

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

RELIGION AND MONEY.

"Every religion is a getting religion; for though I myself get nothing, I am subordinate to those that do. So you may find a lawyer in the Temple that gets little for the present; but he is fitting himself to be in time one of those great ones that do get."—SELDEN'S *Table Talk*.

"The Divine stands wrapt up in his cloud of mysteries, and the amused Laity must pay Tithes and Veneration to be kept in obscurity, grounding their hope of future knowledge on a competent stock of present ignorance."—GEORGE FARQUHAR.

RELIGION and priestcraft may not be the same thing in *essence*. That is a point on which we do not intend to dogmatise, and this is not the opportunity to argue it. But *practically* religion and priestcraft are the same thing. They are inextricably bound up together, and they will suffer a common fate. In saying this, however, we must be understood to use the word "religion" in its ordinary sense, as synonymous with *theology*. Religion as non-supernatural, as the idealism of morality, the sovereign bond of collective society, is a matter with which we are not at present concerned.

Priestcraft did not *invent* religion. To believe that it did is the error of an impulsive and uninformed scepticism. But priestcraft developed it, systematised it, enforced it, and perpetuated it. This could not be effected, however, except in alliance with the temporal power; and accordingly, in every country—savage, barbaric, or civilised—the priests and the privileged classes are found in harmony. They have occasional differences, but these are ultimately adjusted. Sometimes the priesthood overrules the temporal power, but more frequently the former gives way to the latter; indeed, it is instructive to watch how the course of religion has been so largely determined by political influences. The development of Judaism was almost entirely controlled by the political vicissitudes of the Hebrews. The political power really decided the great controversy between Arianism and Athanasianism. Politics again, twelve hundred years later, settled the bounds of the Reformation, not only for the moment, but for subsequent centuries. Where the prince's sword was thrown into the scale, it determined the balance. England, for instance, was non-papal Catholic under Henry VIII., Protestant under Edward VI., papal-Catholic under Mary, and Protestant again under Elizabeth; although every one of these changes, according to the clergy, was dictated by the Holy Ghost.

Priests and the privileged classes *must* settle their differences in some way, otherwise the people would become too knowing, and too independent. The co-operation of impostor and robber is necessary to the bamboozlement and exploitation of the masses. This co-operation, indeed, is the great secret of the permanence of religion; and its policy is twofold—education and the power of money.

The value of *education* may be inferred from the frantic efforts of the clergy to build and maintain schools of their own, and to force their doctrines

into the schools built and maintained by the State. In this respect there is nothing to choose between Church and Dissent. The reading of the Bible in Board Schools is a compromise between themselves, lest a worse thing should befall them both. If one section were strong enough to upset the compromise it would do so; in fact, the Church party is now attempting this stroke of policy on the London School Board, with the avowed object of giving a Church color to the religious teaching of the children. The very same principle was at work in former days, when none but Churchmen were admitted to the universities or public positions. It was a splendid means of maintaining the form of religion which was bound up with the monarchy and the aristocracy. Learning and influence were, as far as possible, kept on the side of the established faith, which thus became the master of the masters of the people. This is perfectly obvious to the student of history, and Freethinkers should lay its lesson to heart. It is only by driving religion entirely out of education, from the humblest school to the proudest college, that we shall ever succeed in breaking the power of priestcraft and freeing the people from the bondage of superstition.

We could write a volume on this theme—the power of education in maintaining religion; but we must be satisfied with the foregoing at present, and turn our attention to the power of *money*. It is a wise adage that money is the sinews of war. Fighting is very largely, often wholly, a question of resources. Troops may be ever so brave, generals ever so skilful, but they will be beaten unless they have good rifles and artillery, plenty of ammunition, and an ample commissariat. Now the same thing obtains in *all* warfare. It would be foolish, no less than base, to deny the inspiring efficacy of ideas, the electric force of enthusiasm; but, however highly men may be energised, they cannot act without instruments; and money buys them, whether the instruments be rifles and artillery, or schools, or churches, or any kind of organisation.

Given churches with great wealth, as well as control over public education, and it is easy to see that they will be able to perpetuate themselves. Endowments are specially valuable. They are rooted, so to speak, in the past, and hold firm. They bear golden fruit to be plucked by the skilful and adventurous. Besides, the very *age* of an endowed institution gives it a venerable air; and its freedom from the full necessity of "cadging" lends it a certain "respectability"—like that of a man who lives on his means, instead of earning his living.

It is not an extravagant calculation that, in England alone, twenty millions a year are spent on religion. The figures fall glibly from the tongue, but just try to realise them! Think first of a thousand, then of a thousand thousand, then of twenty times that. Take a single million, and think what its expenditure might do in the shaping of public opinion. A practical friend of ours, a good Radical and Freethinker, said that he would undertake to create a majority for Home Rule

in England with a million of money; and if he spent it judiciously, we think he might succeed. Well then, just imagine, not one million, but twenty millions, spent *every year* in maintaining and propagating a certain religion. Is it not enough, and more than enough, to perpetuate a system which is firmly founded, to begin with, on the education of little children?

Here lies the strength of Christianity. It is not true, it is not useful. Its teachings and pretensions are both seen through by tens of thousands, but the wealth supports it. "Without money and without price" is the fraudulent language of the pious prospectus. It would never last on those terms. The money keeps it up. Withdraw the money, and the Black Army would disband, leaving the people free to work out their secular salvation, without the fear and trembling of a foolish faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

PROFESSOR EDWIN JOHNSON.

MANY Freethinkers are now interested in the personality and opinions of Prof. Edwin Johnson, the modern Hardouin, who would bring to the service of Freethought the historical scepticism with which the Jesuit sought to pulverise the Benedictines. Owing to *Antiqua Mater*, his first work of a Freethought character, having been anonymous, his name does not appear in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, although at the time when I reviewed that work both in *Progress* and the *Freethinker*, I entered into a correspondence with him which has since grown voluminous. A few brief particulars of the man and his career may then not be out of place, and I here supply them.

Mr. Johnson is the son of the late Rev. A. Johnson, Congregational minister at Basingstoke and in London. He was born November 9, 1842, and is consequently exactly a year younger than the Prince of Wales. His life has been entirely that of a scholar. His father, I have been told by a very learned clergyman, was a scholar of learning and judgment. Our author studied for the ministry at New College, South Hampstead, from 1859—65. Among his tutors were the Rev. R. Halley, D.D.; Rev. S. Newth, D.D.; Rev. J. H. Godwin; Rev. M. Nenner; Dr. E. Lankaster; and Sir Wm. Smith, D.C.L., the renowned editor of the *Bible Dictionary* and *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography* and *Greek and Roman Antiquities*, who, about 1863, pronounced Edwin Johnson as one of the most distinguished pupils he ever had. He graduated in Honors at London University. In 1865 Mr. Johnson was ordained a Congregational minister, officiating at Forest Hill till 1870, and from 1871 till 1879 at Boston, Lincolnshire. In that year he was appointed Professor of Classics at the New College, and retained that position until 1887, when the chair, with the Arts faculty, was done away with. Those who care to look up the Congregationalist papers of that day may perhaps discover the circumstances under which this change took place. Suffice it to say Prof. Johnson could not expect to enjoy outspoken freedom in an orthodox college. He never had any quarrel with his colleagues. Most of his life has been occupied in research, and, if I understand the man, he would not keep the result of his researches to himself, even in teaching theological students their classics.

During the period of his ministry he edited the *Colloquies* of Erasmus, translated Meyer's *Critical Handbook* on the Romans, translated Ewald on the Psalms for the Theological Translation Fund Library, contributed to the *Pulpit Commentary* and wrote in the *British Quarterly Review*. His *Antiqua Mater*

was originally written with three other essays, two in Latin, for a Dutch Theological Society. Prof. Loman gave him much encouragement, as did also the late Ernest Havet.

His *Antiqua Mater* (published by Trübner in 1887) was the result of an examination as to what testimony was actually to be found in ancient literature as to the existence of, and the alleged facts put forward by, the Christian Church. Instead of going to any of the numerous Christian compilations of evidences, Mr. Johnson went to the documents themselves, examining them as he would any other. The result was meagre, not to say barren; only plain on the negative side. The alleged testimonies of Josephus, Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius he found spurious, like the old Sibylline verses, epistles of Jesus and Abgarus, the testimony of Phlegon and other forgeries, which did duty as Christian evidences in pre-critical days. On the other hand, there was a remarkable silence in such writers as Plutarch, Pausanias, and Jayenal. The Pagan writers show no acquaintance with the particulars of the gospel; nor do even the alleged works of the apostolical fathers. Justin Martyr knew nothing of Paul, and as to Jesus and the apostles it is evident he had before him an ideal, not actual persons of whose life and teachings any accurate particulars has been recorded. The origin of Christian tradition, he saw, lay not in verifiable fact, but in cravings, imaginations, and aspirations, and he says, "The question will again and again occur whether men, who busied themselves with such phantasies, had any grasp of an actual life once lived among men at all."

Brought thus to an *impasse*, Prof. Johnson resolved to dig deeper to discover, if possible, when the first stone of the church was laid, and to trace the growth and completion of the structure. On this investigation he found himself driven from point to point downward. Early inscriptions, monuments, and paintings were found wanting, and the documents of ecclesiastical literature, all came from the monasteries of the twin orders of St. Basil and St. Benedict. These documents, the books of the New Testament and the Christian Fathers, he found were at bottom all monastic in character, written in and for the cloister; and that the writers ascribed to the fourth century, have identically the same style and the same thoughts as those ascribed to the fourteenth. He came to the conclusion that the traditions of the Mohammedan church are earlier forms of those held in the Christian church, and that the Christian scriptures must be dated since the time of the Crusades. These results, and others equally startling, are stated in his big book on *The Rise of Christendom*. In reviewing that work in the *Freethinker* I stated my difficulties in accepting its positions, overturning, as they do, all received history, even that of the colossal Gibbon. Since its publication, and indeed before, I have given what attention I could to the same problems, and, although Prof. Johnson has not converted me, I am convinced both that there is still a large field to be carefully explored, and that it is now incumbent on Christians to prove their documents backwards from the age of publication, some 400 years ago. It is certain that the labors of a vast order of men, working for generations, will not be overturned in a day, but it is also certain that Mr. Johnson has no such motives as animated the monks. In making his conclusions known, he has lost the good will of the orthodox, among whom he was brought up, and has found himself deserted by his former tutors, pupils, and friends. He will have the consolations always open to the conscientious scholar. For Prof. Johnson is emphatically a scholar. I call myself a bit of a book-worm. My life has been spent among books, and an attendant at the British Museum jokingly taxes me with attempting to read all the books in that library

—a task as far from my desire as from any one's ability. But Prof. Johnson's reading is far wider than my own. He is complete master of monastic Latin, and he has an expert's ability of seizing the pith of a book. Hitherto his work has been received with silence rather than refuted. He is about to contribute to the *Freethinker* a series of articles on the Church History ascribed to Eusebius, upon which depends the truth or falsity of early Christian history, and this introduction will, I think, bespeak for them that attention their importance demands.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

MUCH time and ingenuity have been devoted by theological writers to the exposition and defence of what is termed Christian ethics. It is generally supposed by orthodox believers that morality has a divine sanction, and that it is necessarily associated with the Christian religion. In consequence of this assumption great confusion of thought has arisen in reference to the basis and nature of ethical culture. Personally we have no difficulty in understanding that by ethics is meant morality applied to the duties and obligations of life. But when the term Christian is associated with it, its proper meaning appears to us to be entirely changed. It is then a speculative force rather than the result of the operation of natural law.

