

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XIII.—No. 21.]

SUNDAY, MAY 21, 1893.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. BALFOUR ON RELIGION.

MR. BALFOUR, the leader of the Tory party in the House of Commons, has occupied some of the leisure he enjoys now that he is out of office, in seeing through the press a volume of *Essays and Addresses*. It is by no means a great book, but it contains some careful and elegant writing on a considerable variety of topics. Mr. Balfour writes well on Berkeley and on Handel, two contemporaries of vastly different genius. His address on the Pleasures of Reading is genial and attractive, and an effective supplement to Mr. Frederic Harrison's address on the Choice of Books. But it is with the concluding addresses in Mr. Balfour's book that we are specially concerned; namely, a Fragment on Progress, delivered at Glasgow University, and a criticism of the Religion of Humanity, delivered at a Church Congress. The former is composed in a true Conservative vein; the latter is polished and polite, but a decisive condemnation of non-supernatural "religion" in its very highest manifestations. It is surprising, however, that the writer did not perceive the essential opposition of these two addresses. In the first herebukes the Utopists, emphasises the uncertainty of future progress, expatiates upon man's limited faculties and opportunities, and declares that the wise man will be content to deal in a sober and cautious spirit with "the problems of his own generation." In the latter address, his main objection to the Religion of Humanity is that it is not Utopian enough, that the human race may come to an end in time, say in two or three million years, that such a limited prospect strikes chill upon the moral imagination, and leaves us with a poor hope to sustain us in the struggle for human improvement. Surely this is a fatal discrepancy. The philosophy of the Fragment on Progress discounts all that Mr. Balfour says in this respect against the Religion of Humanity, and gives it the appearance of a mere academical exercise.

The Religion of Humanity is a phrase which, so far as we are aware, was first used by Thomas Paine. A generation later, when the poet Shelley was standing in the cathedral at Pisa, listening to the splendid music of the organ, he remarked to Leigh Hunt, who was with him, that a glorious religion might be established, employing every art in its services, if only its inspiring principle were Humanity instead of God. A generation later the great Frenchman, Auguste Comte, promulgated the Positive Philosophy, and elaborated a Religion of Humanity with all the minute love and patience of a born system-builder. To follow Comte in all his ecclesiasticism is not given to the keenest devotion of his followers; and many who admire his genius, and to a large extent revere his memory, are opposed to his dogmatic anticipations of the way in which a great idea will realise itself in future ages. But it can hardly be disputed that some kind of reconstruction will succeed the decay of theology. That reconstruction will not be mapped out by one man, or by twenty men; it will "get effected," as Carlyle

would say, in its own fashion; and that fashion may belie the predictions of the most sagacious reader of futurity.

Many persons object to the Positivist's use of the word "religion," and it is indeed open to misconception. But their use of it was championed by John Stuart Mill, who suggested the idea of "a religion without God" as a profitable object of contemplation even to Christians. Mr. Balfour adopts a practical attitude, not seeing the use of a mere quarrel about terminology.

"Some will deny at the outset that the term *religion* can ever be appropriately used of a creed which has nothing in it of the supernatural. It is a question of words, and, like all questions of words, a question of convenience. In my judgment the convenience varies in this case with the kind of investigation in which we happen to be engaged. If we are considering religions from their dogmatic side, as systems of belief, to be distinguished as such both from ethics and from science, no doubt it would be absurd to describe Positivism, which allows no beliefs except such as are either scientific or ethical, as having any religious element at all. So considered it is a negation of all religion. But if, on the other hand, we are considering religion not merely from the outside, as a system of propositions, stating what can be known of man's relations to a supernatural power, and the rules of conduct to be framed thereon, but from the inside, as consisting of acts of belief penetrated with religious emotion, then I think it would be unfair to deny that some such emotion may centre round the object of Positivist cult, and that if it does so it is inconvenient to refuse to describe it as a religion."

Admitting this non-Theistic system to be a *religion*, Mr. Balfour inquires what is the chief feature which distinguishes it from supernatural religion. And here again he is practical, seizing upon man's expectation of another life, which is the secret of all theology, and for which God himself is only a supplementary arrangement.

"The belief in a future state is one of the most striking—I will not say the most important—differences between positive and supernatural religion. It is one upon which no agreement or compromise is possible. It admits of no gradations—of no less or more. It is true, or it is false. And my purpose is to contribute one or two observations towards a *qualitative* estimate of the immediate gain or loss to some of the highest interests of mankind, which would follow upon a substitution of the Positivist for the Christian theory on the subject."

In a latter part of his address Mr. Balfour admits having neglected the most important element of the problem, namely "the question of comparative proof." But that element is not only important, it is *all-important*. Mr. Balfour says of a future life "it is true, or it is false?" Very well, then, the first duty is to decide this point. The truth of anything is a primary consideration. "I have only one objection to Christianity," said George Eliot to an orthodox gentleman. "And what is that?" he inquired. "Why," she said, "it isn't true." But that objection includes all others, for who with a grain of self-respect will discuss the profitableness of a *lie*?

Mr. Balfour prefers to neglect the primary point and discuss the subsidiary one. He says the worst he can against the Religion of Humanity on its emotional and ethical side; forgetting, by the way,

that his criticism derives nearly all its force from the audiences he addresses. He appears to think that every Naturalist must be a Pessimist, who should sum up the world, and all that therein is, has been, or will be, in the following fashion.

"Man, so far as natural science by itself is able to teach us, is no longer the final cause of the universe, the heaven-descended heir of all the ages. His very existence is an accident, his story a brief and discreditable episode in the life of one of the meanest of the planets. Of the combination of causes which first converted a piece or pieces of unorganised jelly into the living progenitors of humanity, science indeed, as yet, knows nothing. It is enough that from such beginnings Famine, Disease, and Mutual Slaughter, fit nurses of the future lord of creation, have gradually evolved, after infinite travail, a race with conscience enough to know that it is vile, and intelligence enough to know that it is insignificant. We survey the past and see that its history is of blood and tears, of helpless blundering, of wild revolt, of stupid acquiescence, of empty aspirations. We sound the future, and learn that after a period, long compared with the individual life, but short indeed compared with the divisions of time open to our investigation, the energies of our system will decay, the glory of the sun will be dimmed, and the earth, tideless and inert, will no longer tolerate the race which has for a moment disturbed its solitude. Man will go down into the pit, and all his thoughts will perish. The uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the Universe, will be at rest. Matter will know itself no longer. Imperishable monuments and immortal deeds, death itself, and love stronger than death, will be as though they had never been. Nor will anything that remains be better or be worse for all that the labor, genius, devotion and suffering of man have striven through countless generations to effect."

Mr. Balfour forgets that if man, after all these millenniums, has but conscience enough to know that he is vile, and intelligence enough to know that he is insignificant, he is a poor tribute to the wisdom and generosity of his "Creator."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE SECOND GOSPEL.

WHO was Mark? Nobody knows. The gospel itself gives us no indication of the person according to whom it is compiled, or how he obtained his information. Theologians have tried to identify "Mark" with the "John whose surname was Mark" of Acts xii. 12 and 25, who again is identified with "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas," of Col. iv. 10. This pleasant theory has a screw loose. The evangelist is never called John, and tradition speaks of him as the companion of Peter, not of Paul.* Barnabas, according to the veracious Acts iv. 36, was a Levite, so his nephew should have been "a Hebrew Jew." But we shall find reason to think the author of our gospel remained untouched by the circumcisional knife. "Mark" is said to have founded the Christian Church in Egypt. He is also said to have been with Peter at Babylon, and to have written at Rome. He has even been said to have founded Venice. At any rate the Venetians stole his alleged remains from Egypt, and still have them, together with some almost undecipherable Latin fragments, which every true Venetian believes to be portions of the second gospel, in Mark's own handwriting.

Mark is said by Papias to have been the interpreter of Peter, "though he did not record in order that which was either done or said by Christ, for he neither heard the Lord nor followed him." On this Dr. S. Davidson says, in his *Introduction to the New Testament*: "A careful examination shows that it does not relate to our present gospel, nor bring Mark into connection with it as its author. All we learn from it is that Mark wrote notes of a gospel which was not our canonical one." Dr. Davidson comes to the conclusion to which I fancy any critical reader will be led, viz., that "The present gospel grew out of and

displaced Mark's early production." It is not specially remarkable in particulars relating to Peter; indeed, it gives him one of the nastiest rubs in making his Master say, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice," as the first crowing would not prevent a second denial. According to Matthew and Luke, J. C. said nothing about the cock crowing twice.

Irenæus virtually contradicts Papias, for he says expressly that Mark wrote his gospel after Peter and Paul were dead. External evidence being so unsatisfactory, let us glance within. The very first words "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God," indicates an already established doctrine.* It smacks of the Church almost as strongly as the injunction at the end, "He that believeth not shall be damned." In the second verse we find this Jew ascribing a verse of Malachi to Isaiah. This mistake does not appear in the Authorised Version, some persons having kindly revised Mr. Mark's little slips, but it may be seen in the Revised or any critical version. Then we jump fair *in medias res*—John the Baptist and Jesus being introduced with no account of how they got beside the river Jordan. They may have fallen from the moon for aught we learn from this gospel.

Take Mark and set down what it has in common with Matthew and Luke, and you find the basis of a continuous narrative. Dr. Abbot has done this. You may find a specimen on p. 793 of the article "Gospels" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. This he calls the Triple Tradition." I should prefer to term it "the skeleton documentary basis" which sundry gentlemen amplified and worked up into our present gospels. For this common basis is not only far shorter, but omits all account of the birth, passion, and resurrection of the Christian idol. That "Mark" as we now have it is the work of several hands is evident from the instances of duplication, a dozen of which may be pointed out in this short gospel. Again as in Matthew, we have the amazement of the disciples (vi. 51) after they have already witnessed a similar phenomenon (iv. 41). We find a second Sabbath cure exciting surprise and indignation (iii. 1-6) though the first had been performed without protest (121-28).

That in some cases we have a later text in Mark than in Matthew, I have already noted (*Freethinker*, p. 282). The simple message in Matthew, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," is for instance amplified into, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (i. 15). So viii. 35 inserts "for the gospel's sake," and x. 29, 30, elaborates Matt. xix. 28-29. Much amplified too is the comic story of the devils and the pigs, giving their number as 2000. He tones the diatribes against riches into "how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God" (x. 24). The short account of the raising of Jairus's daughter in Matthew is obviously prior to Mark. An abbreviator would never have left us in doubt whether the girl was dead or in a swoon.

On the ground that it is the shortest; that it leaves out the miraculous birth, and in its earlier form the resurrection; † that it admits that when his wonder-working hero was at Nazareth "he could do there no mighty work" because of their unbelief; that he was limited in knowledge as well as in power (xiii. 32),

* Even the conservative Ewald thinks Mark originally began at v. 4 about John. Again we are reminded of Mr. Vance's notable theory, that the earliest of the double narratives now found in the gospels referred to John, preacher of baptism, repentance, and the coming Kingdom of God. These were the cardinal ideas of early Christianity, and they all antedated the preaching of Jesus on the gospel's own showing.

† The last twelve verses are wanting in the earlier manuscripts and in the old Latin version. They are certainly spurious. The Rev. H. H. Evans has written a book to show they were written by Paul, and another to show that the same writer was the author of "Luke" and the Acts of the Apostles. So far as his argument is good it bears out the idea of a literary concoction.

* The Catholic Church has no fewer than 28 saints named Mark, all of the first three centuries. A list may be seen in *Migne's Dictionnaire Hagiographique*.

and that he was accused by his own friends of being "beside himself" (iii. 21); many rationalists have supposed that Mark preserves for us earlier forms of the Christian legend than found elsewhere. There is, however, still something to be said for the theory, first put forward by Edward Evanson, that Mark is mainly a compilation and attempted harmony of Matthew and Luke.* St. Augustine called Mark Matthew's follower and abbreviator, and Clement of Alexandria, earlier still, made him later than Luke.

There are only about twenty-six verses in Mark which are not either in Matthew or in Luke. How, then, is it an original, independent gospel? In chap. vi. 14—16 an employment of materials now found in Matthew and Luke is plain. Herod, hearing of J. C.'s works, displays the superstition of the time by identifying J. C. with John the Baptist, whom he beheaded. Then the opinions of others are given, and it is added: "but when Herod heard thereof he said, It is John whom I beheaded; he is risen from the dead." The fourteenth verse is found in Matthew xiv. 12; the opinions of the people in Luke ix. 7, and the sixteenth verse reverts to Matthew. Thus Mark begins his account with Matthew's, he continues it with Luke's, and terminates it with unnecessarily repeating what he has already given from Matthew. Cannot we, with such an analysis, almost see the scribe engaged in his work of concoction?

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded).

BELIEF AND DOUBT.

