

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 8.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1898.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## THE REAL ROBERT BURNS.

(Continued from page 98.)

MR. HENLEY'S portrait of Robert Burns the man seems to us as honest as it is powerful. He paints him, as Cromwell insisted on being painted—warts and all. Nothing is set down in malice, and also nothing is extenuated. We understand that dire offence has already been taken at this picture of Burns by certain perfervid Scotsmen, who adore a legendary poet, the creation of three or four generations of foolish image-worship. Mr. Henley, however, is not to be frightened by their denunciations. Indeed, he has hit back vigorously at some of his critics in the first number of *The Outlook*. "Scotland," he says, "is, in fact, delivered over to the possession of the Burns Club, and to the worship of a man whose living aspect has so far dislimned that to attempt to realize him as he was is to amaze the neighborhood, from Maidenkirk to John o' Groats. The Burns of fact, the Burns of history and life, has disappeared; and in his room there is shown a kind of popular transparency"—not a bit like the real Burns, or the real anything. "Half-read M.P.'s and sheriffs, and divines and provosts flushed with literary patriotism," who toast the immortal memory of Robert Burns on the twenty-fifth of January, may rail at Mr. Henley to their hearts' content. They will not ruffle his equanimity. He knows the facts, and he has other tastes than theirs. He declines to recognise their figmentary Burns, just as he declines to admit the superlative excellence of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*—for a wilderness of which he would not give the *Holy Fair*, still less *Halloween* or the *Jolly Beggars*.

Robert Burns was first of all a Scots peasant. "He was absolutely of his station," Mr. Henley says, "and of his time; the poor-living, lewd, grimy, free-spoken, ribald, old Scots peasant-world came to a full, brilliant, even majestic close in his work." Even when he went to Edinburgh, and achieved such a triumph by his genius and personality, he saw an old capital that was "gay, squalid, drunken, and dirty," as well as "lettered and venerable." "It was a centre," says Mr. Henley, "of conviviality—a city of clubs and talk and good-fellowship, a city of harlotry and high jinks, a city (above all) of drink." It is impossible to deny that Burns drank too much and too freely. And the worst of it was that the fashionable tippie just then was whisky "fire-new from the Highlands." Had Burns been born a generation earlier, when the drink was more commonly beer or claret, Mr. Henley thinks he would have stood a better chance. It is pretty certain that he took part in many such convivial scenes as the one so deliciously described in *Tam o' Shanter*, and no doubt when the whisky was in his talk was glorious; but he had to pay the penalty afterwards, just like meaner mortals. Probably it would have been better for him had he kept to farming. The post they gave him in the Excise took him too much away from home and its restraining influences, and threw him too much into company which he consumed his genius in delighting. Mr. Henley frankly notices some of Burns's social offences during the Dumfries period, and just as frankly says that "the explanation in these and other cases is that he was drunk." Burns was "great in his strength," Lord Rosebery says, "and great in his weaknesses." He was largely endowed with what Mr. Henley calls "the primordial instinct." His amours were many, and the charms he admired were what his brother Gilbert called "sexual."

No. 865.

"A delicious armful"—his own expression—was his ideal of a woman. Like all highly imaginative men, he had a large capacity for deceiving himself; but Gilbert said he "was no platonic lover, whatever he might pretend or suppose of himself to the contrary." The famous letters to Clarinda are in one sense tragic-comic. Burns is sentimentalising prodigiously, but his eye is fixed all the time on the lady's voluptuous figure. Mr. Henley boldly says that "he longed for the shepherd's hour to strike for the chime's sake only." But after all there is a difference between the fancy and the heart. We agree with Mr. Henley that "Burns was first and last enamored of the woman he made his wife." The heroine-in-chief of Burns's story is not the half-legendary Highland Mary, who was either "something of a lightskirts" or "a kind of Scottish Mrs. Harris." Mr. Henley decides for "the loyal and patient soul whom he appreciated as the fittest to be his wife," the Jean "who endured his affronts, and mothered his children (her own and another's), and took the rough and the smooth, the best and the worst of life with him, and wore his name for well-nigh forty years after his death as her sole title to regard."

Burns's great lust of life was unhappy in its environment. Mr. Henley holds that he was too hardly used and desperately driven in his youth, and too splendidly petted and pampered in his manhood, to endure the life by which the tenant-farmer has to earn his bread. Then there was his potent temperament; and "when Pan, his goat-foot father, would whistle on him from the thicket, he could not often stop his ears to the call." He was a misplaced Titan; too great for his circumstances. Mr. Henley sees in him a certain general likeness to Mirabeau.

"Born a noble, and given an opportunity commensurate with himself, Burns would certainly have done such work as Mirabeau's, and done it at least as well. Born a Scots peasant, Mirabeau must, as certainly, have lived the life and died the death of Burns. In truth, it is only the fortune of war that we remember the one by his conduct of the Revolution, which called his highest capacities into action, while we turn to the other for his verses, which are the outcome (so Mary Riddell thought, and was not alone in thinking) of by no means his strongest gift."

Robert Burns was no man's enemy but his own. His faults were faults of temperament and excessive temptation. Apart from them he was high-minded, generous, and tender. A thousand good things may be said of him on this side. He loved his fellow men, and gave them his heart and brain unstintedly. He had a romantic affection for the old Stuarts, but he was essentially a friend of the people. He sang for them, and he was of them to the heart's core. And then his splendid personality! The Duchess of Gordon said he was the only man who carried her off her feet. Learned professors, as well as illiterate peasants, fell under his irresistible charm. Scott never saw such an eye as Burns's in any human bead, though he had seen the most distinguished men of his time. "His voice alone," said Maria Riddell, "could improve upon the magic of his eye." It was "sonorous" and "replete with the finest modulations." Mr. Henley thinks he had "well-nigh the finest brain conceivable," and, if it made him nothing else, it made "the most exquisite artist in folk-song the world has seen." He has thrilled and delighted thousands of hearts, and will probably continue to do so for centuries. He had the good sense, as Mr. Henley observes, to deal with the life he knew, and that life is, after all, the essential life of men and women always and everywhere.

Empires rise and fall, dynasties come and go, religions appear and vanish, but human nature abides unchangingly. Mothers croon over their babes now as they did milleniums ago in India and Egypt, Cupid still wields his bow and arrows, the maiden dreams of her lover who sighs for her adorable presence, husband and wife climb the hill of life together and sleep together at its foot, and friend clings to friend with a glad tenacity that often defies death and disgrace. And to all these imperishable elements of human life Burns gave beautiful and sometimes matchless expression.

Burns died at the early age of thirty-eight. Himself knew well enough (he never tried to conceal them) the faults that half-wrecked his life. "But the precisian," as Mr. Henley says, "has naught to do at this grave-side." Sermonising is so easy, and nature is so despotic.

"The strength was great, but the weaknesses were greater; for time and chance and necessity were ever developing the weaknesses at the same time that they were ever beating down the strength. That is the sole conclusion possible. And to the plea, that the story it rounds is very pitiful, there is this victorious answer: that the Man had drunk his life to the lees, while the Poet had fulfilled himself to the accomplishing of a peculiar immortality; so that to Burns Death came as a deliverer and a friend."

Mr. Henley's criticisms on Burns the poet seem to us entirely sound. Burns was not a sudden miracle, as some think; he was the last and greatest of the Vernacular school. He was not a founder, but a consummator. The spirit, the ideals, the very forms of the school were all ready to his hand. Again and again he takes an old verse and improves it, setting his mark upon it for ever; or an old refrain, and makes it the *motif* of a splendid new song. He did not know the secrets of English; but "he had the sole ear of the Vernacular muse; there was not a tool in her budget of which he was not master." And singing in the Vernacular he won his immortality.

G. W. FOOTE.

[Our third and final article will be on Burns as a Free-thinker.]

### PAGAN MORALITY.

"*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto.*"  
("I am a man, and hold nothing human alien to myself.")  
—TERENCE.

I WAS, in the eyes of the law, many years short of being a man when I took this passage from the slave-born Pagan dramatist as my motto. Whether it hit the vanity of boyhood or some deeper feeling, it struck me as embodying a sentiment which every human being should feel concerning his fellows. I had heard in church of "the heathen in his blindness," but here was one at least who seemed to have a clearer outlook than those who prided themselves on being God's "elect." I remember, though it must be a generation ago, my dear friend, J. E. Garner, telling me how St. Augustine relates that the utterance of this line in the theatre was greeted with tumultuous applause. The incident spoke volumes. Could the people be wholly bad who responded to such a sentiment? Did they need a supernatural revelation to implant the very elements of righteousness?

Christianity claims a moral monopoly; yet, as a matter of fact, there is no single moral sentiment in the New Testament which cannot be paralleled from Pagan writers. To deny this, as Buckle said, can only be attributed to gross ignorance or wilful fraud. In his recent volume of *Short Studies on the Science of Comparative Religions*, Major-General Forlong has, at the expense of immense labor, translated the pick of the sentiments of all religions. This portion of his volume might well be published separately, for it is well calculated to dissipate the notion that there is something peculiarly divine about Christian ethics. A few extracts may be given as specimens. As exemplifying Egyptian religious thought, Major-General Forlong gives the following:—

"Our eternal hope is in Thee, Thou great Redeemer,  
In Thy love, Thy death, and resurrection to glory,  
For in Thy blood we are healed, justified, and sanctified;  
And as Thou, great Osiris, lived here a life of goodness,  
And suffering rose—the firstborn of the dead—to live  
The eternal judge of all men, so with confidence we,

Thy faithful followers, see our release from  
The dread shades of Dark Amenti  
Into that 'Land of the Rivers of Life,'  
A land like to this, but without sorrows and troubles,  
Where, beside the fruitful 'Tree of Life,'  
We shall inhabit 'Thy mansions of Glory.'"

This may indicate how closely Egyptian religion resembled Christianity; while the famous Negative Confession of Faith shows that the Egyptian conception of ethics was very comprehensive.

From Chinese scriptures, prior to Confucius, may be culled many scraps of sage advice; as, for instance:—

"Be jealously watchful over small acts and words,  
Lest they affect thy character in great matters."

Jainism, which lies at the foundation of many monkish systems, gives the following:—

"No one becomes a *Srāman* merely by tonsure,  
Nor a *Brāhman* by holy words and prayers,  
Nor a *Muni* by living in lone woods or caves.  
Thou must show thy holiness by thy life, by doing justly,  
Loving righteousness, by fulness of knowledge and  
equanimity."

A characteristic of the religion of Zoroaster was the inculcation of purity in thoughts, words, and works. The following is among Major-General Forlong's paraphrases from the Mazdean scriptures of the ancient religion of Persia:—

"Ever and again will our lips repeat and hearts rejoice  
In the *Ashem Vohu* or 'Praise of Righteousness';  
And reiterate the holy *Hurmat, Hukht, and Hurvarst*—  
*Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds.*  
By these only can true Religion and the good man be  
known,  
Not by prayers, worship, rites, and sacrifices."

The *Tao-te-King*, the Bible of the Taoist followers of Laotse, a contemporary of Confucius, is a work no larger than the Gospel of Mark, yet it is full of elevated moral teaching, as witness the following:—

"Show affection and tenderness to all living creatures,  
Especially the helpless widows and orphans;  
Actively rescue those who are in peril;  
Sympathize with the bereaved and afflicted,  
And rejoice when the good man prospereth."

"Be compassionate to errors, and brave against wrongs:  
Return good for evil; truth for insincerity;  
Gentleness for wrath. Seek the good of the evil-doer, and  
Strive for reconciliation, but urge not thine own wrongs,  
Else will there ever remain a grudge behind."

In the Golden Sayings of Pythagoras we find:—

"Sympathize with all, and actively aid the oppressed;  
Thou wilt have thy reward in inward peace and joy.  
True happiness can come unto us in no other way;  
It is the offspring of virtue, sympathy, and brotherly  
kindness."

Among the sentiments of Gotama the Buddha we read:—

"Observe 'the old rule' that soft words and looks dissipate  
anger;  
Return good for evil, justice for injustice,  
Remembering that hatred is only overcome by love;  
That, as evil develops evil, so does good goodness,  
And that righteousness yields happiness unto the doer.  
Seek not thus, however, any personal boon or advantage,  
But only the highest good of all sentient creatures"

From the single little book known as the *Dhammapada* may be culled as choice moral maxims as any to be found within the covers of the Bible. The boasted golden rule, described as the core of Christian morality, was taught by Confucius five hundred years before Christ, and in the generation preceding the Christian era Rabbi Hillel said:—

"Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by,  
And whatsoever thou wouldst not others should  
Do unto thee, do not thou to thy fellows:  
This is the substance of the law and the prophets;  
All the rest is but commentary thereon."

