

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVII.—No. 38.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 1897.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

BACK TO ROME.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, and the other right reverend fathers-in-God of the Church of England, did not look very far ahead when they got up that St. Augustine celebration at Ebbsfleet. They did not see that they were creating a splendid opportunity for the great rival Church of Rome. In commemorating the alleged introduction of Christianity in the south of England by St. Augustine and his brother monks, they overlooked the fact that all those missionaries were Roman Catholics. But this fact was very naturally not overlooked by Cardinal Vaughan, who at once proceeded to work it for all it was worth. He began to organize a counter demonstration at the same spot in the county of Kent, taking care that it should outvie the other one in every important feature. There should be more clericals, a greater variety of costumes, and a bigger procession; and, above all, England should be reminded that the Romish Church, which brought Christianity here, was still waiting to welcome back this country to her maternal embrace.

Cardinal Vaughan's counter demonstration took place a few days ago, and seems to have been a very pretty show. Ecclesiastical millinery, and ritual tomfoolery, were displayed in a manner which showed that the Church of England is dull in comparison with the Mother Church from which it seceded.

The Catholic Church beats all others in the matter of scenic display. On Sunday last it held its annual procession in the East-end of London "in honor of Our Lady, and in commemoration of the thirteenth century of the conversion of England to the Catholic and Roman faith." From the circus point of view, it was a tremendous success. There were hundreds of men and women; children in white carrying baskets of flowers; a contingent from the Italian Church, dressed in scarlet, and carrying a gigantic crucifix; priests in surplices, and acolytes in blue and white; a distinguished Father vested in a gorgeous cope, and a statue of the Virgin Mary surrounded by lights and flowers. According to the *Westminster Gazette*, the attitude of the vast crowd of spectators was sympathetic and even reverent; in fact, our contemporary regards it as "extremely remarkable, and as denoting the extraordinary change of public opinion towards the Roman Church during the last few years."

One incident of the procession was worthy of particular notice. At the site of the scaffold in Trinity-square a halt was made, and prayers were said in honor of Sir Thomas More, Cardinal Fisher, and other Catholic "martyrs," who were executed there, or elsewhere, in the reign of Henry VIII. This would be a touching incident if we did not know that most of those "martyrs" sent other people to the flames with the utmost cheerfulness. More himself sinned against the light. He had set forth the justice and advantages of religious toleration in his *Utopia*, on the ground that force cannot change opinions, and that threats only manufacture hypocrites. But afterwards, as an apologist for the persecution of the Lutherans, he argued that "the burning of heretics" was "lawful, necessary, and well done." This has always been the doctrine and policy of the Catholic Church. As Cardinal Vaughan once said, perhaps in an unguarded moment, it has "never spared the knife" in its treatment of heretics. Whenever possible, it has always let blood to cure the headache of thought. And those who are conversant with its history, and aware

of its present doings in countries where it is strong enough to command, will only laugh contemptuously at its simulated love of religious liberty in countries like England, where its weakness compels it to assume a certain air of humility.

Among the foreign participants in this Catholic celebration is the famous Cardinal Perraud, Bishop of Autun, and a member of the French Academy. He was the preacher at the Brompton Oratory on Sunday. He discoursed in French, and the place was "crowded with a fashionable congregation." He asked his hearers to pray constantly that England might be brought back to the fold. Bossuet's prophecy that England would return to the faith was being gradually fulfilled.

Cardinal Vaughan struck the same note in his speech the next day at Ramsgate. "The change that had come over England," he said, "during the present century was without a parallel in Christendom. England was not indeed Catholic—far from it—but multitudes had swung so far round that they were more than half Catholic." A curious and an ambiguous remark, which was greeted with loud cheers.

There was no superfluous modesty about Cardinal Vaughan. He plainly told the Anglicans that "not to be in continuity with the one true Church of Augustine was confessedly to be in schism and heresy, and, if culpably, out of the pale of salvation." We dare say, however, that Archbishop Temple will bear up under this terror with a great deal of fortitude; at least until he is convinced that Cardinal Vaughan, or his master at Rome, holds the keys of heaven. It will take far more than this, we imagine, to frighten the Archbishop out of his fine position and his fifteen thousand a year.

History was treated by Cardinal Vaughan with the same assurance. The Church of Augustine, he said, had served the people of England for nearly a thousand years, when "a tyrant arose in his lust and overthrew it." This is an allusion to Henry VIII., whom we are not going to defend. He was very much like other kings in most respects, only he had a strong will, and God's own Church (as Cardinal Vaughan would call it) went down before him when it stood in his way; a fact which shows us how much more force has had to do than persuasion in the establishment of religion. At the same time, it must be admitted that Henry VIII., forceful and imperious as he was, could not have bowled over the Catholic Church by himself. Opposition to Rome had been growing ever since the days of Wicklif. The Reformation had spread widely in England, despite the efforts of the Catholic Church to crush it. And a still greater movement had been in progress, that which is known as the Renaissance, the new birth of science and philosophy. Henry VIII. counted for something, but the successful revolt against Rome would certainly have taken place (sooner or later) without him. He struck at the Pope in his anger, but the time was ripe for the blow, and the forces of Protestantism which he liberated were not of his own creation. He simply transformed latent power into potential energy. A single spark will do that in a barrel of gunpowder. Some people call the spark the cause of the explosion, as though it would have caused an explosion had it fallen on a barrel of sand!

But let us leave history for the affairs of the present. Cardinal Vaughan calls himself the unworthy successor of Augustine, and we will not quarrel with the description. He tells us that he wears the same pallium (how dirty it must be!), exercises the same metropolitan jurisdiction, teaches the same doctrine, uses the same holy water (how

it must stink!), venerates the same relics, and offers the same sacrifice of the Mass. It is with this rubbish that Cardinal Vaughan aims at the conquest of England—the England of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer. We venture to prophesy that he will fail. England shows no sign of going back to Rome. The Catholic Church will doubtless sweep into its net a growing number of respectable superstitionists from other churches. But science is against it, philosophy is against it, democracy is against it, freethought is against it—and history is against it. It is all very well to censure the tyranny and lust of Henry VIII., but when did the Catholic Church denounce the vices or the crimes of a king who served its interests? Cardinal Vaughan weeps over the three hundred English Catholics who “suffered death for the spiritual power of the Pope” under Henry VIII. Has he ever dropped a tear over the Protestants who were sent to the fire by Mary? Has he mourned over the butcheries of Alva in the Netherlands? Has he deplored the frightful massacres of St. Bartholomew? Has he sighed over the wholesale torture and extermination of the American natives by the Christian Spaniards? Has he regretted the agony of a single victim of the dread Inquisition, the bloodiest tribunal ever established on earth?

Back to Rome! Back to relics and holy water, and childish superstition, and cunning, unscrupulous priestcraft, and suppression of liberty, and persecution and murder of heretics! Back to the glorious condition of Spain! Back to the state of Italy under Papal dominion! Never! England must cease to be England before this can happen. Rome may go on capturing idle rich men, and fantastic professionals, and the poorest of the poor who admire charity above justice; but the moment she imagines the time has come to dare as she once did, she will have to face millions of free men, who would fight lions in defence of their rights, and would soon settle an army of wolves.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE LEGEND OF PERSEUS.*

THE third volume of Mr. E. S. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus* completes a work which ably combines the labors of the folk-lorist and mythographer with those of the anthropologist. The researches of men like Tylor, Lubbock, Evans, Mannhardt, and Frazer into the early history of mankind are worthily followed up by this study of the ramifications of one of those classical stories which are not only hallowed by antiquity, but seem enwoven in the very fibre of the traditions of humanity. *The Legend of Perseus* is not only of deep interest to all students of human evolution, it is not without important bearings on Christianity itself, as the *Church Times* has recently discovered. The first volume, reviewed in the *Freethinker* of September 1, 1895, was devoted entirely to the story of “The Supernatural Birth.” Mr. Hartland shows that this story is so widely spread that it may be considered as at some time well nigh universal. An ingenious man of God has suggested in the *Church Times* that such stories may be regarded as Pagan prophecies of the exceptional event which happened at Bethlehem some nineteen hundred years ago, when the Holy Ghost got Mary with child. But this clever theory won't wash. The fact made patent by Mr. Hartland is that these stories are all savage in their superstructure. The tales of heroes brought into the world in an extraordinary manner arose in times of ignorance, when men actually believed in the possibility of such modes of reproduction.

Mr. Hartland's second and largest volume was on “The Life-token,” the notion of the hero's life being bound up with some specific object, such as a plant. In this he delved amid the very origins of human thought—man's early conception of his connection with nature and with his tribe. Mr. Hartland, going over much of the same ground as my own *Footsteps of the Past*, poured forth a store of information on witchcraft, leechcraft, sympathetic magic, sacred trees and wells, totemism, the blood covenant, saliva customs, and funeral and marriage rites, all tending to elucidate obscurities in the history of human belief and custom.

The Legend of Perseus. A Study of Tradition in Story, Custom, and Belief. By Edwin Sidney Hartland, F.S.A. London David Nutt, Strand.)

In this third and final volume we have the most generally interesting part of the Perseus legend—the rescue of Andromeda, and the capture of the head of the Medusa Witch. Mr. Hartland has chosen to treat them in the order named, but, in my opinion, he would have done better to have reserved for the finish the story of the deliverance of the maiden from the monster. In regard to this last, it is clear that the root of the story was the custom of offering human victims to appease the water demons, the rescue representing a time when the custom became repugnant to civilized humanity. The story of petrification caused by the Gorgon glance is, of course, paralleled by many stories of “the evil eye.” From the fact that “the evil eye” is usually feminine, and associated with envy, I conjecture that the belief has largely been influenced by the fact of children dying at, or shortly after, birth really from neglect or improper treatment, which has been ascribed to the evil-eye of some attendant or ill-wisher. The fascination exercised by some animals doubtless countenanced the belief.

Taking the subject as a whole, Mr. Hartland finds that the incidents of the Supernatural Birth, the Life-Token, and the Medusa Witch are founded on superstitions common to all mankind, and arising in the depths of savagery. The Rescue of Andromeda appears to be restricted to nations which have attained a certain grade of civilization, and to spring out of the suppression of human sacrifices to divinities in bestial form. It is the merit of Mr. Hartland that he has not only collected from every quarter of the world all sorts of folk-tales and sagas bearing on the Legend of Perseus, but he enables us to interpret them and see their place in the history of evolution. We may in some cases dissent from his interpretation, but we must admit that it is always suggestive, and we must thank him for bringing together such a collection of facts. Still further must we Freethinkers thank him for not shrinking from showing the bearings of his views on theology. I must cite his own words on one point. He says (p. 188):—

“I cannot hide from myself the important bearing that some of the subjects dealt with in these pages may have upon matters of Christian controversy. Our illustrations of the Supernatural Birth have been drawn entirely from certain forms of the story, to the exclusion of other forms which, interesting as they are in themselves, were for our purpose irrelevant. But sufficient has been said to raise questions which may be summarily stated thus:—If these legends be universal, if they must be rejected in every case but one as the product of an inevitable tendency of human imagination, then why not in that one case also? Assuredly that one case can be regarded as exceptional, only if it stand upon historical evidence totally different in kind from the others, and of inevitable cogency. But can anyone who sits down (as it is the duty at least of every educated man to do) calmly and, so far as he can, with scrupulous impartiality to weigh the evidence, say that the testimony of ecclesiastical tradition, or even of our Gospels, is different in kind from, or of greater cogency than, that which we reject, without hesitation, in the case of Sakyamuni, or of Alexander the Great? About ecclesiastical tradition I need say nothing. The records in the two Gospels which bear the names of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke are, carefully considered, irreconcilable. Both Gospels are now admitted to be secondary documents. It is hardly claimed for either of them that it was written less than sixty years after the event. It is by no means certain that they were in existence, as we now have them, when Justin Martyr wrote in the middle of the second century. Outside them there is no record, no unambiguous allusion even, that can be dated within one hundred and ten years of the Birth, and then only if we admit the genuineness of the questionable Epistles of Saint Ignatius, and the earliest possible date for his very doubtful journey. Is this the testimony on which belief in so amazing an event can be safely built?”

On the equally important question of the Christian Sacrament Mr. Hartland says: “That sacramental superstitions were rife in Judea as well as elsewhere in the time of Jesus Christ is certain, though our information concerning them is still lamentably deficient. The influence of mysteries upon Christianity has been hitherto little studied.” Mr. Percy Gardner has, however, paid some attention to the matter, and in 1892 I devoted a series of articles to this subject. There is a cognate question—that of initiatory rites—which, now that his task on *The Legend of Perseus* is so ably performed, I wish Mr. Hartland would undertake. There is no one in England so competent to deal with the

subject, with the possible exceptions of Mr. J. G. Frazer and Mr. W. Simpson. The former is busy with *Pausanias*, and the latter, who is now aged, has already provided valuable material for the person who will one day show what an important part secret fraternities have played in the history of man.

