most hard, selfish, and mean persons in his district are always to be found wending their way to some church or other on a Sunday."

Those who wonder that gipsies obtain any victims for their *hakkni panki*, described by Mr. Wheeler in his paper on Gipsy Religion this week, should reflect on the Clutterbuck case. Like the gipsies, the mystery-man swore his dupes to secrecy. The *Times* confesses that if such a character as the pious clerical swindler had been put in a novel, he would have been considered the absurd invention of one who owed a grudge against the cloth. Yet under the guise of religion he carried on his fraudulent career for years. We do not wonder. The whole black business is one which tends to callous indifference to actual duties and to living on the folly and credulity of mankind.

The *Review of the Churches* joins in the chorus of the poverty of the clergy. Poor things. We have the appalling picture held up that unless God's people open their pockets more freely to his ministers, it will be only bishops, deans and such-like dignitaries who can venture on the responsibilities of marriage.

Among the Jaiswars and other low caste Hindoos, caste is regulated by filthy lucre, and a man is distinguished amongst them by a regulated monetary scale. One person may be a 14 anna caste man, while another may only be a 12 anna caste man. Does the 12 anna caste man wish to supersede the 14 anna caste man, then he consults the priest, who will, in return for cash, promote him to a higher caste grade. Says a writer in the *St. James's Gazette*: "A moneyed man having qualms about his future state should join the Jaiswars where he can utilise his spare cash for the good of his soul. The average priest will be only too glad to procure him everlasting glory for a matter of a few rupees." Priests at home will, however, see to this for the benefit of the rich.

The Lord's Day Rest Association is going to prosecute the Sunday League for its lectures and music on the "blessed Sabbath." We are glad to hear it. The League will fight the question, and the wicked, foolish law will be brought a little nearer to the point of being repealed. If the Lord's Day Rest Association wants to "go the whole hog" it should prosecute the Hall of Science too. Mr. Foote is quite ready to receive the writ.

Mr. G. W. Barker, ex-Wesleyan minister, of Chester-le-Street, challenged Mr. A. T. Dipper to debate the question "Did the Christ of the Gospels really Exist?" A joint committee was formed to make all arrangements, but at the third meeting Mr. Barker turned up and said he would not discuss the question agreed upon; he would only discuss "The Historical Identity of Jesus Christ." That means anything or nothing, and the debate is "off." Mr. Dipper is trying to draw the Barker, but cannot bring him to the point of biting.

T. G. Barrett, of the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School at Gillespie-street, Highbury Vale, gives in the *Daily News* an instance of clerical intolerance, supported by the last London School Board. Mr. Barrett applied for permission to use a room in the Gillespie-road school on Sunday, and permission was granted by the Works Committee; but before tenancy commenced he was informed the permission was withdrawn because the Rev. F. W. Isaacs wished to have the use of the building. He then applied for the Blackstock-road school, and was told that "Mr. Isaacs has informed us that the same objections apply in the case of Blackstock-road as in the case of the Gillespie-road school." So it appears the application was considered to depend on the wishes of the local clergyman. What we should like to know is, what more right have these public buildings to be let to any religious bodies than to Secularists, should they apply for the same? But what chance would they have if their application was referred to the Rev. Mr. Isaacs?

A story is told in *Truth* of a little girl who, on being reminded that she had forgotten to say her grace, put her hands softly together and shutting her eyes, said, "Excuse me, Amen." Now this little girl spontaneously hit on a great mystery of Christian prayer. The word Amen probably represents a spell similar to the Hindu *Aum*, or the Buddhist *Om mani padmi hum*. Amen was the name of the concealed God of Egypt. How he got into Christian prayer is one of the unexplained mysteries of the faith. The last word of the Lord's Prayer was probably used as an exorcism, just as the

two fingers held up by the Catholic priest in giving the benediction was a gesture to ward off witchcraft.

Talmage gives the Agnostic creed as "I believe in nothing, the maker of heaven and earth." He doesn't see that his own creed of a God "without body, parts, or passions" is just as nonsensical. And then, his nothing was born of a virgin, died though he couldn't die, and descended into hell, when there was no hell for him.

The *Truthseeker*, of Oct. 31, contained a full exposure of the "Lady Magnet" from a Mr. Butler, of Huron S. Dakota, who asserted 'hat at one of her performances he duplicated all her tricks, which depend solely on mechanical balance. He cites a letter from Edison denying any knowledge of the lady.

On the "Marriageable Women" question, discussed in the *Daily Chronicle*, a clergyman writes: "It appears to be the ambition of multitudes of ministers of all denominations to marry the richest woman they can find, whether she be eminent for piety or the reverse. It is not surprising that their lay brethren should seek to copy their example."

A good story of a miraculous cure is given in the November number of *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. Like most of such tales, it occurred a long way off, viz., at St. Louis, U.S., but, unlike most of them, it is not dated long ago, for it is said to have occurred on the 9th of April of the present year. A nun called Sister Philomena is said to have been a sufferer for five years, and her agonies reached a climax when her eyes began to bleed. She was given a phial of water containing a piece of linen which had touched the bones of Blessed Margaret Mary. On April 8 she swallowed the linen relic, and on the following morning a needle came out above her eye, bearing near its point the relic of linen which she had swallowed the night before and which had gone to fish out the cause of the evil.

The churchwardens of St. James Church, Darwen, Lancs., have had to pay £5 damages and costs for detaining a Mr. Leach in church against his will. When the curate mounted the pulpit Mr. Leach rose to leave. The churchwardens were on guard at the door, and detained him. He submitted quietly and brought an action. The magistrate told them they were guilty of a most serious offence, that of imprisoning one of the Queen's subjects without due warrant. If bodily harm had been done they would have been held responsible. It is well that this decision should be widely known, as it is the common practice at Salvationist meetings to detain the audience until after the collection.

Some clericals have been squabbling in the *Church Times* about the doctrine of "the Kenosis," that is how far God, when he became man, submerged his divinity in his humanity. Church doctrine on this abstruse point seems still unsettled. The divinity seems to have been quite submerged when J. C. cursed the fig-tree, but it manifested itself in making it wither away. The Rev. C. I. Black asks "What authority there is for believing that the Redeemer while on earth violated that interior compact of Himself with Himself whereby, for the duration of His temporal mission, He renounced the exercise of the faculties and resources of the Godhead inherent in His own Person." Fancy God making a compact with himself not to reveal himself. When Jesus said "Of my own self I can do nothing," he meant "Of my own self I have made a compact with myself to pretend I can do nothing, though really I can do everything." Then he winked the other eye.