The distinctive feature of Christianity is its exclusiveness. It proclaims that there is no salvation under any other name save that of Christ Jesus. Arising among a people who esteemed themselves God's chosen, it has had this air from the time when Peter addressed the converts as "Elect, according to the pre-knowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit," and called them "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," till the date of our Anglican Articles of Religion, which declare that "Works done

before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God"; and "They also are to be accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he profeseth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved." How different is the cosmopolitanism of the Pagan Stoic, Marcus Aurelius. "The whole world is in a manner a state," says he; "my city and country, as far as I am Antoninus, is Rome; but, so far as I am a man, it is the world. The things, then, which are useful to all citizens are alone useful to me." Thus finely does the Pagan Emperor elaborate the sentence of Terence, *Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

J. M. WHEELER.

### MODERN SCEPTICISM.

It is well that Secularists sometimes specially note the admissions that are frequently being made by professed Christians of the fact that scepticism is rapidly increasing in "Christian England," and that in spite of the great efforts of orthodox believers to check its progress. The recognition of this advance is the more necessary, inasmuch as it affords us an opportunity to correct the misrepresentations which often accompany the aforesaid admissions. The clergy, and others of the Christian fold, when they are driven to acknowledge the spread of doubt as to the truth of the credentials of theology, seek to detract from its influence by false representations as to its nature and results, and by this method they hope to hide from the masses dangers which threaten their faith.

A striking instance of this appears in a sermon preached a few weeks ago at Wesley Chapel, Higher Tranmere, by the Rev. T. Ogden. His subject was "Modern Scepticism," and a long report of the sermon was printed in a supplement to the *Birkenhead News*, dated January 22. The rev. gentleman commenced by saying: "I think we should all be agreed to this, that scepticism is exceedingly prevalent at the present time. . . . Looking upon the ocean of human thought as far as the eye can reach, we can in no way discover a place of calm. Most of the signs are of a very ominous nature. This general upheaval of moving thought is seen, both among the educated and the uneducated portions of society, in a wide-spread scepticism. It has shaken the confidence of many in the faith that once was delivered unto the saints—it has impressed others with a feeling that the old landmarks of theology have been forever taken away, and the very doctrines upon which the whole Christian fabric is resting have been threatened with very great danger. Now this prevalence of doubt, and of unbelief, and of scepticism, makes it necessary that intelligent Christian people should examine the articles of their faith, and the basis upon which that faith rests." There is much truth in these statements, but how does it affect the Christian boast, "that the increasing power of the religion of Christ is destroying modern infidelity"? Those who indulge in this false exultation appear to forget that the very fact of the continual increase of scepticism is a clear proof that Christianity is impotent to stop its advancement. Let the public defenders of "faith in Christ" bear in mind, when they parade the fallacy that "Secularism is declining," that in proportion to the progress of all forms of doubt as to alleged orthodox verities, the practical belief in Secularism extends. That this is so will be seen by those who know that it is an essential principle in Secular philosophy to endeavor to destroy the adhesion to orthodoxy, and to vindicate the right of every person to reject the belief in any or all the religions of the world, if he cannot honestly endorse their pretensions. Secularism claims mental freedom for all, while faith in theology too often implies intellectual bondage; and as scepticism tends to secure mental emancipation, its progress is that of Secularism also.

The advice given by the rev. gentleman to his co-religionists, to "examine the articles of their faith and the basis upon which that faith rests," is good; but is it likely to be acted upon? Judging from experience of the past and a knowledge of the present, we think not. The majority of those who profess Christianity have seldom examined the nature and basis of their faith. Either

through lack of ability, time, or inclination, they have accepted their religion on trust. It is this indifference which, in all the ages of Christianity, has invested the priests with so much power over the minds of their unfortunate victims. This explains why these "servants of the Lord" have opposed secular education and discouraged freedom of thought. It is much the same to-day, for thousands go to church as a matter of form, simply to be thought in the fashion. To them it is easier to accept without question than to investigate. They listen to sermons as a matter of habit, but, as to the truth of what is said, they seem neither to know nor care. One day's devotion is thought sufficient to compensate for six days' neglect. Even among the clergy, few of them have studied what is supposed to be the evidence of that which they preach. Many of them are afraid to examine, lest their faith should be disturbed. We trust, however, that with the further advancement of Freethought it will be more and more seen that Volney was correct when he said: "To believe without evidence and demonstration is an act of ignorance and folly."

The rev. gentleman next spoke thus: "The scepticism of the last century was blatant and coarse and irreverent and repulsive. The scepticism of to-day is earnest and respectful, and has a very high regard for what is called morality. Some of the leaders of modern sceptical thought have a passion for what is called morality, and some of them have an exceedingly high regard for the character and for the teachings of Jesus himself. To denounce these people, who hold sceptical views, at the present time, as being utterly regardless with respect to morality is unjust to them, and is to show a profound ignorance of their own writings." Having quoted from the works of Huxley and John Stuart Mill to show that they never tried "to set aside the obligations of morality," he said: "These men may differ from ourselves with regard to the foundations of morality, but because they differ from us on a point like that we are not justified in saying that they are regardless of morality." This tribute to the morality of modern sceptics is creditable to his fairness and regard for truth. The fact of its being strictly correct does not render his candor less commendable, for there are too many occupiers of pulpits who, when dealing with unbelievers, resort more to reckless denunciation than adherence to veracity of statement. Still, we shall discover presently that the Rev. Mr. Ogden is rather rash in his allegations when he claims that Christianity is superior to scepticism in aiding social progress. Even in the above extract from his sermon he offers no proof of his charge that "the scepticism of the last century was blatant and coarse and irreverent and repulsive." In our opinion, Bentham, Helvetius, Holbach, Hutton, and Thomas Paine were among the leading sceptics of that century, and where in their writings can be found anything that is "blatant, coarse, irreverent, and repulsive"? This allegation of the rev. gentleman is as false as it is unjust to the memories of men who doubtless revolted at the use of the "blatant, coarse, irreverent, and repulsive" language to be found to-day in portions of the Christian's Bible. In that book we find much that is so obscene, couched in language so disgusting, that no decent man would dare to read it to his own family or to a public audience; and this, be it remembered, in writings said to be inspired by God for the "edification" of all people in all ages. No doubt the principal writers of the present time are more refined and choice in their phraseology than were many of their predecessors; but this applies equally to the exponents of Christianity, and certainly does not justify the rev. gentleman's imputations against the sceptics of the last century.

Apart from this last point, there is but little in the sermon up to now that sceptics would object to. When, however, the rev. gentleman begins to speak of the influence of Christianity and the results of scepticism, he, like most Christian ministers, sees "through a glass darkly," and therefore indulges in some most extraordinary perversions. Preachers, as a rule, are in the habit, when in the pulpit, of making "the wish father to the thought," and then taking for granted that their emotional ideas represent the truth of the subject under their consideration. The Rev. T. Ogden is no exception to orthodox preachers in general, as we hope to show in our article next week.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

### CONCEPTIONS OF DEITY.

THE effect of the word of God upon man has been chiefly to create feelings of fear and actions of folly and cruelty. Man stands before the Unknown with awe and dread. That is instinctive, because the result of experience. The savage looks upon the blackness of night with apprehension. His eyes, which in the light foretell him of danger, cannot pierce it, and a wild beast or an enemy may spring upon him defenceless. The rain wets him, the cold pinches him, the storm breaks great branches from the trees, and hurls them upon him; even the usually kindly sun has times of fierce, raging heat; every force of nature which touches him has its unkindness and cruelty, and as long as he does not understand these forces he fears them, dreading injury. It seems to man at times as if the forces of nature were hostile, and were trying to kill him. In the end they do kill him. That is one side of it. The other side is that nature keeps him alive and gives him forces to fight with, and that using them he enjoys the fight at times, and wins on the whole, and keeps winning.

But when the savage makes a god, his first god, his father's ghost, as he does not know much about it, for he cannot see it, and does not know just where it is, or what it is doing, he is rather afraid of it. He offers it food and clothing, and a fire, and anything else that he thinks it needs—through what feeling? Affection? Partly, no doubt; but affection quickly fades, and the offerings are continued much more through fear, for the ghost may injure him. His imagination endows the creation of his imagination with extraordinary powers. It is unseen, like the wind; but the wind is strong. The ghost may keep the deer from his arrow, or the fish from his hook, or breathe hot fever on him, or stir up his enemies to attack him. His general state of mind is fear lest he offend it.

Much more, if it be a chief ghost, of yet greater power—a lord of battles, like Jehovah, very jealous and merciless to his enemies—can the prevailing feeling with which he is regarded be anything but fear?

And the usual feeling towards the Christian God has not been greatly different. Jesus taught that he was a god of love, but the Augustinian and Calvinistic theology did not leave much of that quality in him. The doctrine of predestination, that God selected a few individuals for eternal happiness (though rather a starved and uncomfortable sort of happiness to our notion) and condemned the rest of the world to eternal torture in flame, could not but excite the direst apprehension, and we must not forget that it was Jesus who taught that his God of love would do this very thing; that he would separate the sheep from the goats, and that the latter would depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Is not the feeling of Christians about their God to-day chiefly one of fear? Does not the Christian mother teach her child that if it does wrong God will be displeased and make it sick, or even kill it? And the child, if it be at all sensitive or imaginative, will look up at the sky, where it is told that God lives, a great crushing something which seems all around it, and makes its heart beat and its breath flutter; or an eye seems to be looking sternly from the darkness, and the child hides its head to shut it out.

And, when older, when men and women, it is the sentiment of fear that is chiefly appealed to, to induce us to become disciples of this God, to join his Church. Sam Jones threatens Protestants with hell fire, fresh and hot, and plenty of it, and a creeping forever through chambers of darkness, and other fictions of his fertile brain; and the Catholic Church never lets purgatory and hell out of the sight of its members, and ever presents itself as the representative of God, to threaten or punish, grant or withhold forgiveness, and determine salvation. The personal qualities of the Hebrew Jehovah still cling to the Christian God. He is jealous and angry, and must be praised and prayed to constantly, or ill will come of it. Theologians lay it down learnedly and philosophically in their articles that God has "neither body, parts, nor passions"; but they constantly contradict that conception in the pulpit, where God has a great deal of passion and mental qualities (which are a part of the body) that are by no means creditable.

This feeling of fear with which man has usually regarded his God has led him constantly into foolish, pitiful, cruel,

and useless acts. Can anything be more useless and absurd than to offer food and clothes to a ghost, an airy spirit from the fancy wrought? Or blood, or incense, or oil and wine to a God who can have no senses, and cannot eat or taste, or do anything with these uselessly-wasted things?

And what infinite cruelties have been committed in the name of God! Rivers of human blood have flowed around altars, bodies have been tortured with every art that ingenuity could devise, minds have been kept upon the rack of uncertainty and apprehension for years, lives have been wasted in useless penances and asceticism; the whole human family has suffered agonies untold because of this imaginary creature—God. If to-day the name were rejected from the vocabulary of nations, the name and the idea, and the religious beliefs consequent upon it, it would confer an incalculable benefit on mankind. If man were compelled to endure for the future what he has endured because of this name in the past, and is still suffering to-day, it would be a sad outlook for the world.

It is said that Edgar Saltus, the author, being asked lately, "What is your favorite character in fiction?" replied, "God." The witticism may seem audacious, but it strikes straight at the heart of a great imposition. The history of the word God shows that the thing signified by it has been a gigantic sham. This idol of the imagination has lacked life quite as much as idols of wood or stone. He does not sit in the heavens, he does not punish men now or hereafter, he does not want to be praised or prayed to. You need not be afraid of him; for there is no such He. When you try to express the infinite in any likeness to humanity, bodily or mental, you are trying to put the universe into a pint bottle. You are attempting an impossibility. If man will rid himself of this nightmare God which has oppressed him, he will breathe more freely, see more clearly, think more calmly, and act more reasonably.

HERBERT MILLER.

### GIVING TO GOD.

WE received a letter the other day asking us how much we were going to give to God in the coming year. If God is in want, we are willing to chip in to relieve the divine distress; but we wish to have proof of his poverty before we make any contribution. This begging for God is the most dishonest business carried on in the world to-day. Why does not a minister ask assistance for himself, or for the Church he is working for, in his own name, like a man?

We are willing to help a suffering human being, but why God is an object of our charity we cannot comprehend. Men have been asked to give something to God, when the priest was waiting to carry home the money in his pocket.

Now, we do not believe in giving a cent to God, nor in giving a cent to those who ask us to give money to God, for this reason—that God does not need assistance, and that most of the objects for which charity, in the name of God, is solicited are better dead than alive. A church to-day is a fraud on society, an organization which lives by begging for God—which is no better than getting money under false pretences. We have men enough that need help, women and children sick, ragged, and hungry, that should be made well, clothed, and fed, before anything is given to God. A Church for God is not as necessary as a home for suffering human beings. It has not yet been shown that the world needs a hospital for souls.

God wants too much of man. He demands to be supported in a manner that is extravagant. This world ought to have a poorer God until it gets wise enough to get along without any. We are suspicious of all enterprises founded upon, or run in, the divine name; and we are suspicious of all men who hold out their hands to receive gifts for God.

