

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## ZOLA'S "ROME" AND THE PAPAL BAN.

ZOLA is undoubtedly a powerful writer. His admirers do him an injustice in comparing him with Balzac, one of the sovereigns of literature. Nevertheless, he occupies a high position as a novelist and a critic, and his exclusion from the French Academy can only be regarded as a cheap sacrifice to the proprieties. Certainly he has taken the fullest liberty as a man of letters in dealing with social phenomena, and some of his pages would look terrible in literal English. But, for all that, we believe there is little sincerity even in the English outcry against him. Mr. Vizetelly was imprisoned for publishing an English edition of some of Zola's novels, but when the novelist himself visited London he was absolutely lionised, and stamped with the seal of respectability by the Lord Mayor's hospitality at the Guildhall.

Zola's later works have been little concerned with the sexual vices of society. He has entered into the field of religion and sociology. In *Lourdes* he gave us a study of Catholic superstition in France at the end of the nineteenth century, and of its conflict with the teachings of a sane philosophy. In *Rome* he gives us a study of Catholicism at its imperial centre. The picture he draws of the Pope and the cardinals, and other members of the hierarchy, is not flattering. He lets us behold the seamy side of the great Catholic business; its ambitions, its intrigues, its hatreds, its avarice, and even its crimes. No wonder, therefore, his book is placed in the Index Expurgatorius, which is almost a catalogue of the books which an intelligent man ought to read. Zola's name is in the Index with those of Bacon, Descartes, Malebranche, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Leibnitz, Mill, Hugo, Balzac, and a host of other great writers. This is excellent company for any man to be in. And as the Pope cannot kill him, or imprison him, or starve him, or do him any sort of real injury, Zola will probably regard his literary excommunication as a remarkably good and cheap advertisement. What people are told they must not read is pretty sure to find a wide public, if it is only accessible. Had nothing been said against those apples, Mother Eve's curiosity would never have led to her expulsion from Paradise.

The cream of the joke is that the hero of *Rome*, the Abbé Pierre Froment, is introduced to us as visiting the Eternal City for the purpose of appealing to the Pope against his book being placed in the Index Expurgatorius. The young priest, who has been cured of his Catholic superstitions by visiting Lourdes, has taken to charitable work in Paris, and his mind is intensely occupied with the great social question. How is the misery of the poor to be remedied? Certainly not (he thinks) without religion. Theological dogmas must go, but belief in God and Immortality is indispensable. What if the Catholic Church could be brought to recognise this, to adjust itself to new developments of thought, and to lead the great movement towards the social redemption of the people? Full of this idea, he writes a book called "New Rome," advocating such a policy. But his book is denounced, it is under consideration by the proper authorities at Rome, and he goes there to appeal to the Pope in person against its condemnation.

The simple-minded though intellectual French priest finds the Pope nearly as inaccessible as the Mikado of Japan used to be in the old conservative days of that country. He is bandied about from pillar to post, and when at last he does meet the representative of God on

earth he is almost completely disillusioned. The ridiculous pomp of the cardinals, the general absence of spirituality, the imperviousness to all fresh ideas, force him in his own despite to see that he is chasing a chimera. Such a Rome could hardly head the new movement of the world, unless a miracle were wrought, and the age of miracles is past—or rather, as Pierre knows very well, it never existed. The one cardinal who is open, sincere, and courageous protests against yielding an iota to the modern spirit. This is how the Cardinal Boccanera addresses Pierre on the subject of his book:—

"Whosoever has given birth to scandal must stifle it and expiate it, even if he have to cut into his own flesh. The only duties of a priest are humility and obedience, the complete annihilation of self before the sovereign will of the Church. And, besides, why write at all? For there is already rebellion in expressing an opinion of one's own. It is always the temptation of the devil which puts a pen in an author's hand. Why, then, incur the risk of being for ever damned by yielding to the pride of intelligence and domination? Your book again, my dear son—your book is literature, literature!"

Pierre hears of the Pope's industry and personal asceticism, to which Zola does full justice, in a spirit of high impartiality. But when he goes to a religious celebration at St. Peter's, in honor of a big pilgrimage, especially from France, he sees the faithful, in a frenzy of zeal, stripping themselves of their valuables, as well as emptying their purses, and flinging them at the Pope's feet. Afterwards he overhears a cardinal reckoning that the contributions amount to three million francs. And this is what the speaker says is done with them:—

"Why, his Holiness is taking them to his room; or, at least, is having them carried there before him. Didn't you see two persons of his suite picking up everything and filling their pockets? And now his Holiness has shut himself up quite alone; and if you could see him you would find him counting and recounting his treasure with cheerful care, ranging the rolls of gold in good order, slipping the bank notes into envelopes in equal quantities, and then putting everything away in hiding-places which are only known to himself."

This was shocking enough to Pierre, but he is still more disgusted at the abject superstition he witnesses. The Pope is carried round on his chair, looking like an old idol, and receiving unbounded adoration as God's deputy. A vivid description is given of the scene which ensues on Leo's departure:—

"But a signal was given, and Leo XIII. made haste to quit the throne and take his place in the *cortège* in order to return to his apartments. The Swiss Guards energetically thrust back the throng, seeking to open a way through the three halls. But at sight of his Holiness's departure a lamentation arose and spread, as if Heaven's gates had suddenly closed again and shut out those who had not yet been able to approach. What a frightful disappointment—to have beheld the living manifestation of the Deity, and to see it disappear before gaining salvation by just touching it! So terrible became the scramble, so extraordinary the confusion, that the Swiss Guards were swept away. And ladies were seen to dart after the Pope, to drag themselves on all fours over the marble slabs and kiss his footprints and lap up the dust of his steps! The tall dark lady suddenly fell at the edge of the platform, raised a loud shriek, and fainted; and two gentlemen of the committee had to hold her so that she might not do herself an injury in the convulsions of the hysterical fit which had come upon her. Another, a plump blonde

was wildly, desperately kissing one of the golden arms of the throne chair, on which the old man's poor bony elbow had just rested. And others, on seeing her, came to dispute possession, seized both arms, gilding, and velvet, and pressed their mouths to woodwork or upholstery, their bodies meanwhile shaking with their sobs. Force had to be employed in order to drag them away.

Among the minor characters of the book is a Swiss relic-monger, Jules Laporte, who marries a rich Roman widow and becomes ennobled. The relics he sold to convents in France and Switzerland were manufactured by Jews out of mutton bones, yet they were signed and sealed by the most genuine authorities; and the affair was afterwards hushed up because three prelates were implicated.

Two very different characters are the French servant, Victorine, and an old Garibaldian, Count Orlando Prada. Victorine is very French in her scepticism and *bonhomie*. She does not like priests, and shrugs her shoulders at talk of a future life. "Why live again?" she asks. "When one's dead the best is to remain so and to sleep." She had ever done her duty in her humble station, and Pierre, tortured by his own doubts, envied that "well-balanced, healthy, ignorant creature." His last thought of this good Frenchwoman on leaving Rome was one of admiration for her "simple courage and great practical common sense." For him she personified the whole "unbelieving lowly class of France—those who no longer believe, and will believe never more." Count Orlando Prada is a splendid old man, paralysed in his lower limbs, but preserving a wonderful vitality in his trunk and brain. He tells Pierre that Mazzini dreamed of the renovation of Christianity, but Garibaldi knew better. The new religion of a humanitarian Christ, and the pacification of the world by the Gospel, was a wild hope, an impossible dream—as Pierre himself eventually perceives.

One day, in the sanctum of Cardinal Sarno, long a secretary of the Propaganda, Pierre looks at a map of the world. The Catholic parts were indicated by a special color, and how small they were in comparison with the rest! Gazing at this map, Pierre is lost in reflection. Certain figures occur to his mind:—

"Statistics showed that Rome's uncontested dominion was limited to 200 millions of Apostolic and Roman Catholics; whereas the schismatics of the East and the Reformation, if added together, already exceeded that number, and how small became the minority of the true believers when, besides the schismatics, one brought into line the 1,000 millions of infidels, who yet remained to be converted. The figures struck Pierre with a force which made him shudder. What! there were 5 million Jews, nearly 200 million Mahomedans, more than 700 million Brahmanists and Buddhists, without counting another 100 million pagans of divers creeds, the whole making 1,000 millions, and against these the Christians could marshal barely more than 400 millions, who were divided among themselves, ever in conflict, one half with Rome and the other half against her? Was it possible that in 1,800 years Christianity had not proved victorious over even one-third of mankind, and that Rome, the eternal and all-powerful, only counted a sixth part of the nations among her subjects? Only one soul saved out of every six—how fearful was the disproportion! However, the map spoke with brutal eloquence: the red-tinted empire of Rome was but a speck when compared with the yellow-hued empire of the other gods—the endless countries which the Propaganda still had to conquer. And the question arose: How many centuries must elapse before the promises of the Christ were realised, before the whole world were gained to Christianity?"

This train of thought is familiar to our readers, but it was novel to the French priest, and it gave a great shock to his remnant of faith. Another shock was experienced at the death-scene of Dario and Benedetta, the two characters who almost monopolise the love interest in *Rome*. Dario is killed by some poisoned figs, sent as a present by a vindictive priest to Cardinal Boccanera. Benedetta, under family pressure, had married a man she did not love, but refused to live with him. A divorce suit was pending, and she hoped to be united to the man of her choice. But when Dario is dying, she laments that she obeyed the Virgin instead of Nature, and in frantic grief she dies beside her lover.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## REAL AND NOMINAL CHRISTIANITY.

IRONY is a two-edged sword, a self-dangerous weapon in the hands of a novice. Gibbon, who "sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer," was a great master. Yet I have heard a Christian-evidence orator cite some of his most sarcastic sentences as testimony to the gospel. On the other hand, I have heard the passage in Josephus defended on the ground that, when he says "if it be lawful to call him a man," and "this was the Christian," he was using irony. In such cases we have only to know our author to be aware that, while Gibbon is frequently ironical, Josephus never is.

It sometimes happens that an argument adduced in all seriousness reads, in course of time, like mere irony. The younger Henry Dodwell, in his masterly *Christianity Not Founded on Argument*, only reproduced the reasonings of many schoolmen and divines. He saw that the anti-Rationalist arguments of Romanists really told for Deism. Similarly, Atheists may find, in the writings of theologians who argued against the Deists and against natural religion, as distinguished from revelation, many of their own strongest arguments. If the positions of many of the old defenders of orthodoxy were published for the first time to-day, they would be regarded as infidel sarcasms. The worst things I have been able to say in *The Christian Doctrine of Hell* against that belief are extracts from the writings of genuine believers.

Swift is our greatest satirist, yet his famous ironical *Argument to Prove that the Abolition of Christianity in England may, as things now stand, be attended with some Inconvenience*, is, from its mixture of the serious with the humorous, quite as powerful an argument against Christianity as for it. He says, for instance:—

"I hope no reader imagines me so weak to stand up in the defence of real Christianity, such as used in primitive times (if we may believe the authors of those ages) to have an influence upon men's beliefs and actions. To offer at the restoring of that would indeed be a wild project; it would be to dig up foundations; to destroy at one blow all the wit and half the learning of the kingdom; to break the entire frame and constitution of things; to ruin trade, extinguish arts and sciences, with the professors of them; in short, to turn our courts, exchanges, and shops into deserts; and would be full as absurd as the proposal of Horace, when he advises the Romans, all in a body, to leave their city, and seek a new seat in some remote part of the world, by way of a cure for the corruption of their manners."

