

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 7.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1897.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

PROVIDENCE IN INDIA.

A LADY of my acquaintance was once sitting on a public seat fronting the sea at a watering place in the south of England. An elderly lady took a seat near her and opened a conversation, in the course of which she remarked how good it was of Providence to vary the weather in different places, so that when it was wretched in one place a person might remove to another. "Yes," said the first lady, "but Providence doesn't pay railway fare and hotel bills." This was a smart hint to the other lady that she had been generalizing, rather selfishly, from the experience of a favored class of people. The poor devils who live where the weather is "insufferable" have to put up with it, having no means of escape. They must take what Providence sends, and if it half kills them they must grin and bear it, or else get drunk or attend revival meetings, or indulge in some other form of delirium.

That pious old lady was probably one of the world's do-nothings, and an optimist from a mixture of privilege and cowardice. But after all she took a view of Providence which is extremely common. It is a natural one to the wealthy classes. Mr. Gladstone writes eloquently on the beneficent care of Providence in fitting up the earth for man's habitation. Yet people are burnt at the equator and frozen near the poles. The really temperate parts of the earth's surface—if we except the sea, which man has not yet learnt to inhabit—are comparatively meagre. Then there are volcanoes that have not finished erupting; now and then an earthquake, or a big tidal wave, destroys thousands of people; snakes and wild beasts, in India alone, kill enough men and women every year to populate a fair-sized town; sometimes the weather is diabolically perverse, parching the crops with too much heat, or rotting them with too much wet; while at other times an unforeseen pestilence breaks out and ravages whole nations. Yes, the argument of Mr. Gladstone is essentially the same as that of the pious old lady at the seaside. You may always be sure of the man who employs it—unless he is a professional exhorter—that he knows very little of physical geography, or that he is blessed with a very comfortable independence.

Those who can see evidence of beneficent wisdom controlling the affairs of this planet must be gifted with the occult powers of the fabled Mahatmas. Look at the present condition of India, for instance; a magnificent country, so far as scenery and natural resources are concerned—a country, the famous missionary poet said, where every prospect pleases and only man is vile. India is often afflicted with drought; that is to say, the people are afflicted with it, for the land itself does not care a straw about the matter. The rain that should fall on the rice fields of India is diverted to other parts of the world, where it is not wanted, and where it is a curse instead of a blessing. The result is that, as India is peopled right down to the level of subsistence, millions of people are brought face to face with starvation. For many weeks past the English newspapers have contained most distressing accounts of that unhappy land. Telegraphing from Jabalpur on February 8, the correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "I observed a girl five years old who weighed only ten pounds, and several adults actually scaled less than four stone. The skin in these and many other cases was so tightly drawn over the face as to

show the formation of the skull, while the limbs were so emaciated that the articulation of the joints was visible." What a frightful picture of human suffering! And all because the power called Providence (if such a power indeed exist) has forgotten, or deliberately declined, to send them a little rain out of the abundant reservoirs of this world.

In the Jabalpur district, out of a population of 750,000, no fewer than 120,000 persons are in receipt of relief, and the number will probably be doubled by the end of May. The famine belt in India is thirteen hundred miles long, and four hundred miles wide. The area is enormous, the distress is terrible, and as a fresh food supply cannot be expected until September, the mortality will be appalling.

The tender mercies of Providence seldom come alone. On the heels of famine follows the plague. It has been raging for some time in Bombay, it is increasing in spite of all efforts to check it, and it may spread to other districts of India. The Hindus flee from the infected district if they are able to, and the English fight the plague with the weapons of science; but the Mohammedans, who are the most sincere believers in Providence on this earth, cry "Kismet," it is the will of God, and quietly submit to what they regard as inevitable.

Here in England, while the Churches go on teaching the blindest trust in divine wisdom and justice, and inculcating the doctrine that there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, a subscription is being raised on behalf of the sufferers from the famine in India. God Almighty regulates the affairs of this planet on the most perfect principles, yet the Christians think it advisable to circumvent him occasionally. He sends a plague, and they try to drive it away. He sends a famine, and they try to dodge it with charity.

Charity, however, will only be a palliative. It may mitigate the very worst effects of the famine, but an amount of suffering will be unrelieved at which the imagination shrinks aghast. Nor is this charity itself quite the sublime phenomenon that we are apt to think it. India is squeezed every year by Great Britain. Millions are drained out of her annually, and the charity which is sent to her relief is insignificant in comparison. John Bull is perhaps the greatest hypocrite among the nations. He fattens on the spoils of distant lands, and when their inhabitants are afflicted with plague and famine, so that the whole world is moved to sympathy, he subscribes a small percentage of his questionable profits, and exclaims, "How philanthropic I am! Surely there is a good seat reserved for me in heaven!"

It would have been more creditable if the British government had voted £600,000 for the relief of the famine-stricken millions of India instead of presenting it to priests and parsons, to be spent by them in making our public schools the recruiting ground for their churches.

The comedy of this awful tragedy is the intellectual perversity of the religionists. They send little children round begging for the poor people in India, who are dying from famine; and they teach those same little children to pray to God to protect them against plague, pestilence, and famine, as well as against battle, murder, and sudden death. Well, if God is able to protect the Hindus, and does not, he must have a reason for it, and to interfere with his plans is the grossest impiety. The truth is that the charitable effort on behalf of India is not at all religious; it flows from the purely secular elements of human nature.

G. W. FOOTE.

PIONEERS OF EVOLUTION.

(Continued from page 82.)

THE title of the second section of Mr. Clodd's book is "The Arrest of Inquiry: A.D. 50-A.D. 1600." The dates are suggestive. From the first establishment of Christianity, till the commencement of the new era of man at the date of the burning of Giordano Bruno, we have a gradual twilight gloom of knowledge, followed by the long night of the Dark Ages, and the slow dawn of intelligence leading up to the Renaissance. For this long night, which has tempted evolutionists like Professor Edwin Johnson to think there is something wrong with Christian chronology, Christianity was largely responsible. Its presumed Divine Savior was not inerrant. Mr. Clodd reminds his readers that "Jesus accepted the accuracy of the sacred writings of his people; he spoke of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch; he referred to its legends as dealing with historical persons, and as reporting actual events. All these beliefs are refuted by the critical scholarship of to-day." Jesus, too, believed in an archfiend and possession by devils, though these beliefs are abandoned by those who pretend to regard him as divine. Our author remarks:—

"But they who abandon belief in maleficent demons and witches; as also, for this follows, in beneficent agents, as angels; land themselves in serious dilemma. For to this are such committed. If Jesus, who came 'that he might destroy the works of the Devil,' and who is reported, among other proofs of his divine ministry, to have cast out demons from 'possessed' human beings, and, in one case, to have permitted a crowd of the infernal agents to enter into a herd of swine; if he verily believed that he actually did these things; and if it be true that the belief is a superstition limited to the ignorant or barbaric mind; what value can be attached to any statement that Jesus is reported to have made about a spiritual world?"

Among the clearest of the teachings of Jesus was his speedy return to wind up all earthly affairs. Such a notion, sincerely believed, was bound to stand in the way of worldly progress. Mr. Clodd is fully justified by history in regarding Christianity as responsible for the long retardation of human thought which followed its establishment. Christians usually ascribe this to the barbarians, but it was not till Christianity had sapped the spirit of the Roman Empire that the barbarians had their chance.

From the fifth century Christianity was practically mistress of the old Roman Empire. Its sway was immense, and uncontested, save by Islam, for a thousand years. It was a millennium of darkness. Something of its record may be read in *The Crimes of Christianity*. The remnants of pagan art, science, and learning were remorselessly destroyed. Heretics, Jews, and supposed witches were hunted to death, and all original thought was stamped out so far as possible.

The Church charlatans occupied their minds with such questions as to whether their man-god had two natures, and a single or a double will; was he, as Son, co-eternal with the Father? was he *ὁμοούσιος* like as to substance, or *ὁμοουσιος* consubstantial? was Mary the vehicle of the Holy Ghost, or the Immaculate Mother of God? Such absurdities were settled in the absurdest fashion.

It was, as our author points out, only through a handful of Jews and Moslems that a knowledge of Greek science, of astronomy, algebra, chemistry, and medicine, was brought to Western Europe; and when Roger Bacon, the precursor of science in England, indulged in chemical experiments, he was regarded as using black magic and being in league with the Devil.

It is often said that, while Christianity did not come into the world to teach natural science, or to encourage vain learning, it had a far more important rôle to fulfil—that of elevating the morals of the people. Those who have credited this would do well to read the chapter in Mr. James Cotter Morison's *Service of Man* dealing with "Morality in the Ages of Faith." He may here learn how the triumph of religion was the decay of morals. In politics the Christian Church taught passive obedience to the powers that be, "for the powers that be are ordained of God." The masses were a prey to the delusions and depressions that flow from superstition and oppression. They were kept ignorant and credulous, their minds filled with fables, terrorized in this life and threatened with eternal torment in another, while the priests and monks

grabbed their lands and held them by forged decretals, charters, and donations.

Christianity arose in barbarism, its triumph was the victory of barbarism, and its maintenance in its integrity involves the retention of survivals of savagery. Its three-headed Deity; its devil who tempts his maker; its hell of eternal torment; its scheme of atonement through the blood of an innocent person; its doctrine of making up by death-bed repentance for a life-time of sin; betray its savage superstructure, which to the anthropologist is no less revealed in its ritual.

Mr. Clodd, whose presidency of the Folk-Lore Society gives him some authority on the matter, remarks that "in the ceremonies of the higher religions there are no inventions, only survivals"; and he shows how much of paganism got incorporated in the Christian faith, citing Mr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* to show that the central rite of the Lord's supper, the conception of the slain and eaten God, is not a part of old-world faith. Christianity overcame Paganism by assimilating it.

The Lutheran Reformation, as Mr. Clodd points out, was not a true carrying out of the Humanism of the Renaissance. It was but an exchange of fetters, or, as Huxley puts it, the scraping of a little rust off the chains which still bound the mind. "Learning perished where Luther reigned," said Erasmus, and we find the Reformer agreeing with Melancthon to permit no tampering with the Bible fetish. Copernicus notwithstanding, they had no doubt that the earth was fixed, and that the sun and stars travelled round it, because the Bible said so. The progress of science has been one long conflict with religious prejudice.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS A DELUSION AND A FAILURE.

(Concluded from page 82.)

IN our article last week upon this subject we stated that the system of "Foreign Missions" was based upon arrogance and self-assumed superiority. It is alleged by orthodox Christians that their religion is the only true one, and that all others are so inferior that it is a misfortune to accept any of them. Hence these Christians arrogate to themselves as a duty the task of forcing their theological notions upon the devotees of other religions, forgetting the fact that those whom they seek to "convert" have equal grounds for their belief. What would Christians say if the exponents of the Chinese, the Buddhist, or the Mohammedan faith were to have a special mission to this country for the avowed purpose of converting the "English heathen"? Such missionaries would be laughed at by the orthodox believers in the assumed "brotherhood of Christ"; and yet they would be quite as justified in their action as the Christian missionaries are in their impertinent interference with the adherents of religions some of which are older and more numerous accepted than their own.

Ample evidence is at our command to prove that those people whom Christian missionaries vainly strive to "convert" are in no way inferior in moral conduct to themselves. In fact, in some instances they are superior. Alfred Kinnear, who is no mean authority upon this subject, writes thus: "The Chinese are in no sense a dark race. China itself cannot be likened to what has been picturesquely called the Dark Continent. The people are civilized within themselves. They may be Pagans; they are not barbarians in even the Russian application of the term. Their mobs are not unknown in kind in Europe. Trade with the people of China is more than barter. It approximates to a scientific commerce on the European model. It is, indeed, older in its scientific sense than the trade of Cheapside or the financing of Lombard-street. You enter a native inland city, and find thousands of people as actively industrious as a swarm of flies upon a sugar-barrel. Everyone is busy upon something. Mammon is as much *en évidence* there as in London. The inhabitants, when in repose, unexcited by fanaticism, compare favorably with the inhabitants of civilized cities. I have felt as safe in China as in London—safer than in Seven Dials. They are sober, industrious, uncomplaining, law-abiding, and easily

ruled. In Heathen China the daily life is, on the average, as decorous as it is in Christian England. All that the missionaries strive to do is to possess the religious conscience of a race almost curiously free from vice and crime; whose notions of sharp dealing are satisfied with a 5 per cent. return, and whose theory of the Christian virtue of thieving is to 'squeeze' each other within that limit only. The unbiassed traveller naturally asks why such a race cannot be left alone, and in peace with their souls" (London *Echo*, August 12, 1895).