John Edward Smith, a retired builder of Croydon, recently told his wife he had a message from heaven to the effect that they would both live to be eighty, and that he would become a great preacher. He, however, died at sixty-seven. He told his medical man he had thrown away his crutches at the command of heaven. But heaven seems to have made a mistake as usual.

The bigots have been talking of the irreligion of Board schools because Jews and Jewesses have actually been appointed teachers in schools where the Jewish population is densest. Their religious instruction is hardly likely to take a Christian shape.

When children's parents paid for their being sent to voluntary schools, there was no thought of their being allowed a voice in their management. Now the fees are remitted it is proposed to give them some voice. Why is this thus? Simply to put off the cry for popular control of state-aided institutions on the plea that the children's parents are perfectly satisfied.

A nice specimen of the heavenly director is the Rev. Louis Rymarsky, pastor of the German Presbyterian Church, of Carlstadt, N.J. The Worcester *Evening Post*, of Oct. 29, says that "he fled from that village after he had confessed to having assaulted several girls between the ages of twelve and fifteen years, who were accustomed to go to the parsonage every Monday afternoon for religious instruction. He is a married man, and has one child."

The *Freethinker* is still an eyesore to the orthodox at Oswestry. They are shocked that such a paper is allowed to live. Of course they forget that the Christians tried to kill it and couldn't. "A Teacher," who has much to learn, ventilates his injured feelings in the local press. He asks if "such a corrupt Radical publication is to be freely allowed to circulate" in that holy town. "For the sake of the young" (note the good old trick) he pleads for suppression. But if it cannot be stopped, he begs the Christians to "flood the town with tracts in defence of the truth." Well, we hope they will take the advice. The more the question is stirred the better—for Freethought.

Moody, the Yankee revivalist, is giving a fillip to piety in Scotland. At Campbeltown he told a yarn about the "leader of an infidel club" he converted at Edinburgh. This is the first time we ever heard of such a club. Perhaps Mr. Moody will disclose the name and address of his interesting convert. It is more likely, however, that he will keep it to himself. We suspect it is the same "converted infidel" who does duty for all the revivalists. He died a long time ago, and his ghost has been in the business ever since.

Mr. Foote is visiting Bradford in the new year, and in order to make a big demonstration the Star Music Hall was engaged. But the proprietor did not feel safe without consulting the police. He laid the matter before the Chief Constable, who said he must have a written guarantee that the lectures would not bring the Christian religion into contempt. Mr. Foote felt inclined to say it *couldn't* be brought into contempt. But he went in for diplomacy instead. It hasn't answered, however, and as the "authorities" still frown, the music hall proprietor feels he dare not venture to let the Secularists use his premises. The only resource is to engage a smaller hall in a less conspicuous position.

Halstead seems to have a good supply of impudent bigots. One of the species objected to the Secularists using the Co-operative Hall. The matter was discussed by the committee, and finally left open till the next meeting in April. On behalf of the Secularists, Mr. L. Spurgeon wrote to the objector, who had insinuated that Secularism and Secularists were both immoral. Not being able to point out the immoral Secularists, the objector (a woman) replied that she thought the *tendency* of Secularism immoral; but she wasn't going to discuss it, and she "closed the correspondence." O these meek and lowly Christians! How they squirm and spit when a Freethinker heaves in sight!

Mrs. Vaughan, 162 Mare-street, Hackney, has been selling the *Freethinker* and displaying it in her window. By so doing she excited a Christian, who entered the shop and told her to remove the paper that "damned his God." He so persisted, and looked so big, that she got frightened and submitted. We hope our friends about there will call and tell Mrs. Vaughan that the bigot cannot do her any particular harm.

The new Mayor of Stockport attended a Unitarian church on Mayor's Sunday. Thereupon the Rev. A. Symonds, of St. Thomas's, reproached his worship for going to a place where "the divinity of our blessed Lord is denied," and where the Bible is not regarded as "different in kind from any great and good book." Had the mayor been a Churchman, and gone to an established gospel-shop, Mr. Symonds would have thought it quite proper; but, alas, the mayor will go to his own shop, and hence these tears.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 29, Hall of Science, Freeman-street, Grimsby; at 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; at 3, "Follies of Theosophy"; at 7, "The Way to Heaven."

Friday, Dec. 4, Gladstone Hall, Military-road, Chatham, at 8, "Who Wrote the Bible?"

December 6, Hall of Science; 13, Manchester; 14, 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 29, Leeds. December 1 and 2, Bradford; 4, Wolverhampton; 6, Bolton; 7 and 8, Blackburn; 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Leicester; 27, Birmingham. January 3 and 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Milton Hall, London; 24 and 31, Birmingham. February 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 4, Manchester; 11, Birmingham; 25, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

E. H. J.—The verses are fairly good, but not striking enough for the space they would occupy.

W. LUSH.—Of course we cannot tell until we see it. You might leave it at a venture.

BERNHARDT, newsagent, Foregate-street, Leicester, supplies this journal and other Secular literature.

J. CLODE.—The verses you send us are spirited. But we cannot pay you for them. We cannot even insert them. They have appeared before. We have sold them as a Tract, at sixpence a hundred, for many years.

J. RALPH.—We believe the poor little man you refer to has recanted his recantation, but it is a matter of indifference whether he has or hasn't. There is no verbatim report of the debate you refer to, which took place thirteen years ago.

QUIZ.—Mr. Forder will send you any number of copies of this journal over seven post free. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* is rarely met with second-hand. It is published in two vols. at 21s.

A. STRONG.—(1) See the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in *Crimes of Christianity*. The greatest argument against the passage in Josephus is the fact that no Christian apologist before the time of Eusebius, in the fourth century, ever heard of it. The passage has no connexion with the context, and could not have been written by a professed Jew. (2) Is it really worth while to ask whether Colonel Ingersoll is the owner of a gin-palace?

J. W. BRAY (Hull).—Letters for the editor of this journal must be addressed to 14 Clerkenwell-green. Wednesday morning, in any case, is too late. Your letter was dated November 17 (Tuesday).

W. MARTIN.—Pleased to hear the sale of the *Freethinker* is increasing even in so bigoted a place as Burton. Colonel Ingersoll's address is 404 Fifth-avenue, New York. We wish you prosperity in the new world.