Come, my pulpit-friends, be honest, *be honest*. Don't beg in God's name any more. Stand up before men, and make your appeal honestly. You are really doing a great deal in the world that is good, but it need not be done in the name of God. If you will turn your churches into schools, into libraries, into homes for the aged, and hospitals for the sick and infirm, we will aid you all in our power. Our motto is: All we can spare for man, not a cent for God.

—*Boston Investigator.*

## ACID DROPS.

MR. JOHN MORLEY is a Freethinker, but a timid one. A friend of ours, who knew him well in his old constituency at Newcastle, said that he "had the theory of courage." This was a terrible sarcasm, but the worst of it was that it hit very near the bull's-eye. No one ever knew John Morley to do a bold thing, and no one ever will, now that he has sunk into a tame and correct politician, wearing the livery of one of the two great parties who carry on the see-saw of government in this country.

Some of us recollect the ridiculous attitude taken up by Mr. Morley when Bradlaugh introduced his Oaths Bill. They say that few animals are so dangerous as an infuriated sheep, and Mr. Morley on that occasion seemed to illustrate the saying. He actually set himself up as a better Freethinker than Bradlaugh, whom he taunted with compromising his principles. Mr. Morley never brought in a Bill himself to allow unbelievers to affirm instead of swearing, and when Bradlaugh did Mr. Morley quarrelled with the clause which gave the Bill its only chance of passing. It was provided in that Bill that all citizens, on every occasion when an oath was required, should be permitted to affirm on declaring that they had no religious belief, or that the taking of an oath was against their religious belief. Thereupon it suited Mr. Morley to play the part of a perfect St. Just. He affected a dislike, if not a disdain, of this legal inquisition into a man's opinions—just as though Bradlaugh were initiating such an inquisition, instead of amending the old law which inflicted the inquisition and injustice too. No doubt Mr. Morley felt it would be rather awkward for *him* to have to make a plain declaration if he ever wanted to affirm, and we dare say it was this feeling that gave edge to his pharisaic protest against Bradlaugh's method.

Some time before that, when Mr. Foote was imprisoned for "blasphemy," and a memorial to the Home Secretary was being prepared in favor of his immediate release, Mr. Morley was asked to give his signature. His first question to the gentleman who called on him was characteristic. "Who has signed?" he asked. At that moment the memorial was very young, and Mr. Morley hesitated to sign it. He was not asked again. Other men were braver. Herbert Spencer and Professor Huxley signed the memorial straight away. They did not stop to inquire whether they would be supported by a crowd in an act of justice and common sense.

Well (it may be asked), why do you rake all this up at this time of day? Our reply is that Mr. Morley has invited us to do so. In his recent address, at the opening of the Passmore Edwards Settlement, in London, Mr. Morley offered, as is now his wont, his pinch of incense on the altar of the great Bumble. "We all know," he said, "that it is a drawback to many modern ideals that they rest on materialism and a soulless secularism." This is Mr. Morley's backhanded way of striking at men who are braver and more outspoken than himself. He takes good care never to make a plain statement of his own religious (or irreligious) opinions. Like the lady in *Don Juan*, who was asked what were the duties of a Cavalier Servente, he says: "I beseech you to suppose them." Of course he may think, or imagine, that he has good reason for this reticence, though it sits very awkwardly on the author of the essay, *On Compromise*. But why hit out at others who practise no concealment? Why sneer at "materialism" when you are a materialist yourself under the rose—that is, in the proper, philosophical meaning of the term? And why sneer at "soulless secularism" when you are a Secularist yourself, in the sense that human interests in this world claim your whole attention?

"Soulless secularism" is a phrase calculated to insult and injure. Mr. Morley no more believes in a metaphysical "soul" than we do. By "soulless," therefore, he must mean abject, grovelling, confined to the bodily appetites, and negligent of reason and conscience. Now in this sense secularism is not "soulless"—and Mr. Morley knows it. Let him say so, if he dares, in the presence of George Jacob Holyoake. Across the Atlantic there is a great Secularist, Robert G. Ingersoll, in whom there is more "soul"—in the natural, poetic sense of the word—than there is room for in Mr. Morley's constitution.

Why, then, did Mr. Morley use this insulting expression? The truth is that the Passmore Edwards Settlement, initiated by Mrs. Humphrey Ward, is really a Unitarian enterprise. The promoters got £12,000 from Mr. Passmore Edwards, which made their task easy; in fact, they have only raised £4,500 themselves. Now the Unitarians have never loved the Secularists, partly because they carry Unitarian principles with regard to Jesus Christ and the Bible to a logical issue; and we suppose the truth is that

Mr. Morley was just infected with the Unitarian atmosphere of the Settlement. All that remains for him to do is to occasionally occupy a Unitarian pulpit.

"General" Booth has interviewed President McKinley at the White House. They got on wonderfully well together. The President expressed great sympathy with the "General's" movement, and probably this will be worth a pile of dollars in the shape of subscriptions. American society is quite as rotten as British society, and there is work for Booth in both countries; namely, to play with the "residuum" on the pretence of reforming them, and thus save society the trouble of investigating the causes of its social wreckage.

Zola's eloquent letter to the French people, published by Fasquelle at Paris, points out that all those wild exclamations about "the honor of the army" are absurd in view of the fact that, under the conscription, the army is really the nation. What is meant at bottom is that certain high officers are above criticism, and this is merely an acclamation of the sabre. Zola says that this blatant ovation to the chiefs of the army is an awakening of the latent disease of Boulangism. "Beware," cries Zola, "or you will fall under a dictatorship." Nor is this all. There is another grave danger. "You are going to the Church," Zola says; "you are returning to the past, to that past of intolerance and theocracy that the most illustrious of your children have combated, and thought they had killed, giving to the task their intelligence and their blood. At present the tactics of anti-Semitism are very simple. It was in vain that Catholicism strove to influence the people, creating workmen's circles, multiplying pilgrimages, striving to reconquer France, and to prostrate her at the foot of its altars. The thing was settled, the churches remained deserted, the people would not believe. But circumstances arose that presented an opportunity for filling the people with the fever of anti-Semitism. They were poisoned with that fanaticism, and hurled into the streets, crying, 'Down with the Jews! Death to the Jews!' What a triumph if one could let loose a religious war! Certainly, the people still refuse to believe; but is it not the beginning of faith to resume the intolerance of the Middle Ages, to burn the Jews in the public squares? Behold, then, the poison found; and when the French people are turned into fanatics and butchers, when generosity is torn from their hearts, together with love of the rights of man, so hardly conquered—no doubt God will do the rest."

Zola is surrounded in this campaign by Freethinkers. Clemenceau, for instance, writes: "They have massacred at Algiers in honor of the God of Drumont. To-morrow, perhaps, there will be slaughter in Paris for his greater glory. The lads of the Catholic clubs have provided themselves with loaded sticks, and are ready to march courageously behind bands paid by syndicates of agitators. The Palace of Law is invaded. In the hall of judgment one hears only the howlings of the army of Jesuits who call for their victims."

Clemenceau's expression, "the God of Drumont," needs explanation. Drumont is the leader of the anti-Semitic movement in France. He is a Catholic, and has doubtless a good understanding with the Church. He proposes that a law should be passed depriving Jews of the common rights of citizenship. The Jews, in short, should be driven out from France; and Drumont hopes they will leave of their own free will to avoid the necessity of expulsion. Max Nordau, a Freethinking Jew, declares that the situation in France is alarming. "We are marching," he says, "towards a new St. Bartholomew's Eve, to a massacre which will only be limited by the number of Jews whom the Catholics can find to knock on the head." Being asked whether he seriously charged the Catholic Church with being at the bottom of this vile agitation, Max Nordau replied, "Most seriously."

Dr. Haham Gaster has been lecturing on the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah. He stated that what the Jews expected of the Messiah was simply that he should be a descendant of David, a powerful warrior, wise and god-fearing, who should take as his mission the gathering in of the outcasts of Israel, leading them to the Holy Land, re-establishing their State, and re-building their Temple. No miracles were expected. Hence, it was not strange that learned Rabbis like Akiba endorsed the pretensions of a warrior like Bar Kochba, who threatened to throw off the yoke of the oppressor, and who seems to have achieved the independence of the Jews for a period of three years (132-135 A.C.). Some sixty Roman legions had to be brought to quell the revolt. This was something like a Messiah, but his non-success showed he was not the genuine article.

In Dr. Gaster's view, the Bar-Kochba war brought about the break between Jews and Judæo-Christians. The latter refused to join in the revolt against the Romans, and naturally tended rather in a Pagan direction.

The *Church Review* says that one of the greatest perils of our reading age is that of dangerous books. "It is sad to observe learned and apparently pious ecclesiastics writing and committing to the press works which are of a dangerous, unwholesome, and unsettling character." It scrupulously refrains from mentioning these unholy works—we suppose the mild admissions of Farrar, Cheyne, and Driver are referred to—but it pats on the back the *Sorrows of Satan*, which, though "manifestly too bold, yet might, to some, act as a solemn warning, and frighten people into being good." The last phrase gives the Church theory in a nutshell.

Marie Corelli's novels sell "like anything," and Hall Caine has made quite a fortune out of his pious and trashy novel, *The Christian*. Herbert Spencer, however, being a great thinker, has found it very difficult to get purchasers for his books. Writing to the *Times* recently, he said: "During the first twelve years of my literary life every one of my books failed to pay for its paper, print, and advertisements, and for many years after failed to pay my small living expenses—every one of them made me the poorer." All the same, he had to send gratis copies to the national libraries. They were demanded by a nation of forty millions, Mr. Spencer says, from the impoverished brain-worker.

No publisher would look at Mr. Spencer's first book. He issued *Social Statics* at his own cost, and it took fourteen years to sell the edition of 750 copies. He published the *Principles of Psychology* in the same way; there were 750 copies, and it took twelve years and a half to sell 650 of them. It took ten years and a half to sell 500 copies of his *Essays*. In fifteen years he lost £1,200. The tide turned at last, but it took twenty-four years to make things level. And this is the man whom Henry George, in an evil moment, accused of advocating opinions for sinister motives!

The correspondent of the *Morning Post* in Rome writes, in its issue of February 9: "Following close on the Government Circular to the Syndics of Italy pressing them to carry out the existing laws for the protection of animals, the *Voce della Verità*, the recognised organ of the Papacy in Rome, has published an article which is simply a disgrace to the religion it professes to uphold. 'Infidels, Protestants, and Freemasons' are the only persons who have a care for animals, this article states, and it urges that as animals are only given for our use and our pleasure, and as they are not Christians and do not possess souls, they are not entitled to the exaggerated consideration which foreigners demand for them."

Some time ago this correspondent pointed out that the priests were mainly responsible for the indifference to animal suffering which exists through the length and breadth of Italy, and now the particular organ of the priesthood gives undeniable proof of his contention. In this instance the Government of Italy is deserving of every sympathy. They have done what they could, frankly stating in this last Circular to the Syndics that the treatment of animals in Italy is exciting attention abroad to the detriment of the Italian people; and the Vatican organ replies with an article that is practically a commendation to the people to continue in their cruelty in the name of religion.

Religious people have a curious way of defending themselves. For instance, if you say the Bible is often obscene, you may be prosecuted and imprisoned for bringing that holy book into disbelief and contempt. If you quote some of the obscene texts to prove your case, the Christians charge you with obscenity, while swearing that the holy book itself is perfectly clean from cover to cover. In much the same way, the English Catholics, who are no longer under a cloud, deal with objections to their institution of the confessional. Say that priests put filthy questions to female penitents, and they call you an infamous libeller; and if you quote from manuals published for the use of priests, they call upon the authorities to proceed against you for circulating indecent literature. This course has just been taken in the case of the ex-monk, Joseph Slattery, and his wife, who are going about the country giving their experiences as priest and nun. Both have been charged at the Edinburgh police-court with offering for sale an obscene volume entitled *The Devil's Prayer Book; or, Roman Catholic Theology in Latin and English*. The case was adjourned in order that the defendants might destroy every copy of the book in their possession, although it was not written by themselves, but consisted of extracts from the published works of accredited Catholic theologians. Slattery's giving such an undertaking shows that he has little in him of the spirit of martyrdom.

Father Coussette, of the Society of Jesus, has the priests' notion of his office as the actual substitute for God on earth.

He has written a book entitled *The Mauresa of the Priest* (Mauresa is the cave in which Loyola is said to have thought out his plan for the Society of Jesus), which has already seen seven editions. He says: "Between God in heaven and man upon earth stands the priest, who, being both God and man, combines both natures and forms the connecting link.....I, as priest, do not follow in rank the Cherubim and Seraphim in the administration of the universe I stand high above them, for they are God's servants. We, however, are God's coadjutors.....I fulfil three exalted functions towards the God of our altars: I summon Him to earth, I give Him to man, I guard Him." He might have said the priest is higher than God, for he has him in custody and makes him what he likes. The priest's ideal is well expressed in the old lines:—

Your God I hold him in my hand;  
Your wife I have her at my feet.