Mr. Frederick Stanley Arnot, who was a friend and an associate of Dr. Livingstone, gives the following description of the natives of Central Africa: "He arrived at Zambesi, and was there detained by the king for a long time, and thus saw a great deal of Africa and the customs of the people, among whom there was a strong tribal affection and hospitality—even more than among ourselves. A stranger arriving among them, let the hour be ever so late, would not be allowed to go to bed hungry, but they would get up and provide him a meal. This occurred to himself, and a sick stranger was most carefully nursed. There were never committed those brutal murders which we hear of in our own country" (quoted from the London *Daily Chronicle*, February 18, 1893). In referring to the moral influence of Mohammedanism, the Rev. Canon Isaac Taylor says in his pamphlet, *The Great Missionary Failure*, on page 32: "Let us remember that in some respects Moslem morality is better than our own. In resignation to God's will, in temperance, charity, veracity, and in the brotherhood of believers, they set us a pattern we should do well to follow. Islam has abolished drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution—the three curses of Christian lands." In 1894 a commission was appointed in Japan to visit England for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the religion of this country was superior to that of their own. The London *Echo*, of September 17, 1894, had the following editorial note as to the result of the visit: "The Commission studied our religious organization, they read our books, our formularies, or reports of Convocation, of Scotch and Irish Assemblies, of our May Meetings in Exeter Hall; they read our Liberation tracts, they went to church and chapel and took copious notes. We Europeans were amused. But it was no laughing matter. That strange Commission of Inquiry should rather have set us a-thinking, for when the Researchers got home again they reported that, judging from what they saw of the Christian life in Europe, they could not conscientiously recommend the importation of the Christian religion into Japan."

From the evidence here given it will be seen how fallacious is the claim that Christianity is superior to religions professed in other countries. Moreover, Christians appear to ignore the important fact that they have not settled among themselves as to what their religion really is. Not only have we the faith as propounded by the so-called National Church, which differs in many essential points from that taught by the various Nonconformist bodies, but among the dissenting sects the divergence is so great that the "heathen" must be sorely puzzled to know which is the Christian religion. Surely it would be better for these self-appointed religious instructors to decide which of the many versions of their faith is the correct one before they seek to foist upon others their heterogeneous teachings.

There is, however, another very important consideration that is worthy of note, which is that, according to the popular theological idea, "Foreign Missions" are as unjust as they are useless. If the belief in what is called Christianity is necessary to secure the salvation of mankind, it may be fairly asked, What was the fate of those who died before the advent of Christ, and what will become of millions of human beings now living who, in all probability, will never hear either his name or of his system? If God thought such knowledge necessary to the eternal happiness of his children, is it credible that he would not have revealed it? Yet two-thirds of the human family have not, up to the present date, even heard of the Christian faith. The orthodox "explanation" of this difficulty is that those who lived prior to the Christian era were saved by anticipation, and that those now existing, who have no knowledge of the Christian faith, will be excused on account of their ignorance. If this be so, it is positively cruel to send missionaries abroad with the alleged "glad tidings," inasmuch that, if "the poor heathen" do not hear of this Gospel, they will not be punished for not accepting it; whereas, if they are

informed of it and do not believe it, the probability is that, from the Christian standpoint, some at least will be "lost." Instead, therefore, of these missions being "messages of salvation," they are likely to prove to many heralds of damnation.

These "Foreign Missions," however, have been a decided failure in the endeavor to achieve the object for which, it is said, they were started. Dr. Moffatt, the well-known missionary, made the humiliating confession, after years of effort, that the work of the Christian missions might be "compared to the efforts of a child trying to grasp a looking-glass by its surface." And Mr. Henry Norman reminds us, in his book, *The Far East*, "that we have forced the inculcation of a detested creed upon the Chinese literally at the point of the bayonet." The *Weekly Sun* for August 16, 1895, published the following interesting items: "Hundreds of thousands of pounds are squandered annually on this barren work. To what end? Will some supporter of the Church Missionary Society or of the London Missionary Society enlighten us? Says Dr. Morrison, an unbiassed authority: 'There are 1,511 Protestant missionaries laboring in the Chinese Empire; and, estimating their results from the statistics of previous years as published in the *Chinese Recorder*, we find that they gathered, in the year 1893, into the fold 3,127 Chinese at a cost of £350,000—a sum equal to the combined incomes of the ten chief London hospitals.'"

Similar testimony is given by the author of *Conquests of the Cross*, in reference to New Zealand. He says: "Some of the ardent toilers in the mission so revolted at the sight that they gave up the work in despair, and left the colony in search of more promising fields. One of the best of them, preaching his farewell sermon, confessed that the bitterness of his defeat consisted in 'the knowledge that, after laboring twenty-five years in New Zealand, he left it with the Maori no more Christianized than he was when he first landed'" (p. 86). Even where limited success followed missionary efforts it was not in consequence of the acceptance of Christianity by the "heathen," but rather the result of securing more material assistance. James Gilmour, in his work, *Among the Mongols*, says: "The great interest which many of them showed when I preached the Gospel to them was chiefly caused by the circumstance that I gave them medical assistance when they were sick. They sought bodily cures rather than spiritual light and comfort." This view is supported by Buckle, who, in his *History of Civilization in England*, writes: "By strenuous and unremitting activity, and frequently by promises, and even by actual gifts, they [the missionaries] have, in many cases, persuaded savage communities to make a profession of the Christian religion. But whoever will compare the triumphant reports of the missionaries with the long chain of evidence supplied by competent travellers will soon find that such profession is only nominal, and that these ignorant tribes have adopted, indeed, the ceremonies of the new religion, but have by no means adopted the religion itself" (vol. i., pp. 233, 234).

Our advice to Christian missionaries is: Stay at home, and seek to rescue your own people from the ignorance, poverty, and superstition which so extensively prevail among them. By so doing you would be helping to make this country a far happier abode than it now is for thousands of the human race. CHARLES WATTS.

REVIVALS.

REV. ARTHUR RECTOR preached at the Methodist Church the other night what our local paper calls a powerful revival sermon, upon the text, "What shall I do to be saved?" The question ought to have been settled long ago, but, unfortunately, the more it is talked about, the more obscure it gets.

Jesus told the young man who sought information upon the subject to keep the commandments of the Jewish law; and, in addition to that, to sell all his property and give it to the poor. This last addition was all that was necessary, according to Jesus, to secure salvation; and this marks the only difference between Judaism and Christianity that Jesus established. It is true that, in the last chapter of Mark, he is reported as saying that "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned"; but this is so contrary to all his other teachings that it is hard to believe he was correctly reported, and

the revised edition intimates that the passage is an interpolation. If this is true, then Jesus never taught that belief would save anybody.

The question in the text is from Acts xvi., and is asked by the jailor who had Paul and Silas in charge, when a great earthquake opened the prison doors. He was much frightened, as he had reason to be, for the punishment for letting his prisoners escape was death. He was about to commit suicide, but the apostles prevented him from doing that; and then he asked the question in the text. Evidently he was not thinking about the salvation of his soul; it was only his body that he was anxious about, just at that time; and the answer of the apostles—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"—must have seemed to him to have been certain evidence of insanity; and as insane persons were at that time held to be especially under the protection of the gods of heathendom, he concluded that by their favor he might escape punishment for negligence of duty.

The revival preacher—forgetting the teaching of Jesus—asks the question, and then repeats the answer, as though it applied to the salvation of the soul from the ever-blazing fires of hell; and he proceeds to paint in vivid language the horrible tortures that souls will undergo if the bodies of the owners of these souls do not, before they die, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

I repeat that it is the bodies that must believe; because it is only the body, or that part of it comprised in the brain and nervous system, that can feel, think, and believe in anything. That the soul remains passive, and wholly under the influence and direction of the body, must be evident to everybody who observes and reflects. The very existence of the soul has been an unsolved problem from the earliest time, when an ignorant barbarian first guessed that man had such a soul inside him.

It is the brain, then, that thinks, reasons, and wills to believe when such evidence is offered to it as compels belief; and the brain must refuse belief to any proposition that is not supported by convincing evidence. Fright may induce a person to say he believes—and that is what the revivalists rely upon to make what they call converts confess or profess a belief in such follies as they may be told to believe; but they lie while they make such profession, and they would know they lied if they were not too much frightened to reason upon any subject whatever. In the meantime, if the religious theory of a soul is correct, the soul must remain passive, unthinking, unbelieving, and unfeeling—the victim of the controlling brain that it has no way of influencing—till the body, with its thinking head, is dead and gone to decay; and then the poor soul escapes from the body, and, according to the revival preacher, is sent to hell to be punished forever, because the body it inhabited did not believe an absurd hypothesis that had no rational evidence to sustain it.

There is consolation, however, in the evident fact that the soul cannot feel the torture of the fire down below, for it never had any means of feeling except through the action of the nerves of the body, and, these being all dead with the body, the soul will have no organs of sense, and, therefore, cannot feel pain.

Dr. Mivart may be right, that there is no suffering in hell, and that souls will be as happy there as they have a capacity for being.

It is true that the Pope condemned Mivart's theory of happiness in hell, and that the Catholic scientist, like a good member of the Church, submitted to the Pope's correction; but we may believe in Mivart in preference to Pecci, otherwise Leo XIII., if we choose to: nobody knows that the Pope is any more infallible than the doctor. Let us have our hell a happy one; how can it be otherwise, with all of earth's brightest, greatest, and best intellects there in happy communion. It must be preferable, in its social population, to the riff-raff that are daily crowding the ecclesiastical footpath to the mythical heaven, from the mourners' benches of revival halls, where reason is wrecked and intellect submerged in the wild orgies of hysterical emotion; and the platforms of the gallows, from which bull-headed murderers and rape fiends swing directly into such eternal bliss as they can find in a callithumpian band of harps and horns, and an eternal singing of "holy, holy," around a despotic throne, absolute slaves to the mis-called lamb who sits upon it.

There is another aspect of this revival business that may be contemplated with profit by thinking people. During

the past year it appears that the ministers of the widely-varying Churches have united in a "long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether," to make head against the rapidly-rising tide of rational thought that portends annihilation to the superstition by which they live, and move, and have their being. A constant succession of revivals has stirred the depths of the ignorant and susceptible classes of society; as a long pole reaches the mud at the bottom and soils the purer water that rests above it, so ignorance and conceit float about among those who are better informed, exhorting them to come to Jesus, and pretending to pity them for not being such blamed fools as they are themselves. And these revivals are successful in catching this class—the bottom mud, that fouls the social pool and disgusts the purer and more intellectual people who maintain our civilization upon a higher and more stable basis.

And what is the result of all this flood of salvation that is daily and nightly poured out by pulpit pounders and Bible bangers in every town and village throughout our broad land? Look in the daily papers that, every morning and evening, bring to us the long record of crimes that blacken their columns and sicken our hearts to read them. In my newspaper of this morning I find no less than eight murders, besides rapes, thefts, and outrageous violations of law and morals, of all sorts, and I am not aware that this is an exceptional issue of my daily record of the news of the day.