R. WATTS.—Mr. Bradlaugh did not recant, and no story of his having done so ever went the rounds of the press. Your Christian friends, as usual, are drawing on their pious imaginations. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. Bradlaugh's only daughter, tended him in his last illness. She wrote an account of it in her father's journal a week after his death. Besides her own evidence, there is the signed testimony of the nurses, which she sensibly procured, against the paltry fiction of "a death-bed recantation."

JOHN EASTON.—Tom Mann knows his book. He who is after votes suits himself to the majority. Don't be too hard on men who bag a little at the knees. You musn't expect every labor leader to be a Bradlaugh. Freethinkers are still in the minority, and in matters of religion, or anything very deep, the Tom Manns and Ben Tilletts will go with the stream.

T. H. ASTON.—The paragraph was "set up" from a newspaper cutting sent to us.

J. GREEVZ FISHER.—The statute of Elizabeth, under which people can be fined and imprisoned for not going to church, is still unrepealed. In 1841 Lord Brougham presented a petition from two laboring men who were then in custody for infringing the Act. We are not aware of any more recent convictions.

MINNIE MANN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Mr. Foote is in good health.

T. BIRLEY.—See paragraph. Drawing a sky-pilot into a debate is worse than driving a pig to market. *Lux Mundi* is now published in a cheaper edition at 6s. Its only value to Freethinkers lies in the editor's essay on "Inspiration."

N. ASHWOOD.—We note subject. Send copy of bill early.

C. E. SMITH.—All the works you mention by Mr. Foote are out of print. Sorry we cannot help you obtain them, at least at present.

C. DOEG.—The list of lecturers in the *Almanack* was made up by the Organisation Committee. The gentleman you mention was not "inadvertently" omitted. The Committee are not Mahatmas. They have no occult sources of information. Freethinkers are very remiss in supplying the necessary facts. After the *Almanack* is printed the negligent ones begin business.

J. MARTIN wishes to meet Derby Freethinkers at 41 Copeland-street on Sunday evenings at 7, with a view of forming an N. S. S. Branch.

W. F. B.—Mr. Courtney's views on Egypt may be "well worth attention," but we cannot give it in this journal.

A. LORD.—We are much obliged to the member of the Nottingham Branch who offers to get newsboys to sell the *Freethinker* in the streets. Certainly we will bear the legal responsibility should there be any interference by the authorities.

J. R. WILLOCK.—Glad to hear Mr. Heaford had a good evening audience at Manchester. Sorry for the misprint. The fault is not ours. The list was framed and revised at the N. S. S. office.

S. COLEMAN.—Delighted to learn that a Newark newsagent is bold enough to display our contents-sheet. We are obliged to Mr. Mumby for guaranteeing against loss or unsold copies. Write as soon as possible as to the Town Hall.

P. GUNAN.—Good news from Aberdeen is very welcome. Mr. Foote hopes to meet your members in the spring.

E. POWNCEBY, sec. London Secular Federation, desires Branch secretaries to make their returns of the Freethinkers' Ball tickets as early as possible.

W. P. MURRAY.—Cuttings always welcome.

A. W. DAVIS.—We don't keep volumes of this journal in stock. Perhaps Mr. Forder could procure any you may require. Thanks for your successful efforts to promote our circulation at Cricklewood.

HENRY GREENWOOD, formerly of Liverpool, who went to Halifax, is requested to communicate with his Secular friends in the former city.

A. STRONG.—We hope to give the reverend gentleman enough work.

D. BAKER.—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

R. D. WILLIAMS and G. Hathaway, who have left Swindon, should send their addresses to W. Hollick, 101 William-street, New Swindon.

J. C.—Samson's "bringing down the house" is an old joke.

L. SPURGEON.—See "Acid Drops." Send the pious soul our paragraph.

T. KILBEY.—The newsagent would probably suffer no harm if she defied the bigot.

T. NOBLE.—Thanks for the cuttings. Our circulation increases steadily. It will continue to do so if our friends press their newsagents to do us justice.

T. BARNETT.—The suggestion is hardly practicable. Perhaps a good, thick pamphlet, full of cases of men of God who went wrong, would startle the orthodox.

R. B. WALTON.—See "Lecture Notice." Thanks for cuttings.

R. G. LIES.—Thanks for the information. The man must be beside himself.

W. H. GREGORY.—"White feather" is nonsense. We simply cannot find paragraphs on *ex parte* statements which the persons criticised may repudiate.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Western Daily News—Bath Argus—Grimsby News—Echo—Messenger of the Sacred Heart—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—Ironclad Age—Monthly Intelligencer—Modern Thought—Flaming Sword—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Sussex Evening Times—Wakefield Express—Essex County Chronicle—New York Herald—Thanet Advertiser—Better Way—Kent Messenger—Manchester Guardian—Independent pulpit—Brighton Examiner.

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.

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

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.

Mr. Foote paid Wolverhampton a second visit on Sunday. His audiences were nearly half as large again as on the first occasion. Several men of influence in the town were present, including an ex-mayor and two or three doctors. All three meetings were markedly sympathetic. Every strong Free-thought sentiment was applauded to the echo. In the evening a resolution was carried unanimously, requesting Mr. Foote to "come again" as soon as possible.

After the evening lecture about forty members and friends of the new Wolverhampton Branch met Mr. Foote in the anteroom. Several fresh members were enrolled on the spot, and after some discussion it was decided to obtain a hall for regular Sunday meetings. It was also decided to carry on a propaganda in the neighboring towns, like Bilston, Dudley, and Walsall, in connection with the Midlands Federation which Mr. Charles Watts intends to organise with its centre at Birmingham. Mr. Watts is to visit Wolverhampton himself on December 4, when he will lecture in the Athenæum. We hope the local Freethinkers will rally round him on that occasion.

We are glad to learn that the circulation of the *Freethinker* is rapidly increasing in Wolverhampton. Newsagents are displaying it more freely, and one or two exhibit a contents-sheet. General satisfaction is expressed at the enlargement of the paper to sixteen pages.

Mr. Charles Watts had good meetings on Sunday at Portsmouth. The Secular Hall was crowded in the evening. Mr. Watts was in good form, and the local "saints" were delighted. They want to hear him again as soon as possible.

Fund for settling Mr. Watts at Birmingham:—Birmingham Branch N. S. S., £5; A. Holland, 3s.; E. Hickman, £1.

