

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 18.

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1895.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

SUNDAY CRANKS.

CHRISTIANS, or at least orthodox Christians, are evidently going to make a determined stand against Sunday freedom. The Lord's Day Society has half, if not wholly, captured Mr. Gladstone, and its cause has naturally received a fresh impetus. It is to the credit of the ordinary, or profane, press that it takes up, on the whole, a sensible and tolerant attitude on this question. But the religious press, with the exception of a few journals like the *Christian World*, opposes Sunday freedom out of the mere instinct of self-preservation. Churches of all kinds depend upon privilege. They detest every sort of competition. Their trade is largely supported by Protection. Free Trade would annihilate their artificial advantages. And one of the greatest of these advantages is having Sunday almost entirely for their own business. When they take their shutters down they have the pleasure of seeing everybody else's shutters up; everybody's, that is, with the exception of the publican; and they are beginning to cast an evil eye upon him; indeed, they will never be satisfied until he also is compelled to close his establishment from Saturday night till Monday morning, so that it shall be "Church or nothing" for everybody who wants to go anywhere on what is facetiously called the Lord's Day, but is in reality the Priest's Day.

Our readers will not be surprised to learn that the Methodists are on the side of Sunday tyranny; but they may be interested to learn, as a matter of psychology, what the Methodists have to say for themselves in pursuing a policy which is so alien to their boasted principles of "civil and religious liberty."

There were several paragraphs in last week's *Methodist Times* on the Sunday question. The Lord's Day Society is highly complimented, with the qualification that in view is perhaps "too Jewish." This is followed by an attack on the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society, which was recently the object of an abortive prosecution. "It is quite evident," we are told, "that some of the lectures given by the Leeds Society were anything but instructive and elevating." Well now, that is a matter of taste. Max O'Rell mingles wit with sense, and sometimes makes people laugh; and anything that provokes laughter, especially on Sunday, is naturally not "instructive and elevating" to a devotee of the Bible. But the Methodists might recollect that tastes—ay, and opinions—have always differed, do still differ, and probably ever will differ. There are people quite fit to be at large who do not care for sermons, and some of them (alas!) are unable to find anything "instructive and elevating" even in the discourses of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Still, they do not want to close his mouth on Sunday; they only want to open their own.

Our Methodist contemporary proceeds to state, in its usual dogmatic way, that "It should be distinctly understood that the Act of Parliament under which that particular course of lectures was arrested simply forbids a pecuniary charge for admission to any lecture or entertainment provided on Sunday." Now, when the *Methodist Times* says that anything must be "distinctly understood," it is pretty certain to be wrong; and it is certainly wrong in this particular instance. The Act contains nothing about lectures. Its preamble states that working people had met to discuss religious questions which were beyond their competence—that is, they were poaching on the preserves of the clergy. This was what Bishop Porteus,

who instigated the Act, wished to put down. Meetings for discussing religion were therefore prohibited, and entertainments were included just to make the Act look a little less intolerant. Nor is it exactly true that *only* a charge for admission to such assemblies is made illegal by the Act. In our opinion—and it is endorsed by our solicitors—the taking of money at all is prohibited; and, if the Act were strictly and impartially enforced, not only a charge at the doors, or an admission by saleable tickets, but even a collection, would render the responsible persons liable to penalties.

Mr. Hughes's organ thinks it "significant" that "without enforcing the illegal charge for admission these entertainments cannot be made to pay." But, in the first place, is it not hypocrisy to call Sunday lectures "entertainments," merely because the lecturer happens to have a broad face, instead of a long one? The object of this designation is simply to bring "lectures" within the scope of the Act. And, in the next place, we should like to know why a lecture should not be paid for by the people who hear it? What is the essential difference between hiring a pew quarterly, and paying for your seat when you attend? Ministers of religion depend, at least to some extent, upon the seat-money of their congregations. What impudent hypocrisy they display, therefore, when they turn up the whites of their eyes against Sunday lecturers who tap the same source of income!

"These lectures," the *Methodist Times* says, "are exceedingly profitable to professional lecturers." Well, why should they not be? Is not a lecturer as good as a preacher? Why should not Sir Robert Ball be paid ten or fifteen pounds for teaching the truths of astronomy, when clergymen get hundreds a year, and sometimes thousands, for preaching the inspiration of a book which represents the earth as flat, and relates a cock-and-bull story of the sun and moon being stopped while the Jews went on with a massacre? Really, it is the clergy, and not the lecturers, who ought to be ashamed of themselves.

In the Leeds case it is admitted that "the immediate promoters do not seek pecuniary gain." What is their crime then? The *Methodist Times* says they are "extremely blatant and self-righteous." But this offence is not punishable at law; otherwise, it would go hard with a good many Methodists, and Mr. Hughes himself would be in serious danger of fine or imprisonment.

Our contemporary, in its beautiful, urbane fashion, speaks of the "yells of delight" with which the lovers of Sunday freedom greeted a pronouncement by a Committee of Convocation in favor of the Sunday opening of museums, picture-galleries, and libraries. It rejoices that the Committee's report was rejected; and then announces, with a final blast of the Methodist trumpet, that "the demand for the Sunday opening of such institutions is a mere fad of a handful of benevolent cranks who live in an imaginary world of their own."

Let us see who are these Sunday cranks. They include the most illustrious names in science, literature, and art. What sort of a philosophy is it which regards Mr. Price Hughes as the standard of sanity, and sets down as cranks such men as Mr. Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, Sir Robert Ball, Sir Frederic Leighton, and Mr. Burne Jones? And what is it that these "cranks" demand? They do not want to close the Gospel-shops and make the men of God rest themselves on the day when they condemn others to inaction? They simply say that the Church should not be allowed to play the part of the dog in the manger. Let

those who like go to church; let those who like go to a museum, a library, an art gallery, or a lecture hall. Do not let those who prefer one place say to their fellow citizens, "You shall go there or nowhere." Let us have fair play all round.

Such is the demand of the Sunday cranks. And they will win. It is only a question of time. They are "cranks" to the Sunday bigots, who understand by "liberty" the right to do as they please, and to make other people do as they do. But they are really the champions of justice, liberality, and enlightenment; and they may well despise the railing of their adversaries, in the sure faith that history will ratify the verdict of their own consciences.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHEN CHRIST RULED.

It is useful to look back and observe what Christianity actually was in the days of its power. Now-a-days it poses as everything that is gentle, benign, and helping to civilisation. Yet it cannot get rid of the damning fact that war, slavery, oppression, and persecution accompanied its career during the days of its supremacy. It has the blood of myriads of heretics and Jews and of millions of so-called witches on its track. In its palmy days the Christian Church literally revelled in cruelty. Punishments by torture and death by fire were the natural results of a creed which taught that God needed a blood atonement, and would punish the immense majority of his creatures in ever-burning hell. Mr. Lecky says of these dogmas: "We can never conceive the intense vividness with which these conceptions were realised, or the madness and misery they produced. For those were ages of implicit and unflinching credulity; they were ages when none of the distractions of the present day divided the intellect, and when theology was the single focus upon which the imagination was concentrated. They were ages, too, when the modern tendency to soften or avoid repulsive images was altogether unknown." What must have been the feelings of those who believed in diabolical possession, a doctrine distinctly taught in the New Testament, as fully shown in *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*; and who believed that they themselves or those they held dear were the victims of the wiles of the devil?

Christianity tended from the first to withdraw men's minds from the concerns of this world, and to concentrate them upon another life; and no fact in history is more patent than that the triumph of Christianity was followed by the decline of Pagan civilisation. Literature passed from the hands of poets, philosophers, and historians to those of monks and theologians, and then almost totally declined. Bury, in his history of *The Later Roman Empire* (i. 311), says: "The spirit of early Christianity was a most favorable atmosphere for the stifling of humane literature; and as Christian theology became current, and Christian ideas penetrated the minds of men, little breathing-space was left for the faint life of that humane literature which had already travelled so far from its former heights." From the first ages a dislike of Pagan learning was general among Christians.

Warned by the apostles to beware of philosophy and the knowledge which puffeth up, they despised the vain science and learning of a world they expected soon to pass away. Those only of the Fathers who were converted from Paganism retained somewhat of the philosophic temper, like Origen, Clement, and Augustine. But once Christianity had obtained complete victory, and its effects were seen in the destruction of libraries, the decline of learning, and the long night of the Dark Ages.

In Pagan Rome books were common, and sold at comparatively low prices. When Christ ruled books were so scarce that none but the wealthiest could purchase them. Charles V., who began to reign 1365, formed the first royal library, and when the English took Paris in 1425 the collection only amounted to about 853 volumes. When, in 1471, Louis XI. borrowed the works of Averroes, the Arabian, from the faculty of medicine in Paris, he had to deposit in pledge a considerable quantity of plate, and to procure a nobleman to join with him as surety in a deed binding himself under a great forfeiture to restore them.

Buckle declares that such learning as there was in the days when Christ ruled, only ministered to ignorance. He says:—

"From the sixth to the tenth century there was not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves; and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was, during these four centuries, sunk in the most degraded ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the Fathers. From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of the time is principally composed."

The ages that were pre-eminently Christian were pre-eminently dark. Violence, tyranny, spoliation, and pestilence characterised them. The people were serfs; the nobles, robbers. The ages of faith, as Mr. J. C. Morison has shown in his *Service of Man*, were ages of immorality. He says with truth and force: "The temperature of faith rises steadily, as we penetrate into the past, almost with the regularity which marks the rise of the physical temperature of the air as we descend into a deep mine; but a neglect and defiance of morality are found to ascend in a corresponding ratio." Faith abounded, all scepticism being stamped out; but it was powerless to prevent the brutality of the Middle Ages seen in the records of the Crusades and of the Inquisition.

But it may be said all this was Catholic Christianity. Christ was not really ruling, but under a cloud, overshadowed by the head of the Church. Well, I admit that Protestantism was an improvement, so far as it asserted the right of private judgment; but what little good it did was largely mitigated by its substitution of the Bible as an infallible fetish book for the infallible authority of the Church. The publication of the Bible with its inspired text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," led to renewed persecutions of witches. Protestants were just as persecuting as Catholics. Men were still burnt, tortured, and imprisoned for their opinions. In England Dissenters were long treated almost as outlaws. That pious monarch, James I., not only wrote against and persecuted witches, but burnt two Unitarians, himself kicking one previously to burning him, because he would not be convinced by the king's arguments. His sacred majesty, as the translators of the Bible called him, decorated Temple Bar and London Bridge with human heads and trunks from which the limbs were severed. The head of the noble Raleigh, who gave us tobacco and the potato, would have been with the number had not influential friends carried it away. So Christian was this savage custom that his sacred majesty got himself painted on his war horse, with the gate of London Bridge, decorated with the heads of traitors, in the background. So much had Christian civilisation done for the world up till the seventeenth century.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE VALUE OF DOUBT.

(Concluded from page 259.)

WHEN professed Christians have a firm conviction that doubt in matters of religion is a sin, there is no degrading superstition to which they may not fall victims. If such unfortunate persons could only be induced to seriously reflect, apart from all prejudice, they would undoubtedly experience the humiliating thought that they would have been just as violent upholders of any other faith than their own, if such faith had been that of their parents or their country. It is the tendency of orthodoxy to produce intellectual apathy, and to cause its adherents to allow others to think for them, instead of exercising their mental powers themselves. Until men acquire the habit of independent thought they will be influenced more by the prevailing ideas of their time than by their own reason. Now, doubt is valuable, inasmuch as it tends to destroy this condition of mental torpor, and to remove that unfruitful uniformity of acceptance upon trust which has so long prevailed throughout Christendom.

In the absence of all doubt a state of intellectual indolence must appear, to those who encourage it, as profitable as a state of activity. If this were not so, it

would be difficult to account for the human mind being dazzled by certain creeds and dogmas which are being constantly repeated as if they were self-evident truths. Not the slightest suspicion is entertained that such theological figments may be false; they are, as a rule, believed without any examination, and defended at the sacrifice of reason and mental dignity. It is a serious drawback of that too-confiding spirit engendered by the popular religion that it induces its lethargic devotees to placidly listen to the incoherent statements made in the pulpits, which are the stock-in-trade of the clergy in their efforts to endeavor to stifle free inquiry, and to suppress that doubt which has proved the great enemy to priestly supremacy. Christians, of course, claim that they are not opposed to free inquiry; judging, however, from their actions, such is far from being the case. They tell us to "prove all things; hold fast that which is good"; but they take upon themselves to decide what is good. This is an orthodox notion of freedom with a vengeance! What stimulant did Christ give to free thought when he said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me; . . . if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned"? Is there any incentive to impartial investigation in the gloomy words, "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"? Once establish among mankind the erroneous notion that truth is confined to one particular channel, and that the man who does not go in that direction is to be cast forth as a "withered branch," and the impossibility of unfettered thought will be immediately apparent. Induce a man to examine a subject, and tell him that, regardless of evidence, he must arrive at one conclusion or be damned, the pursuit of truth is then made a hypocritical farce, rather than a noble and useful reality.