Now, is there not some connection between this wave of religious feeling, this stimulated emotion, and the increase of crime that is threatening to engulf us? Revival preachers are teaching our most ignorant people, and those most inclined to crime, that, no matter what they may have done, their sins will be all wiped out if they will but come to Jesus; or, in the words that answer our text, "Believe on our Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." Though your sins be as scarlet, the blood shed by Jesus, for the remission of your sins, shall make them white as wool. In fact, the worse the crimes you have committed, the more you will be honored when you get to heaven; for does not Jesus himself say that "there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance"?

What must be the effect of such teaching as this upon an ignorant man, inclined to crime? We see the effect in every revival wave, when such men crowd the mourners' bench and have their sins wiped out in the regular way, and then go out and backslide, as the term is, till the next revival, when they repeat the process.

There never was a clearer exemplification of the law of cause and effect than is shown by the increase of crime that follows this religious excitement. It has always been so in the history of the world for the last eighteen hundred years. Whenever religion has been most prosperous, and has exercised the most power, then morality has been at the lowest ebb, and crime has flourished unrebuked, except that priests grew fat upon the income they derived from their share of its profits.

The consideration of these characteristics of Christian revival methods and their effects will help us to answer the question asked in the text, "What shall I do to be saved?" The answer of the Rationalist, and of every man of common sense, must be:—

Believe in the truth as it is demonstrated by evidence that proves it to you. Believe nothing upon authority; especially put no trust in priests. They are blind leaders of the blind, and they know no more about the mysteries they pretend to teach than do their dupes, who sit with open mouths and swallow, without thinking, the absurd and incredible tales of old and obsolete books and worn-out traditions.

Study the open book of nature, with science as its interpreter and common sense as your guide. Be brave—that is, be not frightened by the denunciations of priests, who threaten pains and penalties that they have no knowledge of, and no power to inflict. Keep your body clean and healthy by temperance in food and drink, and your mind pure and clear by rational thought and study, and you shall surely be saved, body and soul, from the wiles of priests in this world, and thus secure for yourself the best chance in any other world that you may happen to meet with in the future, where honesty is honored and intelligence is appreciated.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*The Independent Pulpit.*

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

THE VERBAL AGREEMENT OF THE SYNOPTICS.

THE arrangement of the events common to the three Synoptical Gospels proves, as has been shown, those Gospels to have been compiled from pre-existing documents. If further evidence of this fact be needed, we find it in the numerous cases of verbal agreement in the three accounts. As an example of this I select a passage from the two Gospels whose compilers are admitted to have not been hearers of the words they ascribe to Jesus:—

MARK (x. 14, 15).

"Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

LUKE (xviii. 16, 17).

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein."

Neither of these two writers heard the words they record spoken by Jesus. We have seen that the only external evidence relating to them is to the effect that one was a companion of Peter, and "wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered" of Peter's preaching, and that the other was a fellow-laborer of Paul, and committed to writing the substance of that apostle's teaching. Now, Peter, the fisherman, if he heard these words, did not write them down at the time, nor is it even probable that he was able to write; similarly, Paul neither heard the words spoken, nor was he in the habit of quoting any words of Jesus in his teaching. Luke, further, tells us in his preface that he did not live in apostolic times. We know, also, that there were no written Gospels in Paul's day, nor until long after. Yet both these compilers give the passage *verbatim*—the omission of the word "and" in Mark's version being probably due to some early copyist. Now, how did these two editors become acquainted with the exact words which Jesus was supposed to have uttered more than half a century before their time? I hear some senseless apologists say "Inspiration." I must, however, remind these credulous and irrational people that, unless they are able to demonstrate that there really is, or was, a thing or an influence of this supernatural character (and this, it is needless to say, they cannot do), they are simply begging the whole question. But it has already been shown in the case of two of the evangelists that the only kind of inspiration by which they were guided was that which the writer of 1 Kings xxii. 22 calls "a lying spirit." This spirit those two Gospel writers possessed in abundance.

I take another example from the Gospels of the same two writers who were not hearers of Christ:—

MARK (ii. 8-11).

"Why reason ye *these things* in your hearts? Whether is easier to say *to the sick of the palsy*, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

LUKE (v. 22-24).

"Why reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (he said unto the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thy house."

That these two accounts were copied from the same document is unquestionable. Take away the words which Mark has added (*i.e.*, those in italics), and we have Luke's somewhat shorter version. Could there be any doubt upon the subject, it would be dispelled by noting the parenthesis which each writer employs after identically the same words. If we turn now to Matthew's version (ix. 4-6), we find that that compiler has slightly altered the opening sentence, and has omitted the words, "I say unto thee"; but, notwithstanding this, it can be plainly seen that the paragraph is the same, even to the parenthesis.

"Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (*then* saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."

It will also be seen, by comparing the three versions of the

passage, that the Synoptists thought it no harm to alter or add to the words of their Lord. Each doubtless believed he was improving the narrative.

But, further, we find this verbal agreement not only in the words ascribed to Christ, but in those employed by the writers themselves. These, in the case of independent historians, could not possibly be the same. The following are examples:—

MATTHEW.

iii. 5, 6.—"Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

iv. 20.—"And they straightway left the nets, and followed him."

vii. 28, 29.—"The multitude were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes."

ix. 21.—"For she said *within herself*, If I may but touch his garment I shall be made whole."

xiv. 36.—"And they besought him that they might only touch the border of his garment: and as many as touched were made whole."

xvii. 1, 2.—"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John *his brother*, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart; and he was transfigured before them."

MARK.

i. 5.—"And there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

i. 18.—"And straightway they left the nets, and followed him."

i. 22.—"And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes."

v. 28.—"For she said, If I may touch but his garments I shall be made whole."

vi. 56.—"And besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched *him* were made whole."

ix. 2.—"And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter and James and John, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart *by themselves*: and he was transfigured before them."

Those who require more examples of the verbal agreement of these two writers can compare the following: Matthew ix. 10 and Mark ii. 15; Matthew xii. 13, 14, and Mark iii. 5, 6; Matthew xiii. 2, 3, and Mark iv. 1-3; Matthew xiv. 22-26 and Mark vi. 45-49; Matthew xix. 22 and Mark x. 22; Matthew xxvi. 30 and Mark xiv. 26; Matthew xxvii. 47, 48, and Mark xiv. 43, 44; besides scores of other passages. The verbal coincidences are, however, closer and more numerous in the words ascribed to Jesus (compare, for example, Matthew xiii. 3-9 with Mark iv. 3-9; Matthew xxiv. 4-8 with Mark xiii. 5-8).

No one who has any idea of composition, and of the many and totally different varieties of style, language, and modes of expression which characterize different writers, even when relating the same occurrences, can, after comparing the foregoing passages, come to any other conclusion than that Matthew and Mark compiled their accounts from copies of the same pre-existing documents. The same we also find to be the case with Matthew and Luke, and Mark and Luke. The following examples are all I can here find space for:—

MATTHEW.

xiv. 19.—"And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake; and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes."

xv. 20.—"And they did all eat and were filled; and they took up that which remained over of the broken pieces twelve baskets full."

MARK.

v. 6, 7.—"And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he saith: What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee *by God*, torment me not."

v. 8.—"For he said unto him, Come forth thou unclean spirit out of the man."

LUKE.

ix. 16.—"And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake; and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude."

ix. 17.—"And they did eat and were all filled; and there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces twelve baskets."

LUKE.

viii. 28.—"And when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said: What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not."

viii. 29.—"For he commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man."

v. 11, 12.—“Now there was there on the mountain *side* a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought him, saying: Send us into the swine that we may enter into them. And he gave them leave.”

viii. 32.—“Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain. And they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave.”

Now, without continuing the narrative farther, it is only necessary to point out that the reason why the demoniac fell upon his knees, and cried, “Torment me not,” etc., was because Jesus had *previously* commanded the demons to come out. This command was given first, and was the cause of the man's entreaty; but it is only mentioned parenthetically to explain why he cried out. Yet the two evangelists, by a wonderful coincidence, tell the story in the same lop-sided fashion.

To sum the matter up, several pages might be filled with the verbal coincidences of the Synoptical writers, including both the words they ascribe to Jesus and their own language in relating the events which they record. After comparing all these parallel passages, only one conclusion is possible. This is, that in the Synoptics we have not three independent accounts of the life of Christ, but merely three versions of an earlier and more primitive Gospel, whose author is unknown. We have thus no guarantee that any of the events related in the three Synoptical Gospels was ever witnessed by anyone, or that any of the sayings therein attributed to Jesus was ever heard by anyone. The three compilers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, merely copied these matters from existing writings, and altered, curtailed, or added to them as they thought fit.

ABRACADABRA.

AUSTRALIAN BRETHREN AND SISTREN.

ANY ardent Tottie who hankers after the clingsome hug of salvation, likewise the kiss of peace, might do worse than throw in her lot with the Melbourne Christian Assembly. The C.A. is a quite old-fashioned sect, comprising a hundred souls and a small mob of “adherents,” under the guidance of Pastor X. All was going well within this religious circle until lately, when Brother Z. was found guilty of too much Christian behavior, and suspended from practice. This Brother, according to the pastor, “has a lawful wife and family living in Victoria, and he does not keep her, but all the time he is running after another woman, a single girl, kissing her and hugging her in pretty well every corner.” Smarting under a sense of having been thrown out, Brother Z. recently convened a meeting to inquire into Pastor X. and his alleged larks. Various charges were hurled at the boss saint. It was declared in open tabernacle that a small boy had seen pastor kissing a “sister” under dim religious circumstances. Furthermore, the brother accused his shepherd, firstly, of grabbing a small handbag from off a “sister's” lap in a railway carriage, and, secondly, of taking therefrom a piece of preserved ginger, which he held up to view, crying “Ginger for pluck!” On top of this revelation he produced two letters “supposed” to have been written by other sisters who wanted to love their pastor violently. Then some more brothers rose, and started to reveal domestic details, until several ladies retired blushing from the fray. Finally, the inquiry broke up into fragments, and Pastor X. went home triumphant, with several devoted spinsters in attendance.

Anyway, Pastor X. is an improvement upon a previous leader of the sect, who was driven out of the pulpit on a charge of not being able to produce a marriage certificate when called upon. The evidence of the small boy is unreliable, and the letters said to have been written by the two sisters are wrapped in doubt. Also the significance of “Ginger for pluck” is questionable. Therefore, the *Bulletin* advises Pastor X. to continue his ministry as before, paying particular attention to the welfare of the single girl whom Brother Z. is alleged to have kissed and hugged in pretty well every corner. Probably there are still a few corners where she hasn't been hugged up to the present, and it seems to be somebody's duty to see that these corners are duly attended to.

The pastor, by the way, says that he forgives Brother Z. everything. “As for that poor deluded implement of the arch-enemy of souls, he (X.) feels that the Almighty love, which will enable Judas to *eventually* be saved, will also enfold the present mischief-maker.” How comforting! The brother, of course, can't expect immediate salvation. As an implement of the Old 'Un, he will be required to wriggle on the grill Below for a few million years or so. But eventually, O *eventually*, even Brother Z. may be brought back. How these Christians temporarily damn one another!

—*Sydney Bulletin*.

JOSEPH ESTABLISHED A CORNER.

JOSEPH, Pharaoh's Prime Minister, was the first to establish a corner. He secured all the grain (gold), and during a famine scooped all the money, and then the cattle; and then the land of the Nile, and finally the people as slaves. The lesson of Bible history applies to the corner Rothschild holds on gold at this day.

The Bible states that “the rich rule over the poor, and that the borrower is servant to the lender”; and so oblivious is the lender of every interest except his own, and so reckless is the concerned borrower, that civilization begins when the State curtails the right of the borrower to destroy himself.

There is a strangely instructed tale related in Genesis xlvii. One Joseph, without even a dream of his own, but only a God-given gift of interpretation, foresaw that there were to be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. He at once concocted a scheme to run a gigantic corner in grain, and so alluring was it that he was given full charge of the details. He did not invest his own or the King's money in grain when it was cheap. Not he! He made the people turn over without price or equivalent one-fifth of all they raised, and this he stored away.

