

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVI.—No. 52.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1896.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. FOOTE'S LETTERS FROM AMERICA.

XI.—PHILADELPHIA AND BOSTON.

My last letter closed with a record of two delightful days spent with Dr. E. B. Foote. We returned to New York from Larchmont on Friday afternoon, December 4. In the evening Mr. Watts lectured before the Manhattan Liberal Club on "The Philosophy of Unbelief." I could not get my writing finished in time to hear him. When I arrived at the hall I found it full, and a gentleman was participating in the "discussion." He was of Jewish blood and I believe of German extraction, and his English was somewhat mixed, like his observations. Two or three other speakers mounted the rostrum afterwards, but no one really criticised the lecture, although the speeches were interesting to me as revealing certain aspects of Freethought here which I might not have seen otherwise. Mr. Watts complained that he had nothing to reply to; the fact being that pretty well everybody present was in essential agreement with him. The speakers did not contest what he advanced, but gave their own views as to how Freethought should bear itself in politics and sociology. Dr. E. B. Foote junior, who was present, did not speak at all. I expected to hear him, and I was disappointed.

Prior to Mr. Watts's lecture the secretary of the Manhattan Liberal Club referred to the presence in New York of Dwight L. Moody, the famous evangelist, who was conducting a soul-saving mission on a large scale, and with the usual methods of sensationalism, including a display of converted niggers, thieves, detectives, etc., and a parade (on paper) of a considerable supply of converted Atheists. Mr. Dobson suggested that Moody should be invited to a public debate, and the notion caught on with the Liberal Club members, who immediately resolved that such an invitation should be forwarded. Accordingly the following letter was drawn up and posted to the famous Anti-Hell Emigration agent:—

"Pursuant to a resolution adopted at a meeting of the Manhattan Liberal Club, held on Friday evening, Dec. 4, 1896, I am instructed to invite you to debate with Mr. Charles Watts, the well-known Secularist lecturer and debater, the following question: 'Is Christianity or Secularism the More Conducive to Progress in Art, Science, and Morals?'

"The debate to be held on the evening of Dec. 12 or 13 inst., at any place agreed upon by both parties. If, however, you do not desire to meet Mr. Watts alone, you are at liberty to choose a substitute, or as an assistant, any representative defender of Christianity who will, with yourself or singly, debate the question above submitted with Mr. Watts, or Mr. G. W. Foote, or both. Mr. Foote is the successor of the late Charles Bradlaugh as President of the National Secular Society of Great Britain. Mr. Watts is Vice-President of the same Society.

"We believe that if the debate can be arranged much good will result from it to the side presenting the stronger arguments. If Christianity is God's truth, if it is the basis of progress in art, science, and morals, we are anxious to have the fact confirmed. We believe that you represent Christianity better than any man now before the public; and the gentlemen selected to defend Secularism are as prominent and capable in their sphere as you are in yours.

"We trust that you will accept this challenge. If you do, kindly let me know immediately, so that arrangements satisfactory to both parties can be made without delay."

No. 805.

This letter was printed verbatim in the New York *Sun*, and its substance was published in most of the other journals. Of course the interviewers got at Moody on Sunday afternoon in Carnegie Hall. They wanted to know whether he was going to accept the invitation. Moody told the *Herald* man that "he had not received the challenge, and would not enter into such a debate." The *Tribune* man drew him a little further:—

"I have received no such invitation," was Mr. Moody's response.

"Would, in your opinion, such a debate be conducive of good?"

"I can say nothing upon the subject whatever, as the question has never been brought to my attention. This is the first intimation I have had that such a debate is under contemplation."

"Would you be party to such a debate?"

"No!" with much emphasis.

There the matter rested for a few days. Nobody expected Moody to enter the arena of public debate. He is too old a bird to be caught in that way. But the question remained, Would he send a written reply? Moody had at least the courage and honesty to do that. His letter to Mr. Dobson, as secretary of the Manhattan Liberal Club, ran as follows:—

"Park Avenue Hotel (Absolutely Fireproof).

"New York, Dec. 9, 1896.

"MR. EDWARD DOBSON, Secretary—Dear Friend: Your letter of December 5 reached me on Monday.

"I cannot accept your invitation to debate with a leading Secularist for many reasons, of which I shall only refer here to two.

"In the first place, my mind is made up on the question proposed—namely, the relative merits of Christianity and infidelity, under whatever other name it appears.

"Somebody once asked Charles Sumner to hear the other side of slavery.

"Here the other side!" he replied; "there is no other side."

"I would as soon discuss the merits of lying, or adultery, as of infidelity.

"Nobody who studies history need hesitate in answering the question. And I know what Jesus Christ has done for me during the past forty years since I have trusted him. Let the members of your Club accept Christ as their personal savior, and they will not waste time discussing such a question. If I had a remedy that never failed to cure disease for forty years, I should not stop to compare its merits with another remedy.

"My other reason is that the times call for action, not for discussion. Hundreds and thousands of men and women are dropping into drunkards' and harlots' graves every year right here in New York. Now let us all join hands and try to save them. I will try to reach them with the gospel. I will tell them of a savior who came to seek that which was lost; who died a cruel death on the cross in order that their sins might be blotted out in his precious blood. If there is any merit in infidelity, let your members likewise put it into practice. Let them reach out a helping hand to these unfortunates who are sunk in vice and misery.

"Then, when they are restored to purity of life and morals, we shall have time to turn aside to discussion. Yours very truly,

"D. L. MOODY."

Moody's letter is clever. There is no logic in it, but it is calculated to please the Christians. He panders to orthodox prejudice by calling Freethought "infidelity." He does not do this inadvertently, but deliberately. "Whatever you like to call yourselves," he hints, "I shall call you

infidels, because I know that is the most hateful designation I can employ." It is quite natural that Moody should say there is "no other side" to Christianity, and we quite agree with him, though for a different reason. The only distinctive side of Christianity is its barefaced imposture, its evasion of all criticism, its hatred of reason, its emotional appeal to human terror and weakness, and its substitution of futile and often demoralizing charity for sensible reform on the lines of social justice. It is also natural for Moody to think that when *his* mind is made up on any question there is no need for further trouble; but, after all, the object of the Liberal Club was not to convert him, but to give the public an opportunity of judging for themselves. No doubt Jesus Christ has done much for Moody during the past forty years—far more than he has done for a vast multitude of the poor and suffering; but this does not prove the value of Moody's remedy for social diseases. That remedy is applied by myriads of well-fed practitioners all over Christendom, yet it does not abate the disorder. Freethinkers do not want to potter on the surface of things, as Moody does. They do not believe in reclaiming drunkards and harlots by revival meetings and similar agencies. They believe in going to the roots of evil, in dealing with its causes, which lie chiefly in bad education and vicious social environment. All the preaching in the world leaves drunkenness and prostitution in full possession of all its old territory. Personal reclamations do not lessen its area or diminish the number of its inhabitants. In short, the answer to the Churches is to be found in the regular statistics of vice and crime.

But to return to my friend Mr. Watts, who lectured on the following Sunday afternoon before the Brooklyn Philosophical Association on "The Bible and Civilization." According to the *Truthseeker*, at this meeting "an opportunity was given to Mr. Watts by Christian opponents to exercise his powers of debate, which he did to the great delight of Freethinkers and to the confusion of his adversaries." The discussion lasted nearly two hours.

On the same Sunday (December 6) I lectured twice at Philadelphia. I arrived at the Pennsylvania Railway Station at eight on Saturday evening; but my host, the veteran J. O. Bentley, was not there to meet me, having made a mistake as to the train. I was a perfect stranger to the city, so I waited for someone to claim me; and, as no one did so in half an hour, I walked down the steps of the handsome hall to the street, where I saw a solitary hansom and a patient horse waiting for a customer—to wit, myself, as it proved to be in the book of destiny. I asked the driver in a promiscuous way how far it was to 4,312 Pine-street, and he replied, "About five miles." I inquired whether it might not be fifty. He then made a fresh calculation, and thought it might be three. Finally we struck a bargain. He undertook to drive me to the house, whether the distance was three miles or three hundred, and I undertook to pay him a dollar. When I arrived at Mr. Bentley's I found he had gone to bed, but he got up again and made me heartily welcome, and I enjoyed his hospitality until Monday morning. Mr. Bentley's own bedroom, which he gave up to my use, had three windows and one door, and they were all wide open. He told me he believed in the circulation of air, and that was how he kept so healthy and vigorous at the age of seventy-four. I congratulated him on his Spartan habits; at the same time I closed two windows and the door. One window pretty wide open was sufficient for me, and I postponed fresh experiments in ventilation until I had time enough on hand to recover from the possible effects of intra-mural cyclones. Mr. Bentley is also a great believer in pure water, which does not exist on this earth naturally. He has patented an ingenious apparatus for distilling water for domestic use, which ought to have a large sale. The cost is only one cent per day for each member of the household. Of course, the pure water is tasteless, and most people like their liquor flavored. It is a fault in nature's economy that so many wholesome things are unpleasant.

My lectures on Sunday were delivered in a handsome hall under the auspices of the Liberal Union, which has held Sunday meetings for forty years in Philadelphia. Both my audiences were large and appreciative, if I may judge by the applause. Dr. Westbrook, once President of the American Secular Union, was present in the evening. Being troubled with deafness, he occupied the chair next to mine on the platform, and I could see that he followed my lecture with close and interested attention. In wishing

me good-bye, he was good enough to pay me a compliment which is too flattering to be recorded. I was glad to have his good opinion, for the scholar and thinker, as well as the gentleman, is stamped upon his face and head.

Both lectures were followed by discussion. Some of my critics were fairly good talkers, but the substance of their remarks was extremely slender. I asked aloud, "Did I cross the Atlantic for this?" and the audience laughed in sympathy with my dissatisfaction.

Philadelphia is a vast city. I had no idea that it had a million and a quarter of inhabitants. It has a noble post-office, splendid city buildings, miles of fine shops, and one public park ten miles long.

The next day I travelled to Scranton, a mining town, five hours' ride from Philadelphia. Most of the scenery was bold and romantic, the track running for many miles through the gorge of Le High River, and then for many miles through mountain forests. The trees, however, were all small to English eyes. I believe one must go out West to see large trees in the United States. Some day I hope to see the mammoth trees of California.

Scranton Freethinkers are a struggling handful, but they mean to persevere. Many persons of a Liberal tendency are afraid to be seen entering a Secular meeting-place. Scranton is the seat of a Catholic bishop, and the city swarms with churches and chapels, though it only numbers a hundred thousand inhabitants. My audience, like Mr. Watts's before me, was of moderate dimensions; but it comprised a number of leading citizens, including the Democratic candidate for Congress.

I met Mr. Watts again at New York on Tuesday, and on Wednesday we travelled to Boston, where we met Mr. Putnam for the first time since we left Chicago. With him was Mr. Ernest Mendum, the proprietor and conductor of the famous old *Boston Investigator*. Both of us lectured the same evening in the Paine Memorial Hall. There had been no general advertising, but the hall was crowded with Liberals, who gave us a splendid reception. Mr. Mendum welcomed us to Boston, Mr. Putnam recited a poem written for the occasion, and Mr. G. N. Hill, the chairman, introduced us in flattering terms. Mr. Watts spoke extremely well. The *Investigator* says that "he has lost none of his former force and eloquence," and that his discourse was "one of the most able and eloquent ever delivered in this hall." My own reception as President of the National Secular Society was very enthusiastic. The *Investigator* says there was "much curiosity" about me, and is pleased to add that my "reputation as an orator was fully sustained." It was half-past nine when I rose, and I spoke for an hour. The appetite of the Liberals over here for lectures is prodigious. After the speeches were over we stepped down from the platform and shook hands with the friends as they filed past us, in American fashion.

