

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 39.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1895.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

BLIND BELIEF.

CARDINAL MANNING was a bitter opponent of Charles Bradlaugh, who had committed the unpardonable crime of thinking for himself, and of thinking to considerable purpose. When the Atheist member for Northampton was endeavoring to take the seat to which he had an indisputable right in the House of Commons, and from which he was debarred by the mere brute force of a temporary majority of law-breakers, Cardinal Manning wrote the most passionate articles against him in one of the leading monthlies. The red-hatted Romanist implored the House of Commons not to admit an Atheist. He predicted something like national ruin if a notorious "infidel" were allowed to sit with "the gentlemen of England." The Cardinal, in fact, simply foamed with rage at the bare idea of an Atheist being entitled—even in this world—to the common rights of citizenship. In the end, however, the Cardinal had to digest the venom of his spleen as he could, for Charles Bradlaugh took his seat and filled it with great distinction.

Cardinal Manning was succeeded at Westminster by Cardinal Vaughan, who was previously Bishop of Salford. It was this gentleman, we believe, who, on the death of Darwin, rather rejoiced to think that the great evolutionist was "burning in hell." Such a bigot is capable of anything in the way of intolerance. If he had his way, the population of hell would soon be increased by the addition of every independent thinker on this planet.

"His Eminence," as they call this underling of the "Servant of the servants of God" at Rome, recently paid a visit to Formby, where he preached a special sermon at High Mass in the Church of Our Lady. His text was taken from the Romish edition of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "My just man liveth by faith." His first comment was an explanation of "just." What the world regards as a just man was not necessarily a just man in the eyes of God. "A man might be temperate, pure, just, and pay his lawful debts," he observed, "yet that man might be eternally lost." Men could only be saved by *faith*—which is evidently a very different thing from temperance, purity, justice, and honor. These are only "natural virtues," and without "supernatural virtues," which are born of faith, they lead us straight to the bottomless pit, which we shall find cram-full of people who were guilty of the one horrid and unpardonable crime of being unable to believe the teachings of Cardinal Vaughan. No doubt it was some such idea that prompted the judgment of the gentleman who was asked which of the two great places of future residence he preferred, and who replied: "Heaven for climate, and Hell for company."

This "faith" being so very precious—especially to the Church which lives upon it—ought certainly to be guarded with iron-clad shutters. Accordingly, the Cardinal told the faithful that, however wide they might open their mouths, they should take care to shut their eyes, or they might see things to give them "the headache called thought in the brain." Perhaps we had better give the Cardinal's own words, as reported in the *Southport Visitor*:—

"He had heard many non-Catholic friends and some Catholics say: 'Why should I not read books written by Rationalists and Agnostics, and articles in various reviews written by men who professed to be perfectly hostile to the Catholic religion and to revelation? Why should I not read the works of Huxley, of Spencer, and

of many others who might be named? They are written in the public journals of the country, and are found on the tables of nearly all educated men. Surely, if my faith is true, I can easily afford to read whatever may be written by the hand of man. Is my faith so feeble that it may not be exposed to the Rationalistic arguments and the Agnostic literature of the day? This was an extremely fallacious argument. Why should they treat the virtue of faith in a way in which they would not dare to treat other virtues, say those of honesty and chastity? Would a merchant not at once suspect, and soon get rid of, a clerk who, while professing that his honesty remained perfect as proved by his record, yet persisted, as a new departure, in consorting with swindlers, gamblers, or pickpockets, just because he said their ways interested or pleased him? In the same way, would not parents remonstrate with, and feel poignant grief concerning, a daughter who, while declaring her intention to continue in the chastity to which she had been educated, resolved to pass her leisure in the company of so-called 'gay' companions of both sexes? The honesty of the clerk and the chastity of the daughter would each suffer under such habits and temptations, and so there was danger for the faith of those who permitted themselves to be entangled with the arguments and the doubts of the Rationalist or the Agnostic. It was all very well if, in the course of their duty, some of them were called upon to examine the writings of the Rationalist or the Agnostic in order to refute them; in that case God would protect their faith, but, otherwise, they would probably find themselves in a net from which extrication was well nigh impossible. They would begin by giving up this doctrine or that, until their faith might depart entirely, and, perhaps, never to be regained."

Practically, the Cardinal places Freethinkers in the same category with swindlers, gamblers, and pickpockets; which is the natural result of crying down *charity* and crying up *faith*. Practically, too, he admits the contention of the great Cardinal Newman, that faith can never withstand the solvent power of reason, and that the only way to save it is to keep it from all contact with its enemy. So far we thank him for his candor. It is a warning to all outsiders, that if they once become Catholics they must forswear the use of their reason for ever afterwards.

The rest of the Cardinal's argument is founded on the assumption that an inclination to reason on matters of religion is a kind of disease. He argues with people not to exercise their intelligence. He reasons against reason. He stimulates them to remain quiescent. He implores them to think of the evils of thinking. In short, he renounces his own principles in the very act of commending them; and thus, on his own showing, he was playing the fool from the beginning to the end of his sermon.

Perhaps the Cardinal reckons himself among those who are "called upon" to examine the writings of Agnostics, but *his* faith is under divine protection! We should rather put it in this way. A layman, who supports the Church, might have his eyes opened by Freethought literature; and that is a deadly danger. But a priest, who lives on the Church, is not likely to "blow the gaff," whatever he discovers.

Cardinal Vaughan's "disease" argument is a relic of the old "gangrene" theory, by which his Church justified the extermination of heretics, the burning of whom was only the amputation of a rotten member in the interest of the remainder of the body. Thus the language of faith is always the language of persecution. Those who trample on reason will also trample on humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

HOLY KISSING.

"Salute one another with an holy kiss."—ROMANS XVI. 16.

"His kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread."—SHAKESPEARE, *As You Like It* (iii. 4).

"Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul!"

—MARLOW, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* (last scene).

"Tis certain," said Dick Steele of kissing, "Nature was its author, and that it began with the first courtship." But this is incorrect. 'Tis certain that to many human tribes kissing is unknown. Instead of saying "kiss me," they say "smell me," and this, doubtless, represents an earlier form of salutation. The kiss is much later than the dance. It is still unknown among many races, and may be called conventional. I am not sure that it does not develop from sucking, licking, smelling, and spitting. Some nations yet smell and rub noses, like horses, in salutations; and, where two Frenchmen will run and kiss each other, two Central Africans will deliberately spit, by way of friendly greeting. Dr. Tylor says: "The idea of the kiss being an instinctive gesture is negatived by its being unknown over half the world, where the prevailing salute is that by smelling or sniffing, which belongs to Polynesians, Malays, Burmese, and other Indo-Chinese, Mongols, etc., extending thence to the Eskimo, and westward to Lapland, where Linnaeus saw relatives saluting by putting their noses together."

The kiss is the salute by tasting, and it has to be taught to children. Preyer, in his excellent book, *The Mind of the Child*, states that, at first, they are averse to, and even fearful of, the performance. However this may be, it is certain that Europeans speedily take to it as though to the manner born.

Osculations were far more common in the good old times than at present. The custom which most delighted Erasmus, when in England, was that the girls all kissed him. When ceasing to be performed, some of these ceremonies leave their trace in language. Thus both Austrians and Spaniards say, "I kiss your hands," as a polite term for returning thanks. John Bunyan was a very different man from Erasmus, and in his *Grace Abounding* he says: "The common salutation of women I abhor; it is odious to me in whosoever I see it." And to those who defended it as the holy kiss he pertinently asked "Why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favored go?"

Sugar plums and sweets for perfuming the breath were formerly called "kissing-comfits." Falstaff alludes to them in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. When embracing Mrs. Ford, he exclaims: "Let it thunder to the tune of green sleeves, hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes."

It was an ancient custom to throw kisses towards the images of the gods, and towards the sun and moon (see 1 Kings xix. 18; Hosea xiii. 2). Job says he was never guilty of this last lovely rite of nature-worship. It would, in his eyes, have been an iniquity "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness. And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand" (xxxii. 27).

The early Christians kept kissing as a sign of fellowship. "Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss," says Paul (1 Thess. v. 26). But Christians now-a-days no more think of conforming to this than to Christ's injunction to wash the feet of their fellow disciples.

Kissing in church, at marriage, was formerly part of the service itself, as appears from a Sarum missal. Thus Petruchio, in *Taming of the Shrew* (iii. 2),

Took the bride about the neck,
And kissed her lips with such a clamorous smack
That, at the parting, all the church did echo.

The parson used to claim the first kiss. "Please, sir," said a yokel who objected to "maimed rites," "ye've no kissed Molly." Sometimes brides have been known to take the initiative. This is a relic of a still earlier rite, that of the *jus primæ noctes*, and this again of polyandry. It's a long way off, too remote to be dangerous, but one who has traced the evolution of kissing along "footsteps of the past" will hardly permit a parson or a groomsman to kiss his bride. It calls up too many horrible reminiscences. In the sixteenth century halls were usually opened with a kissing dance. It was called "a brawl," and, like many other dances, really represented old rites of a day when

gesture was the only means of transmitting knowledge. The brawl got broken up, and only relics can be found in children's games.

The Catholic Church, which preserves so many interesting relics of old superstitions, has many kissing ceremonies. Thus in the rite of High Mass the altar is kissed ten times, and nine times in Low Mass, the ten being a masculine, and the nine a feminine, symbol. In China the person admitted to the presence of the celestial emperor prostrates himself nine times, each time beating his head against the ground.

The kiss of peace was given by all communicants in the early ages of the Church, but it led to so many scandals that Pope Innocent III. abolished the rite, and to-day the priest kisses a metal plate known as *pac*, or peace, which is handed down to all the acolytes in turn. Those who will may trace in this a resemblance to Indian rites of the Sakti Puja, as performed by the ancient left-handed worshippers. When the Pope administers the Holy Communion, the partakers kiss the fisherman's ring before receiving it. Bishop's rings are also kissed at the rites of confirmation, when the girl receives her first communion. When cardinals receive from the Pope ashes or palm-leaves, they kiss his hands, and the priest kisses the palm branch as he passes it on. The aspersion of the holy water is also kissed. At grand masses the faithful used to kiss the hand of the priest when he brought the sacred wafer. Now they kiss the paten, but the deacon kisses the hand of the priest whenever he receives anything from him.

The emperor, Caligula, roused the spirit of free Romans by requiring the kissing of the foot. This, everyone knows, is done continually to the Pope. Of course the toe is not now kissed, but an embroidered cross on the slipper. But why is the cross there? Suppose it placed in the still less reverential part indicated by Rabelais. The kissing of the toe was an old rite paid to the Roman Pontifex Maximus, and in that capacity Julius Caesar held out his foot to Pompeius Pænus to kiss in a slipper embroidered with gold. This, too, was the practice of the Arch Druid in Gaul.

The Persian kings in this, like the present Pope, only accorded the privilege of kissing their feet to highly-privileged persons. In the East the kiss of homage is usually given on the hands, sometimes on the knees. In Greece, in classic times, it was customary to kiss the hand, breast, or knee of a superior.

In Theophile Gautier's *Constantinople of To-day* there is an account of the ceremony of kissing the Sultan's toe, an honor which is reserved for the vizier, ministers, and certain privileged pashas. This act of homage is performed with the utmost solemnity, being, in fact, the recognition of the Caliph as God's viceregent—the *Shadow of Allah* on earth.

Probably the most disgusting ceremony of fetish-kissing still extant in Europe is that of kissing, in courts of justice, the holy book, whose greasy covers have been thumbed and beslobbered by all the lowest rascals. Those with self-respect usually open the book at a clean page, if possible, and pretend to kiss it. There is a well-known dodge of intending perjurers to kiss their thumbs instead, there being a popular superstition that if kissing the actual book can be avoided the false witness escapes the actual incurring the charge of perjury.

J. M. WHEELER.

MORAL ASPECTS OF THE CREATION AND FLOOD STORIES.

(Concluded from page 595.)

THE second chapter of Genesis informs us that God made Eve without endowing her with a knowledge of good and evil, the same as he had previously done with man. But she was more curious than Adam, and apparently went in search of what was necessary for the improvement of herself and her posterity. The serpent, beyond doubt, showed his good taste in making her the medium of introducing knowledge into the world. The superiority of some women's perceptive powers over those of many men is a well-known fact in the history of our race. Eve at once saw what was "good and pleasant," and, in spite of God's prohibition, she was not to be deprived of such a blessing as the tree of knowledge afforded. Thus, while God made

the "mother of us all," it was left to the "evil one" to bring her intellectual powers into useful activity. This certainly was the noblest act recorded in this creation myth.