THE history of theological belief is a record of mental apathy and of intellectual subjection. The ages of orthodox belief were periods of darkness in relation to all that pertained to the progress of the human race. It was during those times that morals were at their lowest ebb, that the truths of science were ignored, that the lessons of philosophy were unheeded, and that the advantages of education were unknown amongst the general masses of the people. Doubt, based on mental genius, has been the emancipator of intellect, the liberator of thought, and the precursor of all advanced civilisation. It has transformed society from a condition of moral stagnation to one of ethical activity, it has opened the portals to scientific investigation, it has given an impetus to philosophical inquiry, and it has imparted a new phase to education. Doubt is the handmaid of scepticism, for, as Lecky observes, "nearly all the greatest intellectual achievements of the last three centuries have been preceded and prepared by the growth of scepticism." It is this very doubt, as Buckle points out, "which has remedied the three fundamental errors of the olden time—errors which made the people in politics too confiding, in science too credulous, in religion too intolerant."

Belief implies the assent of the understanding to impressions made on our senses. Among thinking persons belief depends for its existence upon substantial evidence and also upon the influence exercised by personal surroundings. For instance, belief in the Koran or in the Bible is frequently determined by parents, teachers, and by the community in which the believer lives. In the proper sense of the word, belief is really assent to propositions that are true, or appear to be so. Doubt exists when evidence of any proposition is wanting or is deficient; for in that case doubt is the only rational attitude the mind can assume. Of course persons are justified in trusting to their own sensations, but such trust is no criterion that their sensations are right: for if they were so, all beliefs, however contradictory they may be, would be equally correct. Besides, beliefs often change as

new sensations appear or as fresh impressions are made upon the mind; and to assume that they are all equally accurate is equivalent to saying that a man's opinions, notwithstanding that they are frequently changed, are always true.

We know that believers in theology have strong prejudices against doubt, and that they are likewise opposed to investigation outside of their own domain of thought for the reason that such investigation invariably leads to doubt. We admit that the man who investigates may be in error in the conclusions at which he arrives, but so may the man be mistaken who does not investigate. But surely those who examine all the facts bearing upon the question under consideration have a better opportunity of discovering what is right than those who are content to accept without inquiry one idea, and to regard it as embodying the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Belief, to have its due value, must be the result of the exercise of the mental faculties in the study of the evidences in favor of that which is believed. Those who take anything for granted without the exercise of the faculties referred to cannot be said to have any real belief at all. Orthodox Christians, as a rule, give an indifferent assent to certain creeds and dogmas without ever inquiring as to what can be said for or against their acceptance. Intellectual apathy is the great bulwark of the popular faith, and blind devotion is the principal supporter of Churchism. There can be no reasonable belief unless the understanding is properly exercised.

Obviously doubt has the advantage of inducing men to hesitate to say they believe when they do not. It is through acting upon this principle that so many individuals, both outside and inside the Church, during the last few years have given up the belief in the orthodox doctrine of future punishments. It has been found that to profess to believe this doctrine has not caused men to give up their vices or to limit their evil desires. Such believers have been found guilty of committing the worst possible outrages against humanity. Men who doubt the justice and utility of such punishment as a deterring agent find nearer at hand a more humane and effectual remedy against crime. It is a palpable fact that those people who are apprehensive of punishment have more dread of a policeman than they have of any devil. It is the prison, not hell, that alarms the criminals. We do not deny that a belief in eternal punishment influences some characters, but we urge that the degraded condition of the intellect that accepts such a brutal doctrine is not to be envied by persons in possession of their rational faculties. The most horrible cruelties that were ever invented by fiendish minds have had an influence in the past on conduct; but when doubt arose, their barbarous nature was recognised, and a method of prevention against wrong-doing was discovered in accordance with civilised humanity. So it is with this hell-fire theory—doubt has killed the belief in it among men and women of intellect, and a more effective mode of correction and prevention has taken its place.

It was doubt that laid the foundation of inquiry that led to knowledge, the application of which has proved the source of the present advanced state of society. For all practical purposes, we are more indebted to one man who was brave enough to utter a doubt than we are to ninety-nine who proclaimed themselves believers in theology. In his work *On Liberty* J. S. Mill writes: "It can do truth no good to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teachings has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected the Christian faith." Even among those who are termed believers it was doubt that gave birth to those noble

* *The Dissonance of the Four Generally Received Gospels*, p. 357; 1805.

actions that have immortalised their memories. Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Roger Bacon, Newton, and a host of others were inspired by doubt to perform those acts which have proved of untold worth to the world. Cuvier's doubts as to the remains of fossil man being found led to the most valuable investigations, and caused the collection of innumerable evidences in support of their alleged existence.

Although it may be said that doubt is only a negative state of mind, it tends by its very nature to destroy that credulity which lends support to groundless beliefs, and which has in all ages sanctioned practices that are at variance with the best interests of mankind. Doubt calls into play all the faculties by which errors are exposed and impostures are detected; and, furthermore, it prevents dogmatism upon questions that transcend human comprehension. It often requires greater courage to doubt than it does to acquiesce in the conclusions of the multitude. The average theological opinions that prevail in orthodox circles are, as a rule, looked upon with pious reverence and relied upon with implicit trust. Yet these very opinions are but the oracles of the oracle, the traditional talk of ancestors, that have been handed down without examination. The ordinary theologian receives the teachings of the past, and adheres to them as though they were of the same nature as an old family portrait. Whether these teachings be true or false, where doubt is not allowed to enter they become fixed, and maintain a reputation as sacred heirlooms of a departed generation. Not only is this so, but those who believe are considered in the right way to salvation, and those who doubt of being the victims of "damnable errors" and on the road to perdition. That a person should be deemed a favorite of God who takes his belief as he finds it, is a strange comment on the advice "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

The theological contention that to doubt is sin, is an error born of ignorance and bigotry. It is not in the power of an intelligent man to believe that which does not appear to him to be true. If a god or an angel appeared to a person and revealed to him the truth, such a person might be held responsible for rejecting it. But that would be no justification for another individual being charged with sin who only heard this revelation second-hand, and who could not accept it as being true. If Christ did not condemn Thomas for demanding demonstration before he could believe, why should the modern doubter be condemned for requiring similar evidence before he gives his unqualified assent to any doctrine Christian or otherwise? The philosophy of doubt is summed up in the words of Volney: "To believe without evidence and demonstration is an act of ignorance and folly."

CHARLES WATTS.

CAIN'S WIFE.

WHERE did he get her? Who was her brother?
Had she a sister? Had she a mother?
Was she pre-Adamite—born before history—
With her identity shrouded in mystery?
Maid of Phœnicia, Egypt, Arabia,
Africa, India, or sun-kissed Suabia?
Who was her father? Was he a viking,
Cruising about just to his liking;
Out of the whenceness, over the water,
Into the Where bringing his daughter;
Native of Norway, Denmark or Sweden?
Lured by the charms of the Garden of Eden?
Blonde or brunette, rounded or slender?
Fiery or frigid, haughty or tender?
Why are her graces unknown to fame?
Where did Cain meet her? What was her name?
Whisper it softly—say, can it be
The lady we seek was R. Haggard's "She?"
Tell me, ye sages, students of life,
Answer my query: Who was Cain's wife?

S. T. CLARKE.

HELL AS A MORAL DETERRENT.

THE recent controversy in the *Nineteenth Century* on "Happiness in Hell" appears to have created considerable sensation—more, indeed, than the thing was intrinsically worth. For at best it was but a piece of amiable foolishness on the part of a gentleman who can hardly have expected people to take him seriously. In fact that piece of argumentation that hell was painted terribly black simply because heaven could not be painted bright enough, and that because men could not adequately represent the splendor of the "beatific vision"—whatever that commodity may be—they were compelled, in order to keep up the contrast, to represent dungeons of fire in hell. All this is, of course, the most exquisite nonsense that ever figured in a book of humor. One fancies, really, that Mr. Mivart—unless, indeed, he has lost all sense of the ridiculous—must have had his tongue in his cheek while writing it.

However, what we wish to deal with here is the comment which Mr. Mivart's articles have called forth from various people, that the views which he promulgates are calculated to sap the foundations of morality. Thus Mr. Stead, noticing the article in the *Review of Reviews*, concludes as follows:

"St. George Mivart may be quite right. But if he is right, where are we to look for the deterrent influence which for so many ages the dread of hell has exercised upon the minds of mankind? It is idle to imagine that the dread of losing that which they have never realised, and never adequately understood, will be an incentive of corresponding potency to that which St. George Mivart so airily dissolves away into nothingness. If to go to hell is to go to a place exceeding in its comforts and joys the utmost that the most fortunate men on this earth have been able to realise for themselves, well 'Go to hell' will bid fair to become a benediction instead of a curse. What then?"

Mr. Stead asks, What then? Possibly the super-sensitive Nonconformist conscience smells Modern Babylons innumerable if hell is cooled off in any way. The same note is struck by Mr. Mivart's Catholic opponent, Father Clarke, who, in his reply in the *January Nineteenth Century*, said:

"The fear of hell is a powerful deterrent to many, educated as well as uneducated, and many a sin would be committed were it not for the wholesome dread of eternal misery before the sinner's eyes. For this reason I cannot help regarding Professor Mivart's teaching as very mischievous as well as false."

So that we have the amiable, easy-going, namby-pamby publicist, who booms everybody and everything, on the same platform as the Jesuit Father Clarke. These people apparently share the old, absurd belief that the threat of eternal torture will deter people from crime, and that, with the abandonment of this terrible dogma or its dissolution into nothingness, the greatest incentive to right action will be gone and people will gaily plunge headlong into a course of crime.

Now, as against this dictum that hell is a moral force, we make bold to say that the influence of this belief has been distinctly an immoral influence, and we shall try and substantiate our contention. Let us first deal with the plea that this belief has had a beneficial effect on human conduct. In the first place hell has almost been especially reserved for those who differed from the popular creed. It was the special reward of sceptics. The worst criminal stood a better chance than the most virtuous Freethinker. Even in Mr. Mivart's first article his hardest word is for those who attack religion, even though they believe it to be false and pernicious, and he especially condemns people who write irreligious books. Mr. Mivart, of course, claims the right himself to send *religious* articles—or what he conceives to be such—to the reviews, but he will not extend that right to his opponents—which is the religious type all over.

In the next place, apart from the punishment of hell being incident more on creed than on conduct, hell has been a failure in another way. It has been too gigantic. Huge punishments, or threats of punishment, *don't* reform. Their very enormity robs them of their utility. When men were hanged for stealing five shillings there was far more crime than there is to-day. Punishment to be effective must be proportionate, and it must be certain. Now hell possesses neither of these characteristics. It is not proportioned to the offence. Infinite punishment for finite crime—without dealing for the moment with the fact that this finite crime was pre-ordained, we are told, by the infinite punisher—is a monstrous travesty of even all pretence of justice. And besides this, according to popular theology, one "mortal sin" is as bad as a hundred. So that a man who had committed one crime, could lose nothing by committing more. One enormous punishment was meted out recklessly. Then the punishment is not certain. The greatest scoundrel may "repent" on his death-bed and go straight to heaven, while a right-living man may be stricken down before he has time for "repentance," and go to hell.

But apart from this there is, however, the grand test of experience. If hell be really the moral deterrent its upholders claim, ought we not to find that those who believe in it are better citizens than those who do not? Is such the case? How many Freethinkers are there in English gaols to-day, and how many religious men? Is it not a fact that of professional criminals, the clerical profession furnishes the greatest per-centage? Of course it may be alleged that large numbers of the criminal classes are not Christians, they are simply indifferents. Possibly so. They may not be Christian, but we respectfully decline them as a present to Secularism. Whatever else they may be, they are at least the product of a Christian civilisation, and as such they must be treated.

But now we come to the other aspect of the question. We have now to deal with the positive injury which the belief in hell has worked. In the first place, it has brutalised and blunted men's moral sense. The belief in such a doctrine must tend to sap the very foundations of humanitarian feeling. To think that immense numbers of one's fellow creatures were perishing—nay not perishing—in endless torture, would be to degrade a man far lower than the brute, for brutes at least are not capable of such a belief as that. Take for example the following from Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*, a book or pamphlet by the way "for children and young persons":

"Come into this room. You see it is very small. But see in the midst of it there is a girl, perhaps about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on—her dress is made of fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns into the skin; it scorches the bone of the skull and makes it smoke. The red hot fiery heat burns into the brain and melts it . . . You do not, perhaps, like a headache. Think what a headache that girl must have. But see more. She is wrapped up in flames, for her frock is fire. If she were on the earth she would be burnt to a cinder in a moment. But she is in hell, where fire burns everything but burns nothing away. There she stands burning and scorched; there she will stand for ever burning and scorched."

Now we submit that a person capable of writing a passage like that—and it is only one sample from many—or a person capable of sincerely believing it are people of a debased and degraded moral type. And such was the teaching of the Church in the days of its unquestioned supremacy, such indeed the very teaching against which Mr. Mivart's attack was directed.

F. RYAN.

(To be concluded).

One good schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests.—*Thomas Paine*.

MORALS OF MISSIONS.

