

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 35.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 1898.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

GENERAL BOOTH AND MRS. BESANT.

GENERAL BOOTH has been visiting Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he was interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Leader*. The grand old showman, who could easily give points to Barnum and Bailey, seems to have begun business by stating that "his latest despatch was from Klondike," where a detachment of four or five of his soldiers had been "well received." They had opened a bold attack upon the drink and gambling in Dawson City, and had made an excellent first collection of "fifty dollars in gold dust and two hundred dollars in money." Surely this is very characteristic. General Booth never sinks the man of business in the evangelist. He keeps one eye on the salvation of souls, and the other on the raising of revenue. Not for him the old pot-luck policy of Jesus Christ. He knows very well that the Salvation Army lives by organisation. Had the first Salvation Army at Jerusalem, or Galilee, or wherever it started, understood this thoroughly, instead of merely beginning to do so under General Peter, it would not have come to grief so badly, nor would its leader have died on the gallows. General Booth could have taught Jesus Christ a thing or two in that direction. He could have shown him how to get a good balance at the banker's, or somewhere safe and accessible; how to hook in the Jerusalem big-wigs as patrons, instead of quarrelling with them indiscriminately; and how to achieve all the successes of salvationism without the sublime folly of martyrdom. Indeed, the General plainly told his interviewer that the army organisation, which people thought a weakness, had been his strength. He understands human nature—up to a certain point, and especially Christian human nature, or shall we say superstitious human nature? Speaking of the Army law of absolute obedience, he said: "My people have come to delight in it. They don't want to be consulted about this, that, and the other. It is a great relief to be told what to do." Of course it is. Nothing is more congenial to the sort of human nature that William Booth deals with. Don't think, don't ask questions, and do as you are told! Such a policy saves a lot of trouble. And it is evidently carried out to perfection, for who ever heard of a man of any mental distinction in the Salvation Army, except William Booth himself?

"I think my uniform," General Booth said, "is very becoming. It improves a woman's appearance, and makes her look younger." Perhaps so, and a lot of the Salvation Army women need it. All of them will no doubt be beautiful in heaven, but some of them will require a good deal of time for the necessary alterations. With regard to the male soldiers, General Booth said that his uniform "shows a man off, makes him look more important." Well, there is something in that. Human nature is very vain. Peacocks are poor competitors with millions of plain men and women. A bit of uniform, or even a recognisable badge, anything that gives a factitious distinction, is dear to the commonplace. As William Booth says, in his knowing way, it makes them look more important; and it often goes a long way in compensating for poor wages and ill-treatment.

The present writer remembers when he put on his first pair of braces. It was a lovely summer day, and he thought it a shame to hoist a jacket over those beautiful articles, which of course all the neighborhood was bursting to behold. So he strutted down the road in his shirt and little trousers, with his hands buried deep in his little

pockets, and his elbows stuck out at a tremendous angle. And as he thinks of that precious bit of juvenile vanity he is able to understand the attraction of General Booth's uniform.

The Salvation Army creed was next explained to the interviewer. If a man does good for Christ's sake—that is, because Christ died as a sacrifice for sin—he will be rewarded in heaven; if he does not, he will be punished in hell. "We ring the changes," General Booth said, "on those truths." "We are about the only people left," he declared, "who dare say they believe in hell." "Yes," he added, "we preach everlasting hell." But he was good enough to say that hell was a place of degrees, and that "perhaps the most favored parts of it will be near to the least favored parts of heaven." We may venture to put it in this way: the worst of the saved may have to drudge by the fire in the celestial kitchen, while the best of the damned may have a draughty seat near the infernal doors.

All this is very interesting in its way. It shows that even the Salvation Army is affected by the spirit of compromise. General Booth still sticks to hell, because it is a good thing to work with amongst superstitionists—that is to say, persons of inferior mental development; but the old form of the doctrine of hell and damnation is so utterly played out, with its sheep all happy above and its goats all plagued below, that concessions have to be made even to the intelligence and humanity of the "residuum." Yes, the world is moving, and the Salvation Army has to move with it; which proves the inevitable character of human progress. Of course the Salvation Army thinks it causes a great deal, if not most, of the progress; but that is the way of the fly on the wheel.

Heaven itself, even to the Salvationists, is no longer the simple establishment described in the book of Revelation. The "many mansions" theory comes in conveniently. General Booth, who sees that "the people on this earth don't like the Salvationists," says that "Perhaps hereafter the Lord may give us a planet all to ourselves." Well, we hope this is true. A great many people will be glad to keep off that planet. Perhaps the Freethinkers will have a planet to themselves too. And what a fine society will dwell upon it! Poets, philosophers, scientists, wits, and jolly good fellows. The prospect is really charming.

General Booth gave utterance to a real or pretended Salvation Army belief as follows: "We resolve all sin into selfishness, and all selfishness into sin, and we resolve all religion into benevolence, and all true benevolence into religion." But this is not Christianity. It is Secularism. Ingersoll says it over and over again in the cities and towns of America. It expresses the essence of modern humanitarianism. And the fact that it has penetrated the orthodoxy of the Salvation Army shows that what is sometimes called "the spirit of the age" is more potent than all the creeds that swear by the wisdom and revelations of antiquity.

Unfortunately, the chief of the Salvation Army did not stop at this point. He went on to play the fool—which, of course, is not astonishing; for every Christian, in this age of science and evolution, has a screw loose somewhere. General Booth "waxed eloquent" on belief and unbelief. "He pointed to Mrs. Besant," the interviewer says, "and told how, twenty-five years ago, she had stood with her watch in her hand, giving the Christians' God five minutes to strike her dead. Recently he had asked her if she believed there was any good in prayer to Christ, and she replied: 'Yes, if it were earnest and sincere.'"

Now we are not prepared or concerned to challenge the second part of this statement. Mrs. Besant is, mentally speaking, a person of considerable eccentricity. Although she uses a good deal of scientific jargon, she has for ten years been in the camp of superstition. She regards Jesus Christ, whose existence she formerly doubted, as a Mahatma, like the mysterious and miraculous gentlemen who inhabit the fastnesses of dirty Tibet; and in *this* sense, though probably in no other, she may look upon prayer to him as a more or less useful exercise. But we *are* prepared and concerned to challenge the first part of General Booth's statement. Twenty-five years ago Mrs. Besant had not mounted the Atheist platform. When she did stand upon it she was never guilty of the crass stupidity which General Booth ascribes to her. That he believes it is just possible, for Christians have a large stock of credulity; but that he should state it publicly, as a positive fact, without a moment's investigation, only shows the common recklessness of Christian advocates. Mrs. Besant never stood, or sat, or reclined, with her watch in her hand, giving the Christian or any other God five minutes to strike her dead. The story is a perfect "chestnut." It was told before Mrs. Besant was born. It is a credit to Christian invention, though not to Christian intelligence, or to Christian knowledge of Freethought and Freethinkers. Every leading Atheist has been the hero of that absurd narrative. It was told of Bradlaugh, of Holyoake, of Mrs. Law, and of many others; it has been told of the present writer; and now it is told of Mrs. Besant, when she is no longer an Atheist, and is perhaps indifferent about its contradiction. We say *perhaps* because we are by no means certain. There is room for hope that Mrs. Besant *will* contradict this fatuous story. She can hardly wish it to be supposed that she displayed folly and bad taste even when she was an Atheist. Meanwhile we may ponder the saying of Herder that "Christian veracity" deserves to rank with "Punic faith." Unscrupulous and even joyful lying about their opponents has always been freely practised by the devotees of "the only true faith."

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

IN this age of earnest inquiry and mental activity it is difficult to believe that intelligent persons should attempt to depreciate the advantages of well-conducted controversy. The results of fair and honest discussion have always appeared to us to be of the most beneficial character. It has been aptly remarked that it is "fraud and falsehood only which dread examination. Truth invites it. Public discussion is the spear of Ithuriel; the fiend Imposture starts up, trembling at its touch." Amongst the most persistent opponents of controversy are the clergy of nearly all denominations. It has been so ever since these false leaders of the people arrogated to themselves the function of guiding the human mind. It is true that during the last two or three decades a few ministers of the Christian religion have had the courage to meet their opponents in debate, but their controversial ardor was of brief duration. Some years ago Mr. George Jacob Holyoake wrote a pamphlet asking: "Why do the clergy avoid discussion?" The same question can be very pertinently put to-day, for it would be extremely difficult at the present time to induce a prominent clergyman of the Church of England, or a leading Nonconformist minister, to meet a recognised representative of Secularism in public discussion. The cause of this reluctance upon the part of Christian exponents is not hard to discover. This is a period of intellectual discernment, and the "blind belief" of past ages does not find that ready acceptance amongst the masses that it once did. Unfortunately, mental emancipation from priestly dominion has not reached the point we should desire; still, the freedom is advancing. Progress has ever been of slow growth. One fact is apparent, and that is, the pretensions of Christianity will not stand the test of modern criticism, and its would-be defenders have found this to be the case. Hence the more discreet advocates of Christianity confine their propagandism to the pulpit, the "reserved" platform, and the press, deeming that in the arena of debate "silence is golden." Now we allege that principles or systems that cannot stand the

test of honest criticism in temperate discussion have but little claim upon the intelligence of the age. Herein lies the weakness of theology; at its false and absurd teachings "reason stands aghast, and faith itself is half confounded."

The *Church Gazette*, in a recent issue (July 23), published a special article upon "The Value of Religious Controversy," by the Rev. Moritz Kaufmann, M.A. His object was "to show that religious controversy tends more frequently towards retarding than promoting progress in the religious life." While he admits that all kinds of controversy are not to be condemned as useless, yet, "in the nature of things, they tend that way." His principal protest is against theological discussions. But why this exception? If controversy tends to elicit truth, which we allege it does, then it should be regarded as of the highest service in dealing with a subject that is supposed to involve the most important issues pertaining to man's welfare both in this life and in some future existence. If religion were simply one undisputed truth, the case would be different; but, inasmuch as there are many varied and contradictory religions professed, for all of which truth is claimed, it becomes necessary to examine the *pros* and *cons* of each, with a view of ascertaining which is the correct one. We know of no better plan of seeking to discover that which is true than by discussing the merits, or otherwise, of whatever is presented to us for our acceptance. As Dr. Cooper wrote: "Those who are averse to have their own opinions examined are manifestly actuated more by attachment to their own tenets than to truth. They arrogate for themselves a privilege which they deny to their neighbor, and they suggest the suspicious inquiry, Is there any concealed interest in the background that causes discussion to be dreaded and opposed?" Besides, all the alleged supernatural religions make such extraordinary demands upon our credence that it is an imperative duty upon the part of us all to analyse their credentials, and this can only be adequately done by having both sides of the questions involved placed before us. We say with Milton: "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Let us briefly notice the reverend gentleman's reasons for objecting to religious controversy. He says: "If we had no experience in the matter at all, reason would tell us that in the *heat* of controversy (and controversy without some warmth is scarcely conceivable where men are in earnest) men are too much blinded by feeling, not to say passion and prejudice, to form a just estimate of their own or their opponent's arguments, and that, therefore, conviction of the truth as the end of all controversy becomes at best very doubtful, and hence the debate which began in friendly controversy may end in division and strife, accompanied by bitter recrimination and reprisals, *without producing the result aimed at—i.e., the vindication of truth.*..... The united testimony of the History of Religious Opinion tends to show that religious controversies have generally either produced barren results, or have been followed by pernicious consequences, or, at best, have been of doubtful value to humanity at large;.....that the general result of such controversy has rather been unfavorable, leading Christian men 'to hate each other for the love of God.'" Now what is here said furnishes no argument against discussion *per se*, but only against the mode of conducting it. We are certainly not in favor of vulgar debate, or of recklessly indulging in the very objectionable practice, so prevalent amongst a certain class of disputants, of wantonly wounding the feelings of those who differ from them. Such conduct too often influences the passions, but seldom wins the assent of reason. All controversy should be governed by intellectual discrimination, not by angry disputation. Truth should always be the goal in such conflicts, and the best and most dignified means of reaching it is by calm and considerate investigation. To condemn anything because it is abused by some is neither fair nor wise. No doubt Christianity has been abused by many fanatics, but, we presume, the reverend gentleman would not admit that as an argument against the Christian religion. In the domain of freedom many wrongs have been perpetrated, but surely freedom itself would not be condemned on that account. The reverend gentleman's contention is, however, a severe indictment against the claim that Christianity has a beneficial effect upon the human mind. If the belief in this faith fails to inspire within its adherents patience, love, and kindness, wherein lies its power for good? Moreover, if

discussion is followed by "pernicious consequences," and if it induces "leading Christians to hate each other for the love of God," as the reverend gentleman affirms, then such discussions ought not to be sanctioned by the Bible. But therein controversy is recommended as plainly as possible, for do we not read: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor" (Prov. xxv. 9), also "Come now and let us reason together" (Isaiah i. 18)? Even Christ and St. Paul indulged in controversy, for it is said that very early in his career Jesus was found in the temple in the midst of doctors, "both hearing them and asking them questions," and St. Paul "disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him, and spake boldly for the space of three months" (Acts xvii. 17; xix. 8). Notwithstanding these injunctions from the "sacred book," and the "sublime example" given by Christ and St. Paul, it is now discovered that, if the one were obeyed and the other emulated, "pernicious consequences" would be the result. And yet we are told that Christianity furnishes a practical guide of life. This is another instance of the inconsistency of the self-styled followers of Christ.