The encouragement which free inquiry received from Christians when they had undisputed power was that they not only tortured and imprisoned those who opposed their faith, but they committed to the flames those works which demonstrated the fallacy and absurdity of their system. Their desire to promote free inquiry during their early history is exemplified in the memorable proclamation of the Christian Emperor, Theodosius, in which he ordered that the whole of the writings of Porphyry, and all others who had written against the Christian religion, should be committed to the fire. The writings of Celsus met with an equally warm reception, and for a proof that the same desire has existed in modern times it is necessary, not only to read the history of those Freethought pioneers of the last and of the early part of the present century, but also to remember that now, whenever Christians have the power, they exercise it in order that we may not have the opportunity to promulgate those principles that stimulate free inquiry. Fortunately, man is a progressive being, having within him an inherent love of freedom; he cannot, therefore, long tolerate anything which cramps his mind or fetters his thought. Truth may be crushed, but it cannot be annihilated; it is as permanent as the earth which contains it. The fact is being more and more acknowledged that opinion is the result of organisation and evidence. And, instead of inflicting punishment for the imperfections of the one or the limitation of the other, it is now recognised by advanced minds that the true policy is to recognise the widest and most diversified thoughts, seeking to correct those which are erroneous by unfettered inquiry and honest criticism.

There are two methods by which opinions are formed: (1) the impressions made upon our senses; and (2) the testimony of others. If people would but study this fact, they would probably understand why so many different views are held upon the subject of religion, and how impossible it is to prevent doubt in a progressive state of society. It is to be regretted that the majority of believers in theology rely principally upon the second method. It is found by some persons to be much easier to depend upon others than to investigate for themselves. This is one reason why the Church has so many adherents who have no solid reason for the hope or the faith within them. The great majority of professed Christians are such more from a desire to be fashionable than in consequence of a calm investigation into the credentials of their faith. They too often accept belief passively from their parents, instead of testing its nature and value. Now, doubt has the

immense advantage of being the means of securing a justification for the reception and the retention of any given opinions.

It is well known that in England the acquirement of useful knowledge and the reform of our penal laws may be traced to the time when doubts as to the validity of certain Bible teachings began. It was through doubt that the old Mosaic idea of creation was exploded, and to the same cause are we indebted for the abolition of capital punishment, which was once inflicted for many trivial offences. So long as men believed in the infallibility of Moses and the divine sanction of the prediction, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," scientific progress and humane legislation upon these questions were unknown. The price paid by the English people for their adherence to the advice of Bible interpreters was a high one. It deprived them of the advantages that result from a rational view of nature, and from conforming to the laws that govern human actions; and, moreover, it inaugurated and maintained a relentless persecution towards those who dared to seek emancipation from the yoke of the Bible and the priest. In proportion as doubt has been fostered, progress has followed, and mental liberty has been vindicated.

CHARLES WATTS.

BEATING THE RELIGIOUS DRUM.

It is to be presumed that the lengthy notices of books under the title "Book of the Month," in the *Review of Reviews*, when unsigned, are by Mr. Stead himself. If, then, Mr. Stead be responsible for the compilation in the March number, introducing Mr. Balfour's book on *The Foundations of Belief*, it is to be regretted; for he has been guilty of some language of which one need say no more than that its more fitting place would be the columns of some of the lower-class Christian-Evidence journals.

Every now and then we are startled by great drum-beating in the religious camp; we are told that religion is "on the boom," or, as Mr. Gladstone's curious phrase puts it, "creation is gathering itself together for a great recovery." Now it is the Pope who is issuing one of his innumerable encyclicals that is to do something wonderful; then it is Mr. Gladstone writing one of his innumerable articles to some magazine or other. Here it is a scientist dropping some stray phrase about science having limitations; there it is a book by a Tory statesman arguing that, if there be no god, it is necessary, in order to keep things from going to wreck, to persuade ourselves that there is. And, singularly enough, these people, who are always telling us that religion is recovering, are the people who could never be got to admit that it had suffered any reverses.

Mr. Stead, however, makes the publication of Mr. Balfour's book the occasion for a great whoop about the revival of religion. For the last half-century, at least, he says, "a science that was nescience, as far as the soul of man was concerned, has been swaggering in the forefront of civilisation." This is a sample of the choice language which it seems the religious revival will bring with it. But there is even more choice language still. Here are some specimens of it which must be transcribed:—

"The intolerance of the bigot of the Churches was succeeded by the even more detestable superciliousness of the Brahmin of science. . . . The doctrine that no man of ordinary intelligence could be a Christian, and that all who held on to the old faith were old women or cowards, has been thundered *ex cathedra* from the pontifical chairs of Unbelief, and complacently repeated by simpering nincompoops, who were delighted to be assured on such unexceptionable authority that there was no Being in the universe superior to their own noble selves, and, what was still more important, no Taskmaster or Judge who would ever call them to account for frivolling away their existence."

Now, when we hear this sort of thing from the reckless street-corner evangelist, or read it in those gutter journals that make a business of combatting "infidelity," we do not marvel greatly. Long suffering has produced indifference, and, besides, one reflects that, after all, it is only the language that is to be expected from ignorant and intolerant persons incapable of thinking, with no leisure or incentive to acquire knowledge; reared, as most of them

have been, in a creed which cramps and starves the intellect. But when the language and the methods of the street-corner are transferred to the pages of a serious magazine with a great circulation and greater pretensions, by an editor who is oppressively godly, and who evidently believes that there are not many saintly enough to touch the hem of his garment, then it is difficult to know quite how to characterise his conduct. The insinuation about it being "important" to Freethinkers that there was no "Taskmaster or Judge who would ever call them to account for frivolling away their existence"—the old, old bracketing of moral guilt with intellectual difference of opinion—is peculiarly contemptible, coming from a man who would be denounced as a heretic himself by any of the great Churches, and a man too who, whenever there was any journalistic capital to be made out of praising and writing up representative Freethinkers like Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, was never behindhand in the work. Mr. Stead, in fact, is a journalist first, and anything else in the world afterwards.

But I must confess I do not know what is meant by the reference to Freethinkers "frivolling away their existence." Do all Freethinkers "frivol," and does no Christian "frivol"? Or does the Freethinker's frivolling consist in the very fact of his Freethought? And, if so, are all Christians stolid and sedate "by the grace of God," who look with disdain and pity on the gambols and frolics of the giddy Freethinker, who buzzes about, heedless of the flame? I would humbly ask a little enlightenment. At the same time, I frankly think myself that Freethinkers are neither serious nor moral. For seriousness evidently means rushing after every passing sensation in literature or politics, and writing columns about it as if it were the final end of all things; whilst obviously no man can claim to be moral who does not go into hysterics at the sight of a petticoat. I agree Freethinkers are frivollers. Balls, receptions, theatres, concerts, clubs, levées, and Monte Carlo make up the story of their wasted lives. Take a census of the N.S.S., and you will find that ninety per cent. of the members winter in the Riviera; whilst the humble, serious, hardworking Christian, who is perforce compelled to take a few months' well-earned holiday in Grindelwald or elsewhere, attempts to stem the tide of frivolity with telepathic interviews and blazing placards.

Let the nincompoop, however, return to his frivol. One sign of the times, showing the way things are going, the recovery religion is making, is an article by M. Brunetière on "The Bankruptcy of Science." Mr. Stead publishes a summary of the article taken from the *Spectator*. I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the summary, but, presuming it to fairly represent M. Brunetière's statement, it is certainly curious, inasmuch as it contains nothing but what has been said many times over by Christian apologists. The sole "importance" of the article—to judge from this *précis*—presumably consists in the fact that it was written by M. Brunetière. Take, for instance, these passages:—

"The Hellenists, it is true, have discovered the scattered fragments of the Sermon on the Mount in the *Manual of Epictetus* or the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*; but they have never explained why the Sermon on the Mount has conquered the world, while the *Manual* and the *Thoughts* have remained mere barren pieces of literature. . . . But after all their labors there remains something in the Bible which is found in no other book and in no other history—something which resists exegesis as it resisted philology."

Had this passage occurred—as it very well might—in one of Archdeacon Farrar's or Mr. Price Hughes's discourses, it would have attracted little or no attention. Its curiosity, like its importance, is bound up solely in its authorship. For the rest, it is no more than you could find scores of parallels to in the sermons of professional Bible-boomers. It is probably what the average Mohammedan thinks of the Koran; what every believer, in fact, thinks of his fetish book. It may also be remarked that if Marcus Aurelius were taught to little children as a divinely-inspired author; if his work were pushed and extolled for centuries by as powerful an organisation as has pushed the Bible; if, through the aid of this powerful organisation and the hold which its officials obtained over the young, Marcus Aurelius had become woven into the art and literature of generations; and if, furthermore, a man of science could be got occasionally to furnish a testimonial to the wonderful power and the unique nature of Marcus Aurelius's work, then, I

suppose, Marcus Aurelius would resist exegesis and resist philology, and all the rest. That, it seems to me, is, in outline, the natural explanation of the position and prestige of the Bible. Can M. Brunetière suggest a more rational one?

There is one passage in M. Brunetière's statement, however, that is extraordinary. He says, or is represented by the *Spectator* as saying: "It [science] has made an enemy instead of a friend of religion; it has insisted on seeing an opposition where, in fact, none exists." It is certainly difficult to believe that this even approximately conveys the sense of the original. It may be presumptuous to say so, for M. Brunetière is a very eminent gentleman, is one of the editors of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and is worthy of respect; but the above is the language of one who is completely ignorant of the most common facts of history. Professor Huxley has told us that along every path of scientific inquiry Theology has erected its notice-boards, "No thoroughfare. By order.—Moses." And most people with any historical knowledge will agree that Professor Huxley is as right as M. Brunetière is wrong. Science simply went on its way, and it was stopped by Theology; a conflict was, therefore, inevitable. It was Theology which was the aggressor always until Science was provoked into an aggressive attitude itself towards the system which hampered and thwarted it.

If, as M. Brunetière says, there is no opposition really between religion and science, why did the Church heap indignities on Galileo? Why did it burn Bruno? Why did it anathematise Darwin? Why, in short, has it thrown every obstacle in the way of scientific advance? It was only in the early part of the present century that the Church removed from the *Index* a simple manual* teaching the Copernican astronomy. It does not even yet accept Darwinism, or allow the doctrine of evolution to be taught. Whilst, if anyone wishes to know how the Church guarded liberty of thought, let him study the blood-red page of history; let him read the records of the Inquisition; let him examine the life of the saintly Torquemada, under whom thousands of human beings were burned at the stake; let him dive into the history of the debauchery and corruption which polluted Europe during the Dark Ages, and which revolved around Rome as its centre. It may not be an edifying study, I admit, but it will throw a great light on the Church's claim to be considered the friend of science and culture. It may be remarked that all this belongs to the past, that the Church has "reformed." Well, I have instanced the case of Darwin, which is modern. But I would recommend anyone who considers things have changed to peruse an important article which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for August last, entitled "Intellectual Liberty and Contemporary Catholicism," by the Catholic writer who discussed in that magazine the policy of the Papacy. And he will find that, in spirit and method and purpose, the Catholic Church—and it was of the Catholic Church particularly that M. Brunetière was writing—stands precisely where it did. It has moved just so far as the pressure of the scientific spirit of the age has absolutely forced it. And what is true of the Catholic Church is true, in greater or less degree, of every organised hierarchy in the world.

But the hierarchies are doomed. Not even the fact that Christianity, according to Mr. Gladstone, "commands the largest number of *professing* adherents" will save it from extinction. Of course its spokesmen and penmen will beat the drum as loudly as they can; it is natural that they should make much of every little back-eddy, while ignoring the stream that flows steadily the other way. It is natural, perhaps, also that, in the very act of dogmatising themselves, they should accuse science of dogmatism, and while violently abusing Freethinkers in offensive language, invite them to deal *reverently* with the shibboleths of the abusers. There is generally a tendency on the part of the conquered to lose their tempers. And religionists—with

* The author of the article in the *Contemporary Review* which has been referred to says: "As late as the Pontificate of Leo XIII. (1823-29) Professor Setele's book on astronomy was forbidden in the Palatii, because the motion of the earth round the sun was described therein as a fact. Professor Setele appealed to the reigning Pope who authorised the publication, and for the first time removed Galileo's works from the Index of forbidden books. I instance this as one example merely of that overwhelming friendship for science on the part of the Church to which M. Brunetière refers."

all their meekness and humility, and with all the consciousness of fighting on the side of omnipotence, to aid them—form no exception to the rule. But bad temper even does not save a lost cause. Religions always die hard. But they die all the same.