When famine came the people struggled along for several years on their own savings, but finally Joseph gathered in all their money, and when the money failed he said: “Give your cattle”; and after he had taken all their cattle, the famine still lasting, the next year the people came and offered to sell themselves and their lands for bread, and Joseph bought them and their land, paying them with their own grain, which he in the years of plenty had confiscated.

It took fourteen years to run the deal, but when it was ended all the people except the priests were slaves, without land, without cattle, without money; and then Joseph arranged that forever they should turn over to the King one-fifth part of all they raised. This amounted to more than half of their real profits.

It was probably a keen realization of the possibility of this trick being repeated on themselves that made the Hebrews establish the year of Jubilee, which was instituted to prevent the growth of the few and the impoverishment of the many.

ACID DROPS.

THE Grand Old Man of Hawarden is down upon the Grand Old Man of the Vatican. Mr. Gladstone is naturally annoyed at the failure of his appeal to the Pope to recognize the validity of Anglican orders. Indeed, he is preparing a little book on the subject. Meanwhile, he sneers at the Pope's “feeble arguments” and “strange want of forethought, courage, and prudence.” What a happy family they are! The household of faith has always been divided, and will probably remain so to the end of the chapter.

The American correspondent of the *Sunday Chronicle* says that Sam Jones, the Evangelist, who is now working with Moody in Boston, wants to meet Bob Ingersoll in a debate on Christianity. Bob Ingersoll is the Charles Bradlaugh of America, and one of the finest scholars on the Continent. Both men are exceedingly witty and sarcastic, and a debate between them will be a deeply interesting display of the power of the English language. Our readers will remember that a year or so ago we gave Sam Jones on Ingersoll, followed by Ingersoll on Sam Jones. After this we fancy that Sam's wish is only from the teeth outward.

Colonel Ingersoll will decide for himself about meeting Sam Jones in public debate, but “one of the finest scholars on the Continent” would certainly condescend a great deal in meeting a man like Sam Jones, who has as much scholarship as Balaam's quadruped.

The case of the modern Christian, Mr. Arthur Knowles, a Bolton cotton-spinner, has been settled by the jury unanimously finding him insane. To give up all for the sake of religion according to Jesus Christ was characteristic of his true disciples. According to the Bolton jury, it is a characteristic of insanity.

The Master in Lunacy, who summed up the case, said Mr. Knowles was a deeply religious man, and yet a man holding such convictions thought he was justified in leaving his wife and helpless children. He said he did so at the call of duty; but did they seriously think that religious fervor or faith could justify a man in disregarding the moral obligations that he entered into when he solemnly married his wife? He thought that some higher call had released him from his moral obligations. Was that the act and belief of a sane man? The jury said No, though they had doubtless all been taught that father, mother, wife, and child must be left to follow Christ.

Two priests of the Church of San Giacomo al Corso, in Rome, are reported to have been arrested for having, it is alleged, stolen a large part of the sacred vases and the valuable jewellery belonging to the church.

While suffering from religious mania Isaac H. Douglass, a well-to-do farmer, of Voluntown, attempted to kill his son, who is about thirty years old, by striking him with an axe, making four wounds on his head. He then started a fire, and was making preparations to burn his own body and that of his son, when the neighbors broke into the house in time to rescue both.

After seeking to re-establish Church rates under the pretence of education, the clericals would like to reintroduce Test Acts to keep all the loaves and fishes among Churchmen. Two certified mistresses and an assistant have just been dismissed from the Public Elementary Schools of St. Andrew's, Willesden, because they would not sign an agreement to attend and communicate at the local church. Some teachers have the impudence to think that, instead of being mere appanages of the Church, their calling is more useful and noble than that of the sky-pilot. Such persons must be taught their place.

Canon Tetley presided at a meeting of the Bristol Vigilance Association held in the Chapter House of Bristol Cathedral. A man created a scene by protesting against the sacred building being used to suggesting the harrowing of unfortunates. Canon Tetley took a tip from the Salvationists by giving out a hymn, and the protester was thus silenced.

The Rev. William Rowthorn (vicar of Oughti-bridge, Sheffield) was sued by his parish clerk for £7 10s. as balance of salary due. The vicar said he took the offertories, but did not keep any record except on slips of paper. The church expenses were more than the income. The judge told him he should preach to his wealthy congregation to shell out enough to pay the parish clerk.

In the *Sabbath School Magazine* Mr. F. A. Laing gives a good old Bible lesson from 1 Samuel, inculcating the real old Bible doctrine of Providence and punishment. Mr. Laing says: "Children often think that if they have a Bible and go to church and Sabbath school they are all safe. They think they must be very good to do these things. But God sends disease and trouble and death into this family and that. Why? Because the children only look like being good, when really they are naughty, careless, disobedient boys and girls, who richly deserve the punishment they receive." This is quite in keeping with the doings of God, who sent the she-bears to kill the little children of Bethel for calling Elisha baldhead.

A dispatch from Little Rock, Arkansas, says: "In a Baptist church at Yellow Bayou, in Chicot county, one man was killed, another fatally wounded, and several badly hurt. A revival was in progress at the church. The Rev. Henry Walker, the pastor, read a chapter in the Bible, and Deacon Austin Williams passed the plate for the offering. As he set the hat, containing a few small coins, upon the pulpit, the preacher made a remark which Williams did not like, and he slapped Walker in the mouth. Walker attacked the deacon, knocking him to the floor with a cane. A free fight ensued, in which partizans joined, using razors and clubs. Walker, with his razor, cut Williams's throat, killing him instantly. A negro, name unknown, received a fatal cut, and about a dozen others were slashed more or less painfully. Several arrests were made, including Walker, who is under a heavy guard to prevent him being lynched."

A Liverpool preacher, on a recent Sunday evening, declared that one thousand certified deaths of women through alcohol took place in that city last year. This is near enough for a preacher. No one expects truth or accuracy from a pulpit. According to Mr. T. E. Sampson, the city coroner, the number of such deaths was only seventy-one. This is bad enough, in all conscience; but what can be expected from a city full of churches and chapels and public-houses and brothels?

The project for manufacturing a Bishop of Sheffield has fallen through. It takes a frightful lot of money to turn out a new Bishop—a hundred thousand pounds at least; and the wealthy laymen of Sheffield will not plank down the cash.

"Tim" Healy, the Irish M.P., is reported to have gone to Rome, where he will have an audience with the Pope. "Tim" seems to be the favorite of the Irish priests, and through them he aspires to the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party. What a change since the days of the great Parnell, who took the Home Rule movement right out of the hands of the clergy! Parnell hated the very sight of the black dragoons.

The *Chicago Tribune* for Sunday, January 24, has a plain spoken article on "The Antiquated Theory of Satan," with reference to the Rev. J. Henry's advocacy of the doctrine of a personal Devil. Satan and his abode, the *Tribune* says, exist only as entities in imagination. "The idea," it adds, "that a good Almighty and a bad Satan are carrying on a contest for the possession of souls, and that Satan is getting the most of them and torturing them, has been gradually but finally dropped by the educated."

The Jewish bakers are being prosecuted for baking and selling bread on Sunday, even though they shut up on the day ordered in the Bible; so, as they are allowed no baking from Friday evening till Monday morn, they will have to live on stale bread, or motzahs, on the Christian Sabbath.

The Rev. Anthony C. Deane, in protesting against the Curates' Union in the current number of the *National Review*, says: "If it has become difficult to treat many curates—and, it may be added, benefited clergy also—as gentlemen, this is due, to speak the painful truth, to the fact that many of them are not gentlemen, and never will be. Many persons are ordained in these days who have not the smallest pretensions to that title, and thereby much undoubtedly is done to weaken the hold of the Church of England over the upper classes." Mr. Deane should know that the real function of the Church is not to have a hold over "the upper classes," but over the lower classes, to keep them lower. He might have made another point had he known that the Curates' Union was originally projected, as a skit, in the *Freethinker*.

A Bill to tax all Church property in the State will be introduced at this session of the Missouri Legislature soon after it gets down to business. For several years past there has been a reform organization in St. Louis, which has sought to compel all religious societies to pay taxes upon all property held by them. The case of Rockefeller, the millionaire, who owns property which he puts in the name of churches to escape taxation, should rouse opinion in the States on this iniquity.

The United States has an army of 137,000 well-paid ordained ministers of religion to support, in addition to numerous self-ordained missionaries, and upwards of 180,000 churches who contribute nothing to the taxation. Altogether, religion makes a tidy pull on the pockets of Uncle Sam. It is estimated that above a third of the religionists are Roman Catholics.

The Rev. Charles H. Kelly, in prosecuting "researches" at the Conference Office, has found a box containing many valuable MSS. of the Wesleys and others. Historical parallels are valuable also. When St. Bernard, of blessed memory, accompanied the Crusade which bears his name, he "prophesied" that the soldiers would find the spear-head which pierced Christ's side by digging on Mount Calvary. Their "researches" were successful; they found it!

Founders of religion never arise in highly civilized nations. It is not easy to get a tremendous reputation in the midst of clover and intelligent people. Comparatively little knowledge and capacity is enough to give a man a start as a prophet or mystery-man among savages, or even among barbarians. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that Prince Henry of Orleans, who has set out for a journey in Abyssinia, has taken with him (according to the Paris correspondent of the *Daily News*) a barrel organ and phonograph. Were he to take those articles to central Africa, the natives would treat him as a god—at least, until they wore out; then they might eat him.

After all, there is nothing wonderful in a god being eaten. Christians devour the body and blood of Christ, and does not Browning speak of Italy as a place where they "see God made and eaten every day"?

"The Monad," who writes "Morsels" for the *Blackpool Gazette*, contributes the following lines to last week's issue:—

Just a *siñce* at twilight,
When the lights are low,
And the bashful spirits
Quickly come and go.

When materializing
Mediums, curtain hid,
For the post of Maskelyno
Freely make a bid.

When the half-dazed sitters,
Cautioned not to move,
Simon Pure's existence
Emphatically prove.

The spread of Tolstoism among the educated and professional classes of Russia has led to a spirited State crusade against the Tolstoists. In some villages one out of every

ten inhabitants is an avowed Tolstoist, and there are many more secret adherents. A notable accession to the cause is Prince Dimitry Chilkoff. The houses of suspected persons are being searched, Tolstoi's works are confiscated, and the owners are entered in the police black book. Some active Tolstoists have mysteriously disappeared from Pavalooka, and it is feared they have been sent to Siberia. Others have had their children taken from them. It is stated that the Council of State has considered the question of Tolstoi's expulsion, and only refrains lest an attack on such should rally new forces to his side.

Northern Gossip, a lively little Newcastle journal, says that many of the big guns in the Newcastle churches are managers or directors of societies who keep their clerks working long hours at small wages.

Frenchmen are not usually credited with religious fervor, but the Mayor of St. Jean Brevelay, a town near Vannes, in France, is certainly an exception, for he has resigned his office rather than offend his scruples, as a devout Catholic, by marrying a lady to a gentleman who had obtained a divorce from his first wife, the Roman Catholic Church not recognizing divorce. Here is an example for our High Church clergymen. When their consciences will not permit them to carry out the laws prescribed by the State, let them resign their offices.

The Rev. J. W. Clark (minister of Queen-street Congregational Church, Chester) brought an action against Sydney J. Clark, formerly deacon of the church, to recover £1,000 damages for libel. Minister Clark accused Deacon Barton of disrespect to himself, and other un-Christian conduct. The deacons investigated the minister's charges, and reported that they were groundless; Deacon Clark going the length of adding, as he resigned his office, that they were malicious. This was the reason for suing him for a cool thousand. The defendant pleaded that his statement was privileged, and true in substance and fact. The evidence showed some unpleasant proceedings at the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

It seems this man of God also accused a brother Congregational sky-pilot of having degraded the cloth and brought his office into disrepute, though the statement was founded on mere hearsay. He had also had other libel cases. The jury intimated that they had heard enough, and the judge remarked that they did not want another such Pleasant Afternoon, whereupon a juror was withdrawn and the case was stopped, leaving the plaintiff discomfited.