The conclusion at which the Rev. Moritz Kaufmann arrives is a very peculiar one. He says: "Then let me suggest, in the last place, what is the practical argument in favor of my thesis. Here the question simply is this: *What will work best?* And the answer is not very far to seek. It is better to live down error than to preach it down." If this be so, there is no further use for churches or preachers—a fact we have frequently urged. It would no doubt be a great advantage if the world in general were of the same opinion. Let us have useful conduct, not impracticable sermons; consistent actions, not creeds and dogmas. It is because we believe that well-maintained controversy will tend to produce this desirable change that we urge its claims. Those who fear discussion, and who seek to depreciate free inquiry in debate, expose themselves to the reasonable suspicion of entertaining opinions that cannot logically be defended. For ourselves, we believe with Robert Dale Owen that "the disciple of free inquiry works not out his salvation in fear and trembling, but in boldness and self-possession. Fear may be the friend of orthodoxy; it is the foe of truth. Before the throne of heaven we may kneel, our eyes closed, and our reason prostrated; before the throne of truth we must stand erect, our eyes open and our judgment awake."

CHARLES WATTS.

THE HYPOCRISY OF RELIGION.

A GLANCE over any of the foremost European countries presents one with a curiously anomalous condition of affairs. On the one side we find it universally admitted that in art, science, and literature the essential condition of improvement is that there shall be perpetual modifications of existing beliefs and institutions in terms of contemporary experience and knowledge. Or, where the ideas of preceding generations are retained unaltered, it is solely upon the ground that they are fully consonant with our knowledge of the conditions of human welfare.

To suggest to the average educated European the advisability of conducting our lives on the same lines as our predecessors would be to invite his contempt or ridicule, and there would be the satisfaction of knowing that it was well deserved. Here, at least, it is frankly recognised that destruction and revision are the two weapons by means of which man cuts his way forward. By destroying what is bad, by improving all that admits of improvement, we purge society of some of the evil it contains, and thus hand on to our successors a purer civilisation than we ourselves received.

But while this much is true in other departments of life, when we turn to that of religion an entirely different set of conditions confront us. Instead of the innovator being welcomed as a blessing, he is viewed as a curse. Criticism of the past becomes the greatest of crimes, slavish submission to it the greatest of virtues. Here we find all the ideas of the most savage and credulous ages—blood sacrifice, eternal torment, virgin births, etc., etc.—holding full sway. Every one of these ideas, which lie at the very foundation of the current religion, can be shown to have had its origin in the barbarism of primitive man; to have been created

by his ignorance, fashioned by his fear, and rounded into a coherent system during one of the darkest periods of European history.

Nor is this all. If these doctrines and dogmas were honestly believed in by those who are paid to preach them, or by those who Sunday after Sunday attend church and between the time devoted to the criticism of dress and the exchange of scandal listen to their exposition from the pulpit, the matter might be wholly regarded with feelings of pity. But this is not the case. There is ample evidence to all except the wilfully blind that these beliefs are no longer accepted in a straightforward, honest manner by any but the ignorant and illiterate.

The educated clergy no longer preach these doctrines. They evade them. The old-fashioned doctrinal sermon is nearly as dead as the dodo, and stands about as much chance of revival. Nine-tenths of the modern sermons consist of either a string of the baldest, tamest humanitarian platitudes, or venomous assaults upon other black-coated members of the celestial fire insurance association, who are rather more honest than themselves in their profession of belief. For I venture to say that an uncultured, old-fashioned preacher who loves to dilate upon the power of the "blood," or who preaches "straight-out flat-footed hell," is on the whole more honest than many of our leading Christian divines who give up belief in miracles, witchcraft, the authenticity of the books of the Bible, and exclusive salvation, and then shelter behind the flimsy technicality that they are within their legal rights as ministers of the Established Church. To anyone but a parson it would be clear that the main question is, not whether he is guilty of a legal breach of the principles of his creed, but whether he is honestly representing its spirit and its teaching. But then, as John Morley says, "clergymen are not exactly like other men. They are very apt to look at laws as those people do who can never be taught that it is wrong to smuggle, or to cheat a railway company..... Indeed, one can hardly imagine a more admirable training for a low-class attorney than a short apprenticeship to one of those heroic Anglicans whose whole lives seem to be spent in finding out by how many little devices of costume, lights, banners, processions, practices, postures, they can strain and evade the law without being convicted and punished."* What amount of respect is it possible to feel for a clergy—conformist or nonconformist—that has vigorously opposed every scientific discovery in its early stages, and just as vigorously proclaimed itself its supporters when it paid to do so; who, to take only one instance, were once as ruffianly in their abuse of Charles Darwin as they are now fulsome in their flattery, and whose whole present effort is an attempt to discover by how many wrenchings of texts and ambiguities of language they can read modern knowledge into ancient myths, or allegorise what was plainly written as sober matter of fact.

One must not, of course, altogether ignore the defence made by the clergy that the doctrines of Christianity are to them merely figurative; and, upon second thoughts, one is inclined to believe them, for when one notes the rush for fat livings it would indeed appear that they honestly regard Christian doctrines as figurative, and the larger the figure received the better they are pleased with it; although it is questionable whether, after all, the figure they cut in the pulpit is not worth far more than the financial figure they receive for their mental stultification and moral cowardice.

And the educated laity are quite as much ashamed of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity as are the clergy. The proof of this is seen in the fact that, when upon the Secular platform one deals with the doctrines of Christianity, the cry is at once raised that we are misrepresenting the Bible and caricaturing their religion. It may be cheerfully admitted that these doctrines do misrepresent their real opinions, but they are part and parcel of Christianity, both official and Biblical, and if professing Christians are so heartily ashamed of the doctrines of vicarious atonement, salvation by grace, eternal torment, or the Jehovah of the Old Testament, as to feel, whenever they hear them outlined from a Secular platform, that they are being misrepresented, why not drop them at once and have done with it?

The simple fact of the matter is that the whole set of

* *Struggle for National Education*, p. 13.

these teachings are out of touch with the life of to-day; and when that is the case, when people who have to deal with the world as it is are saddled with views of life that were getting old-fashioned two thousand years ago, there is bound to be more or less hypocrisy in the attempt to square the two positions.

The modern Englishman no more attempts to guide his life by the Bible than by Homer's *Iliad*; he no more believes in demoniacal possession than he does in the man in the moon; and he would as soon think of trying to walk bare-footed across the Atlantic as he would of turning one cheek when the other is smitten, or of trusting to meekness to secure him the inheritance of the earth.

The whole circle of Christian doctrines comes to us, as I have said, from a barbarous age. The nature of the people they originated with is writ large across their surface; and yet, while we have long ago discarded in practice all their ideas of this life, we still profess to regard them as infallible authorities concerning the next. That is, while they were demonstrably wrong in their judgments concerning the world they were living in, they are held to be indubitably right in their judgments of a world they were not living in, and which, for aught we know to the contrary, may have no existence. It is this fact which renders us progressive in everything but religion, and justifies Heine's caustic remark that the most stupid Englishman will say something sensible if you speak to him on politics, but the most sensible Englishman will say something stupid if you speak to him on religion.

By its very nature every religion is bound to be behind the times. Like the nobility, its greatness is of the past. Every god is in the image of the men that made him, and every theology reflects the mental culture of the men that elaborated it. The result is that, while art and science is perpetually purifying itself by an appeal to the facts of life, religion justifies itself by an appeal to the past, by the parading of great names, or by an appeal to the inherited prejudice of the people. The scientist works to discover truth, the theologian to establish a thesis. The former appeals to the educated few, the latter to the uneducated many. Art and science look with confidence to the future, and hail every invention or discovery as a new lever to raise the race to a higher level. With religion, the main task is to bring the present into line with the past, to make what is equal what has been, while every invention is viewed with suspicion, every discovery with dread, all growth of knowledge as promises of evil rather than harbinger of goodness.

This is the condition of things prevailing to-day in civilised Europe; it remains for all who really value progress and intellectual honesty to say how long it shall continue. It is useless prating of mental development while our whole lives are made a living lie by this attempt to dominate a civilised community by a barbarous religion. It is useless hoping for steady progress while we are ruled by a shilly-shallying, weak-kneed spirit of mediocrity, weighing every expression of opinion in terms of how many shillings we shall lose, or how many social invitations we shall forfeit. Right through history it has been the dauntless few who have made life worth living, and shown others the path of duty. All history, too, has witnessed some phase of the struggle that is going on to-day. In all ages there has been an interested priesthood fighting with all the energy of threatened vested interests to protect its dominions, an army of timid creatures crying only for peace at any price, and a resolute band determined that truth should conquer, come what would. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but both the quality and the quantity of our development are always determined by the independence of the few who keep their minds free from prejudice, their hands well nerved to the work before them, and who are animated by the desire to bring professed theories into complete harmony with known facts.

C. COHEN.

A clerical gentleman was walking through the main street of a small town where he had once been minister, and, meeting an old member of his church, paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Fairly well," said the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My husband is in heaven, sir, this two years!" "In heaven! I am very sorry to hear it!" responded the clergyman, absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

JOSEPHUS AND THE GOSPELS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

If any proof were necessary of the uncritical tastes of the majority of English readers, it might be found in the continued issue of editions of Josephus, all containing the famous forgery (*Antiquities*, xviii., iii., 3), in which "the learned Jew" is made to certify his belief that Jesus was the Christ, and that he rose again from the dead on the third day as the divine prophets foretold (although, as far as our information goes, they quite omitted to foretell anything of the kind), and that the tribe of Christians "exists to this day."

That the passage is a forgery needs little argument. It has no connection with the preceding or subsequent sections. The phrase "to this day," when he is speaking of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, is opposed to the method of Josephus. It is not cited by any of the apostolic fathers, nor by Justin Martyr, Cyprian, Arnobius, Minutius Felix, nor Lactantius; although highly important in their disputations both with the Jews and Gentiles. Nor is it hinted at by Origen, Clement of Alexandria, or Tertullian, each of whom was well acquainted with Josephus, and often quoted from his works. Origen, indeed, expressly states of Josephus that he did not believe Jesus to be the Christ. It is first quoted by Eusebius, for whom Niebuhr can find no better name than a "detestable falsifier." The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says: "It is unanimously believed to be, in its present form at least, spurious, and those who contend even for its partial genuineness are decidedly in the minority." De Quincey more emphatically declares that "this passage had long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatics." Yet the lumbering translation by Whiston continues in demand, more probably for this spurious passage than for any other reason.

We wonder how many of those who boast of the testimony of Josephus to Christ have ever read the section immediately following that passage. It almost seems designed to ridicule the story of the miraculous conception, for it tells how a beautiful woman named Paulina was enjoyed in a temple by one Mundus, who pretended to be the god Anubis. The Unitarian minister, John Jones, in the sequel to his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, does not scruple to connect this story with that in the first chapter of Matthew. If we do not take it as a satire on the Christian story, it may, at any rate, serve to indicate the trickery of priests in that day.

The absence of all mention by Josephus of the new-born brotherhood of Christians, remarked by the keen insight of De Quincey, has never received sufficient attention. The "monstrosity of this omission," as that fine writer calls it, becomes apparent when we consider his chronological position, extending from A.D. 37 to the end of the first century. His opportunities were complete. He was of royal and sacerdotal lineage. He had studied experimentally the doctrines of the various Jewish sects or schools of philosophy, as he preferred to consider them. He had a personal share in "the history of the time, and had access to the works of Nicolaus of Damascus and other historians, as well as to direct documentary and personal evidence." In the opening of the fourteenth book of his *Antiquities* he declares that he has taken great pains to omit no facts of consequence, "either through ignorance or laziness." He devotes above forty chapters to the time extending from Herod the Great to Pilate. Yet he knows nothing of the alleged facts of the Gospels. He knows nothing of the alleged massacre of children because Herod had heard of the birth of a child with neither family nor fortune to support his claims. He himself was, for several years, governor of Galilee, the very district where most of the miracles ascribed to Jesus are said to have been performed; yet he gives no particulars of them.