But we fail to see the moral aspect of a story which states as "God's truth" that woman was made from the rib of a man. The writer overlooked the fact that some day the anatomist would expose the fallacy of the allegation that God took from Adam "one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof." Had this been true, it is only reasonable to expect that the supposed descendants of Adam would either have one rib less than the daughters of Eve, or that some anatomical indication would have remained showing that a rib had gone. This, however, is not the case, for the number of ribs is the same in man and in woman, each having twelve on either side of the sternum, or breast-bone; and in the male body there is no evidence that it ever had less in number than it now possesses. It has been said that probably God had an extra rib, with which he replaced the one he had taken away. If this were so, it would make the story still more absurd, for in that case God might have made the woman from the spare rib, and thus have saved Adam from undergoing a surgical operation. But this delusion is on a par with the statement that man was made from "the dust of the ground," which chemists have shown to be untrue; and that the world was created in six days, which geologists flatly contradict. For ages these stories were believed to be true, but the facts of science have proved that they belong to the realm of theological fiction.

Of course scientific men may have sometimes been in error in their speculations, but no mistakes in the investigations of science can affect the lack of morality in the story of the creation. It comes to us, not as a guess at truth or as an approximate explanation of events, but as a record of verities given under the influence of "Divine inspiration." It surely cannot be moral to teach as positive truth that which is manifestly false. The pretension that this creation story is based upon fact can only be attributed to gross ignorance or to wilful fraud; and those Christians to-day who seek to perpetuate the error, when it has been amply demonstrated to be such, deserve the severest condemnation. It is a violation of ethical duty, and an unjustifiable attempt to deceive those who are, unfortunately, credulous and ignorant enough to believe the fictitious account.

The story of the Flood is equally false, and quite as destitute of moral aspects, as that of the creation. It presents a sad culmination of the first act in the God-created tragedy. The story is that God made man pure, and that he not only gave him the special advantage of divine superintendence, but subsequently he afforded him the "edification" of the preaching of Noah, who is described as being "perfect in his generation," although "he drank of the wine and was drunken," and when found by "Ham, the father of Canaan," in an immodest condition, he (Noah) exclaimed: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." Evidently sobriety, decency, and justice were not necessary features of a perfect man in the days of Noah. Still, notwithstanding the precautions which the Hebrew narrative says God took to prevent mankind from degenerating, the race became so bad that the Lord repented "that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart." It is stated that God is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness; yet he either could not, or would not, devise a plan of reformation for the human race, but, instead, he resolved upon wholesale destruction, and drowned them all except one family. This was a terrible resolve; opposed alike to ethical justice and to every feeling of benevolence. No being with a spark of humanity in his nature would be guilty of voluntarily exposing millions of creatures—men, women, and children—to the agonies and struggles of a watery grave. Surely an omnipotent God could have found other means to correct the work of his own hands without bringing "a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven." Besides, as a remedy and a warning, the cold-water process proved a failure, for the people are reported as having been no better after the deluge than they were before it. What can be said of the God who was the chief actor in such a great calamity—an event so fearfully cruel and so revolting that one "cannot think of it without horror, nor contemplate it without dismay"? How can we reconcile the

drowning of a whole world with the principle of goodness and morality? Suppose that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, was that any reason for destroying every chance of repentance upon their part? What should we say of an earthly despot who acted in a like manner? The cruelty and supreme wickedness of the action thus attributed to God has never been paralleled, or even approached, by the greatest monster the world has yet seen; and on the part of infinite power the action must partake of the character of the actor, and become infinite in its immorality. Because some men were wicked, was it therefore just to overwhelm in a common destruction the son with the sire, the little child who had not yet learned to do wrong with those who were alleged to be the real offenders?

The mere act of destroying "all flesh wherein is the breath of life" is immoral, by whomsoever it is performed. In the Bible story of the flood it was not a case of accidental drowning, or an unexpected downpour of rain, greater in magnitude than had ever before been experienced; it was a deliberately planned act of divine vengeance upon nearly all the unfortunate creatures who were then living. And what is the assigned reason for this inhuman slaughter? Simply that the people were no better than their God-made nature allowed them to be. If God's work did not prove to be as good as he expected, whose fault was that? Not man's, for St. Paul says: "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endureth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" (Romans ix.). But what of the lower animals? Was "every imagination of the thoughts" of their hearts "evil continually"? It appears that the only cause of their punishment was that they were found in bad company, and, therefore, they had to pay the penalty for being in that condition of life in which it had pleased God to place them. If in the days of Noah there had existed a society "for the prevention of cruelty to animals," its officials would have had just grounds for taking action against—well, someone. Truly the Lord "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

The moral weakness involved in these stories of the creation and the flood is indeed great. They both present aspects opposed to reason and to the teachings of ethical science. Here we have an "immutable" God who repents, an "omniscient" God who is grieved, an "omnipotent" God who did not prevent an evil, and an "all-good" God who punished young and old, innocent and guilty, without any discrimination. Finally, we have the "great father of all" taking offence at the conduct of his own children, who were brought up under his own guidance and control, and, instead of tenderly and lovingly correcting their errors, drowning them as if they were so many vermin. If men to-day were no better than the Bible God is represented to be, we should have no faith in the service of humanity. We hope, however, that the growth of morality, based upon an enlightened view of man and of nature, will ere long entirely destroy the belief in such a God. And when the day arrives that this hope shall be realised, an unmixed blessing will be secured by the human family. Then moral men will no longer tolerate immoral gods.

CHARLES WATTS.

CASTING OUT DEVILS IN IRELAND.

ANYONE who knows what the Irish peasantry were, and are, was not surprised at the witch-burning atrocity which shocked the civilised world this year. The Catholic Irish, and indeed almost all the inhabitants of the Sacred Isles, are sunk in the most abject superstitions, and only want opportunity to revive the worst atrocities of the Middle Ages. Take the following case, which lies well within the present century: In 1820 much interest was excited in Catholic countries by the alleged miracles of Prince Hohenlohe, Bishop of Sardica. "In England a Miss O'Connor, a nun, had been cured of a swelling in her arms by the spiritual assistance of the prince, and some enthusiastic women in Ireland believed that they were

relieved by a similar process. One young lady was restored to her speech, having been previously dumb; and another literally took up her bed and walked."

It occurred to the Rev. John Carroll, parish priest of Forth, in the County of Wexford, to rival the Episcopal prince. Carroll was a man of striking appearance and much intelligence. His error was that he believed his Bible, and wished to follow its teachings, which few Christians, happily for themselves and others, attempt to do. He read in Mark xvi. 17: "These signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils." And he considered it his duty to obey the command. "He argued with subtlety upon wrong (?) premises, and his applications of various passages in the holy writings were ingenious, however mistaken. It was in vain that he was told that the power of Satan to possess himself of human bodies ceased with the revelation of Christian truth" (a doctrine certainly not consistent with Church History or Scripture). "He appealed to the Acts of the Apostles, and to incidents subsequent to the death of our Savior, to establish his favorite speculation." A medical man, with whom he was intimate, resorted to sedative medicines to avert the progress of what he considered incipient insanity; though why Carroll should be considered insane for following the example and commands of Jesus, "whose he was and whom he served," is hard to understand.

One Sunday, after performing Mass, he suddenly announced that he was endowed with miraculous powers, and demanded of the congregation whether anyone knew of a possessed person on whom he could test his powers. He was informed that a laborer named Neill was confined to bed, and, "being convinced that he was possessed by an evil spirit, proceeded to effect the removal of the enemy." Followed by a large crowd, he went to the sufferer's cottage, "which he had no sooner entered than he precipitated himself upon the sick man." . . . A severe pommeling was the process of exorcism, which he regarded as most effectual. After a long struggle he declared that he had secured the evil spirit, and would plunge him into the Red Sea; but, as that water was not handy, the reverend gentleman, looking, as one witness expressed it, "as if he held the devil by the tail," marched "with a measured pace and a mysterious aspect" to a bridge over the river Staney, where he buried the captive demon as Christ buried the possessed pigs in the Sea of Galilee.

Neill, however, like Mary Magdalene, had seven more devils, whom Carroll proposed to exorcise by similar means. "The operation was accordingly repeated with such success that Neill (who perhaps was more lazy than ill), after much strenuous expostulation, leaped out of his bed and declared that he was quite well." This success encouraged Carroll to perform other acts of mercy. "A poor woman happened to pass along the road, whom he had no sooner observed than he knocked her down and proceeded to exorcise her, to such good effect that one of the spectators cried out for the people to make way, 'as he saw the devil coming out.'" His next miracle, however, put a stop to his career as a thaumaturgus for ever. An unfortunate child in the neighborhood, named Sinnott, suffered from fits, which Carroll, like the founder of Christianity (Mark ix. 20), attributed to a devil. Followed by a crowd of admirers, he went to the cabin, and entered the room where the little girl was lying. He called for a tub of water, threw salt into it, and inverted it over the child, uttering the prayer: "Bury him (*i.e.*, the devil), Jesus, in the depth of the Red Sea." The monster then danced on the bottom of the tub, while the wretched victim shrieked, "Mammy, mammy, save me"; and all the people, including the child's father, "knelt down and prayed." The natural result was that the little girl, whose throat was crushed by the edge of the tub, soon died. "Why did you not interfere to save your child's life?" was asked of Sinnott at the trial. "I thought," said the wretched fanatic, "that, even if his reverence killed her, he would bring her to life again." But stay—was not this the faith of Abraham "accounting that God was able to raise" (his child) "up, even from the dead"? (Hebrews xi. 17). Sinnott was a true "child of Abraham," and a good Christian after all.

Carroll was tried for murder at the Wexford Assizes on August 24, 1824, and acquitted on the ground of insanity. Of course, this meant his incarceration for life in a criminal lunatic asylum. It is hard to see why Carroll was more

insane than Jesus, who on one occasion nearly killed a boy by his incantations (Mark ix. 24); or than Peter, who struck two persons dead (Acts v.); or than Paul, who deprived a man of his sight (xiii. 11); but the Irish priest was unlucky in his environment.

The above narrative, contained in *The Newgate Calendar*, vol. iv., p. 378, etc., might have seemed incredible a year ago; but we have since seen a poor epileptic woman roasted to death by her husband in the presence of her father, relatives, and neighbors, in the same island, in conformity with the teaching of the same atrocious religion, which is still professed, though not practised, in all its enormities, in most civilised lands. We can only say with the Roman poet,

Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum,

with the comment that the most atrocious "religio"—the "religio" of the Inquisition, whose victims numbered millions—was yet to appear when Lucretius wrote. Well does Bacon remark: "The poet, when he beheld the act of Agamemnon that could endure the sacrificing of his own daughter, exclaimed [as above]. What would he have said had he known of the massacre in France (St. Bartholomew's, or the powder treason of England)? He would have been seven times more epicure and atheist than he was" (*Essays on Unity in Religion*). JAMES RICHARDSON.

SONS OF GOD.

"And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose."—GENESIS VI. 1, 2.

DEARLY-BELOVED BRETHREN,—Several important inquiries are suggested by the profound text of Scripture which I have taken for the theme of my discourse. In the first place, who were the sons of God? How came it to pass that a bachelor deity had sons? Presuming they were sons by adoption, were they men or angels? Various learned theologians have given their views on these momentous questions, and, before passing my own judgment, these may be briefly adverted to.

The old Samaritan version of Genesis, supported by the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, represents the sons of God as really earthly high-born men, who took mates from women of the lower classes. It will be noticed the sons chose, leaving no choice to the daughters; the females were fair, but the males decidedly unfair. This view, which is powerfully supported by the fact that ancient chieftains and kings arrogated to themselves the title of God, is stigmatised as rank heresy by the bulk of theologians, who, in the good old days when angels were generally believed in, thought it nothing strange that they should take wives from among the children of men. The book of Enoch (which Jude appeals to as by the seventh from Adam), Philo, Josephus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and other early Christian fathers, say this is what happened. And among moderns Franz Delitzsch and August Dillman hold that no better explanation can be found. Dillman finds in the narrative a reminder of heathen mythology, and holds that the account has been drawn from ancient legends of the giants being half gods and half men. Do not the Sacred Scriptures declare there were giants in those days? Athenagoras (cxiv.) says that the angels "fell into impure love of virgins, and were subjugated by the flesh"; while Justin (2 Apol. v.) declares they "were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons." It is rather curious that, whenever the angels did descend to earth to visit women, their visits were always followed by the birth of children, as in the case of Sarai, Manoah, and the Virgin Mary. It is true that Jesus says that in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. But this is all the more reason they should marry when they visit earth, just as men of God do many things in Paris they could not think of in their own parishes. The sons of God, in other places of Scripture, are usually taken as meaning angels. The Bible angels, be it noted, were all male ones, though the only angels extant now-a-days are feminine. Jude, too, in his sixth verse, speaks of "angels who kept not their

own principality, but left their proper habitation," which seems to glance at this legend in Genesis.