By thirty-five votes to sixteen the Leicester Town Council has rescinded a former resolution to consecrate one third of the new cemetery. Church corpses will have to be laid in common earth, and take their chance with other corpses when Gabriel blows the Resurrection trumpet. The Town Council also refuses to build a chapel exclusively for the Church of England. Apparently there is to be no religious edifice of any kind in the cemetery. All parties will have to go through their religious rites outside.

In his lecture on "How to Work," delivered to the students of Manchester College, and reprinted in the current number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Max Müller has much to say on his favorite subject of the sympathy of religions. Thus he remarks: "With regard to Buddhism, the custom of prayer-wheels is often pointed out as the worst degradation of religion. But I must confess I had little to say when a Japanese Buddhist, to whom I had pointed out the absurdity of such a custom, replied: 'These prayer-wheels are only meant to remind us of Buddha'; and when he added, with a smile: 'Is it not better to use a wheel, even when it is moved by the wind or by water, than to employ, as you do in your college chapels, a human being, whose chief object it seems to be to get through the service in the shortest time possible?'"

The *Living Church*, an Episcopalian organ of Chicago, will not allow that Unitarians are Christians. It says: "The Moslem believes that Christ was a divine teacher, but no one would so misuse the religious terminology of the English tongue as to designate the Turkish Sultan or the Bey of Morocco as 'Christian.' It is hardly possible, with any degree of truthfulness, to recognize a community which has no definite views regarding the nature of God and the teachings and character of Christ as truly Christian. It is simply an abuse of the term, which must lead to endless confusion. It will be more correct to speak of the Unitarians of the present day as theists or deists." Your tritheists, or believers in a three-headed deity, are the only genuine elect.

In the *Contemporary Review* this month Professor H. M. Gwatkin comes to the help of the Lord against the mighty—the mighty in this case being Professor Harnack, one of the leading German theological lights. Dr. Harnack holds that the evidence of Irenæus for John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel amounts to nothing, for the John which

Polycarp knew was another John—Johnny the elder, not Johnny the divine—and Irenæus only knew Polycarp when he himself was a youngster; whereas Papias, who tells the big yarn about the millennial grapes on the authority of Jesus himself, was a disciple of John the Apostle. Now, Dr. Gwatkin seeks to turn the matter otherwise. He holds that Irenæus was most likely wrong when he tells us that Papias was a disciple of Johnnie the Apostle instead of Johnnie the elder, but cannot have meant that Polycarp's John was any other than the original genuine John, the beloved disciple. It is a fine study for those expert in "telling t'other from which."

How did the confusion of the Johns come about? Probably in this way: things got ascribed to the Apostle which were inconvenient or incontrovertibly false, and so they got ascribed to another, John the elder. But it was John who calls himself the elder who wrote the epistles; and, as "Abracadabra" has conclusively shown, if it was not the writer, or writers, of the epistles who also faked up the Gospel, at least the compilers put in the mouth of Jesus whole phrases taken from those epistles; so that the conclusion is evident that John the Apostle had nothing to do with the Fourth Gospel.

It seems likely that the confusion between the three Jameses and the two Marys came about in somewhat the same way. Parties in different localities ascribed their churches to the Apostle James, or "the brother of the Lord"; so the gentleman had to be differentiated into James the Just, James the Greater, and James the Lesser, or one single gentleman rolled out into three. Yet Mr. Engström says, "Christian Evidences cannot be made funny."

Mr. Lecky, whose election for the University of Dublin was opposed by a very inconsiderable section of that constituency on the ground of his supposed Rationalistic tenets, is encountering a fresh difficulty arising out of the *odium theologicum*. The distinguished historian is now assailed by correspondents in the Dublin Tory press, who are calling him severely to task for having, in his recent speech on the Irish University question, used the expression "Catholics" to signify persons belonging to the Roman Catholic communion.—*Daily News*.

At Ripon they had a greasy copy of the Holy Scriptures, which had been used for swearing purposes for over sixty years. It has just been superannuated, or removed for disinfection.

The Holy Ghost inspired Paul to write to Timothy to bring him the cloak which he left with Carpus at Troas, but he did not make half the fuss over it that was made at the Church House over the loss of the Bishop of Dover's greatcoat.

Fewer deacons and priests of the Church of England were ordained last year than in any corresponding twelve months since 1876, a period of twenty years. The fool of the family used to "take orders"; but he is now sent to take orders of another if the family wants to get on.

N., in the *Sydney Bulletin*, says: "'Thy gold perish with thee!' Thus said an indignant apostle to Simon Magus; but it is not a way they have in the Salvation Army. They freeze on to the gold. Melbourne has the law-case of Buntine v. the Army. Here a 'promoted' member, known as Holy Bob, diverted away £2,000 by will from his children to this religious organization. One might think it would refuse to take the money. But no. The Devil's brigade is summoned up for real fighting. No hallelujahs, but the cold, cruel steel of the legal bayonet. 'Go not to law before the unbeliever.' Oh, pooh! Two thousand quid. Yet they will lose double as much through giving rope to Purves to charge women-officers and other women of the organization specifically with immorality, while the judge contemptuously says the question is not whether Holy Bob was moral, but whether he was sane."

The advance from the simple to the complex, through a process of successive differentiations (*i.e.*, the appearances of differences in the parts of a seemingly like substance), is seen alike in the earliest changes of the universe to which we can reason our way back, and in the earliest changes which we can inductively establish; it is seen in the geologic and climatic evolution of the earth, and of every single organism on its surface; it is seen in the evolution of humanity, whether contemplated in the civilized individual, or in the aggregation of races; it is seen in the evolution of society, in respect alike of its political, its religious, and its economical organization; and it is seen in the evolution of all those endless and abstract products of human activity which constitute the environment of our daily life. From the remotest past which science can fathom, up to the novelties of yesterday, that in which progress essentially consists is the transformation of the homogeneous into the heterogeneous.—*Herbert Spencer*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "Earth, Heaven, and Hell."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—February 14, Leicester; 21, Liverpool; 23, Paisley; 24, Greenock; 25, Motherwell; 26, Dunoon; 28, Glasgow. April 4, Sheffield.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M.—Thanks for the "bits." Pleased to hear that you enjoy your *Freethinker*, and have done so for many years.

H. A. GARLETTE.—Your friend is grossly ignorant for a British citizen, and presumably a taxpayer. The "Voluntary" schools, so-called, are chiefly supported by a Government grant. The seventeen shillings and sixpence per scholar they now receive is to be increased by another five shillings under Mr. Balfour's proposals. The fact is, there are no "Voluntary" schools; that is, no schools supported entirely by voluntary contributions.

H. THOMPSON.—Marked papers always welcome.

THORNEY.—Mr. Wheeler will be pleased to see the book you mention.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Daniel Baker, £2 2s.; W. Gregory, 5s.

J. A.—Thanks for the bambino cutting, which will fill a corner usefully.

J. GRANDY.—It is a very old joke, that of the schoolboy who mixed up Oliver Cromwell with Wolsey's Cromwell, and made the former recite the words put into Wolsey's mouth in *Henry VIII.* about serving his god with the same zeal he had served his king.

F. J. BOORMAN.—We are always sorry to omit lecture notices, but such things should be sent to us and not to Mr. Forder, and by the first post on Tuesday, not the second post on Wednesday—as was the case with your notice last week.

J. STANWAY.—See "Acid Drops." We think it extremely unlikely that a debate will take place between Sam Jones and Colonel Ingersoll, or that Sam Jones really desires such an encounter. Talking loose sensationalism at a revival meeting is one thing; debating with an opponent like Ingersoll is quite another.

H. BROWN.—Glad to hear that the Finsbury Branch is gradually increasing in membership.

J. MELLING.—Always pleased to receive cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New York Public Opinion—Glasgow Herald—Paisley Gazette—Paisley Daily Express—Sunday Chronicle—Chestor News—Manchester Guardian—Northern Gossip—Las Dominicales—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Newcastle Daily News—Cheshire Observer—People's Observer—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Dominion Review—Chicago Sunday Tribune—Isle of Man Times—Young Socialist.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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

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

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

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

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

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

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivered three addresses on Sunday in the Secular Hall, Manchester. Despite the fog, there was a good morning audience; a better one assembled in the afternoon, and a fine one in the evening. All three meetings were very enthusiastic.

Mr. Foote will now deliver a special course of lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, beginning this evening (February 14), when his subject will be "Earth, Heaven, and Hell." The subjects for the other Sunday evenings will be announced on handbills, which Mr. Foote hopes will be distributed among their liberal-minded acquaintances by the frequenters of the Athenæum Hall.

Mr. Charles Watts's lecture at the Athenæum Hall last Sunday evening upon "The Government and the Educational Problem" was enthusiastically received. Mr. Watts, who was in good form, pointed out the defects of Mr. Balfour's Voluntary Aid Bill now before the House of Commons. Captain Adams, of Montreal, Canada, made an excellent chairman, and delivered a very interesting address, which was warmly applauded.

To-day, Sunday, February 14, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester; subjects: "Colonel Ingersoll and Freethought in America" and "Sin and Secular Salvation."

The Finsbury Branch of the N.S.S. has just held its annual meeting, at which all the old officers were re-elected, and arrangements were made for the open-air campaign during the coming season. Considering the difficulties of this Branch, and the poverty of the neighborhood in which it works, the balance-sheet showed a very satisfactory financial position.

Mr. Forder, the honorary treasurer, acknowledges in this week's *Freethinker* the receipt of subscriptions for the Annual Children's Party. Arrangements will soon have to be completed for this gathering; we, therefore, invite intending subscribers to forward their donations immediately. This is a function on which all can agree. It is a source of great pleasure to everyone concerned.

Frederic Harrison has a good article on "Primary Education" in the February *Positivist Review*. He says: "The elementary teaching of the children of the people, which ought to be a simple problem for experts in finance and in administration, has been most woefully obscured by the clamor of sects and priests. The greater part of the hot controversy we have lately heard turns on the question, 'How shall the children be got to profess, or at least be counted as members of this or that theological sect?' The real aim is to get hold of public money to promote Church interests—not in order to teach the children." Mr. Harrison again insists that it is not the business of the State to undertake any religious instruction whatever. "When the State attempts to inculcate opinions it ends in the oppression of the people as well as the perversion of truth."

The Newcastle *Daily News* has an article on "The Blasphemy Laws," taking for its text Mr. Verinder's paper in the *Free Review*. It says: "The electors of Northampton were for some time partly disfranchised owing to their existence, and more recently a bequest to a secular organization was set aside on an appeal being made to the Law Courts. Such laws cannot be called anything less than barbarous. They are a direct denial of all our boasted freedom of thought and opinion. That which is true does not need to be propped up by Acts of Parliament."

The *Dominion Review* (Toronto: 67 Adelaide-street) opens with a paper entitled "Can we have a Divine Revelation?" by the Rev. T. Ernest Allen, who shows there are many difficulties in the way. "The Gospel According to Ingersoll" gives his lecture on "The Two Ways." The Rev. C. Peters advocates the taxation of Church property. Mr. B. F. Underwood gives some interesting specimens of "Pagan and Christian Epitaphs." Dr. Miller has an interesting illustrated article on "Recent Brain Surgery and Psychology." Mr. Wheeler's "Walk Up Fleet-street" is reprinted from our columns. Altogether, the *Dominion Review* offers very readable matter to its subscribers.

In the current number of the *Fortnightly Review* Mr. Grant Allen has an able article on "Spencer and Darwin," taking for his text Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, which he praises for bringing out the true nature of Darwin's magnificent life-work—his establishment of the principle of Natural Selection. This was the fecund idea which made

the adoption of the theory of organic evolution possible. Mr. Grant Allen says: "To Herbert Spencer, Darwin was even as Kant, Laplace, and Lyell—a laborer in a special field who produced results which fell into their proper order in his wider synthesis. The total philosophic concept of Evolution as a Cosmic Process, one and continuous, from nebula to man, from star to soul, from atom to society, we owe to Herbert Spencer himself, and to him alone, using as material the final results of innumerable preceding workers and thinkers."