PEOPLE who, at missionary meetings, listen with open-mouthed admiration as the real live foreign missionary recounts tales of peril passed and stories of wonderful conversions, usually know about as much of the real working of missions as the coin which they drop in the collection plate.

Most missionaries are, no doubt, well-intentioned, and many are industrious—so far as the business will allow—and brave to boot. But what of the system generally? A Bombay newspaper says "Even the Wesleyan, London, Free Church, and Episcopal Methodist missionaries, live in some of the largest houses, keep a large establishment of servants, have splendid carriages and horses, and are more often seen at the band-stand or the tennis-court, than at chapel. . . . If the conversions in Indian mission reports are to be believed, India ought to have been fully converted a hundred years ago, and yet barring some hundreds of chucklers, scavengers, toddy-drawers and pariahs, India is, as far as its millions are concerned, quite unconverted as ever."

It is only the outer fringe of society—the lower stratum—that becomes Christian, and these mostly from motives of worldly interest: "rice Christians" is the native epithet. The Bishop of Calcutta, lecturing at Fraston in 1891, said that "in the districts where the most ignorant races lived, there they had the greatest number of converts. There were learned and intellectual people in India, and it was with these that they had the most trouble." Their intelligence revolts against what appears to them barbarous in the doctrines of Christianity, and in the teachings and ethics of the Bible. The *North China Daily News* publishes a memorandum from our Foreign Office, in which Lord Salisbury recommended "that the Bible societies should refrain from circulating uncommented translations of certain books of the Bible, such as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the Song of Solomon, etc., which contain passages easily open to misrepresentation if unexplained." Mr. A. Michie (*Missionaries in China*), says: "It so happens that, impure as the Chinese imagination may be, the whole body of their classical literature does not contain a single passage which needs to be slurred over or explained away, and which may not be read in its full natural sense by youth or maiden. And to people nurtured on a literature so immaculate in these respects there are things in the Bible which are calculated to create a prejudice against its teachings, even in well-disposed minds." Our susceptibilities have become hardened to these things by familiarity.

Missionaries are fond of dilating upon the depravity of other religionists, but read what the thoughtful Archbishop of Canterbury says (vide *Daily Chronicle*, Aug. 1892): "These religions embodied the best thoughts and feelings and aspirations of man through many ages, and it was not true that they were wicked. . . . He deprecated very much Christian people setting to work in the belief that all the religions which God had allowed to grow up apart from the Christian church, ministered to pride and lust and cruelty."

Mr. Michie (before quoted) asserts: "From whatever cause or combination of causes, missionaries of every creed—and they are varied enough—have aroused the detestation of the people of China of all classes." Perhaps the *Hong Kong Telegraph* hits upon the reason when it says "These foreign missionary societies are the curse of foreign enterprise in the Middle Kingdom; they do absolutely no good, they have never done any work of a substantial or permanent character in religious reformation, and it is notorious that they have been at the bottom of almost every difficulty the treaty Powers have had with China."

One can readily understand why missionaries are not welcome. They are mostly preceded or followed by rifles or swords, and their advent is nearly always accompanied by rum and prostitution, drunkenness and harlotry being the peculiar vices of Christian countries, and quite unknown to vast tracts of "heathen" territory. What must the natives of Uganda think of missions? They are waiting while the people who come to preach "goodwill to men," decide among themselves with cold steel and hot bullets which is the real Christianity, Protestantism or Catholicism. "When the Protestants heard the sharp rattle of the

big guns they burst into rounds of cheering," says a *Reuter* telegram, reporting a missionary's words.

Further, what hope is there of converting the world by the present missionary system? As well try to dry up Niagara Falls by dipping from the river with a bucket. Canon Taylor, at a Church Congress in 1888, stated that the heathen increased in number every year by 10,000,000, and that, at their present rate of progress, it would take the missions 2,750 years to convert even *one year's increase* in the non-Christian population. If the population remained stationary it would take more than 330,000 years to convert the world. Yet £300,000 is wasted yearly on this hopeless task. In Egypt, Persia, Palestine, and Arabia, the Church Missionary Society employed 119 agents, and spent £23,000 in two years. Result, a few "inquiries."

Christians generally hold that those peoples who have never heard the gospel will not be punished hereafter for their lack of belief, but that once having heard it, if they decline to accept it, they will be eternally damned. Is it not wicked to take from the heathen their present security from such a fate by preaching to them a gospel which carries with it eternal damnation? Will not hell be full enough without the heathen? If nearly all who heard the gospel believed, Christians might find some excuse for sending out missionaries; but as a matter of fact, not one in a thousand accepts their creed. What of the remainder, from a Christian standpoint?

The next time you feel tempted to give to foreign missions, take a second thought and consider whether the money would not be better employed if dropped into your local hospital box. Here in England people are dying of starvation, many hospitals are languishing for want of funds, others cannot find enough beds for applicants, while Christians are subscribing thousands of pounds to hasten an impossible Utopia in foreign lands.

Many of the heathen are more moral and more happy than Christians at home, and those whom civilisation might improve will develop in the course of evolution. Meanwhile we should give attention to the beam in our own eye, and spend our energies and spare cash in alleviating want at home, and in civilising and elevating the Christian heathen around us.

A. G.

WHAT OMNIPOTENCE MIGHT DO.

A GOD might alter this world to advantage. He might do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. He might say to a section of the Isthmus of Panama, "Be thou removed and cast into the Caribbean sea." He might then say to the South American continent, "Be thou turned half way around so that the Amazon river may flow south like the Mississippi." He might say to all the river channels, "Be deep; for behold the steamboat cometh heavy laden between your shores." He might sift all the gold and silver out of the dirt of the Rocky mountain chain from Alaska to Patagonia, and give it to the poor. He might irrigate the desert of Sahara and other deserts. He might level off the tops of high mountains and thus get enough raw material to build several islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. He might enrich the surface of worn out localities by a deposit of about ten feet of rich soil. He might do something to prevent early frosts in the North and late frosts in the South. He might move all the active volcanoes to the North and South poles and warm up those cold regions a few degrees. He might do something to regulate the wind so that we could have light breezes all the time, instead of dead calms and wild storms. He might send the rains only on the Sabbath, and every Sabbath, so that people could work six days and rest on the seventh.

He might kill out all poisonous insects and reptiles except honey bees. He might exterminate the whole cat family and cause rats and mice to become extinct. In fact, he might get rid of all animal life not useful to man.

Turning his attention to the human family, he would find much improvement needed. And so he might make us better mentally, morally, and physically. He might give us all stronger minds and bodies, well balanced and beautiful. He might diminish our multiplying capacity and increase our staying power. He might make less folks for death and more for life. He might make us all brave, benevolent, chaste, charitable, and thoroughly in earnest.

In fact, he might "do more for us and better by us than we are able to ask, or in anywise worthy to receive."—*Independent Pulpit.*

ACID DROPS.

Darwinism is converting the Churches now, for of course the Churches always come in last. Professor Henry Drummond, lecturing in America, is reported to be teaching that "the mind as well as the body of man has been developed from a lower order of creation." By and bye we shall see Darwin canonised. He'll be in the calendar as Saint Darwin.

The Presbyterian standards in America are *not* to be revised. The voting does not give the necessary two-thirds majority. It is probable that an agitation will be started for the drawing up of a brand-new infallible creed, and the laying up of the old infallible creed in the Presbyterian museum.

Dr. Black, of Glasgow, the retiring Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod, read a paper on "The Unreasonableness of Doubt." Dr. Black himself is unreasonable enough to doubt every creed but his own. The worst sceptic only goes a step further and doubts Dr. Black's too.

According to Sir William Muir, Mohammedan apologists declare that the Koran is itself a miracle, "for its sublime language, inimitable beauty, and heavenly utterances raise it altogether beyond the range of human possibilities." This is exactly what the Christian apologists say of the Bible. It is all a matter of early training and professional special pleading.

Mr. John Wilson, M.P., for Mid-Durham, and a miners' representative, has been preaching in the Rev. R. F. Horton's pulpit at Hampstead. The service was supposed to be devoted to artisans, but the *Christian World* confesses that "A glance round the congregation revealed the presence of few people who worked for a daily wage. It was a highly-respectable middle-class congregation; silk hats and kid gloves were more plentiful than billycocks and tanned palms, and most of the ladies' costumes showed a knowledge of the fashions." Does not this bear out the contention of our last week's leading article?

New faiths, or new forms of old faith, are continually evolving. From America we hear of Dr. Felix Adler putting forward Ethical Culture as "a middle-ground between Agnosticism and Theism." Now the editor of *Open Court* treats us to "Entheism" as the religion of science. He says: "The religion of science rejects Anthropotheism and also Deism, which is only a peculiar kind of Anthropotheism. The god of the religion of science is not a person. However, he is not less than a person, but infinitely more than a person. The authority for conduct which the religion of science teaches is divine and holy. We should neither call god personal nor impersonal, but superpersonal."

"The religion of science," continues Dr. Carus, "does not accept Pantheism. It does not regard nature and all parts of nature or all aspects of nature as identical with God. The eternal of nature only is god. Those features alone are divine which serve us as authority for conduct. We do not look up with reverence to the forces of nature which we utilise, but only to that power which moulds worlds, which fashions our being, and which moves onward in the progress of evolution. This view we call Entheism."

Mrs. Lewis, the discoverer of the Syrian Gospel in the Convent of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, allows that it is very curious that neither Tischendorf nor Dr. Rednel Harris lighted on the manuscript when previously making researches. She says, "No doubt that a great many of the stories told by Tischendorf and his friends are much of the nature of fables." It will be remembered that when the famous Sinaitic MS. was discovered and obtained possession of by a ruse on the part of Tischendorf, a claim was put in by a learned Greek named Dr. Simonides that he was the writer of this alleged fourth century MS. But as he was confessedly a forger, the erudite Christian world set him down as a liar also. What is strange is, that whenever an item of evidence is particularly demanded, it is usually discovered. Let

sceptics ask persistently for the autograph signatures of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and no doubt they will yet be strangely discovered on Mount Sinai or elsewhere.

The London School Board is still discussing the religious problem, and it appears that £100 has already been spent in printing notices, etc., on the subject. On Thursday in last week there was another pretty squabble between the Board and deputations. Dr. Clifford was once more under cross-examination, but did not shine very brilliantly, not because he is not a man of good parts, but because he occupies an illogical position. If you have Christian education in Board Schools there is no reason in the world why the majority of Christians should not make it what they desire. On the other hand, if you exclude religion altogether, you have nothing left to quarrel about—which would be a capital thing for both children and teachers, and also for the Board members whose "angry passions rise" at the very sound of the word "religion."

A member of a Church deputation refused to acknowledge Dr. Martineau as a Christian, on the ground that he denies the deity of Christ. This is regarded in some quarters as exclusiveness and even intolerance. Nevertheless it seems to us perfectly logical, and in that sense worthy of respect. Surely it is idle for a man to call himself a Christian if he denies the one essential dogma which constitutes Christianity a separate and independent system.

The Archbishop of Canterbury came in at the finish of the Imperial Institute performance to "bless it and approve it with a text." Subscribers shelled out, the committee worked hard, the architect turned out a good job, and when everything was in apple-pie order the mystery-man said a prayer and asked his God to do all the rest.

At Kettering a man named Josiah Johnson died suddenly in the London-road Hall while attending the Christian service by Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh. Had such an event happened at any of the lectures of the greater person of the same name, we might have heard the cry of "judgment."

"The Suburbs of Sodom" is the spicy title of a sermon by the Rev. W. J. Dawson, reported in the *Christian Commonwealth*. "For the youth who has the making or unmaking of life in his hands," Mr. Dawson says, "there can be no story more deserving of studious scrutiny." Pah! An ounce of civet, good apothecary!

A tonsured satyr, the Abbé Boutrois, curé of Cocherel, has been sentenced to seven years' hard labor for indecent behavior with fourteen young children of both sexes. The case was heard with closed doors, and even the provincial French jury did not bring in their usual extenuating circumstances.

Now that the drought has lasted so long that a change in the weather may be expected, the clergy are beginning to pray for rain. They are at it all over the continent. If the rain doesn't come they'll say, "Ah, it is your fault, good people; you've offended God." If the rain does come they'll say, "We did it."

It's a funny world! The farmers who can't get a drop of rain to bring on their hay and turnips may take up their papers and read of floods submerging Arkansas and washing away all the vegetation in the lower Mississippi Valley, and of floods in Roumania that impede most of the railway traffic. It's a queer world!

In the Western Hebrides floods and hurricanes have worked tremendous havoc. At Tchic the floods washed over ten thousand tons of nickel ore into the sea, filled the mines, and destroyed the coffee plantations. The whole settlement of Port Sandwich was literally swept away, and more than half New Caledonia was under water. The scene of desolation is alluded to by Dr. Lamb, the medical missionary at Anbrim, as simply indescribable, two of the islands not having so much as a blade of grass left on them, while every cocconut tree is uprooted in the group, so that the natives have absolutely no means of sustenance, and are entirely dependent upon outside aid. Only two huts are left standing, and, in Dr. Lamb's own words, "the whole land is smitten and blasted from the seashore to the hill-tops, and the fury of the tornado while it lasted was like the roar of an angry sea,

filling the very soul with horror." It all comes from God's mysterious way of moving his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm.