J. M. WHEELER.

MODERN SCEPTICISM.

ALTHOUGH Christian exponents may not be willing to admit that scepticism is the correct mental attitude which should be assumed towards the religious questions of the day, it is not denied, even by theologians, that sceptical views are rapidly spreading, and that disbelief in Christianity is presented in a more definite form than it was in former times. The *Rock*, in its issue of August 20, has a leading article on "Modern Rationalism," in which the editor, admitting that "the last fifty years have witnessed a remarkable change in the climate of religious thought," notices the various Rationalistic aspects which at the present time are so prominent. He grants that "it is perfectly true that some of us, impervious to change, and oblivious of the movements of the intellectual barometer, have managed to escape or to evade any corresponding alteration in the fabric of our minds; but, for the most part, those who have achieved this feat of remaining in a permanent *status quo* are but an insignificant minority. Wise men will prefer to brave changes, even the sudden and the unexpected, and force themselves to adapt their intellectual constitutions to the altered conditions, rather than, ostrich-like, bury their heads in the sands, muttering 'Peace' when there is no peace."

The editor reminds us that "Rationalism, like Christianity, is sub-divided into many sects, each of which is more or less guided by one master desire—that of freeing the human mind from the burden of dogmatic belief." He omits, however, to add that there is a marked difference between the "one master desire" of the Rationalistic sects and those belonging to orthodox Christianity. The object of the former is to get rid of all dogmatic belief, while the latter seek to perpetuate those dogmas whose very tendency is to fetter thought and to retard investigation. He presents his readers with a pious comment upon the Rationalistic "isms," mentioning, among others, Atheism, Agnosticism, and Secularism. Further, he contends that a belief in God is an absolute necessity to good conduct, and that no "vital morality" existed until the advent of Christ. Here we have another specimen of orthodox misrepresentation, and of those dogmatic claims which characterize, more or less, the whole of theological advocacy.

We are informed that "Atheism need not detain us, for, to all intents and purposes, it is a dead creed—if ever, indeed, it was a creed at all, or ever seriously held by any but a madman." Why this false and unjust imputation upon men and women whose characters stand conspicuously forth among the loftiest teachers and exemplars of moral purity? Theodore Parker said, as the result of his experience, that "Atheists are men who aim to be faithful to their nature, and their whole nature." And Professor Tyndall wrote: "If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond.....if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor, and a just citizen, I should seek him, and find him, in the band of Atheists." An Atheist "a madman," forsooth! Why, to give utterance to such outrageous nonsense as this is indicative either of unpardonable ignorance or of a theologically-diseased brain. Who but one whose mental vision is dimmed by orthodox bigotry will dare to say that such men as Diagoras, Lucian, Bion, Danton, Condorcet, Diderot, D'Holbach, Shelley, Swinburne, Professor Clifford, George Jacob Holyoake, and Charles Bradlaugh were madmen? These men were Atheists, and among them were mighty geniuses, whose work—intellectual and moral—will adorn all ages. So far from Atheism being a "dead creed," it has more practical force to-day than it ever had. In all mundane affairs the supernatural is almost entirely ignored. It is the natural that is the controlling power at the present time. Science, which is the Providence of modern scepticism, is purely Atheistic. This the Bishop of Carlisle frankly admitted when he wrote in the *Nineteenth Century*: "I maintain that science is Atheism; that all physical science, properly

so-called, is compelled by its very nature to take no account of the being of God."

We are told by the editor that, of all forms of scepticism, "that which has chiefly influenced, and still profoundly influences, men to-day, is Agnosticism." But we allege that this is only Atheism under another name. It is simply a more modern phrase, representing in reality the same mental attitude. Neither of these "isms" denies the existence of God, while both assert that nothing is known of such a being. We are glad to read that our orthodox writer admits: "There is so much truth mixed with the falsehood in it [Agnosticism], so much of what is reverent in the attitude of its noblest upholders, that we cannot wonder that it has led captive so many in our midst." We should have been better pleased if the alleged falsehood in Agnosticism had been stated. Its teachings relate only to the supposed supernatural, and to a life beyond the grave. Upon these subjects the Agnostic refuses to dogmatize, inasmuch as he considers that they involve problems the solution of which by man is impossible at the present stage of his mental development. If those who condemn this position possess that knowledge upon these subjects which we cannot command, let them state what they suppose they know, and then we may be able to judge of the value of their information. We are also gratified to read the following confession by the editor of the *Rock*: "Christians, as a rule, are profoundly ignorant of the real movements of Agnostic thought, because they will not read the publications of the Agnostic Press, whereas Agnostics do at least study, and often carefully, the trend of Christian thought in our time. Hence, much of the antagonism displayed by Christians to Agnostic writers and writings is founded on wretched support, and, therefore, sadly ineffective." Being a constant reader of the Christian journals, we have no difficulty in believing that what is here stated is quite true.

If the writer of the above had carefully read the publications of the Secular Press, he would not, probably, have written about what he terms "the purely destructive criticism, and negative position, of those older forms of Secularism—which indeed was so anxious to have done with Christianity in every shape, as to be unable to detect where its marvellous power lay, and what constituted the secret of its success." What "older forms of Secularism" are here referred to? From its inception as a philosophy and organization about fifty years ago, it has adhered to its two leading aspects—namely, negative to theological errors, and positive to those principles which foster and regulate good and useful lives. From these two leading aspects Secular propaganda has never departed. Even in our desire to destroy the errors of Christianity, we have always been enabled to recognise its truths, believing that no system is either all bad or all good. Adopting the eclectic principle, we have endeavored to separate the chaff from the wheat; and that is precisely what some of the leading exponents of the "new Christianity" are also doing. Doctrines and teachings, once held to be true, are now abandoned as being false. Surely professed Christians ought not to condemn our "destructive" work, for they are constantly engaged in trying to destroy all that they deem erroneous in other religions and in other systems than their own. The *Rock* is particularly active in this work towards Roman Catholicism, and its method is often of the rudest and most offensive kind, exhibiting no consideration for the feelings of co-religionists. It is quite a mistake to suppose that sceptics fail to detect where the "marvellous power" of Christianity lay, and "the secret of its success." It should be remembered, however, that the power and success of Christianity, as taught in the New Testament, have been much exaggerated. What power it has, and what success it has had, can readily be accounted for. On the one side it has had wealthy exponents, who deemed it to be to their interest to support a system that enjoined submission to "the powers that be." It has had a priesthood whose functions were to preach the doctrine that those who accepted the faith would be rewarded with eternal happiness, and that those who rejected their dogmas would be punished with everlasting misery. Finally, it has had governments who have enforced belief under penalties of fines, imprisonment, and death. On the other hand, Christianity has been preached to those who were poor and dependent; to others who for centuries were deprived of the knowledge necessary to enable them to detect the delusive nature of what was

taught them; and, finally, the exponents of the faith appealed largely to the fears and credulity of those who were too indifferent to think for themselves.

Next week we shall deal with the editor's claim that all "vital morality" is to be accredited to Christianity, and that "there can be no morality apart from God."

CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES.

VI.—THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

THE great perverter of the Old Testament narratives—otherwise our old friend Matthew—tells us, in the second chapter of his veracious history, that certain Magi, or astrologers, who lived in a country to the east of Palestine, having noticed the appearance of a new star in the heavens, knew that this denoted the birth of a king; that these Magi were so interested in the matter, or were so curious, that they left their homes and their country, and journeyed in the direction of the star; that the star moved before them, and ultimately led them into Judea; that, losing sight of it, they went to the capital, Jerusalem, and made inquiries of Herod, the king; that, after leaving the presence of Herod, "the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was"; that, the exact house having thus been indicated, the "wise men," without further inquiries, entered, and, falling upon their knees, worshipped the baby whom they found there. This is the story we are asked to believe.

The first question which naturally arises in the mind of any rational person upon reading this narrative is, What is the nature of the evidence upon which one is expected to believe it? The answer is simple, and ought to be conclusive. We have no evidence whatever; we only know that the story is related by the great falsifier of facts, Matthew, and that it is also recorded in a gospel which is admitted to be a fictitious history—the *Protevangelion* (par. 21). These two accounts are, further, given in nearly the same words; there cannot, therefore, be much doubt either that one was copied directly from the other, or that both were derived from a pre-existing narrative. But the mere fact that the story is found only in the writings of two such systematic deceivers as Matthew and his *confrère* is sufficient to stamp it as a fabrication. In any case, in no court of justice in the world would the testimony of a witness who had, in cross-examination, been five times convicted of lying and deception in matters connected with the subject under investigation (as is the case with Matthew) be received as evidence. We are, therefore, at liberty to set the story aside without further examination. There are, however, two points which clearly indicate its fictitious character; these it will not be out of place to notice.

The first is the introduction of the Magi, or "wise men," who were probably worshippers of Ahura Mazda. They were certainly not adorers of the Hebrew God, Jehovah; yet that God is represented as notifying to them the birth of his son Jesus by means of a "star."

The superstitious concocter of the story evidently believed that great events in the lives of men, and matters that affected the destiny of nations, were connected in some way with phenomena in the heavens. Even the more learned Josephus records a fancied resemblance to armies seen in the sky at the siege of Jerusalem. The originator of the Gospel story must, beyond all doubt, have been a believer in astrology; he could not otherwise have represented his Lord as acting in accordance with the theories of that now exploded science, as he has done. The action of "the Lord," in fact, gives clear confirmation to the truth of the belief in astrology, and is, therefore, besides being misleading, a complete justification of that once popular delusion. One small fact, however, furnishes the reason for fabricating the story. The Magians were priests, soothsayers, and interpreters of dreams among the Persians; and their approval or recognition was believed to be of great assistance, if not absolutely necessary, for the success of any great undertaking. It is for this reason that some members of that fraternity are represented as coming to seek the child Jesus, whose divine character their testimony would, in the eyes of many, firmly establish.

In point of fact, the God Yahveh, in the story, tacitly admits the pretensions of these soothsayers.

The second point which serves to indicate the fictitious character of the narrative is the statement that the star "came and stood over where the young child was." Let anyone, some fine star-light night, take note of some particular star overhead. Let him walk on for a mile or so, and then look at the star again. It will still be directly over his head. Could he instantly transport himself a million miles away, in a plane tangential to the earth at his first position, he would still see the star directly overhead. The "star," then, in Matthew's story could not have been elevated much above the surface of the earth. It could not have been even of the height of the ordinary clouds; for one of these—or some easily distinguished portion of it, such as a white speck—would not, in passing over a village, indicate one particular house more than another. To do this, the cloud or "star" would have to be no higher than an average church steeple, if so high. We are to suppose, then, unless we summarily reject Matthew's story, that some luminous body sailed through the air like a fire-balloon, at about the height of two hundred feet, or so, above the ground. Under these conditions, but only under such, the astrologers might be able to follow the "star" into Judea, and the moving light, when it came to a stand-still, might indicate the house in which the child lay.

But here an important matter, in which no less a personage than "the Lord" himself is shown to be guilty of wanton cruelty, has to be considered. It is implied in the narrative that it was the God Jehovah who placed the star where it could be seen by the "wise men," and that it was he who caused it to move from "the east" into Judea. Why, then, it is to be asked, did he not lead the Magi straight to Bethlehem, and so prevent the slaughter of a number of innocent children? Had he taken this course, there would have been no necessity for those star-gazers to go to Jerusalem, asking Herod, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" etc., and there would have been no massacre of babies; this fact is indisputable. But, had "the Lord" acted in this straightforward and common-sense manner, how was Matthew to introduce his manufactured prophecies? If there were no massacre, how could that evangelist insert Jeremiah's statement about lamentations heard at Ramah? And how, again, could he make Jesus flee to Egypt to escape death, and afterwards return in fulfilment of another made-up prophecy? Hence, assuming the story to be true, "the Lord" was not a free agent; his hands were tied by Matthew's "prophecies." There is also no possible way of rehabilitating that deity's character except by showing Matthew's story to be a fabrication, and as "the Lord" appears never to have read the account in the First Gospel—otherwise he could not have allowed nearly eighteen centuries to pass without setting the matter right in the eyes of his worshippers—I will undertake to do so. He will then see that his servant Matthew has libelled him, and can settle the matter with that evangelist as he thinks fit—that is, if he knows where to find him.