The sacerdotal party are everywhere urging, especially on young girls, the duty of confession. They know there is nothing which more assures the power of the priest. Let the penitent hand over will, conscience, and the direction of life to the priest, and she becomes his slave, and may, if necessary, be estranged from her own family. We have heard that *The Priest in Absolution* is both in print and in use among the Romanisers of the Church of England.

Father Beauclerk has issued a long and pious appeal against the proposal to commercialize St. Winefride's Well. He denies that the water has any natural merits; the cures wrought there are all due to the "goodness and favor of God." It will be an act of sacrilege to lease the Holy Well to Mr. Atherton for bottling purposes. Father Beauclerk protests against it "in the name of common Christianity"—very common, we should say, and calls upon "glorious Saint Winefride" to "defend her own." As she has been dead a long time, and perhaps never lived at all, she will take a lot of calling.

The Rev. Victor Bandot, in an account of *A Holiday in Palestine*, says that at Cana the only water, called a fountain, is a mere hole in the ground, which presents a sordid appearance. When he was passing a shepherd was engaged in washing a sheep there, who protested against ablutions. He was not tempted to taste if the water had any peculiar properties.

Spiritists boast a deal of the scientific character of some of their converts. Yet it is a common observation that a man of science, himself honest, and suspecting nothing but honesty, can be easily duped, especially by a woman. Florrie Cook [Mrs. Corner], who convinced Professor Crookes of spirit return, was caught by a common person when impersonating a spirit. Mme. Blavatsky took in a host of serious people. The most famous mejum of our time, Eusapia Palladino, had her occult power certified by Professor Richet and Professor Oliver Lodge; but Dr. Hodgson, the exposé of Blavatsky, discovered a flaw in their experiments—they did not secure both her hands. When this was done the phenomena were no longer forthcoming, and Professor Lodge and Mr. Andrew Lang, who brought her to England, became the laughing-stock of clever conjurers like Mr. Maskelyne.

The writer of "Our Handbook" in the *Referee* went to see and hear Mrs. Besant at the Spiritualists' meeting the other Sunday evening at St. James's Hall. Her wonderful white silk robe, with its cunning sacerdotal cut, was duly noticed: but the writer allows that something histrionic in the way of costume is necessary to most "movements." What struck him most was Mrs. Besant's eye—not the right one, or the left one, but both together. "It is the eye," he says, "of a prophetess, a mystic, a seer of visions. There is a far-away look in it that warns the sceptic how vain it would be to attempt argument with its owner. She would not hear an adverse argument, or, hearing, would not understand. She lives in a mental world of her own." What the writer did not like was Mrs. Besant's smile. "It is lacking," he says, "in geniality, in sincerity—or so it seems to me. It is a platform smile, which, having served its purpose, fades out of the face as suddenly as the light of a candle is extinguished." There is truth in this, but the explanation is that Mrs. Besant has no sense of humor—otherwise she would not wear magical rings and talk about hidden Mahatmas.

*Psyche* is the name of a new journal "devoted to the mysteries of the soul." It is started in order that "hungering humanity may be filled"—not with good victuals, but—"with spiritual knowledge"—which we take to be about as nourishing as the east wind. "For 2s. 6d.," the editor says, "we will send *Psyche* post free for twelve months to any part of the United Kingdom. We know you can and will assist us, won't you?" That half-crown is the great thing, after all. Give the noble editor solid coin of the realm, and he will tell you all he knows

about "the angel world." A very good trade—for the noble editor.

A number of German pietists are scattered through Palestine, who have gone there because they believe that Jesus Christ will make a personal descent and set up the millennium in that country. They have an organ published at Jerusalem, entitled *Warte des Temples*.

The British officers who went to Bendi obtained prestige by the aid of soda-water bottles. A man was employed who cursed the natives if any harm befell the white men. At the critical moment, when he had exhausted his list of curses, he leapt into the ring and opened the bottle, the cork going off with a loud report. Ridiculous as it may seem, the effect was instantaneous. The natives with one accord—chiefs, women, and children—straightway fled. The people were profoundly impressed with what they called "the white man's God in the bottle." During the whole journey the letting-off of soda-water corks always had the desired effect of impressing upon the people the power of the white man's juju.

A sun-spot was observed in Florida by a colored preacher, who declared it was a sign of the approaching end of the world. A revival set in, the negroes gathering in their chapels and confessing their sins. One rather unexpected result has been the clearing up of several mysterious crimes, in one case three negroes confessing to a murder committed about a year ago and since unexplained. The panic is said to recall to aged men the fright that prevailed over the entire South on the memorable night when "the stars fell."

We claim to have abolished slavery, but the system of indenturing the Bechuanas in South Africa and the Kanakas in Westralia is a close approximation. The Bishop of Perth is reported as saying: "This is only a form of slavery, as the natives, for the most part, do not know what it means, and, for the rest, do not dare to refuse to sign the agreement. As soon as a man is indentured he is absolutely under the power of his master, and, just as some masters treat their animals well and others treat them badly, so is the treatment of the natives."

There can be no question that this system of indenturing is, in the hands of an unscrupulous master, neither more nor less than slavery, and slavery, whether called such or by a name to which less prejudice is attached, always imparts a moral twist to the public conscience concerning the crime of murder. This is shown by the fact that eighteen months ago a man named Thompson was tried at Geraldton, W.A., for flogging a native to death. The circumstances were quite as revolting as in the Anderson case. The flogging was admitted, but the man got off, only one of the jury being in favor of conviction.

Gin and Gospel are the chief imports into Congo in return for rubber and ivory derived therefrom. Sir Charles Dilke stated that the new railway carried nothing up but gin. In our own West Africa colonies the total revenue raised was £595,000, and of this no less than £336,000 was derived from the duty on spirits.

Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, lecturing at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, on the Hawaiian question, said that the missionaries found 130,000 people there, and that they now report only 34,000. The sons of the first missionaries report that the Hawaiians are a filthy, debased, and licentious race, unfit to be trusted with their government, but must be kept under control by the congregational missionaries. This is an admission of how little a generation of Christianity has done for them.

Since the missionaries entered the Sandwich Islands, all the lands except 27,000 acres have been divided between the kings and the missionaries and their families; the missionaries appropriating four-fifths of all the property of the Islands, which now they want to annex to the United States.

The natives wanted twenty-five cents a day to work on the lands the missionaries had robbed them of, which was refused them, and these religious robbers imported Chinese and some of the mongrel races to work the sugar plantations, and reduced the natives to abject poverty and starvation. With the importation of the scum of the human race, leprosy, before unknown there, became common and increased rapidly.

On leaving Madagascar, the Anglican Bishop of Antananarivo informed his flock that, after all his labors, the men were greater thieves than ever, and the women were more immoral.

The Gourkhas, who are fighting so "gallantly" for our Indian Empire, seem to be pretty thorough savages when

on the warpath. A writer in the *Naval and Military Magazine* relates the following sweet incident: "A terribly wounded Pathan unfortunately passed not far from a couple of Gourkhas, who, chatting pleasantly together, were following in rear of the force. He seemed at first to have got by unnoticed, when one of the Gourkhas, with much the air of a man who has dropped his pocket-handkerchief, stopped suddenly and retraced his steps. Passing in front of the wounded man, he took his beard gently in his left hand, and, raising the patient's chin, with a swift drawing cut he severed his head from his body. He then rejoined his companion, taking up the conversation at the point at which it had been interrupted. Neither then, nor at any future time, did either make any allusion to such a trifling event."

Lord Chatham thundered against the employment of Red Indians in war with the Colonists of North America. But perhaps all is fair against the Afridis. And then, you know, all sorts of things have to be done to maintain an empire. So perhaps Christian England should give three-times-three for the gallant Gourkhas.

Last year, in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee, a special fund was got up for the poor clericals with the title of the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund. The innocent curates thought, not unnaturally, that, as their distress was used as a means of raising funds, they were going to participate in the benefit. But they reckoned without their hosts. The Rev. S. W. Thackeray, LL.D., the secretary of the Curates' Society, applied to Prebendary Covington, hon. sec. of the London Branch of the Q.V.C.F., and received a very polite response, informing him that "the Society is now incorporated by Royal Charter, 1897. The Charter directs that its funds shall be expended in increasing the value of benefices. The question, therefore, of appropriating any portion of the general fund to the unbeneficed clergy cannot now be raised."

The subscribers to the fund now know—probably for the first time—that their subscriptions will go to augment the incomes of those who are already beneficed, and that the poor and comparatively ill-paid curates, who do the hardest work, are to have no share in the benefit. At the same time, Prebendary Covington is now careful to say: "The Fund can receive sums specially allocated for the benefit of the unbeneficed clergy"—that is to say, is prepared to receive cash irrespective of its charter.

What better object-lesson could people have of the real inwardness of the Church than this? Verily, its motto is: "To him that hath shall be given." The laborer is worthy of his hire, only the Archbishop of Canterbury is worth a thousand times as much as the curates in his diocese. When money is wanted for the poor clergy there is no word of reducing the bloated stipends of the dignitaries of the Church, but only of getting laymen to subscribe, and when they do subscribe the money is appropriated for those already beneficed.

The Church defenders say that, to attract able men, it is necessary to have big prizes with large salaries and high social positions. This is an admission that the Church is simply a money-making profession, instead of a divine institution, enjoining "Lay not up treasure on earth." But, as a matter of fact, the real workers in the Church—the poor curates—have no more chance of getting the big prizes than a common soldier has of being Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

Old curates complain not only that all kinds of worthless incompetents pass over their heads, but that when they show signs of age they are got rid of, while elderly incumbents remain on with the loaves and fishes, however infirm.

The dear clergy are so hard worked and harassed. Yet they contrive to live longer than any other section of the community. In the *Church Times* obituary of eight names the five eldest reached the great ages respectively of ninety-six, ninety-five, ninety, eighty-five, and eighty-two, and the three youngest were respectively fifty-three, sixty-seven, and sixty-eight. The total of all ages given, 636, gives an average of exactly seventy-nine and a half years each. Jesus Christ was quite a boy compared with his modern expounders.

There is a private publication known as *The Church Patronage Gazette*, containing a list of parishes with the cure of souls open for sale in England. Some of them have choice inducements—good hunting, fine scenery, salubrious climate, and small population. These are great inducements. Total population, three hundred, is a feature of one; but there was even a more valuable living with a population of but 113. The buyers and sellers at the Temple were performing useful functions compared with the traffickers in livings in the Church of England.

Then in the Church papers one sees such advertisements as the following: "Exchange.—County living. Population three hundred. Healthy, bracing situation. Good church, vicarage, garden, and schools. All close together. Income £200, secure. Two miles from station; about one hour from London. Wanted larger parish and more income. Oxford diocese preferred.—Address Q. 680, *Church Times* Office." The parishioners are to be handed over just like coals.

"Dean Kitchin gains £1,000 a year by the death of Dean Lake." This is the first line from a paragraph in a London evening paper. We congratulate the Dean who gains, and don't know what to say about the Dean who is dead. But just fancy one man gaining £1,000 a year by the death of another in a Church of Christ preaching the gospel of "Blessed be ye poor."

In the case of the Field Lane Boys' Home, where Catholics, Anglicans, and Nonconformists have been quarrelling for some time as to what dose of religious education shall be given to the poor boys, the Education Department have decided that such training shall be reduced to an undenominational minimum. If this were strictly carried out, it would form a valuable lesson; but what passes as undenominational to the Christian is quite sectarian to the Secularist.

Dean Gregory calls attention to the fact that since the passing of the Elementary Education Act (1890) 972 Church schools, containing about 1,000 departments, and affording accommodation for not less than 130,000 children, and upon the erection of which about a million of money voluntarily contributed by Church people must have been expended, have been transferred to school boards. The Dean has the cheek to demand that such schools shall be restored to the Church.

The *Free Society*, of San Francisco, says: "The pulpit-pounders of California are springing, or trying to spring, a scare upon the people of the state, by stating that two-thirds of the school children of California are growing up in ignorance of 'Bible history.' They express their belief that if they can only befuddle the parents into swallowing their Bible fables as good secular history, the parents will turn wolfish parsons loose among the flocks of school children, to poison their minds and deaden their brains with the superstitions of the Bible. It is to be hoped the parents are knowingly 'neglecting the instruction of their children in Bible history.'"

The Church schools in London are losing ground. Had they kept up with the increase of population, they would have had an increase of 1,622 scholars last year. Instead of that, there was a decrease of 654. Of course it will take a long time to empty them at this rate; still, it is something to know that they *are* emptying.