The long drought has done much damage in France, Switzerland, and Italy. From Salerno comes an account of Italian superstition connected therewith. A landowner spread the report that one of his children had a dream, in which the Madonna appeared and said rain would come when her image was dug up. Very soon the peasants began to dig for the Madonna. At length some vases were found, and finally a piece of tuft of a sort of clumsy human form, which passed for the missing virgin. Since that day hundreds of thousands have visited the place to adore the new-found image, bringing with them sums of money which in a few days amounted to more than ten thousand francs, besides gold ornaments, which together weighed more than ten pounds.

Some fussy bigot has issued a leaflet denouncing the Rev. C. E. Escreet, rector of Woolwich, for allowing Mr. H. Snell "infidel lecturer of the National Secular Society—of which G. W. Foote is President," to deliver a lecture in his Parish Room on "An Agnostic's View of the Bible." The leafleteer asks the minister if it is right "to encourage these men." But all the minister did was to encourage honest discussion, and if the Bible stands to lose by that, so much the worse for the Bible.

This leafleteer is also a leaflet-liar. He states that Mr. Foote says that "a man and woman who live together are true man and wife according to any rational view of marriage," and reference is given to the *Freethinker*, March 12, p. 175. Any reader who turns to the page will see that Mr. Foote did not pen such a sentence. The words "a man and woman living together" are the leaflet-liar's own invention. Our paragraph referred to the case of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, and to that case only. The sweeping universal proposition that all living together is true marriage was never made. So much for the veracity of bigots.

Labby says in *Truth*, someone sends me, apropos of Welsh Sabbatarianism, a handbill exhibited in an Anglesey hotel. The document is headed with a portion of Exodus xx. 8, in capital letters, and proceeds in this strain:—"As we are aware that the above precept is not duly observed and kept in this neighborhood, but that evil habits are prevailing among us, such as shooting, rowing, fishing, bathing, collecting mushrooms, etc., on the Sabbath day, which are very disgraceful. We, the undersigned, as representatives of the different denominations in the district, protest against such things, and urgently request every visitor and citizen in this district, to refrain. Therefore we hope that this simple caution will suffice to subdue these evils, without taking any further proceedings, as we are determined to put an end to them, if possible." I wonder whether it would ever occur to any human being but a British Sabbatarian that bathing on Sunday is "an evil habit," and "very disgraceful." What, again, is the meaning of the dark threat with which these reverend and other gentlemen conclude? Are there laws in force in Wales which prevent a man taking a bath on Sunday, or, for the matter of that, gathering mushrooms? Might a man, now, pluck an ear of corn on the Sabbath day in the principality, or has Christian teaching on such points been altogether abandoned?

Truth, by the way, has recently been giving several dressings to a pious philanthropist named John James Jones, formerly of the Christian Mission, Homerton, who has got a good living out of a bogus London Samaritan Society—a society backed up by the names of several clergymen. Labby challenges an investigation or a suit for libel.

Mr. G. R. Sims is writing strongly again in the *Referee* on our ghastly English Sunday. He thinks we "owe it all to the bigotry and ignorance of the seventeenth-century Scotch Christians," and apparently relies on the authority of Buckle. But "Dagonet" does not go to the bottom of the matter. Asceticism, which is inherent in Christianity, has much to do with a miserable Sunday.

A body of Christians with a harmonium, hailing from a neighboring Wesleyan Bethel, have the use of a piece of private ground belonging to a pious undertaker, but they

insist on singing and praying at another place in Archer-street, Kensington, where the Socialists hold a meeting. Such a noise was caused on Sunday that the police had to interfere. There is not room at the spot for two meetings, and the Socialists offered to come to an arrangement for its alternate occupation. But no, the Wesleyans would do as they liked for the glory of Jah and his dear son Jesus. Perhaps they are only getting up a pretext for the police to stop all meetings in Archer-street.

The Charrington band had a place in Victoria Park reserved for them. This they refused to occupy, but took up their old position, where they are a nuisance to their neighbors. It appears, as we expected, that there was no persecution in their removal. The local paper, the *North Eastern Leader*, says the band interfered with the speaking in a place dedicated and devoted to speaking. "There is," it says, "no question of religious liberty at stake; it is simply a matter of convenience, and if their action were forced to its logical conclusion, disorder would be rampant." The Parks Committee are little likely to interfere with religious bodies unless they palpably themselves infringe the public rights.

The *Two Worlds* recently recorded a case of alleged spirit-photography, of which Mr. T. Taylor read an account before the London and Provincial Photographic Society. That body passed a resolution recording their opinion that the photographs "bore evidence of having been produced by copying a photograph to represent the so-called spirit portion, and impressing the image upon the plate used for the representation of the persons sitting." The resolution added that no imputation on the *bona fides* of Mr. Taylor was intended. The *Two Worlds* then asks, "Who is the person against whom the imputation is intended?" Our sub-editor, who writes this, knows nothing of this particular case; but he saw enough at various séances at Glasgow, years ago, of the operations of a certain medium concerned in this matter, to retain strong suspicions of the *bona fides* of any transaction in which he had any share.

The individual in question used to have the gas, against which he stood, with brush and easel, lowered so that the sitters were almost in total darkness, while by a faint glimmer he rapidly executed the most execrable daubs, which he attributed to the spirits of Ruysdael or Turner, and sold to the faithful at prices considerably under what any real productions of these geniuses would have been worth, but considerably over what he could have obtained for his own work. Spiritists generally will recognise who is meant. To anyone who has sittings with him we should say he was "worth the watching."

The *Illustrated Church News* is absolutely shocked at the way in which children are taken from Christ and handed over to Belial. In illustration of the depravity of children engaged in theatres it relates a story of a Sunday-school examination. "Tell me, little boy," said a lady to one of the children, "to what station in life it has pleased providence to call you?" "Please, mum," replied the child, "I'm a beetle—I'm the Colleger beetle in the pantomime."

The postmaster of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, advertises a list of unclaimed letters lying at his post-office on April 21, 1893. Among them is one addressed to Jesus Christ. Some time ago Mr. Foote addressed some open letters to J. C. He never received any answer, but doubts if it is any of his letters lying unclaimed at Pottsville.

The Roman Catholics are organising a great function for July 2. It will be the solemn dedication of the whole country to St. Peter. The cry is no longer to be "St. George and Merry England," but "St. Peter and Catholic England." Cardinal Vaughan is to do the business at the Brompton Oratory. Says the *Tablet* (Vaughan's organ), "The ceremony will be of the most imposing kind." Yea, verily. Quite an imposing imposition.

Let not the reader fancy the Church is indulging in a further display of useless mummery. This little game of dedicating England to St. Peter is intended to dazzle the eyes of Catholics abroad, and especially in America, where the priests are playing a little game which will dwarf all their proceedings in England into insignificance. The function of July 2 and the approaching beatification of Jeanne d'Arc

are to be the prelude to events expected to make the Church stronger than ever. We are too good prophets to predict the dates of the enemy's manoeuvres, but if our American friends do not have their eyes opened before the closing of the World's Fair, do not reckon us among the prophets.

There is a letter from "A Loyal Italian Catholic" in this week's Roman Catholic *Weekly Register* which should be widely circulated, for it says some plain truths which have been studiously kept dark ever since the agitation for Catholic Emancipation. At the Italian Chapel they held celebrations in honor of the silver wedding of the King and Queen of Italy. This provoked the fierce wrath of the Jesuits and of certain English Catholics, who believe that King Humbert is the obstacle to the restoration of the temporal power of the papacy. The Italian priests were denounced for subordinating religion to lickspittle loyalty. Whereupon "A Loyal Italian Catholic" retorts: "I had no scruple in taking part in the manifestation of loyalty to my temporal ruler; but if I were an English Catholic, I confess I do not see how I could be loyal to Queen Victoria," who, he proceeds to point out, wears her crown and title, "simply and solely as the supplanter of a line cut off from its inheritance for its Catholicity, and who wields her authority by virtue of her denial of the spiritual authority of the Roman Pontiff. King Humbert has denied no more than His Holiness's temporal authority." When such plain speaking prevails, it is of course time to close the discussion.

Jesus Christ is said to have walked on the water, but there isn't much proof of the performance. Captain Boyton, however, has done the deed in broad daylight. The Galilean wonder-worker has in fact been shamefully beaten more than once. His forty days' fast was eclipsed by Succi, who put in fifty-two days and beat the record.

Pity the poor Bishop of London. He has £10,000 a year and two large residences rent-free. But somehow he finds it impossible to save money for his wife and children. Well now, if his lordship will hand his salary over our way, we'll undertake to save a bit for his family. We will give it a couple of years' trial anyhow.

The Bishop of Peterborough, presiding at a meeting called in opposition to the Welsh Suspensory Bill, said he objected to disestablishment, not as a bishop but as a citizen. Of course, so the publicans object to the Local Veto Bill, not as publicans but citizens. The Bishop of Peterborough is as almost as cool as the Catholic Church, who are going to beatify Jeanne d'Arc after she was burnt by warrant of the Bishop of Rouen.

Mr. Buxton, replying to a question by Mr. S. Smith, M.P., in the House of Commons, gave a somewhat different version in regard to the Protestant lady said to have been persecuted in Malta. He said that Mrs. Lundin Brown, the lady in question, had requested the governor to provide her with a military escort to protect her while distributing her literature. This he properly refused, but sent a plain clothes policeman to watch that she was not molested, and she soon afterwards quitted the island. It seems to have been a storm in a teacup.

The Mayor of Salford must be a narrow-minded bigot. He refused to meet a deputation from the local Lorrymen and Carters Union, because, being overworked on week days, they had met to discuss their grievances on a Sunday. Mr. Keevney ought to be told and taught that he has no right to import his peculiar Sabbatarian views into the performance of his public duties.

At the erection of a church at Llandudno, the scaffolding, with two men on it, gave way and precipitated them some thirty feet. One died within a few hours.

We recorded last week that the Rev. J. L. Rentoul, a Scotch meenister, did not want to see the bagpipes in church. A friend of ours says that *seeing* them is nothing; *hearing* them is the thing. They're enough to frighten the Holy Ghost out of any church, even in Scotland.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson has been sporting some "chestnuts" lately. One of his jokes, however, is worth repeating. A collier was being married, and the bride said she would "love" and "honor," and then hesitated about the "obey." "Go on," said the collier, "we'll rattle that among ourselves."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

June 11 and 18, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

- MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—May 21, N.S.S. Conference; 28, Hall of Science, London; 29, Battersea. June 4, Hall of Science, London; 5, Battersea; 11, Birmingham; 18, Barnsley; 25, Sheffield. July 2, Huddersfield; 25 and 26, debate at Jarrow-on-Tyne; 30, South Shields.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.
- DANIEL.—Articles such as you refer to could of course appear in our columns occasionally. What we avoid is party politics. We quite appreciate your motive in making the suggestion.
- A. DOUGLAS.—It is a question that needs more elaborate treatment.
- J. F. HENLEY.—Shall appear.
- C. DEANE.—Pleased to hear from you. Will find room as soon possible.
- C. E. B.—Rather too long, but will try to insert it in its entirety. We cannot help the boycotting of newagents, though the difficulties they put in our way are a serious hindrance to our circulation. Glad to hear you have joined the N.S.S. as an active member.
- Mrs. GULLET, 16 Church-lane, Islington, sells the *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature.
- G. NAEWIGER.—(1) Too late for Hull Fund; have put it to Benevolent Fund. (2) Glad to hear you are doing better than you expected with the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature in your new centrally situated shop; also that the Special Number "goes off well." We recognise the good work you are doing for Freethought.
- J. H. WHITHAM.—Pleased to have your high opinion of our article on "Labor Leaders in Pulpits." There is too much truth in what you say, and we are not surprised at your strong language. Something may be done in the direction you indicate. Mr. Foote has had exceptionally heavy duties as President of the N.S.S., and has had to relinquish nearly all his political and social work, but this state of things will not last for ever.
- H. HANSFORD.—See paragraph. We hope the delegates will give you as little trouble as possible by communicating in good time.
- R. CHAPMAN.—Mr. Foote may not be in England on August 27, the date you ask for.
- J. KENNEDY.—(1) Thanks for pamphlet. We like to view all sides of a question. (2) It can hardly be expected that officers of the N.S.S. are to refrain from taking part in all political and social movements as to which Secularists are divided. All they are bound to do is to take part in outside movements as private individuals, so as not to commit the N.S.S. in any way.
- J. LITTLE.—We do not insert Branch reports, though glad to give paragraphs on special occasions. Glad to hear Mr. Cohen had a good meeting and gave a good lecture at West Auckland.
- H. JONES.—We hope the Manchester Branch will have a good party and fine weather on June 25. See paragraph.
- V. PAGE.—Mr. Johnson's success is gratifying. We hope he will make a good "secular" member on the Nelson School Board.
- E. ANDERSON.—In our next. Corrections made.
- W. G. COX.—It shall be inquired into.
- A. SCOPES (Ipswich).—Sorry to hear your Branch has spent so much on propaganda that it cannot afford to send a delegate to the Conference. You are doing excellent work, and we hope you will be more favorably situated next year. Your open-air propaganda should bear fruit in the winter.
- J. H. SUMMERFIELD.—See "Sugar Plums."
- J. KEAST, secretary of the Bristol Branch, visited the Chatham Branch last Sunday, and sends us a glowing account of the children's annual gathering. The little ones sang in first-rate style, and excellent addresses were delivered by Messrs. Taylor and Hill.
- L. N. CLIFTON.—Yes, Mr. Foote will advise you how to act if any proceedings are taken; only, in that case, there must be no delay in communicating with him. Advertisement charges are according to space. See the scale at end of "To Correspondents."
- HALL OF SCIENCE REBUILDING FUND.—Collected at Mr. Foote's lectures, May 7 and 14, 17s. 4d.
- "FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—J. Ballard (Cape Town), 5s.; F. T. Rayner (Calcutta), 2s.; E. Barroyatt, 1s.; J. Conley, 10s.
- N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Hull Friend, 2s.
- LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—We have received, J. Conley, 1s.
- C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for enclosures. Mr. Foote would not be able to spare more than four or five weeks for his American journey. He expects to deliver a few lectures in the States and Canada.