The narratives in the Gospels, if we leave out of consideration the birth stories in Matthew and Luke, begin with the fifteenth year of Tiberius (Luke iii. 1), not more than eight years before the birth of Josephus. His father, Matthias, was in great reputation in Jerusalem at the very time of the alleged ministry and crucifixion of Jesus, and should surely have known something of the preternatural darkness, the earthquake, and rending of the veil of the temple, and the rising of the dead from their graves, and their coming to Jerusalem. Yet Josephus has no infor-

mation upon these wonderful events. He knows nothing even of the death of Jesus, although he tells us of a false prophet of the Samaritans whom Pilate ordered to be slain. His own connection with Palestine ran abreast with the generation succeeding Christ, that dating from the crucifixion to the destruction of Jerusalem. But he knows nothing of the wonderful work of Paul, Peter, and the other Apostles.

He describes at length all the particular parties and religious fanatics and impostors among the Jews, yet is absolutely ignorant of the Christians, never mentioning them either in his *Wars of the Jews*, written about A.D. 73, or in his *Antiquities*, written about twenty years later. Many Jesuses, three of them high priests, are mentioned by him and their acts recorded, but no Jesus Christ. He dwells on the origin of the Galilean sect founded by Judas of Galilee, and this, he says, was the latest sect which had originated among the Jews. But the mention of Judas, his followers and their doctrines, does not lead him to mention Christ nor the Christians. He appears to be utterly ignorant of a body of men who, as De Quincey says, "should have challenged notice from the very stocks and stones of their birth-place." Had he known of them, he would surely have inveighed against them on the same ground as he did against the Galileans for renouncing the custom of the Jews, and, by their fanaticism, giving that nation a bad character among the Romans.

But the question arises whether Josephus did not by this latest sect of Galileans intend the Christian. Justin of Tiberias, as well as Josephus, was in Galilee, and yet neither of these historians knew anything of the Christians. Josephus knew much of Judas of Galilee, and of the sect of Galileans which he founded, and it is at the least possible that some confusion has arisen. Joseph tells us that they arose at the time of the procuratorship of Coponius (A.D. 6 to 10). Judas, their leader, sought to revive the tradition of a theocracy and re-establish the kingdom of God. He was a teacher as well as a revolutionist, and taught that men should regard God as their only ruler and Lord. The Jewish historian proceeds to say of his followers: "They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor, indeed, do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord."

Origen informs us that Judas was regarded by his followers as the Messiah (Homily on Luke xxv.). Basnage says: "The Romans sent some forces against Judas, and he miserably perished." Possibly his fate was the same as that of his sons James and Simon, who were crucified by order of Tiberius Alexander, procurator (A.D. 47). Josephus ascribes to his sect the origin of all the troubles ending in the destruction of the city and Temple. De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, says: "We have little doubt that the Sicarii and the Zealots were both products of the same great sect of Galileans, and that in an imperfect sense or by tendency all were Christians." No doubt the current view of Jesus is quite contradictory to the rebellious characters ascribed by Josephus to Judas; but it is not difficult to discern some similar elements in the Gospels, which, we must bear in mind, were compiled when all hopes of a temporal kingdom were at an end. In the many injunctions to follow him, even to leave the dead to bury the dead for that purpose; in the command to call no man master; in the selection of twelve apostles who were promised they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; in the record that the people sought to make him a king; in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the lament over that city "how often would I have gathered your children together"; in the accusation against him that "he stirreth up the people"; in the virtual admission before Pilate; in the inscription over the Cross; and in the cry of the disciples after his death, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel"; those who list may see signs that the legend of Jesus is mixed up with that of a temporal deliverer. Only in John is the statement found that "my kingdom is not of this world."

The identity of the Essenes, mentioned by Josephus, with the early Christians has been noted by many authors from Eusebius to De Quincey, but few have ever suspected that the Essenes were to be identified with the sect founded by Judas. Mr. Proctor, in his article on "The Gospel Life of Jesus," in the *Freethinker's Magazine* for August, 1887, is the first English writer I have noticed to run them together; and this, I suspect, may have happened through a slip of the

pen. A learned Jewish rabbi, however (R. Abraham, in *Libro Juchassin*, folio 139, 1), cited by Schœttgen (Hor. Heb. in Act v. 37), and in part by Adam Clarke, says:—

"At this time there were three sects; for, besides the Pharisees and Sadducees, Judas the Galilean began a third sect, which is called that of Essenes.....the opinion of the Nazarenes, who were called Essenes, and the author of whom was Judas the Galilean. They, indeed, occasioned the Jews to rebel against the Romans, saying that no one ought to command other men, nor to be called Lord, except God alone."

On which Schœttgen remarks that this must be false, because the Essenes existed long before Judas; yet he, with Adam Clarke, thinks it very likely Judas was an Essene, though not the author of the sect. But, as Hennell remarks, in his *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, may not the confusion of R. Abraham be unravelled thus: Many of the Essenes adopted part of the doctrines of Judas, and settled afterwards into that sect, of which one appellation was Nazarenes?

If the reader will turn to the speech put into the mouth of Gamaliel (in Acts v. 33-39), he will see that the author of the Acts takes pains to discriminate the followers of Jesus from those of Judas of Galilee. Readers of Zeller Baur or *Supernatural Religion* will have no need of any assurance that the Acts of the Apostles is utterly unhistorical. Indeed, one has only to compare the speeches put into the mouth of Paul with those ascribed to Stephen and Peter to see that the author in each case has not hesitated to make his characters utter his own sentiments. John Jones, the Unitarian, in his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, a work in which he strives to show that both Josephus and Philo were Christians, says:—

"The enemies of the faith, I have observed, were studious to identify its professors with the disciples of Judas. The Christians, on their part, must have been anxious to defeat this artifice, representing themselves on every proper occasion a very distinct people; and to this natural anxiety we are indebted for a very important incident, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Luke delicately notices the charge, and with great propriety avails himself of the language and advice of Gamaliel to show that it had no foundation in truth" (p. 209).

In other words, the charge that the Galileans were followers of Judas was made in the earliest ages, and the author of the Acts delicately makes a Jewish Rabbi distinguish between them and say that Judas perished, and as many as obeyed him were dispersed. But even this was as applicable to the Nazarenes as to the Galileans.

(To be concluded.)

"SUPERNATURAL" MORALITY.

(A Summary of a portion of a Lecture by Charles Bradlaugh.)

It has been assumed so generally by sky-pilots that some theologic dogma is necessary to every system of morality that the assumption needs direct contradiction. It is put to-day by the clericals who are attacking secular education for the young that without religious teaching there is no morality possible. This inaccuracy of speech is the result of centuries of supernaturalistic bias. To maintain, says a famous historian, that Christism bestowed on the world moral truths before unknown shows either gross ignorance or intentional fraud.

On the contrary, it will be contended here that every system of "supernatural" morality is necessarily uncertain, arbitrary, and confusing; that moral progress is only made in the ratio in which supernaturalism is diminished. The "supernatural" view is that every act is moral which is in obedience to or in accord with the commands of deity; that these commands are known by direct revelation from "God," or through the human conscience, which it is alleged is implanted by "God" in each individual, and which infallibly decides for each person what acts are right and what are wrong.

The Rationalist objection is that the commands of "deity" must be expressed either to individuals or to the whole race. In the first case the sceptic asks, How is it to be determined when any individual is reliable who professes to be the recipient and interpreter of "God's" commands? In the second case one asks, Is it conceivable that any such

command should have been given to the whole human race without its most complete recognition on the part of the recipients? The Mahdi claimed to be god-sent; Joseph Smith declared himself charged with a special revelation; so did Mahomet; so did Jesus. How, in each case, is it to be determined whether the prophet is sane and truthful? Is it to be decided by the numbers who accepted or rejected the prophet? and if yes, at what date or within what limits does the numerical strength become material? There are more Mormons now than there were Christians within a like period. Mohammedanism in some countries would poll an overwhelming majority. Buddhism counts to-day far more heads than can be claimed for Christism.

There is most certainly no one revelation to the whole race universally admitted to be the revealed command of "God." As for the Bible, the large majority of the world's inhabitants do not now accept it; the largest proportion of the human family have never accepted it, and even of the minority who nominally accept it the Christians think the Old Testament very imperfect as a moral guide, whilst the Jews reject the New.

Conscience, so-called, varies in the same individual at different periods of his life, and under different conditions of health. Three centuries ago it was moral in England to believe in witches, and it was moral to kill a witch. To-day it is held immoral to believe in witchcraft; to kill a witch would now be at law a criminal act.

One hundred years ago it was moral to trade in slaves, to own slaves, and to breed slaves. Very recently it was moral to own and breed slaves in America. Why for centuries did Christians trade in slaves if morality is dependent on the immutable judgments of a God-ordained conscience? Why, if slavery was defensible by supernatural moralists only a few years ago, has it now become utterly indefensible?

In England it is immoral to marry the sister of your diseased wife, and the immorality is so clear that any unfortunate children born of such a union are bastards, and in the event of an intestacy are excluded from sharing the property of either of the parents. In Canada and in Australia it is moral to marry your deceased wife's sister, and the children are respected as legitimate. The Secularist asks, How is this explicable from the supernatural standpoint?

PIOUS ROGUES AND FOOLS.

"Forty millions, mostly fools."—CARLYLE'S GOSPEL.

We know that no one knows if God exist,
And know that, if He do, we do without Him;
And yet to cunning knaves we gravely list,
And pay them well to tell us all about Him!

The people's lack of knowledge long ago
Gave priestly rogues and fools an easy living;
The pious habit sticks, although we know
They'd cease to preach if folk refrained from giving.

The parsons and the priests are not all fools,
They're mostly knaves; and all who ponder know it;
And we, the priests' and parsons' dupes and tools,
Are not all rogues; we're mostly fools, and show it.

We know that none knows more of God than we,
That facts divine from parsons never reach us;
And yet—can stronger proof of folly be?—
We pay these shams to teach what none can teach us!

CHORUS OF PARSONS.

Praise God from whom all pests and blessings flow!
All dispensations, good and bad and middling!
The good ones come to us, by which we know
That God rewards us for our pious diddling!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Women Street-Car Conductors.

There are seven women conductors on the Chillicothe (Ohio) Electric Street Railway. They are all of good family and good-looking, and they find nothing unpleasant in the work; indeed, they say it is much preferable to most of the indoor occupations followed by women. They are paid four dollars a week, are on duty nine hours a day, and have one day off in every week.

ACID DROPS.

AFTER a comparatively mild summer we have had tropical weather in England. London has been like a furnace, and many persons have fallen dead in the streets. No doubt we shall get a cold snap presently just as we are growing accustomed to the heat. "Providence" gives the taciturn Englishman a constant theme of conversation in his climate—which is another illustration of the design argument. We present it to the Christian Evidence people free gratis, for nothing.

How these Christians love one another. The anti-Ritualistic agitation is going on merrily in the Liverpool district, and is affording a fine opportunity to the previously neglected energies of Mr. George Wise. This gentleman was the principal speaker at a demonstration held in Birkenhead on Sunday, under the auspices of the National Protestant Union. His chairman, a colored gentleman, was the recipient of several uncooked and well-aimed tomatoes; and the rival meetings which were held in pleasant proximity resulted in free fights. On the other hand, some lively scenes occurred at the Church of St. James the Less. Hundreds of "Protestants" attended, and hooted the vicar. They also spat upon him in the chancel, and the police had to protect him from personal violence. Yes, yes; a happy family is the household of faith.

"If this man Kensit and his followers," wrote "Chorister" in the *Daily Mail*, "tried to reach our chancel and upset the communicants, I, for one, would not hesitate in defending chancel and altar with a revolver, which, I may mention, is kept ready in my cassock pocket for Kensitites." Mr. H. A. Lamb, who is "sacristan and master of ceremonies" at St. Alphege, Southwark, announces that he can call out two hundred costers to do battle with Mr. Kensit's Gideonites. Such a blessed, peaceful thing is controversy amongst Christians! General Booth knew what he was about in taking "Blood and Fire" as the Salvation Army's trade mark. The phrase sums up the whole spirit and history of the Christian religion.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society spent £131,266 last year in saving the souls of the heathen, but we do not know how many it succeeded in rescuing from the bottomless pit. The Society has 345 missionaries operating in various parts of the heathen world. Everybody knows there is no need for their services in England, nor is the money they receive wanted here for any works of benevolence and amelioration.

The Church Missionary Society is watching the Sirdar's advance upon Khartoum. A proposal has been made to constitute the place "a centre of active Christianising effort," and even to set up a Bishopric there. The Cross went down before the Crescent in the old days of hand-to-hand fighting, but the case is altered now that the soldiers of the Cross have got Armstrong, Gatling, and Maxim guns. That makes a world of difference.

The Boers in the Transvaal don't understand why the Lord is making them suffer so. They forget that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Rinderpest has swept off the cattle, locusts have destroyed the crops, and fever is playing havoc in several districts. Altogether, there is a rare opportunity for President Kruger to sink his rural simplicity and show himself powerful in prayer.