The next morning Mr. Mendum took us for a beautiful drive through Boston and some of its principal environs. Afterwards we visited the *Investigator* office, and inspected the Paine Memorial Hall, which is a handsome building, and ought to be wheeled out into a leading thoroughfare. Mr. Mendum showed us fine hospitality, and we parted from him with much regret. Before leaving for New York we dined with Mr. L. K. Washburn, a Liberal lecturer and brilliant writer, who is also a capital companion. Mr. Putnam, Dr. Noyes, and Mr. J. A. Wilcox sat down with us; also Mr. R. Marston and his father, Mr. Howard Marston, a grand old Liberal now eighty years of age, who entertained all the leaders of the anti-slavery agitation, and sometimes protected runaway slaves with a good rifle. When I look upon such noble old men I almost think we are degenerating.

Mr. Washburn, Dr. Noyes, and friend Putnam saw us to the train, and they were so genial that we felt dull on parting from them. Our visit to Boston is a most pleasant memory. We saw a fine city, in a sense the first home of American Independence; we met sturdy Freethinkers who treated us like brothers; and we felt that we had received a royal welcome.

G. W. FOOTE.

We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves.—*George Eliot.*

CHRISTMAS TREES AND TREE-WORSHIP.

"Under every green tree and under every thick oak the place where they did offer sweet savor to all their idols."—*Ezekiel vi. 13.*

ALTHOUGH the children's Christmas tree is an importation from Germany, it links itself with the fashion of house decorating with evergreens, which, since the times of the Druids, have been the symbol of life triumphant over winter and death. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have sought to show how largely the conception of the renewed life of vegetation has influenced the beliefs of the past; and in evergreens we have, as it were, the sign of that life carried on from year to year.

The Druids worshipped the oak and the mistletoe, believing when the latter grew on the former it was sent from heaven as a sign that the tree was chosen by the powers above. They called the mistletoe "all healing," and when it was found on an oak sacrificed two white bulls, possibly of the breed still preserved at Chillingham. A priest clad in white climbed the tree, and cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle. They believed that fecundity was granted to every sterile animal that drank a decoction of the plant, and that it was an antidote for poison. The cutting of the mistletoe, and the diffusion of its virtues among the people, were important items of Druidical worship.

Early man, no doubt, was a tree-climber and tree-dweller. This, probably, lies at the root of tree-worship, the importance of which, in the early history of man, can hardly be estimated by those who regard trees as only material for the carpenter or fire-wood.* From the fact of shrubs growing from the seeds placed in the graves of the dead, it would be thought that their spirits animated the plants, and a variety of customs show traces of such a belief. Those referred to by Mr. A. J. Evans in his account of "Christmas and Ancestor-Worship in the Black Mountains" are especially interesting.†

The ash Yg Drasil, the tree of life, or universe tree, whose branches reach to heaven, and whose roots spread to hell, is the type of the Teutonic Christmas tree, which has spread from the Fatherland over the civilized world. The idea, however, was not confined to Germany or Scandinavia. Lucian (*De Dea Syria*, 49) tells us that trees loaded with all sorts of ornaments were brought as symbols of life to be burnt in the temple of Atergates at Hierapolis. Lord Leighton's beautiful picture of the Daphnephoria, reminds us that laurel-bearing processions were part of the festival of Grecian Thebes. Twelfth Night was formerly celebrated at Brough, in Westmoreland, by carrying through the town in the evening a holly tree with torches attached to its branches. Another native instance was the Wassail-bob (or bunch) of holly, and other evergreens also corruptly called a wessel, or wesley-bob. It was put together "like a bower," hung with oranges, apples, and colored ribbons, and also sometimes enclosed a pair of dolls also decked with ribbons. It is still carried about in Yorkshire by the children.‡

In most of the counties where apples formed an important crop, apple trees were blessed orwassailed with much ceremony and singing on old Christmas Day, with a view to securing a plentiful crop. At Tenby, and elsewhere in Wales, existed a custom of the people whipping each other's legs with holly branches on December 26 till the blood ran. Here we have a survival of a mild substitute for human sacrifice; such is found everywhere as ritualistic bleeding—the patient used to grasp the pole, says Brand. In the Forest of Dean, at a mine-law court, held before the constable of St. Briands, the witnesses were sworn upon a Bible in which a piece of holly was stuck. Doubtless the wood was sacred far earlier than the leaves. The Bible must have been an addition.

In England the old custom of hauling home the Yule-log, and lighting it from the remnants of the last Christmas log, is, as Mr. Gomme points out, "the folk-lore representation of the ever-burning house-fire, which was kindled once a year from the ever-burning village fire." This, and the prohibition against giving out fire from the house on

Christmas Day, take us back to the time when, as Max Müller says, "the hearth was the first altar, the father the first elder, his wife and children and slaves the first congregation gathered round the sacred fire."

The sacred tree in Hebrew is אלה, Alah, the very name of God, with the root idea of power. Abram pitched his tent under a sacred tree at Mamre, which tree, says Josephus (*Wars*, iv., 97), was as old as creation. W. Robertson Smith, in his *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (pp. 187, 188; 1894), says:—

"When, however, we find that no Canaanite high place was complete without its sacred tree standing beside the altar, and when we take, along with this, the undoubted fact that the direct cult of trees was familiar to all the Semites, it is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that some elements of tree-worship entered into the ritual even of such deities as in their origin were not tree-gods.....The oldest altars, as we gather from the accounts of patriarchal sanctuaries, stood under actual trees; but this rule could not always be followed, and in the period of the kings it would seem that the place of the living tree was taken by a dead post or pole planted in the ground like an English maypole."

The *asherah*, Mr. Smith goes on to observe, "undoubtedly was an object of worship." This part of the subject I have treated in my *Bible Studies* on phallic worship.

When a tree was worshipped as the symbol of a man-like God, we often find a transformation legend. Virgil speaks of men issuing from the bursting trunks of oaks. In Saxony and Thuringia folk-lore still makes children "grow on the tree." I used to be told I was brought from a gooseberry-bush. In Ireland there was an old superstition that the first man was created from the elder tree, with its white pith, and the first woman from the mountain ash, with its red berries. In an Irish fairy tale a cow goes regularly and stands under an old hawthorn tree, out of the trunk of which a little wizened old woman comes and milks her, and goes back into the tree again. All know how Daphne turned into a laurel. The acacia was worshipped by Mohammed's tribe in Arabia, and is still regarded with veneration as a symbol by Masons. Mohammed ordered the sacred acacia to be cut down to the roots, and put the priestess to death. Two capitularies of Charlemagne forbid worship of stones, wells, and trees. The Church Councils of Agde, Auxerre, Nantes, and others, had to renew these prohibitions. As late as the thirteenth century Helmoldus said the Saxons still worshipped wells and trees. Sir John Lubbock (*Origin of Civilization*, p. 292) says: "Even recently an oak copse at Loch Siant, in the Isle of Skye, was held so sacred that no person would venture to cut the smallest branch from it; and it is said that oak worship is still practised in Livonia."

In Siberia the Yakuts have sacred trees, on which they hang all manner of nick-nacks—as iron, brass, copper, etc. Franklin, in his *Journeys to the Polar Sea*, describes a sacred tree on which the North American Crees "had hung strips of buffalo flesh and pieces of cloth." They complained of some Stone Indian who had stripped their revered tree of many of its offerings. In Mexico, Dr. E. B. Tylor observed an ancient cypress; "all over its branches were fastened votive offerings of the Indians—hundreds of locks of coarse, black hair, teeth, bits of colored cloth, rags, and morsels of ribbon." In Whidah, Africa, Bosman says: "The trees, which are the gods of the second rank of this country, are only prayed to, and presented with offerings, in time of sickness." In Abyssinia the Gallas made pilgrimage from all quarters to their sacred tree, Wodanabe, on the banks of the Hawash, worshipping it and praying to it for riches, health, life, and every blessing. Those who know how ancient customs become mere games, and items of religious faith food for mirth, will not wonder at a tracing of the Christmas tree to roots in tree-worship.

Dr. Tylor (*Primitive Culture*, ii., 216) says: "A negro was once worshipping a tree with an offering of food, when some one pointed out to him that the tree did not eat. The negro answered: 'O, the tree is not fetish; the fetish is a spirit and invisible; but he has descended into this tree. Certainly he cannot devour our bodily food, but he enjoys its spiritual part, and leaves behind the bodily, which we see.'" The superstitionist resorts to similar quibbles in every age. The negro, happily, illustrated a prominent feature in all religions—the attempt to accommodate irrational customs to rational ideas.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Gerald Massey holds that the tree became sacred because it produced food and was the support of life. He says: "It was the mother in the sense that the mother was the cow, or the earth was the mother, because it was the source of food and drink in the human infancy" (*Natural Genesis*, i., 380).

† See, too, the article in the *Antiquary* of December, 1881.

‡ See *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 188.

O CLISMAS!

(Extract from a Letter from Hsiang-Foo, London, to Woo Tek Chiu, Nankin.)

THE greatest religious festival of these foreign devils is called Clismas. Their God, whom we call "the pig Jesus,"* is supposed to be born on that day. They call him a Lamb, and in their sacred *King* he is described as a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes.† In his honor at this time they slaughter and sacrifice myriads of lambs. Not only thousands of sheep have their throats cut in honor of this God, but they also slaughter and eat the ploughing beast.‡ And they slay and eat every poor animal that they can ensnare and kill. These Clistians boast of the law of reciprocity—their golden rule—which Kung-fu-tze taught before Jesus; but, if reciprocity is carried out in other lives, they will have much to suffer from the animals they have abused and slain. How far are they from understanding the law of Universal Love, as taught by Mih-Teih?

The rites of Clismas extend over many days. They took me first to see the Cattle Show in a large building, where animals are exhibited, fattened up for slaughter, till they can hardly breathe or move. I was sickened by seeing boys and girls poke their umbrellas into the fat sides of the poor animals. Then I was taken to the Meat Market, where the smell of dead blood and rancid fat was horribly disgusting. Luckily, I escaped the horrors of the slaughtering-houses, which, I believe, are a perfect hell to the poor beings imprisoned in the bodies of animals. Then I went to some Clismas parties, where the sexes mix indiscriminately. The women show as much of a bare skin as at court. When they meet their friends they put their mouths to the lips of the other with a smacking sound, and men hold a piece of a plant over young girls, and then apply their lips with a sound. The houses are decorated with red and white berries, which, I fear, have a naughty meaning. It reminded me of our New Year procession.§ Even little boys and girls are permitted to indulge in this and many other funny games at Clismas. They leap, skip, prance, and posture together. Yet these people talk of our indecent customs! They forget that we were civilized ages ago, when they were still savages. The great duty at Clismas is to stuff and drink. You may go to church, where they tell you to eat in remembrance of Jesus.¶ As they order you to eat his flesh and drink his blood, it seems likely that their savage repasts have descended from cannibal times. They do not use civilized chop-sticks in the Great West, but prolongations of the fingers which they call "forks." They drink, too, immense quantities of intoxicants at this time, which must be almost as injurious as the opium habit they have forced on us. How few could say with Kung fu-tze, "With coarse rice to eat, water to drink, and my bended arm for my pillow, I still have joy"? The children have a Clismas shrub hung with toys and lights and oranges. It reminded me of our Feast of Lanterns,|| and of our poem beginning:—

The trees on fire, and the flowers in silver form nosegays all around.
But our lanterns are more poetical than the candles of these foreign devils. I find some likeness between their Clismas and our New Year. There is the same candle-burning and merry-making, and their children, like ours, have a good time with fruit and sweets. But they always celebrate the same old God.** They sing hymns to him as the Prince of Peace; but you know what value to put on these professions of a people who spend so much of their

* The missionaries mispronounce the word *Chou*, Lord, as if it were *chou*, pig.

† Revelation v. 6.

‡ The Chinese, even when not vegetarians, will not eat beef; not for any superstitious reason, but because they consider it wilful extravagance to kill "the ploughing beast"; for everywhere ploughing is done by oxen, not by horses.

§ At the New Year procession the goddess of childbirth is celebrated. The women take from her flower-laden car the first flower that comes. If red, it means a daughter; if white, a son.