To settle the parious question, whether these persons of divine taste for the daughters of men were themselves men or angels, there have been further controversies with regard to the offspring of the alliance. We have seen that, according to the early Christian father, Justin Martyr, they were demons; according to the Authorised Version, they were giants; and according to the Revised Version they were the Nephilim. Now, scholars trace the word "Nephilim" to the Hebrew *naphal*, which means a fallen, sinful being, analogous to *nephel*, which means an abortion or miscarriage. The Nephilim are also called Gibborim or Titans. The narrative goes on to state that the wickedness of man was great; so perhaps it was a case of miscegenation, in which, according to some doctors, all the bad points of both races come out in the offspring. Josephus says "the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those the Greeks called Titans." Lenormant is more inclined to see the counterpart of the Hebrew myth in the Greek stories of the heroes, demi-gods, born of the love of a god for a mortal woman.

So much, dearly-beloved brethren, for the men of crudition, unenlightened, I fear, by the divine spirit, and relying rather on worldly learning than on the inspiration which comes from prayer and faith. To the man of God who has an understanding of things divine, our text presents no difficulty. Both parties are right, and both wrong. The sons of God are men, and they are angels too. They are the godly, divinely-appointed messengers or angels to men, and specially to women, whether known as priests, parsons, ministers, clericals, sky-pilots, black-beetles, parasites, or men of God, who in all ages have shown a partiality for the daughters of men, and mate with whomsoever they choose, quite irrespective of the choice of the female, who, however, is generally quite content to receive a visitation from the divine being. The sons of God were the Levites or priestly caste, who took tithes of all, and who have never been content with a tithe of the women; but when they see the daughters of men that they are fair, take them wives of all that they choose. They were, indeed, the Beni Elohim, for they were actually born to the Kadeshim, or holy women who visited the temples to be visited by the gods, and thus were they literally, not metaphorically, the sons of the gods, and, like chips of the old block, they followed the bad customs of their ancestry. Such, at least, is the interpretation granted to me after much prayer and pious meditation, and I believe it will commend itself to those acquainted with the sacred mysteries of the men of God in all ages.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

EARLY CHRISTIAN LEGENDS.

No grosser forgeries or more shameless prevarications have ever mystified the miracle gulls of this distracted planet than the Christian Evidence juggleries of the Patristic era.

There are liars that lie for the fun of the thing,
And liars that lie for a fee;

but they are eclipsed, very far eclipsed, by the *Mendax in majorem Christi Gloriam*, the professional liar for Jesus' sake.

"The fathers," says Lecky, "laid it down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds are justifiable, and even laudable; Paganism was to be combated, and therefore prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the Church. This tendency triumphed wherever the supreme importance of these dogmas was held. Generation after generation it became more universal, till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth were blotted out from the minds of men."

Yet the prevaricators of the Middle Ages must have been past-masters of their art, indeed, if they could surpass the *Chief Mentors* of the early Christian era, the very era that evolved the "synoptic gospels" among a chimera brood of only slightly more preposterous spook-stories and biographies of the virgin-born anti-Naturalist. Nearly every larger colony of Christian converts had a legend manu-

factured fanatics vied in composing biographies of incredible saints and "acts" of imaginary apostles; there were eleven different "Acts of Barnabas," four crazy "Acts of St. John," numerous, different, and mutually contradictory Acts of St. Philip, of Peter and Paul, of St. Andreas and St. Bartholomew. There were seven supplementary Apocalypses (besides that of "Apocalyptic Jack," as a friend of mine calls the fever-patient of Patmos), there were Gospels of St. Thomas, a Gospel of St. James, a "Protevangelium of St. James," and countless biographies of St. Joseph and the Holy Virgin, most of them written in a style which the author of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments* would have eschewed as too extravagant, even for the purposes of plausible fiction. Some of these vagaries were, indeed, at once suppressed, as too apt to provoke the ridicule of the unconverted; but Professor Griesbach admits that the still extant MSS. of that sort contain not less than 76,842 variations—seventy-six thousand eight hundred and forty-two more or less irreconcilable passages. Griesbach and Baur agree that in the controversies of the second century no appeal is made to the apostolic originals of the "New Testament" Scriptures, and it is more than probable that the "gospels" which eventually obtained canonical authority had the same origin as the four "Acts of St. John," and were merely selected on account of the slightly less shocking extravagance of their miracle absurdities. The rest were gradually eliminated from the catalogues of theological literature, though not from the private libraries of miracle gluttons; and it is a suggestive fact that the name of the "Apocrypha" or "concealed" gospels was derived from the circumstance of their having been hidden from the sight of converts that had not yet quite escaped from the restraints of reason.

F. L. OSWALD.

A HINDU ON MISSIONS.

BABU K. CHAKRAVARTI, of Calcutta, India, has a word to say on Christian missions in his country: "The cases of conversion are becoming less and less every year, as the natives are understanding the worth of their own religion and the motive of the missionaries for advocating conversion. A case of conversion is looked upon as a calamity; a calamity to the members of the family from which a member is thus separated forever, and a calamity to the individual converted, who suddenly thinks himself free to eat, drink, and live as he pleases. I doubt very much if the converts improve any, socially or spiritually. They are obliged to marry among converts or very low classes, and thus degenerate very fast."

He says that, although the Hindus are poor, there are never such cases of starvation as among Christians. "In India one word only, 'atithi,' is sufficient for one to find temporary shelter and food in a fellow-man's house. The word is so much respected that, if there be not sufficient food in the house for the inmates and the stranger, the food there is shared with him. Then, you see, there are numerous temples all over India where devotees and poor people find every day food and shelter. Our temples are not only places of worship, meditation, and prayer, but they are places where daily the poor are fed. We have no workhouses for the poor; no poor laws. Think what a national calamity it would be to introduce the Western system of living and religion, etc., in India. As regards Christian religion, I beg I may be permitted to say as I think, that it is a part of the ancient Hindu religion, enjoining love for mankind and forgiveness. Our religion, so to speak, is the complete religion. It not only improves morals, but develops the powers of the soul and inculcates love for mankind, spirits, and the spirit-world and God. It teaches how the body should be trained to ward off disease, and how temptations are to be withstood. If a tree is to be judged by its fruits, then Hindu religion is the best."

A JEWISH ADMISSION.—The patriarchal age of the Hebrews corresponds with the heroic age in Greece. As they are presented to us in Genesis, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons are not historical personages, but legendary heroes.—C. G. Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures on "The Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews,"* p. 11; 1892.

ACID DROPS.

SABBATARIANISM is being carried to a monstrous length by the bigots of America. Justice Cornell, in New York, has just decided that it is illegal for any private person to have a guest to dinner on Sundays with wine on the table. Any such person, he held, was liable to be arrested and punished under a section of the Excise Law forbidding the giving away or selling of liquor on that day. It seems almost incredible that such a tyrannical law can exist in a "free" country. Yet it is said that the police are going to enforce it by a system of spies on private households.

The principle of this vile interference with personal freedom is of course religious. At this rate the very name of religion will soon stink in the nostrils of every person who values individual freedom. That is one compensation, anyhow.

While the Sabbatarians are invading the privacy of households in this fashion, another set of pietists are waging war against the "rational" dress for lady bicyclists. Brother James Catlin, a popular preacher in New Jersey, is crying "Woe!" to the ladies who commit the "abomination" of wearing bags and knickerbockers when wheeling. He says it is a direct contravention of the teaching of the Bible, and refers to the fifth verse of the twenty-fifth of Deuteronomy, where men and women are forbidden to wear each other's toggery.

What "cheek" some men have, especially when they get religion into them. If women told men what they should wear, the men would call them impudent hussies; and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Women will never be able to live their own lives, free from male tyranny, until the Bible is swept away as a divine revelation.

It is amusing to read the *Methodist Times* article on why women should serve the Church as well as men. First of all, it makes the ingenious admission that the idea of the equality of the sexes only "dawned on the Christian Church" in the middle of the present century. In other words, the "infidels" were first in the field with this idea; and it only "dawned" on the Christian Church when it had made considerable headway. Could there be a better illustration of the truth that religion follows, and never leads, the progress of civilisation?

How was it that the Christian Church took eighteen hundred years to begin getting right on this subject? Well, in this way. "Christianity," says the *Methodist Times* man, "does not attempt to come into any unnecessary or premature collision with the existing customs and prejudices of society." Therefore it said nothing against male predominance, but just let the essential principles of Jesus Christ work themselves out, and that took nearly two thousand years. Dear, dear! What a frightfully slow thing this Christianity is!

Christianity is opposed to slavery, says the *Methodist Times* man, but "the New Testament does not say that in so many words." In fact, it seems to say the very opposite; and the writer admits that many persons still living can remember when "thousands of Methodist preachers in America argued that Christianity was in favor of slavery." Yes, and they did so with the Bible in their hands, and their arguments were unanswerable. The Methodist writer does not attempt to answer them. He talks like a Jesuit about "the reserve of Scripture on that subject." Reserve, indeed! Why the New Testament itself says, "slaves obey your owners."

Similarly, with respect to women, Paul says, "I suffer not a woman to teach." He also declared that "the husband is the head of the wife." Any candid reader would take this to mean that the husband is the wife's "boss," and that is how the Christian Church and the Christian law have always taken it. But in these days of female emancipation the "boss" text must be twisted into meaning something very different; so, in defiance of the English language and common sense, the *Methodist Times* man asserts that the man's being the "head" of the woman just means that they are both equal. Merely this, and nothing more.

Erasmus complained that people in his time treated the Bible like a nose of wax. What would he say if he were living now? A Christian in a corner will make the Bible mean anything, even the exact opposite of what it says.

The following is from an article on "Scientific Treatment of Crime" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of September 20: "Among the least argumentative but most interesting organic features that lie immediately beneath the organic criminal's tendency to crime is his love of, and tendency

towards, religion. Ferri, an Italian expert, had not found, throughout a lifetime spent in prison work, a single murderer who was not religious. In converse with Deeming, the champion murderer of this decade, I found him possessed of the staunchest moral convictions, and prepared at a moment's notice to fight for his creed. The prison walls of England are scratched with a literature as pathetic as anything in our language. A criminal is a plebeian in society, and painfully conscious of his moral nakedness; and the first impulse of the naked is to hide himself, and the Rock of Ages offers the best shelter. Given a capacity for hearing—the rarest of gifts—there can be no cry that rises from a tired earth more sad than the 'We have erred and strayed from Thy ways' that lifts itself abashed each Sunday from prison chapels."

Owing to the Coombes' murder, there is an outcry against "Penny Dreadfuls," although the Judge, who looked through some of them, said they had not the remotest connection with the lad's crime. We see it stated in the newspapers that a pious member of Parliament, belonging to the legal profession, is going to introduce a Bill to check the circulation of such publications. "The line suggested," we see, "is an extension of the law as to blasphemous and indecent literature." This looks like a covert attack on the freedom of the press. In so far as it is aimed at Freethought literature, it will meet with our exposure and opposition. It appears to us that the "Penny Dreadful" parts of the Bible should be excised from the copies placed in the hands of the children in our public schools.

Messrs. Macmillan are publishing *The Modern Reader's Bible*. It appears that the Holy Ghost has not given proper attention to the printing of his, her, or its book, and Dr. Richard Moulton is going to see to the matter. We hope he will succeed in making the Holy Ghost intelligible.

Rev. Dr. Balgarnie, according to the *Sun*, is crusading against the nursery toy known as Noah's Ark. He thinks it is frequently the beginning of Atheism and infidelity. The "kids" compare the number and size of the animals with the dimensions of the ark; then they read Ingersoll, and go from bad to worse. The *Sun* says the reverend gentleman need not worry. But why not? Shall a toy send a child to hell? Perish the thought. Better burn it on the kitchen fire than let the "kids" burn for ever and ever in Old Nick's furnace.

The *Bullie*, of Glasgow (September 18), says: "Clergymen seem to be at their wits' end to know what to do to get their members to attend church. They have tried a revised version, have changed the hours of worship, introduced instrumental music, and some have added swimming clubs and football; but all to no purpose. Perhaps in their present mood they might sympathise with the Viennese movement to get rid of the Sabbath altogether, if only the Sustainment Fund were guaranteed!" And this in godly Scotland! Ma conscience!