The new Vaccination Act appears to be a sublime illustration of the wisdom with which the world is governed. A gentleman applied to Mr. Curtis Bennett at the Marylebone Police-court for the purpose of making an affidavit, under Section 2, of his conscientious objection to his child being vaccinated. Mr. Bennett said that he had looked into the Act, and in the first place it did not apply to metropolitan magistrates at all. In the second place, it did not state how the magistrate was to be "satisfied" as to the objector's conscience. There was absolutely no form prescribed, either of affidavit, oath, declaration, or certificate. The applicant, therefore, would have to apply to the Local Government Board, and point out the difficulties of their Act of Parliament. A pretty state of things indeed! Evidently the old method of objectors to vaccination will still have to be pursued—the method of defiance.

The editor of the *Freethinker* has four children, and not one of them has been vaccinated. He was threatened over the eldest, and he invited the threateners to come on, but they didn't. They preferred to leave him alone, and they have never troubled him since—somewhat to his regret, for in defending himself he might have done something, however little, towards breaking down the infamous law which aims at compelling parents to have poison thrust into the blood of healthy children.

The pilgrimage to Lourdes began on Saturday. About

50,000 pilgrims were taken there in special trains. They suffer from all manner of diseases, and some of them expect to be cured. The paralytics are especially hopeful. One or two who are not very far gone may take up their beds and walk—while the excitement lasts. The rest will get no help from Mary, and have to go on praying to God, who takes a back seat in Catholic countries.

We are all for Anglo-American friendship and good understanding, but some of the clerical fraternity are doing their best (or worst) to make it farcical. An American minister over here, the Rev. Dr. Reuen Thomas, has been talking much nonsense about it. He thinks that Germany will come into a "Teutonic federation" with Great Britain and America. "This," he is reported to have said, "would be a real alliance, and along the lines of such racial agreement the Kingdom of God, if it ever came on this earth, was certain to come." Fancy poor God Almighty depending upon this political project for the realisation of his Kingdom! The cheek of these sky-pilots is quite colossal.

What is a miracle? Well, said a negro preacher, if you saw a cow in a field, that wouldn't be a miracle; and if you saw the cow climbing a tree, that wouldn't be a miracle; but if you saw the cow climbing the tree backwards, that would be a miracle.

Dr. Lyman Abbott seems to be pretty much in agreement with that negro preacher. Questions are allowed after his week-night lecture in Plymouth Church—once the home of Ward Beecher—and lately he was asked: "Do you believe in miracles?" His answer was: "Yes, I do." He was then asked: "Will you give us an example of what you regard as a miracle?" Dr. Abbott replied: "The recent victories of our fleets at Manila and Santiago, resulting in the destruction of the Spanish fleets, with a loss on our side of only one man killed and less than twenty wounded."

Now, if these victories were miracles, it follows that the Lord fought the naval battles of Manila and Santiago, and in that case it is an absurdity to give thanks and honor to Admirals Dewey and Sampson and the officers and men under their command. It doesn't seem at all easy to divide the thanks and honors between God Almighty and the Admirals. Any believer who tried to do that would have the coolest cheek imaginable.

Further, if the American victories were miracles, why was even one man killed in the American fleet, and why were twenty wounded? These men, in the circumstances, were gratuitous victims; unless, indeed, the Lord's omniscience and omnipotence failed him to that extent. It will hardly do to say that one was killed and twenty were wounded just to give an air of reality to the engagements.

Every man with a little knowledge and a grain of common sense knows very well that the American victories were *not* miracles. The American ships were better built, better equipped, and better manned. Their gunners were expert enough to hit the Spanish ships and knock them to pieces, whereas the Spanish gunners were so inept that they could scarcely hit anything but the ocean, and they only hit that because it was too big to miss. Suppose the Americans had been opposed by a British fleet—we only take the horrid supposition for the sake of argument—does any man outside a church or a lunatic asylum imagine that they would have got off so easily? When opposite fleets are well matched, the Lord is pretty sure to keep neutral.

A gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion made a curious application to Magistrate Mead at the Thames police-court. He wanted advice on a very difficult matter. His wife had married him under false pretences. He believed her to be a Jew, and he found her to be a Christian. "I cannot live with a Christian woman," he said plaintively. Poor fellow! His neighbors ought to get up a subscription to send him to Jerusalem—or Jericho; and perhaps his wife would be very glad to be left behind.

Wonders will never cease! A bishop is reported to be seriously ill from overwork and want of proper food. His name is Bompas, and he is at Selkirk, in the Klondike region.

When the late C. H. Spurgeon's wife bore him twins he said: "Not more than others I deserve, But God hath given me more." This is a quotation from a well-known hymn. But no quotation would do for Mrs. Edward Harris, of Richlane. A special hymn is required for her case. She has had twins seven times running.

"Religion for Lunatics" was a headline in the London *Echo* the other evening. Nothing could be more appropriate, we thought, as we turned to the paragraph beneath. Unfortunately, it contained no more than a baldish statement about the Parliamentary return as to the "religious minis-

trations" in the county and borough asylums in England and Wales. However, it is consoling to know that religious requirements of lunatics are properly attended to. Not, indeed, that heaven is poorly stocked with that variety. It is well known that clever people mostly go to the other place.

"A Non-Churchman" contributes a novel letter to the correspondence in the *Westminster Gazette* on Ritualism and the Protestant Crusade. "Is it possible," he asks, "for any sane human being to imagine it a matter of the smallest moment to an Almighty and all-loving Father, in whose eyes a thousand years are as a single day, whether Mr. Jones, in this particular year of 1898, worships the Virgin Mary and believes the Athanasian Creed or not?"

The Vicar of Gorleston is at loggerheads with his congregation. In a recent sermon he said that he believed in a future life for animals, and that he would far rather meet them in heaven than many human beings of his acquaintance. Thereupon most of the congregation got up and left the church. They seem to have felt that the cap fitted; or perhaps they thought, like the majority of Christians, that an exclusive heaven is the only one worth having.

"It is authoritatively stated," we read in the *Daily News*, "with regard to the Emperor's journey to Palestine that, after the consecration of the Church at Jerusalem, the Imperial train will go on to Jericho." A good many Germans would be thankful if it stopped there.

It does seem a little incongruous to hear of the great preparations being made in Jerusalem to receive the Kaiser. To read of the rebuilding of the city the better to welcome this pinchbeck emperor does strike us as a little out of the eternal fitness of things. "The gate at the beginning of the chief thoroughfare is being widened in order to allow the Imperial equipages to pass." Times have changed since the "king of kings" cantered into the city on two donkeys, like one of Sanger's star-spangled equestrians.

There have been more than 100,000 deaths from the plague in Bombay. This shows how right Mr. Gladstone was in arguing that Providence had so beautifully adapted the earth for man's habitation.

Marston parish church, Norfolk, has been struck by lightning. The stonework of the walls was splintered, and some of the woodwork destroyed, including pews and the communion rails. It is curious that "Providence" does not recognise its own houses in a thunderstorm.

"Providence" has sent us a trying heat wave, which is the cause of a good deal of ill-temper and profanity, to say nothing of the deaths that have occurred. It is to be feared that Hades will be quite overstocked in consequence. A taste of it here leads to the everlasting enjoyment of it hereafter. But perhaps the truth is that Old Nick has got hold of the weather, and is running it for his own advantage.

Herr P. Nordheim, in the *Vossische Zeitung*, has been giving a description of General Booth's performance at Berlin. The great man's platform antics and hoarse voice "give him too much resemblance to a well-known comic figure on the Berlin boards." On the other hand, it is impossible not to be impressed by his dramatic earnestness. Herr Nordheim notes the enthusiasm, indeed the hypnotic effects, excited by a Salvation girl with a fine voice. Penitents came up to the platform to be saved in response to her fervid appeals. One of the Salvationists tried for ten minutes to save Herr Nordheim himself, but did not succeed. He left the hall, feeling esteem for the humanity of the Salvationists, but regretting that "at the end of the nineteenth century such means were still needed to induce mankind to lead a reasonable life."

Apropos of Mr. Justice Wright's masterly description of Terah Hooley as a witness, the *Daily News* says: "When the liar's not a swearing on the Bible, he loves to lie a basking in the sun." The *Freethinker* has lost its monopoly of this sort of writing.

The Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians have had a Conference for the purpose of finding a way to "union," but a fatal obstacle has arisen, and the negotiations have collapsed. Thus endeth another pious dream.

Dean Hole has been fined on account of his dog being outdoors without a muzzle. If things go on as they threaten to, a number of clergymen will have to be fined (or something) for being outdoors without a muzzle on themselves. Yes, the muzzling order needs considerable extension.

Emperor William of Germany is the most pious monarch

in Christendom. He is also the greatest friend of "Abdul the Damned." Every reader can extract his own moral. The weather is too hot for superfluous labor on our part.

Merstham Church has a public notice to cyclists, begging them to come in and join in the service. They will "find a seat, a Bible, and a prayer and hymn book quite handy," and "five automatic cycle racks" at the back of the bethel. All that remains to be added is iced lager beer and cigarettes.

The Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods has been lecturing at Edinburgh for a religious association which rejoices in the outlandish name of the British Chautauqua, and which might as well be called straight out the Pious Palaver. Dr. Dods' subject was "The Bible and Other Sacred Books," and his first observation was that the latter differed from the former by their "astonishing mixture of what was worthless with what was valuable." Of course there is no such mixture in the Bible. The Christian Scripture contains nothing that is worthless. There is wonderful value, if you only look with orthodox eyes, or, still better, with professional eyes, in such stories as Jonah's whale and Balaam's ass. In any other book, perhaps, they would have been ridiculous yarns; but, occurring in the Bible, they are serious and solemn and full of instruction. So much depends on the point of view!

Dr. Dods also observed that the "other" sacred books, or at least some of them, claimed to be a special revelation, and even professed to be written at the dictation of God; but the Bible, "without saying anything of its authorship," gave a clear consecutive, &c., &c. So the Bible says nothing of its authorship! Dr. Dods forgets that the book is in print. People can read it for themselves and check this amazing statement. Does not the Bible allege that the Ten Commandments, for instance, were written with the very finger of God? Does it not represent God as personally dictating the whole sacred law to Moses, and as instructing him to write it all down in a book for the Jewish people and for future ages? It is really too bad of Dr. Dods to play these little tricks with his audience, unless he aims at gaining a reputation as a humorist.

Teapot Taylor, the disturber of Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, has got into trouble with the police again. On Sunday last he and his gang were trying the old game with a Secular meeting addressed by Mr. Edwards, but a London County Council constable, named Bush, didn't see why one particular gathering out of the dozen or so in progress should be interfered with in this disorderly fashion. He therefore told him to go to another spot and hold a meeting of his own. But that was not what Teapot Taylor wanted, and there was a warm dispute, which ended by the constable running him in. According to the newspaper report, sticks, stones, and pieces of turf were used as weapons by the soldiers of the Cross, three of whom tried to prevent Taylor's arrest. However, the constable stuck to his prisoner, and took him to the police-station. Magistrate Hopkins ordered Taylor to find a surety in £10 for his good behavior for six months. Perhaps this will teach him a lesson. But we fear that nothing will teach a lesson to his supporters, for those who accept an impenitent thief as a proper champion of Christianity are past tuition.

In view of Teapot Taylor's arrest and condemnation by the magistrate, it is amusing to read the leading article in the *South London Mail* for August 20. The writer is a foaming bigot who wants to see all open-air Freethought meetings suppressed. He calls them "demoralising demonstrations," whose object is to "debauch public opinion, religious, moral, and political." The Secular speakers ventilate "pestilent theories," and indulge in "irreverent and sacriligious (*sic*) attacks upon The Book." They are "sapping and mining the greatness of this nation," and they should be treated as traitors to the State. This looks like suggesting that they should be prosecuted for sedition, but the writer doesn't mean that—he is only in a muddle. However, he recovers lucidity enough to call upon the authorities to put the Blasphemy Laws in force against the infidels. He bids them "strike, and strike hard." In his opinion, that is the only way to answer Freethought advocates; and we quite believe it is the only way that is feasible to his limited capacities. Argument is not much in his line. His idea of settling a controversy is to call for the police.

"It is small wonder," this bigot observes, "that men whose most cherished beliefs are grossly insulted Sunday after Sunday by the inflated irreverence of these profane orators of Peckham Rye are tempted to retaliate with their good strong arms." This is almost a direct incentive to violence. But the writer forgets that Secularists may have good strong arms too, if they are compelled to use them.

Well, the authorities *have* struck a blow, and it has fallen upon Teapot Taylor, instead of upon the Secularists, who only want fair play and the common right to hold their

meetings in an orderly fashion. We hope the editor of the *South London Mail*, after his crusading talk about strong arms, has at least had the manliness to provide the £10 security for his brother in the faith.