¶ Our friend Hsiang-Foo seems to fall into a pardonable error here.

|| Lanterns representing oranges are usually sent to people having no children. The meaning is "hurry up."

** Deities abound in China, and a new household god is taken every new year. The old god is sent off with a firing of crackers, a libation of wine, and oats thrown out for the god's horses to feed upon.

wealth on ironclads, cannons, and other munitions of war. Indeed, I read that their God is also "a man of war," and that he said he came to earth not to bring peace, but a sword. They think it the proper thing to gorge and guzzle in his honor, and if you get drunk it is "only once a year," and all for Jesus, who appears to have inherited much of the worship of the god Bacchus. It seems to me that Jesus is more like our God of the Kitchen* than either a god of peace or war. His festival is a great time for cooks and all who purvey for the stomach. If I were the Pope, I should change him for a better god.†

As you know, the Westerns are terribly lacking in the foundation of all true morality—filial piety. How could they be otherwise when their great teacher, Jesus, repudiated father and mother? The best thing I have heard about Clismas is that at this season children visit their parents, and families tend to reunite in guzzling and merry-making.

The truth, of course, is that there is so little brightness in the dull and sordid lives of these Clistians that they naturally rejoice to exchange the usual gloom of their lives for a little merriment at Clismas. So we must forgive their barbarity. You know our precept, "We must deal gently with strangers," and, as Meng-tseu‡ says, "In reproving others there is no difficulty; but to receive reproof, and profit by it, that is difficult."

HSIANG-TI-FOO.

THE GOBBERGAMMERGOW PANTOMIME.

SIXTEEN years ago, in the first Christmas number of the *Freethinker*, I gave its then readers a full description of the rare relic of mediæval superstition enacted by the villagers of Gobbergammergow in the Tyrol, in honor of their escape by miracle from plague.

Railways, bicycles, motor cars, and other modern influences having almost obliterated traces of this ancient, and once popular, pantomime, I have been asked to give a new generation some brief account of this mystery-play as performed in ye olden time.

The first scene represents the chamber of the "first young lady." To her enters a fairy announcing the birth of a *Wunderkind*. While a chorus of fairies sing "Hail Virgin ever Bright," the principal fairy drops a pigeon's feather on the bosom of the young lady, and vanishes amid more singing. This prologue ends with a tableau. The comic man, a carpenter, enters, and tears his hair.

The next scene introduces a howling hairy man in a howling wilderness. He eats locusts, and preaches in dumb show to the dumb beasts in the wilderness, who perform a reverential ballet. Then enters *Das Wunderkind*, a long-haired youth, with a golden nimbus round his head. *Pas-de-deux*. The hairy man seizes him by the nimbus and ducks him in an adjacent stream. The stream blazes up, a paper pigeon is lowered from the flies, and the curtain descends to triumphant music.

Upon the rising of the curtain a view is shown of an exceeding high mountain and the pinnacle of a temple. The *Wunderkind* is discovered looking very thin and melancholy. Demon enters with a roll of Hebrew manuscripts under his arm. He facetiously suggests dinner, by offering the *Wunderkind* a stone to munch. After some pantomimic references to the documents aforesaid, the black gentleman tries to induce the *Wunderkind* to go down on his marrow-bones, whereupon the hero shows the demon the least dignified portion of his person. Bogie exits down a trap-door as fairies enter with refreshments. Ballet.

The next scene gives a view of the sea coast, with a number of picturesque fishermen engaged in their avocations. The *Wunderkind* enters, and they leave their nets and follow him. He performs a variety of feats of prestidigitation, and pays all expenses by money taken out of fishes' mouths. After a variety of similar allegorical tricks,

* The Chinese have a household divinity of this name. His shrine is placed over the cooking stove, and he is supposed to ascend to heaven at the end of the year to make his annual report of the affairs of the household.

† The Chinese gods—save Shang-ti—are subject to the Emperor, from whom they derive their authority and titles. They are often promoted or deposed.

‡ Mencius.

he rides in triumph on two donkeys. Grand Spectacular Procession.

The fun now grows fast and furious. An elaborately set scene in a temple, in which all the supernumeraries are thrashed with a whip, and their stalls overturned and goods scattered in a true pantomimic *melée*, carries the mystery play on to its *dénouement*.

The *Wunderkind* is arrested, makes fun of his judge by assenting to what he says, and is in turn mocked and condemned.

But all ends happily. A dark scene which follows merely leads up, and gives effect, to the grand transformation scene, in which the *Wunderkind* is seen ascending among the gauzy clouds amid colored fires.

I cannot pretend to explain the real meaning of all this curious performance, but it would seem, like most other pantomimes, to express the triumph of Light over Darkness, and Love over Hatred. So mote it be.

LUCIANUS.

CHRISTIANA ; OR, GOD'S LAMB AND MAN'S GOOSE.

ON the twenty-fifth December
The Creator's chums remember
To commemorate the birth of Mary's boy,
The synthetic son terrestrial
Of a syndicate celestial
That agreed to boom a God-and-man alloy.

This exotic little "nipper"
Was the son of Jah-the-"Ripper,"
And of Poll the artful lass of artless Joe ;
But, as God is somewhat *plural*,
This bambino, ultra-neural,
Was the composite production of a "Co."

It is stated by the godly
That this youngster, rather oddly,
Was as *singularly plural* as his Pa ;
That, in fact, he was the maker,
And occasional forsaker,
Of the universe, himself, and ev'n his Ma

This unique "cross," "sport" informal,
Of paternity abnormal,
By arrangement, "hopped the twig" upon a "tree,"
Was entombed, went down to Tophet,
"Rose" to Earth, and then jumped off it
Back to *Ev'rywhere*, when only thirty-three.

When this uncreated creature,
With the Jewish cast of feature,
Had enacted this amusing little plan,
He became a link, or hyphen,
And a sort of ghostly syphon,
To connect the fount of godly grace with man.

We are told that this arrangement
Healed the God-and-man estrangement
That was started by the apple-sampling Eve ;
But the queerest thing about it
Is, it *didn't*, if you doubt it ;
What it *did* is fixed by what you *now believe*.

When they say that Jah-the-"Ripper"
Meant to roast them like a kipper,
But agrees to let them off, through Mary's boy,
You can understand the reason
Why this sacred solemn season
Gives a goose-and-turkey bias to their joy.

'Twi'x the birth of "Lamb," or ghostling,
And the death of fatted gosling,
There appears, to carnal minds, no causal link ;
But the minds that grace has quickened,
In the skulls that God has thickened,
Can perceive it ; it's a gift—disease, or "drink."

On the twenty-fifth December
The Creator's chums remember
To commemorate the birth of Bedlam's brat ;
But I'll swear my dying "'davy"
That they worship turkey-gravy
More than Jesus ! if they don't, I'll eat my hat !

G. L. MACKENZIE.

HOLDING GOD TO ACCOUNT.

IN a lecture on the Christian scheme of salvation Mr. Hudson Tuttle, a noted Spiritualist, hurled defiance at the popular God in the following language, which we commend to the thoughtful scrutiny of those who worship him as a sentient being of infinite power, prescience, and love :—

"I hold God to account. I arraign him before the tribunal of Reason. If perfect, I demand that his works be perfect. That is what we demand of man and hold him responsible for. A short time ago a train of cars started from New York freighted with a hundred precious lives. It was Christmastide, and all were expectant and joyous. Soon were they to reach their homes, and the union of broken ties make glad their hearts. The cars rushed along the iron way, swift speeding, as though anxious to bring the wanderers home, and had almost reached their destination when a treacherous bridge gave way, the train plunged into the gulf, and the flames completed the awful disaster.

"Then a cry of execration went up from all the land because the bridge was built from plans of unskilled engineers, and was known to be unsafe by those who sent the trains over it. This execration was the voice of stern, unflinching human justice.

"But what shall we say of an infinite God, who has built the bridge over the gulf of death, from this life to the next, not perfectly, but expressly imperfect, and beneath it placed the yawning abyss of eternal hell ? What shall we say when every plank is a trap, every girder a false support, every brace a delusion, and the revelation given as a guide over the trembling structure impossible to understand, and the army of priests blind leaders of the blind ? And, furthermore, God will not direct, because he wishes man to use his own free-will and choice, and hence sends the streaming millions over the shaky causeway, knowing that only one in a thousand or a million will succeed, while the vast multitude will fall through into the endless billows of fire for being exactly what he created them to be, and doing exactly what he created them to do !

"It is usual for advocates of what are deprecatingly called radical ideas to apologize for their being radical, and the necessity of their expressing them. I make none, but demand an apology from those who set themselves before the world as public teachers, and then hold forth such horrible doctrines, converting a world of joy into one of pain ; shutting out the sunlight of gladness with the clouds of despair ; withering and blasting the hearts of men ; suppressing the emotions, and converting this fair earth into a vale of tears.

"Beaten in the battle of a thousand years with science—meaning knowledge—every dogma and doctrine, from data to conclusion, over and over proven erroneous ; every revelation demonstrated to be false ; every miracle a fraud ; its history unreliable, its pretended knowledge ignorance ; its whole scheme of salvation based on the assertion that man was *created* by a fiat of God perfect, and fell, unnecessary, because man is progressive, and not retrogressive ; an anachronism ; a conglomeration of fancies of an ignorant childish age—why should this corpse, galvanized by the priests, insult the intelligence of the present, and stand gibbering in the pathway of humanity ? Why is it not buried under the mercifully concealing turf, like other dead and loathsome things ?

"Oh ! what a terrible path from the beginning to the end of this career ! The history of the martyrdom of man is written with the heart's blood of the bravest, truest, most devoted thinkers, the wisest, purest, most honest. For a thousand years civilization has borne this old man of the sea, clutching its throat ; yet has it pressed onward towards the light with desperate struggle, through faggots' smoke and beneath the clanking gibbet ; over smouldering ruins of homes, and through the festering pestilence of dungeons ; with quiet submission, or leaving the peaceful fields strewn with the wreckage of armies. It needed a Savior, and found that Savior in knowledge."

—*Independent Pulpit*.

A good old Christmas chestnut reaches us about the restaurant which had two mottoes. One said *Try our Mince Pies* ; the second, *Prepare to Meet Thy God*.

ACID DROPS.

VERILY, man is of few days, and full of humbug. He cometh up as a flower, flourishes like a very green bay tree, and is cut down like a too lengthy obituary notice. The Preacher wasn't so far out when he advised man to eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor. At any rate, when Christmas comes round most of us like a little enjoyment, and the sub. hopes to be able to ease off a little, and give the editor a turn at the grindstone.

The Evangelical Alliance has sent out its annual invitation to a week of prayer, and a chorus is to ascend to the celestial ear-trumpet at the New Year which is expected to hurry up the long-delayed Second Coming.

If prayer does not succeed, there are two good Scriptural reasons. One is that the petitioners are not righteous men—which, indeed, is usually the case. The second is that they have not followed the injunctions of the Apostolic "chief of sinners" to "pray without ceasing." If the Evangelical Alliance were truly evangelical, it would call for not simply for a week of prayer at the New Year, but for incessant intercessions from January 1 to December 31.

We offer the Evangelical Alliance a hint gratis. Let them give an order to Edison for a phonograph that will obey Paul's injunction and "pray without ceasing." If they cannot afford this, they might take a hint from the Buddhists and set up a praying windmill. It would prove cheaper than parson's gas. Any English mechanic would construct a praying-machine to petition the Lord for good weather, grind the coffee, clean the knives, rock the baby to sleep, and praise and bless His Holy Name. Such an article would be invaluable in any Christian family. Perhaps "General" Booth will adopt the suggestion.

A man who was not gifted in prayer hung a copy of the "Lord's Prayer" at the head of his bed, and, just before retiring, would point at it and say, "Lord, them's my sentiments," and would sleep the sleep of the just. It is hardly to be expected that a Chinese Buddhist should express the sentiments of an Englishman on Christmas; but, if the animals slaughtered for God's birthday feast could speak, they might echo Hsiang-Foo.