The *Sentinel*, of Washington, opposing the Sunday closing laws, says: "Our challenge to any minister, or any other person, to cite from the Bible a single word from the lips of Christ in favor of prohibition, and what the 'Christian citizens' blasphemously call 'the Christian Sunday,' remains still unanswered. If Christ should come among us now, how he would make those 'Christians' howl! How they would denounce him as a Sabbath breaker and wine bibber! How the name of Christ is being abused! And they all call themselves followers of Christ!"

The Spiritist *Two Worlds* declares: "We have never met with a spirit, who went away a rational, truth-loving individual, who, when he came back, declared that he had found Jesus, that his sins were forgiven, or that he had found in the spirit world that Christianity was true. We have held intercourse with many spirits who confess they were sadly misled, and have become disillusioned. They went away firmly believing that their sins were forgiven, that Jesus Christ would receive them, that he had 'atoned' for them, and they were going to dwell with God and the angels forever; they believed it; they waited 'on the other side' for the Judgment Day, they hoped, and prayed, and praised—and waited. Then came doubt, suspicion, that they had been trained to believe a lie; gradually doubt and fear became a terrible certainty, and the process of 'breaking the fetters' had to be undergone." It would seem to be, on the Spiritists' own showing, best to be undecieved on this side the river Jordan.

A number of materialising "mojums" at Cassadaga camp have been exposed. One Donovan bolted after getting a lot of money from a wealthy lady for spirit pictures, the real painter of which owned up. Mrs. Aber, alias Jackman, and Hugh R. Moore also had to levant, leaving behind them masks, a dummy baby, luminous paint, and other evidence of their tricks.

The *Peablo Chieftain* says: "Within the cheerless walls of the city jail lies the materialised spirit of a being from the world beyond; at least, quite a number of people paid fifty cents each last night to see 'Dr.' H. H. Grabendike step forth from a cabinet at his materialising *séance* in Gold Dust block at D. and Union-avenue, clad in a flowing robe of cheese-cloth, in the rôle of a spirit, appearing for his own benefit, at the gain to him of one dollar for every two spectators. From the spirit embodiment he has fallen to a common prisoner, with a charge of obtaining money under false pretences."

F. W. Harrod, one of the Peculiar People, writes a long letter to the *Weekly Times and Echo* in defence of his sect. The "bone" belief, he says, is "a great mystery," but it is explained because the Peculiar People are members of Christ's body, "of his flesh and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30). Mr. Harrod defends not having doctors on scriptural grounds. "The wrong of seeking after and trusting to the arm of flesh is shown us by Asa (2 Chronicles xvi. 12; Jeremiah xvii. 5). Asa sought not to the Lord, but to the physician, and he slept with his fathers; for the Lord said, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man. Those who trusted in Christ found a perfect cure." But he admits "there is a sickness unto death when prayers will be of no avail, for it is appointed unto men once to die."

After all, the Peculiar People are genuine believers. Moreover, Mr. Harrod assures us their forty-eight elders do not, from the highest to the lowest, receive one penny pay for preaching, all working six days for the support of the body, and devoting the Sabbath entirely to the worship of God. They are true Bible believers; while the people who condemn them pretend to beliefs which their lives show are pretences merely.

"Benjamin Bobbin," who writes the leading article in *Joyful News*, is probably a bit of a wag. Instance the following: "I am glad that Matthew has told us about the angel coming to tell Joseph that his sweetheart was as pure as he was, and that he had nought to lose by looking after her, and being to her as a husband. You see, he did as he was told, and took her with him when he started to Bethlehem. If only all good folk were as teachable as Joseph was, what a Church we should have." And this, which is almost as good, on the necessity for the eternal God having a portion cut off his person: "It would never have done for Jesus not to be circumcised. He would not have been allowed to enter the temple, and when he grew up no one would have listened to his teaching."

There is nothing the old women of the churches and chapels are prouder of than their efforts to promote decency by supplying the heathen inhabitants of torrid climes with coats and trousers by day, and blankets by night. The missionaries dilate on the benefits of civilisation, and traders follow them up. Yet Dr. Pritchard says these same coats, trousers, blankets, etc., are a sure but certain agency for the extinction of their wearers. They dress up in these proud garments for church or for procession, sit or walk perspiring in them, and when they get home throw them off in relief and lie in the cool breezes. Next they come to the missionary for medicine for a cough, unknown in their semi-nude state, and presently pulmonary disease has a hold on these victims of Christian civilisation. Thus does Providence, through the agency of missionary pennies, subtly work for the extirpation of the heathen.

The story of Christian aggression upon heathens, could it ever be written from the standpoint of the heathen, is nothing less than atrocious. The horrors enacted by Cortes in Mexico, and Pizarro in Peru, have been paralleled in the treatment of the natives of Africa and Australasia, and in every case the pretence of aggression has been the desire to spread the blessed gospel of peace.

Dr. W. E. Griffiths says: "The Buddhist missionaries [to Japan] were not satisfied to bring in their train art, medicine, science, and improvements of all sorts, but they themselves became personal leaders in the work of civilising the country. They found out the necessity of better roads, and were largely instrumental in having them made. They dug wells, established ferries, and built bridges. They opened lines of communication; they stimulated traffic and the exchange of merchandise; they created the commerce between Japan and China, and they acted as peacemakers and mediators in the wars between the Japanese and Koreans." The Christian missionaries, on the other hand, brought strife; and, while the Buddhists were received with open arms, the Christians were expelled in the seventeenth century on account of their political intrigues.

The Rev. John McNeill, the Scotch Talmage, has fallen foul of Tennyson. He does not like his lines about honest doubt, or that other verse of his about "an infant crying in the night, and with no language but a cry"; which, said the

man of God, a great many squeamish folk quoted oftener than they quoted any text in the Bible. "I used to think that was very fine poetry," he continued, "until I became a married man and had some experience of the baby's voice—(laughter)—and then I wanted some morning to meet Tennyson." These splendid witticisms were greeted with much laughter.

The Scotch Talmage does not like "honest doubt." He preached at Stockwell Free Chapel from the text: "But Thomas, one of the twelve called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came." "Where in all the world could the fellow be? Ask yourself: Where is your Thomas? why is he not beside you? He is sitting at home in West Pollok-shields reading his book. Think of the flimsy excuse for not coming to the place where Jesus is to reveal himself in resurrection brightness and gladness." We should fancy Thomas was much better occupied than in listening to the balderdash of the Rev. John McNeill, which, by the way, is well replied to in a letter to the *Glasgow Evening News*, signed "Doubter."

The Rev. Lindsay Young, of Portsmouth, is shocked to think that some clergymen actually go to the theatre. He has been still more shocked at the "awful sight" of little girls dancing in the street round a barrel-organ. Evidently the reverend gentleman is far too good for this world. Let us hope he will go to a better one before he is shocked into utter insanity. It would be to his advantage, and perhaps to other people's.

The British Association has been incidentally discussing missionaries. Professor Haddon actually referred to "those characteristic British exports, Beer and Bible." He thought it was quite right to extend our markets, but he thought we ought to do so "honestly, and not under the pretence of advancing religion and morality." Dr. H. O. Forbes did not want to depreciate the value of missionary enterprise, but he thought the "actual religious change" which took place in the missionaries' converts was "extremely small." This gentleman hit the nail clean upon the head.

"Thirsty Grindelwald" is the headline given to the following paragraph in the *Westminster Gazette*: "There seem to be at least two unregenerates attending the Grindelwald Conference. Professor Story, of Glasgow, writes from there to the *Scotsman*: 'I am content with the position, and grateful for the hospitality of Dr. Lunn, though the reason why I and others should travel from Scotland to this Swiss valley to discuss a reunion which we might have as well discussed at home has not yet revealed itself to my mind. Possibly it may be clear to Dr. Lindsay, of the Free, and Dr. Oliver, of the U. P. Kirk, who are here on the same errand. With one of these excellent gentlemen I have already reached a point of perfect sympathy in our common condemnation of the unkindness and impolicy of the managers of the Swiss hotels in keeping no beer on tap, and charging a franc and a half for a bottle which holds no more of a refresher than you can get—just as good—in a beer garden for twenty centimes.'"

How funny it is, to be sure, to read of a projected railway from Acre to Damascus, by way of the Plain of Jezreel, and across the Jordan through the Land of Bashan—where the famous Bible bulls used to roar. Had there been railways in that part of the world in ancient times, the Jews would not have given us a Bible stuffed with ridiculous miracles, nor would the Christian religion have stood a ghost of a chance of imposing upon the world.

Another singular choir strike is reported from Cossington, Leicestershire. The church choir had practised a processional hymn, and were about to begin it when the vicar vetoed the project. The choir thereupon struck, divested themselves of their surplices, and took their seats with the congregation, only a solitary chorister entering the choir stalls. The musical element is beginning to discover that it is the most attractive factor in church services, and it presumes accordingly.

The Rev. Walter Hind, who is charged with indecently assaulting little girls in the vicarage of All Saints, Highgate, is not the vicar thereof, who is the Rev. Edgar Smith, but merely the *locum tenens* put in charge of the parish while the vicar enjoys a holiday.

The Muslims of Bombay have petitioned the Government against enforced medical inspection before making the Hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca. They are entirely in favor of the other sanitary measures provided in the new Bill.

The Portsmouth *Evening News* devotes a paragraph to "Tom Paine," with special regard to the exhibition of Paine relics which is being organised by Mr. Moncure D. Conway. But why "Tom"? Surely it is high time to drop this

vulgarity. The editor of the *Evening News* would hardly like us to call him Jack Brymer.

Our Portsmouth contemporary quotes some doggerel about Paine which has been resuscitated by that organ of "blood and culture," the *Globe*:—

Tom Paine for the Devil is surely a match;
In leaving Old England he cheated Jack Ketch;
And then, to the wonder of all the beholders,
He marched out of life with his head on his shoulders.

It is satisfactory to know that Paine was a match for the Devil, who is reputed to be marvellously clever. The Christians are *not* a match for the Devil. They are always begging God to deliver them from Old Nick. Paine was able to deliver himself.

With respect to the hanging which Paine escaped by fleeing to France, it is well to emphasise the fact that, if Jack Ketch had operated on Paine, it would have been for no crime. His sole offence was the authorship of the *Rights of Man*, which is now admitted to be one of the most important contributions to political philosophy.

By far the largest part of the cost of all the Voluntary schools in the kingdom is paid by the State. There were nearly two millions and a half of children in average attendance last year. The cost of each of these children was £1 18s. 2½d., and of this thirty-eight shillings 10s. 1d. came from the fee grant and 18s. 2d. from the annual examination grant. Here is £1 8s. 3d. direct from the State. The subscriptions come to 6s. 6d., and the children's pence, endowments, and other receipts make up the rest of the cost. These are averages taken over the whole of England.—*Daily News*.

The schools which thus derive five-sixths of their revenue from the State are not under public management. They are built and kept up for denominational purposes. The subscribers who contribute one-sixth of the cost have the whole control, and the public, who give five-sixths, have no part in the management. And now a further dip into the public purse is asked. Surely the time is approaching when a demand will be made for further public control of these falsely-entitled Voluntary schools.

Dr. Buckley, of the *Christian Advocate* (New York), has the honor to lead the way with a Christian lie about Huxley. He puts it tentatively, but no doubt it will soon reach the dignity of a full-grown assertion. His words are: "Huxley, it is said, wished, a few days before his death, to be buried with the service of the Church of England." Who said this, Dr. Buckley, before you, and how comes it to be said in New York when it is not said in England?

Mr. W. Allen, M.P., presiding over a meeting of the Primitive Methodists at Newcastle, urged them to stick to every word and letter of the old book, which he swallows *in toto* from Genesis to Revelation. He observed: "He did not think there was anything he believed in so firmly as in the Bible. He was one of those who believed that the spirit of God influenced the men who wrote the Holy Scriptures; that it influenced them to pen them word by word, passage by passage. He reminded them of the words in the last chapter of Revelation: 'If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,' and said he believed that no pledge given by Jehovah to the human race would be more strictly carried out to the letter than that one, for there could be nothing so bad for Christianity—no day could be so dark for the Christian Church—as that day when her faith in the Scriptures became shaken.

During the past century the London Missionary Society has received no less than £5,618,123 in subscriptions and legacies. Yet the Bishop of Rochester has stated that South London is no longer Christian.