An editorial against the Secularists was not enough. The subject was also referred to in "Notes and Notions" by a fellow who writes as "John Justice." He likewise complains of Peckham Rye being "polluted by profanity." Where are the police? he asks. He calls upon the authorities to "deal promptly and drastically" with the Secular lecturers. But why this frantic appeal to the police and the authorities? Any citizen can set the Blasphemy Laws into motion, though we don't choose to tell him how. But it would have to be done at the said citizen's own risk and expense. Ay, there's the rub! It is a peculiarity of bigots that they almost invariably like to gratify their evil passions at the expense of their neighbors.

There was a fire at the Consumptive Hospital's buildings in the neighborhood of Paisley, and the damage will eat up every penny of the £3,000 insurance. While the fire was burning, and before the arrival of the fire brigade from Paisley, a pious gentleman named William Quarrier, who writes a long letter on the subject in the *Glasgow Daily Record*, made up his mind to wrestle with the Lord in fervent effectual prayer. For two hours he prayed lustily, and all the time "the flames rose higher and higher." Still, the Lord did answer his prayer by keeping the east wind blowing all the time, and this kept the flames in the western side of the building. Simple William Quarrier! One would think that the wind was in the habit of shifting whenever a fire broke out. But, after all, this William Quarrier may not be quite as simple as he seems; for, after declaring that his faith in God is stronger than ever, he begs "the sympathy of the Lord's children in making good any deficiency." Perhaps this prayer to the Lord, conveyed through the columns of a widely circulated newspaper, will be answered likewise, to the vanquishment of all the infidels and materialists on this planet.

Marcus Hedges Lewis, of Eccles, near Manchester, described in the *London Star* as "minister and preacher, borrower of money, backer of horses, and obtainer of goods for which he had no means of paying," was charged at the Mansion House with forgery by altering a cheque for £1 to £61.

Men of God will go wrong. A warrant has been issued at Wood Green for the arrest of the Rev. F. onwick Skrimshire, of the Presbytery, Lower Tottenham. He is charged with inciting a man to commit a certain offence in a carriage on the Great Eastern Railway.

"Providence" does not seem to afford special protection to clergymen and their families. One of the victims in the latest Isle of Man boat accident was the Rev. Mr. Gordon, a retired Church of England parson, who had just built a large house, in which to enjoy the remainder of his life. At Yeovilton, near Yeovil, Miss Gertrude Hyson, eldest daughter of the rector, has been drowned while bathing in the river.

Sir Henry Fowler, one of our Liberal "statesmen," has been orating at the laying of the foundation stones of a Primitive Methodist Chapel at New Invention. He declared that the improved condition of the people of England was mostly due to the work of the Christian Churches—just as though there were no Christian Churches in England a hundred years ago. "The one thing the people wanted," he said, "was the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ." Well, it is provided for them at a cost of something like £20,000,000 a year, and it is frightfully expensive considering its real value. Of course, Sir Henry Fowler may think he is speaking the truth. We don't. But if he is, it is clear that he and all his fellow members of parliament are wasting time at Westminster. What is more, they are wasting the nation's money.

A witch doctor, Chambers alias Elliott, has been committed to prison at Wells for two months. He appears to have done a roaring trade. His fee was 10s. 6d., and the simple country people, including well-to-do farmers, had implicit belief in the efficacy of his magic and incantations. No doubt it is all right to send him to prison, but what about the Catholic purgatory doctors who take money for getting your dead relatives out of a place nobody knows where? When you sweep the stairs why not begin at the top?

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

H. L. Barrow, 5s.; T. Holstead, 10s.; Richard Green, £1.
Per C. Cohen.—W. Swaile, 2s. 6d.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, August 28, Victoria Park.

September 4, Peckham Rye and Athenæum Hall; 11, Athenæum Hall; 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park; 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. November 27, Birmingham. December 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. LEDGER.—The Hyde Park Demonstration was settled by the rain. No doubt you were much disappointed after coming from Hull. Perhaps you will be able to hear Mr. Foote, and maybe Mr. Watts, there before long. Thanks.

J. M. DAY.—We will enquire, and try to let you know next week.

W. A. FINCKEN.—You are quite old enough to join the Secular Society, Limited. Some men have more sense and character at twenty than others have at sixty. You have your share, or you wouldn't incur the trouble and expense of becoming a member. Your certificate will be forwarded before the General Members' Meeting.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—In our next.

G. W. BLYTHE.—We don't recollect the date of the piece you mention. Perhaps it will be included in Mr. Mackenzie's projected volume.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A. Marsh, £1; T. Holstead, 10s.; W. Ledger, 1s.

T. J. THURLOW.—Inserted as desired. Pleased to hear the East London friends had such a good time.

W. KOHEN.—Glad to have your letter assuring us from personal knowledge that the Freethought Demonstrations are doing great good, especially amongst the younger men, who are rallying to the branches in their respective districts. Never mind the personalities of the Christian blackguards you refer to. An advertisement is just what they are dying for. Leave them alone, and they will sink and rot in their own filth. We have noticed the misfortunes of Teapot Taylor.

T. HOLSTEAD.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Bolton before Christmas.

G. BRADY.—Received with thanks. Mr. Foote's holiday did him much good, though it was too brief, and broken by editorial duties.

W. MANLEY suggests that Mr. Watts's article in last week's *Freethinker* on "Secular and Theological Forces" should be reprinted as a cheap tract for general distribution.

H. PERCY WARD.—We have not seen Mr. Roodor Harris's *Case Against Atheism*, though we have seen it advertised. We have glanced at a few of his outpourings in evangelical papers, and we thought them almost imbecile. Is the book any better?

G. CROOKSON.—There must have been a mistake. Our old sub-editor is dead, and we cannot ask him whether he recollects the matter. Mr. Foote has not the least objection to lecturing at Barneley. We believe there was a difficulty some time ago in obtaining a suitable hall. No doubt a date can be found for a visit if this difficulty is removed.

T. WILMOT.—Mr. Foote would have been very happy to lecture at Camberwell on September 4, but he has to reopen the Athenæum Hall that evening. You must charge the accident on the hot weather.

NON DEI.—(1) You will only waste your time by refuting Christian lies about leading Freethinkers. Mrs. Besant, of course, never made any such infamous statement about Charles Bradlaugh. Any man with an atom of common sense must see its monstrous absurdity. We cannot make our columns the medium for printing such stuff. (2) Glad to hear you have such high admiration for Ingersoll's oration on Shakespeare. Every Freethinker ought to have a copy. (3) Clodd's little book on Evolution is good; we believe the price is 2s. 6d.

RICHARD CARROLL (Belfast) joins the Secular Society, Limited, and sends good wishes.

A. B. MOSS.—We shall be glad if you can manage to have our paragraphs safely conveyed to the writers in the *South London Mail*. Thanks.

RICHARD GREEN.—Sorry to hear that the postponement at the Athenæum Hall deprived you and your wife of the "pleasure," as you are good enough to put it, of hearing Mr. Foote lecture again. Perhaps you and your wife will be coming to London again before long. We hope so. Your subscription to the Wheeler Fund is acknowledged elsewhere. Glad you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. We expect a good many accessions during September, before the first General Members' Meeting. Some always take a long time considering, but jump on board when the whistle sounds.

H. WARD and W. A. JONES (Kimborloy) congratulate Mr. Foote on the launching of his Secular Incorporation, which they hope will be "vigorously taken up by every Freethinker in the United Kingdom." They apply for membership themselves, and send the entrance fee. They expect to get a few others to join presently. "You have," they add, "a good many sympathisers scattered about in South Africa."

KNOWLEDGE.—We presume you mean translations, but we do not know of any such chart. Of course there are easily accessible translations of Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Lucretius, and Lucan. After the immortal work of Gibbon, you will find Mommsen's *History of Rome* most helpful. There is a good English translation, but somewhat expensive.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION FUND.—C. Cohen acknowledges:—Mr. Striemer, £2; Victoria Park Collection, 15s. 9d.; Mile-end, 1s.; Mr. Bars, 6d.; Mr. Wood, 1s.; Mr. Davey, 1s.; Mr. Beadle, 1s.; Mr. Hall, 1s. 6d.; Mr. Wills, 1s.; Miss Lawrence, 2s.

W. ANDERSON.—There are several volumes of Hazlitt's writings in Bohn's Library, at 3s. 6d. each. If you do not want, or cannot afford, them all, you can obtain a most excellent and full selection from Hazlitt in the Chandos Classics. The volume is edited by Alexander Ireland, who contributes a lengthy Memoir. Hazlitt was in some respects a great writer, though not so choice as Coleridge or Lamb. His style is masculine and trenchant. He was undoubtedly a Freethinker—probably a Deist, certainly not a Christian.

E. G. JAMES.—Will use in our next.

W. WILSON.—Every member of the Secular Society, Limited, has to pay 10s. the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards. Your suggestions are taken in good part, but we have not the means to purchase "advanced" novels from Grant Allen and Mrs. Humphry Ward. The lady's price is a very high one. Where are we to find a few thousand pounds? Some new features will be introduced in the *Freethinker* shortly.

A. MILLER and S. MCLANG (Paisley) ask us to contradict the story that Mr. Foote declined to debate with a certain Dr. Reid? Well, who is Dr. Reid? We do not recollect such a person. We have an idea that some sort of challenge was thrown out by a local quack doctor, but we could hardly take him as an accredited representative of the Christian religion. Our correspondent also asks us to deny that "on another occasion you shut the doors to keep out Christians who wanted to debate with you." Nothing of the kind ever occurred at any of Mr. Foote's lectures. At one of Mr. Watts's lectures the Secularists had to keep out a gang of disturbers who came over from Glasgow, and were led by the ruffian, Walton Powell, who is now doing fifteen months' imprisonment for debauching young girls. Perhaps this is the occasion alluded to.

JOHN GRAHAM.—Mr. Forder is not the editor of the *Freethinker*. Please send your notices direct to editor himself in future. See paragraph.

J. N. LEIDS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. MARSH, 62 Pentonville-road, London, N., treasurer of the Truelove Fund, desires us to acknowledge that he has received 10s. from W. C. Griffin.

H. L. BARRON.—J. M. Wheeler certainly did, as you say, render splendid services to the Secular cause. The Memorial Fund closes at the end of September. There is still time for many more sympathisers to subscribe.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ethical World—Free Thought Magazine—Lucifer—Awakener of India—Star—South London Mail—Daily Record—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Sydney Bulletin—Lucifer—Paris in 1900—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Liberator—People's Newspaper—Daylight—Charleston News and Courier—Daily News—The Two Worlds—English Mechanic—The New Time—Secular Thought—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Torch of Reason—Dor Arme Teufel—Crescent—Free Society—Midland Evening News.

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

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

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

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

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

I VENTURE to press this appeal again, and more strongly, upon the attention of the friends of this journal. I assure them I am not doing so needlessly. It would be far better to increase the circulation by regular, judicious advertising, than to face the necessity of a maintenance fund. Standing still is impossible; one must go forward or backward; and it will be easy enough to go forward if Freethinkers rally to my support on this occasion. I want to begin advertising in various ways early in September. There are thousands of liberal-minded people who might buy the *Freethinker* if it were only brought under their notice, and made less difficult to procure. This cannot be done without money, and it ought to be forthcoming. What I cannot do individually, my readers can do collectively. It is rumored, I hear, that I have just had a windfall of £2,000. Unfortunately it is a pure and absolute invention. If those who start such rumors had to make them good I should soon be wealthy.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the continuance of the heat wave, there will be a still further postponement of the resumption of the Sunday evening lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road. There will be a lecture on Sunday next, September 4, under any circumstances, and Mr. Foote will occupy the platform.

The third Freethought Demonstration took place on Sunday afternoon in Finsbury Park. It was blazing hot, and the shade of a big tree was most welcome to the speakers, and to the portion of the audience which it covered. Mr. Wilson kindly provided a brake and pair of horses as before, and the vehicle made a first-rate platform, solid to the feet and high enough to command the biggest crowd. Mr. Forder, who acted as chairman, led off with a brief speech, and then called upon Mr. Cohen, who was warmly received and listened to with great attention. He was heartily applauded on resuming his seat. Mr. Charles Watts, who followed, was in good form. All his points were caught up by the meeting, and he was loudly cheered at the finish. The chairman then introduced Mr. Foote, not only as President of the National Secular Society, but as editor of the *Freethinker*, a journal which Christian bigots had vainly tried to suppress by prosecution and imprisonment. Mr. Foote was enthusiastically cheered on rising, and the crowd, which was a big one before, grew bigger and bigger as he proceeded with his speech, much to the detriment of the Christian gatherings in the vicinity. There was more enthusiasm at the finish, and then Mr. Heaford delivered a brief, effective address, which was evidently appreciated. Mr. Forder spoke a few more earnest words before closing the meeting. The horses were then hitched on to the brake, and the speakers drove away amidst vigorous cheering, the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and cries of "Come again!"