One of the methods sometimes adopted to prove a matter false is to assume it to be true, and to note the absurdities or impossibilities which result from such an assumption. Let us suppose, then, that certain astrologers in Persia, in or about the year B.C. 6, saw a small luminous body appear in the air (!), and knew by their hanky-panky science that this denoted the birth of a king (!!); that they followed this "star," journeying only by night, and resting during the day (for that luminary would not be visible in the broad daylight), the star also remaining stationary during the day and moving only during the hours of darkness and twilight (!!!); and that, after travelling in this way for several months, the star led them into Judea, and there suddenly disappeared, so that they were obliged to go to Jerusalem and make inquiries of the king in order to bring about a massacre (!!!!). Now, had such an event really occurred, the "star," as it moved onwards, would have been seen by others besides the Magi—by all, in fact, whose business or pleasure took them in its way. People everywhere, along the whole route, of all classes and conditions, would have flocked to see the extraordinary phenomenon—a luminous body moving only a few score cubits higher than the trees—and multitudes would have followed it, the majority believing that the end of the world was at hand, or, at the very least, that something

awfully portentous was about to happen. All kinds of speculations would be hazarded as to its nature, significance, and destination. The Magi would be questioned, and, having nothing to conceal, they would proclaim to all the great event of whose occurrence the moving "star" was sent as a sign. They would, consequently, enter Jerusalem accompanied by thousands of shouting enthusiasts, and, after their interview with Herod, would come to Bethlehem at the head of an immense multitude, who, after filling up every available foot of space within that village, would take up their position in the suburbs, all waiting to have a look at the divinely-announced king. Jerusalem being only six miles distant, every hour would bring a fresh influx of sightseers to Bethlehem, and those returning to their homes would spread the news, so that that village would be thronged for a long time to come. There would be no privacy for Joseph and Mary, and no chance of a surreptitious flight to Egypt.

If the parents took the child up to Jerusalem "to present him to the Lord," as stated by Luke (ii. 22), they would be escorted thither by joyous multitudes carrying palm branches, and singing "Hosanna to the son of David; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matt. xxi. 9); and—what conclusively proves the massacre story to be a fabrication—King Herod would have no difficulty in laying hands on the child. In fact, the birth of this wonderful babe, and the remarkable circumstances attending it, would soon be known throughout the whole of Palestine, and would be the common talk for years to come. After such a world-wide advertisement, it would have been simply impossible for Jesus to have lived in Nazareth, or in any other Jewish city, for thirty years, and then to make his *début* as an unknown teacher. Yet, according to the writer of the Fourth Gospel (ix. 29), the chief men at Jerusalem say of Christ: "But as for this man, we know not whence he is."

It goes, of course, without saying that such a marvellous event as Matthew's "star" story, if true, could not go unrecorded. We should expect to find accounts of it related by Philo, Josephus, and Justus of Tiberias, if not also by some of the Pagan historians; but, needless to say, no such records have ever been seen by anyone.

We have now to contrast what we know would obviously have been the result of a real appearance of a moving "star," in the superstitious age which is called "apostolic," with the fictitious story in the First Gospel. In that fabulous history the Magi came into Judea, and entered Jerusalem alone, no one but themselves having seen the star; subsequently, when the star went before them and showed them the way to Bethlehem, they entered that village alone, everybody else upon the route being apparently blind. Also, none of the priests or scribes, and none of the curious, of the sight-seeing, or of the truth-seeking, inhabitants of the holy city, who all knew, according to Matthew's story, that the birthplace was Bethlehem, thought it worth while to accompany them. The Gospel narrative, in fact, will not bear thinking of as an actual occurrence.

We may also notice here the statement of Luke (ii. 25-38) that the child Jesus, at his presentation in the temple, was known as a being whose birth had been divinely ordained, to two individuals only—an aged seer named Simeon, and a still more ancient biddy named Anna; but in each of these cases the matter had been revealed by the Holy Ghost. Here, again, the star-story is clearly excluded.

ABRACADABRA.

The temporary nature of Christianity is plainly indicated by its endorsement of the Old Testament. Jesus was never able entirely to outgrow the prejudices of his Jewish education. "One jot or one tittle," says he, "shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." As if the doctrine of these Jewish law expounders was all divine! Jesus refers to the old stories of the Jewish Bible as if he believed them—and he evidently did; and even takes the marvellous tale of Jonah for true, and refers to prophecies of himself in the Old Testament which certainly have no existence.—*William Denton.*

Ignorance is a disease, and a deadly and dangerous disease. There are few things in the world more costly than an ignorant man.—*Ernest Jones.*

To know life we must detach ourselves from life.—*Feuerbach.*

THE CETACEAN HOTEL; OR, BELIEVE WHAT CHRIST BELIEVED.

YOU'VE heard of the tale
That is told of a whale
In the book where the godly man grazes;
But, don't be deceived,
It must *all* be believed,
If your soul's to be rescued from blazes.

No doubt it is hard
That your soul should be barred
From a temp'ature lower than "roasting,"
For smiling to hear
That a fugitive seer
In a chartered whale's "tummy" went coasting.

Believe in a ghost
And its youngster, or roast;
But, remember, the fish-tale's included!
The Lord thought it true,
And, of course, so must you,
If you don't think that Christ was deluded.

You cannot have faith
In the son of the wraith
If you think he believed what is silly;
So, credit the tale,
Lest you weep, gnash, and wail
In a district where no one is chilly.

If grace you'd receive,
You must firmly believe
What the "Savior" believed—as recorded;
So, swallow the tale
Of the lodging-house whale,
And the comforts its parlor afforded.

If heav'n you would gain,
You must weaken your brain,
For it's no use disguising the matter;
You'll *never* get there
If for reason you care;
But you *may* if you're "mad as a hatter."

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

MR. JOHN BURNS continues to be president of the body which calls itself the Progressive School Board Election Council (of London), the secretary being Miss Constance Williams. This lady has been interviewed by the *Echo*. In reply to a question concerning the Council's policy in regard to religious teaching, she spoke as follows:—"The Progressive policy, expressed in the words of Mr. Lyulph Stanley, is—strictly to maintain the settlement arrived at by the Board on the proposal of the Right Hon. W. H. Smith in 1871. To resist all attempts to introduce dogmatic formulas for the children or tests for the teachers, and to refuse to substitute the definition of the Churches for the words of the Bible as the basis of instruction. Progressives are anxious that the theological controversy should be excluded from discussions, and that the Board should be left to its proper business of advancing education."

How infantile is all this! The Progressives want to exclude "theological controversy," but to include "the words of the Bible." Don't they know that controversy has always been, and still is, raging over these very words? What controversy do they think would be left *without* the Bible? They cherish the source and denounce the stream. Sooner or later they will have to learn that there is nothing progressive in fighting the battle of Nonconformity against the Church for the control of religion in the public schools, and that the only way to banish religious controversy is to banish religion altogether. Nothing is more ridiculous than the idea that parents are anxious to have their children taught religion without caring as to its color and character. There is no such thing as a general religion, any more than there is such a thing as general politics. A genus is only a name; the species are the realities. At bottom, indeed, the only realities are individuals; and religion, like everything else of the kind, only exists as it exists in them. Set a Conservative to teach politics, and you know what he will do. It is just the same with a Catholic, a Churchman, or a Wesleyan teaching religion. To ask him to separate the

essential from the non-essential is to ask him to be a philosopher and an unbeliever.

The Trade Union Congress has taught the "Progressives" a lesson, which it is to be hoped they will soon carry into practice. An amendment was incorporated in the resolution condemning the educational policy of the Government. This amendment states that it is "essential to educational progress that sectarian strife should be entirely dissociated from the question of the education of the nation's children, and that this can be done only when theologians, as such, are debarred from raising sectarian strife, and when the State provides only for teaching secular subjects and social duties, leaving the teaching of creeds and dogmas to the parent and the numerous religious denominations." This is not too well expressed, but we welcome it as a first pronouncement by the Trade Unions of this country in favor of secular education. A similar resolution was carried at the last annual conference of the smaller Independent Labor Party. Mr. Burns had better take care, or he will be left in the lurch.

The Ameer of Afghanistan has written a little book on *Jehad*, or Holy War, a copy of which has reached England. A correspondent gives an account of it in the *Times*. This is interesting as far as it goes, but it is not full enough on the essential point. One would like to know exactly what the Ameer says on the Mohammedans' duty of waging war for religion, especially in view of the great unrest now obtaining throughout the whole of Islam. One point, however, is made clear enough. Those who die in the *Jehad* are martyrs, and enjoy six advantages. All their sins are forgiven, they are exempted from all punishment after death, they are freed from anxieties as to the Day of Judgment, they are crowned with the diadem of glory, they are each married to seventy black-eyed houris, and they are allowed intercession for seventy of their relatives. How natural it is that Mohammedans who believe all this—not with a cool assent, but with a fervent conviction—should rush joyfully into the arms of death. One reason of the tenacity of the belief in a future life is undoubtedly this: that men have been taught it to make them face death on the battlefield, in order to carry out the worldly designs of their rulers, who have often laughed at the superstitions they encouraged.

"Sat Bhai" is of opinion that Theosophy, as well as Turkey's successes in Thessaly, is responsible for some of the troubles in India. It has been preached there, and is expressly stated in *The Secret Doctrine*, that 1897-8 witnesses the end of a cycle, "when accounts will be squared between the races." Political designs in the East are always accompanied by prophecy, which may serve to explain a good deal of the unfulfilled rubbish of the Old Testament.

The writer of "Our Handbook" in the *Referee* says: "We certainly do all we can for our subject races compatible with robbing them of their land in the first instance. We respect their customs and their religion. If we afflict them with missionaries, we also supply them with idols at a reasonable rate." Precisely so. And this shows that John Bull is the greatest hypocrite as well as the greediest thief on this planet.

Mr. Kipling asks us to remember God, and Mr. Watson replies that we have picked up most of our empire during times of forgetfulness. Mr. Nesbit tries to steer a middle course. "Why," he asks, "should the policy of might be accounted immoral? It is the great and the most universal law of nature." But morality is not a law of nature; it is a law of human society. Call it artificial, if you please; and so it is, in the primary meaning of the word; but is not all civilization artificial? It is artificial to eat with anything but one's fingers, artificial to wear clothes, artificial to inhabit houses, and artificial to refrain from certain natural functions in public. In the same way, it is artificial to abstain from a present gratification for the sake of a future advantage, artificial to be polite and considerate of other people's feelings, and artificial to pursue an ideal at the cost perhaps of poverty, imprisonment, or death. Yet these artificialities constitute the most precious part of human existence.

No doubt it is true that behind civilization there always lies the raw force of barbarism. Yes, and below the brain lies the raw force of the viscera. But is that a reason for slighting the brain? The word *force* is used as though it only meant measurable physical power. Yet, in the long run, it is ideas that rule the world. "We are ultimately," said William Smith, "in the power of our ideas"—and there is no profounder aphorism. Mr. Fouillé, the great French thinker, has actually written a book on *Les Idées-Forces*; and Mr. Nesbit, who is a thoughtful and suggestive writer, would do well to study it before dealing again with the subject of "might is right."

Sentimental Christianity is a paying business. It beats

mesmerizing and conjuring. Witness the success of Wilson Barrett's *Sign of the Cross* and Hall Caine's *Christian*, to say nothing of Marie Corelli's *Sorrows of Satan*. It is now reported that Mr. S. R. Crockett has declined an offer of £6,000 made to him by Major Pond for a prolonged series of readings and lectures in America. Perhaps the refusal is only temporary, like a girl's "No" to a fellow she likes who is pretty sure to renew the offer.

Winans, the Yankee millionaire, who caused considerable depopulation in Scotland for the sake of sport, has left personal estate in this country to the value of £2,403,527 17s. 5d. All of it goes to his own family, not a penny to any charitable or public use. Winans appears to have been a sound Christian.

Sir William Marriott, if we recollect aright, was once terribly mauled by Mr. Chamberlain, in whom there is something feline, claws as well as teeth. Both gentlemen, however, now belong to the same party, and perhaps they have buried the hatchet and smoked the pipe of peace. The noble Marriott, in any case, has preserved his wonderful gifts of intellect. He was the star speaker at a recent Primrose League meeting at Lathom park, and he explained that this astonishing organization of duchesses and bricklayers was formed to combat the evils that threatened the very existence of every good old English institution. Among these evils he mentioned "irreligion and Atheism," which had been so successfully assailed that Parliament had passed a Bill giving a large additional grant of more than half-a-million a year to "schools in which religion was taught." No doubt this is a very effective way of promoting religion—among children; but the fact that the Tory religionists are driven to resort to it proves their inability to make any persuasive impression on the minds of adults.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews alone has spent two-and-a-quarter millions of money. The net result, according to Mr. Oswald Simon, is that it has not converted a single Jew who is not ready to return to Judaism if he be equally well provided for.