FREDERICK RYAN.

JESUS AND THE COLT.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to steal a hoss,
Or blush to ride the same?

It may seem strange that one living in a land where Jesus is worshipped as a God should ask the question, "Did Jesus steal a colt?" and were it not for his own testimony (Luke xix. 29-31) probably no one ever would have accused him of such an act. His teaching and precepts in general are good, and but little, if any, inferior to those of Buddha or Confucius, from whom he possibly copied them; yet I have never read a word charging that either Buddha or Confucius was a thief, and I cannot for a moment believe that Jesus ever converted to his own use property belonging to another, or sent his disciples to steal a colt. Furthermore, I would not repeat the story were it not that nearly every family in Christendom has, at some time, either bought or had given them a Bible in which the story appears. It is as follows: "Go ye into the village over against you; in the which, at your entering, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat; loose him and bring him hither; and if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him."

If the record is true, and Jesus actually did order his disciples to so purloin a colt, I have no plea to make for the man-god, for all criminal law would hold him equally guilty with his deluded disciples who "led the hoss away." We have no evidence of any kind to show that the colt belonged to Jesus, in fee simple, or that he had a mortgage lien on the animal; to the contrary, his own words condemn him when he says: "If any man asks you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him."

I can see no reason why a god should need a colt in such a hurry that he would have to steal one, when we are told there is nothing impossible with God, and he could have made a two-year-old colt in a minute (though he would not have been two years old), and had him ready broke to carry double, if necessary, without extra expense; and why Jesus set such a bad example before his disciples (which many of them still follow) I cannot understand. From a general digest of the matter, I judge that the end justified the means, and that it was all for the glory of God. This being true, why should we condemn the Jesuits for doing anything and everything they choose, when "the end justifies the means" and "for the glory of God"?

Whether the Lord had need of heretical ashes (for Christian lye) in the Dark Ages, I know not; but the end must have justified the means when, between the years 1600 and 1630, the Christians burned at the stake over 270,000 human beings as heretics to the Roman faith. Otherwise the omnipresent Lord would not have been lounging around without calling a policeman. To say the least, it looks rather bewildering to read that Jesus commands us not to steal, and then commands his disciples to borrow a rope that he knew had a colt on the other end of it. Perhaps this is why his vicegerents preach one thing and practise another, and why, like a guide-board, they point the way, but never go themselves. They teach what to do to go to heaven, but they cannot indicate the direction of either heaven or hell, and

Had I the colt that Jesus stole,
I should not know, 'tis pity,
Which road to take to land my soul
Within the golden city.

If the olden saying is true that "what is bred in the bone cannot be whipped from the body," Jesus must have been "a chip from the old block," for Jehovah is credited with saying to his chosen people (Exodus iii. 21, 22), "When ye go ye shall not go empty; but every woman shall borrow of her neighbor and of her that sojourns in her house jewels of gold and raiment; and ye shall put them

upon your sons and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians." This is theft of the meanest kind, and no other god but Jehovah would ever have risked his reputation by ordering it in writing.

Mine eyes are dim; I cannot see
The great Jehovah's plan.
Did God—will you enlighten me?
Wish for the fall of man?
Pray tell me, if you will and can,
Did God, in thunderbolt,
Bid Moses slay the Egyptian,
Or Christ to steal that colt?

It's no go, my Christian friend. You never can make thinking people believe that any god ever stole a colt or cut up such capers as you say Jehovah did; or that any real, sure-enough god ever cursed the world because Eve ate an apple. You can fool our unsophisticated women and artless children, make them believe that the Lord of this universe was so put to it for a colt that he had to steal one; but intelligent people who have no bread and butter depending on the issue will swallow no such truck.

—Truthseeker.

A. D. SWAN.

FROST, THE FRIEND AND FOE.

SING ho! for the Frost, for the keen, sharp Frost,
With its bracing and biting breath!
With health that is won, with health that is lost,
And the poor ragged weakling's death.

Sing ho! for the Frost, and the rosy crowds
With their sports, and their health and wealth!
For icicle shuttles that weave the shrouds
Of the bankrupt in wealth and health.

Sing ho! for the Frost, with its dainty hand,
As it decks ev'ry branch and leaf
With glittering jewels of fairy land,
Whilst it mocks at the starveling's grief.

Sing ho! for the Frost, as its sculptured jests
And pictorial pranks appear;
That playfully shatters the mountain's crests,
And disports with the outcast's tear.

"Sing ho! for the Frost," say the clothed and fed,
"On a heavenly earth we dwell!"
Whilst those that are starved cry: "Would we were
dead!
For there's comfort in thoughts of hell!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THE MAHATMAS.

THE only evidence of Mahatmic agency adduced by Mrs. Besant at her recent lecture was the fact that Madame Blavatsky, whom she chose to describe as an uneducated woman—though she was evidently, like Mrs. Besant herself, a woman with a very large power of assimilating other people's thoughts—had written, as if by inspiration, *The Voice of the Silence*. Now, Mr. W. E. Coleman has examined all the works published with the name of H. P. Blavatsky, and finds throughout that they are plagiarisms from other writings. He says of the book in question:—

"The *Voice of the Silence*, published in 1889, purports to be a translation by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from a Thibetan work. It is said to belong to the same series as the *Book of Dzyan*, which is true, as, like that work, it is a compilation of ideas and terminology, from various nineteenth-century books, the diction and phraseology being those of Madame Blavatsky. I have traced the sources whence it was taken, and it is a hotch-potch from Brahmanical books on Yoga and other Hindu writings; Southern Buddhistic books, from the Pali and Sinhalese; and Northern Buddhistic writings, from the Chinese and Thibetan—the whole having been taken by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky from translations by, and the writings of, European and other Orientalists of to-day. In this work are intermingled Sanskrit, Pali, Thibetan, Chinese, and Sinhalese terms—a manifest absurdity in a Thibetan work. I

have traced the books from which each of these terms was taken. I find embedded in the text of this alleged ancient Thibetan work quotations, phrases, and terms copied from current Oriental literature. The books most utilised in its compilation are these: Schlagintweit's *Buddhism in Thibet*, Edkins's *Chinese Buddhism*, Hardy's *Eastern Monarchism*, Rhys Davids's *Buddhism*, Dvivedi's *Raja Yoga*, and *Raja Yoga Philosophy* (1888); also an article, 'The Dream of Ravan,' published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, January, 1854, extracts from which appeared in the *Theosophist* of January, 1880. Passages from this article, and from the books named above, are scattered about in the text of the *Voice of the Silence*, as well as in the annotations thereon, which latter are admitted to be the work of Blavatsky. Full proofs of this, including the parallel passages, will be given in my work on Theosophy; including evidence that this old Thibetan book contains not only passages from the Hindu books quoted in the article in the *Dublin Magazine*, but also ideas and phrases stolen from the nineteenth-century writer of said article."

MORE LYING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

WHEN the American carrion crows leave off raking over the long dead body of Thomas Paine, they usually, without approaching too close, try to leave some of their foul odors near the door of Pagan Bob. The Rev. Robert F. True, whose name belies his nature, is one of this breed. He is secretary of the Evangelistic Association of New England, and at a meeting of that society made the remark "that Colonel Ingersoll's own daughters do not believe his doctrine, and one of them has recently joined the Presbyterian Church in Albany." A representative of the *Boston Investigator*, who occasionally wanders into such gatherings, moved by curiosity or by purposes of criticism, happened to be present. At the close of the meeting he went forward and asked Mr. True for his authority for the statement he had just made. The gentleman, evidently somewhat taken aback by this bold challenge, replied that he had been so informed by several pastors (a very uncertain source of information, by the way). He was then asked if he would retract that statement as publicly as he had made it, provided he was convinced that he was in error, and he replied that he would do so. With the remark that the matter would be thoroughly investigated, and that he would be put in possession of the fact, the *Investigator* representative left the church.

Mr. Ernest Mendum, the editor of the *Investigator*, at once wrote and received answers from the two daughters of Colonel Ingersoll, *fac-similes* of which are given in the *Investigator*. They both emphatically deny having for a moment thought of joining any church. Colonel Ingersoll also wrote: "Ernest Mendum, Esq. My Dear Friend,—I have two daughters, and neither of them ever joined any church. On the subject of religion both of them agree with me, or I agree with them. My wife and I are of the same opinion as to the supernatural. We both believe in the natural, and in what I have done against what is called religion I have always had her support and sympathy. So, you may say from me that the reverend gentleman was entirely mistaken, and in what he said there is not the slightest truth.—Yours always, R. G. INGERSOLL."

Armed with these letters, Mr. True was waited on. He was true to his word, and withdrew the statement publicly in his own church.

Did God Die?

In the *Colloquia* of Martin Luther (p. 114; 1652) we read that on June 18, 1538, Luther received letters from Vienna, out of which he understood that there was one who denied that the Godhead in Christ did not suffer, but only his humanity. Luther said: "That cannot be, for it is written 'God who hath purchased the Church with his blood.'" At the same time this question was put to Luther: "If it were justly and right spoken like a Christian to say Christ did suffer and die according to his Godhead or divine nature, seeing the Godhead is not subject to death, neither can suffer nor die; for St. Peter saith: 'Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit.'" Whereupon Luther answered and said: "All true and upright Christians fearing God and the whole Christian Church and Communion do believe, undoubtedly, that which in the Children's Creed is spoken—namely, that Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, in one divine substance and nature with the Father, is true man, born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Ghost, did suffer, was crucified, died, and was buried. Therefore we must believe that not only the nature of His Humanity, but also of His Deity, or the right, true God did suffer and die for us." The italics are in the original.

ACID DROPS.

Mrs. BESANT has lectured at St. James's Hall, London, on Mahatmas. She was eloquent as usual, but quite unconvincing. "Plenty of eloquence, but not a shred of evidence," cried out one of her auditors when it was all over; and this seemed to be the general feeling amongst all but the Theosophists. Another auditor wanted to know whether Mrs. Besant had ever seen a Mahatma, and the faithful cried "Shame!" at that grovelling materialist. Mrs. Besant did not answer questions or take discussion. She has got past that stage. The High Priestess of Theosophy only delivers oracles.

Mrs. Besant told a *Westminster Gazette* interviewer that she first saw her Mahatma in France in 1889. He revealed himself to her in the night, and we presume the door was locked. Mrs. Besant saw him and smelt him; in fact, it was the odor that clinched the demonstration. Mahatmas bear a peculiar aroma, something like sandal wood. By this sign ye shall know them. Good old Mahatmas.

No wonder the *Westminster* hopes that Mrs. Besant will drop this wretched business and "save the wreck of her reputation." It is a charitable hope, but we fear it will not be realised. While the world talks about her Mrs. Besant is in her element.

An appeal for £20,000 for the East London Church Fund speaks of "the growing opportunities of the Church," because "Secularism seems played out." Our friends the enemy may delude themselves with the belief in our non-existence as long as they please, but the time may come when they will have a rude awakening.

What is the calibre of minds that revel in missionary reports? A Christian paper relates the case of Chung-Te, the only convert in Ohyo, a village in Fuh-Kien. A great fire broke out in this village, although the people tried, without success, to stop the flames with a row of their household gods. Chung-Te, however, knelt down and prayed, and his house was saved; which made the people admit that his God was the strong God. But, after all, Chung-Te was as big a fool as the rest, though a bit luckier. It would be better to improve the antiquated Chinese fire-engines, and let all the gods alone.

What a funny thing it is that the Christian God protects a Chinaman, but does not lift a finger to protect an American evangelist. At one of Moody's recent meetings at Fort Worth, Texas, the roof suddenly fell, killing one person and injuring forty-six others. Providence, sir, Providence!

A drowning person, it is said, will grasp at a straw, and we are reminded of the saying by the avidity with which the religious world has hailed Mr. Balfour's book. Mr. Stead's gush is dealt with by Mr. Ryan in another column. Mr. Balfour's argument is an argument for authority, and therefore an argument for Rome. It is amusing to notice the Protestant Mr. Stead saying: "After this no one will contest with Mr. Balfour the right to Mr. Gladstone's mantle."

Diderot said: "Bewildered in an immense forest in the night time, I have only a feeble lantern to light my path. Comes a stranger, who says to me, 'Blow out thy candle so better find thy way.' This stranger is the theologian." Had he lived now, he might have applied this to the author of *The Foundations of Belief*.

By arrangement, Father Black, the Duke of Newcastle, and a number of members of the English Church Union went to St. Mark's, North Audley-street, W., on April 27, to protest against the marriage of Mr. Brinckman to Miss Linton. Mrs. Brinckman having obtained a divorce was the ground on which Father Black continually protested against the ceremony; but the Rev. Gray refused to listen to him, and he and his fellow protesters were loudly hissed by the crowd.