Recognised exponents of Christian ethics have defined it as "living according to the teachings of Christ and the Church." When, however, we remember the different interpretations given of Christianity, and also when we bear in mind the variety of Churches with their opposing teachings, we perceive the difficulty such a definition involves. Theologians have also alleged that ethical force is "the working of the power of Christ in the Christian consciousness." But the objection to this allegation is, that "the power of Christ," and the manner in which it is supposed to affect human consciousness, have never been clearly explained. Speaking generally, the manifestations pertaining to Christian consciousness have been frequently observed where the profession of Christianity was entirely absent. It is further asserted that there has been in man since the beginning of the human race, a spiritual guide, something which determines right from wrong. If this is true, the claim of Christian ethics is invalidated, inasmuch as the manifestations of the power of Christ necessitate that he should have existed from the first appearance of man on the earth. The Church's idea that a knowledge of right has been revealed only through Christ, excludes it from all ancient and modern nations, except those called Christian. This means that, according to the contention of theologians, the great majority of mankind have been, and still are, destitute of a notion of moral order, or of a conception of right and wrong. To meet this difficulty it has been suggested that conscience might have been human before it was divine. But this is clearly inadmissible, even as a working hypothesis, because Christian ethics recognises only a conscience on which "the spirit of Christ" is operating. This power, whatever it may be, is unable to operate where Christ is unknown, and where his influence is unfelt, which is the case among the majority of the human race.

We are told that the force which is new in Christian ethics is the power to make moral obligation a moral fact, and that the exercise of this power is the special mission of Christianity. Facts of history and those of personal experience show the inaccuracy of this statement. In ancient times, long before Christ was heard of, there existed and was practised a code of morality as pure and as potent in its influence as any

that we have heard of since his advent. And surely no one will contend that to-day ethical conduct within the Church is superior to that in force among unbelievers. Professor Tyndall remarks, in his lecture on *Science and Man* (p. 27): "If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown; if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor, and a just citizen—I should seek and find him among the band of Atheists. I have known some of the most pronounced among them, not only in life, but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a 'hangman's whip,' with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended upon their latest deeds." Here is a living testimony—similar to those furnished by J. S. Mill, Theo. Parker, and many other eminent writers—to the power of morality apart from Christianity or from any other supernatural religion.

For ourselves, without any influence of the "Spirit of Christ," we recognise our obligation to society as a moral fact. It is society that develops both the obligation and the conscience to obey it, and no theological assumption will get rid of the natural causes that operate in determining the actions of men. Social morality arises out of a relation that is human, and it grows with increasing knowledge and experience. Its basis is in nature, and there it discovers an incentive to perform deeds that are noble, and to pursue conduct that is beneficial to the commonwealth. Upon this the believer in natural morality can rely, for "Nature never did deceive the heart that loved her." But how are we to judge of Christian morality? Is the Spirit of Christ that of love and peace, or of fire and the sword? Is it the spirit of forgiveness such as is said to have been shown on the cross, or is it the spirit of vengeance which we are told is to be manifested at the day of judgment? Besides, if we assume that man possesses some moral power like that indicated by Christian ethics, a sort of minor deity within himself, it must apply equally to the Jew, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, and the Freethinker. In that case we should get, as a result, the exhibition of every known contradictory action found among the various groups of mankind. Such a view of ethics requires us to believe that man has some force differing in its nature from all other manifestations of intelligence, and that this force can determine untaught whether actions are right or wrong. Moreover, Christian ethics deprives us of all morality as such, for it ascribes its force to the influence of the "holy spirit," and does not attempt to establish human action on observed facts, which is the method of modern science. The Christian objects to natural morality because it relies upon experience, but the influence derived from the teachings of Jesus, if it exist, is as much an experience as is our belief of what we deem the supreme good. To say that we have not attained the supreme good, and therefore cannot define what it is applies with equal force to Christian ethics, unless in the latter case we are bound to accept it as true, independently of experience.

We allege that in nature there is a standard of moral conduct, and that though for a time it may be rendered obscure by mental darkness, the standard still exists. This law is based upon the fitness of things, and where this condition is found, moral natures will necessarily be the result. The primary truths in morals are as axiomatic as those in mathematics, though the propositions deduced from them require reason to discover their existence. As the Christian writer, Cudworth, remarks, "The distinction of right and wrong is discerned by reason, and

as soon as these words are defined, it becomes evident that it would be a contradiction in terms to affirm that any process, human or divine, could change their nature." We therefore refuse to relinquish our belief in the human character of ethics in favor of the assumption of divine morality, that is based on the notion that man possesses some supernatural power. We prefer our terrestrial feet to celestial wings, and we feel safer in the realms of experience than in the flights of theological conjecture. This is the view of ethics that is finding favor more and more among the intellects of modern times—a view which we believe will ultimately supplant the old idea of divinely regulated conduct. We believe with Emerson, that "No man can tell what religious revolutions await us in the next years; and the education in the divinity colleges may well hesitate and vary. But the science of ethics has no mutations; and whoever feels any love or skill for ethical studies may safely lay out all his strength and genius in working that mine. The pulpit may shake, but this platform will not. All the victories of religion belong to the moral sentiments."

CHARLES WATTS.

A SPECIMEN OF FARRAR.

THAT highly rhetorical gentleman, as the *Spectator* once called him—Archdeacon Farrar—has been unbosoming himself in Westminster Abbey on the question of Science and Unbelief. At the outset of his discourse Dr. Farrar very candidly allows that the pulpit has declined immensely in influence, in modern times, as a public instructor. "There have been ages in which the authority of the pulpit was dominant," says the canon, and what ages they were! Ages of intellectual darkness, of social stagnation, of priestly imposture. "Now," we are told, "it is far otherwise; the predominance of influence has been transferred from the pulpit to the press." The journalist, in fact, has taken the place of the prophet of old, with this difference—the journalist is open to criticism and to contradiction, the prophet generally pretended to be "sent by God," and therefore above either criticism or contradiction. Arrogant as we are sometimes told the journalist is, yet we fancy he can hardly become as impudent as the prophet. Pigotts in the press get found out in a few months at most; it takes centuries to expose a Moses or a Mark. There is, we believe, a journalist to-day who considers journalists should be little deputy god-almightys, but, really, poor old Jehovah has enough to bear already without putting on his shoulders the responsibility for every little vagary of Mr. Stead.

Archdeacon Farrar starts with a laudable exhortation to sincerity in preaching. Doubtless he considers the exhortation is needed. He says the pulpit can have no influence, and deservedly none, "if preachers, without thought, without knowledge, with no impassioned love of truth, shut themselves up in the narrow shell of ecclesiasticism, and have nothing better to offer to men than empty shibboleths, silvery platitudes, and silken euphemisms." All which is very good and righteous—if it is not mere silvery platitude itself. And the idea that it is mere platitude is, unfortunately, liable to be strengthened as we follow the Archdeacon's discourse. Thus, fancy a well-off, comfortable Churchman, who prides himself on his friendships with princes and potentates, who preaches the reigning "respectable" creed—with the least little watering—in the grandest "respectable" Abbey, bursting out in this strain: "It is the function of the true prophet to resist, to tell the truth and shame the Devil, to champion every righteous and every unpopular cause, to stand up before kings, and not be ashamed to regard the friendship of the world as enmity with God." Just think of championing "every

unpopular cause" from the pulpit of Westminster Abbey! It would be an interesting phenomenon, but unfortunately it is a phenomenon which we fancy, in the language of a newspaper-man the other day, will synchronise with that other interesting era when pigs begin to fly.

However, to come to the question of science and its influence on religious belief, Dr. Farrar "looks upon the revelations of science as the conspicuous glory of the age, but also as the infinite boon of God." Being a man of God, the preacher must drag his employer into the business by hook or by crook. He also "looks upon it as a mere confusion of thought, a confusion of language, to say that science is opposed to revelation. Science is part of revelation." Now seriously, candidly, does this exemplify that straightforwardness which Dr. Farrar inculcated previously on his hearers? What does Dr. Farrar mean by "revelation"? He can only mean the Bible. Does he then mean to argue that the results and discoveries of modern science substantiate the Bible? Is he, too, after all his gush about sincerity, going to juggle with Genesis, to tell us that "round" means "square," and "black," if read properly, really means "white"? It is all very well to talk grandiosely of science being a "part of revelation." What then if one part of "revelation" contradicts another part? But Archdeacon Farrar carefully and prudently remains on the ground of vague generalities. He does not condescend for a moment to take up a particular challenged case—say the "creation story"—and show that science has verified the old belief. He simply talks round the question in a vague and general way. Thus he says that "religion, on one side, is nothing but a knowledge of God, and science deepens our knowledge of God." It may be well to remark that the science which "deepens our knowledge of God" exists only in Dr. Farrar's imagination. The astronomer sweeps the heavens with his telescope, the naturalist pierces the infinitesimal with his microscope, the chemist decomposes substances and rebuilds them from their constituent elements—none of them find a trace of Dr. Farrar's God. Some of them may believe, but they believe from early training and prejudice, or from inference—good or bad; they do not believe because of experiment, as they do their scientific facts. But it is curious to see the way Dr. Farrar argues the matter. This is the gist of his reasoning: "The Bible, properly interpreted, is the revelation of God. God cannot contradict God. Therefore 'true' science and 'real' Bible agree." This is choice. Between "true" science and "true" revelation there is no difference. But there's the rub. Between science and the Bible, as we have it, there is contradiction, and serious, radical contradiction. Dr. Farrar gets out of the difficulty by assuming that therefore either the science is not "true" or our reading of the Bible is not correct. Undoubtedly it is an accommodating kind of thing. But one would imagine it never occurred to Dr. Farrar that the premises may be faulty, that science and the Bible may *not* be revelations from the same infallible person. What Dr. Farrar does is to simply lay down certain arbitrary and improved premises, and then, when the deduction from those premises is found untrue, declare that the fault is in the interpretation of plain words or the observation of plain facts. For our part, it seems much simpler, and far less roundabout, to question the unproved premises, to conclude that the Bible and science are not revelations from some supernatural individual, than to dive through a maze of questionable explanations of clear language, to believe that when a book says "days" it doesn't mean days, and when it says "waters" it doesn't mean waters. Even if it were admitted—for the sake of argument—that between "true" science and "true" Bible there is no difference, how is Dr. Farrar helped? Where are we to

get at the "true" Bible when crowds of rival interpreters step in with their contradictory interpretations, and when, abandoning the plain meaning of plain expressions, we lose ourselves in a crowd of verbiage, much of which has not even the merit of sincerity?