"There was arraigned in Adams-street-court this morning," says the *New York Evening Journal* of August 28, "a demented woman—a beautiful young mother, who had killed her baby son because she thought she was called upon to make a sacrifice. She gazed around the court-room with wild eyes, never realizing that the charge against her was murder. To her it was only a sacrifice—a sacrifice she had been called upon to make by God, just as Abraham had been called upon to sacrifice his own son to the Lord." Under this belief she killed her babe. What a lovely thing is religion!

Another imitator of Abraham has turned up in America. Samuel Hostetter, a young farmer, residing near Wooster, Ohio, while laboring under religious excitement, attempted to offer up his young son as a sacrifice recently. He carried the boy into the rear yard, and gathered a large quantity of wood. The boy helped his father gather the wood, and was in high glee over the pleasure he expected to get out of the bonfire. The young wife came to the rear door of the house and watched the preparations curiously for a moment. She did not anticipate the intention of her husband until after the pile was in readiness to light, and Hostetter drew a razor from his pocket and called the child to him. Realizing the fate in store for her child, the mother rushed towards her husband, crying for an explanation. He told her that he had been directed by divine power to offer up this child as a sacrifice, and explained that he was going to cut his throat and burn him on the pile of fagots, and warned her that she would go to hell if she interfered. She tried to pull the child away, but failed, and then she fought for the razor. She finally got the razor, but not until her hands and arms were cut badly. Neighbors got the husband under control, and he was lodged in jail. The incident is commended to the advocates of Bible reading in public schools.

In a debate with a minister recently, Senator Tillman, of South Carolina, said: "It is the abuse, not the use, of whiskey that the Bible condemns, and I can show you hundreds of passages in the Bible where the use of whiskey and wine is sustained by divine authority." The Senator is right, though the beverage which he calls whiskey was not known to Bible writers, being a modern preparation. Solomon's "strong drink" was probably something worse.—*Truthseeker*.

The money which the Rev. Dr. Simpson collects on behalf of Foreign Missions is invested in real estate in Nyack, N.Y. The tract he has purchased is on the mountain side, overlooking the Tappan Zee, and extends from the foot to the summit. It is almost a mile wide. Simpson is putting up extensive buildings, and will run a health resort. His immediate followers are fanatics.—*Truthseeker*.

A local preacher named Smith has been found dead in a pond near Spalding, and is supposed to have committed suicide. Not an Atheist, this one, Mr. Talmage.

J. L. Sullivan, the ex-pugilist, aspires to become Mayor of Boston. His qualifications are that he is a reformed drunkard and was always kind to his mother. On this ground a Methodist journal supports his candidature.

Another case of burial alive is reported from Russia. A lay brother of a monastery near Uralsk, finding the life there not adequate to his ideas of mortifying the flesh, had himself buried up to the armpits in a cave. Tapers were lighted around him, and six pieces of consecrated bread and a bottle of water were placed within reach. This must have prolonged his agony. He is now supposed to be in heaven.

A Newbury firm of contractors received a good order from London. It was inside an envelope bearing the text, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The firm replied that the order would be executed on receipt of cash or satisfactory references.

The Cretan question, like the Turco-Grecian peace question, still drags its weary length along, though happily it seems to be approaching a settlement. An interesting light has just been thrown upon it by Admiral Canevaro, who has been commanding the Italian squadron at Canea. He says that the Cretans are quieting down and getting accustomed to the idea of autonomy. "Once started," he said to a *Daily News* interviewer, "I think government by autonomy will work perfectly, as radical differences between the Mussulmans and Christians of the island in reality do not exist. To be convinced of this, it is sufficient to look them in the face. They are of exactly the same type, and the only difference is that the former wear the fez, while the latter have a silk handkerchief." Here again religion is the great cause of discord and division.

The Synod of High Russian ecclesiastics, recently held at Kasan to consider measures to stop the spread of sectarianism, acted after the historic fashion of holy Christian Councils. It was declared that the adherents of Count Tolstoi were particularly dangerous to State and Church, and ought to be treated accordingly. The Government will, therefore, be asked to proceed rigorously against the Count and his followers. Further, the schools of the sectarians are to be closed, and the congress demands that membership of the different sects be declared dishonorable. The peasant communes are to have the right to exclude sectarians, and to send them to Siberia.

Further than this, the head men of God in Holy Russia decreed that the publication of Lutheran books in the Russian language is to be prohibited, as is the preaching in Russian of Evangelical pastors in places where Stundism reigns. Finally, it was proposed that sectarians' children should be taken from them and educated in public institutions in the Orthodox faith. This proposal met with difficulties, because there are no such institutions. A Russian bishop also suggested the confiscation of the property of sectarians. Almost all the resolutions were passed unanimously. This is the attitude taken by the great Christian Churches since the days of Constantine towards any difference of opinion. Can we wonder that heresy has been a plant of slow growth? Yet Christianity claims to be the most tolerant of faiths. It makes a desert, and calls it peace.

Mr. Ernest Pack, a Secularist lecturer, has been mobbed at Northampton and chased through the streets, though happily without sustaining any bodily injury. The local *Daily Reporter* says that he stirred the susceptibilities of a large number of youths by being "attired in the ordinary costume of a Church of England clergyman." We hope this is not true.

The Welsh Sunday Closing Act having utterly failed to secure the suppression of Sunday tipping, the Prohibitionist party now urge magistrates to suppress the *bond fide* traveller by granting only six-day licenses. This will, if carried, only lead to a development of "clubs" to replace the closed inns.

It is proposed to lay a cogwheel railway up Mount Sinai, so that pilgrims may take an easy journey to see the spot where Moses interviewed his Maker and received the tables of the law written with His own fingers. The only trouble is, that no traveller now believes that the traditional Mount Sinai is the one Moses could have ascended. Even the Rev. Professor Sayce argues that it must be looked for in another direction. Like the other Palestinian sites, it is altogether without authenticity.

A short time ago the School Board of Gaddesby, in Leicestershire, advertised in the *Schoolmaster* for a first-

class certificated master for a small mixed school, the salary offered being only £90 a year. Among the candidates who applied for the post was a teacher who had matriculated at the University of London; and held the best qualifications in drawing, mathematics, sciences, etc. The answer he received is another illustration of the clerical policy of sweating schoolmasters in the interest of the Church. He was asked whether, if the Board accepted him, he had "any suggestion as to provision for needlework, or would be willing to take any less salary to enable the Board to arrange for the same." This was bad enough, but the next question was worse. He was asked whether he would undertake to play the organ in church on Sunday, or whenever required. For the magnificent sum of £90 a year, less than the wages of many an artizan, this clerical-ridden School Board wanted to obtain the services of an Admirable Crichton, with the special conditions that he was to pay out of his own pocket for the school needlework and slave for the parish parson. It is not surprising that the candidate in question withdrew his application for the post.

Three great Bible Societies—the British and Foreign, the American, and the National of Scotland—have joined in preparing a large folio Bible as a present for the Emperor of Japan. This, of course, is a copy of the Protestant Bible. We hope the Emperor of Japan will also be presented with a copy of the Catholic Bible, so that he may perceive the wonderful harmony which prevails among the Christians who are seeking to convert his subjects to "the only true religion."

Murderer Butler's pathetic parsonically-conveyed allusions to Sunday-school and drink are accepted by the orthodox community generally as satisfactory evidence that the Mountain monster died penitent, and is now, according to the theological Cocker, among the happy mortals. The jump-to-glory travesty is reminiscent of the dying speech of murderer Doolan in the condemned cell in Glasgow. Doolan, addressing the officer of the prison, said: "I often think of the many narrow escapes I have made in Ireland and England when I have seen a fellow-workman sent into eternity by an accident, which might have happened to me as well as to him. Had I died then, I would have been called into eternity without a moment's preparation, and my immortal soul would have been lost. But I have reason to thank God that He has given me a long day to prepare for the change that awaits me, and I hope I have improved my time and will go straight to His blessed arms."

In effect, Mr. Doolan reasoned that, had he died by an accident while at work, he would have gone to hell, but that God was good to him, and, by allowing him to brutally murder the foreman of his gang, secured for him some weeks in gaol, where he was able to properly prepare himself for death. The Butler theory is the same. Had that worthy fallen overboard fifteen years ago, he would have been damned—because he did not slip gracefully through a parson's hands. Now, although a murderer, he is in heaven. The parson let him in.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The Rev. D. T. Viljoen was invited to become the pastor at Swellendam. He refused; it is supposed on account of the name of the place. Anyway, he is the ninth minister that has jibbed at the job. The local chapel folk say they'll be Swellendam'd if they ask anyone else.—*African Critic*.

Mr. Howard Swan is going to re-write the Bible in pure English idiom, and translate all the Hebrew proper names. The idea is very far from original, and we do not know Mr. Swan's competence for the task. He asked a *Daily Mail* interviewer if he knew the meaning of the name Barabbas; but this is by no means a simple question. It is still disputed whether Barabbas stands for "Bar-rabban"—son of a rabbi, or "Bar-Abba"—son of a father. The latter reading looks strange, but Bishop Lightfoot showed that it was supported by respectable authority. Mr. Swan may not be aware of the fact that the original reading of Matt. xxvii. 17 appears to have been: "Whom will ye that I release unto you—Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" thus contrasting the two Jesuses. At any rate, Origen implies that in his time this was the common reading.

E. B. Nicholson, in his *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, says (p. 62): "There is no doubt that the name Barabbas was rightly treated in the Gospel according to the Hebrews as a mere surname, nor have I any doubt that the reading 'Jesus Barabbas' in Matt. xxvii. 16, 17, supplies his real circumcision-name." Origen's comment is: "In many MSS. it is not contained that Barabbas was also called Jesus, and perhaps rightly, so that the name Jesus would not belong to any sinner. This implies that 'Jesus Barabbas' was at that time the reading of most MSS.; and while there is manifest reason why the 'Jesus' should have been omitted, it is inexplicable how it should ever have been inserted. Why, too, if Barabbas was not named Jesus, do Mark, Luke, and John exhibit so singular a unanimity in

withholding his real circumcision-name? It is suggestive to find the legend of Jesus the Nazarene mixed up with a legend of Jesus, Son of the Father. We cannot forget that, according to the Moslems and the Gospel of Barabbas, it was not the real Jesus who got crucified, but someone put in his place.

Shakespeare said, What's in a name? but in ancient times there was a good deal. In all the legendary characters the names have meanings, and this fact suffices to show they are legendary. Thus we read: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Evidently such names were not given at birth, but possibly long after. In this story there is probably a contrast between Jesus-bar-Rabban (Jesus the Son of the Master) and Jesus-bar-Abba (Jesus the Son of the Father), which would convey the idea that the Father had supplanted the Master as the true Savior.

There is a curious story told by Philo Judæus of one Carabbas, a daft fellow, who went naked about the streets. On a certain occasion he was taken into the theatre, placed on a lofty seat, crowned with paper, a reed put in his hand, and hailed as lord. It is Lardner who parallels this passage with the story of the Savior's sufferings.

Trench, in his *Studies in the Gospels*, says (p. 295): "Keeping in mind the significance of names in Scripture, we can hardly fail to recognise a fearful mockery in his name Barabbas, or 'Son of the Father': as though in the very name which he bore, not to speak of the work which he wrought, he should be the Devil's counterfeit and caricature of the true Holy One of God." Trench goes on to argue that the name Jesus was attached to Barabbas, because, "while we can scarcely conceive anyone daring to introduce the sacred name of Jesus to give it to Barabbas, we can very well understand that many transcribers should have been shocked to find it there; and, marring the text, which they impertinently sought to amend, have ventured to omit it." Further, "there appear vestiges of the existence of such a reading in the text as it now stands; the words, 'which is called Christ,' twice introduced after the human name of our blessed Lord on the occasion when Barabbas is brought in opposition to him, and nowhere else, seem to be employed by Pilate out of a necessity to distinguish between him and another who bore the name of Jesus as well."

Some amusing Swiss agony-column advertisements were given in a recent issue of the *Westminster Gazette*. A handsome German baron advertises for a wife with good character and plenty of money, and "If possible a Christian." That was not an indispensable condition, like the well-filled purse. But the best advertisement of all was the following:—"Wanted, a Christian home for an ass." Criticism would only spoil the exquisite flavor and subtle suggestiveness of this specimen.

The Pope is said to have called Mgr. Bonetti, Apostolic Delegate at Constantinople, to Rome, to devise means for opposing the Jewish Zionist plans, which are naturally regarded with horror by good Catholics. In fact, this project interferes with the Pope's own desire to collect the necessary money to redeem the Holy Land from the infidel. Pecci sees there's money in it. With Jews and Catholics alike competing for the Holy Land, the Sultan should command a good price. But we doubt if he will sell, however tempting the offers.