Christmas is supposed to commemorate the birth of God himself upon our little planet, for the purpose of redeeming the human race from eternal hell. The occasion should be one of awful solemnity; yet, as our Chinese friend notes, it is one largely of gorging and guzzling. Carlyle remarked to William Allingham that he was struck by the number of drunken people about. "But, then," he said, "I remembered that it was the birthday of their Savior."

Colonel Coulson has been lecturing on "Christmas Cruelties" under the auspices of the Humanitarian League, and our vegetarian friends generally are taking occasion of the season for homilies on the evils of over-feeding and indulgence in animal food. With this we have considerable sympathy, but we notice that just as teetotalers go in for Gospel temperance, as though Jesus never turned water into wine, so vegetarians—at least, many of them—appeal to the Bible as though "Thou shalt eat no meat" were an eleventh commandment.

Now, the old Jew Book fairly reeks of wine and roast meat. One of the earliest items recorded of its deity is his preference for the mutton offering of Abel before the turnips of Cain. Sacrifices were the chief feature of the Jewish religion, and Jehovah was a stout kreophagist. In Numbers (xxix. 13) he orders, as a sacrifice "of a sweet savor unto the Lord, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs of the first year." In his holy temple he ordered a bullock and a lamb to be hacked to pieces every morning for dinner, and a lamb for supper in the evening.

The divine rules about diet have often been extolled as sanitary, but they were not always sociable. Thus the Lord tells his people in Deut. xvi. 21: "Thou shalt not eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it, or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." To this day Jews observe this godly method of disposing of diseased meat.

The name "Christmas" appears to have been unknown in England before the Norman Conquest. The pagan Yule seems to have been the general term, though in the Saxon chronicle we read of midwinter. In and after A.D. 1091 we meet with Cristes-messe. Yule-tide covered a period of twelve days. Midwinter and the new year both began on Mother's Night, now known as Christmas Eve.

According to old Barnaby Googe, Christmas and New Year greetings are taken from Paganism. He says in his

Popish Kingdom: "And good beginning of the yeare they wishe and wishe againe, According to the anntient guise of heathen people vain."

In *Footsteps of the Past* the development of Christmas pantomimes from the old mumming plays is pointed out, and "Lucianus," in his "Gobbergammergow Pantomime," seems to hint that the whole Christian story may have developed from histrionic representations. This is, perhaps, a little far-fetched, but the ancient history of the theatre, especially in its connection with religion, is one deserving further investigation than it has yet received.

In days when gods were plentiful, sons of God were by no means scarce, and even virgin mothers appeared when virginity was supposed to give an extra sanctity to motherhood. Mr. Hartland, in his *Legend of Perseus*, has collected stories of supernatural birth from every part of the world. The Virgin Mary, however, seems to have chiefly gathered up the attributes of Isis, who was called the Virgin Queen of Heaven—the Immaculate Mother, whose veil no man had lifted.

Some likeness of the Christian mythology appears in that of our Pagan forefathers, with whom the goddess Frigga, the genitrix of nature, is the mother of the white sun-god Balder, whom all created things swore to preserve, but who was killed by the mistletoe, which was overlooked when a vow to preserve him was taken from the oak.

The mistletoe is held by many to be a highly mystical plant, the golden bough of the sacred groves of Aricia. One Peter Davidson has written a little book on *The Mistletoe and its Philosophy*, in which he ascribes to the plant wonderful powers, if culled at the right astronomical hour. The truth doubtless is that its strange appearance, growing on other trees, when trees were worshipped as having life, and seeming in winter to carry over the seed of life from year to year, caused it to be considered holy by the Druids. In the same manner, the blood-red berries of the holly gave it a sacred character; and early carols, we find, were not addressed to Jesus Christ, who, as the symbol of vegetative life, rose again in springtime, but to the actual holly, ivy, and mistletoe. Sing heigh ho, the holly!

It used to be a common superstition that at twelve o'clock on Christmas Eve the oxen in their stalls would be found on their knees. This was explained as adoration to the baby Christ. The real explanation is that all things were supposed to be in the lowliest altitude until the turn of the year.

Even the game of snap-dragon probably belongs to the solar allegory. Children snatch plums out of the blue flame of burning spirits, or preserve the fruits of the season from the dragon of winter.

Our very roast beef and plum pudding are remnants of sacrifices and sacramental feasting. The ox was sacred to Odin and slaughtered in his sacrifices when parts were partaken of by the priests and people present. The blood was mixed with meal and fruits into a spherical cake to represent the cosmos. This cake was our plum pudding in embryo.

Famine in India, necessitating Government relief of 500,000 persons; over 1,000 lives lost from plague at Bombay; floods in Turkey, occasioning great loss of life, and leaving over 5,000 without shelter, clothes, or food; a landslip in Devon, killing three children; a Welsh colliery flooded, and entombed miner sdrowned; a pit accident at Whitehaven; earthquakes in Morocco and Japan, are among recent items of Divine Providence.

The religion of the Hindu, like that of the Christian, enjoins almsgiving, and every Hindu in times of distress relieves a crowd of applicants at his door, and many, too, buy quantities of grain to sell cheap to those whose self-respect would be wounded by direct almsgiving. No one refuses rice who has it.

At public schools, at the beginning of the century, nine schoolmasters out of every ten were clergymen. At the present time four out of every five are laymen, and the quality of teaching has vastly improved.

Bishop Worthington, of the Episcopal Church, Omaha, declared "we have carried our free educational system too far in this country." Similarly, the vicar of Royston says the Board schools are turning out "clever devils." After all, self-preservation is the first law. The men of God cannot be expected to really relish anything that tends to reduce their own rations.

Kingston Public Schools give an instructive example of the "voluntary" system. The total receipts of the schools

last year were less than £1,400, and of this £1,400 no smaller part than £1,076 is public money, £701 being Government grant, £350 fee grant, and £25 a grant from the Science and Art Department. The scholars paid £180 in fees. There is a small endowment of £15; a similar amount was realized by a sale of needlework, and a few pounds were raised by a public entertainment. The annual subscriptions and donations, by virtue of which the managers retain the control and the right to carry these schools on as a "voluntary" institution, amount to less than £66, and there are just sixty-one subscribers. There is no single subscription larger than £5; apparently that is from one of the trustees. The second trustee's name does not appear in the subscription list, and no other manager gives more than a guinea for the privilege of controlling the schools, towards which the public contribution is over £1,000.

The Rev. Robert Howie, lecturing at Dundee on the "Home Mission Problem," declared that "things are going from bad to worse in Scotland in the matter of Church attendance," and he further expressed a belief that "the problem of getting people to go to church is not to be solved by building more churches." Most of them are in debt already.

Dundee is said by the Scotch religious press to be a very ungodly city, the percentage of church attendance being even lower than that in Glasgow. With courage and enterprise Dundee Freethinkers ought to make a good show in the city on the Tay.

The census of church attendance at Glasgow shows that the best attendance at a single service of any of the Protestant sects was but 10.7 of the population, while the best attendance at a single service of the Established Church was 4.2 of the population. The Established Church in Scotland draws from public money, in one form or another, £380,000 a year.

Rome has made a large number of converts of the paupers under charge of the Lambeth Guardians. The conversions were performed, not by any priestly ministrations, but by the simple announcement that Roman Catholic paupers would have an extra half-holiday every Wednesday to attend mass. Since then the majority of the inmates, who were staunch Protestants, have suddenly become convinced of the superiority of Catholicism.

It is feared that something worse will happen in New South Wales, where a clause in the Factories Act permits Jews to transact business on Sundays. It is expected that this will largely increase the ranks of the chosen people.

The R. C. *Tablet* says that Anglican priests are in the habit of breaking the seal of confession. The *Church Review* retorts that "there are instances when leave to break the seal is said to have been given in the Roman communion. The Pope is said to have given Henry VII. authority to receive from English priests copies of confessions made to them by nobles of the land. The Bishop of Exeter, in his *Letters to Butler*, charges Pope Sixtus V. with not only breaking the seal himself, but also with requiring the oldest confessors to reveal to him what had been confessed to them." We expect it is a case of six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

This is not a blasphemous joke, but an actual fact, which occurred at the Hackney Union within the present month of December. A Salvation Army girl came to the Union for the purpose of being confined. She was questioned by the matron and lady guardians as to who was the author of her calamity. She replied, "the Lord Jesus Christ," and no other answer could be obtained from her. This replica in modern life of the story of Mary made one of the lady guardians observe, "We have heard something like that tale before." The doctor was asked to report as to the girl's mind.

This reminds us that the *Daily News* recently had a good story of a Manchester man in possession of an old master. The subject is the person who commissioned the artist kneeling appealingly at the Virgin's feet. On either side is a female saint. Underneath are the words, "Ave Maria." This wealthy old fellow was one day asked, "What is the subject of that picture?" He scratched his head and looked puzzled. "Well," said he, presently, "to tell you the truth, me and the missis has often cracked our skulls over it, but we found it out at last. Th' fellow kneelin' down doesn't know which of the girls he'd like to marry, and the lady in middle is wavin' 'er 'and and sayin' 'Ave M'ria.'"

"Cleo," writing in the *Sydney Bulletin*, says: "Philanthropy is always blighted by too much Bible-class. Charitable institutions of all sorts are run on the Sunday-school basis—as if men and women could be walloped into good behavior like naughty children. A dipsomaniac can't be

restored to health without being given his daily stimulant of infantile hymns accompanied by harmonium drone. The dipsomaniac is frequently a man of strong mental calibre, an invalid whose over-acute sensibility makes him a neuropath, and he naturally feels an amused contempt for the dull, nerveless Sunday-school level of intellect. Goody-goody folk can't even give the factory-girls a banquet and dance without throwing in a church service, setting apart special seats at the feast for the girls who are privileged to have their impressions of Jonah and the whale guaranteed by an Hon."

In a Perth (W.A.) hotel. Waitress to lady guest playing Raff's "Cavatina" divinely: "Please'm, missis says as only sacred music is allowed in this hotel on Sunday as she runs it respectable; and she says d'ye want any drinks afore the bar closes!"

"Whoever heard of a clergyman's widow marrying another? I never did; and yet I knew a white woman who wedded two black men."

Maitland (N.S.W.) has run a Chinese mission for seven years past, with the aid of a cheap Chow missionary who gets £30 a year. The name of the toiler in the vineyard is Kum Yee, and in seven years he has presumably drawn £210. As a result he reports that "on one or two hearts the truth seems to be taking hold"—it hasn't entirely taken hold of anybody yet. There are about 300 Chinese in the district, and, at this rate of progress, it will take 1,050 years and £31,500 cash before the truth seems to be taking hold of the whole lot of them, and by that time they will probably be dead—most of them, anyhow.

Some funny translations of religious phrases have been made for the benefit of the heathen. In Sir R. Burton's *True Life* we noticed how a missionary at Damascus exhorted the people to "lift up their dog unto the Lord"; and Hsiang-Foo, in the present number, mentions how missionaries speak of the Pig-Jesus. An ex-missionary has been telling an audience that "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," translated into one of the Polynesian dialects, is made: "All the old stones split in two, let me get under a corner of one."

It is eminently fitting that the head of the Church should take his office by a farce and a falsehood—the farce of a pretended election, when he is really nominated by the Prime Minister; and the falsehood, to which the Archbishop of York and eight bishops give their name and authority, asserting that Dr. Temple has been elected by the Dean and Chapter, and asking the Queen to confirm their choice. The *Daily News* remarks: "The bishops may say that it is all a form, and means nothing. In secular matters this would be called paltering with the truth, and that process does not become less dishonest or more seemly when it is applied to ecclesiastical affairs."

A Church paper says that the celebration of a service by the English Church Union for its deceased members was very largely attended. After this, who will refuse to believe that the bodies of the Jerusalem saints arose and went into the holy city?

The poor parsons, according to the vicar of Aylesbury, are so hard worked that it is simply shameful to ask them to perform marriages on a Sunday. We think parties about to marry should seriously ask themselves if it is worth while troubling ministers at all. Marriage by registrar is more private and economical, and entails no utterance of impossible vows.