Not content with this, Father Black (a Father of the Church of England) writes to the *Church Times*, reminding the Bishop of London "how, a few weeks ago, he deprived Mr. Briggs of his licence and daily bread for an offence which in every way falls short of his own."

The *Church Times*, which devotes an article to the subject, declares that the provisions of the Divorce Act of 1857 "are in open defiance of Holy Scripture, of the express words of Christ in our own Prayer-Book Marriage Service, and of the Canon of 1604," for which, we suppose, the twentieth century will be expected to have revived reverence. The *C. T.* excitedly asks: "How long are Christians of the

Church of England going to stand this kind of thing? Are the parishioners of St. Mark's going to allow their church to be thus desecrated?"

Durant, the Sunday-school superintendent who stands charged with having outraged and murdered a little girl whose mutilated body was found in the Emanuel Baptist Chapel, San Francisco, has been identified by a microscopic examination of horsehair. He had a key of the side door of the church which was found unlocked.

At the further hearing of this case the evidence pointed very strongly to the guilt of Mr. Gibson, the pastor of that church, who is a native of Edinburgh. The examination by experts of the handwriting of Mr. Gibson revealed an extraordinary resemblance existing between the written characters and those in the slip of writing sent to the murdered girl's aunt, together with a couple of her rings taken from her fingers before the murder, of which the police now affirm that Gibson and Durant were jointly guilty.

The *New York Tribune* said on Easter Sunday: "In the churches this morning there will be much said about 'the blessed hope of immortality'; but we doubt if a single preacher will declare that the atoms of the identical physical body that was laid in the grave will be brought together again and dowered with an immortal existence. It is a conception entirely foreign to the spirit of the age; and, in the long run, the Church must always take account of the spirit of the age." The *Tribune* professes to discern in this a sign of drift from Materialism. To us it indicates a drift from the Bible, for the doctrine of the New Testament is distinctly that of the resurrection of the body. Nothing is said about an immortal, immaterial soul. Christians recite in church the old creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body," but they attach to it a new and totally different significance from that of the authors.

Talmage has furbished up an old argument for the resurrection. He says: "If, out of ordinary dust of the earth, and without a model, God could make Adam, a perfect man, surely out of the extraordinary dust of mortal body, and with millions of models, God can make each one of us a perfect being in the resurrection." With improved materials and models, of course, the deity ought to turn out something better than his "perfect man," who fell at the first temptation.

In the *Cosmopolitan* Mr. J. T. Van Gestel gives a vivid account of the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano, which, in May, 1893, overtook the islands of Java and Sumatra, and brought to a horrible death no less than two hundred thousand people. Mr. Van Gestel himself saw the city of Anjer, with its sixty thousand inhabitants, engulfed and blotted out. Believers in Providence must find it hard to reconcile a sudden terrible calamity like this with their fanciful theory.

Catholic Opinion has had its feelings outraged by the fact that eighty French Freethinkers sat down to dine together on Good Friday. It suggests they must have been instigated by the devil to thus outrage the feelings of good Catholics, who were fasting, and were not even obliged to smell the offensive dinner.

A church dispute reached an acute stage in Nebraska a few weeks ago. The affairs of the Polish Roman Catholic Church at Sheelytown, near Omaha, have been in the law courts for over a year, and a deadly hatred has existed between the factions, resulting in a bloody riot a month ago. On March 27, just after the evening service, the church was destroyed, and it is alleged that the faction of Father Kominski handed the church rather than allow it to fall into the hands of the bishop. Fighting is going on, and another riot is feared. Christianity has seldom brought anything more nearly approaching the popular idea of the millennium than this state of things; but perhaps these rioting and blood-thirsty Polish Catholics are not Christians? Who shall decide?

The Rev. Geo. H. Hepworth, who writes the sermon in the *New York Herald*, Sunday, March 31, says: "We shall, undoubtedly, experience a great many surprises when we get to heaven. The heaven depicted by the popular theology is a place very undesirable to go to, because death, we are told, will make such changes in us that we shall lose all of our personal peculiarities, and perhaps our personality itself." Well might the man of God question if such an immortality would be worth having.

Mr. Carroll Everett, of Harvard University, in a paper on "The Devil," in the *New World*, points out that Old Nick could always be trusted to keep a bargain. He says: "In all the stories that I recall in which a pact was made with the Devil, it was not he who tried to squirm out of it. We all remember the many questionable methods which have been

adopted by those who had sold themselves, or others, to him to escape making the delivery by some technical subterfuge, even after they had received the price. In all these transactions it has not been the Devil that has appeared at the greatest disadvantage. So far as I can recall the various narratives, if the Devil makes a promise he always keeps it, even to his own loss." The Bible stories bear this out. When the serpent says, "Ye shall not surely die," he is literally correct. On the other hand Jehovah sends lying spirits into the mouths of Ahab's prophets to lure him to destruction.

God's mercies have been magnificently displayed in the terrible French disaster, sweeping away whole villages, destroying over a hundred lives, and rendering hundreds of others homeless. In Hungary, too, four market towns, with thousands of houses, have been destroyed by the floods, and a great many persons and large numbers of cattle have been drowned.

Again the cholera has broken out at Mecca, and is reported as spreading rapidly from that pilgrim centre. Here religion, instead of coping with disease, rather tends to its diffusion.

According to the *Dover Observer* (April 27), an abominable case of cruelty has been perpetrated at one of the religious Homes of that city. The Institution has associated with it people who believe that faith and prayer will accomplish everything. A young woman was admitted into the Institution who had run a needle into her foot, which, together with the leg, became greatly inflamed, keeping her in an agony of pain. Orders were given that she should not be allowed any surgical assistance, but that, instead, prayers should be said over her for two hours daily, and that she should wait till it should please her Maker to release her from the tormenting pain which had driven her well-nigh mad. If the *Observer's* statement is correct, the directors of the Institution in question should not only be named, but prosecuted for their pious inhumanity.

The South Shields *Free Press* is printing a discussion on "Theosophy," which is rendered amusing by bogus Mahatma letters. The matter advanced by the Theosophists is hardly worth anything better, though Mr. Gordon Scott puts his pin into their air-bladders very seriously.

The Bolton School Board spent three hours arguing whether they should petition for rates to be applied to voluntary schools. Mr. Cooper told them plainly that, if the clerical resolution passed, the minority would present a counter petition.

Walter Condy Parsons, a lad of seventeen, who lived at Small Heath, Birmingham, blew out his brains with a revolver. His mother had committed suicide some months previous, and he brooded over the catastrophe until his own mind became unhinged. According to some letters he left at his lodgings, he was an Agnostic without belief in a future life. Whereupon the Coroner—Mr. Oliver Pemberton—was silly enough to tell the jury that "If a man can neither find a deity in theological teaching nor in nature, he must be mad." Fancy an obscure official talking in this way of his intellectual superiors—such as Darwin, Clifford, Spencer, Huxley, and Bradlaugh! We should like to feel that coroner's bumps.

The Christian, who is ever ready with a defence for his fetish book, is sometimes amusing. One who was asked how, after all the cattle had died by one of the plagues of Egypt, they were nevertheless afflicted with boils, said the Egyptians had bought fresh cattle in the meantime. He might as well have said that the Lord created fresh cattle for them.

"General" Booth has been occupying the Colston Hall, Bristol, which would not be available for a Freethought meeting. His advertised program was "Two Days with God." It doesn't follow, though, that God has had two days with Booth.

Charles Dickens used to tell the following story about a Methodist preacher: "This preacher had been called to officiate at the funeral of a relative of a Conservative editor, and as the preacher himself aimed to be a Liberal leader in the district, he and the editor had often crossed swords. This time the chance came to deliver a home thrust without a chance for either parry or reply. At the coffin of the deceased, beside which the editor and other mourners knelt together, the preacher made this appeal: 'Lord, overrule this affliction to the welfare of all assembled, including the reptile now sprawling in Thy presence, who has frequently abused Thy servant in the columns of his beastly publication.'"

According to the special commissioner of the *Boston Herald*, who visited all the principal towns in the State of

Maine to observe the working of the Maine Liquor Law, which has been for many years in force in that State, Prohibition does not prohibit. The law is violated with impunity. Portland is said to have "about four hundred rum-shops" and from four to five hundred liquor-sellers live in Lewiston. The commissioner observed that the police can resolutely "put down" whiskey when it is offered them to drink, and one beside him at an hotel bar insisted on the commissioner taking a drink at his expense.

An Austrian has invented a rapping and talking table. *Der Stein der Weisen* describes this ingenious electrical apparatus, which is intended for conjurers, "mejums," and private parties entertaining their friends.

Mr. Disraeli and Dean Stanley were once staying in the same house, and it fell to the statesman's lot to listen to a sermon from the Broad Church divine. As was his wont, Dean Stanley indulged in an eloquent denunciation of dogmatism. When next they met, Mr. Disraeli remarked: "We have to thank you for a most eloquent sermon, Mr. Dean, and I must say, from your own point of view, for a most disinterested one. No dogmas, no deans."

The *Monist*, of Chicago, opens with an account of "The World's Parliament of Religions," by the President, the Hon. C. C. Bonney. It is proposed to commemorate and follow up the work of that Parliament with "The World's Religious Parliament Extension." This may be taken as one sign of the break up of Christianity. For Christianity is nothing if not exclusive in its pretensions. It proclaims there is no salvation under heaven save in the name of Jesus Christ, and "he that believeth not shall be damned." At the Parliament the only voice of narrowness and bigotry came from Christians. When once Christians resign their pretensions to having an infallible divine revelation, and admit that there is truth in other religions besides their own, they virtually admit that their own faith may be criticised and rejected as much as Buddhism or Brahmanism.

The Rev. W. D. P. Bliss calls Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* "one of the most dangerous productions of recent years." He regards it as a trap for the orthodox. The cheese that baits it is the laudation of religion and Christianity, but the hidden barb is that Christianity is only pretended to be useful, not true. "Evolution is the main thing, God and Christianity are incidentals. What of it? They are useful as characteristic social factors, such as slavery, for example, was." This, says Mr. Bliss, is the real position of the book, and he asks: "Does it really make no difference whether Christianity be true or not?"

At the same time, Dr. F. Lees, the veteran temperance advocate, declares he regards Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* as most pernicious, anti-rational, and Romanising. He intends to devote his remaining days to a refutation.

The *English Mechanic*, writing on "Examinations," says: "We remember at the London University matriculation examination that one of the questions in English literature, set, by the bye, by the Rev. Dr. Angus, now member of our London School Board, was, 'Write out the Lord's Prayer, and underline the words in it of classical origin.' Immediately in front of us sat a Hindoo student, and we were curious to know his reply. He told us afterwards, outside the examination-room, that he had written: 'Not being a Christian, I do not know the Lord's Prayer.' But that two average sane men should have propounded such a question at an examination which it was known would be attended by Hindoos, Jews, Mohammedans, 'barbarians, Scythians, bond and free,' is significant of the bad side of the system."

The Vicar of St. Pancras is one of those numerous men of God who collect their Easter offerings under false pretences. He issued a formal notice, like a taxgatherer, stating that the collector will call on the parishioners for the purpose of collecting the Easter Dues. There is not a hint in it to ill-informed people that this is a voluntary contribution, while a reference to seeing that they get "a receipt" for the "payment" rather suggests the contrary.

The Fulham Vestry have directed their Law and Parliamentary Committee to consider and report on the recent action of the Rev. C. W. Muriel, the vicar of the parish. The man of God at the Easter vestry meeting took the chair without being elected, and the people's warder was appointed by his casting vote. The vicar's action was absolutely illegal, the law having distinctly abolished the old privilege of vicars. Vestries are foolish if they longer stand the usurpation of non-elected persons, and the sooner the men of God are made to feel they are no longer in their old position of privilege, the sooner they will be on good behavior.

The introduction of separate Communion cups into the fashionable churches in America has occasioned considerable

commotion. Many doctors advocate it as a necessary sanitary precaution. Many theologians, however, denounce the practice as not in accordance with the example of Christ, who passed around the one common cup. Dr. Rainsford denounces it as "fake and fudge." The Rev. C. W. Millard says: "Take away the common cup, and the tendency to divide the worshippers is felt. The natural trend is bad. One man may have a better cup than another. This may cause jealousy or envy. Then the more fortunate may clamor for a separate altar, where they can be divided from their poorer neighbors."

Dr. J. M. Buckley, the editor of the New York *Christian Advocate*, says: "The emergency is grave; for the holy communion, the most sacred symbol of the Church, the most tender and pathetic ceremonial of all history, the source of the most blessed influences, the nucleus of the most spiritual associations, the elixir of life to the penitent, the renewer of hope in the self-distrustful, the vivifier of the faith, the foretoken of immortality, the antetype of the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the unifier of believers in heaven and in earth, is contemplated and approached by many with a divided mind." The alarm of the ministers at the division of their congregation on this point will not count for much in face of the published report of Dr. Forbes, professor of chemistry in Rochester University, who says: "We have found in the communion cup the undeveloped germs of twenty-two diseases." Few love their Jesus so much as to be regardless whether they imbibe bacteria with him or not.