Dr. Farrar discusses the question, "Does Science tend to Unbelief?"; and his method is the most unoriginal and puerile that could be conceived. Frankly, reading this discourse of Dr. Farrar's—we take the report in the *Christian World Pulpit*—we are led to meditate on how little it takes to rear a great pulpit reputation. There is not even the suggestion of an original thought, nay, not even an old, forgotten thought, in the whole sermon. Take this case of whether Science tends to unbelief. What is Dr. Farrar's great argument? Why, to shout out a list of eminent scientists who were Christians, and either ignore the Freethinking scientists, or half dishonestly suggest they were religious. "Half dishonestly" may perhaps sound a strong word, and we are averse to bandying strong or offensive expressions; but we shall presently seek to justify our use of the word here. But first for the Christian scientists. The canon asks: "Whose name stands first in science in our generation?" The answer is Michael Faraday, according to the archdeacon. Now, without in the least detracting from the honor to which Faraday's service to chemical science justly entitles him, we fancy most people would agree that the setting of him up as the greatest scientist of the century is entirely beyond the mark. It is precisely an example of that constitutional extravagance of statement which is Dr. Farrar's besetting sin. It would be difficult, in fact almost impossible, to say who is the greatest scientist of the century; you cannot well get a basis of comparison for men who work in different channels, as most of the scientists do. One is a great chemist, another a great biologist, a third a great astronomer. How can you compare their worth, except in a general way? But if we are going to back scientists against one another, surely Darwin and Tyndall would run Faraday very close—and probably, in the estimation of the majority, beat him any day. The fact, of course, is, that Faraday was a Christian, though he "lapsed" for a time, and caused much anxiety on the part of his comrades for his conversion, a fact which of course Dr. Farrar doesn't state—hence the necessity to exaggerate Faraday's importance as a scientist. There is a story told of Faraday, of which the most that can be said is that it ought to be let sink into oblivion. A friend found Faraday in tears one day, and inquired if he were ill. "No," he said, "it is not that"; but, pointing to his Bible, he said, "while men have this blessed book to teach them, why will they go astray?" The tale is pathetic; for there is something genuinely sad in the spectacle of a great man talking drivel of that character. We should be inclined to charitably assume that Faraday was ill, despite his own disclaimer. Sometimes people are ill without knowing it. If the story be true—and we give it on Dr. Farrar's authority—it may just serve to point a truth that is sometimes forgotten, that very great men very often say very foolish things. Great men, after all, are only men—flesh and blood, like the rest of us; and very often, in realms outside those in which their greatness has been achieved, of no more authority than the ordinary man in the street.

FREDERICK RYAN.

(To be concluded).

OATHS AND ORDEALS.

Our European ancestors, who employed every moment the expedient of swearing on extraordinary crosses and relics, were less honorable in all engagements than their posterity, who, from experience, have omitted those ineffectual securities.—Hume, "History of England," Appendix i.

ETHICAL LIBERALISM.

A REPLY TO DR. JANES BY GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

IN England preachers increase who contend that Christianity has caused or contains all the conditions of progress, which Freethought has originated and established. This neither convinces me nor attracts me. When Dr. Janes set forth that Nature comprised the Christian doctrine of Providence, I thought it lowered the lofty profession of Ethics to the level of Christianity. My valued friends, Dr. Felix Adler and Dr. Coit, have not done this; and I am on their side of ethical teaching. Many parts of the Bible contain noble precepts which I regard; there are many noble preachers of Christianity whom I honor, and whose friendship I esteem and reciprocate; but it is their lives I regard rather than their doctrine. If I knew Dr. Janes personally, no doubt I should find that his honorable passion for proselytism has led him too far in confounding Nature with Providence, yet all the while his intentions are upright. I could not think ill of a correspondent who wrote in the *Freethinkers' Magazine*. With me, it is as a letter of recommendation in a philosopher that he addresses its readers.

At the same time that I accept certain parts of scripture, I do not believe others, and say so. I am an Eclectic. I take on "Heathen or on Christian ground" what seems to me to accord with reason and experience. All else I neither explain away nor try to harmonise with what I accept. And as I was of the ethical way of thinking before Dr. Janes, I stand up for the dignity of disowning what contradicts ethical truth. To Dr. Janes this seems "hysterical" or "illiberal Liberalism"—but it is my way, and I do not apologise for it. He says there are "implications of Christian doctrine from which he dissents as strongly as myself"—without seeing that I dissent not only from the "implications," but from the doctrine itself. Dr. Janes says: "Only by obeying the laws of God can man be profited—such is the teaching of scripture." I wish this was true. On the contrary, a missionary may obey all the laws of God as set forth in scripture, and Providence will do nothing for him in a storm unless he obeys the laws of Nature in his provisions against shipwreck. I believe in Nature, the larger God of mankind.

It is strange to find Dr. Janes treating the truths of Evolution as understood and valued only by himself and his school. I thought Evolution theories were originated and vindicated mainly by Liberals. Ten years before Spencer wrote, or Wallace pondered, or Darwin demonstrated, Charles Southwell published in the *Oracle of Reason* William Chilton's articles on the "Theory of Regular Gradation." In those days Christian defenders poured out their vials of wrath upon us, and the contents of their vials were vitriolic. They had no idea of Dr. Janes' discovery that their Providence was concealed in the folds of Evolution. Liberals not understand nor appreciate Evolution! What can Dr. Janes mean? Liberals kept the gate through which Evolution entered into Ethics.

I have oft had to vindicate Secular Ethics against clerical adversaries, but never before against a professed teacher of Ethics. My earliest friend among preachers was Theodore Parker—the Jupiter of the pulpit, as Wendell Phillips once described him to me; Henry Ward Beecher, the Rev. Dr. Everett Hale and Dr. Robert Collier I count it as great advantage to have known and to know, and some other American divines. In my own country I have personal regard for the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker and Hugh Price Hughes, who are known also in America, and others whose names would fill a page. They all widely differ from me in opinion, and have sources of inspiration not open to me. Except on grounds of intellectual curiosity, I care nothing for the sources of whence many noble preachers derive their inspiration of duty and service to man. I have honor, appreciation, and gratitude for the result. This is the type of "Illiberal Liberalism," which Dr. Janes describes me "as the exemplar." Evolution comprises scientific grounds of toleration, nobler and greater than Christianity has ever offered, or than the world has before possessed. As I have not time to return to the subject, I trust that Dr. Janes, in his wide-mindedness, will deem this declaration satisfactory. I am for ethical teaching, unaggressive, uncovetous of the errors of others, unambitious of assimilating them, eclectic, tolerant, self-respecting and self-sustaining.

—*Freethinkers' Magazine*.

ACID DROPS.

Mr. John Umpleby, one of the National Secular Society's vice-presidents, has been the victim of a cowardly assault by a brutal wretch named Thomas Brooks, who has been sent to gaol for one month by the Blackburn magistrates, without the option of a fine. Mr. Umpleby is seventy-seven years of age, yet the ruffian Brooks threw him down, seized his head, and bashed his face repeatedly against the ground, inflicting serious injuries. It is a great wonder that the victim of this atrocious outrage escaped with his life, and one month's imprisonment is an extremely moderate punishment for such an offence. Mr. Umpleby is a man whom we are proud to regard as a friend. He is one of the kindest, most generous men breathing, and Brooks must be a very malignant scoundrel to assault such a man, and so aged, in such a murderous fashion. We earnestly hope that Mr. Umpleby will not suffer any after effects from the outrage. Fortunately he has always lived a pure, abstemious life, and this will doubtless serve him in good stead in the present emergency.

We have quite lost faith in burglars. They are more stupid than we imagined possible. Last year about this time Mr. Foote's residence was broken into, and all the burglars netted was two shillings. On Saturday or Sunday night the *Freethinker* office, at 14 Clerkenwell-green, was burgled. A few shillingsworth of stamps were taken, and the keys of two rooms, necessitating the purchase of fresh locks. Total damage about fifteen shillings. The same burglars will never come again. Our stock of Freethought books and pamphlets isn't at all in their line. In future, we should think, they will give Freethought publishing offices a wide berth.

We see that there is to be a vote of nearly £1,000 for the expenses of admitting the Czarewitch and the Crown Prince of Roumania to the Order of the Garter. It is announced that most of the money will go in fees to the Dean and Chapter of Windsor. Yes, the sky-pilot is a keen hand at commissions.

The London *Echo* is not well up in biblical criticism. At any rate, it refers to an old Egyptian admiral who wrote an account of his voyages "400 years before Abraham, and 800 years previous to the writing of the Book of Genesis by Moses." Our contemporary ought to know that Abraham is a purely legendary character, and that the Book of Genesis was written nearly a thousand years after the time of Moses.

Reviewing a sceptical book by A. J. Dadson on *Evolution and Religion*, the *Christian World* says "It is strange to hear an educated man, with the latest results of scholarship accessible, making it a subject of doubt whether Jesus ever existed." But why strange? The doubt is not novel, and the latest results of scholarship in no way tend to allay it. That the Jesus of the Gospels never existed is as certain as that Queen Anne did not cure the king's evil by touching its victims. Whether there was a real Jesus, or rather Jeshua, around whose memory the legends and inventions of the Gospels gathered, is a far more difficult problem than our contemporary seems to imagine. We may add that its importance is by no means equal to its difficulty.