Mr. Forder has been actively pursuing his School Board campaign in Finsbury, with the assistance of Miss Vance and Mr. Pownceby, and several Free-thought speakers. Mr. Foote has addressed three meetings, and appears at a fourth on the eve of the poll. We believe Mr. Forder stands a good chance. He is supported by all the Liberal papers, except the erratic *Echo* and the ostrich *Daily News*. Next week we hope to call him "member for Finsbury."

FORDER ELECTION FUND.—Subscriptions received to Nov. 23: W. Palmer, 1s.; J. P., 10s.; Philalethes, 5s.; G. Curtis, 2s.; G. S. R., 2s. 6d.; J. W. and R. Griffiths, 2s.; J. P. Adams, 1s.; W. Duncan, 5s.; J. W. Gott, 2s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; George Anderson, £2 2s.; T. Baden Powell, £1; G. R., £1; E. Truelove, £1; H. L. Jacob, 10s.; F. W. Donaldson, 5s.; R. F. F., 1s. 6d.; E. Hill, £1; J. Robertson, £1 1s.; J. Cheesewright, 2s.; W. Hanson, 2s. 6d.; C. B. Hyde, 2s. 6d.; Wm. Paul, 5s.; J. B. A., £1; J. Bland, 2s. 6d.; W. Anderson, 2s. 6d.; R. O. Brown, 2s. 6d.; S. Kaufmann, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 5s.; A Friend (Stockwell), 5s.—GEO. STANDRING, treasurer.

We have received for Mr. Forder:—Dean (Putney), 2s.

The London Secular Federation's tract, on "Religion in Board Schools," written by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, is being extensively circulated. Mr. G. J. Warren sent a few copies to the Rev. E. Schnadhorst, one of the Progressive candidates for the School Board, who replied—"I am much obliged by your kindness in sending me the leaflet, but I am glad to say you are *too late*. I have already had a large number of them, and have circulated them. I hope to distribute more at my open-air meeting."

Before our paper is in the hands of our country readers the result of the London School Board elections will be known. Despite Progressive successes at Manchester and Birmingham, we cannot say we are very sanguine. Too many advanced candidates have entered the field. The clericals are better organised, and do not put forward more than they have a fair chance of carrying. But we are of the opinion of Mr. Jasper Petulengro, who said he "would rather fight and be walloped than not fight at all." We bring our principles before people, and, having reason and justice on their side, they may be expected in the long run to prevail.

Nor are we depressed at any prospect of the party of "Economy" triumphing over that of "Progress." We know the pretended economists are really hostile to the interests of the schools they seek to manage. They would starve the education and lower the class of teachers in the interests of the voluntary schools. But the tendencies of the age are too strong for them. We must compete with other nations, and have our standard of education up to theirs.

It is no wonder the supporters of voluntary schools are hostile to the Board schools. Mr. Diggle has himself explained the reason. In 1871 they provided accommodation for 261,000 children; they now only provide for 258,000, and the average attendance has fallen from 173,000 to 162,000. In the nature of things, where most time is given to religion, secular education will be least efficient. Our policy is to keep this fact before the public, and to do so should contest every election.

The new course of Free Lectures under the auspices of the London Secular Federation will be given in the Libra Hall, Libra-road, North Bow, on Wednesday evenings, November 25, and December 2, 9, and 16. Mr. Parris opens, and is followed by Messrs. Stanley Jones, C. J. Hunt, and G. Standring. Freethinkers in the district should bring their Christian friends.

The London Secular Federation's annual dinner will take place on the first Thursday in January, but *not* at the Bridge House Hotel. Complaints were made about the dinner and its service, so this time the gathering is fixed at the Hall of Science. A good caterer, with first-rate appliances, will provide the dinner just as though it were cooked on the premises, and the *menu* will be superior to that of former dinners.

Mr. Moss is now charging for admission to the Deptford lectures. The experiment was tried for the first time last Sunday. Result—the pious rowdies disappeared and gave place to intelligent listeners. We wish Mr. Moss all success in this enterprise.

Meetings are being held in London to protest against the prosecution of Mr. H. S. Young. Advanced political clubs are lending their halls for the purpose. The Deptford meeting was fairly successful in point of numbers. Dr. C. Drysdale took the chair, and the speakers were Mesdames Dr. Vickery, Heatherley, and Thornton Smith, and Messrs. H. S. Young, A. B. Moss, and G. W. Foote. A resolution against the prosecution was carried unanimously. On Tuesday evening another meeting was held at Peckham, at which Dr. Drysdale and Mr. Foote spoke, and a similar resolution was carried.

The Bath magistrates seem to be less bigoted and far more sensible than the oracle of Bow-street, who sentenced Mr. H. S. Young to heavy fines for sending Malthusian pamphlets through the post. Mr. S. C. Branch, of 7 Brunswick-street, Bath, was prosecuted by the police for selling a certain Malthusian pamphlet which they chose to describe as "obscene." His counsel, Mr. Titley, defended the pamphlet on its merits. He contended that there was nothing obscene in it. The Bench retired for a private consultation, and on returning the chairman said they would make no order.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake issues the first number of *The Liberty of Bequest Intelligencer*. The price is one penny, and the publication will be monthly. "Counsel's Opinion" as to Free-thought Trusts does not supersede Mr. Bradlaugh's judgment. Mr. Holyoake's appeal to members of the N. S. S. is clear and practical. Branch secretaries will no doubt get the *Intelligencer* and act on its suggestions. Mr. Holyoake has collected a fair amount of money, and we wish success to his earnest efforts, but his Committee wants strengthening.

The members of the West London Branch of the N. S. S. are earnestly requested to attend a meeting which will be held at the Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road, Nottig Hill, W., on Friday evening at 8.30.

Mr. Stanley Jones, the N. S. S. secretary, will probably visit Liverpool and Belfast on December 6 and 13. Lancashire Branches should avail themselves of his services on the

intervening week-nights. Those who desire to do so should apply immediately.

The newly-formed Aberdeen Branch is making good headway. The Sunday meetings are well attended, and the monthly musical gatherings are very much appreciated. Hope is running high in Secular circles in the granite city.

The *Boston Investigator* credits to the *Better Way* a paragraph giving Mr. Gerald Massey's views of the legend of the seamless coat of Christ being taken from the mummy wrapping of Karast. The paragraph was written word for word at 14 Clerkenwell-green, and was probably copied into the *Better Way* without acknowledgment.