Here the Dean's love of sarcasm has led him to sober truth. The late Archbishop Magee admitted as much when he said that on the principles of the Sermon of the Mount the State could not endure for a week.

Dean Swift proceeded to remark:—

"Therefore, I think this caution was in itself altogether unnecessary (which I have inserted only to prevent all possibility of cavilling), since every candid reader will easily understand my discourse to be intended only in defence of nominal Christianity, the other having been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent as utterly inconsistent with our present schemes of wealth and power."

Yet it is these very schemes of wealth and power which have achieved the triumphs of civilization. If people had really believed that the world was soon coming to an end; if they had taken no thought for the morrow; if they were ready to cut off their right hands, or pluck out their eyes, if they offended; the world would have relapsed into barbarism. But, as Swift says, real Christianity has been for some time wholly laid aside by general consent. Those who profess and call themselves Christians never think of acting up to the words of their God and Savior. They are nominal Christians, and should a real one appear they would run him into a prison or a lunatic asylum.

Real Christianity—that is to say, the doctrine of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament—is, whatever Protestant friends may think, of a decidedly monkish character. It takes no heed of the family, but exhorts to the resignation of father, mother, wife, children, houses, and lands for the sake of religion, and with the expectation of the speedy end of the world. It regarded celibacy as a higher state than marriage, and Jesus himself left no example either as father or citizen. The Gospel, as Strauss pointed out, contains no word in favor of pacific political

virtue, of patriotism, or the efficient discharge of civic obligations. The sentence, "Give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," is but an evasion. The ethics of the Sermon of the Mount, where not common-place, are Anarchist and subversive of all law. Swift's description, that it would turn our courts, exchanges, and shops into deserts, is scarcely an exaggeration. But who thinks of following Christ's injunctions? Certainly not his so-called followers. Emerson asked: "Where in all Christendom is the Christian?" And echo answers: "Where?"

What we have to do with is nominal Christianity. With the possible exception of Count Tolstoi, who is regarded as a crank and heterodox Christian, where in all Christendom is the Christian who will give to him that asketh, and when robbed of his coat will freely offer his cloak also? Men profess and call themselves Christians who own no part of the faith of Jesus, and who cut it down remorselessly to suit their own conventions. It has ever been the opprobrium of the pious that they give their lip-homage to God, and their real service to the world, the flesh, and the devil. If people would be honest with themselves, they would acknowledge, what their acts proclaim, that they regard Christianity as a failure. But they palter with their convictions, and, while openly disowning the plainest teaching of Christ, yet call themselves Christians. Jesus said, "Swear not at all." The Christian judge desires the Christian witness to swear. Jesus said, "Resist not evil," and we employ army, navy, and police that we may resist to the uttermost. Jesus exhorted his followers to pray in secret, and they employ thousands of priests to pray in public. He told them to sell all and give to the poor, and they accumulate as much as possible. In short, they treat Jesus as they would one insane. They assent to and endorse everything he utters, but they never intend to obey him. Christian morality is allowed to be of superfine gloss, but it will neither wash nor wear. Its main purpose appears to be to engender hypocrites and preach to other people.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE REFORMATION: ITS VALUE AND ITS DEFECTS.

WHAT is termed the Protestant Reformation forms an important landmark in the history of the progress of human thought. While we are not prepared to fully endorse Thomas Carlyle's words, "That the Reformation was a return to Truth and Reality, in opposition to Falsehood and Semblance," we readily grant that it was a more advanced step towards greater mental freedom than had previously obtained. The expectations, however, that were formed of its power to revolutionize religious thought throughout the world were never realized, as many Protestants allege. The force which dealt a severe blow at the supremacy of Roman Catholicism soon became exhausted, and what might have been, under different conditions, a practical reformation was reduced to a mere change of policy, which, in some respects, was no improvement at all. The mark to which the progressive tide reached in the sixteenth century is recorded in history as plainly as the action of the ever-moving sea is imprinted upon the rocks. As Buckle remarks, after a hundred and fifty years of religious wars, the countries in which they raged settled down into the various creeds, "which, in the essential point, have never since been permanently altered." For more than two hundred years "all the great Catholic countries remained Catholic, all the great Protestant ones remained Protestant." He points out the common error "of ascribing all modern enlightenment to the influence of Protestantism," reminding his readers of "the important fact that, until the enlightenment had begun, Protestantism was never required" (vol. i., pp. 240-1).

It appears to us that the Reformation was the result of the expansion of the mind of man, who could no longer endure the unchanging creeds of the Middle Ages, with their demand of unqualified submission of the intellect to their manifold absurdities. It must be remembered that by the revival of learning at the Renaissance—and especially by the invention of printing—a great impetus and new momentum were imparted to the human mind. The limits beyond which the Roman Church had for centuries prohibited any advance, on pain of the axe, the

rack, the dungeon, and the stake, were now overstepped by the aspiring, emancipated intellect. Those old landmarks of the limits of former inquiry were justly despised, as the memorials of barbarian ignorance; and an appeal was made from the dogmas of sacerdotal authority to human nature, human science, and human thought. The intellect again asserted its supremacy, as it had in former times in Greece and Rome. A bright and radiant future was before it; it stood, as it were, upon an elevation from which it could take a wide and an enlightened survey of the complicated interests of life. The master-spirits of the age soon proclaimed their deliverance from an irrational and degrading bondage; they invited others to at once emancipate themselves from the degrading and mind-destroying superstitions of the theology of the Roman Church, and to assert their mental dignity and personal freedom. The Reformation was the necessary outcome of the Renaissance, or Revival of Learning. It really meant a revolt from Rome, a rebellion against sacerdotalism, and the assertion before the world of the grand maxim that thought is free. As we shall presently see, this maxim was not consistently acted upon; that, however, does not alter the fact that the principle was acknowledged. The fault was in its non-application.

Lord Shaftesbury pronounced the Reformation to be a "holy movement inspired by God." If this were so, God selected strange and very questionable characters to initiate the movement. Luther was a believer in polygamy, a determined opponent of science, and a bitter persecutor of those who did not share his views. Earl Russell writes: "The fault of Luther was that, in the very beginning of this mighty contest [the Reformation], he attempted to erect a new Church, to cover it with something like infallibility, and to defend it by persecution" (*History of the Christian Religion*, p. 188). Hallam says: "We must not be misled by the idea that Luther contended for freedom of inquiry and boundless privilege of individual judgment." Calvin, another of the Protestant reformers, was a bigot of the severest type. He is thus described by Earl Russell in his work already referred to (p. 242): "In one character or the other he bent to his will the religious observances, the dress, the mode of arranging the hair, the number of dishes at feasts, the regulations for weddings, the jests and idle talk, the belief and the behavior of all the citizens of Geneva. The wife of the captain of the town, who was found guilty of dancing at a wedding, was sent to the common prison with prostitutes and thieves. The gaols were occupied to such an extent that in March, 1545, the gaoler reported that the prisons were full and could hold no more. In the four years from 1542 to 1546 fifty-eight persons in that small community were sentenced to death, and seventy-six to exile. The imaginary offence of witchcraft was subjected to capital punishment, and in three months thirty-four miserable beings were executed for that unreal crime. Calvin's health was bad, his temper was irritable; he punished heterodoxy, he punished irreligion, he punished adultery with death, and dancing with imprisonment. But of all his acts of cruelty the execution of Servetus was the most inhuman."

Knox, in his famous prayer, asked God to "send the bloodthirsty Catholics down to hell"; and Henry VIII. was a hypocrite, a plunderer, and a murderer. We submit that these men were not calculated to reform the world; their usefulness was impaired by their theological proclivities and the narrow and bigoted views they entertained upon religious questions. True reformation has been secured through the inculcation of secular philosophy, and the application of the teachings of modern science; and to both of these progressive agencies the leaders of the Reformation were opposed. Dr. Andrew White, in his *Warfare of Science*, shows how both Luther and Melancthon were antagonistic to the Copernican discoveries in astronomy. "Justice," says he, "compels me to say that the founders of Protestantism were no less zealous [than the Catholics] against the new scientific doctrine" (p. 30).

Of course, the Reformation had its advantages, but it was the secular, not the religious, spirit of the movement that made it valuable. Whatever tends to lessen superstition and to encourage freedom of thought is a boon to the human race. Now, the Reformation, being a heretical movement, did this; it was a protest against priestly dictation, and a vindication, in theory at least, of the right of individual thought and action; it favored the separation of morals and politics from theology, and it brought

scepticism face to face with ecclesiastical authority, and this was followed by the breaking up of the compact power of the Church. The scepticism of the Reformation caused the recognition of the rights of free speech, the liberty of the press, the expansion of our educational system, and, above all, it secured the right to dissent from the national religion. As Thomas Henry Buckle puts it: "The increase of scepticism stimulated curiosity, and the diffusion of education supplied the means of gratifying it. Hence we find that one of the leading characteristics of the eighteenth century, and one which pre-eminently distinguished it from all that preceded, was a craving after knowledge on the part of those classes from whom knowledge had hitherto been shut out." Buckle then enumerates many advantages which were derived from the sceptical influences which followed the epoch of the Reformation (vol. i., pp. 392-5). These advantages were: The establishment of schools for the general masses; newspapers and circulating libraries; the extension of the art of printing to the country towns; the popularizing of the sciences; the formation of reading clubs and debating societies; and these were "followed by a still bolder innovation, for in 1769 there was held the first public meeting ever assembled in England—the first in which it was attempted to enlighten Englishmen respecting their political rights." Thus the principal advantages arising from the Reformation were secular in character. The Freethought ball was set rolling, and, like a snowball, it has gathered as it has gone along, until now its dimensions are so great that the Church itself cannot resist its power.