Mr. Dadson's doubt about Jesus is said to be "on a par with the statement that stories of the persecutions of the early Christians were largely their own inventions." Now we appeal to the *Christian World* to be honest. It is idle to pretend such gross ignorance. One has only to read Gibbon to see how much of the Christian martyrology was sheer invention, and surely Mr. Dadson's critic has read Gibbon.

The Rev. S. N. Dods, Methodist missionary at Calcutta, has been arrested and put on trial for eloping with the wife of a native Christian of the same Church. According to reports, the amorous soul-saver took the lady to a mission house at Diamond Harbor.

The *Irish News* reports the details of an inquest on a man named Hall, who was fatally injured while going through the initiation ceremony at an Orange Lodge. Some "Jacob's Ladder" tomfoolery took him blindfolded to the top of a table, whence he fell to the floor, dislocating his spine. After

this it should be easy to believe in Darwinism. There is a lot of the old monkey left, even in Orangemen.

According to an Australian paper, "A Presbyterian church in Melbourne has introduced some innovations into its services, which, although happily blending patriotism and piety, would startle the sober-minded Scotchman at home. The choir, composed of gentlemen wearing the Highland kilt, and girls attired in the costume of the Lady of the Lake, sing their hymns of praise to the music of the bagpipes. These 'original effects' have naturally proved a great 'draw,' and the ingenious parson who contrived them has his reward in greatly enlarged congregations."

"The Gospel teaches that the true end of life is character," says the *St. Louis Republic*. We wonder how much of the true end of life is knocking about in the *St. Louis Republic* office.

Mr. W. T. Stead has had some very "straight tips" from a few of the eminent persons he hooked into the first number of his spook magazine. The Catholic Bishop of Nottingham says "the intelligence which uses your hand is the devil." Still more severe is Professor Ray Lancaster, who says, "I do not consider you are in any way qualified to deal with this question." But this is a mistake. Mr. Stead is admirably qualified to deal with it—in the way of exploitation. He'll make the last copper out of it while it has one to yield.

"There is no money in spooks," says Mr. Stead. Indeed! Then history is truly "a Mississippi of falsehood." History tells us that the spook business has been the best paying one on this planet. Take the spook out of Christianity, and what remains? The great Jerusalem ghost was the making of Christianity. Have not the dealers in the ghostly and the mysterious always made a good thing out of the public credulity? Mr. Stead is romancing.

Stead may believe in the spooks, but it is wonderful how a genuine believer can write as he does. He tells, for instance, how a clairvoyante saw the spirit of a Mrs. D — weeping bitterly. On inquiring why she was weeping, the answer was "he (Mr. S.) is so impatient, he will not give her a chance of using his hand." Whereupon Mr. Stead records: "I said somewhat sharply that I had given her two chances, and that I would not go on fooling around for ever with a spook that would not write when she got the chance." How any real believer could adopt this attitude to a weeping female spirit who was trying to give him positive proof of life after death, is to an unbeliever a mystery.

The *Medium* publishes the prospectus of what it calls a New Revelation, entitled *Oahspe*. We had the work in our hands nearly a dozen years ago. It professed to be a new revelation from Jehovah, given on a type-writer to an American Dr. Newborough. The *Lucubrations of a Lunatic* seems to us a more fitting title. Those who want to see a genuine new revelation from Jehovah, must read his "Last Will and Testament" in our Summer Number. When it comes to revelations, *Oahspe* is not in the running.

Col. Inglis, the Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, in his annual report, shows that for some unstated reason the mortality among boys in Catholic institutions of this kind is eight times in excess of that in the Protestant Industrial Schools. The figures are—For Protestant schools, boys 29 per cent., girls 95 per cent. In Catholic schools the morality is—boys 173, girls 131. Of course some epidemic in Catholic schools may account for it.

The *Church Times*, in an article "Under Seal of Confession," is very much annoyed with Sir F. Jeune. In a recent divorce case he laid down the law in the following words: "It was not to be supposed, for a single moment, that a clergyman had any right to withhold information from a court of law. It was a principle of our jurisprudence that justice should prevail, and no unrecognised privilege could be allowed to stand in the way of it." The *C. T.* refers to some old cases in which judges refused to force chaplains to say what prisoners had confessed, but evidently has a very poor case, so it refers to continental practice as recognising the confidentiality of confession. The *C. T.* is doing its best to bring back this Catholic practice. To the extent to which it succeeds it will also raise a spirit of anti-secularism.

ism in those who know the abuses the confessional has everywhere given rise to.

The *Church Times* falls foul of the Archbishop of Canterbury for having the foresight to observe that if the rate-payers pay for Church schools they will want to control them. The organ of sacerdotalism blusters that the Church looks to the Primate for a definite plan, and if he will not move "so urgent is the need of a policy that assuredly Churchmen will agree to adopt one framed without him"—that is, the sheep will move without their shepherds. We hope they will, for they will certainly stumble. What they want is for clergymen to run their own schools, and appoint the teachers of Board schools, and let the ratepayers find the money for both. If they could not manage this little game in 1870 they certainly will not be able to do it now.

Why is the necessity so urgent that the High Church organ falls out with the Archbishop? Simply because, even in country districts, where hitherto the Church has had sole command of education, it now does not come up to the standard required by the Education Department. These places are waking up. A city like Lancaster had no Board school till the present year, and there are many other places where the Church knows it will soon have to give way, unless it makes a forward movement. This is the secret of raising the religious question in London, since the influence of the metropolis gradually permeates to all parts. We must put our shoulders to the wheel before November, 1894. A defeat of the clericals then will mean a victory for progress all along the line.

Simultaneously, with our own announcement of change, Mr. Kenneth Ffarington Bellairs, of the *Weekly Bulletin*, prints the following characteristic paragraph:—"I have given instructions to reduce the size of the *W.B.* very considerably until—if ever—things alter. People who don't like the alteration must do the other thing. I don't suppose any one of my readers is goosish enough to suppose the paper can be published for a penny? It costs double or treble the sum, and if—as of course is a fact—I can't get business in these times, we must all suffer alike. Every financial paper in existence to day is working at a loss, and I don't propose to join them—if I can help it. Printers' bills are weekly nuisances."

Ten thousand acres of winter wheat in splendid condition and ready for the scythe have been completely destroyed in the Kuban by hailstones of extraordinary size and weight. Thousands of fowls and other domestic animals were killed by the unusual downfall.

Archdeacon Sinclair preached at St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon. His discourse was a condemnation of God's making of man, who had "gone from bad to worse, and from worse to still worse." It looks as though God's business in this world should be put into liquidation again, as it was at the time of the Flood. "Amongst ourselves," the Archdeacon said, "on the one hand thousands of degraded beings are born into the midst of squalor, filth, obscenity, and iniquity, to pass through a joyless life of crime to a hopeless death; and on the other, amongst thousands who have greater advantages, luxury and selfishness deface the image of God." So much for Providence.

An inquest was held on the body of ten-months old baby at Hammersmith. It only weighed four pounds six ounces. The food given it had been insufficient to support life. William Gordon, the father, said he had noticed the baby was getting thin and spoke to his wife about consulting a doctor, but she only replied, "God Almighty has told me what to do, and I am following his instructions." Mrs. Gordon's celestial adviser did not appear to give evidence.

God, according to the Christian poet, "rides upon the storm." At Saratov, Russia, he rode over a number of houses, which were levelled to the ground, killing and injuring their inhabitants; founders eight heavily-laden river steamers, only a few members of the crews being rescued.

A religious paper prints a story about Mr. Walker, scripture reader to sailors at Marseilles, who was told by one of the engineers on board a certain ship, "Don't come here with that nonsense, the Bible is a lot of lies." "Come now," said

Mr. Walker, "surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood. That's true, and that's in the Bible." Very likely, but a sailor could find that out, especially the nose part of it, without the aid of a revelation.

The bigots are having another innings in America. The World's Fair at Chicago is closed again on Sundays. It is reported to be closed because "it does not pay." For that very reason it was opened on Sunday. It is therefore, as we said, the Almighty Dollar that decides all these matters.

The Catholic Church is trying its old paying game of pilgrimages even in England, and the Bishop of Southwark grants an indulgence for forty days to all who joined in the pilgrimage to Canterbury.

The Catholic Duke of Norfolk is the patron of a society for collecting the charters of old abbeys, etc. A circular was sent out to various antiquaries, and Dr. Stubbs the Anglican, Bishop of Oxford, expressed approval of the project. The preliminary meeting was held at Norfolk House, to ensure that the committee are all good Catholics. Mr. W. A. Lindsay was appointed secretary, and a new circular is sent out asking for subscriptions. If the money flows in, no doubt there will be finds of old charters quite unknown to Dugdale, Stephens, or Kemble, who have gone over this ground already. The real purpose of this Society is to put in a big Catholic claim for all the Church was despoiled of under Henry VIII.

Dr. Gasquet, a Benedictine, has recently put forward a very disingenuous history of the suppression of these monasteries. Some day it may be necessary to reprint the disgusting reports of the Visitors appointed to examine into their condition, from which may be discovered how many of the old English Catholic priests and monks of this period, who are now regarded by Papists as persecuted saints and martyrs, were publicly accused of concubinage, adultery, and sodomy.

The Rev. Athelstan Riley, who has made himself such a prominent advocate of the clerical party on the London School Board, is a pronounced Romaniser. He belongs to a "Society of St. Osmund," which has recently held the "Feast of the Translation of St. Osmund." Near the altar was a colored image of the Virgin Mother, with lighted candles, and a box of candles for sale close by. The difference between a Papist and a Ritualist of Mr. Riley's description is a very minute one.

A "Christian Reunion" took place at Bundoran, Ireland, last Sunday. The Protestants held an open-air service, which was resented as an insult by the Catholic population, a mob of whom made a violent attack on the congregation. Such feeling was exhibited that a panic pervades the Protestant residents and visitors.

Augusta Preston, a female churchwarden, was arrested for pocket-picking. A plea of kleptomania, or "automatic irresistence," was put in, and the lady was let off with a fine of £25, or two months' imprisonment.