The *Popular Science Monthly* gives an account of the *Ethics of Confucius* by Mr. W. G. Benton, who shows that the teaching of the great Chinese sage was purely secular, and that the term religion is improperly applied to Confucianism, which proclaimed that we should concern ourselves with life, not death, and serve men instead of serving their spirits.

Statues of Nicholas Lenau and Anastasius Grün have been erected on the Schiller-square in Vienna, through the efforts of Karl Scherzer, the Freethinking president of the city committee on monuments. Both Lenau and Grün are well-known poets of the last century, but as they were Freethinkers, justice of course was tardy in recognising their merit.

At the meeting of the American Secular Union, held in Philadelphia, it was decided, in view of the coming World's Fair, to transfer the headquarters to Chicago. Judge C. B. Waite will be the new president, and Mrs. Mattie Freeman the new secretary. This change of quarters and directorate should result in infusing new life into an organisation which got too colorless under its late management.

The *Pall Mall Budget* for Nov. 19 gives prominence to a paper entitled "Are Babies Like Monkeys?" It relates an interview with Dr. Robinson, to whose article in the *Nineteenth Century* we have already directed attention. Dr. Robinson relates his experiments, proving that newborn infants have a wonderful power in the flexor muscles of the forearms, and can sustain themselves suspended from a branch for a longer period than grown-up persons. The article is illustrated with photographs of babies holding themselves upon boughs, which forcibly bear out the contention that babies are like monkeys.

M. Fillon, in the current number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, writes on "John Morley, Critic, Journalist, and Statesman," and praises him as thinker and as statesman. He considers Mr. Morley as the inspirer and heir-presumptive of Mr. Gladstone, and speaks of Morley's Freethought views in his work on *Compromise* as giving England a salutary shock.

The N. S. S. *Almanack* for 1891 contained a list of fifty Branches. That for 1892, just issued, gives particulars of seventy-two. The increase is a sufficient commentary on the talk of the decay of Secularism.

One of the shortest articles in the *Almanack* is that by Mr. W. P. Ball on the question "Atheist or Agnostic?" The paper, like everything from Mr. Ball's pen, is well thought out and concisely expressed. In just one page he puts the pith of the arguments urged on both sides.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) contains further "English Notes" by Sam Standing, who highly praises the literary ability of our "sub." Our American contemporary also gives attention to the prosecution of Mr. H. S. Young. From our paragraphs, and a report of the South Place meeting, it makes up a clear and interesting statement. Friend Macdonald ends by saying—"There is too blamed much 'government' in this world." Hear, hear.

Colonel Ingersoll has been to Chicago on legal business. A host of friends flocked around him to shake hands and have a chat. The *Tribune* man took down several columns of "Bob's" racy talk on Dr. Briggs and the heresy-hunt, religious progress, industrial protection, and other topics. "A trifling increase in the silver tint of his hair," says the

Tribune man, "is the only reminder that Colonel Bob is advancing with the years. His voice is as full, his hand as firm, and his mind as vigorous and aggressive as ever."

The Battersea Branch has taken the Chatham Hall for the first Sunday in each month; special lecturers will be engaged and admission will be 3d. and 6d. On Sunday evening, Dec. 6, Miss Eliza Hammond Hills will lecture on "Pagan Patches on the Christian Garment." The Chatham Hall adjoins Battersea Park station. It is to be hoped that Freethinkers in South West London will support the Battersea Branch in this expensive undertaking. Tickets can be had at the Secular Hall, at out-door meetings, and at 54 Landseer-street, Battersea Park-road.

Mr. John Grange, of Bradford, one of our promising young lecturers, paid his first visit to Sheffield on Sunday. Unfortunately he was suffering from a severe cold, but he went through his work manfully, and was rewarded with the hearty applause of his audience.

The Rev. Mr. Woodford, a Swedenborgian, gave an address in the New Church, Bedford-street North, Liverpool, on the 17th inst., on "Is there a God?" Discussion followed, with the result that the lecturer, who is evidently a man of large views, somewhat modified his conception of the Freethought position. He acknowledged his inability to conceive of a God as being both personal and infinite, and expressed his readiness to co-operate with Freethinkers where he could conscientiously do so.

There will be a tea at the Grimsby Hall of Science to-day (Nov. 29) after Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture. From sixty to seventy local and country friends are expected to attend. Mr. Foote will be present and glad to chat with the "saints."

WHY CANON GIRDLESTONE BELIEVES IN GOD.

ON Tuesday evenings during this month a course of lectures has been delivered at the Y.M.C.A., Aldersgate-street, by the Rev. Canon Girdlestone, on "Why I believe in God." I felt a "special call" to hear the Canon's reasons. A Canon is a "big gun," and his reasons, if not absolutely invincible, should at least be very forcible. Who knows? I may yet be convinced of the errors of my ways and receive grace; but, if not, I may have the alternative satisfaction of putting a few questions to the Rev. Canon and of making the "natives" stare. Discussion is of course out of the question in the "coward's castle," but with the exercise of a little discretion some argument may be put even in the form of questions.

As usual the lecture was prefaced by a long prayer, in which God was particularly requested to make the Canon's reasoning acceptable and convincing to the hearts of his hearers; and these were the questions which presented themselves to me: What can be the value of the reasoning which requires a special surgical operation by God Almighty on the "hearts" of the listeners to make it convincing? And cannot the Omnipotent make bad reasoning as convincing as good reasoning? And if the special intervention of Providence is to be invoked at all, whence the necessity for reasoning? Is it God *plus* the Canon, or the Canon *plus* God? One remark of the chairman deserves special notice. He excused himself for drawing upon the Canon's valuable time on the score that such organisations as theirs greatly helped the churches. Whenever he found a Christian young man not belonging to any church he impressed upon him the necessity of joining one. "You scratch me and I'll scratch you." What fairer bargain would you have? I wonder where Christianity would be to-day but for its wide-reaching organisation and the fostering care with which it nurtures humanity into its dogmas from its very cradle.