The *Quarterly Review* has an article on "The Lord's Day," which expresses the regret that the Lord's Committee were "unable to suggest any means by which entertainments like a lecture by Sir Robert Ball could be sanctioned and a low type of music-hall performance prohibited." The article points out that the ceremonial of the Fourth Commandment of the Jewish Decalogue has no application to the First Day, and says: "The term Christian Sabbath is unknown for the first twelve centuries of Christian history. The term Sabbath, as applied to the Lord's Day, is unknown to the Articles, the Canons, and the Prayer Book of the Church of England."

There is also an article on "Epicurus and His Sayings" in the current *Quarterly*, in which the old Greek Freethinker's death is thus spoken of: "Epicurus himself, at the end of his life, showed that his claim to fortitude of mind was no mere boast. In the letter which he wrote on his death bed he says: 'My sufferings are so severe that nothing can be added to their violence; yet all these afflictions are combated and counteracted by the cheerfulness of mind which comes from the memory of our past discussions.'"

SHOULD THE N. S. S. HAVE A PRESIDENT?

OWING to correspondents neglecting our condition that the personal element must be eliminated from this discussion, we are only able to give extracts from their letters up to date.

"Atheist" (Liverpool), who writes much in praise of Mr. Foote, says: "I, for one, am rather pleased that your generous invitation to Secularists anent the Presidency has received such a cool reception. It goes far to prove that the Secularists of this country are well satisfied to have a Society and also a President."

An Edinburgh Secularist, who gives his name in confidence, says: "I advise you to pay no attention to the attacks upon you. If the Society is allowed to receive bequests, I will leave a substantial sum in my will for propagandist purposes."

G. P., who is a recent member, and unacquainted with the working of the Society, is against the presidency on the grounds (1) that a capable man is likely to be despotic; (2) that the movement is likely to be judged too much by one individual; and (3) that the more democratic a constitution is the better.

T. Dunbar, who writes in praise of the existing president, thinks a president is as necessary as a captain to a ship, and has yet to learn that any movement in history succeeded without a leader.

J. M. Jones says: "I take it that the President professes to be neither a general who issues commands, nor a King who looks upon a section of humanity as his subjects, but to be simply a focus for the scattered sunbeams of Secularism."

J. M. (Breslau) says: "There may be a question as to the fitness of any particular man, but the idea of doing without a president altogether is too utterly absurd for a moment's consideration."

A. W. Stavers, who is severe on certain critics, says that a society without a president would be something like a carriage and pair without a driver in the streets of a busy town.

D. Hughes, Swansea, thinks that all friends of the movement there are in favor of maintaining the presidency, for "if every man marches as he pleases the army never reaches anywhere."

T. Clark, a Freethinker of forty years' standing, who saw the N. S. S. established, thinks a president indispensable, and wants to know what definite policy of government is proposed by those who think otherwise.

We shall be happy to publish correspondents' letters in full if they will only make them brief, and refrain from praise or censure of the living or the dead.

We are asked to announce that Mr. G. J. Holyoake will preside at the annual meeting of the Rationalist Press Committee, which will be held at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, London, W., on Monday evening next, at eight o'clock. He will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and, probably, Captain R. C. Adams, of Montreal, Canada. Full particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

THE CALF-PATH.

ONE day through the primeval wood
A calf walked home, as good calves should,

But made a trail all bent askew,
A crooked trail, as all calves do.

Since then two hundred years have fled,
And, I infer, the calf is dead.

But still he left behind his trail,
And thereby hangs my moral tale.

The trail was taken up next day
By a lone dog that passed that way;

And then a wise bell-wether sheep
Pursued the trail o'er vale and steep,

And drew the flock behind him, too,
As good bell-wethers always do.

And from that day, o'er hill and glade,
Through those old woods a path was made,

And many men wound in and out,
And dodged and turned and bent about,

And uttered words of righteous wrath,
Because 'twas such a crooked path;

But still they followed—do not laugh—
The first migrations of that calf.

And through that winding wood-way stalked
Because he wobbled when he walked.

This forest path became a lane,
And bent and turned and turned again.

This crooked lane became a road,
Where many a poor horse, with his load,

Toiled on beneath the burning sun,
And travelled some three miles in one.

And thus a century and a half
They trod the footsteps of that calf.

The years passed on in swift fleet;
The road became a village street,

And this, before men were aware,
A city's crowded thoroughfare.

And soon the central street was this
Of a renowned metropolis;

And men two centuries and a half
Trod in the footsteps of that calf.

Each day a hundred thousand rout
Followed the zigzag calf about;

And o'er his crooked journey went
The traffic of a continent.

A hundred thousand men were led
By one calf near three centuries dead

They followed still his crooked way,
And lost one hundred years a day;

For thus such reverence is lent
To well-established precedent.

A moral lesson this might teach
Were I ordained and called to preach.

For men are prone to go it blind
Along the calf-paths of the mind,

And work away from sun to sun
To do what other men have done.

They follow in the beaten track,
And out and in, and forth and back;

And still their devious course pursue,
And keep the path that others do.

But how the wise old wood-gods laugh,
Who saw the first primeval calf!

Ah! many things this tale might teach—
But I am not ordained to preach.

SAM FOSS.

Obituary.

A WELL-KNOWN Paisley Radical and Freethinker has passed away in the person of Mr. John Struthers Mitchell, who died on Feb. 5, at the ripe age of 79. He came of a good old Chartist stock, and by his writings in the local press did much to aid advanced causes. He had been an active figure in political movements since 1832, and was a sturdy supporter of Mr. Bradlaugh.

With most people nothing is so firmly believed as that which is least known.—*Montaigne*.

STELLA.

CAMILLE FLAMMARION, the astronomer, author of *The Heavens*, etc., has written a novel entitled *Stella*, that being the name of his heroine. She is an orphan of wealth, who has been educated in a convent, but who comes to Paris at the age of nineteen to live with her uncle, the Comte de Noirmoutiers, a gentleman in fashionable society. Looking over her uncle's library, she is attracted by the writings of the modern scientists and philosophers, especially one—the Solitary Man—under which designation Flammarion seems to depict himself. The idea takes her mind of epitomizing the teachings she has learnt, comparing them with what she had been taught from the book of Genesis, and dividing them into epochs. Here is the result :—

SCIENCE.

First Epoch.

The solar system appears to issue from an immense nebula, of which the sun and the planets are condensations.

The earth itself was in the beginning nebulous, then a sun, and, growing colder, it has become a solid body.

The epochs of nature represent millions of years.

Second Epoch.

Fossils show us, like the leaves of a book, all the annals of the earth—that life commenced with beings of the most rudimentary and imperfect character. The three great geological periods might be called the era of fish, the era of reptiles, and the era of mammalia.

Each of these eras represents millions of years. Fish are to be found in abundance amid Cambrian, Silurian, Devonian permo-carboniferous strata: reptiles in triassic, jurassic, and chalk strata; mammalia down from the eocene period. The sea has several times taken the place of the earth, and *vice versa*. The species have continued, becoming continually more and more different, and perfecting themselves.

Third Epoch.

Towards the end of the tertiary period animal and vegetable species began to resemble those of our epoch.

Slowly, gradually, our planet has acquired its present conditions of existence, its seasons and its climates. The first beings who merited the title of human appear to have been primitive savages, who lived naked and wild in woods, fighting for their lives against fierce beasts. The anatomy of man resembles that of the larger monkeys, but man by no means descends from the monkey. He is the perfected state of an extinct species which has developed. His frame shows that his body belongs to the order of mammalia.

An admirable law of progress has presided over the gradual development of beings, from the most lowly up to man.

Terrestrial life is one great unity, and man is the crowning point of it.

Fourth Epoch.

By the gradual develop-

RELIGION.

First Epoch.

God created heaven and earth in six days, with all the beings that they contain, and rested on the seventh day.

The sun, the moon, and the stars were created on the fourth day.

The first beings created were angels. They fought among themselves. The vanquished are demons. Such is the origin of demons.

Second Epoch.

The sixth day God made the animals dwelling on dry land. He then said: "Let us make man in our own image." God created Adam by modelling a man in clay, and by breathing into it. Then he took away a rib during the man's sleep, and changed it into a woman. He forbade them to eat of the fruit of a certain tree in his garden. The Devil entered into a serpent, and persuaded the woman to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, which was the best one.

The woman allowed herself to be tempted. She tasted the fruit, and gave some to her husband; he also ate of it.

Then they perceived that they were both naked.

Third Epoch.

God was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Adam and Eve wanted to hide themselves, but God called them.

Adam answered him: "I heard your voice, but I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." "And who told you that you were naked, if you had not eaten of the forbidden fruit?"

"It was the woman who gave me some."

The Lord God said to the woman: "What is this you have done?" She replied: "The serpent deceived me." Then God said to the serpent: "On thy belly shalt thou creep, and thou shalt eat dust." And to the woman: "You shall bring forth children in pain."

God then made for Adam and for Eve, his wife, coats of skins, and turned them away from the garden, and placed angels with swords of fire to guard the entrance.

Fourth Epoch.

In order to save the pos-

ment of his physical and moral faculties, and the slow weeding out of the unfit, man has become less and less barbarous. To the age of rough stone have succeeded the ages of polished stone, bronze, and iron. Clothes, dwellings, implements of labor, scientific and industrial apparatus, the arts, and civilization have been successively invented. Men have become rational and thinking beings. Humanity has given birth to such minds as those of Homer, Socrates, Plato, Archimedes, Jesus, and Newton.

However, the human race is still only in a primitive condition. It will continue this ascending march, especially since the development of the sciences.

Science advances gradually. It is always to be sought after.

As Stella studied this parallel, she could not but doubt of the truth about religion. Scientific history is founded on the direct observation of the facts of nature, while religious history only offers at its base fiction—fiction of a beautiful Oriental symbolism, it is true; but pure fiction, impossible to prove, and even contradictory. The young seeker after truth asked herself: If really the sun, the moon, and the stars were created in one day, to shine upon the earth; if really God took the trouble to model a body in clay in order to form Adam; if really Eve had been taken from the side of the first man thus created; if really the serpent had spoken.

Then deeper and deeper she sounded the depths of her Biblical instruction, and she said to herself that the author of the history treated God somewhat familiarly, and saw in Him only a man. She read over again several times in her Bible that "God walked in the garden in the afternoon when a gentle breeze had arisen," and that He "made coats" to clothe Adam and Eve. She had never read the Bible with this degree of attention, and could no longer believe her eyes. Then she was surprised by other singularities, such as the condemnation of the serpent to creep on his belly henceforth, and she asked herself, without finding an answer, what mode of locomotion a serpent employed before Eve's fall. And then, all innocent that she was, it seemed to her that Jesus is not the son of David if Joseph is not His father, and that if Joseph is His father the Virgin Mary is not a virgin. It appeared to her that there was a contradiction here. And then it seemed to her that Jesus had not saved humanity, seeing that three-fourths of the inhabitants of the earth do not know the gospel, or do not believe in it. In her perplexity she sought aid in logic, went back to the origin of things, and perceived that the redemption is founded on a sin, the sin on a temptation, the temptation on the existence of a demon, and the demon on a battle of angels before the creation of man. All this fabrication appeared to her to be of a very romantic character. She passed one evening in an anxious state of mind, and did not sleep during the night which followed. Why? She had lived so quietly until then. Her thoughts, when she had had any, had been so simple. Life and death had been explained to her. And now she commenced to doubt. And the deeper she went into the matter, the more she read the Bible, the more she doubted. What truth was there in it? Nothing, perhaps!