One feature of the brake party seemed to be rather pleasant to the meeting. Mr. Foote brought his wife, his eldest daughter, and the "baby," a little maiden of seven, dressed in white, with a white sun bonnet. She had never been to such a gathering before, and her naive enjoyment was evidently found amusing. Moreover, the people were able to see for themselves a sample of the "horrible infidel homes" which Christian Evidence men are in the habit of depicting. Mr. Heaford also had one of his children in the brake—a lad of nine with a noticeably good head.

Miss Brown, who was unfortunately suffering from a sprained foot, nevertheless went with Miss Bater amongst the crowd to take up a collection, with what appeared to be a gratifying result.

The Infidel Slaughterers had a rival meeting at a respectful distance. They had a large meeting at first, but there was a general exodus from it when the "infidel" brake appeared upon the scene, and it never got very large again. According to report, the Infidel Slaughterers were madder than ever. They forgot all about Jesus Christ, and spent nearly all the time in traducing the National Secular Society and libelling its President—a policy which soon palls if the "infidels" don't condescend to reply.

A report of the Demonstration appeared in Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. It was not too accurate, but anything is better than the old boycott.

Another Freethought Demonstration will be held this afternoon (August 28) at 3.30 in Victoria Park. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and other speakers, will address the meeting. East-end Freethinkers should gather in strong force and bring along their Christian friends with them.

After speaking at the Freethought Demonstration in Finsbury Park last Sunday afternoon, Mr. Charles Watts hurried off to the Secular Hall, Camberwell, where he gave a free lecture for the benefit of the funds of the local Branch. Considering the excessive heat, there was a good audience, about two hundred persons being present. Mr. Watts had a hearty reception, and his lecture was enthusiastically applauded.

Mr. A. B. Moss had three good open-air audiences on Sunday, in the morning and afternoon at Hyde Park, and in the evening at Hammersmith. One of his opponents confessed that he was nearly driven into a lunatic asylum through listening to the late Mr. Spurgeon's discourses on Hell.

Wigan Secularists are going to re-organise. A meeting for this object will be held to-day (August 28) at 12.30 noon at the Bull's Head Hotel. All local Freethinkers, whether belonging to the N.S.S. Branch or not, are invited to attend.

Editor Green, of the *Freethought Magazine* (Chicago), is gallantly maintaining his periodical, but he appears to have had a bad time lately. When the war excitement began his receipts dropped one-half. He says that all publications have suffered in the same way except the daily newspapers. "The Christian periodicals," it appears, "have suffered equally with the Freethought journals, and most other weeklies and monthlies have greatly fallen off in their receipts and circulation." Happily, the cessation of fighting is now bringing about an improvement.

Miss Vance's official announcement of the details of the Children's Excursion appears in another column. About £20 or £25 will be required to give the youngsters a really good day's outing, with enough to eat and drink. Surely this amount will be subscribed readily enough. Some Freethinker who can afford it should write out a cheque for say £10, and break the back of the expense. Who will do it, and help to make a lot of children happy?

"Our English friends had a very successful Annual Conference on Whit-Monday, when Mr. Foote was unanimously re-elected President. We wish him and his friends all success. Our movement is not dead, nor even sleeping. Secular principles are ousting religion everywhere; and even the churches have to adopt secular means to hold their own at all—that is, they have to renounce Christianity in order to live. It is our influence that compels this change; we are making it impossible for all but the most brutishly ignorant to believe Christian dogmas and the fudge of the New Testament. This is our work, our 'mission,' as some might call it; and certainly no mission could be more successful. We cannot make money, but we can impress thoughtful people for good, and we can help them to see what the clergy are anxious to hide. It matters not in the least how the clergy speak about us behind our backs, nor what their dupes and tools spread in the way of slander; for our work goes forward in spite of all. Secularism is come to stay, everybody likes it, the clergy as well as any—for themselves, if not for their dupes. All that is good, honest, and wholesome in civilisation is secular; religion, at its very best, is perverted, and more or less corrupted, Secularism. Faith is growing less, for intelligence is growing in extent and influence; devotion in the pious sense is giving place to devotion to the world and worldly pursuits. The most devout now go through a little mummery, and spend most of their time in worldly things. This great change is growing and deepening. We are teaching people that this world and this life may be made worth the having, that a future life is all fudge; and the people are believing us and acting accordingly."—*Joseph Symes, in the "Liberator" (Melbourne)*.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.

THE Committee have arranged for an excursion by brakes to Eastcote Farm, Pinner (a most accessible and suitable spot), on Saturday, September 10. Brakes will start from the most convenient points the Committee can select to pick up the children of the members of the various Branches—viz., Camberwell, East London, Bethnal Green, Wood Green, Finsbury Park, North-west and West London, full particulars of which will be announced next week. Each brake will be in the charge of members of the Committee, who will undertake the care of the children. On arrival at Pinner a luncheon and tea will be provided, and every possible arrangement made for their amusement and safety; and they will return early in the evening at a given time.

The age limit is from seven to fourteen years of age. Parents wishing to visit Pinner can obtain from the Secretary particulars of the train service to fit in with arrangements. Application for tickets (members' children only) should be made to Branch Secretaries. Individual members should apply to Miss Vance, 377 Strand, who will also send collecting-cards.

Re East London Excursion.

A three hours' beautiful drive from the Mile End Waste through the sylvan scenery of the forest to picturesque old Epping; musical accompaniments to cheer us on the way; a goodly number of the fair sex, with a fair sprinkling of budding little Freethinkers giving life and color to the jolly company; the very best of good cheer at the "Royal Oak," ending with a most delightful drive back home in the cool of the evening; account for the suspension of the propagandist work of our active saints of East London on Sunday last; and also for the way in which those worthies, on that occasion, did honor to the good old pagan festival, Sunday.
T. J. THURLOW.

BLESSED SAINT ANN.

THE important intelligence printed by the newspapers that "the novena of St. Ann in the church of St. John the Baptist is at an end," and that "many are the cures wrought by the relic of the great saint," should attract the attention of thoughtful persons. That the cures taking place in this church are miraculous is well known; it is to advertise the miracle-joint that they are mentioned by the press. They are brought about by the presence there of a glass case holding a piece of the wrist-bone of St. Ann. I have thought it worth while to look up the record of the lady in the case. During St. Ann's open season her miraculous cures are as common as those of Mrs. Lydia Pinkham, and large aggregations of discarded crutches, ear trumpets, wooden legs, patent trusses, braces, and glass eyes are piled alongside the relic for the astonishment of the faithful and for the benefit of the scoffer. You would think that in the course of time the church of St. John the Baptist would have a line of second-hand mechanical supports to sell or to burn; but we never hear of their being disposed of in that way. I suspect that they are kept from one year to another in the run under the altar, and roused out to do duty again when a novena comes on.

Comment has been caused by the fact that the parents and grandparents of Jesus Christ (or God) are kept far to the rear in the narrative of his exploits. If such a man should come to the front now, we would have pictures of the humble cottage where he lived when he was a boy, and the old folks of several generations sitting out in front under a catalpa tree. Although the hero of the gospels retained a number of Boswells near him to record his bright sayings and the choice scraps of profanity which he let fall anon, and also to preserve examples of his facility at repartee, the members of his family are about the same as ignored. His brothers and sisters, the sons and daughters of his ever-virgin mother, are accorded a single allusion; but that is apparently by mistake. Commentators have surmised that his relatives were shut out in order that the young man himself might more prominently occupy the stage, and that his managers did not wish to surround him with connections who would divide the attention of the spectators. If this is right, it may be inquired why they claimed for him such an over-shadowing Dad. Viewed as the only-begotten, he owes more to being the son of somebody than any man in the subsistence department of the United States army or on the staff of Fitzhugh Lee, and this is not barring Russ Harrison.

I think that St. Ann is unknown to the gospels, though I may be wrong and am open to correction. However, if the writers of the synoptics missed her, there were others, and Ann or Anna gets her dues at the hands of the genius who penned the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, an anonymous and so-called apocryphal contribution to religious literature, which the editors of the canon do not seem to have found available for their columns. Victor Hugo said that to reform a man you should begin with his grandmother. St. Ann was the grandmother of God. Hugo's thought was anticipated by the divine mind, for, though it is true that the genealogy of our Savior is traced to a number of women with a past, whose husbands might have brought suit for divorce and named an angel as co-respondent, Ann (or Anna) is the first of his forbears between whom and himself the common processes of generation do not come in. From Abraham, who was superseded in the affections of Sarah by one of those amphibious individuals called angels, down to Joachim, the husband of Anna, none of Christ's ancestors had to keep an eye aloft to protect the domestic hearth.

This Joachim was a native of Nazareth; Anna, a product of Bethlehem; and they were married to each other. Whether she was a wife in name only it is futile to inquire, but for twenty years they were without children, and Joachim's neighbors jollied him for all that length of time. He could not even go to meeting of a Sunday without having it thrown up to him that the women folks would like to see the doctor's carriage in front of his house. Some said he was afraid he would be expected to blow off the gang, and was too penurious to so spend his denarii. This got so tiresome after two decades that Joachim quit home, changed his name, and went to herding sheep on the range. "When he had been there some time," says his biographer, whose neglect of dates is to be regretted, "on

a certain day when he was alone" he had an idea. The thought overtook him that perhaps he had been standing in his own light all these years, and that as likely as not his absence from home had enhanced his family prospects. The impression attained such strength that he put on his soft clothes, drew what was coming to him, and took the road for Jerusalem. When he hove in sight of the premises he had left, he saw Anna sitting on the stile, waiting for him or for somebody else, and the sight so reminded him of Judah's adventure on the way to Timnath (see Genesis xxxviii. 14) that he felt a momentary pain. She gave him the glad hand, and, as they walked along together towards the house, Anna questioned Joachim, as a woman will, about his conduct while abroad; inquired if he had seen any nicer girls than she was, and what he thought of the women of Hualapi; but it is not chronicled that he gave anything away. When the proper moment arrived, she observed, as though this was the first time it had occurred to her, that she was the possessor of a piece of news, but didn't know whether she had better tell it or keep it to herself. Joachim said Hum, and waited. It was something, she went on, that he might not care to hear. Joachim said to himself: "I thought so. Now it is coming." Well (so Anna resumed), while he was away (and she didn't half believe him when he said he had been true to her—which, by the way, Joachim had not affirmed) a visitor from heaven had favored her with a call, a very agreeable party, resembling the holy men called priests, and had told her to keep a look-out at the gate for her husband, whom she was to assure, when he came, that he would in due time become a father in a truly miraculous way. Joey had heard of these things happening before, and so, suppressing the remark that the miracle would be more extraordinary if he should become a mother, he snored softly and feigned sleep, but did a whole lot of thinking at the same time. To forestall scoffing, and to set doubts of Anna's story at rest in advance, I will here quote a dogma of the Roman Church, proclaimed by Pope Pius IX. on the Feast of the Conception, December 8, 1854, in the church of St. Peter, and in the presence of more than two hundred cardinals, bishops, and other dignitaries, all sober, in these words: "That the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin." That settles it; and, besides, I have seen the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin on Lafayette-place. They named the kid Mary.

It is written in the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, whence, as said previously, I glean these statistics, that Mary was weaned at the age of three. Meanwhile Joachim hung around the house, and the angel stayed away. It is surmised he was a travelling man. Anna's angel instructed her that the child was to be devoted to the Lord. That meant she should be placed in an institution called a temple, which was accordingly done, and Mary, aged three years, became a virgin of the temple. A passage in the narrative, describing the bringing of her there, says: "And there were about the temple fifteen stairs to ascend. The virgin of the Lord in such a manner went up all the stairs one after another, without the help of any to lead or lift her, that anyone would have judged from hence that she was of perfect age. Thus the Lord did, in the infancy of his virgin, work this extraordinary work, and evidence by this miracle how great was she like to be hereafter." I see little to be gathered from this except that, if nothing happened to arrest the development of her pins, the girl would some day be able to make a wheel hum, and to wear appropriate clothes, in serene confidence that she was above criticism. The temple where Mary now took up her residence was the home of numerous other girls, and here also the priests appear to have been domiciled. The rules of the establishment required that when the girls reached "a proper maturity" they were to return home and obtain husbands, and for fear any of them might fail of immediate espousal the priests kindly acted as schatchens, and found a young man for each one of them. In this way did the holy men provide that the wedding and christening should come in their right order. Mary at fifteen became the bride of Joseph, a man far advanced in years. To her also, as to her mother, came an angel to advise her what she should say to her husband in case he inquired; and when Joachim heard of it, he observed: "This thing appears to run in the family." It was the fortune of Mary to rear a son

who was one day to return to this temple where the priests "sold doves" (somewhat soiled) and "oxen" (a euphemism), and clean it out. Probably his raid was made on the strength of her evidence. Nothing like that which happened to Anna and her daughter has happened to any wife or maid since that time; and this is what makes their relics so unique, and their history so interesting.