Having escaped the penny pop-guns, we now arrive at the very Canon's mouth, and must beware of complete annihilation. "The great difficulty men find for believing in God," says the Canon, "is that we cannot see him." This is simply not true. I find no difficulty in believing in stellar systems which no telescope has yet revealed. The difficulty is that we cannot *understand* him—can form no mental concept, except it be distinctly anthropomorphic. Here the Canon proceeded to propound a conundrum. "With which sense do you expect to see God?" I was not aware that we expected to see anything except through the sense of sight. Postulating an ego or personality, on the ground that we speak of

"my thoughts, my body," and so on—just as if we did not speak of "my ego"—and telling his hearers that "the ego was connected with the body by the nervous system," he proceeded to illustrate it on the black-board. Making a "point" represent the ego, he drew circles round it to represent the senses, in proportion to their degree of acuteness, drawing a line from the ego to each sense, representing the connection between the two. First came the grosser sense of touch, close to the ego; then followed the nearly as gross sense of taste; the sense of smell had a considerably larger circle all to itself, and the sense of hearing a very large one. Then came the sense of sight. Where was he to put the circle for that? The sense of hearing extended to perhaps 30 miles, but the sense of sight extended to many million miles, especially by the aid of the telescope. The black-board was not large enough, nor if he went to the end of the room or even the end of the next street. And yet, far as the sense of sight reached it could only see part of the universe. There were systems beyond and beyond that. "But the Controller of the Universe is outside the universe. How, then, can you expect to see him?" So God begins where the universe leaves off. In other words, where knowledge ends and ignorance begins, there is God. What, then, becomes of his infinity? The Canon did not condescend to define what he meant by "universe." Universe—Nature = Totality of existence. Before you can conceive God you must conceive an end to existence—an utterly impossible conception. "Nature conceals God," says the Canon. It does, rev. sir, very effectually. "Can man by searching find God?" Later the Canon contradicts himself. "Man is a limited personality, God an unlimited personality." *Unlimited personality* is good. It conveys about as much idea as a square circle.

Here is a specimen of the Canon's logic: "Can our senses be trusted?" he asks, and proceeds to answer it thus: "In the first place, we must remember that our senses were not given us to lead us wrong, but to lead us right." I pointed out, under cover of a question, that this was a most flagrant *petitio principii*; that he is assuming the very point he is attempting to prove, and the only answer I received was that this was a side issue. But his whole lecture bristled with the same kind of logic. "I feel that neither I nor the outside world form the basis of the universe, but an outside Creator." Well, I do not dispute the Canon's feelings; but this is not reasoning. If all felt the same, and if feeling is to decide the question, the Canon would have no one to reason with upon the matter. I feel nothing of the kind. But, what is more to the point, I know that the mystery of "being" is not explained to me by the word "God"; nay, it mystifies it a thousandfold. The whole lecture, carefully prepared as it evidently was (every line having been written out) was a tissue of commonplaces, inanities, bad logic, and worse psychology of the most approved Christian pattern. "Sound," says the Canon, "cannot be localised by a child," being evidently of the opinion that it can always be localised by a grown-up person. He speaks of the "heart" which longs after something better, and this in an analysis of the feelings, and so on *ad nauseum*. The Canon knows his audience.

One more point and I am done with the Canon—for the present. "Mohammedanism offers you an isolated God." When asked to explain what he meant by "isolated," he replied that Unitarianism had the same fault. "There was no relationship in the godhead. It was a cold creed. It wanted completeness." I kept on puzzling my poor brains to discover what he was driving at, until at last the Holy Ghost, with the assistance of a friend of mine, mercifully shed his light upon my benighted soul. The Mohammedan God was lonely without relation. No one to drop in and have a cup of tea with "promiscuous like"; no chance of talking over the most recent scandal for a half-hour or so. The Christian God was much more comfortable. He has not a host of relations like the gods of Olympus, but two is better than none at all. This is the kind of intellectual fare provided for a Christian young men audience—and of such is the kingdom of heaven. C. J. STEINBERG.

"Papa, in this library catalogue there is a book with the title, 'Letters from Hell.' How could they have got there?" "Well, my dear, I suppose they were posted with a Devil's Head on them."

The Hove Lawns. Sunday morning. "And do you say that the gay butterflies promenading here have just come from places of worship?" "Yes; but I fancy their religion is too much like their churches—stone work in front and compo behind."

A DOUBTER'S REPLY.

I useter go to meetin' some to hear the wimmin sing,
An' see ole Parson Soanso go howling round the ring;
'Twas high old times they useter have a-prayin' an' a-shoutin'.
While I sot there an' looked around a-thinkin' and a-doubtin'.

"Come on to glory! Now's the day! Don't put it off no longer;
The win's of love are blowin' now, God's grace is gittin' stronger."

Thus raved the parson as he howled and long and louder shouted,
But I sot there an' shuck my head an' sorter smiled an' doubted.

"Is there a soul in here to-night," the parson yelled with vigor,
"That hasn't felt the spirit's might nor yielded to its rigor?
Is there a man or woman here who will not go to glory?
Git up before me if you dare an' let me hear your story."

I sot there quiet—didn't stir, although I felt I orter
Rise up in the meetin' an' do up that godly snorter.
"Young man," he yelled, "you are condemned to endless death in hades.

Will you go down to hell from here amongst these weepin' ladies?"

I looked the parson in the eye, I felt my nerves grow stronger,
I couldn't stand his wicked look, no, not a minit longer;
I sprung right up an' raised my hand an' said above the bustle,

"If you can git me on my knees, ole fellow, you must hustle.

"I'm not afraid to live nor die; your God to me's a stranger;
He never helped me hoe my corn nor guarded me in danger,
He never comes to help the weak when struggling with privation,
He's always on the strongest side in ev'ry land and nation.

"Last year poor neighbor Jones was sick, he's one of your own members;
His fire of zeal's a mighty blaze when your'n is coolin' embers.
He leads in meetin' an' he sings, he's one of the anointed,
If Jones gits left I swar the rest of you'll be disappointed.

"But when his crop was in the grass you didn't try to aid him,
You hoed your corn an' left him thar just whar disease had laid him.
Your elders an' your sisters here forgot that Jones was ailin'.
They're mighty good to pray an' sing, but love is not their failin'.

"I hitched my old gray mare an' ploughed your brother Jones's cotton
An' dug his 'taters that was neigh to sproutin' an' to rottin',
I fed his stock an' went to mill an' 'tended to his taxes.
Jones is sittin' over there an' knows that these the facts is.

"Now what's the use to have a God if he can't ease your labors.
If he can't put it in your hearts to help your sickly neighbors?