"The Solitary Man" makes a Radical Freethinker of Stella, and the contemplation of the starry universe raises her mind above the puerility of egotistic human creeds. Here we must leave her, with the conviction of her having all the essential elements of a modern heroine.

Fuddy—"There seems to have been quite a change come over Blowser. They say he gets up to speak almost every evening at the revival meetings in the Beulah-street Church." Duddy—"Yes, it gives him an opportunity of calling people names. It is some satisfaction to him to be able to call folks 'sinners.' And then, you know, it isn't actionable, as 'thieves' and 'rascals' would be. But you make a mistake when you think that a change of heart has made any perceptible change in Blowser himself."

BOOK CHAT.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE, in noticing Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution* in the *Star* (Feb. 5), says: "Christianity has been one grand mistake, a gigantic befuddlement of the human intellect." These words may, perhaps, be taken as a summary of Mr. Clodd's position, but the poet-critic begins a new paragraph by saying for himself: "That Christianity and all other religions have been the bitter and murderous foes of natural science, and the truth about life generally, cannot be doubted."

* * *

The New Spiritualism, a threepenny pamphlet by Richard Harte, has been sent to us from the office of *Light*. According to the author, the Old Spiritualism was the product of religious emotion, while the New Spiritualism is the result of scientific investigation and philosophic speculation. These be fine words, but practically all kinds of spiritism look exceedingly like survivals of savage animism and worship of the dead. The conditions laid down by *The New Spiritualism* seem favorable to fraud, since we are told "the presence of a single hostile person spoils the circle." Mr. Harte holds that "the Materialist is an abnormal being, a *lusus nature*, and nothing more or less, in plain English, than one of Nature's freaks!" A Spiritist, of course, is never an abnormal crank.

* * *

The Rev. H. Haweis pats Theosophy and Spiritism on the back in his new book, appropriately entitled *The Dead Pulpit*. "Nothing but a revival and re-statement of the Occult will rehabilitate Christianity, restore the Bible to the age, rescue its miraculous element, and bring back religion to the people." That is to say, this Broach Churchman wants a revival of the old deep-seated superstitions.

* * *

The *Daily News* (Feb. 5), noticing *The Bible and the Child*, remarks: "All educated men now admit that the old view of the Bible can no longer be intelligently held. When even the orthodox Delitzsch has to admit that the Book of Daniel was written in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, is it prudent to go on attributing it to Daniel himself, who lived three hundred and seventy years before? Such questions can have but one intelligent answer, and it is the one these writers give." The answer of these Broad Churchmen is, however, only another attempt to keep the Churchship afloat by sailing under false colors.

* * *

The *Life of Faith*, in noticing a work entitled *God or Natural Selection?* by a Glasgow evangelist of the name of Miller, says: "We do not say Mr. Miller's book will accomplish all he hopes for, but it is another blow added to the many that are now driving the nail of conviction home that the Darwinian theory is—at least to a large extent—a speculation and a dream." If the editor of the *Life of Faith* lived the life of faith in full intensity, he would not write in this half-hearted fashion. He would say Moses was inspired, and Darwin a dunderhead.

* * *

Another Scotsman, Mr. Duncan Graham, puts out 300 pages of trash, entitled *Is Natural Selection the Creator of Species?* Mr. Graham's book may be suited to the calibre of the Dingwall Presbytery, but it is destitute of scientific or critical value.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of the monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, February 4; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. E. Bater, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, S. Hartmann, A. B. Moss, F. Schaller, H. J. Stace, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, P. Sabine, W. Leat, and the Secretary. Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed; monthly cash statement adopted. The Treasurer received instructions to discharge printing and other accounts.

It was moved by Mr. Wheeler, and seconded by Mr. Moss: "That the National Secular Society issue a manifesto on the Education Bill of the Government." Carried. Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. J. M. Wheeler promised their assistance in its preparation. The following resolution was then proposed by Mr. Moss, and seconded by Mr. Watts: "That this Executive deeply deplores the loss to Secularism in the death of Mr. J. Brumage, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, and begs to express to his widow its sincere sympathy with her in her sad bereavement."

The Secretary received instructions to send out the usual circulars to ascertain which of the Branches would be willing to receive the Conference. Other minor matters of business were discussed, and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREETHOUGHT PROPAGANDA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Will you kindly permit a member of a good many years' standing in the N.S.S. a few words with regard to the propaganda?

When the present parlous state of Secularism is considered, both in this country and abroad, one can hardly fail to arrive at the conclusion that there must be something radically deficient in our propaganda. In saying this, do not let me be understood to mean that I reflect adversely on the attainments of our lecturers. We have in our ranks, I am glad to say, a great many able and conscientious speakers, whose earnestness is worthy of all praise. But, in my opinion, it is the *system* which is at fault. I will explain briefly.

We still proceed on the same lines, in the same spirit, with the same methods, as were current in the days of Charles Bradlaugh, thirty to forty years ago. Now, I contend this is a mistake. Worse, it is an anachronism. Everything around us changes; the perceptions, the notions, the aspirations of mankind alter; economic conditions become modified; we alone stand still. Is this wise? Is it sensible? I do not advocate a change of spirit. I advocate a change of method, and, above all, a widening of range. When Charles Bradlaugh spoke, he addressed meetings that were deeply steeped in superstition, ignorance, and Bibliolatry. Is this the fact still to-day? Everyone knows that it is not, or not in the same degree. Yet our methods continue the same, as if matters had not changed. There are, as we all know, two sides to Secularism—viz., a destructive and a constructive side. Now, I contend that even on the former side Secularism has not lived up to its task, greatly to the impairment of its efficiency in the world at large. For it has been destructive, as a casual glance will show, merely on the lines of theological or anti-dogmatic propaganda. This, of course, meritorious though it be, is not sufficient. Secularism, if it is to be the regenerating power of the world, has to extend its action to all other fields of thought, of human interests and activities, where abuses are to be met with; for these all can be swept away thoroughly only from the platform of Secularism. It is here where I say the action of our Society is deficient. It is here where lies one of the main causes of its weakness. Secularism is not up to date, does not correspond with the altered wants and necessities of mankind, does not feel the popular pulse as it used to do of yore. The youth of to-day is outgrowing it. It wants stronger, better food than the Secularism of the last generation can afford. It does not want a champion whose prowess is spent, Quixote-like, in fighting windmills.

The young, the rising generation wants, I say, a different pabulum, and it is, I contend, rightly entitled to it. It wants, so far as it is intellectually astir, answers to the pressing problems of the day. These answers a Secularism which is eternally unearthing the fallacies of the past cannot give. If we continue on these lines much longer, we shall be told that we are a decrepit creed—a supernatural bogey—which will shortly be thrown, together with its more hoary opponent, into the lumber-room of old Father Time.

I know what will be argued against me. It will be urged that there are large masses of population yet where anti-theological propaganda is seasonable, and, indeed, necessary. That may be so; but it is equally true that there are large—indeed, growing—masses with whom this self-same propaganda is becoming obsolete, superannuated, and distasteful.

There is no absoluteness in the contentions on either side, but the business of the leaders of the Executive is to weigh one set of arguments as against the other, and to decide in accordance.

There is a further, a weighty, point I desire to submit to your attention, Mr. Editor. As Secularists, we are, at the present day, in a truly anomalous position. On the one hand, we have the fact that the bulk of the educated classes, and a large proportion of the non-educated ones, in this country, are Secularists; on the other hand, we have the fact that the roll of the N.S.S. constitutes but a vanishing proportion of the population of the United Kingdom. And likewise, looking abroad, we find that there are millions of people in all lands who, theoretically speaking, are Freethinkers; who, practically speaking, are renegades.

How is this? The reason, I submit, is not far to seek. It lies in the fact that the overwhelming proportion of mankind cannot afford to own themselves, cannot afford to be true to their convictions. Whatever they may think at heart, they must, if they do not wish to jeopardize their prospects, be careful not to disclose their real sentiments. It goes without saying that, so long as this state of things obtains, there is no probability of Secularist propaganda meeting with a large measure of success.

This being so, would it not be well, would it not be a proof of enlightened policy, of rational self-interest, if the National Secular Society were to extend its propaganda so

as to include in its range not only anti-theological, but every kind of destructive, criticism?—on broad, noble, humanitarian grounds, be it well understood.

This question opens up a wide perspective, and I must therefore confine myself, having regard to your limited space, to merely throwing it out. I would suggest that you invite correspondence on the subject, for it seems to me that there must be, especially among your numerous readers in the North, a good many who believe, both on grounds of policy and of principle, in giving the National Secular movement a fuller life, a broader scope, and wider possibilities.

T. F. BLANCHARD.

TACITUS AND POGGIO.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. J. M. Wheeler, in his interesting article on Christian scribblers, who, for the purpose of propagating their hybrid religion, distorted the Roman classics and forged certain documents, quotes a passage from the *Annals of Tacitus* (liber xv., c. 44), in Gibbon's translation, and, like M. P. Hochart, doubts the genuineness of the paragraph. I think it an interpolation, a pious fraud. It seems a crib from Sallust cleverly distorted: "*Nam semper in civitate quis opes nullae sunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt—postremo omnes quos flagitium aut facinus domo expulerat, in Romanis sicuti in sentinam conflexerant*" (*Catilina*, c. 37).

In every community there are men who, having no means of their own, envy their superiors, and extol people of their needy class. Lastly, all who were driven from home by disgrace or crime drifted into Rome as a common receptacle of all refuse. The passage ascribed to Tacitus runs thus: "*Repressaque in praesens exitiabilis superstitio rursus erumpit, non modo per Judaeum, originem eius mali, sed per urbem (Romam) etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocita aut pudenda confluunt, celebranturque*" (*Annales*, c. 44). Checked for a while, this taking superstition* soon broke out again, and not only spread over Judea, the original seat of the evil, but even the city (Rome), into which drift all shameful things, all abominations, and are there readily practised. Gibbon's translation is rather careless.

CHARLES KROLL LAPOITE.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am no orthodox Christian, but I do think many Freethought arguments are almost as weak as those in the *Catholic Times*. In your number of Jan. 31 "Abracadabra" argues that the three lists of the Apostles cannot be of independent origin, because they are all nearly in the same order. Now, if three writers enumerate the Channel Isles as "Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark," would anyone accuse them of all copying one bogus document? If three lists of the ten chief towns of England run thus—

London	London	London
Manchester	Liverpool	Manchester
Liverpool	Birmingham	Liverpool
Birmingham	Leeds	Birmingham
Leeds	Sheffield	Leeds
Sheffield	Manchester	Bradford
Bradford	Bradford	Nottingham
Nottingham	Nottingham	Bristol
Bristol	Bristol	Newcastle
Newcastle	Newcastle	Sheffield

does it prove that they are three copies of one document? Does it not rather show that all three were drawing on their knowledge of well-known facts? The one of them (No. 2) happened at first to forget Manchester, and No. 3 at first forgot Sheffield.

Another illogicality that often strikes me in the *Freethinker* is this: When a Christian writer disagrees with a pagan one about a name or date, why always assume that the latter is right? Caesar or Vitruvius may just as well be forgeries of later centuries as Mark or Luke.

C. HARPUR.

Children's Annual Party.

R. H. Side, 5s.; Seventeen Stone, 3s.; R. Gibbon, 1s. 2d.; G. Harlow, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Marriott, 1s.; A. J. Lorkin, 2s. 6d.; R. Fountain, 1s. 10d. Per R. Muller, 9s. 6d. Per Mrs. Henderson, £1 7s. 4d. Per Master Shepherd, 3s. 2d. Further subscriptions are earnestly invited.

ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

Our ideal women are no longer Jael and Deborah, Ruth and Esther, Martha and Mary. They are Miss Nightingale, Miss Dix, Miss Cobbe, and their co-workers, who have made the name of woman honored and respected, and who, had they lived in ancient days, would either have been burned alive for being too far in advance of time, or would have been raised to the rank of goddesses.—*K. P. Faure*.

* Christianity.