According to the *Theosophical News*, the International Conference at Stockholm endorsed the claims of Mrs. Tingley to the leadership of the movement. Mrs. Besant seems already relegated to the background.

Jaryna Jeryernknowna, an eighteen-year-old propheticess of Bukowina, has come to grief. She declared that she died and was buried fourteen years ago, that she went to heaven, and was sent back again by God to redeem mankind. Crowds of peasants followed her in spite of the remonstrances of the priests, till the police arrested the propheticess, as she had a criminal record for petty larceny.

The Bible orders that "when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them unto the poor and the stranger." This beneficent provision was unheeded by Mr. Richard Kelhan, who prosecuted five women at Long Sutton for stealing wheat of the value of one penny. The Bench ordered the women to pay costs, which amounted to 2s. 3d. in each case.

A Domestic writes to the *Daily News* on the Servant question. She says: "My mistress professes Christian principles, and is also a district visitor, and gives where her name is published. And yet she treats her servants worse

than her dog." She complains that her food is poor and insufficient, and she has to tell lies when she answers the door Truly a Christian home.

The *Saturday Review* pooh-poohs those who "reject the Christian religion because of the madness of some Gadarean swine." We should say that the endorsement of demonology by the Christian God was a pretty good reason for classing Christianity among ancient superstitions.

The China Inland Mission have found it necessary in evangelizing work to employ a Chinese artist to design and execute Scripture pictures to bring the truths of Holy Writ home to the heathen mind. We have some blocks of the Comic Bible series which might prove efficacious for this purpose.

The *Glasgow Weekly Citizen* has an article on "Lapsing in the Methodist Church." It observes that "over forty thousand members have been lost from the fold within the last year. One-eighth of that number have died. Of more than twenty-two thousand, all that can be said is that they have ceased to meet in class. Nothing can be said regarding the remainder save they are not." The pastoral letter recommending the preaching of the doctrines of sin and repentance but induces the *Weekly Citizen* to remark that to the enlightened intellect and refined heart of to-day the Methodist gospel does not come as good news. It comes as an unwelcome echo of the faith of a darker and crueller age.

W. T. Macgregor—is he a Jew or a Scot, or both?—writes to the *Jewish Chronicle* that the purchase of Palestine "would be liable to interpretation as a religious decline, a want of faith in the covenant-keeping God of Abraham, a manifest disbelief in the power of the Almighty disposer of events to work their deliverance." Certainly, if God wishes the Jews to go back to Jerusalem, he can take them there without money and without price; and we suspect that, on the whole, the chosen race would prefer to go that way.

Mr. Oswald John Simon, who, like Rabbi Adler, is opposed to Zionism, makes the statement in the *Times* that "Dr. Herzl is neither an Orthodox Jew nor a Reform one, because he is an Agnostic." Is this the secret of Rabbinic opposition to Zionism? Mr. Simon, who is a rationalizing Jew, has at all events other ground, for he says emigration to Palestine should be discouraged, as it "is already over-populated and unhealthy."

The disingenuousness of the *Church Times* is shown by a brief reference to Charles Bradlaugh, which occurs in its first leading article on September 10. It says: "That doughty champion thought he was assailing Christianity, while all the time he only succeeded in showing that verbal inspiration had its difficulties." What humbug! Charles Bradlaugh attacked and overthrew every one of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity. It now suits the *Church Times* to make out that he only succeeded on the part of the ground which they have themselves abandoned.

Appleton's *Popular Science Monthly* for September, noticing Mr. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, says: "His chapter on the Arrest of Inquiry is, for the most part, an effort to show that the Christian religion was an arresting force in man's intellectual development—the chief barrier to the development of Greek ideas. We cannot accept this view. Christianity is no more the cause of the dark ages than it is of the enlightenment that has followed them. Both are steps in the evolution of mankind in which Christianity has degenerated, and has achieved new birth side by side with science and philosophy and art."

This seems to us mere playing with words. The writer does not show what were the true causes of the dark ages, does not explain why they followed the triumph of Christianity, why that religion degenerated, or how it had new birth. Now Mr. Clodd does make clear these points. Christianity looked forward to the speedy end of the world. It despised intelligence, discouraged science, and fanned the flames of fanaticism. Its degeneracy lay in its non-provision for secular welfare; and any rebirth only comes by accepting the things it formerly contemned.

The *Weekly Times and Echo*, referring to the Jezreelites and their tower near Chatham, remarks: "When we see how, in the closing years of this nineteenth century, thousands of men and women crowd forward to embrace a farrago of nonsense like that enunciated by poor James White, it is not difficult to understand how the religions with which fanaticism has cursed humanity gained vogue."

At the application for a full license for the Raleigh Hotel at Dartmouth, it was stated that the number of confirmations of cadets had increased, and that the confirmations increased the liquor business. The application was granted.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 19, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, subject, "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People."

September 26, Birmingham.

October 10, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 19, Plymouth; 21, 22, 23, 24, debate at Plymouth; 26, Athenæum Hall. October 3, Sheffield; 5 and 6, debate at Birmingham; 10, Birmingham; 13 and 14, debate at Bradford; 31, Stanley, Durham. November 2, 3, 4, and 5, debate at Stanley; 7, Glasgow; 14, Edinburgh. December 5, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. J. HOOPER.—We do not insert Christian notices in our weekly list. Other journals will do that for you. What we should like is a little information as to the alleged Freethought career of Isaac Selby, who presents himself as an anti-Infidel plucked from the fire of scepticism. When and where did he lecture on the Freethought platform? We do not deny his statement; we merely ask for details.

JAMES HAINING, who read with much pleasure Abracadabra's article in the *Freethinker* of Sept 5, wishes he had given the Hebrew words which are wrongly translated in the famous Isaiah passage about the virgin bearing a child.

MISS F. A. LAW, 7 Victoria-road, Peckham, in sending a photograph of Mrs. Law to Mr. Wheeler, mentions that a portrait was taken at Glasgow about twenty years ago, which her family has been unable to trace. Can any of our readers oblige her with a copy?

FOR THE BROWNE FAMILY.—We have received:—T. Warrick, 2s. 6d.; Birmingham Friends (per J. Partridge), 6s.; J. Pruett, 2s. 6d.; Pontypridd Branch, 10s.; W. S. Clogg, 6d.; James Neate, 2s. 6d.; Jones, 1s.; S. H. Munns, 5s.

R. FORDER, hon. sec., N.S.S., acknowledges the following subscriptions to the Browne Fund:—R. A. Cooper, 6d.; R. Forder, 1s.; Mrs. Forder, 1s.; E. Truelove, 6d.; C. Thomas, 6d.; W. G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; W. Cross, 5s.; Mrs. Small, 2s. 6d.; Toby King, £2; L. H., 2s.; G. F. Woborn, £2; J. Hockin, 1s.; R. Tripp, 2s. 6d.; D. Nemmo, 2s. 6d.; J. Sumner, Junr., 2s. 6d.; H. L. Barron, 1s.; H. W. Jones, 1s.; J. Titherington, 1s.

T. HIBBOTT, subscribing to the Treasurer's Scheme, hopes it will be supported as it deserves. This correspondent's order is handed to Mr. Forder.

ALERT.—Thanks for cuttings. Too late for this week. See next.

S. BURGON.—Pleased to hear from you. We share your wish that you could give more. But if all would give as much as you, the Secular movement would soon make marvellous progress.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Corrections shall be made.

J. ROBERTS.—Thanks for your notes. See paragraphs and obituary.

PONTYPRIDD BRANCH (per H. G. Barnes).—Your subscription to the Browne Fund is acknowledged with the rest. We cannot send written receipts by post. Stamps cost money, and letters cost time. We have no secretary, have to do everything with our own hands, and are often sick of the sight of pen and ink. Do be merciful. We note your promise of 10s. annually towards the Treasurer's Scheme.

JAMES NEATE, subscribing towards the Browne Fund, says: "The man should have a fair trial, and be saved from possible petty bigotry."

JONES.—We cannot make out your initial, though your surname is plain enough, and have had to acknowledge as "Jones" simply.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—A. J. Marriott, 2s. 6d. This fund is no longer open. Mr. Foote has carried out his engagement with Mr. Cohen, and minor engagements with other lecturers, and is very much out of pocket. But this is one of the perquisites of the presidency.

SPANISH EXILES FUND.—S. Burgon, 2s. 6d.; H. M. Ridgway, 10s.; T. Horby, 1s.

K. C. WALTON.—Platina's "Lives of the Popes" is now published in two shilling volumes. Ranke's work on the same subject is published in Bohn's Library.

N. S. S. FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION [SCHEME.—We have received the following fresh promises (those marked *p* being paid): T. Hibbott (*p*), 5s.; S. Burgon (*p*), 10s.; Pontypridd Branch, 10s.; A. J. Marriott, 10s.

A. FORDYCE.—The Athenæum Hall is easily accessible. Omnibuses run past the door. It is situated at No. 73 Tottenham Court-road, on the west side, nearly opposite Store-street, about halfway between Oxford-street and Euston-road. At the corner of those two thoroughfares you can get a 'bus to almost any part of London.

ERSKINE wants to know how, if the Canaanites were exterminated in Joshua's time, Simon the Canaanite turns up in Matthew x. 4 and Mark iii. 18. This is a trifle. The Lord said to Moses: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus xvii. 14). The Amalekites were utterly destroyed by Saul (1 Samuel xv. 20); but they turned up again in the time of Hezekiah (1 Chronicles iv. 43).

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Northampton Daily Reporter—Echo—Freedom—Isle of Man Times—Referee—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Intelligence—Theosophical News—Two Worlds—World's Advance Thought—Liberator—Free Thought Magazine—Isle of Man Times—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Yarmouth Independent—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Dartmouth Chronicle—Dominion Review—Islington Gazette—Secular Thought—Star.

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

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 23 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

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

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

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (Sept. 19) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, at 7.30, taking for his subject "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People," in reference to a London coroner's jury and its verdict of manslaughter against one of these Bible Christians for allowing his child to die without a doctor. Freethinkers would do well to bring their orthodox friends to this lecture. Those who believe the Bible without reading it will find the lecture an eye-opener.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts had another good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road. His lecture on "Is Christ Possible?" was enthusiastically received, and when he resumed his seat he had quite an ovation. The chair was occupied by Dr. Rollins, from Canada, who is on a visit to England. The doctor made a neat little speech, describing the position of Freethought in the Dominion, and the good work Mr. Watts did during his residence in Toronto. Previous to the lecture Mrs. Watts gave two readings, which were highly appreciated and applauded by the audience.

To-day, Sunday, September 19, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth. On the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday he debates in the same hall. We hope the friends will rally in good force on these occasions.

The Glasgow Branch's winter session was opened on Sunday by Mr. Cohen. His morning and afternoon audiences were good, and there was a large attendance in the evening. Mr. Cohen occupies the same platform again to-day (Sept. 19). During the week he has been lecturing under the Treasurer's Scheme at Greenock, Paisley, Law, and Motherwell. On Monday evening (Sept. 20) he has agreed to deliver an open-air lecture in Cathedral-square at 7.30. Freethinkers residing in the neighborhood should attend, for obvious reasons, and bring as many as possible of their Christian friends along with them.

Until Christmas, at any rate, Mr. Cohen is engaged by the special sub-committee of the N. S. S. Executive to deliver week-night lectures, and to collect subscriptions towards the Treasurer's Scheme. The subscriptions he receives are all to be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*, and as far as possible official receipts are to be sent to subscribers by the secretary from headquarters. Mr. Cohen sends us the following list (his first one) of subscriptions he has collected at Glasgow—all paid:—Ram, £1; Duncan, 1s.; Bell, 1s.; S. Swale, 5s.; P. D. Cameron, 10s.; W. Abernethy, 2s. 6d.; John McGlashan, £1; James McGlashan, £1; T. Robertson, 10s.

Mr. Forder informs us that he has seen Mrs. Browne since the last issue of the *Freethinker*. Mrs. Browne is the wife of the artist who lies in Chelmsford Gaol awaiting trial on the charge of sending "indecent postcards" through the post; the said postcards, as he alleges, containing only references to Bible texts. Mr. Forder has relieved the immediate necessities of the family. He has not yet obtained a copy of the depositions, but is expecting them by every post. What is most wanted is a copy of the writing on the incriminated

postcards. We shall want to see that before we form our own judgment of what should be done with regard to the trial.

"Our English friends of the National Secular Society," Mr. Joseph Symes says in the *Liberator*, "had their annual conference on Whit-Sunday, in Leicester. There is nothing special to report. They too have had their troubles and struggles, although not so many and long-continued as ours have been. They are not, I am happy to see, discouraged or disposed to drop the fight. Real heroes don't until they are beaten. Freethinkers must fight on, no matter what they have to encounter, until fighting is no longer possible."