In the course of an interesting sketch on some of the first Archbishops of Canterbury, a writer in the *Windsor Magazine* quotes an old account which shows how much it cost to burn a heretic three centuries ago and more. "To defy the authority of the Church," he says, "meant in those days certain excommunication, which, in turn, entailed that the culprit should be dealt with by the laws of the State." What this course implied may be realized in the following significant extract which appears in the municipal records of Canterbury, dated 1595: "For the expenses of burning a heretic from London, 14s. 8d.; for 1½ load of wood to burn him, 2s.; for gunpowder, 1d.; a stake and staple, 8d.; total, 17s. 5d."

What an idea a man must have of God's leisure, or his own importance, to spend three quarters of an hour at the celestial telephone! This extraordinary feat was recently accomplished in Scotland. It could hardly have been done anywhere else. The assistant minister of St. John's Church, Dundee, which his name is Nasmyth, having to offer prayer before Dr. Grant's sermon, on Sunday, February 6, began to address the Lord at twenty minutes past eleven—of course in the morning—and kept it up till five minutes past twelve. Some worshippers left the church, and others engaged in conversation, but they were not able to spoil Mr. Nasmyth's innings. It will be a good while, we imagine, before the Lord wants to hear any more from Dundee.

W. H. Quilliam, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, has been lecturing on "Christianity: A Failure." From the report in the *Crescent* we see that the sheikh did not mince matters. He pointed out how the practice of Christendom was in flagrant opposition to its professions, and concluded by saying: "Drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution flourished like a green bay tree in Christian countries. A tree was known by its fruits, and, judging Christianity by its fruits, it was a perfect upas-tree, and the sooner it was eradicated root and branch the better for the world in general."

Archdeacon Johnson, of Nyassa, complains that young men are more ready to join the police force of Rhodesia than to serve the cause of Christ as missionaries.

It is very characteristic of the land of the Almighty Dollar that they have now a "millionaire evangelist," one W. P. Hall, whose portrait is given in the *New York Journal*, and who, it is said, "equals Moody." We wonder what Jesus Christ would have thought of a millionaire evangelist.

Twelve women, three children, and five men were crushed to death by the collapse of the women's gallery in a synagogue at Edzienciol, in the Government of Grodno, Poland.

The plague is reported as spreading in the Punjab, where eight villagers have been infected. In Bombay it is still so serious as to have brought almost complete ruin upon the city.

The writer of "Protestant Notes" in the *English Churchman* asks that, now that the Pope has sanctioned the formation of an "Association of Prayer for the Conversion of England" to Popery, cannot they form an "Association for Prayer for the Conversion of Roman Catholics." It will be amusing to note their rival prayers while trying to get hold of the same children.

Dean Farrar, at Canterbury, made the statement that "since the Reformation was firmly established in England no single person had ever been burnt in England for purely religious opinions." He ought to be aware that on March 18, 1612, Bartholomew Legate was burnt to death at Smithfield solely for anti-trinitarian heresy, as he might have read this in Fuller. For the same reason, Edward Wightman was burnt to death at Lichfield on April 11, 1612. Francis Ket, Matthew Hamont, John Lewes, and Peter Cole were also burnt to death at Norwich under Elizabeth solely for their religious heresy.

The Anglo-Israel maniacs are going to hold a World's Congress at Philadelphia, from June 22 to July 4, to establish an Anglo-Saxon Israelitish Alliance. The call for the congress is headed with the old belated announcement, "Jesus is coming soon to establish His reign of righteousness on the earth."

A Maori chief said that he was quite ready to be converted if Bishop Selwyn would oblige with a miracle. Here was the chief's "dru" (in Maori "Tohunga"), and here, lying on the ground, was a faded leaf. Could the Bishop turn the grey to the green leaf? The Bishop, instead of telling him that Christ's followers were to do greater works than himself, said that the thing was impossible. Thereon the Tohunga flicked the withered leaf into the air, and, lo, it came down green! The chief, therefore, clung to his old creed. Mr. Lang, relating this, says: "Mr. Maskelyne would be invaluable as an evangelist." As a matter of fact, Houdin, the French conjurer, was engaged to go to Algeria to impress the natives with the wonder-working powers of the French.

There are a great variety of devils in the world, sea-devils and land-devils; but a new one turned up at Southwark police-court, where two men were charged with stealing an iron devil. It was stated that the devil in question was "a grate for an open fire to keep the night watchman warm." The prisoners, it seems, endeavored to sell the devil at a shop in Blackfriars.

Mrs. Newbury, an inmate of the Almshouses of St. Savior's, Southwark, aged eighty-one, came into a nice little legacy of £3,000. The Rev. George Horlock visited her, and borrowed £20. He said it was given as a present, but Judge Bacon came to the conclusion that the money was a loan, and not a gift.

The pious William Smith, who, after killing his wife, said she was "In heaven, I hope," is not joining her at once, having got off with twenty years' penal servitude.

The assassin who stabbed Canon Lightwood in the Catholic Cathedral at Corfu is a Catholic, who, having been baptized in the Greek Church, desired re-baptism—which is illegal, and wished to become a priest. He said: "Yes, I stabbed their reverences. It was right, for they would not recommend me for the Clerical College, after promising to do so." Another case of too much religion.

The Maoriland Salvationists deny that Philpott, accused of the murder and secret burial of his mate, Hawthorne, was ever a full-fledged member of the Army, though he played in the band and helped to spread "the Word" among the Maori. Boshier, hanged for the murder of an old couple at Petone, a very little while ago, was a full-blown member of the blood-and-blazes brotherhood.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, February 20, Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow: 11.30, "The Newest Plea for Satan"; 2.30, "Mr. Stead's Ghosts and His Julia"; 6.30, "The Way to Heaven."

February 21, Paisley; 22, Motherwell; 27, Edinburgh.

March 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 20 and 27, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W. March 13, Camberwell; 30 and 31, Debate at Portsmouth. May 1, Glasgow.—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.

T. LANGFORD.—The proposal to commercialize St. Winefride's Well has already been noticed in our columns. We devote another paragraph to Father Beauclerk's appeal.

O. DREWELL.—Your letter is well written, but there is little interest in a one-sided controversy, and Mr. Engström has intimated that he will not continue the discussion.

G. F. DUPLAY.—What "Nature" would say if she could is a problem that cannot very well be settled; anyhow, it does not appear that she has briefed you to conduct her case. Man's point of view is the only valid one in any discussion.

ESS JAY BEE.—Shall appear. Thanks.

X. L. C. R.—Who on earth told you that Charles Bradlaugh never investigated Spiritism for fear he might see and hear things he didn't want to? Why, he actually sat on a committee of investigation appointed by the old Dialectical Society, and his name appeared in the Report, which made a bulky volume. For the rest, you forget that "evidence" produced under unscientific conditions cannot be the ground of any profitable discussion.

F. ROOS.—Christians are capable of anything against "infidels." It is simply a lie that Charles Bradlaugh recanted on his death-bed, and a peculiarly flagrant lie that his daughter has told the public so. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner has again and again contradicted these imaginary stories about her father. We hope she will see her way to publish a cheap pamphlet on the subject, as people cannot be always referring to old numbers of not very accessible journals. We should be happy to assist in the circulation of such a pamphlet. Of course, as you say, we might publish one; but the task more naturally devolves upon Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, who was with her father during his last illness.

C. WESLEY OWEN.—You have not solved the problem of the origin of life. The phenomenon you refer to is universally known. Pure water so exposed is affected by life-germs in the atmosphere.—Thanks for your good wishes. We have a hard fight, and should be glad of some of the "prosperity" you wish us.

A. G. LYE.—We did not obtain the information, and therefore have to regret that we cannot furnish you with it. You do not trouble us; it is you who are taking the trouble, for which you have our thanks.

EX-RITUALIST.—Thanks. Shall appear.

B. STEVENS.—We fully share your objection to the double "t" in combating. But printers are known to keep a "devil," and you can't always stop his tricks.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Mr. Foote's pamphlet, entitled *Will Christ Save Us?* contains much of the information you are seeking. Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man* is a splendid book. No other volume, to our knowledge, contains such a noble summary of the evolution of humanity. If ever you come to tackle Comte—a writer often sneered at and stolen from—you will find the philosophic-history part of the *Positive Polity* to be of the highest excellence; solid, luminous, and suggestive.

TRUTHSEEKER.—Freethinkers do not believe in sectarian benevolent institutions, too many of which exist already. They subscribe to hospitals and other charities like their fellow citizens. In addition, the National Secular Society has a special Benevolent Fund for the relief of Freethinkers, who are apt to find that "Christian charity" is sometimes very bitter. This Benevolent Fund is well supported, is gratuitously administered, and has absolutely no working expenses. Every penny subscribed is spent, as far as required, in relieving distress.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Crescent—Truthseeker—Catholic—New York Public Opinion—Herts Leader—Sydney Bulletin—New York Times—Atalanta Looking-Glass—Banner of Light—Cincinnati Free Opinion—Torch of Reason—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Fria Tankar—New Century—Lucifer—Aberdeen Evening Express—Free Society.

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

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

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

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

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'S lecture on "A Freethinker's View of the Zola Trial" drew a crowded audience to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Obviously an overwhelming majority of the meeting shared the lecturer's admiration of the courage displayed by Zola in the most difficult and trying circumstances. It was suggested by an auditor, amid loud expressions of approval, that Mr. Foote should send a message to Zola on behalf of the Freethinkers of England, thanking him for his noble stand as a French Freethinker against the infamous agitation, fomented by the Catholic Church, against the French Jews. This has since been done.

Mr. Foote is paying another visit to Scotland. He lectures three times to-day (Feb. 20) in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow, and his subjects should attract large audiences. On Monday he lectures at Paisley, and on Wednesday at Motherwell. On the following Sunday (Feb. 27) he visits Edinburgh again after a long absence. Particulars of his lectures there have not yet arrived from the local Branch, but will doubtless be in time for publication in our next issue. We understand that the Operetta House has been engaged.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured to a good and very enthusiastic audience for the Camberwell Branch of the N.S.S. There was no discussion, but a few questions were asked. We are informed that Mr. Watts was in excellent form, and that, on resuming his seat, he received quite an ovation.

This Sunday evening, February 20, Mr. Watts occupies the platform at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "Mrs. Besant's New Position on Theosophy and Spiritualism." Our readers no doubt have seen that Mrs. Besant is trying to unite the two in their attack on Materialism. Mr. Watts will deal with this proposed alliance, and he will be pleased to see Theosophists and Spiritualists present to take part in the debate.

Mr. Cohen lectured at Birmingham last Sunday. His evening meeting was large and appreciative. On Monday evening he lectured under the Treasurer's Scheme, and the meeting was the largest yet assembled on a week-night. Ten new members were enrolled during Mr. Cohen's visit.

Zola uttered a very dignified protest in court against the noisy clank of the sabre. When General Pellicieux spoke of "officers who had shed their blood on battlefields," as though that were the only, or the supreme, important service to France, Zola rose and said: "There are several ways of serving France. One can do so with the sword and with the pen. If you have gained victories, I also have won mine. I bequeath to posterity the name of Emile Zola, and I leave it to choose."

Mr. George Meredith's seventieth birthday occurred on February 12. His first volume of verse was published forty-seven years ago, his first volume of prose six years later. For the best part of half a century, therefore, he has been writing for the British public, which has only recently grown aware of his existence. He always had, however, an audience fit though few. Still, the want of a more general recognition, and of the sympathy it involves, must have been galling to that mighty spirit; for, with all his disdain of the world's follies, no one ever had a more deep and abiding love of humanity.

On the morning of his seventieth birthday Mr. Meredith received a congratulatory epistle from "some comrades in letters"—including Thomas Hardy, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Frederic Harrison, John Morley, W. E. H. Lecky, Leslie Stephen, and Frederick Pollock. There were thirty names in all. The letter does not strike us as being a good one. It looks a little patronizing, and it certainly does not err on the side of enthusiasm. But perhaps it was difficult to satisfy the taste of so many different signatories, and some allowance must be made for British stolidity. What a different thing a circle of French "comrades" would have made of it!

Mr. Meredith is not only alive, but active. He is still writing prose, and even turning out poetry, which speaks well for his unquenchable ardor. May the end be long yet; but when it does come it will be powerless over the best of him—the noble treasures he has added to our literature, and the fine stimulus he has furnished to many younger spirits of his generation. To admire George Meredith is to be a disciple of reason; to love him is to be a devotee of humanity. He is like Shakespeare in this, that while he laughs at our follies, and whips our cowardice, he uplifts us with the strength of his intellect and the large benignity of his character. Great as Shakespeare he is not; but who is? Yet it is no sacrilege to mention him in the same breath with our greatest.