The *Sporting Chronicle* gives insertion to the following lines on L:—

Hell's played out! no matter what the preacher folks may say,
Though they may try to keep it hot, it's dying every day;
The place where sinners sizzled in the tortures of the cursed,
Has somehow cooled its fires since our water pipes all burst.

The pit of burning sulphur o'er which they used to shake
A fellow every Sunday, just to keep him wide awake,
And the awful smell of brimstone, and the imps that shrieked
with glee,
They aren't one-half so terrible as what they used to be.

Some people say it isn't right to let the fires die;
They'd rather keep them going, just to hear the sinners fry;
"What good is heaven going to prove," they ask, "for me
and you,
If everybody else gets in to share the glory, too?"

Lord Oxford mentions having seen for sale at a small town in Italy, among other relics, a finger-nail from the hand of St. Peter, a bit of a never-dying worm preserved in spirits, a quill from a cock that crowed at the crucifixion, and the chemise of the Holy Virgin! "The good man that showed me all these commodities had got into such a habit of calling them 'the blessed' this and 'the blessed' that, that at last he showed me 'a bit of the blessed fig-tree that Christ cursed.'"

Mr. J. B. Wookey—we believe he is an "evangelist"—held forth at Nottingham lately, in connection with the P.S.A. movement, on "The Woman Who Did." It was a meeting for "men only," with "no youths under eighteen years of age admitted." Perhaps the precaution was necessary. We dare say Mr. Wookey was equal to the suggestiveness of his advertisement. But would it not be as well to fix the same age-limit for Bible reading? Mr. Wookey's address could hardly have been blacker or bluer than Holy Writ.

Hugh Price Hughes has been to Derby—not the Derby but the city of that name. Of course he was haunted by that Atheist Shoemaker exposure. Some of our friends sent him one of our pamphlets in an envelope marked "urgent," while he sat upon the platform. They caught him as he was leaving the building, and asked him why his book was withdrawn. He replied: "Rubbish, nonsense, it's a lie." Afterwards he actually denied that the Gibsons were the right people, forgetting that Mr. Holyoake admitted "Gibson" to be the name which was given to him in confidence. What a brazen liar, to be sure!

Professor Drummond is getting into trouble over his Lowell Lectures on "The Ascent of Man." The Free Synod of Argyll has asked the General Assembly to "take the matter into consideration, and to give such judgment as shall conserve the interests alike of faith and science." No judgment can conserve both.

There must be something wrong about the family government when a four-year-old boy is heard praying: "Oh, Lord, take all the naughty out of Johnny, and all the scold out of papa, and all the punish out of mamma. Amen."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 15 and 16, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 5, Glasgow; 6, 7, 8, and 9, debate at Glasgow with Dr. Jamieson; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

E. MENDUM.—We send you our paper as soon as issued. Will you oblige by doing the same? Yours is usually six weeks old ere it reaches us.

H. ORGAN.—“Acid Drops” are all written by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler. Glad to hear you are so fond of them.

J. FLETCHER.—We hope we have your initial properly. The Derby debate is now fixed for May 15 and 16. Mr. Foote is in first-rate health, but often a little weary from over-work.

S. HOLMES.—Thanks for your good wishes.

THE Secretaries of London Branches whose lectures are announced in the London Secular Federation list need not send notices to us, except in case of any alteration.

S. P. (Manchester).—Delighted to learn that your affection for Charles Bradlaugh is consistent with a “robust admiration” for his successor in the Presidency. Swift said of Queen Anne that her heart was not large enough for more than one friendship at a time; and there are a few Bradlaughites who seem nearly as narrow. Happily it is only a few.

W. C. (Dorking).—Many thanks. We always look for your name among subscribers. We shall resume the Christmas and Midsummer appeals for the N.S.S. when we have done with these special appeals.

W. STUART.—Thanks for your offer of £10 if the project is brought to a successful termination.

H. A. CUMBER.—It may be true that if we advocated Christianity with what you are pleased to call our “eloquence and wit” we should be “swamped with donations,” but we could hardly become a Christian without softening of the brain, and the “wit,” at any rate, would then have disappeared.

E. H.—(1) Begging your pardon, Judas was paid to identify Jesus; which is a great joke, seeing how well he must have been known, if there is any truth in the Gospel. Judas says to the apprehenders, “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he.” (2) Sunday—that is, the Sun’s Day—was observed by the Gentiles; and when the Christians broke away from Judaism and its forms, and gave up the Sabbath, they just took Sunday instead of it, as the only day open to them. That is the whole secret of the “first day.”

T. WILMOT.—We must speak of a man as we find him. Mr. Foote will publish a little volume on the question you refer to as soon as he finds time for its composition.

NEMO.—Your letter is flattering; but this is certain, that we give our whole life (body and soul, as the saying is) to the cause of Freethought.

F. W. THORRINGTON.—Thanks for your Unitarian friend’s comments on that Christian lecturer, who is not worth an advertisement in our columns.

J. M. B. B.—Mr. Foote missed you at Glasgow. Thanks for cutting.

R. BROWN.—We have Palmer’s *Principles of Nature*. Ho was, as you say, an able writer. Shall be pleased to hear from you at any time.

T. FISHER.—Thanks for the promise.

TWO MACS.—We wish you success.

J. HILL.—The Chatham Branch did noble work in raising its pretty little hall at New Brompton. We are not surprised to learn that working men and women members subscribed as much as £7 or £8 each.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Dover Observer—Two Worlds—New York Review of Reviews—Newcastle Daily Leader—New York Tribune—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Boston Sunday Globe—Boston Journal—Isle of Man Times—Middlesex County Times—Freeman’s Journal—Bon Accord—Open Court—Melbourne Argus—Chatham and Rochester News—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Dublin Evening Herald—Der Arms Teufel—Twentieth Century—Boston Investigator—South Shields Free Press—Kansas Lucifer—Freidenkor.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 8d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

HALL OF SCIENCE.

A CONSIDERABLE number of shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Limited) have been applied for, and fresh applications are coming in daily. But we are still a good way off realising the £600 necessary to clear off Mr. R. O. Smith’s mortgage. It will be remembered that he gave us till the end of April to raise the amount, but the time is insufficient, and I have requested him to let his offer stand until the end of May. Unfortunately his answer has not arrived yet (I am writing on Wednesday morning), but I presume it will be favorable.

This fact need not deter any friend from applying for shares, or sending donations, in response to my appeal; for I promise that all their money shall be returned if the project is not carried to a successful issue.

There are several interesting letters amongst my mass of correspondence, but I have only room to mention a few of them.

Mr. John Umpleby, of Blackburn—one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents—says that if five friends will subscribe £100 each, or ten friends £50 each, he will do the same. Mr. Umpleby says he is not a wealthy man, but he would strain a point in this instance, as he thinks there should be “no apathy shown in the matter.”

Mr. R. S. Smith, a veteran Freethinker, of Devonport, sends up applications for five shares. Mr. Boorman, of the Chatham Branch, states that twelve shares will be taken up by some of his members; which is a brave example to other Branches, especially as the Chatham friends are maintaining a hall of their own. The Barnsley Branch, which has had some reverses, also applies for four shares.

Mr. W. H. Morrish, a fine old veteran, of Bristol, who took some shares a few months ago, offers to take more if there is a prospect of success. Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, who has recently been laid low with a severe illness, is now well enough to write me a letter with his own hand. Unfortunately he is still confined to his bed, but he will help when he is able to get about.

Responding to my appeal to “those who prefer to make a promise, on condition that the attempt is successful,” a city friend offers £10 as a donation for shares in my name or that of the N.S.S.

Mr. Martin Weatherburn, of Cramlington, whose support I am always proud of, applies for two shares. Another veteran, and the oldest of them all—a Londoner—offers his subscription.

A London friend, already a shareholder, will take any number of shares up to a hundred. Mr. J. H. Ridgway, one of our quiet “always there” London workers, takes another twenty shares. Mr. G. F. Wenborn, another Londoner, takes fifteen more. Mr. A. Tripp, a Brighton veteran, takes another five. The Birmingham Branch and the Finsbury Park Branch take five shares each.

Mr. G. Nidd, a London friend, is one of twelve, who hope soon to be twenty, or even forty. They are to subscribe sixpence each weekly, and to take a share in the name of one of them for every pound thus accumulated. Which is a very happy idea.

I wish I had room for bits from the letters of donors, some of which have brought the moisture to my eyes. I greatly value their expressions of affection and confidence.

I have received the following fresh donations:—J. D., £2; W. Baxter, 5s.; D. F. Gloak, 2s. 6d.; T. Dobson, 5s.; W. S. M., 10s.; H. A. S., 10s.; C. North, 1s.; E. F. B., 10s.; F. Holland, 2s. 6d.; W. B., 2s. 6d.; W. Hyde, 2s. 6d.; Rubber Stamp Flexible Type Co. (Manchester), £5; One of the Girls, 2s.; C. Mallinson, 2s.; T. Hopkins, 1s.; A few non-members, 5s.; Two Macs, 2s.; M. Bell, £3; T. E. M., 1s.; Nemo, 2s. 6d.; Alpha, 1s.; H. A. Cumber, 5s.; Shop Assistants, 4s. 6d.; F. B., 2s. 6d.; T. Dunbar, 1s. 6d.; W. C. (Dorking), £1; J. Hayes, 1s.; S. Holmes, £1; Fletcher (Derby), 5s.; H. Organ, 1s.; W. Lamb, £1; B. D., £1.

In continuing this appeal I do so in the hope that it will soon be entirely successful. Those who cannot take shares, or prefer not to do so, are earnestly invited to send me any donation they can afford, no matter how small it may be. Many little things make much, and in the union of numbers is strength.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. PUTNAM, the President of the American Secular Union, and an intimate personal friend of Colonel Ingersoll, is on the Atlantic while we are penning this paragraph. The ship he is voyaging in is timed to arrive at Southampton early on Friday morning, and Messrs. Foote and Watts will be there to meet her as she steams into dock. They will welcome Mr. Putnam in the name of the Secular party, and travel up with him to London, where they will see to his comfort and make him feel as much at home as possible in a new land.

Mr. Putnam is to deliver his first lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening (May 5). Mr. Foote gives up his Sunday in order to take the chair and introduce our distinguished visitor. We hope the Freethinkers of the metropolis will muster in strong force on this occasion, and pack the hall in every corner. Mr. Putnam ought to have a big meeting and a grand reception. He represents the American Secular Union officially, and in giving him an enthusiastic welcome our friends will be honoring the Freethought party in the land of Ingersoll. Mr. Putnam has a reputation for eloquence upon the platform, and we know he is an eloquent writer. N.B.—The free admission will be suspended on this occasion.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. Mr. Putnam will attend it and speak at the evening meeting as President of the American Secular Union. He will also read a special letter from Colonel Ingersoll to the Freethinkers of Great Britain. Mr. Putnam will send an account of the Conference to the *New York Truthseeker*, and we hope he will have plenty of good material for his article. Branches of the N.S.S. should lose no time in making arrangements to be represented at this Conference. We believe there will be a strong gathering of our party's lecturers.

The report of the Hall of Science Libel Case is now on sale in pamphlet form, with a sixteen-page Introduction by Mr. Foote, giving a history of the case before trial and a full and true account of "The Leeds Orgies," which the Christian Evidence people have made such sinister use of for nearly twenty years. This Introduction has given Mr. Foote a great deal of trouble, partly owing to the difficulty of obtaining all the facts relating to the Leeds affair. But the thing is done at last, and done once for all; so that this pamphlet should stand for a long while as a thorough vindication of Secularism against its most malignant calumniators.

The pamphlet is well printed on good paper, and is published at the low price of threepence. Of course there will be a considerable loss on this edition. Should it turn out that there is a wide demand for the publication—and there *should* be, for Secularists ought to circulate it as extensively as possible—Mr. Foote will issue a bigger edition on cheaper paper and at a lower price—say twopence, or even a penny. It could not be produced at that price, but the great thing is to get it widely distributed.

There was a capital audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, when Mr. Charles Watts lectured on "Man and the Universe." The applause was very enthusiastic, and at the conclusion of the lecture it was repeated again and again.

To-day, Sunday, May 5, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Glasgow, and on Monday evening he commences a four nights' debate in the Glasgow City Hall with Dr. Jamieson.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Branch takes place this Sunday evening at the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne's-street. A good attendance of members is desired.