"Uncle Benjamin" writes on the "Sons of God," and M. Claremont Ganneau has suggested that Kadesh Ruach, the holy spirit that brooded over the water, was originally a feminine consort of deity, while St. Anna is addressed in a Catholic hymn as "grandmother of the eternal God." Yet another relation is turned up by a correspondent of the *Spectator*, who cites the following as an inscription in the parish church of St. Helier, Jersey: "To the glory of God, and in memory of George Frederick de Carteret his cousin, who perished by drowning, and lies interred in the Cathedral Church, Galway, Ireland, this window is given by Edward Charles Malet de Carteret, Seigneur de St. Ouen, A.D. MCCCCLXVII."

According to the *Liberator*, more than three-fifths of the members of the new House of Commons are members of the

Church of England—which is a bad prospect for Disestablishment. The Methodists, who crowded so much before the elections, have thirty-eight members all told. There are thirty-four Presbyterians, twenty-three Congregationalists, three Baptists, six Quakers, eleven Unitarians, and seven Jews. The number of Freethinkers is not stated, but there are known to be several, though they may object to be ticketed.

Napoleon's religion was the subject of a recent article in our columns by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who pointed out that this extraordinary man had no particular religious belief of his own. A corroboration of this view appears in the *Daily Chronicle* review of *Napoleon's Last Voyages*. During his voyage to St. Helena the great victor-victim talked a good deal with the English chaplain, but "he did not at all impress Mr. Glover that he had any religious sympathies." "Every religion," Mr. Glover said, "is alike to him, and did I believe there existed such a being as an Atheist, I should say Buonaparte is that being."

After this it is amusing to read the vapors of Mr. Alfred Thomas, M.P., in a chapel at Pontypridd. This gentleman—for we suppose he passes as such in Wales—said he believed with Mr. Gladstone that infidelity would be very little heard of by the end of the present century. Infidelity, however, would not die out altogether, for "as long as there were fools on earth infidelity would remain." Mr. Thomas, therefore, regards "infidels" as "fools." We know one or two of these "fools" who would give him an awful dressing on any public platform where he had the courage to maintain his "wisdom" in debate.

Joseph Hutchinson, a Belfast dyer, was dying for the last time, preparatory to his funeral; and in this extremity he bethought him that it would be nice to have in a priest, who might administer the last sacraments, and give him a good send off to the beautiful land above. But the landlord of the house wherein he lodged was a rabid Orangeman, who rushed in while the priest was performing, and tried to argue the matter with a poker. Finally, the priest had to be escorted home by the police, and Joseph Hutchinson died almost in the midst of the rumpus. This story will enable everyone to see the blessings of religion. There is nothing like it for bringing peace and comfort to the dying.

Religion is a source of harmony and goodwill at Vienna just now. A Christian killed a poor old inoffensive Jew in a public street, and the heroic action was loudly applauded by a large meeting of the hero's fellow religionists.

Christianity professes to be a *spiritual* agency, but when a Christian man of God takes up the subject of social reform the very first thing he does is to send for the policeman. At Grimsby, for instance, the Nonconformist Ministers' Association is "deeply impressed with the great extent to which gambling evidently prevails in the town." So far so good. But what remedy do these Nonconformist ministers apply to the evil? Their proper business is to preach against it and show its immorality. That is slow work, however, and troublesome work too; for a very good subscriber to the chapel funds may be guilty of making a bet now and then, and it would hardly do to rebuke him too pointedly. So the Nonconformist ministers "urge upon the Council to put into force its powers to suppress this vice." Which is all very well, in its way; but if the police are to look after morality, what are the ministers paid for?

Rabbi Schindler, of Boston, was recently asked if Jonah was really swallowed by a whale. "Ah," said the rabbi, with his agreeable accent, "I don't know anything about Chonah, and I don't know anything about the whale—it's all the same as *Drilly*—it's a noffel."

Helen Williams edits a spiritist journal, called *Freedom*, at Boston. On one side it has a quotation from R. W. Emerson; on the other, one from Helen Williams. No doubt the spirit of Emerson has called to thank her for the honor conferred.

Patrick Gleeson, a clergyman, aged forty-six, and therefore old enough to know better, was charged at the Lambeth Police Court with being found drunk and incapable in Atlantic-road, Brixton. The policeman found him lying helplessly in the road with his face cut. In consideration of the cut (probably) the magistrate ordered him to pay the doctor's fee. This case was reported on Monday. On Tuesday another London clergyman was charged with indecent conduct, and committed for trial.

The London rectors attended the meeting called to form a Curates' Union. The Rev. C. E. Curtis, of St. Paul's, Haggerston, and the Rev. T. W. Goodman, of St. Mary's, Haggerston, strongly denounced the proposal, and supported an amendment to that effect. The proposal was outvoted. This is a good deal like employers deciding that employees have no right to combine. But it is thought that the milk-sop curate will stand anything.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 29, Foresters' Hall, {Clerkenwell-road, E.C. :
7.30, "Clinging to Christ."

October 6, Wood Green.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—September 29, Camberwell. October 6 and 13, Foresters' Hall, London; 14, 15, 16, 17, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne with the Rev. A. J. Waldron; 18, North Shields; 20, Glasgow; 22 and 23, Dundee; 27, Edinburgh; 29, York. November 17, Liverpool.—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.

J. MARTIN.—Professor Fiske's reply to Joseph Cook was republished in pamphlet form a dozen years ago. Perhaps you can obtain a copy from Mr. Forder.

LE DIABLE.—Will be acknowledged next week.

R. WILSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. J. BARTER.—You are early with "Shilling Week" subscription. Acknowledgment next week. Glad to have your warm approval. Tell your veteran friend that we have nothing to do with Sir William Harcourt as a Liberal leader. We complain that he lied about us most basely in the House of Commons. Surely your veteran friend does not think the reproof of a liar is worse than his lie.

LONDON Branch Secretaries must send us their Lecture Notices for next week's number.

W. GILMOUR.—Inserted.

J. WOOD.—See "Sugar Plums."

H. THOMPSON.—Thanks for report of Cardinal Vaughan's sermon, which we have made the subject of our first leader. Thanks also for the sight of your friend's interesting letter. Glad to hear you both appreciate "the good the *Freethinker* is doing."

G. J. WARREN.—We are obliged to you for your trouble in the matter, which is having our best attention.

R. GREEN.—Your letter is most encouraging. We were happy to see you and your daughter at Mr. Putnam's farewell lecture. Your donation is transferred to the Special Lecture Fund.

H. SNELL.—Sorry to have missed you during your brief visit to London. Hope to see you before long.

J. M.—Thanks. Acknowledgment next week in full list of subscriptions.

H. W. JONES.—Much pleased to hear of the success of Mr. Cohen's lectures at Blackburn. We hope his next visit in December will be still more encouraging. Mr. Foote will be happy to lecture for you on a Sunday if you can secure a decent hall. He is in good health, and feels no impairment of what you call his "old fighting form."

W. STRASSHEIM.—(1) The South Shields engagement was cancelled, and the announcement removed from the *Freethinker*. We are sorry that the alteration was not noticed by some Newcastle friends, but no engagement was broken, as you appear to imagine. (2) Glad to hear that Mr. Parris made such a good impression. (3) We cannot advise you to invite the other person you mention to lecture at Newcastle. (4) Thanks for cutting.

PYRITES.—The poem shall appear. Mr. Foote will be glad to hear from the Belfast Branch—or, if the Branch prefers inaction, from any individual members—what hall is available for Freethought lectures on a Sunday.

HUGH LLOYD.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder for execution. See "Acid Drops" re cutting.

A. LEMAIRE.—Pleased to hear you have been introduced to the *Freethinker*. Perhaps if you continue to read it you may see reason to change your opinions. Whether the Bible does or does not teach the doctrine of Atonement is properly a question for Christians to settle amongst themselves. We attack the doctrine because it holds the field, and you admit that we have "ably shown its fallacy and injustice."

T. E. PERKINS reminds us that there was a case of bigoted intolerance on the part of Coroner Baxter in 1890, in connection with an inquest on the body of Mrs. Simson. Coroner Baxter was censured in the public press, a special leaderette appearing in the *Daily Chronicle*.

J. HUDSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

A. J. MAIRIOTT.—See our comment. It behoves us to be always vigilant.

C. DEANE.—Always pleased to hear from you.

W. WIGGINS.—Glad to hear you have derived so much profit from reading the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the cutting.

G. HARDIE.—Surely you mistake us. We have no quarrel with Mr. Keir Hardie as a Socialist. Our complaint is, that he constantly mixes up his peculiar Christianity with labor questions. It would be reckoned ill taste if a Secularist labor leader were always introducing his Freethought on social and political platforms. Is it not equal ill taste on the part of Mr. Keir Hardie to be always introducing his religion? We are sorry to hurt anyone's "feelings," but public men are necessarily open to public criticism. With respect to George Macdonald's opinion of Keir Hardie, it was quoted in the *Freethinker* simply as an item of news. We neither approved nor condemned.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Pleased at any time to receive your cuttings.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—We think you have argued the question ably. You must expect the devices and evasions you complain of if you discuss with Christians. Mr. Foote is seeing through the press a large pamphlet on *Beer and Bible*. It will be published in a week or so, and will probably be of considerable assistance to controversialists like yourself.

J. B.—Your subscription will be acknowledged next week. See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Baillie—Glasgow Evening News—New York Public Opinion—Post—Staffordshire Sentinel—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Crescent—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Daily News—Two Worlds—Torch—Echo—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Isle of Man Times—Manx Sun—Introduction—Kirkintilloch Herald—Truthseeker—Liberator—Melbourne Herald—Dublin Saturday Herald—Secular Thought—Chicago Chronicle—Cumbernauld Press.

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

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

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.

SHILLING WEEK.

WITH the unanimous concurrence of the National Secular Society's Executive, I am taking personal charge of the organisation of our party's special propaganda. It is my intention to utilise the services of our best lecturers for the spread of our principles, not only in London, but in all parts of the country. Week-night lectures, under my scheme, are already being arranged for by Messrs. Watts and Cohen. The local Freethinkers will bear the local expenses of such lectures, with the assistance of a collection; and I will undertake to pay the lecturer. Sunday lectures, in special localities, where the cause is still weak, will be arranged for on the same conditions, or otherwise, if the resources placed at my disposal are adequate.

I believe it is possible through this scheme, if it is properly supported, to carry Freethought into every fair-sized town in Great Britain, and perhaps into some of the principal towns in Ireland.

Already I have taken the full financial responsibility of the lectures at Milton Hall, St. James's Hall, and the Foresters' Hall, in London; and I propose to organise similar propagandist efforts in other parts of our mighty metropolis, whose five millions of people offer a splendid field for Freethought missionary enterprise.

Wherever it is possible I intend to work this scheme in conjunction with the N.S.S. Branches. But in a few large towns I have my eye upon, if the Branches do not wake up, I shall have to engage halls and arrange for lectures independently.

This scheme is a bold one, and its only chance of success, in the present condition of affairs, lies in the personal supervision and control which I am prepared to give it.

To raise the means for carrying it into effect, I appeal to the thousands of readers of the *Freethinker*, whether they are members of the National Secular Society or not. Three-fourths of them can do something, and a percentage of them can do a good deal. I ask them all to do their very best.

The first week in October is set aside as "Shilling Week." During that period I ask all who desire to aid in sending the torch of Freethought into the cities and towns of this kingdom, to forward me one or more shillings. Every shilling I receive will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*.

We have seen nearly a hundred thousand shillings obtained for a popular cricketer. Surely a few thousand shillings can be raised for Freethought.

The Salvation Army has just had its "Self-Denial Week." Last year it raised nearly £50,000 in this way. Our party is not as large as the Salvation Army, but it is by no means insignificant, and I hope it will make this "Shilling Week" a satisfactory success.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A CAPITAL audience assembled in the Foresters' Hall last Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Bible or No Bible in the Public Schools." His address was closely followed and applauded with marked enthusiasm. This evening (September 29) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, his subject being "Clinging to Christ."

Admission tickets for the Foresters' Hall meetings are no longer necessary. The admission now is entirely free to all parts of the house, but a silver collection is expected in the body of the hall and a copper collection in the gallery. Freethinkers should do their utmost to induce their more orthodox friends to attend these meetings. We should like to see the hall, which is a large one, packed from floor to ceiling on the occasion of Mr. Foote's second lecture, and, if possible, afterwards.

Mr. Watts lectures at Camberwell this evening (Sept. 29) on "The Bible and Civilisation." This is the last occasion for some time that South London friends will have an opportunity of hearing our eloquent colleague.