## CURSORY NOTES ON SWEARING.

BAD language is slowly dying out, but there is still a large class who chiefly keep a God and a Devil on purpose to invoke their names as aids to conversation. They have no real meaning. "God damn you," or "Devil take you," merely implies a feeling of annoyance, and acts as a relief to that feeling. The use of such language is, for the most part, mere habit, thoughtless "cussedness" without meaning, and objectionable on that ground, just as all vulgarity and tautology are objectionable. We can see what such expressions stand for by the occasions upon which they are used, and the classes who have most frequent resort to them. They are the passionate outbursts of impotent anger, making, like a child's popgun, a loud report without inflicting real damage; and they are most constantly in the mouths of those whose animal spirits predominate over their intellect, or of those who have much associated with this type of character.

Swearing, like many other bad habits, was originally distinctly religious. The words used show they are designed as appeals for aid to supernatural beings to overcome enemies; and, as devil-worship is earlier than god-worship, the invocation of the devil in bad language really represents a very deep-seated religion. With some the habit has become so inveterate that they seem quite unconscious, like Lord Thurlow, who shotted every phrase with an oath, and, when seated next a bishop at dinner, apologized, saying: "D———, I make it a point never to use any but Bible words when beside a——— parson."

Queen Elizabeth swore like a trooper, and when a bishop showed some reluctance to obey her mandate in one instance, he was stunned by her expletive, "Do it; or by God I'll unfrock you." Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, once called at the house of an eminent judge on business. Learning from the footman that he was not at home, she let fly some furious expletives, without condescending to mention her title. The servant, when questioned by the judge on his return as to the name of his visitor, could only say that "she swore like a lady of quality."

Everyone has heard the tale of the parson who at sea was told it was all right while the sailors swore, and who, in a storm, listened at the fore-castle, and said: "Thank God they're swearing still." There is another told of a particular sky-pilot, who, on his pilgrimage to Palestine, said he only needed to use the words "Yullah" and "Bismillah" to his donkeys to make them go. He was asked if he had used the words much. Certainly, he said, he had used them all the time. "Then, your reverence," replied his friend, "you have been swearing all the way through the Holy Land."

The instinct of swearing is so deeply rooted, just because it represents an early stage of human culture, in which an attempt was made to arrive at truth and justice by appeals to beings believed to be supernatural. Beyond this, however, there was the deliberate attempt to injure by these same appeals, and the deeper, if not the larger, part of "bad language" is of this maledictory character.

W. W. Story, in his *Roba di Roma*, observes a peculiar feature in the oaths of Italians. *Dio Mio* is usually an exclamation of sudden surprise or wonder; *Madonna mia*, of pity and sorrow; and *per Christo*, of hatred and revenge. It is the name of Christ, and not of God, as with us, that imprecations, curses, and maledictions are invoked. The reason is very simple. Christ is to the Italian the judge and avenger of all, and is so represented in every picture he sees, from Orcagnus and Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment" down; while the "Eternal Father" is a peaceful old figure bending over him.

The Italians still use the Pagan oath, *Corpo di Baccho* (Body of Bacchus), which, to the student of comparative religion and comparative swearing, is the equivalent of *Per Sanguine di Christo* (by the blood of Christ), or *per l'ostia* (by the host, God's bread). So *sapristi* is an euphemism for *sang du Christ*; and *sambleu* for *sang dieu*. One of our too frequently heard expletives is supposed to be a corruption of *hy'r'lady*. Our old "zounds" is an appeal to God's wounds, as "odd's-bodikins" is an appeal to God's body. Our little monosyllable "damn" is so essentially English and Biblical that nations little used to the Holy Scriptures are fairly puzzled, and know us as "God dams."

Beaumarchais satirized it as the very basis of our tongue: "*Avec Goddam en Angleterre on ne manque de rien*....."*il est bien aisé de voir que Goddam est le fond de la langue.*" But "damn," where it has not died out, has got to be a mere sign of genial emphasis, and some French dictionaries properly represent it by *très*, or very. The devil, too, once so dreadful, is now mainly named by way of comicality. In former times the use of his name was supposed to evoke his appearance. In the old drama of *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Ford, Rowley, and Dekker, the devil himself gives the caution:—

Thou never art so distant  
From an evil spirit but that thy oaths,  
Curses, and blasphemies pull him to thine elbow.

Nothing is more curious and instructive than to note how "deuce" and "deus," "devil" and "god," are really one, and how what was once a dread appeal to a spirit, really believed in, becomes a mere joke.

There is a peculiar oath of French Canadians—*Tors mon âme au bout d'un piquet* (Twist my soul round a pike). This singular expletive comes from a cruel punishment used in the Middle Ages. In 1231 the knights of the Teutonic Order, who conquered Prussia and Christianized Northern Europe, put to death the heathen, who would not accept baptism, by making an incision at the navel, when the victim was eviscerated by being attached to a pole, which they were compelled to circle.

Hume, in the first part of his *History of England*, notes that in the old days, when dreadful oaths were common, perjury abounded; and it is the general experience of judges that the most untrustworthy witnesses never bungle at the oath. Andrew Lang, in one of his inimitable leaders in the *Daily News*, says: "William deceives Harold, who thought he was making a cheap ordinary oath, by putting relics under his hands, a high-expensive and first-class oath. Edward I. tried the Scotch Bishops with oaths of superior quality; but, in spite of a long and carefully-conducted series of experiments, he never found out what, if anything, a Scotch Bishop held sacred."

There is something of the mock-heroic about these old appeals to supposed supernatural beings which is still found very attractive to the young, who are prone to imitation if the example comes from their superiors and elders. The stupid practice of swearing in courts of justice is itself responsible for much profanity, and the frequency of such appeals as "s'welp me bob." For, like all deep-seated habits, swearing is contagious. It goes from our police-courts to their frequenters, and from the pulpit to the pew. The substitution of "condemnation" and "sheol" for the old words in the Revised Version should assist Atheism in purifying the language from vulgar expletives.

LUCIANUS.

## FREETHOUGHT.

RELIGIOUS liberty guarantees every other kind of freedom, as every form of slavery walks in the train of priestly despotism. In America religious emancipation led the way to the Declaration of Independence, and still continues to make this continent the chosen home of thousands of Liberals whom the material prosperity of the New World would have failed to attract. It is possible that a policy of intolerance would have averted or postponed the fate of the Moorish empire, which was ultimately overthrown by the fanatics of a creed which the followers of a more rational faith had permitted to survive in their midst; yet it is not less certain that for nearly five hundred years religious tolerance made the realm of the Spanish caliphs the one bright Goshen in a world of intellectual darkness. In northern Europe the history of civilization begins only with the triumph of Rationalism. Protestantism, in that wider sense which made the revolt of the Germanic nations an insurrection against the power of superstition, has laid the foundation of national prosperity in Great Britain, in the Netherlands, and in the rising empire of Northern Germany. The real founder of that empire was at once the greatest statesman and the boldest Freethinker of the last fourteen centuries. His capital became a city of refuge for the philosophers of Christian Europe. The eastern provinces of his empire were colonized by refugees from the tyranny of clerical autocrats. His absolute tolerance protected even the Jesuits, expelled by the Catholic rulers

of France and Spain. During the reign of that crowned philosopher the religious and political dissenters of Prussia expressed their views with a freedom which in semi-republican England would have involved them in a maze of endless law suits. Among the fruits of that freedom were products of science and philosophy which have made that period the classic age of German literature. "Before the appearance of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*," says Schopenhauer, "the works of duly-installed government professors of philosophy were mostly medleys of sophisms, pretending to reconcile science and dogma, reason and despotism. Here, at last, a State university could boast of a man who lived at once by, and for the service of, truth—a phenomenon made possible only by the circumstance that, for the first time since the days of the great Aurelius and the greater Julian, a Freethinker had mounted the throne of an independent monarchy."

The protection of Freethought is likewise the best safeguard against that virus of hypocrisy that has undermined the moral health of so many modern nations.

"What an incalculable advantage to a nation as well as to its ruler," says a modern philosopher, "to know that the pillars of State are founded on the eternal verities, on natural science, logic, and arithmetic, instead of casuistry and immaculate conceptions!"

The consciousness of that advantage has more than once upheld the birthland of Protestantism in its struggles against the allied powers of despotism, and should uphold our republic in the inevitable struggle against the allied despots of the twentieth century.

—F. L. Oswald.

### THE SEPTUAGINT.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the earliest known copy of the Hebrew Bible should be in the Greek language. It is known as the Septuagint, or LXX., and wondrous tales are told of its having been translated from the original Hebrew for the benefit of the resident Jews of Alexandria, on the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, some 270 years before our era, by seventy persons selected for that purpose. They were placed in seventy different cells [an item betraying monkish origin], and did their work in seventy-two days, at the end of which each of their versions turned out alike. As a matter of fact, the LXX. must have been compiled later than the time of Ptolemy, as it includes Daniel, which was written after his time. But, indeed, the original Septuagint is known to have been destroyed. Burnt, no doubt, says General Forlong, in the Bruchium Library in 47 B.C. What passes as the LXX. is probably founded on the version of Theodotus, an apostate Christian Jew. Theodotus was an Ebionite, who apostatized to Judaism and learned Hebrew. On his confessedly faulty version Origen and Jerome built up their Scriptural text. Yet moderns have gone rather to the Hebrew of nearly a thousand years later.

Professor Swete, of Cambridge, agrees that "it is impossible to dissent from the superiority of the LXX. over the Hebrew text"; and Sir H. H. Howarth shows that the Massoretic text, on which the Revised Version is built, is hopelessly corrupt, and only to be amended by the LXX. Says Kitto, in the *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, article Septuagint: "The Septuagint and Samaritan harmonize in more than a thousand places where they differ from the Hebrew."

In another place in the same article Kitto says of this Greek translation: "The history of this version is obscure. Few notices of its origin are extant, and even such as do exist are suspicious and contradictory."

And Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*: "The Greek version of the Old Testament known by this name [Septuagint] is, like the Nile, a fountain whose source is concealed. The causes which produced it, the number and names of the translators, the times at which different portions were translated, are all uncertain."

And yet, "suspicious and contradictory" as it is, its origin "obscure" and "uncertain," it is really the earliest Jewish scriptures of which we have any knowledge. Says Smith: "We find it [the Septuagint] quoted by Josephus and Philo; and thus we are brought to the times of the Apostles and Evangelists, whose writings are full of citations and references, and imbued with the phraseology of

the Septuagint. But when we attempt to trace its origin our path is beset with difficulties. It bears upon its face the marks of imperfect knowledge of Hebrew, and exhibits the forms and phrases of the Macedonian Greek prevalent at Alexandria, with a plentiful sprinkling of Egyptian words."

Every quotation of scripture put into the mouth of "our Lord" came from this obscure, uncertain, and imperfect Septuagint. The Latin Vulgate of the Jewish Scriptures, from which was derived our so-called King James' Translation, flowed from this pretended Greek rendering in Alexandria. And there have not been wanting those who think that the whole concoction arose in Egypt.

ABRAXAS.

### CHRISTIAN INCONSISTENCY.

THE Christian is nothing if he is not inconsistent. The most superficial examination of the Sunday sermon, or the casual perusal of the Christian periodical, is sufficient to establish the truth of this assertion. The Christian abounds in absurdities and in self-contradictions in a manner glaringly apparent to whomsoever submits to the bar of his reason that of which his eyes and his ears take cognizance.

We were strongly reminded of this predominating failing among these people who profess to be the followers of Jesus a few days ago, while in attendance at the funeral ceremonies over the remains of a young girl who had died just on the threshold of womanhood, when her life was full of joy and of promise.

The death, on this account, was inexpressibly sad, and the tears of the relatives and friends, who had assembled as a matter of respect and love for the deceased, bespoke the grief which was but the natural and unavoidable consequence of such a separation from their loved one.

And yet, as we listened to the words of the clergyman who officiated at the bier, the words so full of intended consolation, about the higher life to which the young lady had been called, her being safe with Jesus, and only gone before to a realm of brightness, free from carking care and trouble; where, in a short time, those who lived and loved her would join her under conditions of happiness which far surpass all earthly possibilities—as we listened to the sweet hymn, "Gathering Home," beautifully rendered by a choir of superior ability, we could not repress the question: Why these tears? Why these red and swollen eyes—these sobs of anguish, and this bitter, despairing grief, if hers was but a change for the better? If, indeed, she had gone to a realm where all was happiness and goodness, and where, in a few years at most, her parents, her brothers, and her sisters would join her in her blissful surroundings—was this cause for sorrow and for sadness? Was her transition such as to cause bitter, unspeakable suffering? And the answer which forced itself on our mind was that these people are but self-deluded; their tears and their grief are but the unwilling proofs of the truths of materialism. These mute witnesses told that they did not believe in the glittering promises of the reverend gentleman; but, on the contrary, that they were as sceptical as ourself in regard to a future life. If they had really believed in the promises of their religion, they would not have been so sad.