Mr. Symes has been asked to contest Collingwood at the coming general elections. He doubts whether the voters are prepared to elect an outspoken Atheist, any more than they were several years ago; however, if a large number of voters would like him to represent them, he is ready to take the field and fight their battle.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, the distinguished Positivist, speaks out strongly on behalf of secular education. "The only solution," he says, "of the educational imbroglio is: teach in common at the public cost that in which all agree; and teach separately, and at your own cost, that in which sects and Churches differ."

Frederic Harrison, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the death of Auguste Comte, adverted to the fact that, although the Positivists were by no means numerous, yet in various cities of Europe they had without relapse continued to assemble and celebrate the founder of the Religion of Humanity.

Our Ipswich friends hope to see a good gathering at the meeting this evening, as it is proposed to enter on a smart winter campaign.

Mr. Roberts, secretary of the Liverpool Branch, takes us to task for the well-meant paragraph in our last issue. "You are quite mistaken," he says; "we have migrated to a lecture-room capable of holding nearly twice the number of the one previously tenanted by us." But is this contradictory to what we said? Special lectures were always delivered in the large Oddfellows' Hall, not in the Board Room, which was used on ordinary occasions; and it was that we were thinking of when we were asked to make the announcement of Mr. Robert's lectures in the new meeting-place.

Mr. Roberts adds that the new meeting-place is within a stone's-throw of the leading churches and chapels, and the Branch wants to establish itself there by means of regular Sunday meetings. Certain structural alterations are being made on the premises, and when they are completed the Branch will be able to have the use (occasional or otherwise) of another hall nearly as large as the Oddfellows', and more commodious. We publish this news with pleasure.

Birmingham people, not above smiling at a trifling absurdity, may be amused at the following nonsense nursery rhyme which appears in the current *Cornhill*:—

There were two young ladies of Birmingham,
A sad tale I have learned concerning 'em;
They stuck needles and pins
In the reverend shins
Of the bishop engaged in confirming 'em.

Freethinkers of the Midland metropolis have, at one time or another, stuck many "needles and pins" into "reverend shins," and it is gratifying to observe that they are showing a disposition to stick many more.

The *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago, gives in its September number a portrait of the Rev. W. E. Copeland, with an article by that gentleman entitled "The Bible of Humanity." Mr. Copeland's standpoint may perhaps be judged by his saying: "No Bible can decide what is truth for me; but I can decide by virtue of the Christ within me what is true in every Bible." There is also a portrait of Watson Heston, who contributed many cartoons to the pages of the *Truthseeker* of New York. Mr. T. B. Wakeman extols Mr. Taber's book on *Faith or Fact?* which is also praised by Judge Waite; and Mr. B. F. Underwood discusses "Weismann's Theory of Heredity."

Open Court of Chicago has, as frontispiece, a portrait of Amos Bronson Alcott, the Concord transcendental philosopher. There is also an illustrated article on the canonization of "Two Saints"—namely, Zacaria of Cremona, and Pierre Fourier—at Rome. The proceedings appear to have been of a theatrical description. There is a learned article on "The Unrecorded Sayings of Jesus Christ," by Dr. Pick; and Professor Cornill continues his rational "History of the People of Israel."

RELIGIOUS TIMIDITY.

"Frances Havergal, in one of her letters, complains that she has lost some of the radiance which characterized her faith a year ago; she attributes it to the reading of Shakespeare."—REV. DR. MATHESON, in the "*Expositor*," September, 1897.

A DISTRESSING result, no doubt; but Frances Havergal should have continued her reading and study of Shakespeare, and if, in the end, the philosophy and poetry of the "myriad-minded man" destroyed her faith altogether, she might have consoled herself with the reflection that she was well rid of it. What she really did in the circumstances Dr. Matheson does not say, and most readers will have to confess that they do not know. But the inference from the context is that she dropped Shakespeare for the reason mentioned, and secured salvation by the simple expedient of shutting her eyes. Heaven seems to be favored with many such acquisitions, and is doubtless proportionately proud of them. Yet one can hardly conceive of any thoughtful reader of Shakespeare who has not caught at least a spark of the fire which burns in that noble and heroic utterance: "Who tells me true, though in the tale lie death, I hear him as if he flattered."

Frances Havergal is not, of course, the first believer whose farthing-candle faith has "lost some of its radiance" in the effulgence of Shakespeare's sun. At the same time, there does seem to be something a little comical in the picture of the Christian lady, in deadly fear of her faith, thrusting aside the great bard—as the maid in Antolycus's ballad "puts him off, slights him with 'Whoop, do me no harm, good man.'"

It may be some comfort to the pious to have the assurance of the Rev. T. Carter that Shakespeare was a religious man—his father being a Puritan and recusant. On the other hand, the *Academy*, in reviewing Mr. Carter's recently-published work, observes: "Theological problems, indeed, racked and disturbed the poet's mind, but they go deeper than any controversies of forms or Church discipline or the nature of the Mass. The origin of evil and the moral government of the world—these are weighed in the balance, and you will not claim the framer of those terrible indictments in *King Lear*, against the little wanton gods who kill us for their sport, as Romanist or Anglican." It is easy to understand how faith may be not only dimmed, but extinguished, in those who have the courage and the capacity to probe to the bottom for the poet's deeper meaning.

A noteworthy fact is, that the timidity which avoids particular avenues of study and inquiry lest they should lead to undesired conclusions often conceals most violently aggressive propensities. Its tendency is naturally and inevitably to intolerance. It says: "I dare not go that way myself, and I feel it my duty to prevent you." This curious forcible-feeble amalgam presents itself in Dr. Matheson's contribution to the *Expositor*, a high-class theological magazine. He discourses on "The Freedom of the City of God," and, after citing the experience of Frances Havergal as above, proceeds to suggest that books like Renan's *Life of Jesus* should be "forbidden" to the "uninitiated," because, forsooth, there is "a danger to limited minds which have not been impregnated with the New Testament portraiture." A cool kind of suggestion, indeed, for the close of the nineteenth century! If this is a fair sample of the freedom of the City of God, one would much prefer to be without it, even though it were presented in a golden casket. Sensible people would sooner be citizens of somewhere else. Nevertheless, the intolerance and bigotry of the suggestion are the natural outcome of the fear, visible or concealed, of all the Christian sects—an outcome that will continue to manifest itself as long as belief in the Christian superstition exists.

If timid inquirers would compose their nerves and take time to consider, they would see that, after all, they have little or nothing to fear, however far they may wander in their investigations from the beaten track. Though there are in the Scriptures some dreadful denunciations of unbelief—though damnation is declared to be the unbeliever's portion—nobody's equanimity need be disturbed. The existence of these threats is in itself one good reason for rejecting as a Divine revelation the book that contains them; for belief is not a matter of will. It is, however, the duty of inquirers—for their own protection—to particularly search the writings of such authors as are clerically proscribed and "forbidden." They are very

likely to find in them truths which the Church would be glad to hide.

Just now there is a type of religious timidity to which no feeling of sympathy can be extended. It is well known to all who are acquainted with the undercurrents of clerical life that the Established Church is permeated with a spirit of disbelief and unrest which sooner or later must find some considerable outward expression. The clergy have eaten of the Tree of Knowledge, and are naked and ashamed. In respect of the origin and inspiration of the Scriptures, they are in the equivocal position that they dare not openly proclaim all that they privately know and believe. The clerical flock are, in fact, holding back until a sufficient number of daring spirits among them have gone forward and opened the way. The adventurous few who have already advanced have not inspired quite enough confidence to induce the main body to follow. As a result, pulpit discourses of the present time are largely fashioned on one or the other of the following pusillanimous lines, as far as many vital matters are concerned:—(1) Weak avoidance of debatable points; (2) Ambiguity and obscurity of expression; (3) Orthodox terminology with arbitrary meanings; (4) Bold assertion with nullifying qualifications. The result is either vapidty or misrepresentation amounting to spiritual fraud.

FRANCIS NEALE.

RELIGION AND SUICIDE.

ONE of the most pernicious of all the pernicious tenets of Christianity is the one relating to suicide. Christians hold that a person who commits self-murder perpetrates an unpardonable sin, and will have to endure an eternity of infinite torture as a punishment for so doing. It is a doctrine which has wrought incalculable evil, and we can almost say with certainty, judging from the reports of the daily papers, that the number of suicides is not diminished by it. On the other hand, how many parents has this horrible doctrine not weighed down into a premature grave? How many sweethearts has it not bereaved of their reason? To how many husbands, wives, brothers, and sisters has it not helped to embitter life and render existence unbearable? I should probably not be so bitter against this monstrosity of the Christian imagination if I did not speak from personal experience; but I myself have had a near relative who, seemingly in cold blood and with his full reasoning faculties, laid hands upon himself. I was only a youth when it happened, and had an implicit faith in the Christian religion, including the theory which had been instilled into my mind from childhood, that to kill oneself was an act as criminal as that of killing someone else, and that there was one chance less of salvation, inasmuch as there was no time left for repentance after the deed; whereas an ordinary murderer gets time to be converted. We had been brought up together, been educated together, had played together in field and meadow, worked together, and slept in one bed. He was my near kith and kin; and to think that he was now to be kept in a state of detention, perpetually going through the mental anguish and despair which he must have experienced before the rash act, and dreaming of the past agony of death until the day of judgment, and then only to be liberated in order to bear his dread sentence, and to be sent to his eternal doom, almost drove me mad. The restless ticking of the clock he had left behind sounded like a death-knell; all his belongings spoke with the voice of an angry god. I could not bear to see any of his old clothes; from the darkness arose myriads of spooks; every sound frightened me, and at every step I took I stopped and asked myself, "Am I awake, or is it all a dream?"

The unfortunate young man's mother was a mental and physical wreck for months after the event, and his father went to an early grave as a consequence thereof.

Our spiritual guides were, of course, consulted as to the possible future of the dead man's soul; and they were the kindest and best, broadest and most liberal of religionists; but they gravely shook their reverend heads, and told the despairing parents that they could give them no consolation.

Now, most Christians, on reading this, will probably shrug their shoulders with a pitiful smile, and call me weak-minded for taking this so seriously. That proves their *insincerity*, and does not speak much for their character and faith. If the Christians really believed in their doctrines, they could not but prostrate themselves in the dust, preach and plead, weep and wail every hour of the day. A Christian who can for one moment forget the unspeakable doom towards which the majority of mankind is drifting, to such an extent that he can smile or participate in any kind of frivolity whatever, must be absolutely insincere—in short, a sincere Christian must be insane as a consequence of the barbarous doctrine of hell-fire.

Our law, which is supposed to be based upon our religion, does not recognise suicide as a crime equal to murder, the punishment meted out for an attempt at the former offence being but slight compared with that meted out for the latter. It is also notable that the suicide in the eyes of the law is "insane"; but if one makes an attempt at it, and does not succeed through no fault of one's own, one is a criminal, and liable to punishment. But, if the suicide is insane, and not responsible for what he does in *our* judgment, why do we believe that he is responsible to God to such an extent as to incur a punishment surpassing all human imagination, both in degree and length of time? Why do we not try and depict a god whose qualities soar above ourselves as an ideal for men to strive to live up to, instead of picturing one in the blackest dyes of human passion and depravity? Of course, the explanation is simple. Man made his gods in his own image, and as man slowly climbs upwards, so his gods as slowly improve; but, owing to the fondness with which we cling to our petty prejudices, the progress of our gods is slower than our own, wherefore they keep at a respectable distance.

Before Christians so ruthlessly condemn their weaker and unfortunate, often downtrodden, brethren, who fail in the race for life, and are flung to the wall; who become weary of the struggle for existence, and voluntarily quit the scene to make room for a score of new combatants eager to take his place, they should draw a line. Who takes his own life, and who does not, is a question which is not so easily determined as it at first sight seems. We are all—or, at least, most of us—responsible for the abbreviation or prolongation of our lives. But if a man coolly says to himself, "I am sick of life and want to divest myself of its burdens and responsibilities," sits down writing to his friends telling them so, has a good feed, leaves his messages behind on the table and goes out, puts a rope round his neck with some straw underin order not to cause the skin to smart, and hangs himself—we say that man commits suicide, and he goes to eternal torment. If a woman standing alone in the world, outrageously victimized by a brutal, amorous scoundrel, deserted by friends, and disowned by relatives, in a moment of despair flings herself over the precipice into the river, we still call it suicide, and that young woman, be she ever so pure *intentionally*, goes into "the fire everlasting, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels." When the gambler loses his whole fortune, and upon the spur of the moment puts a bullet into his delirious brain, he commits suicide, and is lost for ever. But when a father throws himself into the river to save his drowning child, knowing beforehand that he himself will lose his life, we sing praises over his grave, and extol him before men as an ideal and a hero. And yet, if he knows beforehand that he will himself go under, is the case not one of suicide just as much as any of the other cases I have quoted? If a man dies from consumption, which has sprung from a slight cold contracted through going out on a cold and rainy day insufficiently clad, the man knowing that this may cause death, and seeing the malady creeping upon him, but wilfully neglecting himself till too late, we say that that man died from natural causes. And yet is it not as much consciously self-caused, and therefore self-murder, as in the cases above mentioned? The scientist who drinks the deadly poison, in order to test the effect thereof upon his system, we laud to the skies for his steadfastness and heroism in thus risking his own life, and laying it down as a martyr in the interests of science; and yet, in reality, if we would be consistent, is he not as much a suicide as those we stigmatize as such? Whatever may be laid to these unfortunates' charge, they are certainly not cowards who dare, voluntarily, face the terror of creation—our arch-enemy, grim Death.