—New York "Truthseeker." G. E. MACDONALD.

BOOK CHAT.

BOOKSELLERS' catalogues often contain food for mirth, and the trade journals keep us from becoming too sad. In one of the latter, dated August 13, occurs the following among the books asked for:—"Shelley's Works, by Formans." Such is fame. Mr. H. Buxton Forman has devoted a good portion of a useful life to the elucidation of Shelley's poems, and his reward is to be referred to as "Formans."

* * *

This recalls Byron's savage sneer, that military glory meant that one manured a foreign field and had one's name spelt wrong in the gazette.

* * *

We are delighted to see that Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein and Co. have published another edition of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, translated by "George Eliot." The present is a bulky volume of nearly 800 pages, and is issued at 15s. Despite the sneers of the orthodox, Strauss is by no means obsolete, and his book is much more satisfactory for the student than the more brilliant *Life of Jesus* by Ernest Renan.

* * *

For the benefit of those of our readers who are not millionaires, we may mention that Strauss's book is by no means uncommon in second-hand bookshops, where copies usually fetch about eight shillings, if in good condition. It is pleasant to reflect that the book must still have a ready sale to be at all in evidence among the second-hand dealers.

* * *

Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer has published several short stories in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* recently. It is gratifying to find that Mr. Mortimer's fine talents are appreciated by the editor of the paper with the largest circulation in the world. The million or so readers might do worse than buy the books of the author of *Tales of the Western Moors*.

* * *

Walt Whitman is without question one of the greatest figures in American literature. He completely broke with the past, and no longer contented himself, like the Longfellow, Bryants, and Whittiers, with being the sedulous ape to European poets. Whatever American literature may ultimately become, he must ever remain the pioneer of the distinctive New World literature. We therefore welcome the new, cheap, and complete edition of his poems issued by G. P. Putnam's Sons, Bedford-street, Strand, at 2s. net.

* * *

Until recently *unexpurgated* editions of Whitman used to fetch as much as 15s. second-hand. We fear we have said almost enough to induce Detective Sweeney to take a copy to bed with him, but we have every reason to believe that it is only *scientific* works which can demoralise a policeman.

* * *

To those of our readers who are unacquainted with Whitman, we recommend Colonel Ingersoll's pamphlet on the American poet, which, besides being a most eloquent oration, is a most illuminative piece of criticism.

* * *

Mr. George Meredith's novels were the subject of an article in the *Harvard Monthly* for June, 1887. The writer sent it to Mr. Meredith, who promptly replied in a very interesting letter, which was recently read at the annual dinner of the magazine. We reproduce the letter for the benefit of the Meredithians among our own readers:—

England—Box Hill, Dorking.

July 22, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,—When at the conclusion of your article on my works you say that a certain change in public taste, should it come about, will be to some extent due to me, you hand me the flowering wreath I covet. For I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; and, as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only where they point and aid to that end. Close knowledge of our fellows, discernment of the laws of existence, these lead to great civilisation. I have supposed that the novel, exposing and illustrating the natural history of man, may help us to such sustaining roadside gifts. But I have never started on a novel to pursue the theory it developed. The dominant idea in my mind took up the characters and the

story midway. You say that there are few scenes. Is it so throughout? My method has been to prepare my readers for a crucial exhibition of the personæ, and then to give the scene in the fullest of their blood and brain under stress of a fiery situation.

Concerning style, thought is tough, and dealing with thought produces toughness. Or when strong emotion is in tide against the active mind, there is, perforce, confusion. Have you found that scenes of simple emotion or plain narrative were hard to view? When their author revised for the new edition his critical judgment approved those passages. Yet you are not to imagine that he holds his opinion combatively against his critics. The verdict is with the observer. In the comedies, and here and there, where a concentrated presentment is in design, you find a "pitch" considerably above our common human; and purposely, for only in such a manner could so much be shown. Thus my notes and condensations are abandoned when the strong human call is heard. I beg you to understand merely that such was my intention.

Again, when you tell me the Harvard has the works, and that young Harvard reads them, the news is of a kind to prompt me to fresh productiveness and higher. In England I am encouraged but by a few enthusiasts. I read in the *Critical Review* of some verse of mine the other day that I was "a harlequin and performer of antics." I am accustomed to the kind of writing, as our hustings orator is to the dead cat and brickbat flung in his face—at which he smiles politely; and I too; but after many years of it, my mind looks elsewhere. Adieu to you.—Most faithfully yours,
GEORGE MEREDITH.

* * *

According to Mr. Carlyle Smith, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, Mark Twain's literary preferences are "entirely serious." The only poet he cares for is Browning. Good heavens! Who would have thought it? In prose, we are told, he reads "anything that is clean and healthy." Yet he has never been interested in a single line of Thackeray, he does not in the least appreciate Goldsmith and Addison, and "Meredith provokes him to laughter." It really looks as though Mark Twain had been playing the humorist with Mr. Carlyle Smith.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ATHEISM, AGNOSTICISM, AND MR. CHARLES WATTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read with astonishment Mr. Charles Watts's article on "Atheism and Agnosticism" in the August number of the *Literary Guide*; I have also read, with disappointment, his "Explanation" in the *Freethinker* in reply to the "Book Chat" note in your issue of the 7th, in which you criticise the article.

Mr. Watts's explanation does not satisfy me, and I venture to think that many others share my dissatisfaction. Mr. Watts's position does not appear to me to be logical, and there are several points in his article and explanation which I should like him to make more clear.

To some it may seem presumptuous on the part of a young Freethought recruit to criticise one who is an experienced general in our ranks, but I feel sure that Mr. Watts is too generous-minded and genial-spirited to stifle sincere desire for information by stigmatising it as impudence.

As Mr. Watts states in his article, "in these days precision, both of thought and expression, is expected on the part of those who write for, or speak to, the public"; but, at present, it appears to me that, adhering to that standard of precision, which, as a rule, characterises Mr. Watts's writings, reconciliation between his article and his explanation would be a difficult task.

The following are some of the apparently contradictory statements of Mr. Watts's which, to my mind, are most perplexing:—

1. Mr. Watts designates himself in the *Freethinker* an "Agnostic." He says in the *Literary Guide*: "It becomesalmost a necessity for those who choose to designate themselves Agnostics to explain their position, and to vindicate their use of the word so as to set themselves right with the public, and avoid being called by a name [Atheist] to which they object, upon the ground that it does not clearly express their views." Yet, in the *Freethinker*, Mr. Watts, the Agnostic, also says, "I am a pronounced Atheist," which, surely, can hardly be considered an effective way of setting one's self "right with the public"; nor is it, I submit, the proper policy to adopt in order to avoid being called by a name to which one objects.

2. In his article Mr. Watts asserts that the two "isms" are not identical in their signification. In his explanation Mr. Watts defines an Atheist as one who has "no belief in the existence of any 'God,'" and an Agnostic as one who knows "nothing of the alleged supernatural." Is not this a

distinction without a difference? Is not disbelief in "God" disbelief in the "alleged supernatural"?

3. Mr. Watts writes in the *Literary Guide*: "It is true the judicious Atheist may not assert in so many words that there is no God; but from the whole of his teaching that is the legitimate inference to be drawn." In the *Freethinker* Mr. Watts writes: "I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing." Would it be fair to Mr. Watts to say that the legitimate inference to be drawn from the latter quotation was that there is no God; only that Mr. Watts, as a judicious Atheist, had not in so many words asserted it?

4. Mr. Watts declares in his article that when the Atheist "positively denies" the existence of a God portrayed in "terms which no human mind can grasp," and which are "unthinkable," a being whose existence is not "susceptible of proof," he is as unphilosophical as the Theist who positively asserts the existence of such a God. If a person positively asserts the meaningless formula, $2 + 2 = 5$, is the mental attitude of the individual who positively denies the assertion to be characterised as unphilosophical? Or would it be more philosophical and judicious to neither deny nor affirm anything about the matter, and say "I do not know"? And is the illogical position of the Theist who defines God as a personal, infinite being, a term "meaningless" and "unthinkable," shared by the Atheist who denies that a God so defined could exist?

5. In the *Literary Guide* Mr. Watts affirms: "The dogmatism both of the Theist and the Atheist the Agnostic eschews, seeing that both are tacitly claiming to have some sort of a conception of the inconceivable, and thoughts of the unthinkable." But, in the *Freethinker*, Mr. Watts affirms, as I have previously quoted above: "I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic either to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing." In the one quotation the person who accepts the Atheistic position possesses "dogmatism"; in the other quotation the Atheist is one who regards it as equally dogmatic to affirm or to deny "God"—a position which, according to Mr. Watts's article, is the very point upon which the Agnostic "claims to differ from the Atheist." It is difficult to see how the two statements can be harmonised; they utterly destroy the distinction which Mr. Watts has been trying to show exists between the Atheist and the Agnostic. Mr. Watts will forgive me, I hope, for not being able to resist the temptation to say that the reader will not, as he states in his article, "be able to decide for himself which is the more logical position"; unless, like Mr. Watts, he accepts both positions.

In his explanation Mr. Watts writes: "Unfortunately, the article is not printed exactly as it was written. I regret that several words which were intended to explain my object in writing were inadvertently omitted." Of course one can easily understand how a misfortune of that kind might occur, but I must confess that I cannot understand Mr. Watts when he further writes: "It was my intention, while not objecting to the use of either term, to state what is supposed by some persons to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism." Who are the "some persons"? Theists, Atheists, or Agnostics? Does the article represent Mr. Watts's ideas about Atheism and Agnosticism, or does it not? And, if not, I respectfully ask, What is the utility of an article which states what is "supposed by some persons" to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, if it does not represent the views of leading Atheists and Agnostics, but the erroneous opinions of "comparatively unknown" persons?

I do hope that a further explanation from Mr. Watts, with the missing words, will appear in the next number of the *Literary Guide*, as many persons will read the article there who do not see the *Freethinker*. It would be a pity if the position of a prominent Secular leader like Mr. Watts on this question was misunderstood, and his article used by unscrupulous Christian Evidence lecturers to keep alive the mistaken idea, denied by almost every Atheist of any note, that an Atheist is one who says "There is no God."

H. PERCY WARD.

FLOGGING CERTAIN CRIMINALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am at a loss to understand why Mr. Joseph Collinson pitches into Mr. Justice Day in your paper of August 14. As I take it, rape is a serious offence, although sometimes a question of degree, and for which the judges do not possess the power of flogging; but I have no doubt that learned judge knew the sort of case with which he had to deal, as well as being able to discern the sort of gentleman he was dealing with. Some years ago I was on the petty jury at Winchester, where two cases of rape came before us. The judge was Baron Huddleston, a most irritable old gentleman. One was where a young fellow met a girl in a lonely spot, threw her down, and committed the offence. Fifteen years was his reward. The other where a brazen-faced girl attended a fair, and consented to go off with a

young fellow, who committed the offence. We stopped the case. Rape is an offence against the person, and I have no doubt the prisoner before Mr. Justice Day deserved it, or you may depend he would not have made the remark. Does Mr. Collinson wish to do away with flogging for any sort of offence committed against the person? Well, as a Free-thinker and a constant reader of your paper, I totally differ from Mr. Collinson; and as the mention of the word Hooligan is suggestive of a class who do not stop at daylight murder, and whose victims have done them no injury, I convey to the non-flogging champion, Mr. Collinson, that, were I a judge, and either of these gentlemen appeared before me, I should give them all the elbow room the law allowed, and even stretch it, so that this game may be stopped. Flogging is the only cure. I do not think there is much the matter with the sentences passed by our judges, and, if there were, these sentences are carefully revised, and, if deemed prudent, the Home Secretary could step in at any time and remit; but I feel sure it will be a long time before Mr. Collinson could get the Home Secretary in the mood to remit any flogging for crime committed against the person, highway robbery with violence, and others for which that punishment is provided. In fact, the outlook points to the need of our judges ordering more flogging, whether Mr. Justice Day or either of them, before the outrageous offences which have lately been perpetrated in our large towns are stamped out. Flogging is a safer cure than long terms of imprisonment or penal servitude for these crimes, whilst the first suggestion does not deprive them of their reason, a fact which the latter in many cases often does. Criminal lunatics are certainly on the increase.

CHARLES PARMETER.

MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—With one or two brief statements I think I shall have closed my case against Mr. Cohen.

I want the teacher to be allowed the use of any book which he pleases to choose as a source of illustrations, and I do this on the principle of freedom of thought. I will not consent to boycott the Bible, any more than I would consent to boycott Paine's *Age of Reason*.

I cannot understand what Mr. Cohen means by speaking of the Bible being placed in the teacher's hands on "official recommendation." I do not want a School Board or the Education Department to "recommend" the use of the Bible. I want the authorities to lay a certain syllabus of instruction (veracity, justice, kindness, etc.) before the teacher and say to him: "Teach that, and draw your illustrations from any book you like."