These funeral ceremonies would have been, on the contrary, the occasion of joy more glorious than that which accompanies the marriage feast. The parents and the friends would have thought of their darling as one moving resplendent among the blessed, free from every temptation, with larger opportunities, and transcendently happy in her new sphere; and they would have rejoiced at the good fortune which had befallen her. Their grief bespoke their inconsistency, and we departed from that house of sorrow with the feeling that every person there, be they called Christian or what not, had by their grief proclaimed their disbelief in one of the leading claims of the Christian; and that their faith was a matter of pretence only.

We do not accuse the Christian friends who attended these obsequies of wilful dishonesty. We say that they are self-deluded only; but we do also say, it is a pity that they cannot awake from their dreams and read the cold, hard lessons of nature aright. Nothing can be gained from blinding one's eyes to the fact that things are not as

we wish them to be, but as they are, and that the ultimate happiness and well-being of mankind demand that we arouse from our torpor and adjust ourselves to nature's favorable and unfavorable conditions.

—*Boston Investigator.*

## BELLS.

THAT bells came into Christian service from Buddhism seems likely from their following the monastic movement from Egypt, where the feast of Serapis was announced by bells. In Europe, however, bells were not known until about the year A. D. 400, when Paulinus, Bishop of Nola in Campania, cast the first. Hence their Latin name of *Campana*. Venerable Bede, the ecclesiastical historian, tells us of bells being used in a church in the year A. D. 600. An abbot of Croyland started the ringing of a peal of five bells in or about the year 1000. Bell-founding was carried on in the monasteries, and St. Dunstan, who seized the Devil's nose with a pair of tongs when he tempted him in the form of a seductive female, was a skilled worker.

Bells were supposed to drive away diseases, evil spirits, and even mortal enemies. King Clothair, in the year 610, besieged Sens, when Lupus, Bishop of Orleans, ordered the bells of St. Stephen's to be rung. The sound so terrified Clothair that he relinquished the siege. When a city was conquered its bell-gods were removed, just as the Philistines took the ark of Jahveh. Henry the Fifth removed a bell from Calais, which is still said to be hung in a steeple in his native town, Monmouth. Inscriptions, often of a bragging character, were placed upon them. Thus one had: "I am Mary; I chase away the pestilence." A little one at Devizes boasts:—

I am the first: although but small,  
I will be heard above you all.

A bell in Durham Cathedral has the following:—

To call the folks to church in time, I chime;  
When mirth and joy are on the wing, I ring;  
When from the body parts the soul, I toll.

These lines are almost a translation of the Latin inscription on the bell in Longfellow's "Golden Legend":—

Sabbato Pango  
Funera Plango  
Solemnia Clango.

Bells in the Catholic Church are blessed and baptized, the bishop washing them within and without with a linen cloth previously dipped in Holy Water, the choir in the meantime singing the 145th, 146th, and following psalms; then the bells are anointed with Holy Oil, the choir chanting the antiphon, *Vox Domini super aquas multas*, together with the 28th Psalm, after which the bells are again anointed exteriorly in the form of a cross seven times, and then at four equal intervals with the Oil of "Chrism," the *Oleum Infirmorum* being used prior to this. Incense is then put in the thurible and placed under the bells. The Antiphon, *Deus, in Sancto via tua*, etc., is sung; and, certain prayers having been said, the Deacon sings a portion of the Gospel according to St. Luke (ch. x.). The Bishop makes the sign of the Cross on the bells, and gives them a name, which ends the ceremony.

"Great Tom, Big Ben, and Great Paul" are names recalling the personality once ascribed to bells. A big price used to be asked by the priests for tolling the biggest bell as a passing-bell at death, for thus the evil spirits had to keep further off out of its holy sound, so that the soul got a good start, and more people were called on to pray for the passing spirit.

BIMBOM.

## Obituary.

I HAVE to record the death of an old worker in the movement—Mr. Jesse Cocks, at the age of ninety-three. He was one of the few of the present day who knew Carlile and the Rev. Robert Taylor. Until a dozen years ago he was a frequent lecturer at our open-air stations; was a fairly good speaker, a keen logician, and a remarkably good debater on metaphysical questions. In 1875 he was prosecuted by the late Metropolitan Board of Works for speaking on London Fields; but, aided by Mr. Bradlaugh's advice, the case was dismissed. It had, however, the effect of certain portions of open spaces under the control of the Board—a policy since continued by the County Council—being set apart for open-air meetings. He leaves a widow, eighty-eight years of age; and I hope the funds of the Benevolent Committee will allow the small weekly pension poor Cocks had for some years to be continued to her. My knowledge of Cocks extends over a period of more than thirty years, and all those who knew him will agree that, as a husband, father, and citizen, there could be no more honorable, kindly, and genial man.—ROBERT FORDER.

## BOOK CHAT.

IN the fiftieth and last verse of the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*, according to the synopsis given by W. Strickland in his *Epicurean Essays*, one Mariatta, a child of beauty, has a strawberry popped into her bosom, whereupon she becomes pregnant; but neither pa nor ma believes in her guileless story. Mariatta seems to have been more unfortunate than Mary. She has to go to a stable, where a baby is born and cradled. A star salutes the mother, and the holy babe is hidden in the reeds and rushes. Eliséé Reclus, in his *Geographie Universelle*, considers this legend to have been borrowed from that in the New Testament; but, says Mr. Strickland, "the latest and most orthodox opinion in learned quarters is that the Finn legend is prior in date to the Bible story, and, consequently, that the borrowing has been the other way."

In a treatise, *Of the Original of Nations*, by R. Verstigen, which appeared in 1628, is the first hint of something wrong about the reference in Tacitus to London. He says (p. 134): "I cannot a little marvaile how Tacitus should call it by the name of Londinii, which appellation hee could never have from the Ancient Britaines, seeing they never so called it. Julius Caesar seemed not to know of the name of Londinum, but nameth the city of the Trinobantes." Mr. Ross, the author of *Tacitus and Bracciolini*, finds in this reference to London one of the proofs of the late date of the annals ascribed to Tacitus.

Just two hundred years ago, this twenty-second of February, was Count Guido Franceschini decapitated at Rome for the murder of his wife and her parents. The printed report of the proceedings, long lost in oblivion, was picked up for a *lira* in Florence by Robert Browning, and resulted in his most marvellous production, *The Ring and the Book*. Just an Old Bailey story, said Carlyle; and that is part of the wonder of it. For the highest qualities of heart and mind are brought to bear on the Old Bailey story. All the characters, from the wretched murderer to Pope Innocent XII., are made to live again and show their inmost selves; and above all shines the saintly Pompilia, a radiant star of innocent wifehood and motherhood. *The Ring and the Book* is certainly among the noblest productions of the Victorian age.

*Open Court*, of Chicago, gives as the frontispiece of its February number a portrait of Gaspard Monge, the French mathematician. Mr. Lucien Arréat writes on "The Religion of the Future." He says: "What religions did, philosophy improved and clarified should now do."

*Intelligence*, an American metaphysical magazine, has the commencement of a series of papers on "The Dogma of Hell," by the Rev. H. Frank, who describes hell as the most appalling of all the conceits which have held the mind of man in awe.

There is no mystery about the authorship of *A Ballad of Reading Gaol*, by C. 33 (L. Smithers), and it is by no means strange that Mr. Wilde, who witnessed the case of the warder who was dismissed for giving a hungry child a biscuit, should inveigh against a prison system which often tends to brutalization, though it seems to have given himself a needed sense of the seriousness of life. Here is his prison testimony:—

The vilest deeds, like poison weeds,  
Bloom well in prison air;  
It is only what is good in Man  
That wastes and withers there,  
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,  
And the Warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child  
Till it weeps both night and day;  
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,  
And gibe the old and grey;  
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,  
And none a word may say.

An old German author dedicated a treatise on sacred geography "To the only three hereditary sovereigns in heaven and earth—Jesus Christ; Frederic Augustus, Prince of Saxony; and Maurice William, Prince of Saxe Zeitz." In Father de Isla's *Life of Father Gerard* he tells how that author calls Jesus Christ "The Crowned Emperor of the Celestial Host," "His Majesty the chosen King of Sion," "Grand Pontiff of the Christian Church," "Archbishop of Souls," "Archduke of Glory," "Prince of Peace," "Knight of the Gates of Hell," "Lord Justice of the Great Assizes and Privy Councillor to God Almighty." This is related in Sismondi's *Literature of Europe*.

The late Philip Gilbert Hamerton left a posthumous work

on *The Quest of Happiness*, which has just been published by Seeley & Co. It was written, we are told, when the author was held in the clutches of a mortal disease, and knew that he was nearing the end of life. Hamerton died as he lived—a Freethinker, and sought no happiness from the futile consolations of religion. He says: "The power of seeing things as they really are, without being biassed by the desire to have them as we think they ought to be, is of all the gifts the most desirable, with a view to a rational, though not an intoxicating, kind of happiness."

\* \* \*

Some contributors to the *Pall Mall Gazette* some time ago gave their idea of the most pathetic lines in literature. The most out-of-the-way ones were the production of "A Lincolnshire Poacher":—

To sit in your straight-laced heaven,  
Where saints and angels sing,  
And never hear a pheasant caw,  
Nor the whirr of a partridge wing.

\* \* \*

Mr. Fox-Bourne has just published, through King & Co., a shilling pamphlet on the pledge-breaking, rebel-making, and enslaving policy of the Cape Government to the Bechuanas. We wonder if it will get the attention devoted to the Jews in Russia or the Armenians in Turkey.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE BIBLE BOARD-SCHOLAR'S SOLOLOQUY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Rev. O. de V. sends me the enclosed, the production of one of his *protégés*, aged ten. The rev. proudly regards it as a triumphant vindication of the efficacy of copious Bible instruction, and hopes the day is not far distant when every child will similarly burn with holy zeal, and strive to follow in the footsteps of the blessed (Bible) ones who have gone before. I have altered or erased certain portions which were too indecent to be inserted in any but Christian publications.—Religiously yours,

EX-RITUALIST.

I love the Bible, yes, by gosh!  
I read it every blessed day:  
Though bad men say it's only bosh,  
And try to hide it right away.  
I love my Bible, yes, I do—  
Especially the bits of blue.  
Now, Jacob was a downy lot,  
He cheated everyone he knew;  
Yet heaps of wealth at last he got,  
And so like him I think I'll do.  
For 'tis as plain as plain can be,  
God only blesses such as he.  
Soft Esau was an honest cove,  
So God with him would have no truck;  
I musn't be like him, by Jove!  
I don't want hairy Esau's luck.  
God was uncommon hard on him,  
And so he'd be on little Jim.  
King David was a mighty man,  
Who sliced up people left and right;  
I'll imitate him, if I can,  
And kill and dance and fight.  
For, if I try like him to be,  
God will, I'm sure, be fond of me.  
Old Lot drank wine till he was tight,  
And on the mountains—well, *you know*;  
If I do likewise 'tis all right,  
To Hell I'm sure I shall not go;  
For all these men God did so love  
That he has taken them above.  
Ah me! I long to be a man—  
Kids in the Bible have no show;  
To be a patriarch's my plan,  
To chop folks up, and plague like Mo';  
To roll in riches, drink strong wines,  
And praps have lots of conkybines.  
Our gals ain't what they ought to be,  
Why, twig Bathsheba, Tamar, Ruth!  
Our gals are different as can be,  
And don't act *holy*, that's the truth.  
But never mind, perhaps they may  
When parson-members have their way.  
So I will read my Bible well,  
And imitate God's chosen few;  
I can't go wrong, as you may tell;  
'Tis clear as day what I've to do:  
And when I die I shall be seen  
In Abraham's bosom. (Hope it's clean.)

LITTLE JIM.

## VACCINATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am quite aware that vaccination is an open question, and one in which the majority of "expert opinion" is opposed to the view of the anti-vaccinationists. Yet the success of the movement in East London, as well as in Leicester, may suggest that the view of common sense and instinctive human nature, that it is not good to inject exterior matter into the blood of our children, is worthy consideration. It would be out of place in your columns to enter into a medical discussion, yet it may be worth while pointing out that the so-called expert medical opinion is an interested one, as much as is clerical opinion on religion. Priests have taught the importance of baptism because it first brings the child under their influence. So is vaccination an introduction to the doctors, whose services are too often soon required afterwards. I venture to think that a bath with soap is the best form of baptism, and that sanitation is better than vaccination.

A PECULIAR SECULARIST.

## THE YOUNGSTERS.

THE Cherubs—"We've come to wish you a merry Christmas, gran'pa, and mamma says if you give us each a dollar we're not to lose it on the road home."

Little Tommy—"Say, popper, does God make bald-headed men, too?" Mr. Fewhars—"Yes, my son." Little Tommy—"Well, it's mighty funny. You told me yesterday that he made flies."

A minister, making a pastoral call at a house where the children were kept quiet on Sunday, was confidentially told by one of the girls that she would like to be a minister. "Why?" said the gratified, but somewhat puzzled, shepherd. "So I could *holler* on Sunday," was the reply.