In our estimation, one of the greatest results of the Reformation was the split up of the Christian body into many sects. These divisions were favorable to the demands of Freethought, inasmuch as they lessened the strength which cohesion secures. When certain persons fall out, it is said, honest men get their due. The various sects, having to fight for their own rights, have less time and less inclination to seek to deprive others of theirs. Not only has the National Protestant Church to encounter the antagonism of the many dissenting sects, but it has to deal with divisions in its own fold. There are members of the "Low Church," who are intolerant of all phases of doubt; there are members of the "Broad Church," upon whom their religion sits but lightly; and there are the members of the "High Church," who dislike all science, and who pander to masculine emotion and feminine weakness. Between the latter Protestants and Roman Catholics but little difference exists. They are termed Ritualists, and these have been thus humorously described:—

What is a Ritualist? Ah! there we find  
A question, but no answer to our mind.  
He is no Papist; to the creed and name  
Of Anglican divine he puts his claim.  
And yet no Protestant; his acts deny  
The faith to which such name we should apply.  
"To be or not to be?" he seems to ask  
(And finds the problem no easy task);  
Whether 'tis better to espouse the cause  
Of Rome, or bow to orthodoxy's laws.  
Perplexed, he gazes where a gulf divides  
Two different and antagonistic sides.  
Firm to the one his principles prevail,  
His wishes follow the opposing scale;  
He'd be a Papist, but the mighty force  
Of duty stern forbids so bold a course;  
In short, between the two he makes his way  
Like the proverbial ass amid the hay.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

The huge Papal system, built on fraud, plunder, and oppression, cemented with the blood of thinkers and discoverers, maintained in awe-inspiring grandeur by the sweat of enslaved toilers, strove to subdue the nations of the earth. The Pope ruled Europe; the Curia increased in affluence, and became more despotic in proportion to the growth of cringing pietism and the subversion of the intellect. One idea—aggrandizement—has always been the motor, the characteristic of the Roman Church.—*Geoffrey Mortimer, in "The Free Review."*

Many innocent and harmless people have so much intellectual cowardice that they dare not reason about those things which they are directed by their priests to believe.—*Darwin.*

## KIPLING'S LITTLE TRACT.

RUDYARD KIPLING has written some extremely smart little stories. Also some very silly ones. He is, of course, proudest of the most puerile of his performances. Who ever knew an author who was not? Or, at least, affected to be. There is a well-known instance—"but that is another story." From which it will be seen that I have been re-reading the *Plain Tales from the Hills*, and, besides having caught for the moment the "snappy, jerky, pyrotechnic style" of which James Payn speaks with so much distaste, have been weighing up once more the varying merit of that popular collection of Anglo-Indian sketches.

Mr. Kipling was christened, as the public have been told, after the very pretty Moorland lake near Leek, which, by the way, I have no doubt is looking its best during the present summer season. That lake has peculiarly pleasant associations for many of the older Freethinkers of North Staffordshire and Cheshire, who, years ago, used to picnic in its picturesque vicinity. At that time Rudyard Kipling was unknown, and none of us, I am sure, had any anticipation that there would arise an author named after our favorite resort who would write such a gratuitously offensive little story as *The Conversion of Aurelian McGoggins*.

He says: "This is not a tale exactly. It is a tract, and I am immensely proud of it. Making a tract is a feat." Well, perhaps this a feat in Mr. Kipling's estimation, but, in the opinion of most people, other than bigoted Christian believers, the story is rather a poor achievement to be proud of.

The author, you may remember, describes a young Civil servant who is sent out by the Government to an Indian district, and who, in the course of a conversion in one of the clubs, is suddenly, to the theatrical accompaniment of lightning, seized with *aphasia*—a temporary paralysis of speech and memory. This is an idea which a really clever story-teller like Grant Allen would have worked out with artistic effect. But Rudyard Kipling must make it into a tract. So he describes the official as a clever, a brilliantly clever, young fellow, whose cleverness works the wrong way. This is in consequence of his having "read some books written by a man called Comte, I think, and a man called Spencer," and he goes out to India with a rarefied religion over and above his work.

"It was not much of a creed," says Kipling; "it only proved that men had no souls, and there was no God and no hereafter, and that you must worry along somehow for the good of Humanity." If Aurelian "had kept his creed with the capital letters, and the endings in 'isms,' to himself, no one would have cared"; but it seems that he committed the unpardonable sin of expressing his views with the same freedom that other people express theirs. He is nicknamed "Blastogerm," because he said he came from a family of the name somewhere in the prehistoric ages!

The *aphasia* comes on in a very startling fashion. The roar of the long-desired rains breaking over the river is heard in the club. One of the members exclaimed: "Thank God!" Aurelian inquires: "Why? It is only the result of perfectly natural causes—atmospheric phenomena of the simplest kind. Why should you, therefore, return thanks to a being who never did exist, who is only a figment?" etc. There is a flash of lightning; he is struck dumb, and carried away a blighted idiot. The doctor pronounces it a case of *aphasia*, brought on by overwork. The young man recovers after a time, but we learn that the stroke "cowed" him, gave him a "wholesome feeling of mistrust," and from that time it is observed that, while "he lays down the law on things human, he does not seem to know as much as he used to about things divine," though, of course, if the tract has a moral, he ought to know more.

Obviously, it would be absurd to treat this imaginative trifle seriously, even though Mr. Kipling is immensely proud of it, and thinks it a tract, and evidently wrote it with a purpose which was not to burlesque the tractarian efforts of Christian Evidence scribes.

But, in laying the book aside, I have just asked myself, as I suppose other Freethinkers who have read the tale have asked before, Why should the Blastogerm have "kept his creed to himself"? Do Christians keep theirs? Why should he not, on suitable occasions and in suitable terms, express his opinions, as people with religious faith never hesitate to give utterance to theirs? In the incident

related, if one member of the club may openly give thanks to a supposed Deity, even in a colloquial exclamation, why should not another member be at liberty to express his doubts whether any special thanks are due in that direction, or whether, indeed, there is any such being to be thanked?

Kipling says: "Every man is entitled to his own religious opinions, but no man has a right to thrust them down other men's throats." Quite so; that may be the orthodox theory, but it is not, and never has been, the orthodox practice. What can be more uninvited and intrusive than the Christian missions to the natives of India? Look at the pertinacity and ferocity with which Christians in all ages, when they have had the power, have thrust their religious opinions down other men's throats. That is the lesson of history, and present observation shows that, in will, they are equal to not less coercive cruelty to-day. What Kipling means, of course, is: "Every man is entitled to his own religious opinions, except he dissent from mine."

And, then, why was this young man's creed "not much of a creed"? Is not the service of humanity a sufficiently comprehensive creed? Is it worth while "worrying" about anything more? If quantity in theology is the thing to be desired—and some people talk as if they must believe by the bushful in order to be happy—then is not the faith of the heathens in a host of deities to be preferred to a mere belief in one? If Kipling had lived a few centuries ago, his complaint against the sceptics of the time would have been equally plaintive: "No witches, no fairies, no demons, no ghosts to believe in. That is not much of a creed."

Again, the conclusion of his story is quite too glaringly improbable. Is it likely that Aurelian—brilliantly clever, and a student of Comte and Herbert Spencer—would have been "cowed" into silence about things divine by a seizure which the doctor and his own common sense assured him was merely the result of long-continued overwork?

*The Light that Failed* is a poor enough story, but this tract that fails shows that Rudyard Kipling shines far better as a "Tommy Atkins" balladist than as a soldier of Christ.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### INGERSOLL ON THE JEWS.

WHEN I was a child I was taught that the Jews were an exceedingly hard-hearted and cruel people, and that they were so destitute of the finer feelings that they had a little while before that time crucified the only perfect man who had appeared upon the earth; that this man was also perfect God, and that the Jews had really stained their hands with the blood of the Infinite.

When I got somewhat older I found that nearly all of the people had been guilty of substantially the same crime—that is, that they had destroyed the progressive and the thoughtful; that the chief priests of all people had incited the mob, to the end that heretics—that is to say, philosophers; that is to say, men who knew that the chief priests were hypocrites—might be destroyed.

I also found that Christians had committed more of these crimes than all the religionists put together.

I also became acquainted with a large number of Jewish people; and I found them like other people, except that, as a rule, they were more industrious, more temperate, had fewer vagrants among them, no beggars, very few criminals; and, in addition to all this, I found that they were intelligent, kind to their wives and children, and that, as a rule, they kept their contracts and paid their debts.

The prejudice was created almost entirely by religious, or rather irreligious, instruction. All children in Christian countries are taught that all the Jews are to be eternally damned who die in the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that it is not enough to believe in the inspiration of the Old Testament, not enough to obey the Ten Commandments, not enough to believe the miracles performed in the days of the prophets, but that every Jew must accept the New Testament and must be a believer in Christianity—that is to say, he must be regenerated—or he will simply be eternal kindling wood.

The Church has taught, and still teaches, that every Jew is an outcast; that he is a wandering witness in favor

of "the glad tidings of great joy"; that Jehovah is seeing to it that the Jews shall not exist as a nation—that they shall have no abiding place, but that they shall remain scattered, to the end that the inspiration of the Bible may be substantiated.

Dr. John Hall, of this city, a few years ago, when the Jewish people were being persecuted in Russia, took the ground that it was all fulfillments of prophecy, and that whenever a Jewish maiden was stabbed to death God put a tongue in every wound for the purpose of declaring the truth of the Old Testament.

Just as long as Christians take these positions, of course they will do what they can to assist in the fulfilment of what they call prophecy; and they will do their utmost to keep the Jewish people in a state of exile, and then point to the fact as one of the cornerstones of Christianity.

My opinion is that in the early days of Christianity all sensible Jews were witnesses against the faith, and in this way excited the eternal hostility of the orthodox. Every sensible Jew knew that no miracles had been performed in Jerusalem. They all knew that the sun had not been darkened, that the graves had not given up their dead, that the veil of the temple had not been rent in twain—and they told what they knew. They were then denounced as the most infamous of human beings, and this hatred has pursued them from that day to this.

There is no chapter in history as infamous, as bloody, as cruel, as relentless, as the chapter in which is told the manner in which Christians—those who love their enemies—have treated the Jewish people. The story is enough to bring the blush of shame to the cheek, and words of indignation to the lips, of every honest man.

Nothing can be more unjust than to generalize about nationalities, and to speak of a race as worthless or vicious simply because you have met an individual who treated you unjustly. There are good people and bad people in all races, and the individual is not responsible for the crimes of the nation, nor the nation responsible for the actions of the few. Good and honest men are found in every faith, and they are not honest or dishonest because they are Jews or Gentiles, but for entirely different reasons.

Some of the best people whom I have ever known are Jews, and some of the worst whom I have known are Christians. The Christians are not bad simply because they are Christians, neither are the Jews good because they are Jews. A man is far above these badges of faith and of race. Good Jews are precisely the same as good Christians, and bad Christians are wonderfully like bad Jews.

Personally, I have either no prejudices about religion, or I have equal prejudice against all religions. The consequence is that I judge of people, not by their creeds, not by their rites, not by their mummeries, but by their actions.

In the first place, at the bottom of this prejudice lies the coiled serpent of superstition. In other words, it is a religious question. It seems impossible for the people of one religion to like the people believing in another religion. They have different gods, different heavens, and a great variety of hells. For the follower of one god to treat the follower of another god decently is a kind of treason. In order to be really true to his god, each follower must not only hate all other gods, but the followers of all other gods.

—American Israelite.

### The Gospel of John.

I know no document in existence whose internal evidence so strongly condemns its character as a truthful narrative as the Gospel by John. It "records" two stupendous miracles attributed to Christ, which, if he really performed them, must have been witnessed by the other three evangelists, neither of whom makes any allusion to them in his account of Christ's doings. I refer to the miracle at Cana of Galilee, where water was converted into wine, in the presence of many people; and to the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead at Bethany. The Church people think more of the spurious Gospel of John than any of the rest, and that for obvious reasons.

The Catholic gets all the proof he wants for his cardinal doctrine of transubstantiation; and the Protestant gets all he wants for the divinity of Christ, in the affirmation of the first three verses of the new gospel, and much more besides.