The *Johannesburg Star* (November 17) calls the Rev. Abraham Matthys de Villiers—who seduced two girls of his congregation, one of whom died while in childbirth,—a Dutch clergyman, and it quotes the *Volksstem* as saying: "He who dared to administer the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to her whose betrayer and murderer he was remains a beast incapable of controlling his passions."

The Rev. Mr. Brooks got a grant of £200 from Mr. Balfour out of the Royal Bounty Fund. Mr. Labouchere exposed the begging-writing schemes of the pensioned pauper, and he brought a libel action, which resulted in a second exposure. His pious letters were simply nauseating.

The Bible in the Light of Day is the title of a volume by the Rev. C. Crosleigh, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Of course, Dr. Crosleigh doesn't let it really be seen what the old barbarous documents are in the light of to-day, but only how they may be adapted and interpreted in fashions their authors never thought of. He avoids such questions as to when and where the books were written, and as to how far they are inspired.

In the January *Young Man* Dr. A. B. Bruce writes on

"Modern Neglect of the Bible," which he attributes to the old-fashioned methods. He says: "My father, a man of God if ever there was one, was reading in course the Aholah-Aholibah chapter in Ezekiel. The tone of his voice showed that it was costing him acute pain, but he was doing his duty. I could not stand it, and said abruptly: 'Father, pass on to the next chapter.' He said: 'Alexander, it is the Word of God.' I replied: 'I don't care, it is not fit to be read.' He turned over the leaf, not sorry, I think, to be relieved by my impulsive interruption." Here is a frank confession that one of the chapters of the Word of God is too disgusting for public perusal.

Relic worship, that survival of fetishism, is not extinct in the Anglican Communion, and the vicar of St. Cuthbert's, South Kensington, is glorying mightily in having a piece of the Saint's chasuble cut off when his tomb was opened in Durham Cathedral in 1827. At St. Cuthbert's, last Good Friday, a service was held for the "Adoration of the Cross." The time may come when the "Adoration of Relics" will come within the sphere of its religion.

The *Christian World* (December 17) tells the following profane story as having occurred in a Methodist chapel. One Sunday the hymn, "Jesus the name high over all," was sung to the tune which has for its refrain, "Singing around the heavenly throne, Glory, glory, glory." The result was that when the congregation and choir came to the last line of the first verse they were shocked to find themselves singing, "And devils fear and fly, singing around the heavenly throne, Glory, glory, glory."

Mr. Carvell Williams, in a letter to the *Times*, quotes a sentence from the *Guardian* of August 2, 1893, which is worth noting. "In order," it admits, "to keep going our own Church schools, we are obliged to block, wherever we can, the general advance of the Education movement." In this matter the Church has been always and everywhere the same.

Solomon, who didn't know the New Woman, said: "There is nothing new under the sun." Here is the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams writing in the *Echo* on "The New Universe." He says: "There is a theory of God which is impossible to the mind saturated with modern knowledge. God as a being of impulse; fickle, variable, changing His purposes and mode of operation to accommodate Himself to the changing needs of man; a God who gets angry and is placated, who is obliged to plan and contrive, to invent new methods to match unexpected necessities; a God who is for the most part an absentee, and makes Himself known only by occasional incursions into the world; a God who will allow the laws of health and disease to be set aside in answer to human supplications, who will arrest the storm, the flood, the pestilence, at the request of man; a God who will in any way reveal Himself as a being so limited as to manifest His power through laws which need to be suspended, modified, or improved to suit any contingency or any emergency in the history of mankind; that conception is gone, and gone never to return."

What is this but saying that the Bible deity is defunct? Yet Mr. Williams reads every Sunday from the book which tells how God gets angry and is placated, who sends plagues and arrests pestilence at the request of man. He reads it to people brought up in the belief that it is all divine. Why does he not read his *Echo* article to his own congregation, instead of the nonsense about what the Lord said to Moses?

It is said that overtures are being made to the leading Wesleyan ministers and laymen from distinguished dignitaries of the Established Church, suggesting the celebration of the sixtieth year of the Queen's reign by the return of the followers of Wesley to the Church of England. The question is, What share of the loaves and fishes is offered? We guess a very small one. The Wesleyans will get better terms when the Church feels itself more truly in danger.

We have read of many schemes for advancing the interests of the British agriculturist, but a Sussex man of God fairly takes the cake with his statement that if farmers would devote more of their income to the work of God—that is to say, to his ministers—there would be less agricultural depression.

The following is given as an actual reproduction of a schoolboy's essay on the so-called Psalmist of Israel: "Davies was a shepherd boy; he went against the Philistines. While he was away, lo, a lion and a bear came and pounced the sheep, and carried away a lamb; but Davies came after them, and soon made them leave a-go of that. He was a giant-killer. When the giant seen him come over the wall, he said, 'Am I a dog that a boy comes after me with slings and sticks and things?' but Davies killed the giant, which made the king mad. He was son of Jessie, and father of Solomum and Absolomum. He had one hundred sweet

singers of Israel. He took a census, and it did not rain for three days and three nights."

One of the evening papers having stated that Mr. E. T. Hooley, the company promoter, who gave the Hooley Communion Service to St. Paul's, had been elected a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the paper received a postcard as follows:—"SIR,—I have no intention of turning my business into a limited company through a 'promoter,' and must request you to contradict the statement.—Yours truly, GEESUS CHRIST." Mr. Christ's letter not being inserted, it has been forwarded unto us, as always distinguished by our concern for his unfortunate family.

Mr. Nisbet, who writes "Our Handbook" in the *Referee*, says: "The other day I stopped and listened for a few moments to a very earnest and vigorous street-preacher. God intends this, he said; God intends that; God is disappointed, vexed, angry, compassionate, and what not. I marvelled greatly that this illiterate man should know so much, and that one of our greatest thinkers, such as Mr. Herbert Spencer, should know so little, and passed on my way."

The people of Walsingham can rejoice in having a metaphysical parson who contributes to the parish magazine articles entitled "The Substance of the Universe" and "The Cosmos is Due to the Self-Sacrifice of God." They seem to warrant the definition of metaphysics as something no one can understand, not even the metaphysician himself.

Some one sent Mr. Coote, of the Vigilance Society, a copy of the Song of Solomon; but he declined to express any opinion as to whether it should be prosecuted for obscenity. This draw was not so successful as that of sending the Revised Version of the Apocalypse to an out-West editor, who expressed the opinion that the author had been indulging in too much old rye.

The *Cabman's Friend*, a goody-goody monthly for Evangelical Jehus, in its issue for January, 1897, tells us of one thing God never made. That is alcohol. It says: "When God made the world, there was not a drop of alcohol in it." God, it seems, only made the ingredients, and left it to man to ferment them. However, he made poisonous plants and berries, yet more deadly than alcohol.

A correspondent of the *Sydney Bulletin* suggests that some lepers, which have turned up in Australia, should be sent on to Palestine to see if the waters of Jordan preserve their old efficacy in the cure of leprosy.

It is very rare indeed for old England to tremble as she did last week, and the fact that some have died from fright lends support to Buckle's reckoning of earthquakes among the causes of superstition. Buckle pointed to Spain, Portugal, and Italy in illustration; and Oscar Peschel, in reply, cited Japan, noted for its earthquakes and irreligion, and Russia without earthquakes, but with superstition. Of course, it is the conjunction of ignorance with fear which does the mischief. The peasants of Japan are superstitious, and those of Russia have plenty of other calamities to dread, if not earthquakes. The slight houses of the Japanese mitigate the damage of earthquakes.

The W.C.T.U. is carrying on the whisky war in Australia. The *Sydney Bulletin* suggests that the esoteric meaning of the letters of the Women's Christian Temperance Union is, "Who Could Tickle Us?"

Le Radical, of Paris, suggests that, while the popular feast days of the Church should be retained, it would be well, now that they have really lost their religious character, that they should do away with such antiquated names as Saint Barbe and Saint Fiacre, and introduce a few modern saints and martyrs from the Republican Calendar.

As a specimen of priestly toll from the dead, the vicar of Hampstead, the Rev. S. B. Burnaby, has taken between November, 1876, and March, 1895, no less than £10,611 from the parish for burials in Hampstead Cemetery, giving an average annual addition to his stipend of £577. The vestry asked for a reduction, but were refused. They then appealed to the Bishop of London, who, of course, backs up the vicar.

Toronto has a minister named Johnson who takes the same view of Freethinkers as our own Mr. Moody—that is, that they cannot be converted, and there is no use trying; which is probably true. Since thumbscrews and other aids to righteousness of that kind passed out of general use, no way of converting Rationalists has been discovered that is worth a moment's notice. But the Rev. Mr. Johnson still favors mediæval methods, and thought that Foote and Watts should have been put in gaol for uttering their "blasphemies" in Toronto.—*Truthseeker*.

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF FABRICATION.

It has been shown, I submit, beyond all reasonable doubt that neither Paul the apostle, nor John the beloved disciple, had knowledge of the acts and precepts now ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels. And this being the case, the obvious inference is that all those sayings and doings were fabricated in post-apostolic times. This conclusion receives confirmation from many passages in the Gospels, of which the following may be adduced as examples:—

1. The writer of the Fourth Gospel represents Jesus as saying (iii. 13):—

“No man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven.*”

Now, Jesus was not “in heaven”—wherever that place may be—at the time these words are said to have been uttered; but at the period when the Fourth Gospel was written he was believed to be in that undiscoverable locality. Hence, the Gospel writer, naturally thinking of him as having long ago left the earth for a mansion in the skies, by inadvertence makes his Lord speak of himself as “the Son of man *which is in heaven,*” when he was, according to that Gospel, holding a discourse with Nicodemus in Jerusalem.

As regards the other statement in the passage—viz., that “No man hath ascended into heaven”—this, if we accept the Old Testament accounts as correct, is untrue; for in one of those stories the prophet Elijah is stated to have ascended straight up to heaven, and in another it is implied that the antediluvian patriarch Enoch was admitted into the same abode of bliss. These matters had apparently slipped the memory of the inspired evangelist; or, more probably, he had never heard of them. For he either states himself, or makes the Baptist say (it is uncertain which), that “No man hath seen God at any time” (i. 18). The latter statement is contradicted by Exod. xxxiii. 20–23 and xxiv. 9–11, in which paragraphs it is distinctly stated that both Moses and seventy elders saw the God Jehovah or Yahuah. As to the words put in the mouth of Jesus, it is obvious that, if they had really been uttered by that personage, they would be a proof of his imperfect knowledge of the Old Testament; but there are good reasons for believing that they were never spoken by any historical person at all.

2. The same veracious writer represents Jesus as saying of his apostles in a prayer to God (xvii. 12):—

“*While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition.*”

Jesus, at this time, had not left his disciples; he was still “with them.” But he was not with them when the author of the Fourth Gospel sat down to write his inspired history; hence, we have another example of that careless fabricator’s inadvertence. Again, the treachery and fate of Judas Iscariot—“the son of perdition”—are spoken of, not as a prediction, but as a fact of which the writer had no doubt. Yet Judas, at the time the statement was made respecting him, had not “perished” either literally or figuratively.

3. In Matthew’s Gospel Jesus is represented as saying (xi. 12):—

“And from the days of John the Baptist *until now* the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force.”

These words were uttered while the Baptist was still alive, and at a period in Christ’s ministry when “the kingdom of heaven” can scarcely be said to have begun. No time had elapsed between “the days of John the Baptist” and the day upon which Christ is represented as speaking. The “days” of the two teachers were identical. Only a writer who lived many years after the time of Christ and the Baptist (say half a century), and who was able to look back through the long period which separated the days of the Baptist from his own—only a writer under some such circumstances could have employed the words which are put in the mouth of Jesus. These words, too, could not have been used until the Christians had become a well-known sect, and had actually suffered, or were reported to have suffered, some kind of persecution—a fact which again points to post-apostolic times.