J. BALLARD (Cape Town).—See "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear you think our Special Numbers "a grand twopennyworth." 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.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Arbroath Herald—Birmingham Daily Argus—Commonweal—Post—Leek Times—Inkanyiso Yase Natal—Western Daily News—Nelson Chronicle—Burnley Gazette—Old and Young—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Referee—Kettering Leader—Watts's Literary Guide—North Eastern Leader—Modern Thought—Weekly Bulletin.

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.

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

The *Freethinker* (including the twopenny special number for the first week in each month) will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 7s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 9d.; Three Months, 1s. 10½d.

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.

SPECIAL.

THE Freethought party is specially and urgently appealed to on behalf of the National Secular Hall Society (Limited), whose general object is the erection and maintenance of Secular Halls and Institutes in this country, and its immediate object the completion of the purchase of the London Hall of Science, of which it is now in possession, and the transformation of the same into high-class headquarters for the National Secular Society. Mr. George Anderson generously offers to give £300 if the number of subscribed shares is made up to 3,000 by the end of July. I am very anxious to secure that generous donation, and it can be done if the party will only rise to the opportunity. By the party, I do not mean an abstraction; I mean the *individual members*. Everyone should seriously ask himself (or herself)—"What can I do to help this important enterprise?" The shares are only £1 each, payable in easy instalments. Half-a-crown is called up at a time on each share, and the notice extends to two months. No one therefore can say that the conditions are too onerous. Even the poorest may take one share, if no more, and "stand in" with the wealthiest for the success of a cause which transcends class distinctions. The enterprise *must* be carried to a speedy completion, and I shall give the party no peace till it is done. They will be appealed to week after week without intermission. I may add that if the 3,000 shares are made up by the end of July, the *rebuilding* will commence *immediately*. Then we shall soon have a splendid Institute, up to date in every way, and openly dedicated to the memory of Charles Bradlaugh.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Readers of the above who mean business should send a postcard at once to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., who will send them share application forms by return.

SUGAR PLUMS.

We fear that bad trade and recent financial failures will somewhat interfere with the numerical success of this year's Conference of the National Secular Society. Still, we expect a fairly good gathering at Hanley, and there will be plenty of speakers for the public meeting at night in the Town Hall. It is to be hoped that the whole of the proceedings will be marked by a practical spirit. There is very little time for anything but real business.

Delegates to the N.S.S. Conference to-day (May 21) are requested to communicate with Mr. H. Hansford, the local secretary, at the Secular Hall, John-street, Hanley, so that hotel accommodation can be provided for them. The Reception Committee will meet all trains at Stoke and Hanley on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. Members of the Committee will wear a small white rosette. Delegates and visitors should bring their cards of membership with them.

Mr. Foote's criticism of Mr. Balfour's attack on "The Religion of Humanity" was heartily relished by the audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and the applause at the end was markedly enthusiastic. This evening (May 21) the platform is to be occupied by Mr. O. Cohen, one of our promising young lecturers, who will doubtless meet with a cordial reception.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Watts had a capital audience at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. The enthusiasm throughout the lecture was hearty, and at its close several rounds of applause testified that Mr. Watts's reply to Mrs. Besant and his remarks upon the Bible "up to date" had been fully appreciated. Every copy of the current issue of the *Freethinker*, and over a dozen copies of the last Special Number, were sold.

Mr. Joseph Brown, secretary of the N.E. Secular Federation, whose portrait appeared in our last Special Number, has labored gratuitously for the Freethought cause for many years, giving ungrudgingly of his time and energy, and mulcting himself considerably in out-of-pocket expenses. Some of his local admirers think the time is favorable for presenting him with a testimonial. The shape it takes will depend upon financial circumstances. Mr. J. H. Summerfield, the Federation's treasurer, 61 Grove-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, will receive subscriptions. We shall be happy to contribute a trifle to the testimonial, and we hope it will be something handsome—not as a reward, but as an acknowledgment, of Mr. Brown's services.

At the discussion on the policy of the London School Board, in the Conference Room of the National Liberal Club, several speakers expressed the opinion that a program of purely secular education must be put forward now the compromise of 1870 is seriously threatened.

The Rev. R. B. Dolling, of St. Agatha's, Landport, is a clergyman of a very uncommon character. He devoted a recent Sunday afternoon to advocating the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church, which he contended would give greater freedom to Churchmen, who now might come under the official control of Atheists or Romanists.

One of our readers at Cape Town, South Africa, after much trouble induced a local bookseller to order a dozen copies of the *Freethinker*, guaranteeing him against any loss on unsold copies. The result shall be given in our correspondent's own words:—"The first lot arrived about three weeks ago [early in April] and were all sold in less than ten days. When the last mail came there was not a copy left in six hours. In a few weeks he will require, not one, but three dozen, as there are many young men in the colony glad to get from under the thumb of the mystery-man." This correspondent adds that the local "saints" would give a good deal to have Mr. Foote over for a course of lectures.

Ingersoll's *Skulls* has for some time been out of print. It is one of his very best efforts. A new edition is now on sale at 28 Stonecutter-street, price twopence. The pamphlet comprises thirty-two pages of solid printing.

—Mr. J. B. Charlesworth, secretary of the new Freethought Federation of America, whose headquarters are at 345 West Randolph-street, Chicago, writes to Mr. Foote under date of May 3, begging to know if there is any prospect of his attending the International Congress on the first Sunday in September. The Federation offers to arrange lecturing engagements on the way to Chicago and back, and to do all that can be done for the comfort and convenience of any other N.S.S. delegates. Mr. Foote has replied that he thinks of attending the International Congress in company with Mr. Charles Watts, who is well-known across the Atlantic.

Mr. Symes has been visiting Sydney. He says his visit has been all he could reasonably expect. Trade is almost as bad at Sydney as at Melbourne. Mr. Symes thinks sport, gambling, and religion responsible for many of the present troubles of Australia. He says: "This is too good a country to be given up in despair because rogues and sharpers have rushed it to the brink of ruin. There is a great future for Australia, provided Australians will take the trouble to create it, not else. But work is the only savior, personal, manly toil. Sports, gambling, religion will have to be dropped, and

the people must remember that it is nobler and more paying, too, to create more wealth than to scramble and plot and cheat for what already exists." We are pleased to see Mr. Symes has Mr. Huntington helping on the *Liberator* during his temporary absence. He has really been obliged to do too much work unsupported.

Mr. Forder has issued a reprint of Francis Wright's *A Few Days in Athens* (see our advertisement pages). The book is well worthy of being made accessible to a new generation of readers. The new edition is enriched by a sympathetic biography of the authoress, from the pen of Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and a brief account of Epicurus and his Philosophy, which should be of much service to the ordinary reader. We commend the volume to the attention of Secular book-buyers.

De Dageraad for May contains a translation of Col. Ingersoll's *Oration on Voltaire*, and continues its translation of Lecky's *Rationalism in Europe*.

The Trotter, one of the local papers in Boston, publishes three columns of well-written criticism on Mr. Watts's recent lecture in that town on "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" The writer, in speaking of our colleague, says: "Now, as regards Mr. Charles Watts. He is a humorous and pleasant lecturer; broad-minded, tolerant, and respectful of other people's opinions. One can see that he is full of love for humanity; he wishes to do good to all men. And he will. He is a most amiable and courteous gentleman. I admire him; nay, what is more, I could love him, if I knew him."

The South Shields Branch has a picnic to-day in Holywell Dene. Brakes leave North Shields at 1 o'clock. Tea or hot water will be arranged for at the Dene.

Mr. Cohen's lectures at South Shields gave great satisfaction, and the local friends are anxious to hear him again. There was some good discussion at the open-air lecture.

The Manchester Branch is to have its annual picnic on Sunday, June 24. It will be a railway trip to Cleethorpes, and saloon carriages will be provided. Tickets (3s. 3d.) can now be had of Mr. Hunter, the financial secretary. Arrangements may also be made with Mr. Hunter for dinner.

"Ixion," in the *Hull Critic*, has a pungent letter on "Church and Dockers." "The Church," he says, "never has been a friend of the worker, and its attitude to-day is a standing disgrace which will not be forgotten in a hurry."

The Hull Branch's annual excursion announced in our last issue is to take place on the last Sunday in June, not the first, as we stated in error. The Branch starts its open-air work to-day (May 21) in the Corporation Fields. Members should attend and support the speakers. Good progress has been made recently by the Branch, and fourteen new members have been enrolled this year.

The annual excursion of the Battersea Branch will take place on Sunday, June 4. It will be by brakes to Riddlesdown; fare 2s. 6d. London Freethinkers wishing to accompany the Branch must communicate at once with Mr. F. Mullins, 5 Warrener Gardens, Battersea Park Road, S.W.

The Wolverhampton Branch means to push on with its open-air propaganda. It had a lively time on Sunday, when Mr. C. J. Hunt addressed two meetings. His criticism of the Lord's Prayer provoked the Christians into using very bad language, and a son of Councillor Cousins got so exasperated that he rushed off for a policeman. The afternoon meeting was held on a spot often used by Evangelists, but directly Mr. Hunt mounted his rostrum a policeman said "I must ask you to move off." Mr. Hunt didn't, but his name and address were taken. After the lecture some opposition was offered by a Nonconformist minister, who couldn't wait for a reply.

Mr. A. B. Wakefield delivers three lectures to-day (May 21) in the Arcade Hall, Barnsley. We hope he will have good audiences. The afternoon lecture is on Ernest Jones; the morning and evening lectures on Freethought subjects.

Nelson School Board election, Mr. E. Johnson, who went the whole hog for secular education pure and simple, came out at the top of the poll, considerably to the surprise

of the denominationalists, who found that both the Wesleyan candidates had been rejected, and only one of the Church candidates returned. Two unsectarian Labor candidates got returned, but much lower down the poll than the Secularist.

HARDOUIN.

I HAVE read with great pleasure the able article of Mr. Wheeler, on Hardouin's works: a subject, the interest of which it is not easy to exhaust.

I have no jealousy whatever of the Jesuit scholar; on the contrary my feeling towards him is that of warm gratitude, because without his example to encourage me, I know not that I should have had sufficient self-confidence to publish my results to the world. Any competent student will see that I am not a disciple of Hardouin, so much as an independent investigator, who has travelled to common ground with him by another road. It is this fact which should be noted by all who desire to see literary speculations give way to literary science.

Like the honest rustic, "I know my place, and I keep it." And it gives me pleasure to hold a candle to the Father now and again, though without the slightest subservience to his authority.

When I arrived at conclusions, substantially those I have published, I was so astounded at the discovery of the secret literary activity of the founders of the Church that I asked myself, What can the Catholic apologists say to all this? I took down Newman's *Grammar of Assent* to see if I could find an answer, and there came upon the notable passage relating to Hardouin, which led me for the first time to consult his works, and to make a few emendations in my MS. That in brief is the story of my relation to this admirable critic.

Perhaps it will interest the reader to know what is the common ground held in general by Hardouin and myself. He said that it was almost necessary that a Jesuit should be the critic of the alleged writings of the "Fathers," because there was hardly another family of the priesthood which had not been deceived by books with false titles. "The Dominicans have Thomas Aquinas" (who is also in a sort claimed by the Benedictines of Monte Cassino), "Vincent of Beauvais and others; the Franciscans have Bonaventura, Scotus, Alensis; the Carmelites have Thomas Walden; other Orders have other writers, but the Benedictines have a whole legion of them."