Mary (just five years)—"Mamma, do all the angels wear white?" Mamma—"Yes, darling." Mary—"Where do they get all their white dresses?" Mamma—"Why, God gives them all they have, of course." Mary—"My! What a lot of washing God must have to do!"

A little girl in Pimlico was in the habit of saying her prayers to kindergarten airs. When her mother told her that God would not like this, she replied: "Huh! Can he hear me with all them angels singing?"

Parson—"Why, Willie, don't you know that good little boys never fish on Sunday?" Willie—"Yes, sir; that's just the reason I'm a-fishing. I stand more show of gettin' a bite when the good fellows are at Sunday school."

## PROFANE JOKES.

SOME children of five or six in a stable, who were cold when the pony came in warm, began a conversation on noticing this. One remarked: "When it's cold I wants to be 'ot, and when it's 'ot I wants to be cold." To which the other little chap replied: "When I gets into bed I feels cold, and then I wants to be 'ot; and by and bye Gord makes me 'ot." Replied the other youngster; "Tain't Gord *do's* that for me; I wrops my old shirt round me!"

The choir volunteered to sing the favorite hymns of the members of the congregation. Each was requested to write down his choice. Easily recognised as the chirography of the butcher was, "We shall meet on that beautiful shore." The leading shoemaker chose, "Awl for me." The favorite of the baker was, "I knead thee, every hour." The lodging-house keeper wrote, "Abide with me." The young lawyer handed in, "Just as I am without one plea." And the grocer who did strictly cash business made the selection, "Trusting Jesus, that is all."

Superintendent—"Children, this is the Rev. Dr. McSnorter, from Gowanus, who will address you a few brief remarks. Children, he has come all the way to try and save your souls from hell. You are not paying attention. Now, can any little boy or girl tell me where this gentleman is from?" Chorus of children: "From hell."

Under the heading, "Preaches an Ingersoll Sermon," the *New York Journal*, January 31, says: "Rev. Francis Edgar Mason, of the First Church of Christ, Madison-street and Bedford-avenue, Brooklyn, preached a Radical sermon yesterday morning on 'A Plastic Deity.' He said among other things: 'The gods improve as man himself improves. The gods disappear as man embodies in himself the elements and attributes once conceded specifically to them. The god idea in human consciousness is a legitimate factor of man's mind, but the idea of God varies according to the intelligence of the race.'

## 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, O. Watts, "Mrs. Besant's New Position on Theosophy and Spiritualism."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Mrs. Besant's Theosophy"—second reply.  
Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 8.30, Benefit Concert and Ball for the Club.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11.30, A lecture; 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "The Body Wonderful": being a lecture on the structure and functions, etc., of the human body, illustrated by large pictures of the skeleton, muscles, internal organs, and organs of sense.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion, opened by Miss Morant; 7, Stanton Coit, "Shakespeare: (iii.) The Characters of Portia and Hamlet."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "Portia and Hamlet."  
WOOD GREEN (Station-road Hall): 7.30, H. B. Holding, "Secularism and Social Questions."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, A lecture.

### COUNTY.

BIRMINGHAM (Bristol-street Board School): E. J. Sale—11, "The Evolution of Man"; 7, "Shelley's 'Queen Mab.'"  
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. Heaford, "The Gods and their Doom."  
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote—11.30, "The Newest Plea for Satan"; 2.30, "Mr. Stead's Ghosts and his Julia"; 6.30, "The Way to Heaven."  
HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Seth Ackroyd, "Science and Theology Compared and Contrasted."  
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "Some Plain Words about India."  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen—3, "Christianity and Slavery"; 7, "Religion at the Bar of Science."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "Jesus the Infidel"; 3, "Secularism and Woman"; 6.30, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secularist Platform."  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, Members' meeting; 7 (Byker Social Club, corner of Raby-street and Parker-street), R. Chapman, "A Defence of Secularism."  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): E. Evans—3, "Gold and Gold-mining"; 7, "Science and Modern Civilization." Tea at 5.  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—February 20 and 27, Liverpool. March 6, Liverpool.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—February 20, King's Hall, Mile End.

H. PERCY WARD, 6 Wawne Grove, Alexandra-road, Hull.—February 20, Manchester; 21 and 22, Blackburn; 27, Manchester. March 1, Huddersfield; 6 to 11, Mission at Derby; 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Sheffield. April 17, Glasgow.

## 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 2.45.

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

BATLEY.—Positivist Meeting at Mr. Joseph Walker's, Primrose Hill, Lady Anne-road, every Sunday afternoon at 2.30.

Information and literature on Positivism may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Just published, cloth, lettered, 3s. 6d.,

EPICUREAN ESSAYS (in Prose and Verse), by W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A. This book contains several essays and poems of special interest to Freethinkers, notably: "A Strike in the Top Storey," "The Possible Application of Mechanical Discovery to the Propagation and Maintenance of Religion," "Three Fallacies," etc.

Just published, price 2d.,

CHRISTENDOM: Two Essays (by the same Author) on "Protestant Blasphemy" and "Popery and the Stock Exchange," the latter analyzing the effect of National Religion upon the National credit in various countries.

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

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

## THE ADULT.

THE JOURNAL OF SEX.

Commencement of a New Volume. February number Now Ready. Price 3d., post free 4d.

Contents: "Music, Religion, and Sex," by Orford Northcote; "Malthus," by Lady Cook; "Love's Coming of Age," by Sagittarius; "The Divine Woman," by William Platt; "Two Gifts," by Edward Carpenter; "The Sex Philosophy of Exeter Hall," by W. F. Dunton; etc., etc. 16 John-street, Bedford-row, London, W.C.; also of Robert 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 is 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. Beant 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. Rendall," 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, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

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

## COMPOSITION TABLETS 1d. each.

As a Stimulant nothing to Equal them. As a Beverage nothing else required.

G. THWAITES, 2 Church Row, Stockton-on-Tees.

Or post free, 3 Tablets for 4d.; 6 Tablets for 8d.; 12 Tablets for 1s. 3d.; 36 Tablets for 3s. Agents wanted where none are appointed.

One Tablet sent to any address Post Free.

## CIRCULARS, ETC., ELECTROGRAPHED, Lithographed, or Typewritten.

MSS., etc., Typewritten. All at moderate charges. Typewriting Accessories supplied.—W. HARDAKER, 15, Farnival Street, London, E.C.

WELL-FURNISHED LARGE FRONT BED-SITTING ROOM to let in superior house in Brixton. Bath (hot and cold). No children or other lodgers. Tram, bus, and train every few minutes to City or West-end. Terms (including gas and attendance), 12s. per week. Address, W., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

SCOTCH TWEEDS.—Suitings, Trouserings, and Ladies' Dress Goods. Patterns by post on application. Parcels carriage paid on receipt of order with remittance. R. F. Thomson, Manufacturer, Abbot's-place, Galashiels.

### A LIVE TRACT.

THE WORLD, THE FLESH, AND THE DEVIL. By J. M. Wheeler. Price 2d. per dozen, post free; 9d. per 100 post free; 8s. per 1,000 carriage paid. R. Forder, 21 Stonecutter-street E.C.

## WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

- Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians.** In parts 4d. each.
- Was Jesus Insane?** A Searching Inquiry into the Mental Condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.
- Royal Paupers.** Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.
- Philosophy of Secularism.** 3d.
- Atheism and Morality.** 2d.
- The Bible God.** 2d.
- Interview with the Devil.** 2d.
- The Dying Atheist.** A Story. 1d.
- Bible Romances.** New Edition. Revised and largely re-written. (1) Creation Story 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 1d.; (5) The Tower of Babel, 1d.; (6) Lot's Wife, 1d.; (7) The Ten Plagues, 1d.; (8) The Wandering Jews, 1d.; (9) Balaam's Ass, 1d.; (10) God in a Box, 1d.; (11) Jonah and the Whale, 1d.; (12) Bible Animals, 1d.; (13) A Virgin Mother, 1d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) John's Nightmare, 1d.
- Some or Atheism—the Great Alternative.** 3d.
- Letters to Jesus Christ.** 4d.
- What was Christ?** A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.
- Christianity and Progress.** A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.
- Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England.** A Reply to General Booth. 2d.
- The Impossible Creed.** An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.
- Ingersollism Defended against Archdeacon Farrar.** 2d.
- Mrs. Besant's Theosophy.** A Candid Criticism. 2d.
- Secularism and Theosophy.** A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.
- The Grand Old Book.** A Reply to the Gand Old Man. An exhaustive answer to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s.; bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.
- Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh.** 6d.
- Letters to the Clergy.** *First Series*, 128 pp., 1s.
- Christianity and Secularism.** Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s.; superior edition, in cloth, 1s. 6d.

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

## Works by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

- SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES.** LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.  
The only complete edition in England. Accurate as Colenso, and fascinating as a novel. 182 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
- DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT.** WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.  
A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
- SHAKESPEARE.** 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.
- THREE PHILANTHROPISTS.** 2d.
- LOVE THE REDEEMER.** 2d.
- IS SUICIDE A SIN?** 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.

## WORKS BY CHARLES WATTS.

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

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

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

## THE LITERARY GUIDE

AND RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE FEBRUARY NUMBER CONTAINS:—

- Supernaturalism and Science. By Adam Gowans White.
- The Typical Prophet. By Charles E. Hooper.
- The New Reformation. By Charles T. Gorham.
- Those who March in the Van. By F. J. Gould.
- Rationalism in Fiction: *The Gadfly*.
- Ernest Renan: Madame Darmesteter's *Life*.
- The Secrets of Monasticism.
- Signs and Warnings (Gleaned from the Religious Press).
- Random Jottings.
- Literary Shrines and Pilgrimages.—III. In Byron's Country (concluded). By Amos Waters.
- The Origins of Civilization, of Matriarchy, and of Religion. By J. S. Stuart Glennie, M.A.
- Rationalism in the Magazines.
- Short Notices.

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

## SHAKESPEARE,

A LECTURE BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

"A powerful piece of literary and philosophical criticism. Ingersoll's glowing style, his forcible logic, and his acute discrimination make his panegyric of the Bard of Avon almost as interesting to read as, no doubt, his lecture was inspiring to hear."—*The Stage*.

Price Sixpence.

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

# BEST VALUE IN THE WORLD!

## LOT 11.

- 1 Pair Blankets Pure Wool.
- Pair Large Bed-sheets.
- 1 Beautiful Quilt.
- 1 White Tablecloth.
- 1 Pair Lace Curtains.

21s. carriage paid.

## LOT 33.

- 40 Yards Remnants in good Dress Materials.
- Fashionable Colors.

*State Lengths Most Useful.*

21s. carriage paid.

No. 60 Parcel.—1 Suit Length, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 pair high-class Boots or Shoes in Black or Tan, 21s. the lot  
No. 70 Parcel.—1 Dress Length, 1 Lady's Umbrella, 1 pair high-class Boots or Shoes in Black or Tan, 21s. the lot

Don't miss these exceptional **SALE BARGAINS.**

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

NOW READY.

## THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

BEAUTIFULLY PRINTED ON FINE THICK PAPER  
AND HANDSOMELY BOUND.

*Contents:—*

Speech at Walt Whitman's Burial—Tribute to Henry Ward Beecher—Tribute to Courtlandt Palmer—Tribute to Roscoe Conklin—In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—Tribute to Elizur Wright—Address at Horace Seaver's Grave—Mrs. Mary H. Fiske—Tribute to Richard H. Whiting—Mrs. Ida Whiting Knowles—At the Grave of Benjamin W. Parker—Tribute to Rev. Alexander Clark—Death of John G. Mills—At the Grave of Ebon C. Ingersoll—Death of Thomas Paine—Death of Voltaire—At the Tomb of Napoleon—Heroes of the American War—At a Child's Grave—Through Life to Death—Death of the Aged—If Death Ends All.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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

## FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT.

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

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

CONTENTS:—Old Nick—Fire!!!—Sky Pilots—Devil Dodgers—Fighting Spooks—Damned Sinners—Where is Hell?—Spurgeon and Hell—Is Spurgeon in Heaven?—God in Japan—Stanley on Providence—Gone to God—Thank God—Judgment Day—Shelley's Atheism—Long Faces—Our Father—Wait Till You Die—Dead Theology—Mr. Gladstone on Devils—Huxley's Mistake—The Gospel of Freethought—On Ridicule—Who are the Blasphemers?—Christianity and Common Sense—The Lord of Hosts—Consecrating the Colors—Christmas in Holloway Gaol—Who Killed Christ?—Did Jesus Ascend?—The Rising Son—St. Paul's Veracity—No Faith with Heretics—The Logic of Persecution—Luther and the Devil—Bible English—Living by Faith—Victor Hugo—Desecrating a Church—Walt Whitman—Tennyson and the Bible—Christ's Old Coat—Christ's Coat, Number Two—Scotched, Not Slain—God-Making—God and the Weather—Miracles—A Real Miracle—Jesus on Women—Paul on Women—Mother's Religion.

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'welp 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—Piggottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

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