4. An oft-quoted example of the ascription of later ideas

to the Jesus of the Gospels is the use of the word “cross” in the following passages:—Matt. x. 38; xvi. 24; Mark viii. 34; x. 21; Luke ix. 23; xiv. 27. The expression “to take up one’s cross” is merely a metaphorical way of speaking of the patience and endurance under affliction or suffering which is supposed to be peculiar to Christians. The hearers of Christ could have no idea of the sense such words conveyed. Only later Christians, who had the crucifixion of their Lord before their eyes, could make use of, or could have originated, such an expression.

5. Another well-known example is the word “gospel,” which, like the cross, has also been fraudulently placed in the mouth of the Gospel Jesus. The Greek word *evangelion* signified originally nothing more than “good news,” and might be employed for any “good news.” The early Church, however, used the word to denote everything relating to the new plan of salvation resulting from the death of Christ, as well as the sayings which had been ascribed to that personage. It is very unlikely that Jesus originated, or even made use of, the word. Yet in the Second Gospel we read (i. 14, 15):—

“Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the *gospel* of God, and saying: ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the *gospel.*’”

Here it is implied that Christ’s hearers were all perfectly acquainted with the peculiar signification given to the word by later Christians; hence, when Jesus told them to “believe in the good news,” they knew by intuition that this “good news” referred to the atonement which he was about to make later on for their “sins,” by dying upon a cross to appease the righteous anger of his “Father,” who had not forgotten (nor forgiven) the stealing of those apples from his garden some four thousand years before.

In the same Gospel Jesus is represented as saying of the woman who poured some precious ointment on his head (xiv. 9):—

“Verily, I say unto you, wheresoever the *gospel* shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”

Here one of two things is plainly implied—either (1) that the first promulgators of the Gospel and all later preachers would, in teaching, narrate the incident of the anointing of Christ; or (2) that this incident should be preserved in a written Gospel, and so become known wherever that Gospel was read. Now, if we take into consideration the fact that neither Paul, the greatest preacher of the Gospel, nor John, the author of the Revelation, has once referred to the anointing of Jesus by a woman, and also that the story of this anointing is found in all four canonical Gospels, the latter alternative is the only conclusion possible. In other words, Mark, the second-century editor, noting that the incident mentioned was one of the anecdotes in the primitive Gospel from which he and others compiled their improved Gospels, took the liberty of putting the statement quoted in the mouth of Jesus. This statement was copied by Matthew, who altered “wheresoever the *gospel* shall be preached,” etc., into “wheresoever *this gospel* shall be preached,” etc.

6. In the Third Gospel Jesus is represented as saying to the Jews (xi. 50, 51)—

“that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation; *from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary; yea, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation.*”

In the parallel account in the First Gospel (xxiii. 35) Zachariah is said to be “the son of Barachiah.” As to the justice of punishing the unfortunate Jews who lived in the time of Christ for all the righteous blood shed on the earth up to their time, I have nothing to say; I am concerned now only with the words in italics. From these it is quite clear that Zachariah is mentioned as a recent instance of martyrdom. In the account in the First Gospel Jesus speaks of “*all* the righteous blood shed on the earth,” from the time of Abel to that of Zachariah—that is, from the earliest recorded instance to the latest notable example. Who, then, was this late martyr Zachariah? In 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, is an account of the martyrdom of Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada; but this took place nearly nine hundred years before the time of Christ, and could not, therefore, be the one referred to. We have, then, to look for a later martyred Zachariah, which quest results in two,

and only two—one historical, and one fictitious. The first is Zachariah, the son of Baruch, who was foully murdered in the temple, "between the altar and the sanctuary," during the siege of Jerusalem (*Josephus*, War, iv., v. 4). The other is Zachariah, the father of the Baptist, who, in the apocryphal Protevangelion (par. xxiii.) is stated to have been slain by order of Herod "at the vestibule of the temple of the Lord." The historical Zachariah suffered martyrdom about thirty-eight years after the crucifixion; his imaginary namesake came into existence some time later. The historical Zachariah doubtless suggested the other. It is probable, however, that the Zachariah of the Protevangelium was the only one known to Matthew and Luke, and was therefore the one to whom Jesus is represented as referring, though Matthew, in designating him "the son of Barachiah," indicates the source—Zachariah, the son of Baruch.

ABRACADABRA.

THE DECLINE OF THE PULPIT.

No student of history needs to be told that the power of the clergy is relatively less than in former days. The diminution of clerical sway over sentiments, opinion, and conduct is evident in every direction. Take as a single example the Sunday, the day on which the men of God claim the monopoly. Even a Conservative Government has passed a measure opening the people's treasures of art upon their day of leisure, in spite of the interested opposition of the ministers of religion. The united power of the pulpit would now be too impotent to stop bicycling or preventing excursions on the Lord's Day. The cause of the downfall of the clergy is not far to seek. It is the advance of the laity in intelligence. It is not so long since all the avenues of learning were in the hands of the clergy, an interested corporation who manipulated things to suit their own order. Learning was mainly theological. Any man of parts unfitted for a soldier had to take to the Church if he hoped to advance in life. The discovery of printing was the first blow to the clergy, and, as the press has grown, so has the pulpit declined. Education, once their sole prerogative, is gradually emancipating itself in every country, and has become a department of the State with officials of its own.

Anyone past middle age, who looks back on the manifestations of religion in his young days, notices a vast alteration. The religionist of a generation ago would have been as horrified at the musical services which now go on in the churches as at the idea that one of the writers of *Essays and Reviews* would become the Primate of the Church. Verily the old order changeth, giving place to new. In the Church Establishment, Evangelicalism has degenerated into mere snivel and snuffle. Low Church platitudinarians have declined before Broad Church latitudinarians and High Church attitudinarians, or before the various cross-bred mongrels between them. The Ritualist apists of Papists have triumphed with their mass in masquerade. Altars, candles, crucifixes, pictures, incense, gorgeous garments, and other sensuous attractions, take the place of good old doctrine. The clergy not only go to *The Sign of the Cross*, but imitate the arts of the actors. The choir has become more important in worship, and the congregation less. A man of God is no longer required to be "powerful in prayer." That he is "a good intoner" is a stronger recommendation. Musical services, short sermons, and brief prayers are now the rule. Petitions to the Throne of Grace, giving lengthy hints to the Maker of the universe as to the management thereof, are becoming things of the past.

The spread of Ritualism is a proof of the decline of the pulpit. The man of God no longer depends on discourse. It can be criticized and exposed by his congregation. He relies on his histrionic paraphernalia, his assumption as the ordained receptacle of divine grace, the disposer of the holy sacraments. Sacerdotalism is really a sign of clerical decay. It is aping the forms from which the spirit has long since fled. It is successful because most people in their leisure do not want to think, but to be relieved from thought. The priest, like the publican, supplies them with a stimulant and an entertainment. Booth has catered to the craving for excitement so effectually that between Salvationism on the one side, and Roman Catholicism on the

other, both churches and chapels try to outdo each other in attractive services. This all means the decay of real religion. Like a burlesque, it is not true, but it can be made very entertaining.

CELSUS.

"NOW WE SHA'N'T BE LONG."

MEEK and gentle Jesus C.
Such a solemn chap was he
That you never would have thought that he could joke ;
Still, the fact is very plain
That of humor he'd a vein,
When he hocus-pocussed Galilean folk.
"When my life's been sacrificed
I shall come again," said Christ,
"With a winged and a white night-shirted throng ;
Very soon we shall arrive,
Yes, as sure as you're alive
You can take my tip that now we sha'n't be long !"

Said the Lord, "Look out for squalls
When we leave our golden halls,
And to *terra firma* take our flying leap ;
You will find you're 'up a pole'
If you haven't saved your soul—
Or, in other words, if you are not a sheep,
Ancient Nick, who'll then be loose,
Will his toasting fork produce,
And he'll collar you, and stick you on a prong.
Oh, we mean to make things hum
When to judge the world we come—
So look out," said Christ, "for now we sha'n't be long."

Folks have waited ever since
For the coming of the "Prince,"
With the patience of the much-enduring Job.
Nineteen centuries have fled
Since he vanished over-head,
But he hasn't reappeared upon the globe.
Yet, although the Lord is late,
People, added in the pate,
Cannot see that what he prophesied was wrong ;
They must be as blind as bats,
And have brains as small as sprats,
For he plainly stated, "Now we sha'n't be long !"

Christ has ruled for ages past,
But his power is waning fast,
For from Science he's sustained a fearful shock ;
We can hear his dying wails,
While she's hammering the nails
In his coffin, just as fast as she can knock.
He will soon be in his grave,
For himself he cannot save ;
At his funeral we'll sing a joyful song.
Death of Christ means dawn of day,
So we'll sing no mournful lay,
But a song entitled "Now we sha'n't be long !"

ESS JAY BEE.

SANTA CLAUS.

THE small boy had been only a day or two at school when he approached his father, showing a great deal of indignation.

"Papa, that isn't a good school. I don't want to go to that school any more."

"Why, my boy ?"

"Well, do you know what the boys at that school say ?"

"What ?"

"Well, papa, they say there ain't any Santa Claus ; that it's not true ; there ain't any such thing. Papa, there is a Santa Claus, isn't there ?"

The father thought a moment. Then he decided to tell the child the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So he took him on his knee and told him how it was a pretty fabrication made up by fathers and mothers who loved their children to make them happy, and the fathers and mothers were the real Santa Claus. The small boy listened in silence. This was a shock to him, because, we suppose, like older and more inexcusable people, he felt he had been making a painful exhibition of his ignorance. He slid down from his father's knee, and walked across the room to the door. He opened it, and stood holding the knob for a moment in a kind of deep thought. Then he turned and looked at his father.

"I say, papa, have you been filling me up about the Devil too ?"

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF NATURE.

HE was an ardent evolutionist, and was holding forth on the interdependence of nature.

"You see," he said, "it has been shown by Darwin that the clover crop depends entirely upon the number of old women in the district. The fertilization of clover is chiefly accomplished by the agency of bees roaming from flower to flower; the chief enemy of bees is the mouse, which invades the hives and devours the young pupa; the mice in their turn are the prey of cats; and the number of mice is regulated by the number of cats in the neighborhood. So that, if there are few old women, there are few cats, many mice, few bees, and poor clover. If there are many old women, there are many cats, few mice, many bees, and rich clover crops."

"Wal," said the Yankee, "I guess *we* didn't hit on the doctrine of evolution; but we were right there on the interdependence of nature long before Darwin struck it. In Kentucky, where I was raised, they had a law agin foxes, and the sheriff paid a bounty on every fox-scalp that was brought in. Some of these sentimental coons got up a cry that all the wild animals of America were being exterminated; and they brought in a Bill in the Kentucky legislature to repeal the law agin the foxes; and they got mighty near passing it. When up gets a farmer from a mountainous and sparsely-settled part of Kentucky, and says, with indignation fairly breaking out on him, just like a rash, says he: 'Gentlemen, I oppose this Bill on religious grounds. If the bounty law is repealed, my constituents will be deprived of the benefit of hearing the Gospel. Up my part of Kentucky we are all Methodists, but as we are not thick enough to support a frame chapel we depend on travelling preachers. The preachers won't come without we give 'em chickens. We can't raise chickens without somebody kills the foxes; and there ain't nobody that can afford to waste his time going round killing foxes if he ain't paid for it. So it appears to me, gentlemen, that, if this Bill becomes law, all my constituency will be deprived of preachers and preaching; and we shall all be like the heathen that bow down to wood and stone.' The result of which eloquent peroration was that the whole blamed Bill was thrown out, and the foxes continued to be killed in the interests of religion in Kentucky."

The Baby God.

When a baby is produced in long clothes, the presumption is that it came into the world in the ordinary manner. A mother on earth and a father in heaven is unnatural. Every child of woman born has a father on this planet, and if he cannot be found it is not the fault of biology. It is simply a case for the police.