B.

## ACID DROPS.

GENERAL BOOTH took up the cause of the Armenians at the finish. Salvationists all over the world were ordered to devote Sunday, August 30, to praying to God that he would deliver the Armenians from their oppressors. The result was another frightful massacre of these unfortunate people in Constantinople. The Armenians won't want any more assistance from General Booth.

Julian Hawthorne, the novelist, is acting as travelling correspondent for a New York paper, and this is what he says of the Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States: "Mr. Bryan is a religious man, and he believes that his wonderful success is only indirectly the result of his own or other men's efforts—it was a movement of the Divine will." A man who thinks like that, at the end of the nineteenth century, is cracked. We hope the Americans will get a sane President, anyhow. We say this without any reference to politics. That is *their* business, but the sanity of the head of a great nation is *everybody's* business.

The Post Office is a State institution, and should therefore be entirely secular. But it seems that the higher officials, being Christians themselves, allow soul-savers and gospel-grinders the run of the great establishment at St. Martin's-le-Grand. These black gentry distribute tracts and enter into conversation with the employees. If anyone ventures to resent their impertinence, or to express dissent from their religious views, they threaten to report him for insolent behavior. Life at the Post Office is made unbearable for men of intelligence and self-respect. Some of the other offices are nearly as bad. We have just heard of a case in which an employee was suspended because he had the audacity to differ from his overseer as to the inspiration and value of the Bible. It is gross impudence on the part of Government servants to use their position to proselytise and persecute their subordinates. The subordination only applies to the work of the Post Office; beyond that all have the same equal rights of citizenship.

George Edward Emmet, a retired solicitor, of Southport, being on a visit to Whitby, attended "divine service" at St. Hilda's church. While standing up and joining in the service he suddenly fainted, became unconscious, and died almost immediately. Of course there is no moral in such an incident in a church; but what a hubbub there would be if it happened in a Secular hall! The religious papers would detect the hand of God.

According to the *Crescent*, a Baptist clergyman in Liverpool was making a great brag about his intended journey to the Holy Land. "When I get there," he said, "I will stand where Moses stood, and read the Ten Commandments from the top of Mount Sinai." "You had better stay at home and keep them," replied a Mohammedan listener.

Mr. Arthur G. Bristow, who has lately returned from a sojourn in Assam, India, says that during his stay there he did not know of a genuine conversion made by English or American missionaries. He says there are apparent conversions; but the natives are well satisfied with their own religion, which is admirably adapted to their peculiar needs, and there is no good reason why they should abandon it for Christianity. Missionaries have lived among them for years, and the inhabitants have learned how to handle them for their own advantage. Some apparently become converted; but this is for a purpose. They want Christians to make them presents of money, food, or clothing, and pretend conversion to gain their ends.

Asked if he considered the work of the missionaries productive of desired results, Mr. Bristow replied: "No. About all the missionaries achieve is a pleasant time for themselves. They do but little work, and live easily and comfortably upon the funds sent from home. Some are in dead earnest, and imagine great results; but they are the ones the natives 'work' most successfully by sham conversions, rewarded with material favors. Those few who do adopt the new faith part with their native honesty and become rascals."

From the *Straits Times*, of Singapore, it appears that the Methodist missionaries solicited money from the Chinese to build a school, and made a compact that no religious teaching whatever should be given in the school, which should be purely secular. The Chinese subscribed no less than \$4,000, and sent their children there, to find that religious teaching was given; and, moreover, the Rev. C. C. Kelso boasted, in his report to America, that the leading boys are professed Christians. The Chinese thereupon denounced the man of God, and about sixty boys have been withdrawn from the Anglo-Chinese school. It is further alleged that unjust favoritism was displayed towards those children who learnt the Bible and spoke as Christians.

A correspondent of the *Straits Times* observes:—"This mission owes its very existence to the generosity of the Chinese. It has been most bountifully assisted by them, and even at this moment a large sum of money is being subscribed for rebuilding 'Bellevue.' In the face of this, it might be thought that the often-expressed wishes of the Chinese, that the religious views of their children should not be interfered with, would be attended to. They do not ask much. All they wish is that the boys should not be approached on the subject of religion until they have reached an age when they may reasonably be expected to understand the matter, and then decide for themselves what course they shall pursue." The rascally missionaries know this will never do. They must kidnap the children before they have learnt to reason and compare. Everything is considered allowable in the soul-saving business. The Chinese of Singapore, however, have had a lesson, the influence of which will last for a generation.

The Jesuitical principle of the Methodists in Singapore is fairly acknowledged by the Rev. D. D. Moore, who is cited in the *Straits Times* (July 25) as saying: "Nowhere so much as in the East is it necessary for the Christian worker to combine the qualities of the dove and the serpent. First innocence, then subtlety, must be the order of his work." We should say that missionary innocence has long been lost in their subtlety, or perhaps it would be safe to say they are about as wise as doves and as harmless as serpents.

We insert a long letter from Father Ignatius in reply to our very brief comment upon his attempt to hound out Dean Fremantle from his position. It will be interesting to note if anything comes of "the serious attention" of the Archbishop of York. We do not expect to hear of the Dean's trial for heresy, despite the indignant letters of Father Ignatius, with whom we can sympathise. There are too many taking the money of the Church while undermining its fundamental teachings.

Lies about Thomas Paine have been pretty numerous, but the Rev. C. Bridgman, of Washington, has made an attempt to outdo all previous efforts. Here is the result: "Tom Paine thought he had 'cut down every tree in Paradise.' He is dead, and in his dying confession said: 'Until this moment I have believed there was neither a God nor a hell; now I know and feel there are both, and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the Almighty.'" The Rev. C. Bridgman takes the cake, though it is just possible that he is indebted to some predecessor in the easy clerical art of lying against infidels.

The *Vegetarian* has summarily closed a discussion on "The Bible and Vegetarianism," after inserting a long letter from Major Richardson, a leader in the Danielite order, who, of course, argues that the Bible is in favor of vegetarian diet, despite the sacrifices of the Old Testament and the example of Jesus in the New.

The *Good Templars' Watchword* says that a three-storey gin palace is to be erected on Church property at Hendon, which was required for enlarging and beautifying the churchyard adjoining.

The same paper gives the following item: "A Congo native, who has been taught to read and write, has sent the following letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury: 'Great and good chief of the tribe of Christ, greeting,—The humblest of your servants kisses the hem of your garments, and begs you to send to his fellow servants your good gospel and less rum.—In the bonds of Christ, UGALIA.'"

At Onset, Mass., at a test *séance* given by Mrs. J. Hatch, a well-known medium, a complete *exposé* of an alleged materialization of the spirit of a young woman was accomplished by a Miss Hagerstrom, who seized the "spirit" in her arms, tearing off its wig and draperies, and leaving the very slightly-robed body of the medium herself.

"Catholicus Cambrensis," who writes in the *Church Times* on "Morality and Dissent in South Wales," affirms that the Rhondda Valley, which is one of the very strongholds of dissent in South Wales and counts its chapels by the hundreds, is, according to official returns, one of the very worst districts in the United Kingdom for offences against morality.

The *British Weekly* offered prizes for papers on the question, "Is Church Attendance Declining?" It says: "Accounts vary considerably, some taking the decline as an undoubted fact, and some earnestly denying it. On the whole, the prevailing opinion seems to be that matters are at a standstill." Of course this opinion is that of religious readers of this religious weekly, which adds: "Most of our correspondents say that the services of the Salvation Army are now not well attended." As to Scotland—godly Scotland—"there is a general consensus of opinion that

attendance both in town and country is more irregular." The *British Weekly* gives the prize to the Rev. J. P. Perkins, of Worthing, who thinks the Church is not losing ground, though he fears seaside visitors do not attend public worship as much as they used to do, and "the once-a-day system has made alarming advance in the last fifteen years."

Dr. James H. Rigg, the eminent and veteran Methodist, does not seem to take a very hopeful view of the future of his own Church. In a series of articles he is contributing to the *New York Christian Advocate*, he describes the revival of the Church of England during the last fifty years, and adds that "the clergy are thus masters of the situation in most parts of the country, and the Methodists have a hard struggle to hold their own, and are often unable to do so." Again, he says: "In 1820 Nonconformist chapels were crowded; churches were empty. To-day the chapels are not often crowded; the churches are seldom empty, not seldom crowded." Dr. Rigg further declares that the Church of England is "more than equal, taking together all the sources and channels of influence, to all the other religious bodies united."

The *Methodist Times* raves against Dr. Rigg for writing in this fashion. In a lucid interval, however, it makes the following admission: "As a matter of fact, recent newspaper statistics have proved that the immense majority of the people of England are outside all Churches, and are quite as accessible to us as to Anglicanism." In plain language this means: "Don't make faces at us; we are all going to the Devil together."

The Rev. T. H. Baylis, pastor of the Baptist church in New Rochelle, N.Y., was found in company with a female member of his own congregation in his own house by his wife, who had just unexpectedly returned from New York, when he shouted to her, "If you raise an alarm, I'll kill you," at which she ran from the house, he following her, to the police headquarters, where she asked for protection.

Rev. J. T. Gibbons, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Austin, Texas, was shot three times and instantly killed by Percy Cook, one of his parishioners, at the latter's residence. For some time past the clergyman had been quite intimate with Mrs. Cook; and on the previous day the guilty pair had made an engagement to meet each other at the home of the latter, which her husband having overheard, he waited for the appearance of the Rev. Mr. Gibbons, when the tragedy occurred.

The Rev. Lemuel Penrod is a well-known Kentucky preacher, who is now in jail for cutting a young man's throat. His excuse is that he was drunk at the time.

The Rev. G. E. Scott, a married man of God, eloped from Waterloo, Iowa, with Daisy Dorlan, a girl just over the age of fifteen. They were arrested at Logansport, where they passed as man and wife. As his real wife refuses to prosecute, and Daisy is just over "the age of consent" in Iowa, the man of God will have no punishment unless Daisy's father or brothers take the law and the man of God into their own hands.

An exhorter known as the Boy Preacher of Fall Leaf is in jail in Kansas on what is described as "an ugly charge." Ministerial conduct, probably.

Colonel James F. Lilly, one of the best known men in the vicinity of Thomasville, Ga., was shot and had his throat cut by a religious lunatic named Rushin as he was conducting the Sunday-school services.

The New York courts have finally got hold of the Rev. Dr. Potter, the elusive Baptist parson who has been wanted for examination in supplementary proceedings growing out of a judgment for debt. Last week he paid \$25 for contempt of court.

Bishop Newman, of San Francisco, has instructed all his clergy to preach in favor of the gold standard before the Presidential Elections. With far more astuteness, Cardinal Gibbons, when asked his views on the currency question, replied that there was such a diversity of opinion held by experts that he would not venture to express an opinion.

Buckland-in-the-Moor, a secluded Dartmoor village, has no pub, no parson, no policeman, and no pauper. The squire and the people get along together without any of these characteristics of Christian civilisation. All the laborers live in his cottages; he pays them when they are ill, and when they are too old to work they are allowed to potter about and get their wages all the same. This, at any rate, is what we read in the newspapers; and it is quite refreshing to come across one of these oases in the general desert of rural life.