At the Finsbury Park Branch meeting, last Sunday, motions for the Conference Agenda were passed, and delegates appointed. It was unanimously resolved to take up five fully-paid-up shares in the National Secular Hall Society as an inducement to other N.S.S. Branches to go and do likewise.

The Report of the Humanitarian League, read at its annual meeting on April 25, showed a greatly extended amount of work during the past year. The energetic workers on the H. L., with but a small income, can fairly claim that they are helping to leaven the public mind with humanitarian principles.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures in Victoria Park, for the first time this season, on Sunday afternoon. Freethinkers in the neighborhood are asked to attend and support the meetings against the attacks of Christian rowdies.

The *Rochester and Chatham Standard* devotes several paragraphs of "Chit-Chat" to the recent Foote-Waldron debate at New Brompton. The writer doubts whether any good comes of such intellectual encounters, but he compliments Mr. Waldron as a speaker, and says that "Mr. Foote is an able and eloquent debater, and friends and foes joined in acknowledging his power and ability."

The Islington Branch opens its *al fresco* lecturing season to-day (May 5) at its station in Prebend-street, Packington-street. During May the experiment of lectures in Finsbury Park on Sunday evenings is to be tried, and they will be continued if the Branch finds them successful.

The West London Branch having decided to reopen the outdoor propaganda in Kilburn, local Freethinkers are earnestly requested to attend and support the platform to-day (May 5), when Mr. F. Haslam will lecture, his subject being, "Bible Stories: Are they True?" Time, 7 p.m.

The Bristol Branch commences its open-air propaganda this Sunday evening, at 7, in the lower end of Eastville Park, when Mr. J. Keast will give an address on Christian Evidence. Friends in the neighborhood are requested to attend and support the meeting.

Mr. William Heaford lectures at the Failsforth Secular Schools on Sunday afternoon and evening, his subjects being "Secularism Expounded and Vindicated," and "The Bible, the School, and Morality." Hymns and choruses will be sung by the choir, assisted by the Failsforth string band, and tea will be provided for friends from a distance.

Dr. Lyman Abbott writes in the *Century* on "Religious Teaching in the Public Schools." He argues in favor of moral teaching, and against the State conducting religious exercises. "Settlement," he says, "will not be reached by contriving some simple theology which can be taught in the public school, on the theory that a theology can be found so broad and simple that Agnostics, Jews, Protestants, and Roman Catholics will agree upon it. Theology is the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of religion is not necessary to good citizenship." His paper is an attempt to find a basis acceptable to all reasonable parties.

There was a capital audience at Mr. Foote's lecture for the West London Branch on Tuesday evening. The Athenaeum was well filled, and the lecture was followed with close attention. Mr. Touzeau Parris took the chair and kept questioners to the point, much to the disgust of one or two of them who wanted to put questions several yards long. Four Christians offered opposition, and were listened to courteously. Mr. Foote's reply aroused great enthusiasm.

Mr. A. B. Moss will be forty years old on May 8. People used to think about their funerals at that age, but the world has altered, and Mr. Moss is still a "young man," though it is just twenty years this month since he delivered his first Freethought lecture. Mr. Moss's last lecture (that is, his last up to date) was delivered on Sunday morning to a big open-air audience at Camberwell. We hope he will keep on the war-path for another twenty years at least.

Mr. J. M. Wheeler has taken the witch-burning case at Clonmel as the text for a terrible sermon, which he preaches in a pamphlet entitled *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible*. Readers of the *Freethinker* know how thoroughly our colleague always does his work. He proves conclusively, by a multitude of references, that the Clonmel witch-burners were good Bible Christians. The pamphlet, which is published at twopence by Mr. Forder, should be widely circulated while the Irish tragedy is fresh in the public mind.

Obituary.

LAST Sunday, the 28 ult., we consigned to the tomb, in Sunderland Cemetery, the remains of a sturdy Freethinker, Thomas Cussins, who died at the age of fifty-one on the previous Thursday. Though not taking any official part in the business of the N.S.S., our late friend had for many years maintained in private discussion the truth of Secular principles, both here and in the South of England. As a young man he had fought for liberty in the American War. Though earnestly adjured to seek the services of a clergyman in the last days of his illness, he resolutely held to his opinions, contemplating the end with calmness, and even with pleasure. Austin Holyoake's service was read at the graveside by W. R. Stansell to an attendance composed chiefly of the deceased's Catholic friends, upon whom it appeared to have much effect. Few Freethinkers assembled, they being mostly occupied in listening to Mr. Foote's grand lecture in the Victoria Hall.—W. R. STANSELL

BOOK CHAT.

In the April *Monist* the editor, Dr. Paul Carus, criticises the late Professor Romanes's *Thoughts on Religion*; and, having been a correspondent of the Professor, throws some light on his "conversion." Romanes never got away from the sentiments in which he was trained. In his *Candid Examination of Theism* he says: "I feel it is desirable to state that any antecedent bias with regard to Theism which I individually possess is unquestionably on the side of traditional belief." It was "with the utmost sorrow" he found his intellect in opposition to it. When his health broke down, he "rummages his brain for arguments to silence the voice of reason!" "What tortures," exclaims his friend, "must this man have suffered in his eagerness not to think, but to believe! His religious struggle may have been the physical cause of his premature death; for distraction of mind is more injurious than overwork. And, after all, he was anxious to attempt the impossible." The case of Professor Romanes seems to be the painful, but not unusual, one of a long struggle of reason against preconceived ideas and dogmas inculcated in youth, which only triumph, if triumph it can be called, when ill-health prostrates the faculties. The incoherent and unfinished state of the notes left by Professor Romanes sufficiently indicates that their author, when he penned them, was no longer at his best. Canon Gore would probably have done better for his friend's reputation, and his own, by suppressing them.

Mr. Edward Douglas Fawcett, author of *A Key to the Riddle of the Universe*, contributes an article to the *Monist* on "The Well-Springs of Reality." He says: "Monads, human, subhuman, superhuman, are the well-springs of reality." This key to the riddle is an old one, which even in the hands of Leibnitz did not prove very useful. Mr. Fawcett, who makes "metacosciousness" and "idealist monadology" solve all sorts of difficulties, complains of the "word-spinning" of Hegelianism!

It is pleasant to find that our old friend, the *English Mechanic*, keeps up its high standard of excellence, and provides thought as well as information for its clientele. It was this combination which, in the days of R. A. Proctor, made the *E. M.* a welcome visitor in other places beside the workshop. In the monthly part for May, which lies before us, we note that "A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society," and other writers, ably maintain the reputation of the paper; while the leading articles embrace such popular topics as Eastertide, Witches, and Witchcraft, and a large number of correspondents seem to delight in answering every conceivable question bearing on science, mechanics, and the arts.

During the Franco-Prussian War the name of M. Albert Collignon, "the man on the white horse," who stirred up the people of Metz against Marshal Bazaine, was familiar. He is now about to publish two volumes on two Freethinkers, one dealing with the life and work of Diderot, and the other on Gustave Flaubert.

Messrs. Luzac & Co. have issued a translation of Dr. Wildeboer's *Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament*, which gives the present aspect of "higher criticism."

D. Appleton & Co., of New York, are issuing an "Anthropological Series." The initial volume is Dr. Mason's *Woman's Share in Primitive Culture*, which share is proved to have been a very considerable one. The second volume is by the late A. D. Quatrefages, on *The Pygmies*. The author, who was of the old school of anthropologists, believed in the great antiquity of the human race, and never fully accepted evolution. He tries to show that the pygmies offer no support to the hope of finding a missing link. The last chapter, "The Religious Belief of the Hottentots and Bushmen," is of great interest.

English versions of a number of the late M. Darmesteter's essays have been included in a volume which Houghton, Mifflin, & Co. are to publish. The subjects of the essays are: "The Religions of the Future," "The Prophets of Israel," "Afghan Life in Afghan Songs," "Race and Tradition," "Ernest Renan," "An Essay on the History of the Jews," and "The Supreme God in the Indo-European Mythology."

The *Melbourne Argus* (March 23) has a very ill-natured notice of *Charles Bradlaugh: His Life and Works*, which it calls "pious, but a little preposterous, and altogether out of proportion." It says: "Bradlaugh or no Bradlaugh, the oath would have been abolished in good time." The "good time" of the *Argus*, like that of the song, is always "coming." To go on, as it does, to speak of "Bradlaugh's brutal and

foolish attempt to force his way into the House of Commons" may be pious, but is certainly preposterous. Bradlaugh only persisted to his utmost in doing what his constituents had sent him to do. Had he not done so, the "good time" might have been deferred to the Greek calends.

A KIND OF PREACHER.

"Volumes might be written on the impiety of the pious."
—Herbert Spencer.

A MIGHTY moral leader this,
Who deals with finely-flourished arms,
Now in damnation, now in bliss,
Now sweetly comforts, now alarms;
And skilled to clothe each view intense
With pulpit-shaking eloquence!

Nothing too vague or too sublime
Transcends his confident surmise;
The awful ambuscades of time
Conceal no secrets from his eyes;
The deeps of space he coolly sounds,
He gives eternity its bounds.

On Nature's plan his looks are bent,
And lo! she teems, we straightway learn,
With special providences meant
For his rare wisdom to discern.
He scorns what Science may disclose,
For she but talks of what she knows.

He lifts aloft his pious gaze;
In holy wrath his features glow;
For all dark sinning souls he prays;
His congregation weeps below.
He sees destruction's giddy brink
Thronged with these rogues who dare to think.

But once beneath his throne we sat;
We heard his outflow, word for word:
And God was this, and God was that,
And God was thus and thus, we heard;
Till we, who merely mope and plod,
Envied this bosom-friend of God!

—Bloom and Brambles.

EDGAR FAWCETT.

MR. PUTNAM'S ENGAGEMENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS has made the following lecturing engagements for Mr. S. P. Putnam:—

May 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell; 19, Bradford; 26, Liverpool.

June 2, N.S.S. Conference; 9, Glasgow; 16, Edinburgh; 23, Manchester; 30, Sheffield.

July 7, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 14, Bristol; 21, Birmingham.

Mr. Putnam will return to New York in August, therefore friends who have not engaged him should communicate with Mr. Watts at once. Societies near any of the above towns requiring week-night lectures should arrange for Mr. Putnam to visit them when he is in their district on the Sunday.

Arrangements are being made for him to speak in Derby and Stockton-on-Tees during the weeks following his being at Manchester and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Dundee should be visited when he lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Christianity is to be regarded as a system rather than as a doctrine, for, like Proteus, it changes its form, and, whenever defeated in attack, if policy so dictates, it adopts the proved ideas of its assailants, and thus preserves its organisation, which is more essential to its official supporters than are its dogmas. These are abandoned or changed whenever expediency dictates, making aggressive effort very difficult; for whenever a point is successfully assailed it is declared to be "unessential," or else not to belong to true Christianity. Everything is abandoned but natural morality, and still men call themselves Christians and support the system which has no excuse for continuance unless miracle and revelation are facts. When Rationalists see the duty of consistency, they will cease to uphold a system which has no logical existence apart from supernaturalism. —Robert C. Adams.

SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREETHINKERS—VII.

MAJOR EVANS BELL.

MAJOR THOMAS EVANS BELL was chiefly known by his works on Indian affairs. He entered the army in 1842, and was employed in the suppression of Thugee. He served his country well in India, and probably in nothing better than in his continued advocacy in books and pamphlets of the just claims of the natives. But this independent attitude did not commend him to the authorities, and stood in the way of justly-earned promotion. As a Freethinker, he is to be remembered by his concise little book entitled *The Task of To-day*, in which, taking up Carlyle's injunction to do the duty nearest hand, he examines the religion in which he had been reared. During the early days of the *Reasoner* Major Bell supported that paper with both purse and pen, writing many Freethought articles under the signature of "Undecimus." He, indeed, contemplated selling his commission to devote himself to Freethought, but, by the advice of friends, was deterred. He returned to India at the outbreak of the mutiny, and became Deputy Commissioner of Police at Madras. He probably had some share in leading Judge Strange on the road to Freethought.

The influence of Carlyle is notable in *The Task of To-day*, which was published by James Watson in 1852, and is dedicated to G. J. Holyoake. He says in his preface: "Life is a very serious thing; every gleam of truth reveals to us more of the laws of absolute fact, inexorable and eternal, which make up the inscrutable Future and Invisible, as they do the visible and mysterious Present. Shall we raise our puny hands or voices and fight against those laws? Shall we lie against eternal truth, or shut our eyes and ears against it? I dare do none of these things deliberately. My share in the work of the world is doubtless of the minutest consequence, but to me it is of infinite consequence. To me it is of infinite consequence whether I live a traitor and a coward, or a true man. Good or bad, this is my work; I found I had it to do, and I have done it. May I ever do so."