It is presumable, therefore, that Jesus Christ (if he ever lived) came into existence like every other little Jew of his generation. Those who say that his mother was a woman, but his father was not a man, must prove the statement. They should also explain why a mother was necessary if a father was dispensable. A half miracle is doubly suspicious. It is as easy to be born without one parent as without two. Why, then, did Jesus Christ avail himself of the assistance of Mary? Why did he not drop down ready-born from heaven? He is said to have returned there as a man, after burial. Could he not also have come from there as a baby, without birth? Why was the plain natural mixed with the uncertain supernatural, to the subsequent confusion of every honest and candid intelligence?—G. W. Foote, "*Who Was the Father of Jesus?*"

On the Bible.

(AFTER SCOTT.)

Within this awful volume lies
Lie thick—as well as mysteries—
Designed to gull the human race,
Who swallow all with little grace.

They read, they fear, they hope and pray,
Until their sense is charmed away.
Brave men there are, of woman born,
Who *think* and laugh the book to scorn.

C. K. LAPORTE.

A poor woman in childbirth had so bad a time that the priest was called in. While he was praying, the physician, by his attentions, got the matter over safely. The priest took his hand, and, raising his eyes to the ceiling, said: "I thank you in the name of the Father." "And I, sorr," said the actual father, with a glance at the babe, "in the name of the rest of the family."

CORRESPONDENCE.

OBJECTS OF PIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It will amuse some of your readers to know there exist such articles as holy pipes—not the camulet of the Red Indian, but pious clays—in so near a country as Germany. I have obtained three; one of them embossed with the emblems of Faith, Hope, and Charity, another with the image of a miraculous Virgin and Child, and the third bears the likeness of no less a god than the Holy Coat of Treves. They are common clay pipes, and are smoked by laborers. Whether they are "indulged" or blessed, I do not know; but they are certainly interesting as a new extension of idolatry. I have given them to the Secretary of the National Secular Society for the Society's Rooms, in the hope they may form the germ of a collection of eccentric religious objects, which may eventually lead to the formation of a Museum of Cults. G. P.

THE PREVENTION OF PREMATURE BURIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The growing attention paid to this subject, coupled with the desire for information, in order to avert the risk of the most dreaded catastrophe to which every member of the human family is liable, prompts me to invite the co-operation of the press. Already I have received and answered over four hundred letters from persons anxiously interested in the subject; but applications accumulate, and it appears necessary to take other steps. In response to inquiries as to publications bearing on premature burial, I would suggest the following: *One Thousand Persons Buried Alive*, a treatise on suspended animation, by Moore Russell Fletcher, M.D. (Boston, U.S.; 1890); *The Occult Causes of Premature Burial*, by Dr. Franz Hartmann (Swan Sonnenschein); *La Mort Réelle et la Mort Apparente*, by Dr. Icard (Paris; 1897); *The Perils of Premature Burial*, by Professor Alex. A. Wilder, M.D. (London: E. W. Allen; 1895); *Premature Burial, and How it may be Prevented*, by Messrs. Tebb and Vollum (London: Swan Sonnenschein; 1896). An almost complete list of works, dating from the seventeenth century, the titles of which alone occupy twenty-five closely-printed pages, will be found in the bibliography of the last-named recently-published treatise. The four works before mentioned will furnish students with the results of the latest researches on the momentous subject, which before long must engage the attention of Parliament and of all your reflective readers.

Further information can be obtained from Mr. Arthur Lovell, secretary, London Association for the Prevention of Premature Burial, 88 Hillfield-road, West Hampstead, N.W., or from the undersigned, on receipt of a stamped and addressed envelope.

J. R. WILLIAMSON.

42 Stibbington-street, London, N.W.

Obituary.

It is with deep sorrow I have to record the death of Mr. John Lees. He was killed on the railway, on the 12th inst., near his home at Aberlady, where many a time Mrs. Besant and Mr. C. Bradlaugh and family found a resting-place. He was always true to the cause, and was for some time a vice-president of the N.S.S.—J. F. DEWAR.

It is with regret that I record the death, at seventy-eight, of Thomas Duffy. A member of the Bethnal Green Branch, he was a staunch and fearless Freethinker. Even up to two years ago he defended Freethought on the Christian Evidence platform. A kind father, a good husband, and an earnest friend, he died as all real Atheists die—vigorous in his denunciation of supernaturalism. I was with him the evening before his death, and he was sensible to the last. He severely questioned me upon the success of the Foote and Watts American tour; and almost the last words were to his son-in-law that he wanted to be buried as an Atheist. In the absence, through illness, of Mr. R. Forder, the undersigned spoke a few words.—JAMES NEATE.

It is not that religion is merely useless; it is mischievous. It is mischievous by its idle terrors; it is mischievous by its false morality; it is mischievous by its hypocrisy, by its fanaticism, by its dogmatism, by its threats, by its hopes, by its promises. Consider it under its mildest and most amiable form, it is still mischievous, as inspiring false motives of action, as holding the human mind in bondage, and diverting the attention from things useful to things useless. The essence of religion is fear, as its source is ignorance.—*Frances Wright, in "A Few Days in Athens."*

BOOK CHAT.

In a rationalistic work, entitled *Catholicity: Spiritual and Intellectual*, by T. Wilson, late minister of St. Peter's, Mancroft, Norwich, and published by John Chapman in 1850, it is stated that in a periodical called *Annals of Religious Science*, published in Ireland, with the sanction of the Roman Catholic Primate, it is plainly laid down that the sun is *two yards* in diameter, and the earth immeasurably vaster than all the stellar hosts put together, with much more to the like effect. We were unaware that the real Christian astronomy had been brought down so near to our own time.

From the Secular Sunday-school, Pole-lane, Failsforth, we receive a very neat volume of *Secular Hymns*, compiled for their own use. The book contains over three hundred well-selected hymns of a manly character, and entirely free from theological taint, or the mawkishness too usually associated with hymns. All the selections have the metre indicated, and are indexed, so that the work can be recommended to societies desirous of cultivating social harmony.

The Labor Annual for 1897, edited by Joseph Edwards, is now in its third year, and fully bears out its secondary title, being "A Year-Book of Social, Economic, and Political Reform." It is full to the bung with information of interest to all concerned in the labor movement and in social and political reform. Among the features are a well-compiled calendar; full directories of advanced journals, organizations, and lecturers; an index to the principal articles on social subjects which have appeared during the year; and fifty-two biographies of reformers, among them Mr. G. W. Foote. The *Annual* has many portraits and illustrations, and is altogether a capital shillingworth.

The Greek View of Life, by G. Lowes Dickinson, M.A., is announced by Methuen & Co. It purports to give the Greek view of religion, of the state of the individual, and of art, and should be both interesting and instructive.

The latest volume of the Oriental Translation Fund, 22 Albemarle-street, announced as "now ready," is entitled *Kadambari*. It is a Sanskrit romance, translated by C. M. Ridding, and is interesting as one of the comparatively few works of which the date is known, and as having been long popular in India.

The *Academy* now gives brief reports as to the condition of the book market in various towns. Here is an item from York: "Divinity is at a discount since clergymen have taken to bicycling, cricket, lawn tennis, and other outdoor pursuits." The cycling "boom" seems to have brought a "slump" in theology.

Daybreak: A Romance of the Old World, is a novel with a purpose, by James Cowan, published by H. Richmond, of New York. The purpose, however, is by no means novel. Mr. Cowan takes us to the planet Mars to show up the superior government, science, social life, and religion of the Martians. We are happy to learn that they have "no government, in the strict sense, for there is no one that needs governing." They have organizations for mutual help, but no legislators or rulers. After this it is a down-come to discover that poor Jesus Christ had to go to Mars to be crucified, in order that Martians might accept the belief in a Son of God who died for the sins of man. We suppose he is still travelling round the planets, which may account for his delay in putting in his promised speedy second re-appearance. Anyone who got to Mr. Cowan's Mars would be little likely to wish to return to earth.

Olive Schreiner may claim the fairly unique distinction of having written a famous book at the age of twenty. She started *The Story of an African Farm* when quite a girl in her teens, and was scarcely of age when she came to London with her manuscript. The second daughter of a Lutheran clergyman in South Africa, her earliest work shows how she emancipated herself from the influence of dogmatic religion.

In Mr. S. C. Musgrave's *To Kumasi with Scott* he tells how one of the most noted of the Ashanti secret societies of cannibals, known as Leopards, was an ex-Methodist Sunday-school teacher. In spite of his Christianity, the converted savage is, according to Mr. Musgrave, a savage still. The command to "eat my flesh and drink my blood" gets taken very literally, despite the explanation of the "God-palaver man," as the negro calls the missionary.

The end of the year is with many races a time for expelling devils and clearing up accounts. Mr. Musgrave tells how,

among the natives of the West Coast, there exists a bad Christmas custom. In Christian Europe Christmas is the season at which people are supposed to let bygones be bygones. In Christian Nigritia it is the season for wiping off old scores in quite another sense. The "claret" runs—but down the civilized dorkie's white waistcoat.

A new volume of verse by Alfred the little Laureate, entitled *The Conversion of Winckelmann*, is announced. Mr. William Watson should reply with a counterblast, to be called *The Mussulman's Damnation*.

The second part of *The Woman's Bible* is to be published from the office of the *Boston Investigator*.

The Puritans justly considered Christmas, like other of the Catholic festivals, as so many remnants of Paganism. Prynne says in his *Histriomastix*: "Our Christmas lords of misrule, together with dancing, masks, mummeries, stage players, and such other Christmas disorders now in use with Christians, were derived from these Roman Saturnalian and Bacchalian festivals, which would cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them."

PROFANE JOKES.

MR. HARE records that Dean Stanley once asked some scholars the meaning of bearing false witness against one's neighbor, and received for reply: "When nobody does nothing to nobody, and somebody goes and tells."

"Mamma, is it true that grandma is better off than she was before she died?" Mamma—"Oh, yes, my darling. Yes, grandma is in a beautiful land, where sorrow and pain are quite unknown." Child—"Then what's the use of having doctors to keep us from going there?"

Place—Orderly-Room of 22nd Hussars. (Prisoner, under escort, marched in. Adjutant states charge to Commanding Officer, who is a martinet of the old school.) Commanding Officer—"Drunk, and fighting in the barrack-room, eh? (To Adjutant) What d'ye say his name is?" Adjutant—"His name, sir, is Private—[at this instant a friendly but foolish subaltern surreptitiously sticks a pin into the energetic Adjutant]—Jesus Christ!" Commanding Officer—"Jesus Christ? I've heard something of this man before. Ah, yes! Chaplain said last Sunday he was a pestilent fellow. Seven days in the Guard-room. March in the next prisoner."

Dr. Nevercease, having exhausted his "thirdly," "and moreover," "finally," and "one word," further asked: "And what shall I say more?" A muffled voice from the congregation earnestly responded, "Say Amen."

Another reasonable interruption occurred when Boanerges Brimstone announced: "I have invited Brother Sleepyhead to preach, but he declines." "Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord," exclaimed a devoted pietist in a front pew.

"Why is baby like Jonah?" asked Mr. Benedict, as he walked the squaller up and down the bedroom. "Because he has been in a wail three days and three nights." And there was weeping and whaling and gnashing of teeth.

"Now, children," said the Sunday-school teacher to her class, "who loves all men?" "All women," replied a little girl.

Jesus said: "The poor ye have always with you." Yes, but the rich go out of town in summer.

"I am wedded to Jesus Christ," said Salvation Sal. "Well, your father-in-law ought to be ashamed of you," said a passer-by.

The Prince de Conti was not fastidious on the subject of the Mass. He wished to have for his almoner the Abbe Prevost, the author of *Manon Lescaut*. "Monseigneur," said the Abbe to him, "I have never said Mass." "Never mind," says the Prince, "I never hear it."

Parson—"In the bright world above you shall wing your way"—Dying Bicyclist (interrupting)—"Wings be blown; can't I have wheels?"

"Why do you sign your name J. John B. B. Bronson?" asked Hawkins. "Because it is my name," said Bronson. "I was christened by a minister who stuttered."