The London *Echo* has made ample amends for inserting a letter by A. Le Lievre, in which Mr. Foote was stated to have been imprisoned for obscenity. Mr. J. M. Wheeler was so indignant at this detestable falsehood that he paid a visit to the *Echo* office with a copy of Mr. Foote's trial in his hand. Other correspondents protested against the slander, particularly Mr. F. Jackson, to whose letter the *Echo* appended the following note:—"It is only right to say that Mr. A. Le Lievre's statement that Mr. Foote 'had twelve months' imprisonment for publishing obscene caricatures' was false and calumnious, and that Mr. A. Le Lievre has forfeited his claim to again occupy our space."

The Wood Green Branch has engaged the Masonic Hall in High-street for a course of four Sunday evening lectures. Mr. Foote has consented to give the opening address on October 6, his subject being "Life, Death, and After." Money cannot be taken at the door, and therefore the tickets—which are a shilling, sixpence, and threepence—should be secured beforehand. They can be obtained of Mr. John Wood, 71 Gladstone-avenue, Wood Green, N. Mr. Foote is to be followed by Messrs. Parris and Forder.

Mr. F. Thompson, one of the best of our Wood Green workers, desires to have his child named by Mr. Foote on this occasion. This ceremony is always interesting to ladies, and there should be a good attendance of the fair sex that evening.

The Annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union was held at Toronto on September 7 and 8. Captain R. C. Adams, the retiring president, was unable to be present, but sent a capital address. Mr. Allen Pringle was elected president, Mr. J. S. Ellis secretary, and Mr. A. Earsman treasurer. Among the resolutions passed by the Convention was the following: "Resolved, That this Union desires to place on record its high appreciation of the grand efforts being made in England by Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. Charles Watts to further the cause of freedom of opinion and freedom of speech, and trusts the Freethinkers and Secularists of England will amply sustain them in their work."

It was also resolved to issue propagandist literature to influence the French Canadians. There is a French translation of the *Age of Reason*, and the works of Ingersoll are also to be translated into French.

We hope the best efforts of our Canadian brethren will be given to sustaining *Secular Thought*. Under the able editorship of Mr. J. S. Ellis it is maintaining a gallant fight. To us *Secular Thought* is a weekly sign that Secularism in Canada commands the support of intelligent and devoted men, of whose co-operation in Freethought work we are proud.

Members and friends should attend the Battersea Branch quarterly tea and soiree to-day (Sunday, September 29). Tickets are sixpence each, and can be obtained at the hall or at the outdoor meeting. Ex-members and strangers are particularly invited.

The Newcastle *Evening News* comments on the fact that England gets into a fever over Mohammedan outrages on Christians, but takes no notice of Christian outrages on Mohammedans. "Islam," the writer says, "has been from the beginning, and is still, incomparably less disposed to persecution than has been Christianity." He continues: "His greatest enemies allow that the Turk has never been a religious persecutor. When the Turks invaded Asia Minor

and Europe they left with few exceptions the Christians in full possession of their worship, their priests, their monasteries, and their churches, and that, too, at a time when, in the name of Christ, Papal bulls ordered the massacre of heretics, and when the Reformers in certain parts of Europe were thirsting for the blood of the Mother Church, and calling on the populace to pull down the rookeries (Catholic churches) that the rooks might follow. Even now, when Protestant processions are forbidden in Catholic France, Catholic processions may circulate without let or hindrance through Constantinople. On such occasions the streets of Pera and Galata are hung with white, and Turkish soldiers present arms on the raising of the Host."

WHAT NOBODY KNOWS.

WHERE or when Christianity began.

Who was Jesus Christ, or when he lived.

Who wrote the Gospels, or any other part of the New Testament.

What the New Testament is—whether all that is in it ought to be there, or whether all that is out should be excluded.

Who made the New Testament.

When the New Testament was put together.

Where the New Testament was put together.

Who the Apostles were.

What became of Gabriel the angel.

What became of Joseph, Mary's easy-going spouse.

What became of Mary.

What became of Jesus.

What became of the shepherds that visited Christ's cradle.

What became of the "wise men" who came from the east.

What became of the star that misguided them.

What became of the dove that descended upon Jesus.

What became of the Holy Ghost who visited Mary.

What became of the Devil who tempted Jesus.

What became of the multitudes of devils who were expelled by Jesus and his agents.

What became of Simon the Cyrenian.

What became of Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, and the rest of the women who figure so prominently in the Gospels.

What became of Lazarus, and of others who rose at the time of Christ's resurrection.

How those devils fared which entered the pigs and frightened them into the sea, where they were drowned.

Who founded the Church of Rome, or who were the first bishops of it.

What the first Christians believed.

What the first Christians thought of Jesus.

Whether the first Christians had a Jesus or a Christ.

Whether a Christ gave rise to the sect, or the name of the sect suggested the supposed Christ as its founder.

What became of Pontius Pilate.

What became of Caiaphas or Annas.

What became of Joseph of Arimathea.

What became of the seventy disciples Jesus sent out, etc.

What became of the five hundred persons who are said to have seen Jesus after his resurrection.

What became of any one of all the multitudes Jesus fed, cured, etc.

Why none of those benefited by Jesus ever took the trouble to preach his gospel and advertise his healing power.

Why none of them turned up to speak a word for him at his trial.

Who compiled the creeds.

Who compiled the old litanies, liturgies, chants, etc.

Who or what God was.

What the trinity in unity was.

What became of God or the trinity, etc.

Where to find such a mass of useless, lying, imbecile literary rubbish as in the Bible and religious books.

I have just flung the above together as they occurred to me with my pen in hand. Arrangement and elaboration are unnecessary. Let the reader turn each clause into a question; and there is no man in the world that can give any reasonable answer.

Had they ever been answered satisfactorily, I never should have required to put them, for they would have received such answers as would content all honest inquirers many centuries ago.

I renounced Christianity because it had no evidences and was manifestly untrue. I am now twenty-two or twenty-three years older, and I find the leading scholars in the Churches are now pretty much of my opinion, although the sentiments of many will revolt from what I say.

That doesn't matter. We Freethinkers have conquered their intellect; their emotions will follow.

JOSEPH SYMES.

MR. PUTNAM'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Extracts from his Letters to the New York "Truthseeker" (August 17).

SATURDAY afternoon I visit some of the notable places of Birmingham—the library, art gallery, the Bull Ring, the market, the Arcades, the town hall, etc. In the evening I call upon Mr. Daniel Baker, who for years has been one of the main supporters of Freethought in Birmingham, and has given much of his wealth to aid the work, especially when Mr. Watts labored here, with much success, amidst many discouragements, keeping the cause vigorously at the front. Mr. Baker is over eighty years old now, but the "sweep of years" does not destroy his hope for humanity, nor his devotion to truth. I was pleased, too, to meet his daughter. His wife is now upon a sick bed. Also here, for the first time, I met George Jacob Holyoake, who for sixty years has been a Freethought agitator. He is over eighty years of age, but the intellectual fire is not diminished. He is keen, alert, ready to lend a hand. To lend a hand has, in fact, been one of the great purposes of his life. Perhaps no man understands better than does Mr. Holyoake the science of co-operation, not as a religionist, but as a man of the world. In youth he suffered martyrdom on account of his outspoken Atheism, and he stands firmly to-day by the principles he then announced. He does not indulge in any sentimentalities of religion. He does not believe in them. He makes no compromise with Christianity. He has done what he could to prevent the priest from assuming the mastership of the co-operative movement. And he has succeeded. So far as I can discover, the religious element has been kept out of this co-operative movement in England much more than in America. The curse of labor reform in our country is, that priests are allowed to run it. Mr. Holyoake saw this danger, and guarded against it over forty years ago. In all his associations with the reform party he has not denied his Atheism. I should judge that Mr. Holyoake was a good deal like our Horace Seaver. He has the gift of pertinacity and of resoluteness. If he makes up his mind to a thing, he stands by it, and all the opposition in the world would not induce him to change. If he makes up his mind to live to be a hundred years old, I guess he will do it. He came to Birmingham on purpose to be present and preside at my lectures, which afforded me great gratification, for, knowing Mr. Holyoake by reputation for so many years, I desired to see him face to face, and to stand together with him in the ranks of Freethought.

The friends at Birmingham did the best they could; but it rained on Sunday, and the audiences were not large. It cleared off somewhat in the evening, so that at the closing lecture there was nearly a hall full. I gave three lectures. Mr. Holyoake presided at the morning meeting. He said that, as Birmingham was his native place, he wanted to meet the representative of American Freethought and give him a welcome to Birmingham. The short address of Mr. Holyoake was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and it was certainly a stimulation to my own effort; and if it did storm outside, there was sunshine within. I lectured on "The Bible and Modern Thought." In the afternoon Mr. Ridgway presided. I gave my lecture on "Christ and the Nineteenth Century." The method of the lecture was to accept the validity of the orthodox record, the four gospels, and then to discover what value, if any, Jesus was to the nineteenth century. I demonstrated from the record that Jesus was ignorant, superstitious, fanatical, immoral, and utterly unworthy of the intellectual respect of the present times. Of course my Christian critics after the debate quoted Mill and Renan. I answered that neither Mill nor Renan was an authority in Freethought, and that on this point I considered them entirely unhistoric and unscientific. It is nonsense for any man to-day to talk of the commanding excellence of Jesus. It is false whoever utters it, be he Renan, or Mill, or any of the most illustrious of Freethinkers. The moral excellence of Jesus is one of the humbugs of the ages, and ought to be demolished with all the force of truth and intellectual sincerity. One man tried to come at me with the miracle of the resurrection, and wanted to know what became of the body of Jesus after it disappeared from the tomb. I answered that the body of Jesus, whatever became of it, had nothing to do with the question at issue, which was the moral character of Jesus as given in the gospels, which I had demonstrated, according to the progress of to-day. My opponent sat down. He could not stand up for the Jesus of the gospels; only for an imaginary Jesus. There is not a Christian to-day who obeys, or tries to obey, the teachings of Jesus. The discussion was somewhat animated. In the evening I lectured on "Christianity and Woman." There was some debate after this, wandering, as usual, all over the universe, and scarcely touching the points I made. One critic inquired if I did not think that Miss Willard and Lady Somerset were doing a great deal for the temperance cause. I answered, "No; that they rather had injured the rational temperance movement by their foolish and tyrannical methods; that the true method of temperance was science and education, and not coercion and sentimental gush. Of all methods of temperance that of prohibition is the most orthodox, despotic, and unsuccessful."

Mr. Holyoake closed the evening with a short address; and really, as my friends say, he was never in better form. He was animated by the occasion, and the audience responded to his keen thrusts with hearty appreciation. A vote of thanks was given him by the audience.

On the platform also with Mr. Holyoake was another veteran and well-known Freethinker, Mr. Charles C. Cattell, a broad-browed man, grey with years, who looks as if he could strike many a strong blow for mental emancipation. I was glad to meet one whose writings I had read with so much profit—writings clear, logical, and to the point. There is a young and vigorous element at Birmingham, but it is seldom that four such veterans gather on one occasion as George Jacob Holyoake, Charles C. Cattell, Daniel Baker, and Joseph H. Ridgway. All honor to those who have made it easier for our footsteps to press forward in the thorny pathway of reform. After the lecture a few of us met at the house of Mr. C. H. Cattell, and enjoyed a social union for an hour or so. Mrs. C. H. Cattell is the daughter of Charles Watts, as is also Mrs. Curtis, who was present. We all wished that Charles Watts was with us on this occasion, with President Taylor and other jovial spirits.

Thus the campaign at Birmingham closed with brightness and cheer. I have made friends whom I shall remember always. Among the workers here, besides those already mentioned, are Robert Meredith, David Thomas Bullows, S. Armfield (who made the pilgrim welcome to his home), W. T. Pitt, J. H. Bridges, Mr. Steptoe, Mr. J. Terry, etc. Mrs. Armfield and Miss Lilly Pitt are also active in the ranks, with other ladies who are not afraid to be counted as Freethinkers. There have been many ups and downs for the cause at Birmingham, but there is still a good chance of winning the day, despite apathy, boycott, and various other things too numerous to mention that are always in the path of reform. In a city like Birmingham, where so many elements are in play, and where there are so many quasi-reforms and half-movements, the straight-out and pioneer rank cannot always advance. There will be drawbacks, but while the veterans pass off the stage I am sure that youth will take their place with undiminished fire, and with wider advantages for action.

With Birmingham comes Shakespeare, for Stratford-on-Avon is only a few miles distant, and with choice friends I spend a whole day in that land of poesy, and a thousand thoughts throng into my mind.