He further says that his socius, the well-known Petavius, had denied the sincerity of certain Athanasian writers ("Athanasius" being a Benedictine author), and that others had cut down the works ascribed to Augustine and Bernard, to about half their length. Therefore Hardouin had good precedents for following out the Apostolic precept, "Prove all things, etc."

He makes no concealment of the fact that it was his hatred of Jansenists and Calvinists which inspired him to the attack on Augustine, because they claimed Augustine as "all for them." "He is all yours, is he? Then I will show that a scoundrel and an enemy of the true deity, a man who teaches Atheism under the mask of Christian words, is all yours."

"I began in August, 1690, to scent a fraud in Augustine and his equals; in November I suspected the same in all; I detected the whole in May, 1692, after I had toiled almost to disgust over the Greek and Latin writers, yet occasionally with great delight in the discovery of the truth."

He evidently found great difficulty, as I have done, while pursuing a different method, in determining the true age and date of these writings; and he had to shift his ground, as I have had to do, from an earlier to a later period. But there is a very striking story about him which illustrates the position at which he ultimately arrived. I cite from memory, but I believe I am nearly correct.

It was in the time of our Queen Anne. Cardinal Angelo Maria Qurino, a champion of the Benedictines, paid Hardouin a visit in the Jesuit library at Paris; and the Jesuit unfolded to him the dire tale of fraud and imposture, declaring that Christianity had no sincere documents except the Vulgate Bible, a few

coins, and the Decrees of the Council of Trent. The cardinal, I presume, could make no stand against the torrent of Hardouin's argumentation; he therefore adroitly snatched a dummy book with a false title from a shelf, and exclaimed triumphantly, "This was not got up in a monastery!" Would that all religious controversies might end in laughter rather than in tears or blood!

Now not being myself a priest, I cannot exempt the Vulgate from criticism; I cannot say, with Hardouin, that I deserve execration if I deny the gospel of Matthew to be Matthew's "because the Holy Spirit has so pronounced it." All such talk is priestcraft, not literary criticism. Was he not aware that the Vulgate Bible was prepared in the same monasteries in which the "Fathers" were compiled? It is not for me to attempt to unravel the enigma of his mind.

Here was another weakness. He makes incessant desultory attacks on the ranks of the "Fathers," and abounds in suggestive observations; but he does not expose clearly the regular system on which those works were schemed and written; at least, not so clearly as he might have done. It is this defect which I have labored to supply, and hope further to supply. But his researches have saved a weary waste of labor to all clear-sighted students. Note how luminous is the following passage. After pointing out that the so-called "Fathers" are a literary coterie who have a common stock of ideas which they repeat, over and over again; he adds: "Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Theodoret, Justin had the same Library. They praise the same authors, they confute the same fables. So with others."

There is a clue which will lead you to the world's end of ecclesiastical literature. When you have disposed of the mythical Library of Cæsarea, and the smoke has cleared from the scene, you will find yourselves in what I have elsewhere called the Abbots' Circulating Library, and you will be able to form a good opinion as to the place or places in which the Abbots' Round Table was set up.

Briefly, then, here is the common ground on which I stand with Hardouin. What we call the "sixteenth century" is the Age of Publication. Before that age there was a period of darkness, as it seems to the historical eye, when a secret literary activity was going forward, from the effects of which we have suffered ever since. The Vulgate story of Christendom was designed for the vulgar; and it easily conquered the imagination of the world. But it is inconsistent at every point with our knowledge of human nature and of the course of human life. The inner, secret story of Christendom is an utterly different thing; it is the only true story, and, if so, ought to be ascertained and published on the housetops. When the writings of Hardouin and my own (in which I take credit for little but the arrangement of the facts of the evidence) have been really read and digested, as they have not yet been, it will be found that we have been leading the intelligence of the world out of the paths of fantasy and fable into those of experimental science.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO N.S.S.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—Nottingham Branch, 5s.; Sunderland Branch, 11s.; Mrs. Small, 7d.

GENERAL FUND.—R. Sturton, 1s 4d.; D. R. Harvey, 2s 6d.; T. F. Rayner, 2s. E. M. VANCE, Assist.-Sec.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING, April 27; President in the chair. Present:—Messrs. Charles Watts, S. Hartmann, R. O. Smith, J. M. Wheeler, J. E. Brumage, G. J. Warren, C. J. Hunt, E. Bater, T. Gorniot, J. Potter, J. Samson, W. Trew, C. H. Martin, W. Heaford, R. Killick, H. A. Lupton, S. H. Baker, E. Forder, Thornton Smith, E. M. Vance, asst. sec.

Minutes of previous meeting and of Organisation Committee were read and confirmed. The Treasurer's audit of the Shilling Week Fund in the *Freethinker*, not having tallied with Mr. Foot's statement, lists had been re-audited by Mr. C. J. Hunt, who brought the amount to within a few shillings of the printed total. Mr. Hunt moved, therefore, and Mrs. Thornton Smith seconded, that the *Freethinker* figures be taken as accurate.

The President presented a financial statement in relation to the contests at Portsmouth and Hull. Mr. Heaford moved, and Mr. Warren seconded, that the Executive endorse the President's action, and discharge the liability.

Messrs. Wheeler, Standing, and Samson, were appointed as the Conference Agenda Committee. Applications for grants, etc., were remitted to the Organisation Committee.

The President made a proposal, *re* the Hall of Science tenancy, offering to have the Society released, and to take the full responsibility himself. He did not press the proposal on the Executive, though in view of the financial situation, and some other matters, he felt bound to make it, and the Executive would have an opportunity of a perfectly free decision upon the merits of the case. On the motion of Mr. Hunt, seconded by Mrs. Thornton Smith, it was decided to postpone the decision until the adjourned meeting on May 11.

The Conference business was considered, and the Executive decided to place several notices of motion on the Agenda.

ADJOURNED MEETING.

Thursday, May 11.—President in the chair. Present: Messrs. R. O. Smith, S. Hartmann, J. M. Wheeler, J. E. Brumage, G. J. Warren, E. Bater, C. Quinton, J. Potter, T. Gorniot, J. Samson, W. Trew, C. W. Martin, W. H. Baker, B. Wherle, W. Heaford, G. H. Baker, and E. M. Vance, asst. sec.

On the recommendation of the Organisation Committee, the Executive resolved to issue a special lecturer's diploma to Mr. S. H. Alison; and grants were made of £3 to the Bristol Branch; £1 10s. to the Bethnal Green Branch; and £5 to the London Secular Federation on account of the open-air lecturing.

Mr. W. H. Reynolds, not wishing to continue the treasurer-ship, some discussion followed of a business character, and on the motion of Mr. Gorniot, seconded by Mr. Samson, it was resolved to advise the Conference—"That the office of treasurer be abolished, and that all monies in future be paid into a banking account opened in the names of two or three members appointed by the Executive, who shall sign cheques for all monies to be drawn out."

The President's proposal *re* Hall of Science tenancy was then reconsidered. Mr. Bater moved, and Mr. Potter seconded, "That the President's offer be not accepted"; this was carried with one dissentient. Mr. Gorniot desired to move a resolution in appreciation of the President's motive in making the proposal, but the President said it was unnecessary.

The Society's annual balance-sheet was ordered to be printed for the Conference on the motion of Messrs. Warren and Hartmann.

The President read the draft report for the Conference, which was adopted.

The existing committees were authorised to act until the Executive's first meeting after the Conference.

The meeting closed with a brief address from the President, who hoped to meet the Executive again after the Conference.

E. M. VANCE, Asst. Sec.

Messrs. Macmillan and Co. have issued an In Memoriam volume on *Ernest Renan* by his friend, Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, who says that in losing hold of him the Catholic Church (he might have said Christianity) lost hold of one of the most innately religious minds of our times. Renan's mind may have been what Sir M. Grant Duff calls religious, but, as he well knows, he did not scruple to chaff God and the Angel Gabriel, as he does in his *Prologue au Ciel*, which appeared in the *Debats* at the beginning of 1886.

OMNISCIENT IGNORANCE.

JEHOVAH knew what Eve would do if put to any test,
Because he's omni-ev'rything; he therefore thought it best
To place the dainty *debutante* where tid-bits were taboo,
Then watch, and try to ascertain what frisky Eve would do.

Jehovah knew where Adam was when he was lying hid,
His optic being ev'rywhere, with ne'er a lash nor lid;
So, searching through the leafy shades, Omnipotence did go,
Because where skulking Adam was, Omniscience wished to know.

Jehovah, from on high, could see each brick and grain of sand
That formed the heav'n-invading tow'r in Shinar's ancient land,
Because his eye is infinite; so, straight to earth he booked,
In order that his eye might see just how the building looked.

Jehovah knew th' exact amount of Father Abram's faith,
Because he is omniscient, as his holy scripture saith,
He therefore set himself to try through Isaac—Abram's lad—
To ascertain th' exact amount of faith that Abram had.

Jehovah knew the final list of all the hell-doomed host,
Because, from all eternity, he settled who shall roast;
So, down to earth he came with love and meekness nicely shammed,
To see how many he could save of those who *must* be damned.

How thankful we ought all to be that finite is our might,
Restricted is our knowledge, and imperfect is our sight;
Since, *absolute* Jehovah had to fuss so much about,
Whene'er he wished to learn a fact, and tried to find it out!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

MORALS OF WESLEYAN STUDENTS.

A shameful case of hazing recently occurred at Delaware, Ohio, in connection with the Wesleyan University located at that place. The whole community has been excited over a most fiendish outrage perpetrated by some of the students. It seems that the junior class fraternity, called the S. Z. C., concluded to initiate a student named P. A. Wilson, who is a junior, but who had not yet received his rank. It so happened that the Sophomore class fraternity, called the D. O. A., had also intended to initiate the same man. About eleven o'clock four juniors with their initiate went to the Chi Phi Hall to show their victim the secrets of the organisation. At about twelve o'clock at night, while they were going through the most exciting part of their ritual, twelve Sophomores—big, raw-boned fellows—having procured a key, burst into the hall, and, like a lot of hungry hyenas, pounced upon the little juniors, beating them mercilessly with ropes and clubs. For fully fifteen minutes the juniors did all in their power to withstand the blows, and then sank to the floor senseless and bleeding. It was one of the most atrocious and bloody fights that ever took place within the city. The juniors were then at the mercy of the conquerors, who, like raving maniacs, proceeded to inflict on their victims the most excruciating tortures. They were first stripped of their clothing and whipped with ropes until they bled all over. Then each was laid on the floor, tied with their faces up, and the letters "D. O. A." printed on their cheeks and chin and little horns on each temple with nitrate of silver. The caustic was allowed to stay there until it had burned into the flesh, thus branding five bright young men like Texas steers for life. Not satisfied with this, they stood them up, and with red-hot shovels burned their bare backs and legs into blisters. Four of the victims were then bound hand and foot and gagged, and left in the hall. One was gagged and carried two squares away, where he was bound in a stall with a cow, from which place he was extricated when the milkman came out to milk. The others lay in the hall until some passer-by heard them groan and let them loose. The young men are confined to their beds, and some of their cases are very serious. They are ruined for life. The nine students who participated in the outrage have been dismissed from the school. The sufferers have brought suit for 100,000 dols. damages, besides which there is to be a criminal prosecution.

From a later dispatch, it appears that the girls have had a hand in the branding. Forty of them took five others and

proceeded to initiate them in a manner similar to that of the boys. They took them into the basement and branded them with nitrate of silver, and printed pictures on the victims' arms and breasts.

—*Christian Commonwealth.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

A BRAVE AND NOBLE PARSON.
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the "Acid Drops" columns of the *Freethinker*, April 30, 1893, you had an extract from a speech delivered by the Rev. J. W. Rhodes, vicar of St. Chad's, Everton, bidding his audience (if not already in possession of one) to buy a Snider rifle. Perhaps, sir, you are not aware that the reverend gentlemen has a history in which valor does not play a conspicuous part.

In the year 1889 one of the people's wardens resigned, through a dispute about Ritualism. In the Easter of 1890 he attended the vestry meeting to give his statement of accounts, having previously had them audited by the church auditors—also, at his own expense, had the statement printed and circulated at the church door. When he attended the aforementioned vestry meeting, the rev. gentleman refused to have the statement read, and proceeded to charge the resigned warden with having issued a statement which did not account for some money he had received and acknowledged in the parish magazine. The warden challenged him to prove his statement. Whereupon he meekly and mildly said, "I have made my statement."

The slandered ex-warden instructed a solicitor to demand a withdrawal and an apology. He refused. On October 20, 1890, in the Court of Passage, Liverpool, an action for slander (*Davies v Rhodes*) was heard, the defendant putting in a plea of privilege. Verdict for the defendant, with costs. The complainant refused to pay the costs; the Rev. J. W. Rhodes, vicar of St. Chad's, Everton, put the bailiffs in his house and had the furniture sold, leaving him and his wife and four children to sleep on the floor. The furniture not realising sufficient to pay the costs, he put him in the county court for the balance, which of course he had to pay in instalments.