GIBBON AND VOLTAIRE.

In the new edition of *The Life and Letters of Edward Gibbon* there is a vivid picture of Voltaire in a letter from Gibbon to his stepmother: "I made a little excursion some days ago to Geneva, not so much for the sake of the town, which I had often seen before, as for a representation of Monsieur de Voltaire's. He lives now entirely at Fernay, a little place in France, but only two leagues from Geneva. He has bought the estate, and built a very pretty, though small, house upon it. After a life passed in courts and Capitals, the Great Voltaire is now become a meer country Gentleman, and even (for the honor of the profession) something of a farmer. He says he never enjoyed so much true happiness. He has got rid of most of his infirmities, and, though very old and lean, enjoys a much better state of health than he did twenty years ago. His playhouse is very neat and well contrived, situated just by his Chappel, which is far inferior to it, though he himself says, *que son Christ est du meilleur faiseur de tout le pays de Gex*. The play they acted was my favorite *Orphan of China*. Voltaire himself acted 'Gengis,' and Madame Denys 'Idamé'; but I do not know how it happened: either my taste is improved, or Voltaire's talents are impaired since I last saw him. He appeared to me now a very ranting, unnatural performer. Perhaps, indeed, as I was come from Paris, I rather judged him by an unfair comparison, than by his own independent value. Perhaps, too, I was too much struck with the ridiculous figure of Voltaire at seventy, acting a Tartar Conqueror with a hollow, broken voice, and making love to a very ugly niece of about fifty. The play began at eight in the evening, and ended (entertainment and all) about half an hour after eleven. The whole Company was asked to stay, and set Down about twelve to a very elegant supper of a hundred Covers. The supper ended about two, the company danced till four, when we broke up, got into our Coaches and came back to Geneva just as the Gates were opened. Shew me, in history or fable, a famous poet of seventy who has acted in his own plays, and has closed the scene with a supper and ball for a hundred people. I think the last is the more extraordinary of the two."

PROFANE JOKES.

A STORY is going the rounds of Bishop Paret, of Baltimore. Some time ago he was the guest of an episcopal family in West Virginia. Learning from the Bishop that he liked hard-boiled eggs for breakfast, his hostess went to the kitchen to boil them herself. While so engaged she began to sing the first stanza of a hymn. Then she sang the second stanza, the Bishop, who was in the dining-room, joining in. When it was finished there was silence, and the Bishop remarked, "Why not sing the third verse?" "The third verse?" replied the lady, as she came into the dining-room, carrying the steaming eggs; "oh, that's not necessary." "I don't understand," replied Bishop Paret. "Oh, you see," she said, "when I am cooking eggs I always sing one verso for soft-boiled and two for hard-boiled."

There was a Jewish gentleman who went into a restaurant to get his dinner, and the devil of temptation whispered in his ear: "Eat some bacon." He knew if there was anything in the universe calculated to excite the wrath of an infinite being, who made every shining star, it was to see a gentleman eating bacon. He knew it, and he knew the infinite being was looking, that he was the eternal eavesdropper of the universe. But his appetite got the better of his conscience, as it often has with us all, and he ate that bacon. He knew it was wrong, and his conscience felt the blood of shame in its cheek. When he went into that restaurant the weather was delightful, the sky was as blue as June, and when he came out the sky was covered with angry clouds, the lightning leaping from one to the other, and the earth shaking beneath the voice of the thunder. He went back into that restaurant with a face as white as milk, and he said to one of the keepers: "My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?"

Sexton (from the vestry-room)—"Dr. Blank, Dr. Blank! the church is on fire!" Dr. Blank (from the pulpit)—"Very well, William; I will retire. Perhaps you'd better wake up the congregation."

It was said of a late sky-pilot, whose sporting propensities were proverbial, that he was engaged in chasing the fox all the week, and the Devil on Sunday.

The following dialogue recently occurred in an English country church when the rector was catechizing the children. "What is your name?" he asked a strapping girl of thirteen, the only daughter of the village boniface. He received no reply. "What is your name?" said the minister, in a more peremptory way. "Nin o' yer fun, parson; ye kna ma name verra weel. Duon't yo say, whon ye're at our house on a neet, 'Bet, bring me a pint o' yel'" The congregation was on a broad grin.

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, "Earth, Heaven, and Hell."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Chilperic Edwards, "Ancient Monuments and the Bible."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. P. Ward, "Shall we Live After we are Dead?"
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7, Miss Hope Rea, "Our Movement—its Direction."
ISLINGTON: 8.30, Quarterly meeting at Bradlaugh Club and Institute.
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Athenæum, Camden-road, N.W.: 7, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, "Moral Theory and Practice."
NORTH LONDON ETHICAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, Leighton Hall, Kentish Town: 11, Lesson by F. J. Gould. Children invited.
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY, Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Ruskin."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, F. Haslam lectures.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3—weather permitting—H. P. Ward, "For Christ's Sake or Right's Sake."

COUNTRY.

BRISTOL BRANCH (Shepherd's Hall): 7, Mr. Stone, "The Education Question."
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. B. Thompson, "Voluntary Schools: Past, Present, and Future."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, 2.30, and 6.30, C. Cohen.
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): O. Watts—11, "Colonel Ingersoll and Freethought in America"; 6.30, "Sin and Secular Salvation."
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Ross, "The Immortality of the Soul."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Busholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "Prehistoric Man: His Remains, and what we Learn from Them." Illustrated with lantern views.
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Is Competition an Evil?"
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Bowie, "An Hour with the Microscope." Lantern lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 14, Glasgow; 21, Bristol; 28, Plymouth. March 7, Cardiff; 15 to 21, Manchester; 23, Bradford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—February 21, Leicester; 28, Bradlaugh Club. March 7, New Brompton. April 4, m., Hyde Park; a., Harrow-road; e., Hammersmith.

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, 18 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.

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."

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.

100 ODD NUMBERS OF THE REASONER (1853-54) FOR SALE, Interesting Freethought Relics. Very Scarce. Single copy, post free 1½d.—E. Davis, 4 Fulford-terrace, Pimlico, London, S.W.

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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

THE BEST BOOK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

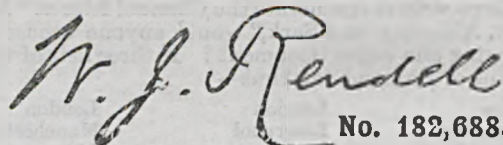
W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in *Law of Population*, p. 32, and Dr. Allbutt in *Wife's Handbook*, p. 51. Made 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


No. 182,688.

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

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 8s. per doz. All prices post free.

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

The Rationalist Press Committee.

THE Annual Report of the above Committee will be presented to Subscribers and Friends at Essex Hall (Smaller Hall), Essex Street, Strand, W.C., on Monday evening next, February 15th, 1897, and readers of the *Freethinker* are cordially invited to attend. Admission is free. The Chair will be taken at Eight o'clock promptly by Mr. G. J. HOLYOAKE, who will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and the members of the Committee. The work and prospects of the Committee will be discussed, and any suggestions will be gladly welcomed.

F. J. GOULD
CHARLES A. WATTS } Hon. Secs.

17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

ATHENÆUM HALL, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W.

A DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENT will be given in the above Hall on Tuesday, February 16, 1897, under the direction of Mrs. CHARLES WATTS and Miss EDITH M. VANCE, consisting of the following programme:—Pianoforte Solo; Comedietta—"A JOINT HOUSEHOLD"; Ballad, Mr. Ridges; the Laughable Farce of "BETSY BAKER"; Ballad; and Quarrel and Screen Scenes from "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

Mrs. Charles Watts will appear in the Comedietta, and as "Lady Teazle," assisted by Miss Nowlan, Miss Annie Brown, Messrs. F. Cotterell, James Geddes, Charles Watts, and others.

Doors open at 7.30, commence at 8. Tickets, reserved 1s., unreserved 6d., can be obtained at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street; of Miss Vance, 377 Strand; and of Mr. H. Brown, 61 Patshull-road, Kentish Town, N.W.

Recently published, price 3d., by post 4d.,

THE Secularist's Catechism.

BEING

*An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to
the Political and Social Problems of the Day.*

By CHARLES WATTS

(Vice-President of the National Secular Society).

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

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.

Price 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d. post free,

THE GRAND OLD BOOK.

A REPLY TO THE GRAND OLD MAN.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

An Exhaustive Answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's
"Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture."

CONTENTS:—Preface—Preliminary View—The Creation Story—The Fall of Man—The Psalms—The Mosaic Legislation—Corroborations of Scripture—Gladstone and Huxley—Modern Scepticism.

London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-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.

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

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

48 Pages, beautifully printed and elegantly bound, price Sixpence,

THE

SIGN OF THE CROSS

A CANDID CRITICISM

OF

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S PLAY

BY

G. W. FOOTE

CONTENTS:—

A Pious Play
Blasphemous Abuse
Melodrama
"Claudian"
Pagan and Christian Morality
Pagan and Christian Torture
Nero and His Vices
Faith and Filth
The Primitive Christians and the Roman Empire
Fabulous Persecutions
Paul at Rome
The Neronian Persecution
The Forged Passage in Tacitus: its History and Probable Origin
Mr. Barrett's Cant
The Real Sign of the Cross

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

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LECTURE,

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE.

Price Sixpence.

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

REMAINDER of WINTER STOCK must be CLEARED.

EVERYTHING AT FAR BELOW COST.

THINK
OF
THIS FOR
A
MOMENT.

OVERCOAT TO MEASURE, 21s.
SUIT TO MEASURE, 28s. 6d.
TROUSERS TO MEASURE, 9s.
OVERCOAT LENGTH, 11s. 6d.
SUIT LENGTH, 13s. 6d.
TROUSERS LENGTH, 5s. 6d.

OVERCOATINGS—

Black, Blue, Brown, Fawn, Grey Meltons,
Friezes, Tweeds, Worsted, or Covert
Coatings.

SUITINGS AND TROUSERINGS—

Black, Blue, Brown, Fawn, and Grey
Mixtures, Checks, Stripes; English, Irish,
or Scotch Tweeds, Worsteds, Serges, or
Vicunas.

1,000 Dress lengths, all sorts and shades, 7s. 6d. each.

ALL GOODS CARRIAGE PAID.

In every Parcel over £3 in Value we include, free of cost, LIFE OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH, by his
Daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner (value 7s.).

Measurement Form.

OVERCOAT.	COAT.	VEST.	TROUSERS.
Full Length of Back.....	Full Length of Back.....	Centre of Back to	Round Waist
Chest over Vest	Chest over Vest.....	Opening	Round Thigh
Waist over Vest	Waist over Vest.....	Centre of Back to Full	Round Knee
Centre of Back to Full	Centre of Back to Full	Length of Vest	Round Bottom
Length of Sleeve	Length of Sleeve.....		Length inside Leg.....
			Length Outside Leg

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

Ingersoll's Works.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.—Mistakes of Moses; Reply to Gladstone; Rome or Reason; Faith and Fact; God and Man; Dying Creed; The Ghosts; Great Mistake; Myth and Miracle; Real Blasphemy; and The Hope of the Future.

VOL. II.—Defence of Freethought; Why I am an Agnostic; Clergy and Common Sense; Do I Blaspheme? Marriage and Divorce; The Household of Faith; Limits of Toleration; Art and Morality; God and the State; Live Topics; Repairing the Idols; Truth of History; and Social Salvation.

VOL. III.—About the Holy Bible; Oration on the Gods; Walt Whitman; Paine the Pioneer; Humanity's Debt to Paine; Love the Redeemer; Religion of the Future; Breaking the Fetters; Difficulties of Belief; Is Suicide a Sin? Last Words on Suicide; and Christ and Murder.

Cloth, gilt, 3s. 6d. each. Each vol. can be had separately.

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

Works by J. M. Wheeler.

Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of All Ages and Nations. Containing the Lives of over 1600 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.

Prior 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.

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. 4s.
- 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.

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