Shakespeare's day! What a day it was—of joy, of roses, of bloom and splendor; a day when man and nature blend in perfect poesy. The home of Shakespeare, the river Avon, the green fields, the beautiful church, the embowering groves, the thousand flowers, make a world of delight; the past and the present mingling in glory and romance. What memories illuminate the brain at the magic word "Shakespeare"! What a long procession moves athwart the mind; what pomp, what variety, what passion, what power! And here is the land of his birth. Here he gathered the treasures of nature, here he caught the music of the birds and plucked the flowers, here he felt the flame of love and the grand ambition of youth, and here, after the triumphs of an eventful life, he found the repose of death. How the heart thrills and the imagination kindles at Stratford-on-Avon! Scott, Burns, Byron, and then Shakespeare, who comprehends them all in the amplitude of his genius, and enriches them and us so that poetry and art hereafter are a common heritage, like the earth and sun and sky.

I did not come a solitary pilgrim to this memorable shrine. Not simply the dead, but the living world itself, was round about my pathway, as variable as the pages of Shakespeare himself, and the comedy of life softened and glorified its tragedy. Like Chaucer's company, we found as much wisdom in play as in labor itself, and certainly no one can appreciate Shakespeare who does not see the joy of life as well as its shadows.

I must describe the companions of my delightful journey, who added the lustre of Freethought to the reminiscences of the poetic past.

Robert Taylor is the captain of the Birmingham host, and, after being twenty-three years in the military service of his country, is fully capable for the position. He has travelled over a good part of the Old World, and expects eventually to see the New. He is a jolly story-teller. He has gathered his materials from many a camp-fire and curious adventure, and there is not a subject he cannot illuminate with some telling anecdote. James Partridge, the secretary, is a quiet and persevering man, and does the hard and silent work without which there is no public success. W. T. Pitt, the treasurer, has the knack of paying all the bills, which makes the passage of life a free-and-easy one to the Secular Pilgrim. Joseph H. Ridgway, vice-president of the Society, I have already referred to as a stalwart veteran. Mr. Stephen Armfield was ordained to preach the gospel according to Methodism, but found in Freethought and

hard work a better field for humanity and truth. David Thomas Bullows is the singer of our party, who puts the music in where it does the most good, and adds to the festivity and romance of the occasion; and Charles Henry Cattell joins us with Freddie Cattell, the grandson of Charles Watts, so that my famous American co-worker has the dignity of a grandsire, which, of course, he carries with vigorous ease. This was a typical English party, proud of their own land, yet cosmopolitan in spirit, literary, poetical, musical, historical, anecdotal, reminiscent, and prophetic; so there was plenty of Promethean fire all along the way.

We left Birmingham at 9.40 in the morning, and it was about 11 o'clock a.m. when we rolled into the station at Stratford-on-Avon. Stratford has a population of about 10,000. It is one of the cleanest and handsomest towns in England at the present time. It looks like a parlor. It has quite an aspect of modern magnificence. The old parts of the town are not apparent without a searching look. Ignatius Donnelly, the anti-Shakespearean critic, says that Stratford was a "dirty little town." I can see no evidence of this. All towns were dirty three centuries ago to what they are now. London was simply horrible. Stratford was no worse than its neighbors. It was evidently a town of some importance, the centre of business for an extensive agricultural country, where crowds would gather on market days, and a bright boy would have a chance to see a vast deal of human nature. It was not a country place that Shakespeare lived in, but a bustling trading-point, which would afford much stimulation and knowledge to a youthful genius. Donnelly is very much out of the way when he calls Stratford a "dirty little town" in order to belittle Shakespeare. At the time in which Shakespeare lived Stratford might be called a leading provincial town, and of this town Shakespeare's father was the chief magistrate, and must have been a man of energy and ability. Stratford was not a stagnant village. Shakespeare was born amidst active and superior elements of English life.

The first thing to attract our attention was the handsome American monument, which is gratifying as the expression of our national feeling for England's greatest bard. They say that more Americans visit Stratford every year than Englishmen. It appears that every American tourist makes it a point to see Shakespeare's birthplace without fail.

But I cannot linger at the monument. It is too modern. I want to get back to the old times—to the very hearthstone of Shakespeare; and here, in a little while, I stand beneath the very roof under which he was born. The big old-fashioned fireplace is before me. The iron dogs are gone, but the very stones are there where the fire glowed, and on the side are the stone seats under the chimney, where, I suppose, little Willie must have sat when the embers were low and it was cold. At any rate, I sat myself down on these snug stone seats where Shakespeare might have toasted his shins. This was in the kitchen with its stone floor. Overhead is the room where Shakespeare was born; not much of a room now, but more royal than the court of any prince. I should think about a million names were scribbled all over the walls and the window-panes; among them, by careful observation, might be discerned Scott's, Byron's, Carlyle's, Dickens's, Thackeray's, etc.; but it is almost impossible to distinguish. In another room opposite is a portrait of Shakespeare, probably the finest extant. To my mind, it is certainly a veritable portrait, and conveys a noble impression of the poet. This portrait was discovered a few years ago among some old relics. It had a thick, heavy beard upon it. It was found, however, that this beard did not belong to the original picture, and, being carefully cleaned off, a new face appears—the face of Shakespeare himself. It is constantly guarded, being framed in a fireproof iron safe, which is locked every night. It is a priceless treasure. I do not like the ordinary pictures of Shakespeare. They convey no impression of genius or character. One might think Shakespeare was only a comfortable burgher, looking at these pictures. It is a heavy, unintellectual face that confronts us, in which there seems to be no fine play of wit and cheer. But in this portrait now hung upon the walls of Shakespeare's home, and of which I believe there is no copy elsewhere, we see the real man, as described by Ben Jonson—"honest, brave, open, free, gentle, and witty." Here we see the lips that the muses might have kissed; the eyes where genius makes the world luminous, and the dome-like forehead. In connection with this portrait I am reminded of the Kesselstadt mask, which I think is the most wonderful and pathetic expression of Shakespeare's face ever given. Here we see the grandeur, the delicacy, the subtlety, the mobility of the poet-genius. Thus in the shadow of death, rather than in the fleshly lineaments of life, are revealed the depths and intensities of Shakespeare's inner being.

I cannot describe the many relics and curiosities, pictures, books, manuscripts, etc., now gathered within the poet's birthplace. Amidst the mingling rain and sunshine we journey to Shuttery, about three miles from Shakespeare's

early home. Here, on a bit of rising ground, is Ann Hathaway's cottage, surrounded by an old garden, in which are many of the Shakespearean flowers. The cottage has been divided into three portions. The central portion is a fairly large room, with quaint chimney corner. There is an old settle with high back, and the window, under which Shakespeare might have done his courting in the "good old days." Upstairs is a beautiful carved bedstead, which shows the care and workmanship lavished on furniture in the Middle Ages. This bedstead existed in the Hathaway house before the time of our poet. An old woman has charge of the house, a descendant of the Hathaways. She is eighty-three years old, and is a sprightly and chipper old lady. She can talk the day long. She is full of the old days, of her great-great-grandfather, and great-great-grandaunt, etc. It was a pleasure to listen to her traditions. I liked the cottage and its surroundings. The modern look has not yet appeared as in bustling Stratford. The glamor of the old days is almost undisturbed. The garden has an ancient flavor. The flowers are in wild profusion, and we are permitted the blessed privilege of plucking a few. At Shakespeare's birthplace there is a garden in which are blooming, it is said, all the flowers spoken of in Shakespeare's drama; but the guardians will not allow one even to stroll through it, and not a petal is to be had for love or money. They are not so strict at Ann Hathaway's cottage, and you can roam around to your heart's content, and dream of the lovers of the "golden time."

SAMUEL P. PUTNAM.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN CHINA.

MR. A. A. HERBERTE, who was formerly a member of the American mission at Shanghai, writes to the *Melbourne Herald* as under:—

"One feature of the Inland Mission, in contradistinction to the other missions, is the number of single women they employ. These they dress in Chinese costume, and send them out in the streets to 'preach' or visit from house to house wherever they can gain admittance. This is utterly opposed to all Chinese notions of etiquette, or even decency. Native ladies never perambulate the streets; they must go in sedan chairs, and attract as little attention as possible. There are other causes that give color to false impressions. In the first place, the ladies have no husbands—which the native cannot account for on moral grounds. They live in the house of a married man, and the native distrusts that. They are averse to foreign missionaries of any sort, but when, in addition, the missionaries trample on all their notions of propriety, this feeling becomes intensified. Again, if young women missionaries make babies and young children their special field of work (as it seems some of these young ladies did), then the gravest suspicions are aroused in the minds of all respectable Chinese.

"It is sad to think that these young ladies who have fallen before the fury of an excited mob might have escaped their terrible death had they used ordinary common prudence, for coming events had certainly cast their shadows before them, and it was evident that trouble was brewing for some time previous. It was plainly Mr. Stewart's duty to have sent the women and children into Foochow weeks before the riot commenced—even if his desire for a martyr's death prompted him to remain himself."

Voltaire.

It is fashionable to say that he was not profound. This is because he was not stupid. In the presence of absurdity he laughed, and was called irreverent. He thought God would not damn even a priest forever; this was regarded as blasphemy. He endeavored to prevent Christians from murdering each other, and did what he could to civilise the disciples of Christ. Had he founded a sect, obtained control of some country, and burned a few heretics at slow fires, he would have won the admiration, respect, and love of the Christian world. Had he only pretended to believe all the fables of antiquity, had he mumbled Latin prayers, counted beads, crossed himself, devoured now and then the flesh of God, and carried fagots to the feet of Philosophy in the name of Christ, he might have been in heaven this moment, enjoying the sight of the damned.—*Ingersoll*.

The Episcopal Church at Centerville, Ct., was an object of displeasure to Almighty God, so on the 30th ult. he hurled one of his thunderbolts at the belfry, and knocked it into smithereens. The world is governed by special providence, if we can trust the Bible and the preachers, but Providence is unselfishly regardless of its own.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE Executive meeting was held on Thursday, September 5, at the Club and Institute Buildings, Holborn, W.C.; the President in the chair. Those present were Messrs. C. Watts, S. P. Putnam, T. Parris, H. J. Stace, J. N. Zwibel, F. Wood, S. Jones, E. W. Quay, G. Ward, S. Hartmann, J. Samson, E. Bater, J. M. Wheeler, S. R. Thompson, T. Gorniot, J. Potter, A. B. Moss, W. Heaford.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed.

Cash statement received.

The President gave an outline of his Lecture Scheme, and informed the meeting that he had, upon his own responsibility, arranged for courses of lectures at Milton Hall and St. James's Hall, and recently at the Foresters' Hall. Mr. Charles Watts moved, and Mr. John Samson seconded: "That this Executive cordially approves the action of the President in the matter of his Lecture Scheme, and promises him not only a free hand, but the utmost possible support in his enterprise." Carried unanimously.

The forthcoming Conference at Brussels was discussed, and the President was asked to make the necessary arrangements for the Society to be represented.

The meeting then closed.

At the previous meeting of the Executive the following ladies and gentlemen were elected to serve on Committees for the year:—

Organisation Committee: Messrs. R. Forder, T. Gorniot, C. Watts, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, S. Hartmann, and G. Ward.

Benevolent Fund: R. Forder, Mrs. Standing, Thornton Smith, Annie Brown, Miss Robins, G. J. Warren, Victor Roger, S. Hartmann, G. Burton.

Committee for Examining Lecturers: Messrs. J. Samson, J. M. Wheeler, V. Roger.

Finance Committee: E. W. Quay and J. N. Zwibel.

E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary.*

THE LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

THE monthly meeting of the Federation was held at the Club and Institute Rooms on September 5; Miss E. M. Vance in the chair. Present: Messrs. G. Ward, F. Schaller, W. G. Renn, M. Loafer, C. Durrant, S. R. Thompson, J. M. Wheeler, and the Secretary.

The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the Annual Excursion was reported to have yielded a profit of £4 18s.

A grant was made to the Lambeth Branch, and the meeting adjourned.

The Secretary wishes to call the attention of branch secretaries to the fact that only two branches have yet forwarded their Annual Collection.

ANNIE BROWN, *Hon. Sec*

GLASGOW SECULARISM.

ONE of the best and most effective replies to the cry that Secularism is decaying in Glasgow was the large turn-out at the Soirée and Concert held by the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. on Sunday evening last, in commemoration of Mr. Bradlaugh's birthday. The hall at 110 Brunswick-street was practically filled with the members and their friends; indeed, a pleasing feature in this respect was the large number of ladies present.