To make matters worse, the money the vicar alluded to was in possession of his (the vicar's) warden, and by his instruction—that is, the vicar knew that Davies had nothing to do with the money. Comment is superfluous.

Among the magnificent audiences you addressed here on your last visit, you had not a more delighted auditor than the sincere, straightforward ex-warden, whose maltreatment I have recounted.

Liverpool.

J. ROBERTS.

BOOK CHAT.

The *Bookseller*, as the organ of the trade, complains much of two religious organisations—the P.S.A. for demanding enormous discounts, and the Sunday School Union for establishing depôts, and thereby taking away the trade of retail booksellers.

The Rev. John Owen, author of *Evenings with the Sceptics*, is convinced that scepticism is coming to the front, and issues another work on *The Sceptics of the Italian Renaissance*, dealing principally with Boccaccio, Pulci, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Pomponazzi, and Vanini. Signor Felice Tocco, an Italian Freethinker, has already gone over the same ground in his work on *The Heresy of the Middle Ages*, 1884.

Two American novels entitled *An Heir to Millions* and *American Push*, by Edgar Fawcett, who has some reputation as an American Freethought poet, have been issued in this country by Messrs. S. Low, Marston, and Co.

How Nature Cures, comprising a New System of Hygiene, also the Natural Food of Man, by Emmet Densmore, M.D. (Swan, Sonneschien and Co.), is a popular treatise by one who is rather an hygienist than a drug doctor. "Health," says Dr. Densmore, or rather his wife, to whom he dedicates his book, "Health is man's birthright. It is as natural to be well as to be born. All pathological conditions, all diseases, and all tendencies to disease, are the result of the transgression of physiologic and hygienic law." The author

believes in treating disease by fasting and copious draughts of hot water. He considers fruit and nuts the primal and natural food of man, objects to all intoxicants and stimulants, including tea and coffee, and denounces the use of salt and tobacco. Bread he calls the staff of death, and objects to all cereals and all forms of starch as giving overwork to the intestines and tending to clog the arteries. As the majority of the world consume cereals, we should have expected tables showing the relative nutritive value of foods, and statistics proving the longer life of fruit eaters. Dr. Densmore thinks we ought to live till about 140 or so. But then, "there is no short cut to longevity." Despite what most people will consider his "fads," Dr. Densmore writes in an easy popular style which arrests attention, and his book contains many interesting facts on the daily important question of diet, and some common sense on such subjects as fresh air, superstition concerning doctors and doctorcraft, etc.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Stanley Jones, "A Heaven on Earth"; 9.15, dancing. Monday and Tuesday at 8, social gatherings (free). Thursday at 8, delegate's report.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 5.30, public tea (6d.); 7.30, free entertainment.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, W. Heaford, "A Critical Examination of the Holy Scriptures."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, C. Cohen, "Religion and Freethought" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "The Noble Army of Martyrs."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, E. Calvert, "The History of the New Testament Canon."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Are the Holy Scriptures Impregnable?"

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Behold, I Bring Glad Tidings."

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, J. Marshall, "What Think ye of Christ?"

Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Is Christianity Played Out?"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "The Consolations of Religion."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, Mr. St. John, "The Heaven Above and the Earth Beneath."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "What is Life?"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Bible Opposed to Science and Morality." Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

Islington—Newington Green: 3.15, A. Guest, "Is the Bible Inspired?"

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, S. H. Alison, "The History of the Devil."

Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christianity at the Bar of Morality."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Shadows of Superstition."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Bible Opposed to Science and Morality"; 3.30, C. J. Hunt will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. St. John, "Science and Miracles"; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist and why I Remain one."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Civilisation: its Use and Progress."

The "Queensberry" R. and A. Club: Saturday, May 20, at 5 and Sunday at 10.30, at Reader's Boat-house, Lea-bridge, rowing. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Clerkenwell, swimming. Thursday at 8, at the hall, gymnastics.

COUNTRY.

Barnsley—Arcade Hall: A. B. Wakefield, 11, "Some Historic Characters who were Not Christians"; 3, "Ernest Jones, the People's Friend"; 7, "Are the Gods of the Bible Worthy of Man's Adoration?"

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Mr. Sketchley, "The Tendencies of Modern Thought."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Christianity and Social Order."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Tuesday at 8, debating circle, Mr. Pegg, "A Familiar Chat about Dickens."

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, C. Rowe, a reading.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Bockingham-street: 7, instrumental and vocal music, etc.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, T. Pearson, "Materialism v. Spiritualism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Brighton (on the Level): 3, A. Simson, "Some of the Teachings of the Jews."

Sunderland—Wheat Sheaf, Monkwearmouth: 6, T. Pearson will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—May 21, m., Camberwell; e., Lambeth; 28, m., Midland Arches; e., Lambeth. June 4, m., Wood Green; 11, e., Lambeth; 18, Chatham; 25, m., Camberwell.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—May 21, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hall of Science; 24, Hyde Park; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 29, 30, 31, Portsmouth. June 1 and 2, Portsmouth; 4, m., Camberwell; a., Islington; e., Camberwell; 11, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea; 15, Hammersmith; 18, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 25, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. July 2, Manchester.

J. FAGAN, 18 Church-lane, Upper-street, Islington, N.—May 21, m., Midland Arches. June 25, m., Battersea.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—May 28 m., Islington; e., Kilburn.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—May 21, m., Finsbury Park; e., Battersea; 28, Ipswich.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—May 21, m., Westminster; a., Finsbury; 28, m., Wood Green; e., Hammersmith.

J. ROWNEY, 7 Park Villas, Newington Turning, N.—May 21 to June 25, m., Regent's Park; a., Hyde Park.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—May 28, m., Hyde Park; a., Regent's Park. June 4, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., Edmonton; 10, Hotspur Club; 11, e., Camberwell; 18, m., Battersea; e., Lambeth; 25, m., Westminster; a., Regent's Park.

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—May 21, m., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Bethnal Green. June 4, m., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 11, m., Finsbury Park; 18, m., Bethnal Green.

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,
TRUE MORALITY, OR THE THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

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

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

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

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

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

Both the Book and the Pamphlet may be had of R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, or of the Author,

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

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

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

Bible Heroes. First Series, in elegant wrapper ... 1 0
(1) Mr. Adam, (2) Captain Noah, (3) Father Abraham, (4) Juggling Jacob, (5) Master Joseph, (6) Joseph's Brothers, (7) Holy Moses I., (8) Moses II., (9) Parson Aaron, (10) General Joshua, (11) Jephthah and Co., (12) Professor Samson. *One Penny each*

Bible Heroes. Second Series, in elegant wrapper ... 1 0
(13) Prophet Samuel, (14) King Saul, (15) Saint David I., (16) Saint David II., (17) Sultan Solomon, (18) Poor Job, (19) Hairy Elijah, (20) Bald Elisha, (21) General Jehu, (22) Doctor Daniel, (23) The Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea), (24) St. Peter, (25) St. Paul. *One Penny each singly.*

The Complete Work, bound in cloth ... 2 6

R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

SKULLS

A LECTURE

BY

COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

Price Twopence.

R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

FREETHOUGHT PUBLICATIONS.

The Jewish Life of Christ. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Paper covers, 6d. Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. CHAPTERS:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3, Monks; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades. Cloth gilt, 216pp., 2s. 6d.

Utilitarianism. By Jeremy Bentham. 3d.

The Church of England Catechism Examined. By Jeremy Bentham. A trenchant analysis, in Bentham's best manner, showing how the Catechism is calculated to make children hypocrites or fools, if not worse. With a Biographical Preface by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.

Free Will and Necessity. A Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty. By Anthony Collins. First published in 1715. Now reprinted with Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote, and a Biographical Introduction by J. M. Wheeler. Paper covers, 1s.; superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.

The Essence of Religion. God the Image of Man, Man's Dependence upon Nature, the Last and Only Source of Religion. By Ludwig Feuerbach. 1s.

The Mortality of the Soul. By David Hume. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. This essay was first published after Hume's death. It is not included in the ordinary editions of the *Essays*. Professor Huxley calls it "A remarkable essay" and "a model of clear and vigorous statement." 2d.

Liberty and Necessity. An argument against Free Will and in favor of Moral Causation. By David Hume. 4d.

A Refutation of Deism. In a Dialogue. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 4d.

Life, Death, and Immortality. Two Essays, an Extract, and a Sonnet. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. 2d.

Darwin made Easy. By Dr. E. B. Aveling, Fellow of the London University. This is the best popular exposition of Darwinism extant. Cloth, 1s.

Essays in Rationalism. By Charles Robert Newman (Atheist brother of the late Cardinal Newman). With a Preface by George Jacob Holyoake and a Biographical Sketch by J. M. Wheeler. 1s. 6d.

Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. By G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Complete, paper covers, 1s. 4d. Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s. Also in parts as follows—

1. BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS. The contradictions are printed in parallel columns. 4d.
2. BIBLE ABSURDITIES. All the chief Absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each absurdity in a sentence. 4d.
3. BIBLE ATROCITIES. Containing all the godly wickedness from Genesis to Revelation. Each infamy has a separate headline for easy reference. 4d.
4. BIBLE IMMORALITIES, INDECENCIES, OBSCENITIES, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies. 4d.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations. By J. M. Wheeler. Handsomely bound in cloth, 7s. 6d.

Bible Studies. An Essay on Phallic Worship and other Curious Rites and Customs. By J. M. Wheeler. Superior paper, illustrated, and bound in cloth. 2s. 6d.

The Code of Nature. By Diderot and D'Holbach. 2d.

Pagan Mythology, or the Wisdom of the Ancients. By Lord Bacon. 1s.

Satires and Profanities. By James Thomson (B.V.) Contents:—The Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm (Jehovah, Son and Co.)—The Devil in the Church of England—Religion in the Rocky Mountains—Christmas Eve in the Upper Circles—A Commission of Inquiry on Royalty—A Bible Lesson on Monarchy—The One Thing Needful. Cloth, 1s.

Was Christ Crucified? By Austin Bierbower (member of the Chicago Bar). 1d.

The Age of Reason. By Thomas Paine. New edition, with Preface by G. W. Foote. 1s.

Miscellaneous Theological Works. By Thomas Paine. 1s.

Thomas Paine's Complete Theological Works. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Rights of Man. By Thomas Paine. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. Paper covers, 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

N.S.S. Almanack for 1893. Edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d.

Letters from Heaven. By J. M. Wheeler. 1d.

Letters from Hell. By J. M. Wheeler. 1d.

Giordano Bruno's Statue. A Picture of, for framing. 2d. Post free in Letts's case, 3d.

Photo-Portrait of G. W. Foote. By Amey. 1s.

R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER ST., LONDON, E.C.

PROFANE JOKES.

Impecunious Lover: "Be mine, Alice, and you will be treated like an angel." Maiden: "Yes, I suppose so; nothing to eat and less to wear. No, thank you."

"How are you succeeding, Mr. Hornblower, in your work?" Rev. Mr. Hornblower: "Magnificently. There's a great awaking at the close of every sermon."

The Rev. Dr. Hanson, of Chicago, recently lectured at Chautaugua, his subject being "Fools." The Rev. Dr. Vincent, who is somewhat of a wag, introduced him thus: "We are now to have a lecture on fools by one"—long pause, and loud laughter—"of the wisest men of the country." The lecturer advanced to the desk, and responded as follows: "I am not half so big a fool as Dr. Vincent"—long pause and loud laughter—"would have you suppose."

Mr. Oldbeau: "And your husband?" Widow: "In heaven these two years." Mr. Oldbeau: "I'm shocked at the news! He and I used to go out together. I never would have dreamed it."

"Have you been to Sunday-school, Johnny?" "Yes." "Why, your hair is wet." "Yes, it was a Baptist Sunday-school."

"Do you swear?" asked a ministerial-looking man of a sailor on the dock. "Partly often," was the reply. "Drink?" "M—yes. I get dry once in a while." "Gamble?" "When th' v'yage's over I shake a few dices." "Chew tobacco?" "Look here, shipmate, ain't you gittin' kind'r curious?" "Answer me that; do you chew tobacco?" "Wa'al, yes, I do." "That's what I wanted to get at, and I meant to do it in a soothing, gentlemanly way, as it were. Gimme a chew, will you?"

Accepted Suitor: "Wen't you find it awkward when you meet your other two husbands in heaven?" Interesting Widow: "I don't expect to meet either of them there."

Bobby: "Ma, wasn't there anybody left in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were turned out?" Mother: "No, Bobby." Bobby (after thought): "Well, who fed the animals?"

A Sunday-school teacher asked a little girl of her class if she had been baptised. "Yes," said the little girl, "two times." "Two times? Why, how could that be?" "It didn't take the first time," said the little girl.

Let others fancy worlds above, Where mysteries are unfurled, Enough is here for us to love, We need no other world."

NOW READY.

A FEW DAYS IN ATHENS

By FRANCES WRIGHT.

With a Sketch of the Life of the Authoress, and the Life and Writings of Epicurus, By J. M. WHEELER.

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE. In Cloth, 2s. 6d.