The *Task* examines the Christian evidences with the result of showing that they were accepted in days of gross credulity, and have been largely maintained by pious frauds. Thus he says: "There was exactly the same evidence, and no more, in the third and fourth centuries that there is now—namely, certain narratives, the earliest of which was certainly not written sooner than thirty years after the death of Christ; but the superstition and ignorance of those times were such that accounts of supernatural events met with easy credit, and were attributed by some to divine, and by others to diabolical agency, according as they approved or disliked the character of the miracle-worker, or the tendency of his doctrines."

"Hardly two centuries ago a man in England was considered, even by the educated, as little better than an Atheist if he doubted that many old women were endowed by the Devil with the power of working miracles without number." The frauds, he shows, were not confined to Catholics. "Although modern Protestantism has never pretended to miraculous powers, yet Protestant pious frauds have always abounded, and abound in the present day. It is a gross fraud to gloss over and conceal the infamous characters and obviously interested motives of many of the principal actors in the Reformation, in England particularly, as Protestant writers have done. Awful interpositions of Providence, exaggerated and fictitious accounts of death-bed scenes, both of believers and infidels, the lying reports of missionaries, and, in particular, the long evangelical speeches they are so fond of putting into the mouths of their converts, are instances of Protestant pious frauds."

The alleged evidences of prophecy are equally examined, and paralleled by the evidence for Mohammedanism. The Bible is shown to bear many traces of superstition and savagery, and he proceeds to examine the evidence for an alleged Great First Cause. He concludes this section with the words: "To act this life well it is not necessary to know the secrets of the Invisible, the destinies of worlds and systems, or the life beyond the grave, if a life there be. That is the department of speculation and poetry, and not of knowledge or of action. We owe no service to the Invisible and Unknown; our work is here before us."

The little book concludes with the contention that morality must be independent of speculation, and an exhortation to mutual help and frankness in proclaiming unbelief in dogmas which have only cursed mankind. "How long," he asks, "could the present social ostracism be pursued against avowed unbelievers if the words, 'I am not a Christian,' were calmly and gently, but firmly, pronounced, not obtrusively paraded, in the drawing-room, the court of justice, and the senate, whenever passing event called for such an expression of opinion from a candid and honest man? How long could the Christian superstition enjoy its galvanic life in England if every man whose heart and intellect revolted from it were henceforward to raise his voice and pen to denounce and to abolish it? And in the

speedy destruction and abolition of its influence lies our only hope of peaceable and harmonious progress."

Major Bell retired from India in 1865, but continued to largely interest himself in Indian affairs. He died September 12, 1887. The *Illustrated London News* shortly afterwards gave his portrait, which is that of a remarkably fine-looking man.

J. M. W.

JONAH OUTDONE.

AN American paper publishes the following, which bears internal evidence of being as true as Gospel: "Many years ago a ship had made its way around Cape Horn, and had entered the Gulf Stream. On this trip many of the passengers sickened and died. When they died it was the usual custom to read over the dead the burial service, attach a weight to the bodies, and cast them overboard. Among the passengers were an old man and his boy. The old gentleman had been out as a missionary to some island. At last he sickened, and it was supposed he had died. The usual service was read over his body, a carpenter's axe and grindstone were attached to it, and it was cast overboard into the sea and passed out of sight. This crazed the boy, and in a paroxysm of grief he leaped overboard and disappeared also. It was discovered that many sharks were following the vessel, and the sailors baited a hook, threw it overboard, and caught one of the monsters, and, with the aid of a windlass, they drew it on board. When the creature was dissected the sailors found the old man and boy in its stomach. By chance, or by the power of God, they had both been swallowed by the same shark. The old missionary was not dead, as supposed, but only in a religious trance. The warm atmosphere inside the shark had revived him. They had set up the grindstone, the boy was turning it, and the old man was grinding the axe preparatory to cutting their way out. As they had been working a fire-liver to prevent the gastric juices from taking hold of them and digesting them, and the atmosphere being quite warm, and the air rather impure, they both sweated tremendously. But after using two or three bottles of 'Orthodox Stomach Bitters,' the old man seemed better than he had been for some years, and entirely recovered."

Witchcraft.

Two hundred and fifty years ago it was moral in England to believe in witches, and it was a moral act to kill a witch. To-day it is held immoral to believe in witchcraft; to kill a witch would now be at law a criminal act. Witchcraft is so admittedly false that palmistry, conjuring, and fortune-telling are treated as punishable frauds. Yet from the supernatural point of view the reality of witchcraft is unquestionable, and the praiseworthiness of witch-killing is indisputable (*vide* Exodus xxii. 18, Leviticus xix. 26-31, xx. 27, Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 1 Samuel xxviii.). And in some of the districts of England where school boards are yet without influence, and where godless education has been prevented, the pious ignorant folk still believe in charms, wise women, and white and black magic.—C. Bradlaugh, "Supernaturalism and Rational Morality."

Real Beliefs.

I remember reading some time ago a suggestion, I think it was by a man of God, that every one should write down, in his own words, what he really believes. Having some leisure and a stock of paper, I thought of doing so. But the more I pondered the matter, the less paper seemed necessary, and I found that the document would not only omit every particular of the Athanasian Creed, but even of the Creed ascribed to the Apostles. I found that my real creed was a very meagre one, and entirely secular. If I wrote down "I believe in God," it would have no more real meaning than "I believe in ghosts." In my own existence and that of my fellows, and in my consequent relations to them, my real belief was included. Of course one could expand the beliefs arising out of our relations to other beings to considerable dimensions; but between this and the theological dogmas for which faith is demanded there is a great gulf fixed. People say they believe in them, but what they mean is that they assent to, without ever realising them.—*Carpe Diem.*

What strange rage possesses some people to insist on our all being miserable! They are like a quack, who would fain have us believe we are ill, in order to sell us his pills. Keep thy drugs, my friend, and leave me my health.—*Voltaire.*

MOSES AND SARGON.

STUDENTS of legendary lore are aware that one of the most widely extended of myths is that of the miraculously-preserved child. The Roman story of Romulus and Remus is strikingly similar to that told of the Trojan Paris and the Persian Cyrus. The story of Herod seeking to slay the child Christ is similar to that of Kansa seeking to destroy the infant man-god, Krishna. The oldest known of these stories is that of Sargon, whose reign is fixed by Assyriologists at about 3800 B.C., or some fifteen hundred years earlier than the date ascribed to Moses. Yet the story of Moses in the bullrushes is almost identical with that of Sargon.

As rendered by George Smith, Sargon's birth was in a grove, and the child's mother placed him in a cradle of wicker and launched it on the river. Fox Talbot renders it: "In a secret place she brought me forth; she placed me in an ark of bullrushes; with bitumen my door she closed up; she threw me into the river, which did not enter the ark to me; the river carried me; to the dwelling of Akki, the water-carrier, it brought me. Akki, the water-carrier, in his goodness of heart, lifted me up from the river. Akki, the water-carrier, brought me up as his own son" (*Records of the Past*, vol. v., p. 1).

Before the birth of Cyrus it was foretold that he would overthrow the Median kingdom of his grandfather, Astyages, and conquer Asia, and it was to ward off this calamity that the child was abandoned. Hecuba, wife of Priam, king of Troy, before the birth of Paris, dreamed that she brought forth a firebrand which caused the destruction of the city. To prevent it, the king ordered the destruction of the child. A tale of the Midrash tells us that, before the birth of Moses, Pharaoh dreamed that as he sat upon his throne an old man stood before him holding a balance, into one side of which he put all the princes and elders and nobles of Egypt, and all its inhabitants, and into the other side he put a young babe which outweighed them all. As Balaam interpreted the dream, a child was to be born to the Hebrews that threatened great danger to all Egypt; and he advised the decree that all their new-born sons should be thrown into the river.

In Chilperic Edwards' admirable little book, *The Witness of Assyria; or, the Bible Contrasted with the Monuments*, he gives not only the legends concerning Sargon and the proof of what an important part he played in Babylonian history and literature, but evidence of the improbability of the story of Moses. He says: "Commentators and apologists have long seen the absurdity of representing Pharaoh's daughter as giving a purely Hebrew name to her foundling." He shows how far-fetched are their conjectures, and remarks: "The whole story was written in Hebrew, by Hebrews, as part of the history of a Hebrew nation; therefore, the name of the hero must be taken as Hebrew until we have very strong evidence to the contrary. The probability is that the Jews borrowed the legend of Moses from their Babylonian conquerors."

CELSUS.

Known by their Fruits.

The Freethinkers of Oregon celebrated the birthday of Thomas Paine, and some of the orthodox people of the same State hanged him in effigy. With these specimen products of Liberalism and of religion before him, the Rev. Mr. Locke, of Portland, was moved to deliver a sermon on the "Fruits of Infidelity." No pomological expert can censure him for the choice he made, for the fruit of Infidelity, as illustrated in the present case, is good, being nothing less than a display of gratitude for services rendered and the paying of honor where honor has been long overdue. The fruit of religion, on the other hand, ripened under a hundred years of patriots who provided that freedom a home. The one fruit improves under liberty; the other decays. The one, grown on the tree planted by Paine, it is worth our trouble to pick; the other, dropping rotten from the gallows-tree, is enjoyed by no animal that I know of, except the religious hog, whose taste is not sufficiently cultivated to relish humpy salmon.—*G. Macdonald, in "Truthseeker."*

Whence the influence of our churches? By what agency have they awed the masses into silence, and even thrones into obedience? By what means have they succeeded in sowing sectarianism, setting man against his fellow, and threatening eternal infamy to all who would not kneel at their dark and dominant shrine? The Bible! Faith in the supernatural origin of that book is the secret source of priestly ascendancy throughout Christendom. While that delusion prevails there is no hope for freedom in Europe.—*Robert Cooper.*

SCIENCE AND SUPERSTITION.

As crumble custom's mouldering chains away,
Power's gilded idol turns to common clay.
Heart flies to heart; no longer reason heeds
The weak resistance of established creeds;
Tradition totters from her misty throne,
And all the impostures of the past are known.
Hardly can we lend credence to the tale
Of their long woes who first rent error's veil;
What royal spite, what curses from the church
Scared the pale scholar in his cloistered search;
How many from themselves their visions hid,
Or, friendless, exiled, outcast and forbid,
Like Dante, scaling with dejected tread
A tyrant's staircase, broke a tyrant's bread?

But now the soul, from ancient falsehoods woke,
Abjures old Superstition's rotten yoke;
No wrathful threat in Nature's thunder fears,
No fate foreboded in the falling spheres.
All fables, Fancy's fond impertinence,
Fade from the cold arithmetic of Sense.
Now to Truth's courts a never-faltering throng,
Thy torch, O Science! lights and leads along;
No sluggard sons this age of labor owns,
In earth's great workshop solitary drones,
But every mind the general task must share,
Brave the long toil, and mingle in the care;
In love with knowledge, that alone can be
Our country's hope—sole safeguard of the free.

T. W. PARSONS.

"General" Booth and the Angels.

While in Scotland last week "General" Booth, the Pope of the Salvation Army, in one of his addresses, remarked that he was particularly satisfied with the conduct of the angels who had warned Lot and his family of their danger, and helped them to flee from the doomed city. "I do like these angels," he added. "When I go to heaven, and have got over the first surprise at all I shall see there, I'll go and have a cup of tea with them."

For writing an infinitely more decorous yet scathing denouncement of the follies of Christianity, G. W. Foote, the Freethinker, was a few years ago sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in Holloway Gaol. "General" Booth's coarse vulgarity was received with acclamation and loud cries of "Amen" and "Hallelujah" by thousands of excitable Salvationists "who had been washed in the blood of the Lamb."

What in one man was considered as the "rankest blasphemy," in another is regarded as "pious jocularly." But then the one man was an "Infidel," and the other is a pious Christian.

That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut.—*The Crescent.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Son—"And the missionary was eaten by the cannibal? Will the missionary go to heaven?" Father—"Oh, yes!" Son—"Will the cannibal?" Father—"Of course not." Son—"He'll not! Why, how can the missionary go to heaven if the cannibal doesn't, when the missionary's inside him?"

Dr. P— took his son for a drive the other day, and stopped at a tavern to water his horse. After watching the operation, Bobby blurted out, "Papa, why don't the horse take the pail up with his feet and drink?" "Why, he isn't made that way," replied Dr. P—. "Why didn't God make him so?" next asked Bobby. "Ah! that beats me. How should I know?" The youngster's reverence for his father fell fifty per cent, and he replied: "I'll ask grandma. She knows God."

A well-known divinity professor, a grave and learned man, had five daughters, whom his students irreverently named "Genesis," "Exodus," "Numbers," "Leviticus," and "Deuteronomy." Beginning his lecture, one day, the professor said: "Gentlemen, I wish to speak to you about the age of Genesis." Roars of laughter came from the students. "Genesis is not so old as you suppose," continued the professor. More roars—so long continued, indeed, that the worthy man had time to think before he made the next remark. He said timidly—and he managed to hit the mark this time—"I may not be thinking of the same Genesis as you are!"