It is not here contended that we should commit suicide wholesale in order to shirk the responsibilities of life; but I do maintain that it is absurd to deny their irresponsible dead remains a decent burial, and that it is criminal on the part of society to vent its spite on those whom the unfortunate one has left behind by refusing to bury their dead relative in consecrated ground, or to omit ringing the bell; and, in addition, to tell the weak-minded, broken-hearted wife or mother that his soul is now roasting in hell. Shame upon the dastardly hypocrites of priests who commit these crimes; who have to subsist upon the ignorance of the weak-minded, and the credulity and timidity of women and little children!

J. K. MAAGAARD.

The Egyptian theologians attributed the origin of plants to tears falling from the eyes of the son and daughter of the sun. After the creation of the universe by Rā, it was observed to be barren—a defect supplied in the manner just indicated, which seems to be symbolical of the fall of rain in a dry country after a long period of heat and drought.—*Athenæum*.

We may truly say of the theological notion of the relations of mind and body that it has been surpassed by few false doctrines in the evil which it has worked.—*Dr. Henry Maudsley, "Body and Mind," p. 120.*

MISSIONS TO JEWS.

INCREASING interest has of late been taken by the various missionary societies in the welfare of the Jews, probably stimulated in a measure by the non-success of their efforts. In attempting the conversion of the Jews the missionaries have an exceedingly difficult task. His creed is too firmly rooted in the Jew for him easily to change it. In the East-end of London a large number of the journeymen claim to be Secularists, though unattached to any Secular Society; but so great is the hold of ancient customs upon them that many keep up the observance of the Bris Milah, Burmizvah, and sitting Shiva, for which latter funds are provided by the various benefit societies. The working classes are certainly not reached by these Bible thumpers. The reports of the societies seldom, if ever, give any details of the converts that have been made, urging the inadvisability of publishing names. It would serve greatly to arrest imposition if these names were published; the public would certainly like to know who they are. Are they men and women likely to bring credit to the societies and to the general community? Or are they men like Joseph Samuel Levi, afterwards known as Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, the originator of the London Society, who seduced the wife of his friend and frequented bawdy houses until he became so notorious that the society shipped him off to America? Or are they like Joseph Josephson, who kept forged banknotes within the covers of a religious book, cashing them when opportunity offered, and who afterwards stole a large quantity of plate? Or are they like L. Leon, who ruined the servant girl of the printer at the home and then decamped? Or like Warsawiak, who a few weeks since was expelled from the Presbyterian Church on the ground of immorality, and from whom his supporters are waiting for a settlement of the building fund? Or are they like Mr. Routenburg, an account of whose career is given in the *Toronto Mail* of June 28 last, who, before his alleged conversion to Christianity, was admittedly a gambler, a thief, and "a prey to every vice"? Why is it that at the annual gatherings none of the converts are brought forward? What tremendous applause there would be, for the general public look upon a converted Jew as a curiosity worthy of exhibition. There are many Jews who, like Esau, are willing to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage and make their religion a saleable article, and are encouraged to do so by these highly-paid and over-fed missionaries, who do their uttermost to make some sort of a show for the enormous sums they receive annually from the gullible British public. The London Society originated in a dream. Dreams seem to have been in Mr. Frey's line, for he relates others which he had, and which proved beneficial—to himself. The results are about as solid as Mr. Frey's dreams.

DUDLEY WRIGHT.

DIES IRÆ.

It was some millions of years after the great Judgment Day. Satan had been sleeping, and when he awoke he felt somewhat chilly.

"Confound those imps!" he exclaimed; "I believe they've let the fires down a bit. A more careless set of devils I never had to do with in all my eternity. I'll give them particular sheol for this."

As he spoke he touched the electric bell, and a few seconds afterwards a trapdoor in the floor fell open, and a devil, burnt to a rich terra-cotta by the eternal fires, shot into the presence of the Lord of Hell.

"How now, sir?" thundered the potentate; "do you think hell was meant to be an ice-house, that you let the fires down so low? You seem to have mistaken your vocation. The whole stoking department ought to have been angels with white robes and crowns of glory. What do you mean by it, anyhow?"

The stoker-devil trembled like a leaf. "May it please your majesty," he said, "it isn't really our fault; the fact is, we are running out of fuel."

"What!" roared Satan, "running out of fuel, with the whole universe to draw on?"

"We've been using ten constellations a minute for the last three million years," explained the stoker: "and now the supply has given out. We kept the Milky Way till the last, hoping against hope, but this week we had to use it. We are running the furnaces now with the Magellan Clouds, but the quality is none of the best, and we'll want a fresh supply in a few hours."

"Search the ends of Space then!" exclaimed Satan, "there must surely be any quantity of constellations left."

The stoker-devil shook his head sadly. "We've used 'em all up," he replied. "Our cinder heap reaches to the farthest depths."

"Search that cinder heap then!" cried Satan; "plenty of suns and constellations may have been thrown carelessly out."

"No," replied the stoker-devil despondently; "during the last million years the ashes have been carefully sifted, and all burnable parts have been returned to the furnaces."

Satan ground his mighty teeth in despair. "This comes of damning too many souls," he exclaimed. "I begin to think that I was far too active in the old days. If I had had any foresight at all, I'd have let the parsons save all the souls they wanted. Here I am brought to beggary in my old age—burnt out of house and home by a lot of miserable souls who have not the common decency to thank me for giving them the chance. But I will not submit; I'll strain the universe through a hair sieve before I give up the game. Here, you, turn out ten thousand of those Australian miners we damned in the nineteenth century. Tell 'em to prospect all Space. Tell them I'll give threepence each for planets, and ninepence each for suns—in asbestos orders, good for whiskey at the refreshment-room. And, while they are routing around, I'll see what I can find on my own account."

At once the message clanged throughout hell, but before the order could be carried out Satan took a header into the depths on a quest of his own. In a few seconds thousands of eager souls swarmed out on to the clinker-heap. There they were, gaunt and grim, seared by millions of years of searching fires, grilled for ages on the unmelting fire-bars of the inferno, racked and torn by the tireless torturers, and hideously disfigured by a thousand endless and unimaginable torments. But there they stood with the old prospecting fever still strong within them, and before them lay the biggest prospecting field ever offered to the sons of men. There lay an apparently duffered-out universe, with just a chance that somewhere in it were constellations, every sun of which was worth a drink in the private bar of hell, and so with a whoop that shook the grim portal of the inferno they dashed into Space.

But little they recked of the task before them. For days they wandered, that troop of disconsolate diggers, and many a billion miles they prospected without success. At last, when the search seemed almost hopeless, something huge and filmy hove in sight on the great black wall of starless Space. With a simultaneous rush the prospectors went for it, and, hooking themselves on by every available point, they dragged it, with a wild hurrah, through billions of miles of emptiness, till they triumphantly dumped it at hell's gate, and sent it bodily down into the furnaces.

A stoker-imp rose up and thanked them, with tears in his eyes.

"Just in time, oh, just in time!" he exclaimed, in broken accents. "The weather prophet in the third gridiron has prophesied a white frost."

But suddenly a mighty form spun up from the exterior darkness. It was Satan, returned from a fruitless search.

"I hear the roar of the furnaces," he said; "what have you found?"

They told him.

"A filmy thing, floating in Space.' Oh, fools!" he cried, "you have gone and burnt up Heaven. It won't last ten minutes. We are lost!"

And, sure enough, fifteen minutes later Hell froze over.

—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Z. E. F.

Obituary.

FRITZ MÜLLER, who died in Brazil, deserves mention as the first German naturalist to accept the theories of evolution. His book, *Für Darwin*, helped to popularize Darwinism in Germany, and he was a correspondent of our great naturalist. Fritz Müller said that the eyes of faith were never suited for the microscope.

We regret to record the death of Mr. John Tanner, of Prospect-vale, Liverpool. He had attained to the ripe age of eighty-seven. Mr. Tanner was a familiar figure at Secular meetings in Liverpool for we know not how many years. He and his wife—who survives him, and has our deep sympathy in her bereavement—sat in front and greeted the lecturer's every point with a sympathetic smile. They were also good financial supporters of the movement. Mr. Tanner was interested in many advanced causes, and the world is poorer for the loss of a man of so much goodness and intelligence.

Daniel Greenleaf Thompson, who died a little time ago in New York, was the author of *A System of Psychology*, a book on *The Problem of Evil*, and another on *The Religious Sentiment*. He was a descendant of Benjamin Thompson (Court Romford), and was a Freethinker. For several years he was president of the Nineteenth Century Club, one of the Liberal Associations of New York.

The only monopoly any Church has a right to claim is a monopoly of the errors peculiar to it; what truth it has is generally common to all.—*Laurence Oliphant*, "Scientific Religion," p. 131.

BOOK CHAT.

It is related that a Spanish preacher once delivered a sermon to a crowd of victims of the Inquisition, about to be delivered to the flames, from the text, "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." We are reminded of the circumstance by an unctuous book entitled *Thoughts for all Times*, by Monsignor J. S. Vaughan. This worthy follows his Church in proclaiming that animals have no rights, and suggests that the antivivisectionists might have prosecuted Jesus for sending devils into pigs. According to Monsignor Vaughan, the cutting-up and torture of living animals is, "in the theological sense, wholly indifferent." As much might be said of the torture of men believed to be doomed to eternal torments.

* * *

Professor Woods Hutchinson opens the *Dominion Review* by an essay on "The Value of Pain." Pain, he contends, is the essential condition of progress. We rather hold that much of it is superfluous, though, perhaps, once useful, when man, without mind, needed it as a warning to danger or a stimulus to exertion. With intelligent men we hold that pain is of no more use than the os coccygis which tells us what we once were. Professor Woods Hutchinson, who approves of it, is welcome to our share. His essay, however, is worth reading; and among other papers are Professor Dolbear on "The Divisibility of Matter," Mr. G. J. Holyoake on "English Co-operation," and Mr. J. M. Wheeler on "The Resurrection Mystery," a reprint from the *Freethinker*.

* * *

W. R. Morfill, writing on "Russian Literature" in *Cosmopolis*, refers to translations of the works of Poe and Shelley, and observes: "Shelley is at last beginning to make himself felt as a power in Europe."

* * *

The publishers of Mr. R. Le Gallienne's book, *If I were God*, have thought it necessary to defend his title from blasphemy by citing the old epitaph:—

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod.
Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,
As I would do were I Lord God,
And you were Martin Elginbrod.

This sentiment is very ancient. In the *Rig Veda*, viii. 1, etc., the writer exclaims: "If I were thou, O Agni, and thou were I, then thy wishes would be fulfilled.....If I, India, were like thee, the lord of wealth, he who praised me would not lack cows"; and again: "If I were Lord as much as thou, I would support the sacred card; I should not abandon him to misery." This appeal to put yourself in my place is one of the most ancient sentiments of which we have record. Yet Christians have the cheek to say that the Golden Rule was originated by Christ.

* * *

General Forlong, writing of Confucius in his *Short Studies in the Science of Comparative Religions*, says: "The Golden Rule, which only appears once in the teaching of Jesus, he reiterates three times, as in 'Doctrine of the Mean,' xiii. 3, 'Analect,' v. xi., xv. 23, and again in his 'Great Learning' (Com. x. 2), where he exhaustively expands it as 'The principle with which, as with a measuring square, to regulate one's conduct.'"

* * *

Under the title of *Faith or Fact?* Mr. Henry M. Taber has collected, and published in a handsome volume through Peter Eckler, of 35 Fulton-street, New York, a number of his contributions to the *Free Thought Magazine*, of Chicago. Mr. Taber goes over a great deal of the ground in controversy between Christians and Freethinkers, and on every article dealt with has a number of apt quotations from great writers, intermixed with shrewd observations of his own. The book is dedicated to the lovers of mental freedom of every land, and especially to those who have endured the sneers, the invectives, the ostracisms, the persecutions of orthodox Christianity.