"General" Booth, in his exercise of self-denial, is spending the month of September in Switzerland. In addition to his many other businesses, the universal provider has now started a Life Insurance Society and Annuity business.

Mr. Bennet Burleigh, the well-known war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, in his new collection of despatches entitled *Two Campaigns*, regards the British suppression of King Prempeh in Ashanti as a triumph of humanity. This is how he describes one of the atrocities that prevailed and are not terminated: "Human sacrifices were of almost daily occurrence. Any mortal who sat down for an instant beneath the big roadside fetish tree of the village, or other so-called fetish tree, had his tongue and cheeks stealthily and suddenly skewered with a sharp wooden stake run through them. In that condition, gagged and unable to cry out, he was bound and delivered to the priests, who, after Mumbo Jumbo ceremonies, sacrificed the poor wretch to the spirits of the grove, the executioner and others drinking a portion of the victim's blood."

We are as pleased as any Christian can be at the suppression of such monstrous cruelties. What is more, we have no material interest involved; we are not looking out for a good dividend on an investment in Ashanti. We are even tempted to remind the Christians that it is really not very long ago since they left off—or rather were compelled to leave off—the hideous practice of human sacrifice. They used to burn men by the hundred in the name of their Mumbo Jumbo.

There is a story in *Cornhill* about a boy who came in one day in a great hurry to ask God's Christian name, and was told he had none. "It's of no consequence," he said, "I have put Alfred"—the name of his grandfather, an Archdeacon.

Better still is the story of the same boy, who, when the floor was up in the dining-room to mend a gas-pipe, came to his mother with tears in his eyes, and said: "O mother, I know I'm lost; but I cannot help pitying the poor Devil; so I've been and poured some water down the hole in the dining-room floor."

The *Methodist Times* has a leading article on "The Use of the Imagination in the Christian Church." We could write an article on that subject, but it would be a different one from that of our Methodist contemporary. For instance, the four Gospels are works of imagination; so are most of the "evidences" that have since been palmed off upon the ignorant and credulous multitude of "believers."

Imagination, it appears, is allowed free play in the Catholic Church, but is too much kept under in Methodism. "John Calvin and John Wesley," it is said, "were too exclusively logical; they were sadly deficient on the poetic and artistic side; they forgot that man is emotional as well as ratiocinative." The moral is, that Methodists must improve on John Wesley. They must go in for beautiful buildings, splendid music, and more ornate services. In other words, religion to succeed must be made more and more an entertainment—with which we perfectly agree.

Occasionally we find ourselves agreeing with the *Methodist Times*. We entirely agree with its statement about the term "Christian," that "Its use by any good man who denies the deity of our Lord is unhistoric and misleading." This is *apropos* of the fact that young Mr. Voysey has applied for recognition as a Unitarian minister, while declaring that "he was not a Christian, and refused to profess Christianity." Unitarians of the old school protest against his admission, but the party represented by the *Inquirer* treats the term Christian as "a glorified nickname."

At Gillingham, near Chatham, there is a vast shell of a building which is a monument of credulity. It was there 144,000 of the elect Jezreelites were to ascend visibly to heaven. It is now for sale, and may become a barracks. We read that the sect at Chatham has finally collapsed, though we believe the *Pioneer of Wisdom*, their organ, is still published. "Jezreel," their prophet, was an ex-soldier, named James White, who so far accommodated himself to modern views as to proclaim that God was a woman. His principal followers were of the fair sex. Several of them had more money than brains.

Mr. G. F. Nye, of Brixton, in view of the collapse of this sect, recalls the prophet Wroe, who wandered over England some years ago. This humbug announced that he had received orders from heaven "that seven virgins should be delivered to him to comfort and cherish him." As a result three of his disciples at once gave him up their daughters, and with these poor creatures and some married women Wroe, in grand harem style, proceeded from place to place "spreading the light." One of the girls became pregnant, and Wroe asserted that the expected babe would undoubtedly prove to be the promised "Shiloh" or Messiah.

The babe turned out to be a girl, and Wroe emigrated after narrowly escaping lynching.

Wroe was a follower of the famous Joanna Southcott. Another successor was a merchant of Leeds, named George Turner, who had revelations still more astounding than those of Wroe. What they were is described on p. 95 of *The Antichrist*, by J. E. Smith; but the subject is too delicate for us.

Another crank of the same period was Zion Ward, who called himself the son and Shiloh that was promised to Joanna, who died of dropsy, supposed to be child-birth, in 1814, in which year his mind was changed and led into her faith. About 1830 he had thousands of believers in his mission. In 1832 he was, however, imprisoned.

Did any of our readers ever hear of the blessed Peter Claver? Probably the majority have not, or, if they have heard of him, have never heeded his name. Yet Peter promises to have a distinguished position as the first American saint. Canonization is a slow process, but the chief item has already been performed. A bishop and some others have sworn that Peter Claver wrought some wondrous miracles, not thousands of years ago, but in 1863, when the Americans were too much taken up with their own civil war to notice them. We hope that Peter Claver was more cleanly than one of the latest acquisitions to the calendar, St. Labre, who is said never to have washed himself.

The *Spectator* has been having its say on the momentous question, "Should a Bishop Ride a Bicycle?"—for it seems that one of the episcopal bench is a pedalist. It thinks it allowable, if not laudable; but the father-in-God should use a lady's machine, with a drop frame, lest his apron should take unbecoming positions.

The Pope sanctioned bicycling in Italy, but the Archbishop of Paris has issued a decree forbidding it to his clergy, on the ground that it is incompatible with ecclesiastical dignity, calculated to lower the rider in the estimation of the faithful, and expose him to the taunts and mockeries of the infidel.

An attendant at one of the Ritualist churches, where they are getting up a harvest thanksgiving, says the vestry was like a wax-chandler's, and now it is like a greengrocer's shop.

A Central African traveller gives the following as the scale of character among those he met: First and best, the African Mahometan; second, the native, unsophisticated heathen African; third, the African Christian convert; last and worst, the missionaries.

Who would think of seeing in an English paper the legend, "No Christians need apply"? Yet this was inserted in the advertisement for a Hindu servant, and confirms the statement of Sir Lepel Griffen, that Europeans do not care to employ the native Christian, from a belief, founded on extended experience, that his new creed has removed his ancient prejudice against the brandy bottle.

Morris Jastrow, writing in the *International Journal of Ethics* on "The Jewish Question in its Recent Aspects," points out that so weak was the commercial spirit among the Jews in Bible times that "they incorporated in their legislation a regulation which crippled all chances of commercial enterprise—the prohibition against lending money on interest." In Lev. xxv. 36, 37, and Deut. xxiii. 20 no distinction is made between "interest" and "usury." All "increase" on the capital is absolutely forbidden, and the late Ps. xv. declares that he who lends his money on interest has no place in the Lord's tabernacle. Of course the modern Jew overlooks such passages, just as the Christian overlooks "Lay not up treasures on earth," and the other injunctions of Jesus.

The prophecy or curse in Deut. xxviii. 41, that the stranger "shall lend to thee and thou shalt not lend to him," has been strangely reversed, though parts of the same chapter are cited by Christians as illustrations of the fulfilment of prophecy. The Jew may say the passage shows that in adhering to his own faith he has acquired a blessing instead of a curse.

A servant girl affected with religious mania, at Bushridge, near Godalming, locked herself in the church, tore up some of the books and displaced others, covered the font with a mat, and finished up by ringing the church bell. She was, after some difficulty, removed from the building and put under restraint.

In the case of the lady who was pursued by the vicar of Kingswood, at Reddull County Court, for burial fees, and who gained her cause against the vicar, Mr. J. Carvell Williams, M.P., points out that, according to a report made by a Select

Committee of the House of Commons, it is only before an ecclesiastical court that a person can be summoned for the non-payment of an ecclesiastical fee, and, although that court may sentence him to pay the amount which may be due, it has no power to enforce the payment. This is commended to the notice of those from whom illegal fees may be demanded on the burial of deceased relatives.

Mr. J. Nunn, of Hill House, Purleigh, Essex, supplies some further illustrations of empty churches and fat tithes in his district. At Hazeleigh, adjoining Purleigh, the whole population is 111. The value of the living is £320, the church is old and of lath and plaster, and the rectory-house a modern-built massive structure with pretty gardens and grounds. He mentions ten parishes where the united population is 4,924, and the annual value of livings 5,063. The gardens, houses, and paddocks attached are well worth an average of over £100 each, so the livings are worth 6,063; and, according to Mr. Nunn, but 10 per cent., or about 500 persons, attend—"some of them for spiritual purposes, others to have a game of nap."

In the case of three persons who were charged before the Lambeth magistrate with keeping a disorderly brothel in Oakley-street, Westminster Bridge-road, the officer in charge of the case said that the rent-book disclosed that the premises were owned by two clergymen, who received £60 per annum as rent. The reporters did not manage to disclose the names of the two clergymen.

At the trial of some Poles for robbing three young Polish girls just arrived in England, Mr. Metcalf said it had been reported that the prisoners were Polish Jews, and, on behalf of the Jewish Association, he wished it to be known that they were not members of that faith, but were Christians. Excellent Christians, no doubt. When they see strangers they take them in.

In committing two ex-Salvationist females for trial for burglary, Mr. Judd, the chairman of the Penge bench of magistrates, emphasized the remarks he made at a previous hearing as to the indiscriminate wearing of the S. A. uniform by dishonest girls being a positive danger to the public. But the public should be more discriminate than to suppose that a poke bonnet necessarily implies honesty.

The following quotation from Thomas Fuller, a worthy divine, Mr. Gladstone will highly appreciate, and it is commended to his notice and that of other Christian Reunionists: "Sure they light on a labor in vain who seek to make a bridge of reconciliation over the great chasm between Papists and Protestants; for, though we go ninety-nine steps, they—I mean their Church—will not come one to give us a meeting."

That the High Church of England is yearly approximating Romeward in no wise affects the wisdom of Fuller's forecast. Rome makes no approach to Anglicanism, and the Romanism of Anglicans only emphasizes the dissidence of Dissent. The real issue is between Rome and Reason.

The Catholics are making strenuous efforts to nobble the universities. The Duke of Norfolk has recently put down £13,000 for the purchase of a site of three acres for a Roman Catholic college at Oxford. This college will be quite distinct from the hall under the auspices of the Jesuits, which is to be opened next term in St. Giles's by Father R. F. Clarke.

"Architect," writing in the *Church Times* on Christianity and Freemasonry, reminds the faithful that "to a Christian Christ is all and in all. His morality, his rule of life, must date from the precepts and example of Christ. His fellowship is in the Church of Christ. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" "Architect" considers that Freemasonry "usurps, in many cases, the place which the Church should occupy, and so is harmful."

The Rev. H. B. Waterman was arrested at Chautauqua on August 14 for robbing the post-office at that place.