SUNDAY 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.O.): 7, musical selections; 7.30, S. P. Putnam will lecture.
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science." Tuesday, at 8, dancing.
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "God at the Bar of Humanity."
 WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Thomas à Kempis and the Inner Life."
 WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, E. E. Sims, "The Need of an Aggressive Policy."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."
 CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, G. Standing will lecture.
 DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, a lecture.
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.
 FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science"; 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Ascent of Man"; 6.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture. Thursday, at 8, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, St. John will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.
 ISLINGTON (Prebend-street, Packington-street): 11.30, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?"
 KILBURN (High-road): 6.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are they True?"
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, P. Harold Snelling, "Secularism and Citizenship."
 MILE END WASTE: 11.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."
 OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Bible at the Bar of Reason."
 REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation by Proxy"—Part I.
 VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Marshall will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told"; 7, "Under Which Flag?" Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Fruits of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.
 CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, J. J. Taylor will lecture.
 DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7.45, members' meeting to appoint Conference delegates, etc.
 FAIRSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 2.30, William Heaford, "Secularism Expounded and Vindicated"; 6.30, "The Bible, the School, and Morality."
 GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 2.30, "Theology at the Bar of History"; 6.30, "The Drawbacks of Theism; or, Dr. Jamieson's Fallacies Exposed."
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 7, C. Doeg, "The Best of All Possible Worlds." Annual meeting of members after lecture.
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Laurence Small, B.Sc., "Darwinism and Socialism."
 STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Members' meeting—important business.
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, S. H. Alison, "The Gospel of Socialism"; 3, "The Bible and Modern Thought"; 7, "His Satanic Majesty" (preceded by recital). Tea at 5.
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, Business meeting.
 SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite Echo office): 7, The Secretary, "Royal Paupers."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNESLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Single Tax a Solution of Poverty"; 6.30, "The Problem of Evil—Theism's Latest Defence."
 BRISTOL (Eastville Park, le or end): 7, J. Keast, "Christian Evidence."
 DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Whitney, "The Bible Up to Date."
 HULL (Corporation Field): 2.30 and 7, "What Socialism will Do." [If wet, Cobden Hall, Storey-street.]

Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—May 5, Sheffield.
 C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.
 STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.
 ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, m. Clerkenwell.
 T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—May 19, m. Kingsland. June 2, m. Finsbury Park; 19, m. Kingsland. July 17, m. Kingsland.

CHRIST'S MALTHUSIANISM.
WIFE AND SONS. Twopence.
 London: W. REEVES, 185 Fleet-street, E.C.

Colonel Ingersoll's Great New Lecture ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE

Price Sixpence.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 132 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
 WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d. Part II. 2d.
 FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
 GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
 THE DYING CREED. 2d.
 THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
 THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
 ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
 DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.
 THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
 SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
 MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. An Agnostic's View. 2d.
 SKULLS. 2d.
 THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
 LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
 MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
 REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
 REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
 CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
 CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.
 DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
 THE GODS. 6d.
 REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
 ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
 CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.
 ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.
 ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
 ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
 PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
 HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
 ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
 TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
 THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
 LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
 GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Freethought Publications.

Crimes of Christianity. Vol. I. By G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable indictment of Christianity. Chapters:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3, Monks; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades. Cloth, gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.
 Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. Edited by G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball. Complete, paper covers, 1s. 4d.; superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.
 The Jewish Life of Christ. Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeschu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Paper covers, 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 1s.
 Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship and other Curious Rites and Customs. By J. M. Wheeler. Illustrated, superior paper, 2s. 6d.
 Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. By J. M. Wheeler. Handsomely bound in cloth, 7s. 6d.
 Essays in Rationalism. By Charles Robert Newman (Atheist Brother of the late Cardinal Newman). With a Preface by George Jacob Holyoake, and a Biographical Sketch by J. M. Wheeler. 1s. 6d.
 Darwin Made Easy. By Dr. Edward B. Aveling, Fellow of the London University. This is the best popular exposition of Darwinism extant. Cloth, 1s.
 London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, 2s. in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

NO FREETHINKERS.—Ladies and Gentlemen requiring SUPERIOR CUT GARMENTS at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artistic Tailor, 14 Great Castle-street, W. (three doors from Regent-street). Patronised by leading Freethinkers.

ALLINSON FOR HEALTH.

HOME CONSULTATIONS—10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10s. 6d.;
6 p.m. to 8 p.m., 5s. Patients Visited.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. Vol. I. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.
Contains Articles on Management of Infancy, Health, Longevity, The Teeth, Tobacco, The Drink Question. Also the Cause and Cure of Disease, Constipation, Biliousness, Eczema, Blackheads and Pimples, Nervousness, Coughs and Colds, Chest Complaints, Deafness, Thread Worms, Long Worms, Tape Worms, The Itch, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. Vol. II. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.
Contains Articles on The Healing Power of Nature, Urine, Saline Starvation, the Hair and its Management, Sleep and Sleeplessness, Want of Energy, etc. Advice for the Thin, for the Stout; Simple Fever, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Ringworm, Hypochondria, Bloodlessness, Diarrhoea, Ulcerated Legs, Tumours, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. Vol. III. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.
Contains Articles on No More Death, Management of Young Children, Un-suspected Domestic Poisons, How to Grow Tall, to Keep Warm, to Live One Hundred Years, to Improve the Memory, and to become Beautiful and Attractive. On the Cause and Cure of Stomach Troubles, Flatulence, Sleepiness, Varicose Veins, Boils and Carbuncles, Sebaceous Tumors and Wens, Hay Fever, Winter Cough, Chills, Epilepsy, and on the Diseases Produced by Taking Mercury.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. Vol. IV. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.
Contains Articles on Hardening, Work and Overwork, Sugar and its Abuse, Milk as Food, the Tomato, Poulitices, Quinine, Against the Knife, Arsenical Poisoning, Tonics, Against Stimulants in Disease, about Swallowing Pins and other Articles. Also Cure of Sunstroke, Dog Bites, Pains in the Back, Pediculi or Lice, Chicken-Pox, Synovitis or Inflammation of the Joints, Tonsillitis or Quinsy, Herpes (Fetter or Shingles), Erysipelas, Ulcer of the Stomach, Epidemic Influenza, Scatica, Psoriasis or English Leprosy, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. Vol. V. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.
Contains Articles on Pure Water, The Mouth, its Use and Abuse; Rules for the Aged, Training, Blood Letting, Nose Bleeding, Felon or Whitlow, Ingrowing Toenail, Gum Boil, Cold in the Head, a Red Nose, Flushing and Blushing, Toothache, Sore Mouth, St. Vitus' Dance, Goitre, Mumps, Inflamed Eyes and Eyelids, Fits, Fainting, Apoplexy, Spitting and Vomiting of Blood, Vomiting, Wounds, Burns, Scalds, Bruises, etc.

The Five Volumes, strongly and neatly bound, price 6s. 9d., post free.
HYGIENIC MEDICINE. For Postal Order for 1s. 1d.—An Eye Opener to Drug Takers.

RHEUMATISM: ITS CAUSE AND CURE. Post free for 7d.

DIET AND DIGESTION. Post free for 7d.

CONSUMPTION: ITS NATURAL CURE. Post free for 7d.

All these Books, bound in One Vol., post free, 9s. 6d. Send Postal Order.

THREE PAMPHLETS FOR YOUNG MEN. For Postal Order for 1s. 1d.

A BOOK FOR MARRIED WOMEN. For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.

All communications to be addressed to—

DR. T. R. ALLINSON,

4 Spanish-place, Manchester-square, London, W.

THE BEST BOOK

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

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.
160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered.
Price 1s., post free.

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

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

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

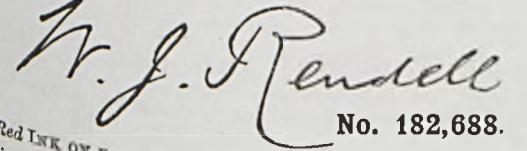
The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.
Other orders should be sent to the author.

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

W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made solely by J. PULLEN, 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.
BEWARE of useless imitations substituted by some dealers and chemists, the words "Rendell & Co." and "W. J. Rendell" being speciously and plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAFH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

No. 182,688.

IN RED INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.
Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

W. J. RENDELL, 15 Chadwell-st., Clerkenwell, E.C.

Works by G. W. Foote.

Flowers of Freethought. First Series. 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Flowers of Freethought. Second Series. 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

Bible Heroes. Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Letters to the Clergy. First Series. 128 pp., 1s.

The Grand Old Book. A Reply to the Grand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Christianity and Secularism. Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

Is Socialism Sound? Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 2s.

Infidel Death-Beds. Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 3d.

Darwin on God. 6d.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s.

Will Christ Save Us? A Thorough Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. 6d.

Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh. 6d.

A Defence of Free Speech. Three Hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With a Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d.

Comic Sermons and Other Fantasies. 8d.

Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.

Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.

Interview with the Devil. 2d.

Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.

Atheism and Morality. 2d.

My Resurrection. A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew, discovered by G. W. Foote. 2d.

The Folly of Prayer. 2d.

Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.

Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.

Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.

The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.

What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.

The Bible God. 2d.

Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.

Is the Bible Inspired? A Criticism on *Lux Mundi*. 1d.

The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.

The Rev. Hugh Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.

Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.

The New Cagliostro. An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky. 2d.

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

The Shadow of the Sword. A Moral and Statistical Essay on War. 2d.

Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

London: ROBERT FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price 1s. 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 2s., post free.

The Bible Handbook

FOR FREETHINKERS & INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND W. P. BALL.

Sold also in separate parts as follows:—

1.—**Bible Contradictions.** The contradictions are printed in parallel columns. 4d.

2.—**Bible Absurdities.** All the chief absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each absurdity in a sentence. 4d.

3.—**Bible Atrocities.** Containing all the godly wickedness from Genesis to Revelation. Each infamy has a separate headline for easy reference. 4d.

4.—**Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.** 4d.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR 21 DAYS ONLY.

To clear our stock of 872 Parcels of

LOT 11

CONTAINING

- ONE PAIR OF PURE WOOL BLANKETS,
- ONE PAIR OF BED SHEETS,
- ONE QUILT (Beautiful Design),
- ONE TABLE-CLOTH.

Rather than keep them over till next Winter, we have decided, AS AN ADVERTISEMENT to clear them out at 19s. per Parcel, Carriage Paid.

WE CANNOT SEND MORE THAN TWO PARCELS TO ONE PERSON,

as the price is less than cost and, apart from the advertisement, we should never offer to sell at the above price. To those who have already tried LOT 11 we need say nothing about the value. They are all agreed that this is the Cheapest Parcel in the market. To those who have not tried it we say, Send one back and we will give 20s. for it, which will be a fair way of testing whether you like it or not.

Remember, for 21 Days Only, and no more than Two Parcels to One Person.

NEW SPRING PATTERNS NOW READY.

Send at once before the Crush for Whitsuntide.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4, UNION STREET, BRADFORD.

3d.  NOW READY  64pp.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE.

WITH A
FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT
OF
"THE LEEDS ORGIES."

EDITED, WITH INTRODUCTION,

BY
G. W. FOOTE.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Twopence,

"A Letter to Lord Ellenborough"

OCCASIONED BY THE SENTENCE WHICH HE PASSED ON
MR. D. I. EATON,

AS PUBLISHER OF
THE THIRD PART OF PAINE'S "AGE OF REASON."

BY
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Freethought Headquarters AND BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

In order to provide Suitable Headquarters for the Secular Party in London, which shall also be a worthy Memorial of its late leader, CHARLES BRADLAUGH, the

NATIONAL SECULAR HALL SOCIETY (LIMITED)

has been formed under the Friendly Society's Acts. Of this Society Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the N.S.S., is Chairman, and every one of the Directors is, and must be, also a member of the N.S.S. This can only be done by the assistance of the whole Secular Party, who are hereby appealed to earnestly. The shares are £1 each, payable in easy instalments of 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and 2s. 6d. on each call, of which two months' notice must be given.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

GENTLEMEN,—

Please allot me.....Shares in the "National Secular Hall Society, Limited," on account of which allotment I herewith hand you the sum of.....pounds.....shillings, being a deposit of.....pounds.....shillings per share thereon. And I hereby agree that, if admitted a Shareholder in the above-named Society, I will conform to its rules, and to such of its bye-laws as may be from time to time in force.

Name (in full).....

Postal address

Occupation (if any)

CUT THIS OUT AND FILL IT IN,

and forward (with remittance) to the Secretary—

MISS E. M. VANCE,
28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.