Mr. Justice Matthew is a very pious judge, but in charging the grand jury at the Essex Summer Assizes, remarking the number of crimes against women and children, he could not refrain from expressing a wish that some of the missionary exertions lavished—he was unwilling to say squandered—in foreign lands should be devoted to some of the districts in England, where moral sterility was as great as in any country in the world.

To become "respectable" you must believe in *something*, if it is only "a sort of a something." That is, you must have some superstition (no matter what) to keep your superstitious neighbors in countenance. This is the reason why Mrs. Besant has become so "respectable." On Sunday last she delivered Theosophical lectures at the Midland Institute, Birmingham. Now we beg every Freethinker to bear in mind that *this very place was absolutely refused* for the National Secular Society's annual Conference in 1891. This is enough to show that Mrs. Besant is really in the camp of reaction, and to warn Freethinkers against putting any part of their machinery at her service.

How seriously people believe in the solemn mysteries of the Christian faith may be gathered from the report of a case between a servant and her mistress, in which the girl said "she told me to go to the Devil, so I packed up my box and went." (Roars of laughter, in which the whole Court joined).

The Rev. J. Strong, D.D., gives a sad account of the religious condition of his countrymen in the land of the Stars and Stripes. In New York State there is a town in which, a few years ago, there were a large Presbyterian church, two Methodist churches, a Baptist church, and a flourishing Baptist seminary. The Presbyterian church has become a barn, the Baptist church is shut up, the two Methodist churches are nearly empty, and the Baptist seminary is a Roman Catholic church. In fifteen villages only twenty-three per cent. of the people are church-goers. In Maine there are seventy-towns in which no religious service is held. Fully one half of the people of the United States never darken a church door.

The Old Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists number 10,000 in the United States. They beat the Hard-Shell Baptists. The names of both sects show the sublime beauty of the Christian spirit.

Christian Re-union is a pretty dream of a few clericals. There has always been talk about it since the early days of the Reformation, but Christendom is more divided than ever. Each sect really wants to absorb the others, and get united to them as the cannibal gets united to the missionary. The Catholics have the strongest hopes of this. On Sunday last the Rev. Dr. Redman, discoursing at the Church of St. Francis, Notting Hill, said that Peter's Church was standing firm on its old rock, and there would be no Christian Re-union till the sects all came over to it. Yes, it is a dream, after all.

"More than twelve months ago," says the *Methodist Times*, "we suggested that the Irish members should be retained for all purposes, but that their number should be reduced to eighty. We cannot but rejoice, therefore, at the extraordinary, unexpected, and, as it seems to us, providential course of events by which that result has been reached." Fancy Providence laboring for twelve months to warrant the wisdom of the *Methodist Times*! whose suggestion, by the way, was made by a number of other journals. But, as Hood sings—

Of all prides since Lucifer's attain
The proudest swells a self-elected saint.

A lady teacher in a London Board school gives us a lively account of the religious teaching. She was describing (without comments) the taking of Jericho to a class of boys and girls from nine to eleven years of age. After she had spoken of Achan's punishment for disobedience, a boy remarked, "But God said, Thou shalt not kill." "What a vastness of criticism," says our correspondent, "is implied in that simple remark." Another child wondered why Rahab's house, which was built on the city wall, was not destroyed when the wall fell down. Another thought it impossible that a city could be compassed seven times in one day, and that time would still be left for its destruction. These children have Christian parents, they attend Sunday-school, and are saturated with scripture; yet the natural scepticism of common sense will assert itself. It is a fatal thing to let children ask questions—from the Church point of view; they should be made to swallow the Church teaching in silence, if they are to grow up true, devout, single-eyed (that is to say, one-eyed) Christians.

Reporter—"If you will allow me to have the sermon which you are to deliver on Sunday, I will copy it and print it in Monday's paper."

Rev. Dr. Goode—"I cannot allow my sermon to go out of my hands. If you will come to church on Sunday you can hear it and take notes."

Reporter (with dignity)—"I do not work on Sundays, sir."

A Western lawyer lately attended a religious meeting where he was called upon to offer a prayer. Not being experienced in such duty, he arose and attempted the Lord's Prayer, and succeeded very well until he came to the passage, "Give us this day our daily bread," when, from force of habit, he immediately added, "with costs."

THE NEW DEPARTURE.

THIS is the last penny number of the *Freethinker*—at least for the present. I fully explained, last week, the reason why I am raising the price of the paper to *twopence*. There is no necessity to repeat my explanation. I only desire to say now that I shall do my utmost to make this journal more useful more interesting, and more worthy of the Freethought party. The next number will be a fair specimen of what is to come, and I shall print the usual number of copies, as I believe (or at least hope) that few of my old readers will drop off in a hurry.

This new departure will have important bearings on Freethought propaganda, if it secures me a permanent income from the paper. I have already made proposals to the Organisation Committee of the National Secular Society, and these proposals will be submitted to the Executive before this meets the eyes of all my readers. The proposals have reference to the London Hall of Science, where I desire to see an attempt made to popularise our propaganda. This will involve certain radical changes, which I may be free to explain next week. It will also involve some free Sunday lecturing on my part. And what I propose to do in London I shall be ready to do in other parts of the country. It will be seen, therefore, that the promises I made last week are not barren, and that I desire the change I am making to benefit the party as well as myself. Every one of my readers, who cares for the welfare of the party—that is, for the propagation of its principles, and the improvement of its organisation—will have an interest in taking the *Freethinker* weekly at the increased price, apart altogether from its intrinsic attractiveness, which is not inconsiderable, if I may judge by my correspondence.

G. W. FOOTE.

SHILLING MONTH.

MY readers are waking up to the fact that this is Shilling Month. Before it is over I hope we shall at least equal the result of the similar appeal in January. As we began on the first Sunday in July we shall close on the first Sunday in August. A whole week remains therefore, and during that period all who can afford to give a trifle to the Freethought cause should do so. Let them send a shilling, or as much more as they can afford, *direct to me* at No. 14 Clerkenwell-Green. Every subscription will be acknowledged, and the total will be divided as follows:—two thirds will be paid over to the National Secular Society, and one-third to the Chicago Delegation Fund.—Cheques and Postal Orders should be *crossed* for greater safety in transmission.

G. W. FOOTE.

RECEIVED.

[When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.]

J. Pottage £1 10s., D. Hertzfeld, J. Nowell 2s. 6d., W. T. Allfrey 2s. South Shields: S. M. Peacock 2s., D. Profit, W. Duncan, D. Bow, R. Moir, A. Searle, J. Robinson, T. Birtley, A. J. H., Mrs. Hampson 4s., Mr. Hampson 4s., A. F. Hampson, L. S. Hampson, M. Gunter 2s. 6d., W. Relph, Lerner Sugden 2s. 6d., J. Cherry, G. Vickers, H. Porter, T. E. Green £1, J. Fish 5s., W. J. Fish, J. Fish, jun., J. Willey 5s., W. H. 2s., E. Calvert, G. R. Gwyn 2s. 6d., J. Scott, T. Jameson, T. Hopkins 2s. 6d., L. R., G. O. F., G. Brittan 4s., J. Crabtree, J. Eccles, D. Smith, J. Sutcliffe 2s., J. Yates 2s., G. Macready, jun., 2s. 6d., K. Hunt, V. Cundy 1s. 2d., S. Soddy, J. Homingway 10s., L. Hill, Three Somerset Friends 3s., J. Trollope, J. J. Crabtree, J. W. Crabtree, M. Christopher 2s. Birmingham Branch: J. Ridgway, R. Taylor, J. P., W. H. Wood, B. Parsons, T. Evans, collected at Mr. Watts's lecture 9s. 1d. T. Warwick 2s., T. Hibbott 1s. 6d., E. R., F. A., Cropley 1s. 3d., T. Dennis, U. Dennis, Mrs. Davies. Newcastle Branch: A. J. Smith, T. Vipond, L. Johnson, W. Stamp, O. Jensen, B. Brodie, J. Summerfield, P. Condor, G. Scarratt 5s., C. S. Ives 1s. 6d., A. Scopes 2s., O. Ford, J. Guy, H. Smith, S. Holmes 5s., F. Bull. N.S.S. ONLY.—J. McC. 10s.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 30, Hall of Science, 142 Old-Street, E.C.: at 7.30, "Christianity not New and not True."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 29, Blyth; 30, South Shields. August 13, Hall of Science, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

G. MANCO.—Pleased to hear you found our reprints at the Shelley Exhibition.

F. HAMPSON.—Our compliments to Mrs. Hampson and family. Pleased to hear you "like the Summer Number" and think "everything about it is good."

M. GUNTER.—Verses shall be seen to. Subscription acknowledged.

W. WHITCHER is "glad to know" that we are going to raise the price of the *Freethinker*, and would willingly, if necessary, pay sixpence for it. As a Radical and a Trade Unionist, he likes his price, and believes in others getting theirs. He also congratulates us on the Summer Number as "a really splendid production," and hopes we shall publish a similar Christmas Number.

J. SCOTT.—We hope we shall "go on and prosper."

T. JAMESON.—Shilling Month may be too long, but Shilling Week was too short, and Shilling Fortnight sounds awkward.

T. HOPKINS.—You seem to suffer from a bad Sunday in South Wales. Mr. Foote will do his best to visit your district before Christmas. If the readers of this journal only take it at the increased price with the old regularity, the editor's voice will soon be heard in every part of the country, in the small towns as well as in the large ones.

QUIZ.—Delay perhaps through Mr. Forder being away on holiday. We shall probably make the alteration you suggest.

J. WILLEY.—Thanks for good wishes.

T. C.—Good sentiment, but not good verse.

G. R. GWYN.—We note promise of more for Shilling Month later on.

H. PORTER.—(1) Matthew Arnold's best books, from a Free-thought point of view, are *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. (2) Accent on second syllable.

J. POTTAGE sends to Miss Vance the sum of £4, to be divided as follows:—Shilling Month, £1 10s.; Benevolent Fund, 10s.; London Secular Federation, 10s.; Hall of Science Advertising Fund, 10s.; fully paid-up share in name of G. W. Foote in the National Secular Hall Society, £1. We should be glad to see other friends of the N. S. S. following Mr. Pottage's example. Every one of the Society's funds is at present in need of support.

C. W. HECKETHORN.—It is a work to be done by someone. We have to do many disagreeable things. As we stated, we exposed the follies of Mrs. Besant's new faith, not for our own satisfaction, but for the sake of others. Opposing superstition of any kind is a work of necessity, rather than of pleasure.