Dr. Barnado is a very particular gentleman. You can't have a girl from his Village Home without standing the test of a severe catechism. A lady who wrote to him desiring to take one of the inmates of his Home as a servant (according to the *Daily Telegraph*) received a list of nineteen questions. The lady was asked what denomination she belonged to, and what place of worship she attended; whether all her household were teetotalers, and had family worship every morning and evening; and whether she would promise that the girl should never be allowed out after half-past seven in the evening. Of the nineteen questions the *Telegraph* says that three or four are reasonable, several absurd, and quite half-a-dozen impertinent. Whenever was pious philanthropy anything else?

### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, September 6, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., at 7.30, "Turks and Christians: An Object Lesson in Religious Brotherhood."

*Monday and Tuesday*, September 7 and 8, Co-operative Hall, Plymouth, at 8, Debate with the Rev. W. T. Lee on "Is there a Future Life?"

September 13, Glasgow; 14, Dunoon; 20, Liverpool; 27, Athenæum Hall.

October 4, Leicester; 11, Athenæum Hall.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 6, Manchester; 13, New Brompton; 20, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, W.; 27, Edinburgh; 30, Dundee. October 1, Dundee; 4, Glasgow; 6 and 7, debate at New Brompton with the Rev. A. J. Waldron.—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.

THE National Secular Society's new office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

MR. T. WATTS TREASURE, Secretary of the Bristol Branch, notifies his change of address to Grove View, Stapleton, Bristol.

NORTHUMBRIAN.—It is easy enough to draw up nice programs and ideal constitutions, but it is only being carried into operation that gives them any value. There is little visible difference between a true Bank of England note and a flash one, but the one represents a solid reality and the other nothing. While the parties you refer to have been declaring their intentions, Mr. Foote and his colleagues have been at work, lecturing and debating in London and in the provinces, and building up a new audience in the West of London. The Athenæum Hall has entailed a considerable loss, for the rent and expenses have always been paid, and in every case the lecturer has received a reasonable fee. But the place has been kept open throughout the summer, the tide has now turned, and the lectures should yield a fair profit in the winter; in fact, it is probable that the audience will outgrow the accommodation.

OLD FREETHINKER.—The Hall of Science Club was never composed of Freethinkers. It was established in Mr. Bradlaugh's time by the lessee as a means of revenue, and was part of the situation when Mr. Foote accepted the Presidency. Mr. Foote only tolerated it as a temporary necessity, and always hoped to see it ended. He will never be a party to forming another Club in any sort of connection, however remote or indirect, with Freeany thought propaganda. Clubs are very well in their way, and Freethought is better in its way; but the two things will not mix. In the long run the social element agrees with the intellectual element as the lion agreed with the lamb, lying down with him inside. Lady Battersea has just given some figures of a Staffordshire club founded for "social intercourse, mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement, and rational recreation." The expenditure on rational recreation was £2 19s. for an entertainment and £1 6s. for games. Mental and moral improvement cost £2 6s. 9d. for newspapers and 5s. 8d. for books. Social intercourse amounted to £4 10s. for bread and cheese and £7 6d. for drinks. Mutual helpfulness came in early in the morning, when some members kindly saw others home.

R. FREEMAN.—The little band who (from outside) are so concerned about the N. S. S., and who affect to look back so regretfully to the leadership of Charles Bradlaugh, are really a curious collection. Two of them boasted, soon after Bradlaugh's death, that they had not paid any subscription to the N.S.S. for ten years; three of them did not join the N.S.S. till after Bradlaugh's death; one of them has never been a member at all, and has always treated the Society with contumely; another was a strong anti-Bradlaughite until a new President was elected; while another was outside the Society for nine or ten years, after practically accusing Bradlaugh of pecculation.

E. GOTTHEIL.—(1) The Humanitarian League has nothing to do with the Humanitarian Society. The latter is a Deistic association, and consists, we believe, of Mr. Kasparly and his friends. (2) Charles Bradlaugh did not relinquish Atheism in favor of Pantheism before he died. (3) Theists nowadays are not all so bigoted. Many of them admit that non-Theists can be thoroughly moral and useful citizens.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. The visit of Messrs. Foote and Watts is expected to give an impetus to the Freethought cause in America, and indirectly (we believe) it will do good to the Freethought cause in England, the more so if they succeed in inducing Colonel Ingersoll to come over and lecture in this country. With respect to your suggestion, you must allow us to judge of its legal feasibility. We have taken advice, and it is not feasible.

JOSEPH COLLINSON, of the Humanitarian League, writes:—"Confusion having been caused by the similarity of names, allow me to point out that the Christian name of the Mr. 'J. Collinson' who claims to rule the clouds is not Joseph, but 'John.' His theories do not commend themselves to yours faithfully."

A. S. COLEMAN.—Thanks for your cheering letter. The Vegetarian matters shall be dealt with. We hope Messrs. Foote and Watts will be as happy and useful in America as you wish them. Pleased to know you intend to subscribe to the other objects later on.

E. SMEDLEY.—The fellow is not worth powder and shot. We have nailed down one of his libellous lies in the Law Courts, and he appears to be loved and supported all the more for it by the brutal section of Christians to whom he appeals. If we prosecuted him at all, we should prosecute him criminally, since he is financially a man of straw. Let any Christian of sufficient standing, or with anything to lose, print that Mr. Foote is a "vile, filthy, and obscene writer," and we will soon make him smart, if there is justice to be had from a judge and jury. But why give the fellow in question a gratuitous advertisement? And why should you, or any other Freethinker, be distressed? Mr. Foote never wrote anything without putting his name to it; his articles and pamphlets are all open to the world; and you can easily judge for yourself whether he is an "obscene" writer.

R. STEVENS.—Your suggestion is well meant, but impossible. We note your remark as to the proposed entrance fee to the projected Association for defeating the Blasphemy Laws. The point was considered by the N.S.S. Executive and decided. There is no need for everybody to come into the Association, which has a special object. The N.S.S. will continue to exist and operate as before. Thanks for your good wishes for Messrs. Foote and Watts in America.

EX-TELEGRAPH MESSENGER.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

W. D. ROLLEY.—See paragraph.

SECLARIST.—You have simply to send a written notice to the headmaster of the school that you require your boy to be withdrawn from religious instruction under the Conscience Clause of the Education Act of 1870. If you have any further trouble, send us full particulars.

C. TURNER.—With respect to Solomon's Temple, you will find help by consulting our *Bible Absurdities*, price fourpence, sold at Mr. Forder's, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

G. RALFES (Liverpool).—Hope we have your name right. Thanks for cuttings. Yes, the *Crimes of Christianity* did "entail an enormous amount of work." Mr. Foote sighs for a little leisure to complete the book with Mr. Wheeler.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—Have put your sub. to the American visit. We note your hope that Shilling Month will be a great success, and that Secularists will rally round the President, who *does* intend to "keep pegging away."

X. RAYS.—We have not seen the book. Send it, of course, if you think it might be useful. Thanks.

W. MANN.—Answer in our next.

FLORENCE BRADSHAW.—In our next.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—Sydney A. Gimson, £1. *Per R. Forder*:—C. E. Hall, 5s.; W. H. Spivey, 2s.; E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; T. Ollernshaw, 2s.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Daniel Baker (July and August), £2.

SHILLING MONTH.—H. Lees Sumner, 7s. 6d.; Hermitite, 2s.; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s. *Per Miss Vance*:—S. Hartmann, £1; L., 5s.; B., 5s.; W., 5s.; D. Mitchell, 5s.; E. Gottheil, 2s. 6d.

SPECIAL FOR MESSRS. FOOTE AND WATTS'S AMERICAN VISIT.—A. S. Coleman, 5s.; Sydney A. Gimson, £2; Joseph Close, 2s. 6d. *Per Miss Vance*:—Daniel Baker, £3; S. Hartmann, £1; Zeta, £1.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Eigene—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Straits Times—Overland China Mail—Aberdeen Journal—Nya Sanningar—Vegetarian—Literary Guide—Truthseeker—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Krugersdorp Sentinel—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Sydney Bulletin—Daily Mail—Herts Leader—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds.

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.

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

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.

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

### SPECIAL.

READERS of the *Freethinker* are reminded that September is Shilling Month. During this month—and the earlier the better—I hope all my friends, and all friends of the movement, will send me something towards the objects for which I am appealing. The poorest subscribers can at least send one shilling, and others more in proportion to their means.

All subscriptions will be acknowledged in these columns. When no special instructions are given, I shall acknowledge under the general head of "Shilling Month," and the total amount received under this head will be divided at my discretion.

Three objects are being appealed for. The first is, the

General Fund of the National Secular Society, which needs recruiting for the winter, and especially while I am on the other side of the Atlantic. The second is, my Lecture Scheme, under which I am continuing operations at considerable cost, although the fund has for some time been exhausted. The third is, my visit to America with Mr. Charles Watts. We go there according to the vote of the Glasgow Conference, as delegates from the National Secular Society.

I have arranged to sail for America with Mr. Watts on October 14. We shall return a few days before Christmas. Our visit is being looked forward to with great interest by the American Freethinkers; at least Mr. Putnam and Mr. Macdonald (editor of the *New York Truthseeker*) say so. The great Chickering Hall has been engaged for our "Reception" on Sunday evening, October 25. All the leading Freethinkers of New York and the district are expected to be present, and I understand that Colonel Ingersoll will preside over the meeting. We go on from New York to Toronto, to meet our Canadian brethren; and thence, by way of Grand Rapids, where we are both to lecture in the Opera House, to Chicago. We are to spend a week there in attendance at the American Secular Convention. A magnificent hall has been engaged for this gathering, which is expected to be very large and representative. After leaving Chicago, each of us will deliver lectures that are being arranged for us by Mr. Putnam.

Our American friends are going to great trouble and expense. They say they don't mind what they do, so long as we come. But of course we cannot go without a good deal of expense. We cannot travel as Jonah did. Our whale will have to be an Atlantic liner. And when we reach America we shall not be favored, as most of the ministers are over there, with free passes on the railways. We don't belong to the godly army of deadheads.

My readers know exactly what I am appealing for, and I leave the matter with them. I have only to add that communications for me should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., and *not* to 377 Strand, W., which is the office of the N. S. S.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Now that the long fine evenings are drawing in, and conditions are more favorable for indoor meetings, the audience continues to improve at the Athenæum Hall. There was a capital gathering on Sunday evening when Mr. Foote lectured on *Zola's Rome*. The number of fresh faces was considerably increased, and the presence of a fair proportion of ladies gave a certain brightness to the room. Mr. Charles Watts, who was accidentally disengaged, took the chair, and announced the literature so persuasively that the bookstall was nearly cleared. The lecture was listened to with profound attention, and very warmly applauded.

Mr. Hartmann had come up from Camberwell to take the chair for Mr. Foote, but finding Mr. Watts there he very much preferred to take a seat in the auditorium. Mr. Hartmann informs us that he has accepted the office of Treasurer to the National Secular Society.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road) again this evening (Sept. 6), taking for his subject—"Turks and Christians: An Object Lesson in Religious Brotherhood." Freethinkers should induce their more orthodox friends to come and hear this lecture.