Ethel—"Mamma, what makes the lady dress all in black?" Mamma—"Because, dear, she's a Sister of Charity." Ethel—"Is Charity dead, then?"

Droll verse from a Sunday-school picnic poem:—

No pen can paint the rapture the God-fearing spirit feels
When a coy and bashful maiden seeks for safety in her heels,
And the deacon, hard upon her, runs her down with final spring,
And then mugs her all the harder for breaking from the ring.

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, "Colonel Ingersoll and the Freethought Movement in America."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 6, Tea and Conversazione—Winwood Reade's birthday. Dec. 31. Social party.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Freethought and Morals."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Sankhya Philosophy."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Children's Festival.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3, Mr. Ward will lecture—weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherd's Hall): 7, Watts Treasure, "Christ the Socialist." December 28, at 7.30, Concert and dance.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class—J. Gilbert, "The Law of Copyright: An Examination"; 6.30, W. Gilmour, "Morality."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Musical evening.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Musical and literary evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, S. Reeves, "The Meaning of Socialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): January 1, Annual soirée.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 7, A meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Dyson—3, "In Defence of Materialism"; 7, "Christmas: Its Origin and its Relation to Christianity." Tea at 5. December 30, Members' Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5.30 prompt.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, An Address.

Lecturer's Engagement.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—December 27, Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

Lady Readers

WHO ARE INTERESTED IN THEIR COMPLEXIONS.

Please send address for pamphlet, or call and try my BEAUTY Preparations, FEE OF CHARGE, at my Toilet Parlors, any day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

This is something new. You will be delighted with results. *Mention this paper.* MADAME CROSS, American Beauty and Hair Specialist, 70 Newman-street, Oxford-street, London, W.

ALLINSON FOR HEALTH.

IF YOUR BABY WON'T THRIVE,
YOUR BOY OR GIRL IS DELICATE,
YOU ARE ILL AND CAN'T GET WELL,
YOU WISH A SOUND BRAIN IN A HEALTHY BODY,

Consult DR. T. R. ALLINSON,

4 SPANISH PLACE, MANCHESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

Fee 10s. 6d. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. To working classes, 5s., from 6 to 8 p.m.

DR. ALLINSON cures without drugs or operations. He has 10,000 consultations yearly. Send 10s. for his "Book of Health."

GOVERNESS desires an Engagement. Subjects: English, French, German, Elem. Latin, Music, Painting, and Drawing. Address, T. B., Milnthorpe Post Office, Westmoreland.

CALLCUT & PINNELL, HOUSE DECORATORS. Rents Collected; estimates for General Repairs. Address, 42 Maivern-road, Queen's-road, Dalston; or Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

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

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.

Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.

Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.

The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.

Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.

The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.

Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.

Types of Religionists. 2d.

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

Just Published,

An Outline of Evolutionary Ethics.

By C. COHEN.

Price Sixpence.

I. Introductory—II. The Meaning of Morality—III. The Standard of Morality—IV. The Nature and Authority of Conscience—V. Society and the Individual.

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

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

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made ONLY at No. 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. per doz., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.

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

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

W. J. Rendell
No. 182,688.

IN RED INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 8s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 8s. per doz. All prices post free.

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

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

- THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY EXAMINED FROM A RATIONALIST STANDPOINT. 64 pp., 6d., by post 7d.
- THE TEACHINGS OF SECULARISM COMPARED WITH ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.
- CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND INFLUENCE. 4d., by post 5d.
- SECULARISM: DESTRUCTIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE. 3d., by post 4d.
- AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIAN THEISM: WHICH IS THE MORE REASONABLE? 3d., by post 4d.
- A REPLY TO FATHER LAMBERTS "TACTICS OF INFIDELS." 6d., by post 7d.
- THEOLOGICAL PRESUMPTION. An Open Letter to the Rev. Dr. R. F. Burns, of Halifax, N.S. 2d., by post 2½d.
- THE NATURAL AND THE SUPERNATURAL; OR, BELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE. 3d., by post 4d.
- EVOLUTION AND SPECIAL CREATION. 3d., by post 4d.
- HAPPINESS IN HELL AND MISERY IN HEAVEN. 3d., by post 4d.
- SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. 4d., by post 5d.
- BIBLE MORALITY: Its Teachings Shown to be Contradictory and Defective as an Ethical Guide. 3d., by post 3½d.
- SECULARISM: ITS RELATION TO THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE DAY. 2d., by post 2½d.
- SECULARISM: IS IT FOUNDED ON REASON, AND IS IT SUFFICIENT TO MEET THE WANTS OF MANKIND? Debate between the Editor of the *Evening Mail* (Halifax, N.S.) and Charles Watts. With Prefatory Letters by G. J. Holyoake and Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, and an Introduction by Helen H. Gardener. 1s., by post 1s. 2d.
- IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE? Reply to Dr. R. B. Westbrook. 3d., by post 4d.
- SAINTS AND SINNERS: WHICH? 3d., by post 4d.
- EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. 2d., by post 2½d.
- THE SUPERSTITION OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY. A Plea for Liberty and Justice. 3d., by post 4d.
- THE EXISTENCE OF GOD; OR, QUESTIONS FOR THEISTS. 2d., by post 2½d.
- CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION. 3d., by post 4d.
- THE BIBLE UP TO DATE. 2d., by post 2½d.
- WHY DO RIGHT? A Secularist's Answer. 3d., by post 4d.
- London: Watts & Co., 17, Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Price Fourpence,

BIBLE AND BEER.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

CONTENTS:—

Drink Traffic and Local Veto
 Christian Methods of Reformation
 Old Divines on the Lawfulness of Drinking
 Paley and Sydney Smith
 Church Opposition to Temperance Movement
 Bible Drinks
 Scriptural Praises of Wine
 Jesus and the Wine Miracle
 The Last Supper
 Communion Port
 The Two-Wine Theory
 Religion and Intoxication
 Religious Drinking in the Bible
 Water-Drinking Heretics
 Christianity and Mohammedanism
 Church Drinks
 Absurdity of Bible Temperance
 Appeal to Common Sense

This pamphlet should be in the hands of every Freethinker for constant use against the upholders of the absurd claims of the Bible and Christianity in regard to Temperance. No pains have been spared to make it complete and unanswerable.

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

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

- Flowers of Freethought. *First Series*, 221 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d. *Second Series*, 302 pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.
- Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. [Edited in conjunction with W. P. Ball.] Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 2s.
- Was Jesus Insane? A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.
- Royal Paupers. Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.
- Philosophy of Secularism. 3d.
- Atheism and Morality. 2d.
- The Bible God. 2d.
- Interview with the Devil. 2d.
- The Dying Atheist. A Story. 1d.
- Bible Romances. New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.
- Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative. 3d.
- Letters to Jesus Christ. 4d.
- What was Christ? A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.
- Christianity and Progress. A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.
- The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's Converted Atheist. A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.
- Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth. 2d.
- The Impossible Creed. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.
- Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar. 2d.
- The Folly of Prayer. 2d.
- Mrs. Besant's Theosophy. A Candid Criticism. 2d.
- Secularism and Theosophy. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.
- The Shadow of the Sword. A Moral and Statistical Essay on War. 2d.
- A Defence of Free Speech. Three Hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With a Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d.
- The New Cagliostro. An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky. 2d.
- London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Price Threepence,

THE COMING CIVILISATION.

An ADDRESS delivered in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, on Sunday, April 12, 1896, to Members and Friends of "THE CHURCH MILITANT,"

By COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

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

Superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 2s., post free,

The Bible Handbook

FOR FREETHINKERS & INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND W. P. BALL

Sold also in separate parts as follows:—

- 1.—Bible Contradictions. The contradictions are printed in parallel columns. 4d.
- 2.—Bible Absurdities. All the chief absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each absurdity in a sentence. 4d.
- 3.—Bible Atrocities. Containing all the godly wickedness from Genesis to Revelation. Each infamy has a separate headline for easy reference. 4d.
- 4.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies. 4d.

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

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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

OUR MONSTER CHRISTMAS PARCELS.

No. 1.

7 yards Lady's Beautiful Dress Material, any color.
 4 " Stout Skirt Lining to match.
 2 " Fine Satteen Bodice Lining.
 2 dozen buttons to match.
 1 Lady's Very Choice Fur Neck-tie.
 1 Lady's Umbrella, newest design.
 1 Neat Striped Flannelette Skirt.
 1 Pair Black Silk Figured Lady's Hose.
 1 Figured Plush Square—a real gem.
 1 Large Fancy White Apron
 1 Fawn Check Wool Handkerchief.
 1 Lady's Pretty Pocket Handkerchief.
 1 Lady's Smart Leather Belt.

All for 21s. carriage paid.

No. 2.

1 Lady's Dress Length, any color.
 1 Lady's Umbrella.
 1 Gent's Umbrella.
 1 Boy's Sailor Suit; state age.
 1 Pair of Gent's trousers; give length inside leg and waist measurement.

All for 21s. carriage paid.

No. 3.

4 Lady's Dress Lengths,
 ANY COLOR.

7 yards 42 inches wide in each length.

All for 21s. carriage paid.

LOT 11.—1 Pair All-wool Blankets, 1 pair Bed Sheets, 1 Quilt, and 1 Tablecloth, all for 21s. carriage paid.

Double-breasted Chester Overcoats in Dark Mixture 30s. each; give chest measurement and length from seam in centre of back to full length of sleeve.

Fine Black Vicuna Suits, 30s. each to measure. Send for our self-measurement form and pattern. This is a Special Line and remarkably cheap.

UNTIL CHRISTMAS

We shall include in Parcels Nos. 1, 2, and 3 an Excellent Cabinet Photo of Mr. John M. Robertson, also a copy of each of Mr. Robertson's Pamphlets, *The Priest and the Child, The People and their Leaders, Godism, The Blood Tax, Saving and Waste.*

To the 6 Largest Purchasers of Lot 11 and Bruno Cloth (if over £3), before Dec. 31, we send *Life of Charles Bradlaugh.*

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

2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription, 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:

A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

No. 7, NEW SERIES, JANUARY, 1897, CONTAINS:—

A Stupendous Undertaking: Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy."
 "Poet, Scientist, ex-Agnostic, and —"
 The Sign of the Cross.
 Mohammedan Missionaries.
 Darwin and Natural Selection.
 A Betrayed Hero: Sir Francis Burton.
 An Excellent Way Towards Philosophy.
 Random Jottings.
 Chats About Books—IV. With Mrs. M. Gilliland Husband.
 Passing Thoughts. By R. Bithell, B.Sc., Ph.D.
 Rationalism in the Magazines.
 Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).

. Nos. 1 to 6 of the New Series, in addition to the January issue, will be sent carriage paid for 1s. 5d.

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

NOW READY.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1897.

EDITED BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Among the Contents are:—Hamlet's Last Words, by G. W. Foote; The Glory of Unbelief, by C. Watts; Hospitals Not of Christian Origin, by J. M. Wheeler; An Inspired Woman; A Negro Sermon; Anecdotes of Frederick the Great; Job and Jah, by G. L. Mackenzie; Worship and Imagination, by W. Heaford; and Information concerning Freethought Work and Organization.

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

Now Ready, price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

Mr. W. T. LEE, Lecturer to the Christian Evidence Society,

AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

Held in the Temperance Hall, Derby, May 15 and 16, 1895.

CHAIRMAN—J. W. PIPER, Editor of the *Derby Daily Telegraph.*

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

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

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

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. FOOTE AND J. M. WHEELER.

Hundreds of exact References to Standard Authorities. No pains spared to make it a complete, trustworthy, final, unanswerable Indictment of Christianity.

CHAPTERS:—1, Christ to Constantine; 2, Constantine to Hypatia; 3, Monks; 4, Pious Forgeries; 5, Pious Frauds; 6, Rise of the Papacy; 7, Crimes of the Popes; 8, Persecution of the Jews; 9, The Crusades.

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

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