R. F. FOX.—Your postcard dated July 20, arrived when this journal was on sale.

CLARA.—See "Acid Drops." We value your good wishes for "success in the war you are waging against bigotry and superstition."

T. BIRTLEY, Chester-le-Street Branch, writes—"I am sorry you have been compelled to raise the price of your paper, but I think you will repay our cause by being able to do more lecturing work."

A. J. H.—Thanks for your interesting letter; it is pleasant to hear from those to whom we have been of service as a propagandist.

W. R. STANSELL.—The matter shall have attention.

J. YATKS.—Your Christian friend who saw Mr. Foote fall off a horse at Ilkeston, and heard him exclaim "Lord help me!" has a fine bold imagination. Mr. Foote has not been on a horse's back since he was sixteen. He did not fall off then; if he had, he would probably have said something stronger than "Lord help me!" Further, Mr. Foote cannot remember ever lecturing at Ilkeston. Your Christian friend should offer to help the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

K. HUNT.—Sorry to hear that Mr. Logan does not show any readiness for the written debate. Many thanks for your kind efforts.

G. S.—Fairly good, but not quite good enough.

J. MORTON.—Put to the Chicago Fund.

YOUNG CRABTREES.—Shillings from lads of seven and nine are more astonishing than the widow's mite. We hope your young enthusiasm will stimulate some of the laggard adults.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to see the Birmingham Branch to the fore in regard to Shilling Month.

H. DELLOW (Grimsby) wants a fine portrait of Colonel Ingersoll for framing. He cannot cut the magnificent portrait out of the Summer Number; that would spoil the copy, and stouter paper is wanted for the purpose. He suggests that we should have artistic copies printed on fine thick paper from our engraving, to be sold at sixpence or a shilling.

R. CHAPMAN sends first list of subscriptions for Shilling Month from South Shields Branch, with a note that we may expect more.

H. JONES (Manchester Branch).—We note contents of circular. W. HOLLAND.—We cannot always use cuttings immediately. This correspondent says "Twopence will not prevent me from buying the paper. It is always a treat to me. I am trying to induce a newsagent to sell the paper."

A. SEARLE.—See this week's acknowledgments.

J. DOWNING.—Applied to Chicago Delegation Fund. Thanks. Glad to have your appreciation of our "noble outburst," as you call it, on John Milton. Freethinkers are apt, perhaps, to think of him too lightly; his name is never to be mentioned without reverence. Landor is one of our own favorites, and it delights us to have our memory of the passages you refer to refreshed. As to future illustrations, you may rely on their being as good as we can make them.

TOTTERING CATHOLIC.—Of course the human race has not descended from Adam and Eve. No such persons ever existed. They are legendary characters. This is now admitted by a host of *Christian* critics, including Professor St. George Mivart, who belongs to your own Church.

JULIAN S.—(1) Since the sixth edition of *Supernatural Religion*, 1875, there has been a "complete and revised edition" in three vols. (Longman; 1879). (2) Dr. Lightfoot's articles were reprinted in book form by Macmillan in 1889, price 10s. 6d. (3) *The Reply to Dr. Lightfoot's Essays* was published by Longman at 6s. (4) Mr. Kennard's book will be reviewed shortly. Some books require not only reading, but examination. We do not undertake to review such works on the day of publication. (5) Mr. Wheeler hopes to publish a cheap book on the gospels some day. (6) We note your opinion that the paper is well worth twopence, and hope it is the general one.

T. DENNIS.—We note your "thanks for the *Freethinker* and its wholesome reading."

H. F. GOODYEAR.—See Notices. Thanks, in anticipation, for your Shilling Month list.

J. H. SUMMERFIELD.—Glad to hear you say, "I am highly pleased with the Summer Number, which is quite a treat; it is my intention to let the Bishop and some of his clergy have a copy; they may find plenty of matter to produce a sermon." Mr. Foote will fix up a tour in the Newcastle district as soon as he hears definitely from Mr. Brown about the circus.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, treasurer, acknowledges:—Collections—East London 5s. 1d., Finsbury 4s. 6d., Hyde Park 2s., Regent's Park 3s., Finsbury Branch concert 12s. 4d., C. J. Pottage 10s.

ANTI-HUMBUG writes: "I have to thank you heartily for your *Flowers of Freethought*. They form a most delightful garden in which to spend a leisure half-hour, and they give off such an invigorating perfume that one always returns from one's stroll refreshed and strengthened. With regard to the increase in the price of the *Freethinker*, I do not think many people who have once taken it will be able to do without it. Friday, on which day we get it, is looked forward to with the greatest eagerness."

C. COHEN's future address is 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E. Branch secretaries will please notice.

S. H. ALI ON's new address is, the Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.O.

JOSEPH GUY (Stanningley) entirely approves of Shilling Month and says it ought to be well supported.

C. S. IVES writes: "I have had the *Freethinker* for some twelve months, and it is particularly welcome in this priest-ridden place (Halesworth). I can't think that any Freethinker worthy of the name will grudge his twopence for it."—This correspondent is advised to read Mr. Foote's *Philosophy of Secularism* (3d.), his debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann (1s.), and Mr. Holyoake's *Principles of Secularism*.

R. S. JOHNSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND (FOOTE AND WATTS).—J. Downing, 10s.; J. Morton, 2s.; A. Scopes, 2s.

F. BULL.—Pleased to hear you "will not begrudge the extra penny for the *Freethinker*." We were unable to send you the information in time.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—A. Scopes, 2s.

A. SCOPES.—Acknowledged as desired. Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

T. VERLIN.—A complete study of the Bible would involve the reading of a big library. Begin with our *Bible Handbook*, *Bible Heroes*, and *Bible Romances*, and then read Mr. Wheeler's *Bible Studies*. You will find extensive references in them to other works.

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—Modern Thought—La Verité Philosophique—Für Unsere Jugend—Ironclad Age—Watts's Literary Guide—Weekly Bulletin—Birmingham Argus—Workman's Times—Brighton Examiner—New York Press—Sun—Northern Daily Telegraph—Lowestoft Journal—Freethinker's Magazine—Norfolk Daily Standard—Glasgow Weekly Herald.

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.

FREETHOUGHT HEADQUARTERS.

ONCE more I urgently appeal to Freethinkers, and especially to members of the N.S.S., to be prompt in applying for shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Limited). I heartily thank all those who have responded to my previous appeals, and I now address myself to the many others who might easily follow their example. The shares are £1 each, payable in easy instalments of 2s. 6d., and application forms can be obtained of Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. If we succeed in making up the number of subscribed shares to 3,000 by the end of July, Mr. George Anderson will give the sum of £300. His cheque for that amount is already in my hands, only without his signature, which, however, he will be most happy to add. His offer is made in this way because he does not believe in helping people who will not help themselves. Every Freethinker, therefore, who takes a share (or shares) in the Hall of Science scheme is helping to earn that £300. He is also helping the Directors, of whom I am Chairman, and all of whom are, and must be, members of the N.S.S., to erect worthy headquarters for our party in London. With better structural accommodation we could do far more good in every way, and I appeal to the Freethought party to enable us to secure it.

G. W. FOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Next week's *Freethinker* would have been a twopenny Special Number. It will now be the beginning of our new departure. Our artist has drawn a beautiful Cartoon, entitled "God is Love," which we believe will give universal satisfaction. Our intention is to print the same number of copies as usual. We hardly think there will be any serious drop in our circulation.

Everybody is speaking well of our Summer Number, which is having as good a sale as could be expected at the price of sixpence. We printed about the same number of copies as we do of our weekly issue, and more than half the edition has gone out in the first fortnight. Our expenditure upon this "Extra Special" is very heavy, and we shall only realize a moderate profit when we have sold out. Readers who haven't yet obtained a copy should do so as soon as possible, and some who can afford it might take an extra copy for circulation among their friends and acquaintances.

We have thought of issuing a sixpenny Christmas Number when the season arrives. Whether we do so or not will depend on the sale of the Summer Number. If we sell out, as we hope to, we shall issue a similar "Extra Special" at Christmas, and if possible make it an improvement on the present one.

Readers who order the Summer Number by post from Mr. Forder must please remember that the number is a heavy one, and that the postage is *twopence*. Eightpence should be remitted, not sixpence; otherwise Mr. Forder is at a loss, and he finds he can't do business on that principle.

Mr. Foote's lecture at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening was a long one, for such weather, but it was listened to throughout with the profoundest attention, and very warmly applauded. His examination of the Trinity Puzzle occasionally gave rise to much laughter. Mrs. Louisa Samson presided with great neatness and efficiency. We believe she will herself occupy the platform a month or so hence. Mr. Foote lectures at the Hall of Science again this evening (July 30), his subject being "Christianity not New and not True."

Attendants at the London Hall of Science this evening (July 30) are desired to bring with them contributions for Shilling Month. Mr. Foote will be happy to receive them after the lecture.

Mr. Charles Watts had an unusually large audience last Sunday evening at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. Every copy of the *Freethinker* on sale was disposed of. To-day, Sunday July 30, Mr. Watts lectures three times at South Shields.

Mr. Willis, who has just been elected County Councillor for Battersea, is a Secularist, and was at one time a member of the National Secular Society's Executive. His father was a well-known figure at the London Hall of Science in the early days of its history, and is now in Australia, where he sells Freethought literature, most of which he imports from England through Mr. Forder.

The London Secular Federation's annual excursion takes place on Sunday, August 20. Mr. Foote hopes to join the party, and to meet a large number of his metropolitan friends. A special train will convey the excursionists to Brighton. The tickets are 3s., for adults and 1s. 6d. for children. They can be had from any London Branch secretary, at 28 Stonecutter-street, or at the Hall of Science. It is to be hoped that the London Branches will all join to make this a general Freethought holiday, even if the outdoor propaganda is stopped for once. They might also pray for rain, so as to secure fine weather.

Mr. George Standring, Mr. G. Ward, and Mr. E. Pownceby are visiting Brighton this week, to confer with the local Branch secretary, and make arrangements for a Freethought demonstration by the excursionists. No doubt a very fine mass-meeting may take place on the Level, and do a great deal of good, especially if we have the services of our best London speakers.

The new Organising Committee of the London Secular Federation is "on the war path." It has had several meetings, and is in brisk communication with the Branches. One part of its policy is to visit Branch committees and talk over business with them. On Saturday last Messrs. Ward and Pownceby visited the Leyton Branch; others will have attention in due course. The Committee meets again on Tuesday (Aug. 1), when representatives of all Branches are invited.