After a nice cup of tea, the chairman, Mr. Gentles, gave a short address on the benefits of such social gatherings. This was followed by a cornet solo by Mr. W. Turnbull, and a song by Miss Taylor. Mr. W. Gilmour then addressed the gathering, dealing with some of the more stirring episodes of Mr. Bradlaugh's career. Another cornet solo was rendered, and songs were tastefully sung by Messrs. Allison, Bolesworth, Gilmour, and Miss King, which led to the delivery of a short, pithy speech by our old friend, Mr. Brown, who congratulated the Branch on the success of the gathering.

After awarding a hearty vote of thanks to the chairman, a most enjoyable evening was brought to a close by the audience singing "Auld Lang Syne." A word of praise is due to Mr. Welsh for his admirable accompaniments on the piano.

Unscrupulous men who try to save Christianity from the responsibility of having encouraged the "peculiar institution" of slavery insist on retaining the word "servants," as it is now found in the King James canonic translation; but all competent Greek scholars know that its Greek equivalent is *Douloi*, which means *slaves*.—*Blue Grass Blade.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNSPEAKABLE TEXTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—At one of Mr. C. Cohen's Sunday afternoon lectures in Stevenson-square, Manchester, two or three weeks ago, he observed that there were certain passages in the *Holy Bible* of such an immoral character that no one would be allowed to read them before a mixed public assembly. A Christian opponent, however—J. Howarth, 17 Thomas-street, City, Manchester—who, evidently, is but slightly acquainted (as is the case with so many other Christians) with the contents of this book, undertook to read any passages which Mr. Cohen might select. As chairman of this meeting, I considered it my duty to inform the chief constable of the facts of the case, and accordingly I enclosed a considerable number of very delicate texts, including 2 Kings xviii. 27 and its duplicate Isaiah xxxvi. 12, for sending which, on a post-card, to the Rev. Mr. Venum, you will no doubt remember, Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, was prosecuted; and I further intimated that, if Mr. Howarth should be allowed in presence of the police to read these passages in public (Stevenson-square), I should claim an equal right to be allowed to have them printed and circulated.

The chief constable, as usual, simply acknowledged the receipt of my letter. Mr. Howarth was informed by me of these proceedings, and when the time arrived (last Sunday, September 15, as agreed upon) for the ceremony of reading the said texts—the police were present—the said Mr. J. Howarth backed out of it by the flimsy excuse that he must read them from *our* platform. Of course, we would not allow him to retail his Biblical filth from a *Secular* platform—we have a little more self-respect than that—and thus render us, perhaps, indirectly responsible; but I informed him, in presence of the public and the police, that he must provide himself with a stand. This he apparently would not do, and so the matter ended in a fiasco.

The said Mr. J. Howarth had the hardihood to state that we actually had invited him to read the texts from *our* platform. This is an audacious falsehood, and is on a par with his courageous finking.

It surely is a pitiable spectacle when a Christian dare not read passages from his *Holy Bible* for fear of the police, and of a public prosecution for uttering obscene language!

E. G. TAYLOR.

A Branded Sheep.

A man, upon whom religion had left its mark ineffaceably, was observed at Ellis Island recently, says the *New York World*. He was one of a number of French immigrants brought before the commissioner for examination.

He was a tall, handsome young man; a skilled iron worker. Attraction was drawn to his personal appearance by the fact that he wore his thick hair brushed down over his forehead to his very eyebrows.

When he was asked by the commissioner the reason for this extraordinary coiffure, the French youth looked embarrassed for a moment, and then replied that he wore his hair in this manner to hide the mark on his brow.

"What is the mark?" was asked.

He tossed his hair back and exhibited a skilfully executed piece of tattooing, which, on examination, proved to be a text from the Bible, done in minute but perfect letters. It was in French, and read: "*Dieu est mon Berger, je n'aurais besoin de rein*"—"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

He stated that the tattooing was done at the request of a cranky aunt when he was a twelve-year-old boy.

A Sermon by the Rev. Mr. Literal.

Brethren and Sisters: I take for my text, on this beautiful Sunday morning, a few verses from the last chapter of Mark—"Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . And they that believe shall cast out devils . . . and do many wonderful works. And these signs shall follow them that believe. . . . They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

Now, brethren and sisters, let us show our belief by doing these things. You, sister Jones, will please take a respectable dose of strychnine upon your arrival home; you, brother Smith, will at once go to the gardens and take therefrom a poisonous snake, wrap it twice around thy neck, and behold it shall not harm thee. Brother Brown will jump into the middle of the river on his way home, and refuse all aid except that which shall be sent him by the Holy Ghost.

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.

FORESTERS' HALL (Clerkenwell-road, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Clinging to Christ."
 BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, annual general meeting.
 CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation."
 FINSBURY PARK BRANCH (91 Mildmay-park): Tuesday, at 8, adjourned meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Good Old Providence."
 CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "Come to Jesus."
 CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, a lecture.
 DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. James will lecture. Thursday, at 8, a lecture.
 EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, T. Thurlow, "The Religion of Jesus."
 FINSBURY PARK (near the band-stand): 11.15, George Standing, "Progress of Freethought"; 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Humanity."
 HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "From Darkness to Light." Thursday, at 8.30, a lecture.
 HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, debate between Messrs. Terry (C.E.S.) and Lucretius Keen, "Has Man a Soul?" 3.30, L. Keen, "The Hen and the Egg." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.
 ISLINGTON (Frebend-street, Fackington-street): 11.30, H. Courtney, "What is Secularism?"
 KILBURN (corner of Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.
 KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, a lecture.
 LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, a lecture.
 MILE END WASTE: 11.30, S. R. Thompson, "Slavery."
 OLD PRINCE PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Glory of Freethought."
 REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3, a lecture.
 VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, R. Forder will lecture. (Collection on behalf of London Secular Federation.)
 WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Prayer"; 7, "Adam, the Fall, and the Atonement." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, O. Cohen, "The French Revolution—Part II, The Dawn"; 7, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and its Value."
 CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.
 GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Plain Truth about the Bible"; 2.30, "The Doom of the Gods"; 6.30, "Is Christianity Consistent with Socialism?"
 LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Religion and the Emotions."
 MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Closed for decoration.
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, members' monthly meeting and election of new secretary; 7, debate between Messrs. M. Lynn and R. Mitchell, "Is Divine Providence a Myth?"
 PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, a meeting.
 SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' trip to Grimsby and Cleethorpes. Meet in front of Victoria Station at 8.30; train starts at 8.45.
 SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, a reading.
 STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecot-street): 6.30, Mr. Yates will read a paper on "Mohammed and Christ."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BIRMINGHAM: Monday, at 8, O. Cohen will lecture at the Five Ways; Wednesday, at 8, at the Bull Ring; Saturday, at 8, at Smithfield Market.
 DERBY (Market-place): 10.45, W. Dyson, "Christian Want of Evidence"; 6.30, "Antidotes to Superstition."
 NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, Carl Aarstad.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—September 29, Birmingham.

STANLEY JONES, 52 Davenant-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 29 m. Victoria Park, a. Finsbury Park, e. Kilburn. October 6, Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 29, Westminster. October 6, Camberwell; 20, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—October 6, Leicester; 13 and 20, Wood Green; 27, Foresters' Hall.

T. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, E.—Sept. 29, e. Edmonton.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

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

Miscellaneous Theological Works. 1s.

Complete Theological Works. (Including the *Age of Reason*.) Cloth, 2s. 6d.

The Rights of Man. Centenary edition. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; bound in cloth, 2s.

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

Colonel Ingersoll's Great 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. 2d.
 The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
 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.
 PAIN 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.
 IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
 LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
 GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
 WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
 WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? 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.

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

Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d., post free,

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

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.

"The book is very carefully compiled, the references are given with exactitude, and the work is calculated to be of the greatest use to the opponents of Christianity."—O. BRADLAUGH, in *National Reformer*.
 "The book is worth reading. It is fair, and, on the whole, correct."—*Weekly Times*.

"The book has a purpose, and is entitled to a fair hearing."—*Huddersfield Examiner*.

"The work should be scattered like autumn leaves."—*Ironclad Age* (U.S.A.).

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

Price Twopence,

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible.

By J. M. WHEELER.

A Demonstration of the Biblical Doctrine of Devils, suitable for circulation among Christians.

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, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 10s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

A PARTMENTS to let for a Single Gentleman. Terms moderate. Situated in North-west London. Near the "Brecknock Arms." Address, W. J., care of 28 Stonecutter-street, London E.C.

Just published, price 1d., by post 1½d.,

DISCREDITABLE TACTICS OF CHRISTIAN DISPUTANTS.

BY CHARLES WATTS.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

A CHAPTER FROM

Strauss's Original "Life of Jesus."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. W. FOOTE.

(A Most Thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel
Story by a Master Hand.)

Price Sixpence.

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

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 combi-
nation 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.

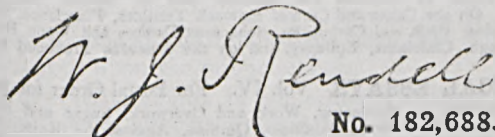
W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

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 "J. W. Rendell" being speciously and
plausibly introduced to deceive the public.

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK


No. 182,638.

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.

Read "THE TRUTH SEEKER."

MONTHLY, PRICE 1D.

Edited by JOHN GRANGE.

Of all Newsagents to order. Wholesale, Mr. Forder.

"The Clacton Tea-Table,"

TOWN HALL BUILDINGS, CLACTON-ON-SEA.

Specialité—1s. ORDINARY, 12.30 to 3.

Tea fresh for every customer. Furnished Apartments

Also "Brunswick Confectionery," Pier Avenue.

Proprietor, H. FOYSTER.

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.

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 Fantasias. 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 Price 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.
- 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.
- Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (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, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.
- London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

BRUNO CLOTH

FOR LADIES' WINTER DRESSES.

This Cloth has been our leading Winter Dress Material for four years. Thousands of ladies have tried it, and, so far as we know, everybody has been satisfied. One lady last winter sold thirty-five Dress Lengths among her friends.

IN ALL THE FASHIONABLE SHADES.
PLAIN COLORS.

Price—

9s. 6d. per Dress Length

till the end of September, as an advertisement.
After that date, 10s. 6d. per dress length.

LOT 11

CONTAINS

1 pair of All-Wool Blankets
1 pair of Bed Sheets.
1 Quilt.
1 Table-cloth.

In spite of wool having gone up very much in price, we sell at the old figure,

21/-

CARRIAGE PAID.

THINK OF THE COLD WEATHER AND THINK
OF LOT 11.

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

NOW READY, CHEAP EDITION OF

CHARLES BRADLAUGH:

A RECORD OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

By his Daughter, HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER. With an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, his Politics, and his Teachings, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

In 2 vols, demy 8vo, cloth, price 7s.

A. & H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 1 and 2 Took's-court, Cursitor-street, E.C.

MASONIC HALL, HIGH STREET, WOOD GREEN, N.
(Adjoining Nightingale Hotel.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, WOOD GREEN BRANCH.

A COURSE OF LECTURES

Under the auspices of the above, to be delivered on the following dates at 7.30 p.m.:

Sunday, October 6—Mr. G. W. FOOTE, "Life, Death, and After."

Sunday, October 13—Mr. TOUZEAU PARRIS, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless."

Sunday, October 20—Mr. TOUZEAU PARRIS, "Some Bible Symbols, their Origin and Meaning."

Sunday, October 27—Mr. R. FORDER, "Who is the Devil? What is the Devil? and Where is the Devil?"

ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY. To be obtained of John Wood, Secretary, 71 Gladstone-avenue, Wood Green.

Tickets, 6d.

Reserved Seats, 1s.

Course Tickets for Last Three Lectures, 1s. 6d. and 1s.

COALS! COALS! COALS!

MESSRS. FRANCIS E. WOOD & CO. are supplying Good Parlor Coal suitable for all purposes, at 16s. 6d. per Ton. Hot Kitchen Coal, 14s.

R. Forder says: "They are remarkably cheap and good."

W. J. Ramsey writes: "I am well satisfied with your Parlor Coal."

Miss Vance says: "They are excellent."

Orders to 206 York-road, King's Cross. Depôts all over London.

THE FREETHINKERS.—Ladies and Gentlemen requiring SUPERIOR OUTFITTERS at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artiste Tailor, 14 Great Castle-street, W. (three doors from Regent-street). Patronised by leading Freethinkers.

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 Leg, 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, Chilblains, 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, Poulitice, 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 (Tetter or Shingles), Erysipelas, Ulcer of the Stomach, Epidemic Influenza, Sciatica, 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. 6d., 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.

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