Members of the N.S.S. are desired to note that the Society's new office is at 377 Strand, London, W., near Exeter Hall. The entrance is in Exeter-street, next door to Manfield's boot-shop, and the office is on the second floor. All letters should be addressed there to Miss Vance, secretary. During the past week she has been enjoying a well-earned holiday. Henceforth she will generally be found at the office during business hours. Members and friends are invited to call.

The National Secular Society's Executive desires special

prominence to be given to the following resolution, proposed at its last meeting by Mr. W. Heaford and seconded by Mr. Moss, and carried unanimously: "That this Executive hereby expresses its indignation at the charges against the President adverted to in the statement headed 'Personal' in the *Freethinker* of August 30, and endorses the terms of Mr. Foote's condemnation of the action of his personal libellers." The members present, and voting for this resolution, were: Messrs. E. Bate, C. Cohen, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, W. Leat, M. Loafer, A. B. Moss, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, F. Schaller, P. Sabine, H. J. Stace, E. Truelove, George Ward, Charles Watts, and J. M. Wheeler.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, September 6, three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. As this will be his last visit to the district prior to his departure for America, no doubt friends will muster in good force. Mr. Watts desires us to state that he will be pleased to meet his personal friends from Failsworth, Oldham, Bolton, and Blackburn. After the evening lecture Mr. Watts will say a few words as to his and Mr. Foote's object in visiting America.

Mr. C. Cohen will be lecturing in the Manchester district from September 20 to October 25. Branches requiring week-night lectures should apply to him immediately. Mr. Cohen has authorization, where necessary, to arrange week-night meetings under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.

We see that a debate is to take place between Mr. Cohen and the Rev. A. J. Waldron on Theism and Atheism. Time, Thursday and Friday, September 24 and 25; place, the Secular Hall, Manchester. The chair will be taken at 8 each evening. No doubt there will be a crowded attendance.

The Spiritualists have just succeeded in doing what Mr. Foote is trying to get done for Secularism. "The London Spiritualist Alliance, Limited," has at last been incorporated, with the sanction of the Board of Trade. Money-making is not the object, which is simply to obtain legal security for the Alliance's property and funds. Among the signatories to the Articles of Association are the Earl of Radnor, Mr. P. S. Wyndham, Dr. Alfred R. Wallace, and Major-General A. W. Drayson. The success of this effort, of which we were ignorant until a few days ago, should stimulate Secularists to obtain (if possible) the same security. We hope the Scheme which Mr. Foote published in last week's *Freethinker* will be considered immediately by all who are interested in the matter, with a view to suggestions or emendations. Mr. Foote wishes—in fact, intends—to start the proposed new Association before his visit to America.

A Blackpool friend reports that Mr. Grange, of Bradford, has been doing good in that popular watering-place by discoursing on the sands. Notwithstanding some rowdyism, it is evident a good impression was made, and a few similar visits would make Blackpool less of a parson's paradise than it is to-day.

We have received from Berlin the first numbers of *Der Eigene*, an organ of modern Individualism of the school of Max Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche. *Der Eigene* is edited by Adolf Brand, and among the contributions are articles by Robert Reitzel, Bruno Wille, and Eduard von Hartmann.

*Nya Sanningar* gives a good portrait and biography of Charles Bradlaugh. Under the editorship of Mr. Petrus Asplund, our Swedish Freethought contemporary presents a very creditable appearance, and we wish it all prosperity.

*Fraternity*, which is now under the editorship of Mr. Frank Smith, has in its September number some excellent verses on how Christian civilization is promoted abroad. They are entitled "A Light on Darkest Africa."

The Blackburn Branch takes its annual picnic this Sunday, going by the West Lancashire line to Longton. The return fare is 1s. 6d., and the train starts at 8.10 a.m. A substantial dinner has been arranged for those who desire it at the Red Lion Hotel.

The Liverpool Branch resumes its Sunday evening meetings in St. Anne's Hall to-night, when Mr. L. Small, B.Sc., lectures on "Faith and Reason."

It is quite refreshing to hear a voice raised in the ordinary press against Mr. Wilson Barrett's play, *The Sign of the Cross*, which is so severely criticised in Mr. Foote's pamphlet. The *Manchester City News* writes as follows of the recent production of this play at the local Theatre Royal: "Since Mr. Wilson Barrett's play was here last, it has captured a section of the non-theatre-going public. Bishops have blessed it, and clergymen in numbers have witnessed the performances, and gone in raptures over the struggles of Marcus Superbus. There has even been talk again of the union of the Church and the Stage, and of the great mission of the Stage. Staid



## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

## FIRST MEETING AT THE NEW OFFICE.

THE N.S.S. Executive met for the first time at its new office, 377 Strand, on Thursday evening, August 27. Mr. G. W. Foote (President) was in the chair, and there were present: E. Bate, C. Cohen, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, M. Loafer, W. Leat, A. B. Moss, F. Schaller, P. Sabine, H. J. Stace, E. Truelove, E. W. Quay, C. Qinton, G. Ward, G. J. Warren, J. M. Wheeler, and Miss Vance (secretary).

Minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the President reported as to his scheme for an Association to defeat the Blasphemy Laws as affecting the pecuniary rights of Secularism. On the question whether the Executive should express a wish as to the *personnel* of the Association at its start, it was deemed best to leave the initiation entirely in the hands of the President.

Mr. Forder reported *re* the balance of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund. Some communications had been received from subscribers, but the matter had not been completed. The Executive expressed a serious and strong hope that it would be so by the next meeting, and Mr. Forder said he would do his best to have it settled by then.

The Heckmondwike Branch desired to change its name to the Spen Valley Branch. This was agreed to.

Applications for assistance from the Westminster, Finsbury, Finsbury Park, and Regent's Park Branches were considered. It was impossible to make grants at the moment, so the applications were left in the President's hands, to be dealt with as might be found possible from the result of the Shilling Month appeal.

The President then addressed the Executive on a matter which they might consider of some importance. For some time past, as he thought many of them knew, he had been the object of much malicious slander. All he had to do with the Society's funds was to raise money for it, from time to time, in the *Freethinker*. The balance-sheets showed that he had done this for several years, but he had not done so during the past year, and the Society had in consequence to meet a deficit on the General Fund. Three years ago the Annual Conference decided that the Treasurership should be abolished, and that the Society's money should be banked in the name of two persons, who should sign cheques for what was withdrawn for expenditure. This had been done. The persons first appointed to draw cheques were the President and Mr. G. Standing, and when the latter resigned Mr. R. Forder was appointed in his stead. The President did not check the Society's accounts in any way. When the monthly statement, audited by the finance committee, was laid on the table for the Executive, it was as new to him as to anyone present. Nor had he ever attended at the annual audit by the two auditors elected at the Conference. They did their work without any sort of suggestion from him. Nevertheless, owing to cowardly scandal-mongers, an impression had got abroad that the President first helped himself to the Society's funds, and after him the paid assistant secretary. Of course the Executive knew that this was a grotesque absurdity; still, they might think that some change was necessary in order to disarm ill-grounded suspicions. More than this he would not say, and he left the matter in their hands.

Mr. Charles Watts moved that the Treasurership be revived. Personally, he was perfectly satisfied with the existing arrangement, but the scandal-mongers were misleading innocent people, and a change was requisite even to protect the President from any possible misunderstanding.

Mr. C. Cohen seconded the motion in a few words, endorsing Mr. Watts's reasons.

A question arose whether the contemplated change could be made constitutionally. The President answered that one of his functions was to deal with emergencies. It was his duty to protect the Constitution, but it was also his duty to protect the Society; and if the Executive thought the occasion critical, and a change necessary, he would take the responsibility of letting it be done, and submit the matter for final adjudication to the next Conference. He declined to say anything himself, however, as to whether any change should be made, or what it should be, as he was resolved not to lay himself open to the slightest misconception.

Mr. Gorniot strongly opposed the motion. They were all satisfied, and why should they yield an inch to liars and intriguers whose only object was to break up the Society?

Mr. R. Forder and Mr. G. Ward also opposed the motion. They were decidedly in favor of the existing arrangement. Mr. Heaford, Mr. Moss, and others, supported the motion. Finally it was carried by a considerable majority.

Mr. Hartmann was proposed as Treasurer by Mr. Cohen, and seconded by Mr. Heaford. This was carried.

The President said he had remained neutral, but he now welcomed the alteration; in fact, if nothing had been done, he should have declined to sign any more cheques.

Mr. Gorniot introduced a circular calling the N.S.S. (in brief) a failure and a fraud, and containing statements

which were as false as they were insulting. This gave rise to a long discussion. The Executive asked to have the President's "Personal" statement in the *Freethinker*. On its being read, the following resolution was moved by Mr. W. Heaford, and seconded by Mr. Arthur B. Moss: "That this Executive hereby expresses its indignation at the charges against the President adverted to in the statement headed 'Personal' in the *Freethinker* of August 30, and endorses the terms of Mr. Foote's condemnation of the action of his personal libellers." This was carried unanimously.

After some formal business, the roll was called, and the Executive adjourned until the last Thursday in September.

E. M. VANCE (Secretary).

## BOOK CHAT.

THE original edition of Shelley's *Queen Mab* is now of extreme rarity, and commands a large price. In 1822, nine years after its first issue, Richard Carlile had in his possession 180 copies, as appears from a notice in the *Republican* of that date (p. 979), which Mr. E. Truelove has transcribed for us. It reads: "*Queen Mab*.—There are now no less than four editions of this work on sale, but I would caution all my friends against imperfect editions selling under the imprint, William Clarke. I was not aware of it until within the last week. At 5 Water-lane, Fleet-street, perfect copies may be had under my imprint at seven-and-six in boards, and any other copies selling under my name are not for my profit, or under my control. I have also purchased the whole of the remaining copies of the original edition printed by Mr. Shelley in 1813. There were but 180 copies left, and these will be sold at the same price in sheets to those friends of Mr. Shelley, or others, who may prize an original copy. The difference in the original and my present edition is, that the notes of the latter are all translated. The imperfections of the copy selling under the imprint of William Clarke consist in the exclusion of all those words and sentences which some simpleton considered libellous. They were sold by the printer at little better than waste-paper price, and are now put forth as perfect copies.—RICHARD CARLILE."

\* \* \*

The wider sweep given to ethics by the doctrine of evolution is seen in the work on *Thier Ethik*, "Animal Ethics," by Ignatz Bregenzler. In the eyes of religion God made animals but for human benefit. "Doth God care for oxen?" asks Paul. In the eyes of early law those only have rights who can enforce them, but in the eyes of evolution all living things have a claim to happy existence. Bregenzler is a Freethinker and a Darwinian, and recognizes in animism the starting point of religious development; but he, in common with our friend Mr. Salt, of the Humanitarian League, recognizes animals' claim, not merely to kindly feeling, but to right of protection in their own interests.

\* \* \*

Monsieur Nourisson, a well-known member of the French Institute, has published through P. Lethielleux, of Paris, a new work on *Voltaire et le Voltairianisme*.