Mr. G. Ward has prepared a Monogram Locket, which he is supplying at one shilling, or nine shillings per dozen; the whole of the profits to go to the funds of the N.S.S. It can be worn as a pendant to a chain, or pinned to the breast of dress or coat. It is very neat in design, and has the N.S.S. monogram worked in colors. No doubt it will have a large sale elsewhere as well as at the Hall of Science.

West Londoners are requested to note that the W. London Branch's Sunday evening lectures are now held under the railway arch, Brondesbury, High-road, Kilburn, when the weather happens to be wet.

Sunday Notes, the organ of the Newcastle Sunday Music Society, keeps up its bright character. It ought to do good among the thousands—we should say tens of thousands—who listen to Mr. Smith's fine band on the Town Moor on Sunday evenings.

Secular Thought (Toronto) begins a new volume (14) with the number for July 7. We wish it all prosperity under Mr. Ellis's conduct in the years to come. It is unpleasant to learn that the paper is not yet on a paying basis, and that Mr. Ellis is still in the midst of financial embarrassments. We hope the Canadian Secularists will give him, and the paper, their best possible support. The number for July 7 is an interesting one, and, amongst other matter, contains a reprint of Mr. Foote's article on "Altar and Throne."

We are happy to see that the West London Branch is making good progress. Two years ago it was heavily in debt, and obliged to apply to the London Secular Federation for assistance. Since then it has retrieved its position, mainly through the open-air propaganda. After an expenditure during the past year of £33 11s. 3d., the Branch starts afresh with a balance of £11 1s. 9d. in hand. We congratulate the Branch on its growing prosperity.

The Liverpool Sabbatarians suffered a severe check last Sunday. During the afternoon a musical performance was given by the Sunday Society in Sefton-park, the use of which has been granted by the Corporation. For seven years the Society has been fighting for this privilege, and at last it is triumphant. It is to be hoped that the victory is final.

The Sunderland Branch is looking up again. At the beginning of the year audiences were small, but they are now so large that the hall in Bridge-street is generally filled, and sometimes overfilled. Under the guidance of Mr. F. Kaper a vigorous outdoor propaganda has been carried on at Monkwearmouth and in the colliery district outside the town. This will shortly be extended. The new secretary is Mr. W. R. Stansell, 14 Brougham-street, Sunderland. Mr. A. Lovell is treasurer, and Mr. J. Bowie librarian. In a fit of democratic enthusiasm the Branch has just abolished its presidency, which will, in the ordinary course of things, make the secretary the president in disguise.

Some Liverpool friends are going over to Chester to-day (July 30) leaving the Landing Stage at 1.45 or Central Station at 2. After visiting various places of interest in the city, they will go to the Chester Branch's meeting-place, where Mr. Doeg will lecture on the blessed Saint David. Return to Liverpool by 8.30 train (G.W.R.).

As it was prominently stated that Mrs. Besant's share of the proceeds of the late debate with Mrs. Macdonald would be devoted to the H. P. B. Home, it is only fair to mention that Mrs. Macdonald has sent the sum of £20 1s. 6d. (her share) to Lady Jeune ("Belle" of *Truth*) for use in connection with the movement for sending poor children for a country holiday.

The Ipswich Branch is getting on finely. It is shortly going to open a Freethought shop in the town, where all kinds of advanced literature will be sold, and the *Freethinker* placard displayed. One or two rooms in connexion with it will be furnished as a permanent meeting-place for the Branch.

The *Freethinker* has once more been a subject of discussion by the Library Committee of the Northampton Town Council. Mr. Gurney, J.P., moved that the minute of May 15, refusing to allow the *Freethinker* on the Reading Room tables be rescinded, and permission given for its acceptance. He was supported by Mr. Councillor Tousley, Mr. J. Ward, and Mr. F. Perkins. Nine voted to the contrary, including the Chairman. There the matter rests for the present, but the Radicals intend to agitate it again before very long. They think such bigotry scandalous in the town that was represented by Charles Bradlaugh.

Some of the speeches by the bigoted nine were really amusing. Two of them, leading lights on the Radical Association, admitted that they had never read the *Freethinker*. Sir Henry Dryden only knew it by repute; he voted against it because it might offend the country people who visited the Library; as though they wouldn't enjoy it as a positive relief to the parson's "Dearly beloved" and "Kingdom-come." Mr. Hammond, a Conservative working man (heaven save the mark!), voted against the *Freethinker*

from a wish to "elevate the working classes"—up (or down) to his own level we suppose. We wish these gentlemen more common sense and liberality.

ORTHODOX MEDICINE.

THE first principles of medical science were laid down by Hippocrates, 500 years B.C. Sickness had previously been attributed to the interference of supernatural beings. But Hippocrates endeavored to trace it to natural causes, and he declared that even insanity was nothing but disease of the brain. These germs of science were speedily destroyed by the Church. Constantine found that physicians, owing to their education, were less credulous than their neighbors, so he promptly suppressed the medical colleges.

The priests had their own peculiar theories of medicine. Slight diseases, they supposed, were caused by devils, and severer diseases by Satan himself; but they generally paid the Deity the compliment of attributing to him anything which was especially loathsome. These orthodox views found support in the Bible. There were the boils of Job, the leprosy of Uzziah, Miriam, and Gehazi! the dysentery of Jehoram, the withered hand of Jeroboam, the woman whom Satan had bound many years, and the innumerable persons who had been possessed by devils. As for medicine, the fathers declared it was useless. Did not the Bible say, "Vain is the help of man"? They even went so far as to maintain that it was irreligious to take medicine, referring, by way of proof, to the case of Asa, who consulted the physicians instead of the priests and died in consequence. "The precepts of medicine," said Ambrose, "are contrary to celestial science." Physicians were so frequently accused of Atheism that there came to be a proverb—"Ubi sunt tres medici, ibi sunt duo athei." But, as heresy was considered more dangerous than disease, people were afraid of a doctor unless he could procure a certificate from a priest. Pope Innocent III. forbade physicians to undertake medical treatment without calling in ecclesiastical advice. Fancy Sir Andrew Clark in consultation with some newly-ordained curate!

The medical profession being thus heavily handicapped, was, of course, neither fashionable nor lucrative, and it was never adopted by really able men. With surgery it was even worse. Surgical operations were considered to be especially distasteful to the Deity, and dissection was denounced by the Church as sacrilege. For over a thousand years surgery was a disreputable profession. It was left entirely in the hands of charlatans, so that it was often impossible, even for an emperor, to secure what would now be considered quite a simple operation.

Ecclesiastics invariably insisted on the peculiar sanctity of filth. No one ever heard of a cleansaint, such a thing would be a contradiction in terms. Athanasius eulogised St. Anthony because he never washed his feet. A certain lady, named Sylvia, was celebrated for never washing any part of her body, except her fingers, and even she was outdone in this holy rivalry by St. Abraham, who never washed at all. The majority of the saints, it is true, fell somewhat short of this exalted standard. But every one of them had the same ideal. Every one of them confused nastiness with piety. The more the clergy preached, therefore, the dirtier the people became. Of course, pestilence of the most appalling kind was the inevitable result. And when the pestilence had come, the clergy increased its ravages a hundredfold by preying on the fears of the people. They told the panic-stricken laity that God was in a rage. They said that he had sent the "Great Plague of London" as a punishment for Sabbath breaking, and that the "Black Death" had come because he was put out by a new-fashioned boot with pointed toes. These clerical explanations, which now make us smile, drove our poor forefathers frantic. No wonder, under all these circumstances, that the Plague decimated London, and that the Black Death carried off, in six years, twenty-five millions of people—a quarter of the population of Europe.

Some of the theological delusions were once taught in good faith. The clergy at first believed them. The indictment against ecclesiastics is not that they were ignorant, not that they were mistaken; the indictment is that they refused to learn, that they persisted in clinging to what they knew to be false. The old superstitions were a source of unlimited wealth, and, therefore, they were kept alive by self-interest long after they would otherwise have died out. A great theologian, Charlevoix, used to say, very naïvely, that "pesti-

lences were the harvests of the ministers of God." The ministers of God always preached atonement by subscription. The sacred relics filled the coffers of every church that possessed them. *The Agnus Dei*—a piece of wax from the Paschal candle, stamped with the figure of a lamb, and consecrated by the Pope—brought enormous revenues to the Papal See. The orthodox method of healing disease was so lucrative that the clergy could not bring themselves to admit its futility. They found ignorance so profitable that they dreaded knowledge. And for ages they continued to offer the most persistent opposition to medical science.

It was not until the seventeenth century that a man arose brave enough to study in spite of them. That man was Vesalius. The Church had always condemned dissection, but he practised it notwithstanding, and laid the foundation of modern anatomy. In spite of ecclesiastical censure and popular fury, he haunted gibbets and charnal houses to secure material for his investigations, risking at once the virus of the plague, and the fires of the Inquisition. He was summoned before the Holy Office in Rome, but he fortunately died prematurely, and so escaped a worst fate. He lived long enough, however, to disprove two favorite doctrines of the Church. It was believed that on one side of a man there was a bone less than on the other, the missing one having been used up in the creation of Eve. But Vesalius found both sides alike. It was also believed that there existed in the human form an incorruptible and incombustible bone, which would be the nucleus of the resurrection body. But Vesalius could not find it. The doctrine of a *physical* resurrection received another blow about a century later from Bernoulli, who discovered that the human organism is constantly changing, and that, therefore, instead of having one body, as was supposed, every individual has, in point of fact, dozens. The clergy were so upset by the discovery that they induced Bernoulli not to mention it, and, for the sake of peace, he omitted it in the later editions of his work.

The ecclesiastical ideas of medicine are even yet not quite dead. Many clergymen denounce vaccination as an attempt to baffle the will of God. Sir James Simpson, who was the first to use chloroform in Great Britain, was accused of having tried to get the better of the primeval curse on woman. And only last year the Bishop of London issued a prayer in which he asked for the miraculous removal of the influenza. But although there is a good deal of superstition still surviving, the Church has no longer the power to interfere with medical research. And scientific progress has been made exactly in proportion to the decline of the theological influence. The death rate in London at the end of the seventeenth century was 80 per 1,000, it is now 18; plague after plague has disappeared; typhus fever, once so deadly, is now rarely heard of, and, as for small-pox, which used to be feared only a little less than the Black Death, there died of it in the Metropolis in 1890 just one person.