Why do you pray to one you say 's a kind an' loving father?
Don't you suppose he knows your needs without your endless bother?

"An' what's the use of singin' sarms an' shoutin' to Jehovah?
Did prayer ever plough your corn or singin' cut your clover?
Did preachin' ever feed the poor or edicate your chillun?
If you will point out such a case I'll come up more'n willin'."

But nary elder said a word, the sisters quit their singin',
Ole Parson Soanso sot down, his tremblin' hands a-wringin',
An' as the meetin' was broke up with nary sinner shoutin'
I left an' walked across the fields a-doubtin' an' a-doubtin'.

W. H. STILES.

Sunday, lunch time. Mrs. De Weasel: "And what was the text, Mr. De W.?" "Very comforting." "And, pray, what was it?" "No—or marrying in heaven."

Mrs. Kingley: "I see your church is going to send away your minister for three months. Isn't that a long time?" Mrs. Bingo: "Yes. But we need the rest."

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling is a clever and powerful writer, but why should he commit blasphemy and sacrilege? He has taken the title of James Thomson's masterpiece, *The City of Dreadful Night*, for a collection of sketches of Calcutta. Really it is too bad. At this rate, we shall see an enterprising writer doing some Danish sketches under the title of *Hamlet*, or a volume of fairy tales under the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Perhaps it is not Mr. Kipling's fault after all. He is scouring the globe at present, and the guilt may lie with his publishers. They inform the public by means of a printed slip that "at the time of printing this work they had overlooked the fact that the title had been previously used for a volume of Poems by the late James Thomson (B.V.). They have, however, received the kind permission of Mr. Thomson's publishers to use it." Are we to conclude, then, that Mr. Kipling's publishers have a general commission to collect his papers and invent titles for them? Surely he should look to these things himself.

So much for the sacrilege, and now for the blasphemy. Chapter VI. is headed with a quotation from the real *City of Dreadful Night*. One line is damnably misquoted. "They naturally claimeth to inherit" is enough to make James Thomson turn in his coffin. The third line has "lavish" for "wasteth"—a corruption of the meaning. "Or" stands for "and" in the first line, and "they" is substituted for "he" throughout. Hence the awful "they claimeth." Now the *City of Dreadful Night* is a classic, and to mangle it in this way is flat blasphemy.

Mr. Kipling's sketches of Calcutta by night are of course graphic. The style, also of course, is vivid and vigorous. They make a good half-hour's reading, but they add nothing to his reputation. Probably it is a bit of book-making which must be credited to the enterprising publishers, who know that Mr. Kipling has a market, and want to make the most of it.

Some time ago the American Secular Union offered a prize of 1,000 dols. for the best manual of Secular Ethics. The prize was equally divided between N. P. Gilman, editor of the *Literary World*, and E. Payson Jackson. The books have been published jointly under the title *Conduct as a Fine Art*, and separately as *The Law of Daily Conduct and Character Building*. No copies have reached us, but we gather from the *Truthseeker* that the works are considered insufficient in "grit" by the advanced Freethought party. This result was to be expected when Unitarians and Ethical Culturists were chosen as judges.

Messrs. Putnam have put forward a scholarly book by an American divine, Dr. Orello Cone, on *Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity*. It professes to be a study of the gospel canon during the second century with a consideration of the results of modern criticism. Although Dr. Cone does not state the case as plainly as might be wished, he shows his heterodoxy by giving up the gospel of St. John and suggesting that the predictions of the end of the world were not worthy of Christ. But if these predictions, which appear in each of the gospels, are not his, then we venture to think there is no solitary item in any of the gospels that can be affirmed to be so certainly.

A beautiful edition of the now very scarce *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, by Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, has been issued from the De Vinne Press, New York, edited with Introduction, Notes and Glossary, by Alex. Wilder, with 85 charming mythological engravings by Prof. A. L. Rawson.

There is a yet rarer work of Taylor's—so rare that it is literally worth its weight in gold—that should be reprinted. The tract, like the *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*, was issued in the same year with the imprint of Amsterdam, and is entitled *A System of Religion*. This tract is a serious plea for Polytheism. Taylor argues it is far more likely that a great God would delegate his power to others than that he would concern himself with such worms as man.

The germs of Taylor's ideas may perhaps be found in Hume, who says: "If we examine without prejudice, the

ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we shall not discover in it any such monstrous absurdity, as we may at first be apt to apprehend." A similar view is found in Diderot and d'Holbach's *System of Nature*.

Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, the well-known entertainer and inventor of conjuring marvels, has, in company with Dr. Lionel A. Weatherby, written a little book on *The Supernatural*. Simple solutions are given of the mysteries usually classed by the credulous as displaying the supernatural. Theosophy and oriental magic are the subjects of a separate chapter.

Professor Henry Drummond's address on *The Programme of Christianity* is published as a shilling brochure. Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton are careful to print on the title-page "First edition, completing eightieth thousand." At trade price, this will yield something like £1,800 *nett* to be divided between Professor Drummond and his publishers. No doubt he will get the lion's share, for he is no novice. Say £1,400 for the author. It is a good round sum for a single address, filling sixty-four pages of well-loaded print, nineteen lines to the page. There is a great deal about social Christianity in the address, but it sounds rather cheap after this little calculation.

Professor Drummond's method is free and easy. He chooses a pet text and makes it a Program. And the text itself is not a personal utterance of Christ's, but a passage he is said to have read in the synagogue from Isaiah. All the rest of Christ's teaching, including the parts that displease sceptics, is quietly ignored. By such means, as Cardinal Newman said, you may prove anything; aye, and disprove it too.

Some monstrous assertions are made by Professor Drummond. "Good will to men," he says, "came into the world with Christ." This is a perversion of the truth, or a downright lie, according to your preference for plain language or polite circumlocution. Then again, it is asserted that Christianity "prescribes aestheticism" and "proscribes asceticism," which is belied by the teaching of Jesus and Paul and the whole course of Christian history. As for "the freeing of slaves," Professor Drummond should answer a great historian like Finlay, who declares that "neither the doctrines of Christianity, nor the sentiments of humanity, have ever yet succeeded in extinguishing slavery where the soil could be cultivated with profit by slave labor," and that "no Christian community of slave-holders has yet voluntarily abolished slavery." As to the "elevation of woman," it has been partially won, and has yet to be completed, in spite of New Testament teaching and the rooted prejudice of Christian churches.