* * *

Among the topics dealt with in *Faith or Fact?* are "Woman in Christian and Heathen Countries," "Inspiration," "The Origin of Christianity," "Religious Decadence," "Faith," "Religion not Morality," "The Trinity," "Miracles," "Sunday," "Primitive Christianity," "Religion and Education," "Future Punishment," "Prayer," and "Church and State." Mr. Taber brings a well-read and well-formed mind to bear on these and other subjects. His work is written in plain language, and he is evidently one who, having lost his hold on faith, yet retains a strenuous grip on fact. The book has a capital preface by Colonel Ingersoll, part of which we have already laid before our readers.

* * *

One good line in a poem is something to be thankful for in these days, when Professor Goldwin Smith thinks he may live to see the last horse, the last woman, and the last poet. And there was one line in William Watson's poem on "The Unknown God" which was rather a happy description of the old deity: "Man's giant shadow which he calls divine."

CORRESPONDENCE.

EMINENT TESTIMONIES CONCERNING PREMATURE BURIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It may interest some of the thoughtful readers of the *Freethinker* to learn that the movement initiated by correspondents in your own and a few other influential journals for the prevention of premature burial has arrested the attention of a number of men of light and leading, both at home and abroad.

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone writes: "I am very sensible of the interest attaching to the subject." The Hon. T. F. Bayard, late United States Ambassador to the Court of St. James, writes that "the subject is certainly of great interest and importance." The Right Rev. Dr. Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London, says: "The subject is one to which you are justified in calling attention." His Excellency Count de Karnice Karnicki (Chamberlain to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia), who has been instrumental in rescuing a young lady from premature interment at the grave, writes: "I am astonished that anyone should be insensible of its paramount importance."

These testimonies might be multiplied indefinitely. My object is, however, to acquaint your readers that a Bill has been drafted by a well-known barrister-at-law for the consideration of Parliament, with the object of providing such safeguards against premature interment as have proved so successful in Munich, Stuttgart, Weimar, Vienna, and other German cities. Whether the Bill will receive adequate support, in order to secure its adoption by Parliament, must depend on the action of County and District Councils, as well as upon the amount of pressure brought upon our representatives.

Meanwhile I shall be happy to supply printed information to enable anyone to safeguard himself and family against the most terrible of tragedies, on receipt of a stamped and addressed envelope.

JAS. R. WILLIAMSON.
42 Stibbington-street, London, N.W.

MANUFACTURED PROPHECIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—"Abracadabra" well shows up the misapplication by Matthew of the text in Jeremiah xxxi. about "Rachel weeping for her children" in connection with the bogus legend of Herod's massacring the innocents—a story similar to many found in folk-lore. One point proves it was not concocted by a Jew familiar with the Scriptures. Bethlehem was of Judah. Now, Judah was Leah's son, not Rachel's. When the children of Bethlehem were destroyed a Jew might have said, "Leah was weeping for her children," but would never have referred to Rachel. Jeremiah was correct in referring to Rachel, because Ramah was of Benjamin (see Joshua xviii.), and Benjamin was the son of Rachel, as Judah was of Leah (see Genesis xxxv. 23, 24). But "Matthew" again was out in his genealogies.

CATAPHIAS.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE Wesleyan *Children's Advocate* is responsible for the following: "A little girl, who had been reading the seventh verse of the second chapter of Genesis, was standing near a window looking at the dust as it blew in clouds along the street. When asked what she was looking at, the little creature said: "I thought perhaps God was going to make somebody, and was just getting the dust ready!"

The children in a Sunday school were being questioned on the incident of the Tribute Money. The following answer was given by one of the scholars:—"And when they brought him a penny he said: 'Whose subscription is this?'"

Nurse—"Good bye, Freddy; I am going to church." Freddy (aged three and half years)—"Tell God I was a good boy." Nurse—"But I cannot; you were not a good boy." Freddy (after meditation)—"Well, fool him!"

Entering a butcher's shop, a Jewish rabbi said to one of the salesmen: "Give me four pounds of that salmon." "That is not salmon," was the reply; "that is ham." "Did I ask you what it was?" retorted the Rabbi.

The vicar looked very severe at the golden-haired little girl before him: "Nelly, they tell me you use swear words, is that true?" "No, sir," "I am very pleased to hear it. I only heard it, and wished to know if it was true." "No, sir, it is not true." After a pause—"Who told you, sir?" "A little bird." "Then it must have been one of them d—sparrows."

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, "Christian Hypocrites and Honest Peculiar People."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "The Mystery of Evil Explained." September 11, at 8.30, Concert.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Rome, Ancient and Modern." Limelight illustrations.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack.
CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack.
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road, near Dalston Junction): 11.30, W. Heaford, A lecture.
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture; 7, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture. September 22, T. J. Thurlow, A lecture.
LIMEHOUSE (Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. September 21, E. Pack.
VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A lecture.
WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Mr. Lewis.

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Athenæum, Victoria-street): H. P. Ward—11, "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist"; 7, "What will you Give us in Place of Christianity?—A Secularist's Answer."
GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, O. Cohen, "Ethics and Economics"; 2.30, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 6.30, "Science and Religion."
IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, Members' meeting.
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 3, J. M. Robertson, "The Reformation in Continental Europe"; 7, "The Collapse of the Christian Creed."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Busholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "Is Secularism Compatible with Socialism or Anarchism?"
PONTYPRIDD (28 Middle-street, Trallwn): Meetings every Sunday evening. Discussion invited.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

PONTYPRIDD—6.15, J. W. Cox, B.A., "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—September 19, Glasgow. 26, Edinburgh. October 10, Gateshead. 16, 17, and 18, Stanley. 24, Newcastle.

J. FAGAN, 48 Popham-road, New North-road, London, N.—September 19, e., Hammersmith. 26, m., Hyde Park.

H. PERCY WARD, Leighton Hall, N.W.—September 19, Mission at Derby; 26, m., Clerkenwell Green; e., New Drompton. 29, e., Mile End Waste. October 3, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye.

E. PACK, 90 Camden-street, N.W.—September 19, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye. 21, e., Limehouse. 26, m., Mile End; e., Limehouse; a., Finsbury Park. 28, e., Limehouse. October 3, Chatham. 10, Bradlaugh Club; 17, m., Camberwell.

POSITIVISM.

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

SUNDERLAND.—Church of Humanity, 23 Blandford-street. Service and discourse every Sunday afternoon at 3.15.

WEST HARTLEPOOL.—Druids' Hall, Tower-street. Meeting for inquirers, conducted by Mr. Malcolm Quin, first Wednesday of every month at 7.30.

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.

Now Ready, price 1s.,

The People's Darwin; Or, Darwin Made Easy.

By E. B. AVELING, D.Sc.

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

UNIGRAPHIC SHORTHAND is the Briefest and most Perfect of all Systems. Parts I. to VIII. now ready. 7d. post free. P. W. BALDWIN, O.M., Ashton-on-Ribble.

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.

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.

THOMAS PAINE'S WORKS.

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

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

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

W. J. Rendell
No. 182,688.

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

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 8s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 6s. 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.

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.

Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES. The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 132 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
THE GODS. 6d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 8d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 8d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.
THE THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE DYING CREED. 2d.
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
SKULLS. 2d.
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
CREEDS & SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

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

Now Ready. Price Twopence.

What is the Use of Prayer?

By C. COHEN.

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

Price Twopence,

Who Was the Father of Jesus?

By

G. W. FOOTE.

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

Price One Shilling,

THEISM OR ATHEISM:

Which is the More Reasonable?

A PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN

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

AND

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

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

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

REVISED BY BOTH DISPUTANTS.

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

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.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

By

G. W. FOOTE.

Second Series (cloth), 2s. 6d.

CONTENTS:—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—"Thus Saith the Lord"—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Christianity and Labor—Dueling—An Easter Egg for Christians—Down Among the Dead Men—Smirching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Pigottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

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 1,600 Men and Women of Light and Leading. Reduced to 5s.
Footsteps of the Past. Essays on Human Evolution in Religion and Custom. 3s.
Bible Studies. Essays on Phallic Worship, Circumcision, Blood Rites, Jewish Sacrifices, Taboos, Ordeals, Witchcraft, Prophets, Song of Solomon, Etc. Cloth illustrated, 2s. 6d.
The Life and Writings of Voltaire. 1s. paper; 2s. cloth.
Secular Songs and Freethought Readings. 1s.
The Christian Doctrine of Hell. 2d.
Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible. 2d.
Types of Religionists. 2d.

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

LESSONS IN FRENCH.—Monsieur JULES BAILLY desires Pupils. Easy plan and efficiency guaranteed. Terms very moderate. Address, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, W.O.

Our New Autumn-Winter Patterns are now ready; they include all the latest novelties in Suitings, Trouserings, Overcoatings, Dress and Costume materials. Our prices are extremely reasonable, and every care has been taken to include only the best-wearing materials. Just give our patterns a look before buying elsewhere. You will never regret it. Patterns on approval Post Free.

J. W. GOTT,
2 & 4 Union Street,
BRADFORD.

(Two Minutes from all the Railway Stations.)

If ever you visit Bradford, don't forget to call.

INGERSOLL'S
Greatest Lecture
ON
SHAKESPEARE,

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Price Sixpence.

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

FIRST EDITION—Printed at the Chiswick Press, with Portrait of the Author and thirteen full-page illustrations (Nine Engravings on Wood), in one volume, 128 pages, cap 4to, gilt lettered, price 5s.

Steps to the Temple of Happiness:

THIRTY TRUE MORAL STORIES FOR THE YOUNG;
With Hints to Parents on the Education of Children.

By **HENRY SMITH**

(Author of *Simple Thoughts in Prose and Verse*, etc., etc.)

"Thirty stories for children of more or less interest are contained in a handsome and well-illustrated volume, entitled *Steps to the Temple of Happiness*. They inculcate in a winning and attractive manner lessons of kindness, and lay stress on the homely but primary duties of truthfulness, obedience, and unselfish regard for others."—*The Speaker*.

"The author of these Thirty True Moral Stories for the Young is an earnest and a good man, we have no doubt, and into his charmingly illustrated volume has introduced a treasury of noble thoughts and excellent advice."—*Schoolmaster*.

London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Limited, Paternoster-square; and all booksellers.

MACKINTOSHES

DOWN ANOTHER SHILLING.

The 630 Ladies' Mackintoshes have been reduced to less than 400. We are now clearing them at

11s. 6d. Each.

Flowers of Freethought, 2s. 6d., free with each garment.

Colors left—Brown, Fawn, Slate. Plain Colors: Brown, Fawn, Grey Checks and Mixtures.

This is a regular Eye-opening Line.

Are You Satisfied with Your Income?

Working Men and Women wanted everywhere to assist us in making our goods known.

WRITE FOR TERMS.

Persons with spare time can easily add from 10s. to 30s. to their weekly income.

Price 2d., by post 2½d.; yearly subscription (including Supplements), 2s. 8d.

THE LITERARY GUIDE:
A RATIONALIST REVIEW.

Devoted mainly to Books and Publications which deal with Religion, Philosophy, Science, and Ethics from a Rationalist standpoint.

THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Mr. Hall Caine's *Christian*.
Iconoclasm in Excelsis.
Mr. Baring-Gould's *St. Paul*.
The Growth of Human Nature.
Training Young Citizens.
American Heterodoxy.
A Thoughtful Man's Religion.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
Chats about Books—VII. With Dr. R. Bithell.
Samuel Lsing: In Memoriam.
German Critics at Work.
Etc., etc.

** Copies of the July issue, containing two important Supplements, may still be had, price 2d., by post 3d.

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

Special Eight Days' Mission

In BARNBURY HALL, Barnsbury-street, Islington, N., from Sunday, September 19, to 26 inclusive (Thursday and Saturday excepted), conducted by ISAAC SELBY (of Melbourne), formerly Freethought Lecturer, now Minister of the Gospel. Sunday afternoons, 3.30 o'clock; Sunday and week evenings 8.30. All heartily invited, especially Freethinkers, Infidels, Secularists, and Sceptics. Questions permitted at close of lectures—Sundays excepted. For list of subjects see posters.

SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL, FAILSWORTH, near Manchester. The above SCHOOL having become too small for the requirements of the members they are desirous of EXTENDING it. To raise the necessary funds—about £500—they are promoting a BAZAAR to be held at the end of October next. Contributions in money or articles from any Freethought well-wisher would be thankfully received.

H. TAYLOR, Sec., 428 Oldham-road, Failsworth.

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