R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

FREETHINKERS, READ THIS!

What's land, or title, state or wealth, Without that greater blessing—Health? What's house or land, or wine, or dress, or meat, If one can't eat, or drink, or sleep, Or go about in comfort? Here's the question—What's all the world without a good Digestion?

MOORE'S DIGESTIVE PILLS

Are honestly recommended by the Proprietor to all who suffer from Indigestion, Liver Complaint, or Debility. They contain one of the greatest aids to digestion ever discovered. They positively assist the digestion of food, stimulate the liver, and act as an invigorating tonic on the whole system. The Proprietor possesses the grateful testimony of many influential Freethinkers. Price 1s. and 2s. per box, post free, from WILFRID HILL, THE PHARMACY, COLESHILL, WARWICKSHIRE.

FREETHOUGHT ON RELIGION AND THE BIBLE.

Books illustrative of the above will be lent free of charge on application to Miss O. M. Rawlins, 5 Sandon-terrace, Liverpool.

OUR

SPECIAL ILLUSTRATED LIST

SHOULD be in the hands of every Married Couple in the kingdom, wishing to regulate the number of their family according to their means, as it contains full particulars of all Preventive Requisites recommended by Dr. H. A. ALLBUTT and others; and valuable information on matters of importance necessary to be known by Married Women.

A copy will be sent, under cover, on receipt of stamp, to any part of the United Kingdom, and to foreign parts on receipt of letter postage.

Address—E. LAMBERT & SON, M.M.L., (DOMESTIC & HYGIENIC DEPT.) 66 Queen's Road, Dalston London, N.E.

W. J. Rendell's "WIFE'S FRIEND."

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in "Law of Population," page 82, and Dr. Allbutt in "Wife's Handbook," page 51. Made solely by J. PULLER, 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope. Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 8d. Dr. Allbutt's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 8s. doz. All prices post free.

W. J. Rendell

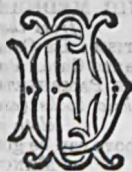
15 Chadwell Street, Clerkenwell, E.C. Near the "Angel."

FIRST FLOOR TO LET.

TWO Very Light Rooms; rent 7s. week; good as main road; very central; every convenience. 1 Scoresby-street late York-street, Blackfriars-road, S.E.

SEEDS. SEEDS. SEEDS.

Vegetable and Flower Seeds saved from choice selected stocks. Everyone with a garden and every market gardener should send for a Catalogue before purchasing elsewhere. Special low quotations to large buyers. B. L. COLEMAN, Seed Merchant and Grower, Sandwich, Kent.



RUBBER STAMPS.

Your Monogram to mark Linen or Paper; two letters, 1s.; three letters, 1s. 6d.; any Name, 1s. 6d. Box, Pad and Ink included. All kinds of Stamps. Patterns free. Carriage 2d. extra. F. N. IBETON and CO., 52 Gracechurch Street, London. Agents wanted.

TO FREETHINKERS, Ladies and Gentlemen requiring Superior Cut Garments at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artiste Tailor, 14 Great Castle Street, W. Three doors from Regent Street. [Patronised by leading Freethinkers.]

Colonel Ingersoll's WORKS.

- Some Mistakes of Moses. 132pp. ... 1 0 Superior edition, cloth ... 1 6 The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. Defence of Freethought ... 0 6 A five hours' speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. Reply to Gladstone ... 0 4 With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. Rome or Reason? ... 0 4 A Reply to Cardinal Manning. Crimes against Criminals ... 0 3 Oration on Walt Whitman ... 0 3 Oration on Voltaire ... 0 3 Abraham Lincoln ... 0 3 Humanity's Debt to Thomas Paine... 0 2 Ernest Renan and Jesus Christ ... 0 2 True Religion ... 0 2 The Three Philanthropists ... 0 2 Love the Redeemer ... 0 2 Why I am an Agnostic. Part I. ... 0 2 Why I am an Agnostic. Part II. ... 0 2 God and the State ... 0 2 Paine the Pioneer ... 0 2 Faith and Fact ... 0 2 God and Man ... 0 2 The Dying Creed ... 0 2 The Limits of Toleration ... 0 2 A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. The Household of Faith ... 0 2 Art and Morality ... 0 2 Do I BlaspHEME? ... 0 2 The Clergy and Common Sense ... 0 2 Social Salvation... ... 0 2 Marriage and Divorce ... 0 2 The Great Mistake ... 0 1 Creeds and Spirituality ... 0 1 Live Topics ... 0 1 Myth and Miracle ... 0 1 Real Blasphemy ... 0 1 Repairing the Idols ... 0 1 Christ and Miracles ... 0 1 R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

EXCEPTIONAL OFFER.

FOR ONE MONTH ONLY. We will make and send, Carriage Paid, to readers of this paper,

A PAIR OF MEN'S ALL-WOOL TROUSERS

(Sold retail at 13s. 6d.)

For 8s. 6d.

Give waist and leg measure, and state color preferred.

Money Returned in Full if not approved.

L. COLEMAN & CO., Clothing Manufacturers, Nuneaton.

Send for our Price List.

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY

TO BE DISPOSED OF. STOCK OF FREETHOUGHT LITERATURE,

AT THE MANCHESTER FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING DEPOT AND SECULAR HALL, With Tenancy of Bookstall. Apply, A. Hemingway, 25 Higher Chatham Street, Manchester.

—READ—

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY: To Keep it Holy!

A Lecture on the Sunday Question.

By ELIJAH COPLAND,

Price 2d. Wholesale; Sunday Music Society, Limited, 24 Bath Lane, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

THE FAMILY LIMIT

1s. 6d. per doz., post free. For further Particulars send stamped directed envelope to A. MOSS, 36 Upper Park Street, ISLINGTON, LONDON, N.

IS SOCIALISM SOUND?

Verbatim Report of Four Nights' Debate between ANNIE BESANT

AND G. W. FOOTE.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Superior Edition, in Cloth, Two Shillings.

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

BIBLE STUDIES.**AN ESSAY ON PHALLIC WORSHIP,
AND OTHER CURIOUS RITES AND CUSTOMS.***By J. M. WHEELER.*

Contents:—Phallic Worship Among the Jews—Circumcision—Moses at the Inn—The Brazen Serpent—Religion and Magic—Tobooos—Blood Rites—Scape Goats—Trial by Ordeal—Bible Witchcraft—Saul's Spiritualist Séance—Sacrifices—Passover—The Evolution of Jahveh—Joshua and the Sun—Hebrew Prophets—Old Testament Marriage—Song of Solomon—Sacred Seven.

2/6 *Superior paper, Illustrated, bound in cloth.* 2/6

ROBERT FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

Flowers of Freethought.

BY G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS.

Old Nick	Mr. Gladstone on Devils	The Logic of Persecution
Fire!!!	Huxley's Mistake	Luther and the Devil
Sky Pilots	The Gospel of Free-thought	Bible English
Devil Dodgers	On Ridicule	Living by Faith
Fighting Spooks	Who are the Blasphemers?	Victor Hugo
Damned Sinners	Christianity and Common Sense	Desecrating a Church
Where is Hell?	The Lord of Lords	Walt Whitman
Spurgeon and Hell	Consecrating the Colors	Tennyson and the Bible
Is Spurgeon in Heaven?	Christmas in Holloway Gaol	Christ's Old Coat
God in Japan	Who Killed Christ?	Christ's Coat, No. 2
Stanley on Providence	Did Jesus Ascend?	Scotched, Not Slain
Gone to God	The Rising Son?	God-Making
Thank God	St. Paul's Veracity	God and the Weather
Judgment Day	No Faith with Heretics	Miracles
Shelley's Atheism		A Real Miracle
Long Faces		Jesus on Women
Our Father		Paul on Women
Wait Till You Die		Mother's Religion
Dead Theology		

Bound in Cloth, Price 2s. 6d.

R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN DOCTOR.**MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. I. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.**

Management of Infancy, Health, Longevity, Teeth, Brown Bread, Bread Making, Food, Vegetarianism, Tobacco, Drink Question, Fruit, Fresh Air, Exercise, Bathing, Light, Holidays, Cause and Cure of Disease, Constipation, Biliousness, Eczema, Blackheads and Pimples, Nervousness, Coughs and Colds, Chest Complaints, Deafness, Thread Worms, Long Worms, Tape Worms, Itch, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. II. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.

The Healing Power of Nature; Clothing; Electricity in Disease; Apparent Health; Vegetarian Experiments; The Pig as Human Food; Popular Fallacies about Flesh; The Beef Tea Delusion; Salt; Saline Starvation; Tea Drinking; The Hair and its Management; Sleep and Sleeplessness; Want of Energy, etc.; Health Hints for Workers, Shop Assistants, and Servants; Advice for the Thin; for the Stout; and on the Proper Treatment of Simple Fever, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Ringworm, Hypochondria, Bloodlessness, Diarrhœa, Ulcerated Legs, Tumors, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. III. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.

Health and Wealth; No More Death; Youth; The Necessity for Pure Air, and How to Get it; The Management of Young Children; Hunger and Appetite; Effects of Fasting; Perfect Foods; Green Foods; Suppers; Unsuspected Domestic Poisons; Thirst; Perspiration; Sea Bathing, etc. HOW—to Eat Properly, to Eat Fruit, to Judge Wholemeal Bread, to Breathe Properly, to Grow Tall, to Keep Warm, to Live, to Live One Hundred Years, to Improve the Memory, and to become Beautiful and Attractive. On the Cause and Cure of Stomach Troubles, Flatulence, Sleepiness, Varicose Veins, Boils and Carbuncles, Sebaceous Tumors or Wens, Hay Fever, Winter Cough, Chilblains, the Diseases Produced by taking Mercury, Epilepsy.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. IV. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.

New Year Resolutions, Prevention better than Cure, Health Savings Banks, Hardening, Rubbish, Work and Overwork, Sugar and its Abuse, Macaroni, Salads, Wholemeal Cookery, Porridge, Celeraic or Celery Root, Milk as Food, The Tomato, Against Butter, Poulitices, Quinine, Against the Knife, Arsenical Poisoning, Tonics, Infant Mortality, Against Stimulants in Disease, Stays and their Substitutes, About Swallowing Pins and other Articles, also the Cause and Rational Cure of Sun Stroke, Dog Bites, Pains in the Back, Pediculi or Lice, Chicken-pox, Synovitis or Inflammation of the Joints, Tonsillitis or Quinsy, Herpes (Tetter or Shingles), Erysipelas, Ulcer of the Stomach, Epidemic Influenza, Sciatica, Psoriasis or English Leprosy. Appendix.

*The Four Volumes, strongly and neatly bound, for 5s. 6d.***HYGIENIC MEDICINE. An Eye-Opener to Drug Takers. Post free from the Author for Postal Order for 1s. 1d.****RHEUMATISM: Its Cause and Cure. Post free 7d. — CONSUMPTION: Its Cause and Cure. Post free 7d. — DIET AND DIGESTION. Post free 7d.****THREE PAMPHLETS TO YOUNG MEN. Post free 1s. 1d.*** * * *All these books (except Pamphlets to Young Men) bound together in cloth in one volume. Post free 8s. 6d.*

All the above can be got from DR. T. R. ALLINSON, 4 SPANISH PLACE, MANCHESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

HOURS OF CONSULTATION are—Morning from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; fee, 10s. 6d. Evening from 6 to 8; fee, 5s.Patients visited in London for a fee of 10s. 6d. Patients visited in the country. Fee according to distance and the time occupied in going and returning. *Advice Given by post.***SEND TO-DAY FOR GOTT'S
NEW SPRING & SUMMER PATTERNS**

They include all the Latest Novelties in Ladies' and Gentlemen's Materials.

**A PURE BOTANY WOOL SUIT LENGTH
FREE OF COST.**

A Special Line of over 2,000 yards of Pure Botany Wool Mixtures, suitable for Gentlemen's Overcoats, Suits, Trousers, Boys' Overcoats, Suits, Ladies' Mantles, etc. In order to get persons to show the patterns amongst their friends, we offer to send patterns free, and to every person securing orders to the amount of £6, we will GIVE one Suit Length FREE OF COST. The price is 6s. 6d. per yard, 56 inches wide. The real value is from 8s. 6d. to 10s. per yard.

**WILL YOU HAVE A SUIT LENGTH FREE OF COST?
A VERY SLIGHT EFFORT WILL GET IT.****WHITE LACE CURTAINS**

4s. and 5s. 6d. per pair.

ALL NEW DESIGNS.

WONDERFUL VALUE.

BLACK DRESS SERGE

In Pure Botany Wool. 12s. 6d. the Dress Length.

*Remember, we return the money in full and allow you to keep the material if this does not give perfect satisfaction.***Remnants in Real Scotch Tweed Suitings & Trouserings**

2s. 9d. per yard, 28 inches wide.

Remnants in Dress Goods, Superior Qualities,

Three Dress Lengths for 25s.

LADIES, TRY A PARCEL OF THESE, AND YOU WILL BE DELIGHTED.

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