—DR. ALFRED MOMERIE, in the *Humanitarian*.

BOOK CHAT.

The Rev. F. W. Puller, in a work entitled *The Primitive Saints and the See of Rome*, just published by Longmans, and with a preface by the Bishop of Lincoln, says "It is strange how, from the very first, the Roman claims have been based on forgeries." It is stranger still that Protestants cannot see that the gospel claim that the Church is built on Peter, for this purpose attributing to Jesus a pun in Greek on a Jewish fisherman's name, is as much a forgery as the Clementines to which the Rev. F. W. Puller is specially referring.

Lux Mundi has made its reputation chiefly by the folly of the old theological fossils. It has now reached its eighteenth thousand, while their folly finds few buyers, even from the sixpenny box.

In October, Hodder and Stoughton will publish an authorised translation of Prof. A. Harnack's *History of Dogma*. Harnack runs pretty well in the old orthodox traces, but he is too good a scholar not to make important concessions to rationalism. Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who has helped to boom Harnack, should now find a translator and publisher for Weizsäcker.

Mr. J. E. Remsburg, an American advocate of Secularism, has for many years been collecting a heap of testimonies to

the scepticism of Abraham Lincoln. The witnesses include Lincoln's wife and other relatives, his three law partners, members of his cabinet, his principal biographers, and scores of his most intimate friends. Mr. Remsburg's book will be published shortly, under the title, "Abraham Lincoln: was he a Christian?"

The *Monist* for July is chiefly occupied with a long discussion on the vexed question of free-will and necessity, between the editor, Dr. Carus, and Mr. C. S. Pierce. According to Milton, the fiends in Pandemonium are addicted to debate on this subject, and they doubtless will much enjoy the *Monist*. Professor E. D. Cope has a paper on "The Foundations of Theism," which seems to us hardly worthy of his reputation.

Dr. Frank Chapman Sharp, the author of a new work on *The Aesthetic Elements of Morality*, says, "Prometheus, chained to the rocks for bringing the gift of fire to the wretched barbarous inhabitants of the earth, in defiance of the will of the Father of gods and men, is one of the grandest productions of the human imagination, and were the Supreme Being such a one as Augustine and Calvin imagined him, we should despise the wretched slaves that licked the dust at his feet."

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. STEAD AND AUTOMATIC WRITING.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

MR. STEAD's new review is a funny farrago of facts, fancies, and superstitions, in which the latter articles have by far the larger place. The Spiritists suggested the title of his maiden tribute to occultism, yet he calls them "more or less ignorant and superstitious individuals, whose interest in the manifestations which promised at least the possibility of a scientific demonstration of life beyond the grave, has seldom risen above mere idle curiosity, and who have had neither the mental equipment or the moral capacity to prosecute their investigations to the end. A group of clodhoppers," he continues, "around a tea-kettle would be about as likely to discover how to build the engines of the Campania as most of the habitués of the modern séance to obtain a clue to the mastery of the laws governing the phenomena which by turns thrill them with awe and fill them with a puzzled sense of utter bewilderment."

The Spiritists may well cry out "Save us from our friends." But Stead himself has cause to utter the same cry. In his usual self-advertising fashion he sent circulars to all notables, asking their opinion on his project. Mr. A. R. Wallace, the Spiritist and Evolutionist, about the only writer whose opinion is of much value, objects to Mr. Stead's "assumption of theories as if they were facts. Thus the statement that certain persons at a distance write through your hand, seems to me a pure theory, and an unfounded one—not a fact, as you appear to think."

It is this weighty utterance of Mr. Wallace, which leads to my suggestion. The fact upon which Mr. Stead dwells with "damnable iteration," is that his hand writes certain words. Probably it is also true that he is unconscious at the time what words his pen will transcribe, though for this we must have reliance upon Mr. Stead's veracity, and scepticism on this subject is, to say the least, excusable. But this I grant. The question is, what is the explanation? Possibly Mr. Wallace would prefer the theory that it is the spirit of a person supposed to be dead and buried, but really present with Mr. Stead and using his hand. He does not say so, but other Spiritists have given out this theory. Mr. Stead's own belief is, that the writings are messages from living persons able to use his hands. As far as familiarity with their contents go, he should be the best judge. But there is a third theory which I suggest as the true one, viz., that Mr. Stead is himself solely the writer, though he writes unconscious of what he is writing. He is like a drunken man who would be surprised, when sober, to hear of the nonsense he had been talking. There is nothing unusual in this, though it is a disease—the automatic writing, not the drunkenness—to which a journalist is peculiarly liable. He falls into the habit of stringing phrases together, till at last he can do it even as he buttons his vest, by instinct rather than by conscious will. Most persons spell, for instance, automatically. Set an educated person for the first time to a type-writer without copy, and if his mind is not specially directed to the matter of spelling, he will make curious

blunders. Ask a writer how he spells a word, and you find, if he has a pen handy, he instinctively writes it down, a proof that only by going through the process under the control of instinct, by habit instead of thought, and looking at the result, that he attains the certainty intentional judgment will not supply. Now any one who has followed the career of Mr. Stead, will see that he has long been afflicted with this bad habit of stringing sentences without definite thought or meaning. He may have had some thought behind them years ago, but he has gone on using them till they are as purely instinctive as the motion by which he raises a cup to his lips to drink. The phenomena of somnambulism and "trance speaking," are, I believe, to be explained in the same way. The mind acts, though unconsciously to the possessor. Of course a morbid and weak state of mind, as in Mr. Stead's case, facilitates the production of the disease.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

NUMBER THIRTEEN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The superstition as to the number thirteen has its origin in the fact that in the Indian pack of cards, consisting of 78 cards, 22 are numbered, and bear emblematic figures, that of No. 13 being the figure of Death, a skeleton with a scythe. These cards were originally intended for fortunetelling only, and not for gambling, and were introduced into Europe by the gipsies. They are known as *tarots*. In more recent times publishers of *tarot* cards have occasionally varied the emblems accompanying the numbers, and curiously enough the "Death" of No. 13 appears now as "Priest." But it is still Death—intellectual instead of physical death.

C. W. HECKETHORN.

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.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christianity: Not New and Not True" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.15, free entertainment. Monday at 6.30, tea and soiree (tickets 6d.). Tuesday at 8.30, social gathering (free).
 Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Vanishing of the Gods."
 Westminster Branch N.S.S.: Excursion of members and friends to Egham; brakes leave Old Pimlico Pier at 9.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, G. H. Baker, "Demoralising the Teachers"; 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Civilisation."
 Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, J. Marshall, "What think ye of Christ?"
 Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Darwinism and Design."
 Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture.
 Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. J. Hunt, "The Zion Creed." Thursday at 8, C. James will lecture.
 Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture; 3.30, a lecture.
 Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Aug. 3, at 8.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Book of Common Prayer."
 Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, S. H. Alison, "The Devil and all his Works."
 Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Prayer"; 3.30, a lecture. Wednesday at 8, Mr. St. John will lecture.
 Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): Friday, July 28, at 7.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Sunday at 6.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."
 Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."
 Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Cooling of Hell."
 Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Forty Days' Fast."
 Newington Green: 3.15, S. H. Alison, "The Devil and all his Works."
 Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.
 Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.
 Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, Stanley Jones, "The Cooling of Hell."
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Secularism and Christianity Compared."

COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, Mr. Verney, "Pre-historic Man"; business meeting after the lecture.
 Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, Mr. St. John, "Evolution and Design."
 Chester—Cathedral Restaurant, City Walls: 6.30, C. Doeg, "The Man after God's own Heart."
 Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Mr. Fryer, "A Remedy for the Evils of the Working Classes."
 Ipswich—Co-operative Hall small (opp.), Cox-lane: 7, important meeting of members.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Harry Smith, "God in a Jug."
 Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, H. Snell, "The Ascent of Man"; preceded by a dramatic recital. Tuesday at 8, debating circle, T. Griffiths, "Spiritualism: a Relic of Barbarism."
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' monthly meeting.
 Sheffield: Excursion of members and friends to Dore, for Rye-croft Glen, etc.; train leaves Midland Station at 2.30, Heeley at 2.35; tea at Mr. Frith's Farm, Dore, at 5.
 South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Charles Watts, 11, "The Bible Up to Date"; 3, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?—the Question Answered"; 7, "Christianity or Secularism: which is better suited to meet the Needs of Mankind?"
 Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, J. Clare, "Thomas Paine: his Place in History."
 OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.
 Bradford—Market-ground, Godwin-street: 6.30, H. Smith, "My Impressions of America and Canada" (continued).
 Brighton (on the Level): 3, Mr. Evans will lecture.
 Chatham—New-road (near Waghorn memorial): 11, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Progress."
 Manchester—Stevenson-square: 3, H. Snell, "God's Book."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.C.—July 30, m., Camberwell; a., Islington; e., Hammersmith. Aug. 6, e., Lambeth; 13, a., Finsbury Park; 20, m., Midland Arches; 27, Mile End Waste.
 C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—July 30, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea. Aug. 6, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park; e., Camberwell; 9, Hyde Park; 13, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 16, Hyde Park; 17, Hammersmith; 20, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith.
 JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Aug. 6, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—July 30, m., Midland Arches; e., Hammersmith. Aug. 6, m., Wood Green; a., Hyde Park; 13, m., Wood Green; e., Hyde Park; 20, m., Victoria Park; 27, Chatham; 31, Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—July 28 to Aug. 19, Summer Tour. Aug. 20, m., Hyde Park; 27, m., Wood Green.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Aug. 13, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell.

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"Look yeah, sah," he exclaimed, turning wrathfully upon me, "whut yo mean by comin' down yeah a-foolin' an' a-meddlin' wid our 'ligious 'fairs? Ain't yo got no bizness teh 'ten teh at home? Doan yo know yo got teh keep de Debbil cons'antly befo' dese niggahs or da-ain gwine do no good? Whar I preached las' yeah I got up an' tole 'em I didn' blebe dat da wus any Debbil an' whut did da do? Da cut down my salary an' den didn' gib me but halfen de cut-down. An' 'stid takin' off dar hats wen da met me in de road like da usteh do, da'd laugh at me au' call me ole knocked-kneed Ben. So wen I come obeh heah I 'lowed teh myse'f, I did, dat I wuz gwine teh use diffunt tactics, an' I has. W'y, sah, ef yo take de Debbil outen 'ligion, de niggah preacher would starve teh death, so g'long 'way, now, 'an quit foolin' wid eh bizness dat you ain't got no intust in."

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