There is a pretty piece of rhetoric towards the close of Professor Drummond's address on the Kingdom of God. But let anyone with eyes in his head, and judgment behind them, compare it with one of the splendid passages on poets, heroes, and saints in James Thomson's essay on "Open Secret Societies," and he will see the difference between a great achievement and a small imitation.

By the way, Professor Drummond says of the Kingdom of God that it is a Society whose "entrance-money is nothing; its subscription, all you have." Pretty, no doubt. But does it mean that his £1,400 profit on this address will go to the said Society? We guess not.

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PROFANE JOKES.

When was double entry first brought into use?—When the animals entered the ark two by two.

"It is not the body," said a clergyman to one of the ladies who sit under him, "that needs most looking after." "No," said she, "I know it isn't; it's the skirt."

When asked why Peter sank when going to meet Christ on the sea, a timid-looking boy said, "Because it wis ower deep."

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. Toleman-Garner, "Modern Irreligion: for Good or Evil?" Admission free.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 6.30, members' meeting; 8, entertainment. 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: 5.30, public tea, at 9d. per head; 7.30, free concert. Monday, at 8.30, social meeting of members and friends. Wednesday, at 8, a lecture (London Secular Federation). Saturday, at 8, social evening for members and friends.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Theism, Pantheism, Atheism."

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Man and Evolution." Preceded by dramatic recitals by Mr. Moss and Mr. W. H. Laurence (of the St. James's Musical Society).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver-street: 7, debate between Mr. R. Boyce and Mr. C. Cohen on "The Philosophy of the Bible."

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 11.30, Mrs. L. Samson, "Disestablishment"; 7, Mr. Crisfield, "Hypnotism: an Exposure of Theosophy" (with experiments). Thursday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The glory of Freethought." Admission free. Saturday, at 8, free social concert.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Mr. H. Snell, "Atheism and Death" (admission free); 6.45, music; 7, Mr. G. J. Polyoake, "A New Method of Criticising the Christian Scriptures" (3d., 6d., and 1s).

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, Lower Marsh: 7.30, "The Cross of Christ."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "How to Keep Well."

Stratford—Enterprise Hall, Great Eastern-road: 7, Mr. S. H. Alison, "The Christian Devil: his Origin and History."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Book of Common Prayer." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road (close to Latimer-road Station): Friday, at 8.30, important members' meeting.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christian and Secular Morality."

Wood Green—"Star" Coffee Rooms, High-street: 7, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms" Assembly Room, 80 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Inutility of Religion."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Teachings of Christ."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. Norrish will lecture.

Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's-hill: 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Joshua and his Times."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street 7, Mrs. Charles Watts, "An Hour with Colonel Ingersoll—What must I do to be Saved?"

Bradford—Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road: Tuesday, Mr. Charles Watts, "Secularism: its Twofold Advantages." Wednesday, Mr. Charles Watts, "Atheism and the French Revolution."

Crook—35 Gladstone-terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law: 6.30, business meeting.

Chatham Secular Society, Gladstone Hall, Military-road: Friday, Dec. 4, at 8, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Who Wrote the Bible?"

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, debating class, an Essay; 6.30, Mr. R. Shaw, "The Origin of the Week."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; 3, "Follies of Theosophy"; 6.30, "The Way to Heaven."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7, Mr. Hodder, "Life in our Village."

Leds—Gladstone Hall, New Wortley: Mr. Charles Watts, 11, "False Claims for the Bible"; 3, "Religion Without Theology"; 6.45, "Unbelief and Modern Thought." Tea provided for friends from a distance.

Leicester—Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate: 6.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "Modern English Politicians—Bradlaugh." Admission free.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 11, Tontine Society; 11.30, general meeting to elect president, etc; 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Fallacies of the Design Argument."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, Mr. Thomas Parke, "Does Home Rule in Ireland Mean Rome Rule?"

Manchester—"Dalton Inn," Morton-street, Clifford-street, Oxford-road: Monday, at 8, debate, Mr. J. E. D. Bourne, "The Coming of the Light." Saturday, at 8, musical evening.

Nelson—Secular Room, Market-square: 2.30, Mr. James Horne, "Secularism v. Christianity." Admission free.

New castle-on-Tyne—Lecture Room, Nelson-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 3, "Heredity: from sire to son, from mother to daughter—how to benefit the human race mentally, morally, and physically"; 7, "Why I am Not a Theosophist—a Reply to Mrs. Besant" (during which the clairvoyant trick of seeing through sealed packets will be exposed)

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, Mr. A. H. Hunter will lecture.

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, Mr. Smith will lecture. Admission free.

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

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, reading or lecture by local gentleman, or dramatic and other recitals.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas-street: 6.30, business meeting. Tuesday, at 7.30, in Central Hall, Dundas-street, Miss Ada Campbell "The March of the Gods; Gods of the Past, Gods of the Present, the God of the Future."

Stockport—Albert Hall, Wellington-street: 6.30, a discourse, "Is the Bible a Moral Book?" Admission free.

Wolverhampton—Athenæum: Friday, at 8, Mr. Charles Watts, "Secularism: its Relation to Life and Death."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

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

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Nov. 29, Camberwell. Dec. 6, Sheffield; 13, Hall of Science; 20, Glasgow; 27, Milton Hall. Jan. 7, Finsbury Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 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. 29, morning, Battersea; evening, Westminster. Dec. 6, Bethnal Green; 9, Bethnal Green (L.S.F.); 10, Finsbury Park; 13, Woolwich; 20, Chatham. Jan. 3, Lambeth; 10, Bethnal Green; 17, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Lambeth; 31, Lambeth. Feb. 14, Chatham.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Nov. 29, morning, Hall of Science. Dec. 6, evening, Newton Hall, Lambeth; 13, evening, Enterprise Hall, Stratford; 20, evening, Camberwell. Jan. 3, evening, Battersea; 10, evening, Finsbury Park; 24, evening, Camberwell. Feb. 21, evening, Camberwell.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Nov. 29, Edmonton. Dec. 6, morning, Battersea; evening, Finsbury Park; 20 and 27, Libra Hall.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth-road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 29, evening, Ball's Pond. Dec. 13, evening, Finsbury Park; 20, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Nov. 29, evening, Woodgreen. Dec. 6, Liverpool; 13, Belfast; 20, morning, Finsbury Park; 27, evening, Westminster. Jan. 10, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Ball's Pond. Feb. 21, Portsmouth.

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