\* \* \*

As the principles of the Church are undermined in the minds of the educated and leisured classes, it is sure to seek to strengthen its influences over the masses by claiming as its own popular social movements which in their first inception it did its utmost to stifle. The movement for the substitution of co-operation for competition is one it will more and more attempt to nobble, and how far it is going in this direction on the continent is brought out in the work on *Catholic Socialism*, by Francesco S. Nitti.

\* \* \*

We regret to learn that Mr. E. E. Russell, the editor of *New York Public Opinion* and author of *The Reason Why*, the Freethought novel noticed by Mr. Wheeler in our last number, is suffering from consumption, and has had to retire to the country, trying to make some headway against the disease. We sincerely trust that the tragedy of his hero's early death will not be repeated in his own case.

\* \* \*

In the *Jewish Year Book* just published Mr. Joseph Jacobs gives a paper on "Jewish Messiahs," who appear to have been sufficiently numerous. "Even when the supply of Messiahs," says Mr. Jacobs, "was not equal to the demand caused by persecution, Jews have continued to expect a redemption throughout the ages; and Zunz, the German Jewish scholar, has given a list of no less than 86 dates on which Messiahs were prophesied and expected. Saadia fixed the year of hope in 964, Rashi in 1352. In 1211 no fewer than 600 Rabbis from England and France travelled to Jerusalem because they expected the coming of the Messiah in the following year. The Sohar, as we have seen, fixed upon the fateful year 1648, or as an alternative 1840. The year 1900 appears to be the latest of the dates on which

Jewish hopes have been fixed, and there have been movements in England giving a practical direction to the conception of the return to the Holy Land." Fanatic faith outlives all disappointment. Jesus promised to return in the lifetime of his disciples, and Brother Baxter adjourns his advent from year to year. The Jews ought to have been restored in the times of Isaiah, and they still look forward to the fulfilment of prophesy. The funny thing is the Christians would be awfully vexed if their Savior did come, and the Jews would not return to Palestine without compulsion.

\* \* \*

*Humanity*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, for September, opens with an interesting article on "Humanity and Art." This is followed by a temperate, though ghastly, account by Ernest Bell of the Jewish slaughter-houses at Deptford. Eleanor Beeby writes feelingly, and withal sensibly, on Capital Punishment. Next comes a letter from Mr. Auberon Herbert, deprecating any appeal to law, and advising entire reliance on moral agencies. An anonymous contributor inquires what would be done by Humanitarians with surplus animals, which would come into existence under the inexorable law of population. Would they not have to be killed? Would not some selection have to be made to keep up the breed? And would not that involve extermination or disablement from procreation? The number has also a letter on the Maybrick case, which, except as illustrating prison treatment, is beside the object of the Humanitarian League. Whether a prisoner is innocent or guilty is a judicial question.

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*The Literary Guide* for September has a good and interesting list of contents, including an interview with Moncure D. Conway, the Rationalist preacher of South Place Institute. The reviews and book notices are up to date and generally excellent.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### DEAN FREMANTLE AND CHRISTIANITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—As "fairplay" and justice are virtues not confined to Christians, I am glad to believe, and feel sure, that you will allow me to make some reply to your strictures upon my action in regard to Dean Fremantle's insidious attack upon the Christian religion in the *Fortnightly Review*. In commenting upon my indignation and agony of mind at the fact of a chief dignitary of our Church trying to pull down the whole fabric of our holy religion, which *our Church* pays him £1,000 a year to teach, you observe: "The Anglican Father is more sensitive than sensible." If you could realize what our religion is to us who *really* believe in it, and what Jesus Christ is to our hearts which He has filled with His love and rest and peace, you would not wonder at our being "sensitive" when a man who is paid £1,000 a year to teach our religion and creeds *takes the money*, but does all he can to destroy the Faith in *every detail* and part of it. Why, even on the lowest grounds of commercial honesty, my dear sir, you should not wonder at a Christian's sensitiveness. Dean Fremantle not only pockets the £1,000 a year, but also has the daring wickedness to receive the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood in Ripon Cathedral, where he *publicly denies* every single article of the Creeds, even to the existence of God himself, or any divine revelation. I candidly confess that, if I were in Ripon Cathedral when Fremantle was about to perpetrate this horrible sacrilege, I should feel that I must protest by tongue and by hand. To receive our Holy Mysteries is a thousand times worse than pocketing the £1,000 a year of the Church's endowments. Is my protest *not* "sensible," Mr. Editor? Do you think we have no right or reason to complain in the very loudest and most determined manner? Why can the Dean not make an honest man of himself and openly join you? Then we should have *not a word of complaint against him*.

I regard you, sir, as a gentleman and a man of honor, but, if you were Dean of Ripon, taking from the Church £1,000 a year and profaning our sacraments, I should say you were a rogue, a thief, a perjurer, a villain of the very vilest kind. And should I not be right? Would you, believing no more and no less than Fremantle, have allowed Lord Rosebery to make you Dean of Ripon? Would you, if you were offered £1,000 a year to declare you believed the Creeds, every Sunday in public worship go through the mockery of saying, "I believe in God the Father Almighty," etc., while, all the time, you publicly, in the press, denied *every single* statement of these Creeds, and wrote to try and destroy the faith of your readers in them also? Would you? You know you would not.

You say: "Dean Fremantle has been over a year in his position, and none of the clergy thought of raising their voices against his appointment." Yes; I did! and wrote to Lord Rosebery asking him how he could dare thus to insult our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church in this land by

making an Atheist a Dean, giving him, at the same time, Fremantle's *own published denial of God*, etc. Then I called a public meeting for further protest, which I have continued ever since; and it is now beginning to take effect in all directions. The Archbishop of York has taken the matter up, the clergy are rousing themselves, important laymen are on the stir, and we *will* purge out this evil thing from our midst. It *shall* be shown that Fremantle's cruel boast that we Christians don't care, and will tolerate anything, and are past contending for our Faith, is *not true*. We do care; and many of us are ready to die, if needs be, for our adorable Lord and God, Jesus Christ, sooner than tolerate any longer such a monstrous and cruel wrong as that the author of *Theology under its Changed Conditions* should be suffered to receive the sacraments in our Church, and be paid as a Dean £1,000 for destroying our religion right and left. It shows what a sham the Church Association and English Church Union are—they don't care two straws when God, our Lord Jesus, the Bible, and the Atonement of Christ are assailed; they keep their money, their time, their energies, for fighting for and against candles and vestments!

The Archbishop of Canterbury allowed all this "Free-thought" teaching to go on for years, when Fremantle was one of his Canons. People used to leave Canterbury Cathedral after Fremantle's preaching, saying how anxious he seemed to be to show them *that there was nothing to believe in*. The Archbishop of York says he does not wonder at my "alarm and disquietude" at the Dean's teaching. He writes to another clergyman that he is going to give the matter his serious attention. But his Grace says: "The matter must first be dealt with by the Bishop of Ripon." "The Bishop of Ripon" endorses the Dean's blasphemies, and writes to me that the Dean is "a man of God"; but by "God" the Dean publicly teaches that he means "rather a force or law" than a personal being. The Bishop must, therefore, be an infidel out and out himself; so he will have to be put out first, I suppose, before we can get at his "man of God"—"force or law," that is.

And now, dear sir, in conclusion, may I remark upon your words, "That the clergy are little likely to do so [protest] when urged by one usually regarded as a rank outsider"? I may be a "rank outsider" in position, as an isolated monk, but not an "outsider" as far as the Faith in our Lord and His religion is concerned; for Christians of all sorts rally round me, I am thankful to say—High and Low Church, Roman Catholics, and Dissenters alike—and we are allowed to realize what a oneness of love, life, hope, aim, and interests we all possess in our one Beloved Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

IGNATIUS, O.S.B., Monk.

P.S.—If anything would cause a wholesale exodus to Rome from our Church, this Fremantle affair will, unless the Bishops begin to act determinately. Thank God, in the Church of Rome such dishonesty could not exist a single day

## PROFANE JOKES.

A bishop, who thought every boy and girl should repeat the Thirty-nine Articles as well as the Catechism, asked a youthful scholar if he had read the Thirty-nine Articles. "No," said the boy; "but I have read the *Forty Thieves*."

"What is the highest dignitary of the Church?" was asked of another scholar. The boy looked up and down, and replied: "The weather-cock."

A certain sky-pilot wrote to a certain judge for a subscription to restore his church. He reminded the judge that the bones of an ancestor lay buried in the chancel. He said that the parishioners were proud of the fact that the ancestor of so distinguished a man was a native of their village, and that there was nothing that they valued more highly than his bones. He then went on in the usual manner to ask for a subscription. The eminent one was quite equal to the occasion. He said that he felt proud of the letter that had been addressed to him, and expressed great satisfaction at the memory of his grandfather being so much revered. "Still more gratified do I feel," he said, "at the mention you have made of his bones, and as you value them so highly it will give me great pleasure to present them to you." And that was all the subscription that parson got.

The parson of N— wants a new church. He has made a pilgrimage of his parish, and in various other ways known to his kind has tried to raise the wind, with the result that he has collected between £2,000 and £3,000. He then quarrelled with the parish (except one man), and N— vows the parson will get no more money there. Nothing dismayed, the parson—with the funds in hand—commences gaily to build a church, which is estimated to cost £8,000, and recently he had an Archbishop to lay the foundation stone. One Sunday evening he had to read for the second lesson the latter part of Luke xiv., and if you turn up the Bible you will see where the fun comes in.

## 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.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Turks and Christians: An Object Lesson in Religious Brotherhood."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, T. Thurlow, "Nunquam's *Merric England*."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "What Think ye of Christ?"

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspar, "Atheism."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, Business meeting.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, A demonstration.

CLERKENWELL GREEN (Finsbury Branch): 11.30, A lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Park Branch: 11.15,

S. E. Easton, "The Exodus"; 3.15, A lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "Myth and Miracle."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Myth and Miracle."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Belief in God."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Bible as a Humorous Book"; 6.30, Mr. Ward, "Can Christ Save Us?"

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Myth, Magic, and Miracles."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, A lecture; 8.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

## COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: Annual Pic-nic. Train to Longton at 8 a.m. Return fare, 1s. 6d.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Mr. Leake's, 19 Chaplain-road): 6.30, Meeting of members.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 7, W. Holmes, "Radicalism and Socialism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Faith and Reason." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Charles Watts—11, "Cromwell and English Freedom"; 3, "The Difficulties of Theism"; 6.30, "Heaven or Earth: Which?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday evening—musical and other recitals.

ROCHDALE (Board Room, Co-operative Hall, No. 2 Building, Toad-lane): 6.30, Members' meeting.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): J. Rowney—11.15, "The Sermon on the Mount"; 6, "Holy Moses & Co."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—September 6, m., Ridley-road; a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell. 13, m., Victoria Park; a., Regent's Park; c., Camberwell. 17 and 18, Derby. 20, Manchester. 24 and 25, Debate with Rev. Mr. Waldron, Manchester. 26, Manchester. 29 and 30, Blackburn. October 1, Blackburn. 4, Manchester.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, London, S.E.—September 6, m., Westminster; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 13, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park; e., Bradlaugh Club. 20, m., Camberwell. October 4, m., Westminster; 11, e., Bradlaugh Club.

## POSITIVISM.

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