Mr. Cohen fastens on my statement, that the lessons given under the Education Department are thoroughly secular. So they are thoroughly secular; but there is nothing to prevent any teacher from making reference to any Bible story in a non-theological sense. No Government inspector forbids it, or would dare to forbid it.

If Mr. Cohen asks what I mean by reference to any Bible story in a non-theological sense, I will refer him to the columns of the *Freethinker*. In an editorial article a fortnight ago on the death of Bismarck you did the very thing I want the ordinary elementary school teacher—Christian or Atheist—to be permitted to do. You were speaking of the pathos and the solemnity of the voice of mourning, and you drew your illustrations from many literary sources. In the annexed paragraph you have selected an illustration from the Bible side by side with an illustration from Roman history:—

"Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favorite child. 'Oh Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.' And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catullus over his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever."

Now, there is the point. Is such a use of the Bible to be right in the *Freethinker*, and wrong in the nation's schools?

F. J. GOULD.

How to Help Us.

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

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.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, F. W. Mussett's Dramatic Company.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.30, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Moss, and Heaford.
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones. Peckham Rye: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.
EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack; 7, A lecture. August 31, at 8, C. Cohen.
EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."
HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Stanley Jones.
HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7.15, R. P. Edwards, "What must I do to be Saved?"
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis, "Meaning of Atheism"; 8.15, Stanley Jones.
KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, A lecture.
KINGSLAND (Bidley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.
LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. August 30, at 8, Stanley Jones.
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Third Commandment."

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): 7, G. Harper, "On a Few Poets."
NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE (Quayside): 11, J. Reid, "What Christianity Teaches."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 28, m., Kingsland; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 31, Mile End Waste.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

F. H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 4, Glasgow; 11 and 18, Manchester. October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

POSITIVISM.

"Reorganization, without god or king, by the systematic worship of Humanity."

Information and publications on the Religion of Humanity may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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. 132 pp. 1s. Superior paper, cloth 1s. 6d.
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.
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.

YOUNG MAN seeks employment. Has been used to arduous work, anxious to improve position. Address—A. O., 64, Boscawen street, Deptford, S.E.

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.

THE PROSECUTED MAGAZINE.

THE ADULT.

Edited by HENRY SEYMOUR.

Published on the 1st of each month. Price 3d., post free 4d. "Most interesting.....exceptionally good.....unique."—*Reynolds*. "Contains some lively reading."—*Freethinker*. Office: 51 Arundel-square, London.

THE BEST BOOK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

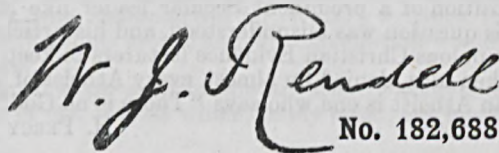
W. J. Rendell's "Wife's Friend"

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

Important Caution.

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

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK


No. 182,688.

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

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

HERB PILLS MADE FROM

Podophyllum, Cascara Sagrada, Dandelion, Rhubarb, Burdock, etc.

These Pills have been used during the last 80 years as a Family Medicine. Nothing else required if used occasionally. Sold at 6d., 1s., and 2s. 6d. per box, with directions for use; or free by post for value in stamps or Postal Order to

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

Advice free on all Diseases. A Herb Recipe to cure any Disease with Herbs free.

FREETHOUGHT WORKS.

- Suicide.** By David Hume. A powerful essay, first published after the author's death, and not included in ordinary editions of his writings. 2d.
- Letters to the Clergy.** By G. W. Foote. Subjects:—Creation—The Believing Thief on the Cross—The Atonement—Old Testament Morality—Inspiration—Credentials of the Gospel—Miracles—Prayer. 128 pp.; 1s.
- Flowers of Freethought.** (First Series.) By G. W. Foote. Fifty-one essays on a variety of Freethought topics. 214 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- Flowers of Freethought.** (Second Series.) By G. W. Foote. Fifty-eight Essays on a further variety of Freethought topics. 302 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.—These two volumes of *Flowers* form together a complete Garden of Freethought. Every aspect of Reason and Faith is treated somewhere, and always in a popular style. Contains much of the author's best writing.
- John Morley as a Freethinker.** By G. W. Foote. Valuable references to Mr. Morley's writings. Good for Freethinkers to read first and then lend to their Christian friends. 2d.
- Is Socialism Sound?** Four Nights' Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Annie Besant. Verbatim, and revised by both disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 2s.
- The Sign of the Cross.** A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's Play, showing its gross partiality and its ridiculous historic inaccuracies, with special reference to the (probably) forged passage in Tacitus and the alleged Neronian massacre of Christians. Handsomely printed, 6d.
- The Birth of Christ.** From the original "Life of Jesus" by the famous Strauss. With an introduction by G. W. Foote. A most thorough Analysis and Exposure of the Gospel Story by a Master Hand. 6d.
- Christianity and Secularism.** Public Debate between G. W. Foote and Rev. Dr. McCann. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. 1s.; superior edition in cloth, 1s. 6d.
- Bible Heroes.** From Adam to Paul. By G. W. Foote. Instructive, interesting, amusing, and honest; in fact, the *only* honest book on the subject. 200 pp., cloth, 2s. 6d.
- The Grand Old Book.** A Reply to the Grand Old Man. By G. W. Foote. An Exhaustive Answer to Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. 1s.; cloth edition, 1s. 6d.
- Will Christ Save Us?** By G. W. Foote. An Examination of the Claims of Jesus Christ to be considered the Savior of the World. Contains much Historic Information on Slavery, the Position of Woman, General Social Progress, and the advance of Science and Freethought in opposition to Christian bigotry. 6d.
- Darwin on God.** By G. W. Foote. A full and minute account of Darwin's mental development, with a brief Memoir of his grandfather, the famous Erasmus Darwin; containing all the passages in Darwin's works, and in his *Life and Letters*, bearing directly or indirectly on the subject of religion. Every Freethinker should have and keep a copy of this important little volume. 6d.; cloth, 1s.
- Footsteps of the Past.** Valuable Essays in the Evolution of Religion and Ethics. By J. M. Wheeler. With a Preface by G. W. Foote. Cloth, 3s.
- Infidel Death-Beds.** By G. W. Foote. Second edition, revised and much enlarged. Contains authentic details of the last hours of sixty-two historic Freethinkers, and in most cases a sketch of their lives. Precise references given in every instance. 8d.; cloth, 1s. 3d.
- Comic Sermons and Other Fantasias.** By G. W. Foote. A selection of the author's best satirical writings. Contents:—A Sermon on Summer—A Mad Sermon—A Sermon on Sin—A Bishop in the Workhouse—A Christmas Sermon—Christmas Eve in Heaven—Bishop Trimmer's Sunday Diary—The Judge and the Devil—Satan and Michael—The First Christmas—Adam's Breeches—The Fall of Eve—Joshua and Jericho—A Baby God—Judas Iscariot. 8d.
- Defence of Freethought.** By Colonel Ingersoll. A Grand Speech, occupying four hours in delivery, made in defence of Mr. Reynolds, who was prosecuted for Blasphemy in New Jersey. 6d.
- Defence of Free Speech.** By G. W. Foote. Three hours' address to the Jury in the Court of Queen's Bench before Lord Coleridge, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy on account of certain issues of the *Freethinker*. Carefully revised, with an important Preface and Footnotes. 4d.
- Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh.** By G. W. Foote. Written directly after Bradlaugh's death, and containing personal anecdotes and characteristics not to be found elsewhere. Necessary to those who want to know the real Bradlaugh.
- The Shadow of the Sword.** A Moral and Statistical Essay on War. By G. W. Foote. Christian papers have called it "powerful" and "masterly." 2d.
- Bible Romances.** By G. W. Foote. New Edition, revised and largely re-written. (1) The Creation Story, 2d.; (2) Eve and the Apple, 1d.; (3) Cain and Abel, 1d.; (4) Noah's Flood, 2d.; (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, 2d.; (14) The Resurrection, 2d.; (15) The Crucifixion, 1d.; (16) St. John's Nightmare, 1d.
- Royal Paupers.** Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. By G. W. Foote. 2d.
- Open Letters to Jesus Christ.** By G. W. Foote. Racy as well as Argumentative. Something Unique. 4d.
- Philosophy of Secularism.** By G. W. Foote. 3d.
- The Bible God.** A Scathing Criticism. By G. W. Foote. 2d.
- Pagan Mythology; or, The Wisdom of the Ancients.** By Lord Bacon. 1s.
- Church of England Catechism Examined.** A Masterly Work, which narrowly escaped prosecution. By Jeremy Bentham. 1s.
- Utilitarianism.** By Jeremy Bentham. 3d.
- Free Will and Necessity.** By Anthony Collins. Reprinted from 1715 edition, with Biography of Collins by J. M. Wheeler, and Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote. Huxley says that "Collins writes with wonderful power and clearness of reasoning." 1s.; superior edition, on superfine paper, cloth, 2s.
- The Code of Nature.** By Diderot and D'Holbach. 2s.
- The Essence of Religion.** God the Image of Man, Man's Dependence upon Nature the Last and Only Source of Religion. By Ludwig Feuerbach. "No one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach."—*Büchner*. 1s.
- Crimes of Christianity.** By G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. Hundreds of exact references to Standard Authors. An unanswerable Indictment of Christianity. Vol. I., cloth gilt, 216 pp., 2s. 6d.
- The Jewish Life of Christ.** Being the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu*, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. Edited, with an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes, by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. 6d.; superior edition, superfine paper, cloth, 1s.
- The Mortality of the Soul.** By David Hume. Not included in ordinary editions of Hume's "Essays." 2d.
- Liberty and Necessity.** By David Hume. 4d.
- Essays in Rationalism.** By Charles Robert Newman, the Atheist brother of the late Cardinal Newman. With a Preface by G. J. Holyoake, and Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s. 6d.
- The Rights of Man.** By Thomas Paine. With a Political Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 1s.; cloth edition, 2s.
- Satires and Profanities.** By James Thomson (B.V.). "As clever as they are often profane."—*Christian World*. 1s.
- A Refutation of Deism.** By Shelley. Really a Defence of Atheism. 4d.
- Miscellaneous Theological Works.** By Thomas Paine. All his writings on Religion except the *Age of Reason*. 1s.
- Theism or Atheism.** Public Debate between G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. T. Lee. Verbatim Report, revised by both Disputants. Well printed and neatly bound, 1s.
- Bible and Beer.** By G. W. Foote. Showing the absurdity of basing Teetotalism on the Christian Scriptures. Careful, thorough, and accurate. Freethinkers should keep this pamphlet by them. 4d.
- The Holy Bible.** By Colonel Ingersoll. A Masterpiece of Popular Criticism; one of Ingersoll's greatest efforts. 6d.
- The Coming Civilization.** By Colonel Ingersoll. An Address delivered in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, Sunday, April 12, 1896, to a vast meeting of Members and Friends of the "Church Militant." 3d.
- The Foundations of Faith.** By Colonel Ingersoll. Contents:—The Old Testament—The New Testament—Jehovah—The Trinity—The Theological Christ—The "Scheme"—Belief—Conclusion. 3d.

LONDON: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER STREET, E.C.

CHARLES WATTS has resumed Business as Printer and Publisher, and will be glad to hear from old Patrons as well as new ones. All kinds of printing undertaken. Special attention given to Freethought publications. MSS. prepared for press. Address—17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, 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.

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

You never Saw such Bargains before!

GOTT'S GREAT SUMMER STOCK-TAKING SALE.

A FEW OF THE LEADING LINES.

SALE ENDS SEPTEMBER 30th.

LOT 1.—1 Tweed Suit Length, 1 Tweed Dress Length, 1 Lady's Umbrella, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 2.—2 Trousers Lengths, 1 Tweed and 1 Worsted, 1 Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 3.—1 Black Cashmere Dress Length, 1 Navy Serge Dress Length, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 4.—1 Scotch Tweed Dress Length, 1 Pair Boots or Shoes, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 5.—1 Serge Suit Length, 1 Blouse, 1 Umbrella, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 6.—30 Yards of Remnants for Children's Dresses and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 7.—1 Pair Gent's Boots, 1 Umbrella, 1 Trousers Length, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 8.—1 Dress Length, 1 Under Skirt, 1 Umbrella, 1 Blouse, 1 Mackintosh, and 12 Yards Flannelette	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 9.—1 Dark Brown Bear Victoria-shaped Fur and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 10.—40 Yards of Flannelette (fine quality) and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 11.—1 Pair of Blankets, 1 Pair of Sheets, 1 Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 12.—1 Dress Length, 1 Trousers Length, 1 Boy's Suit, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 13.—10 Yards of Cotton Shirting, 10 Yards of Flannel, 10 Yards of Flannelette, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 14.—1 West of England Suit Length and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 15.—2 Sailor Suits (to fit boys up to seven years of age), 2 Pairs Boys' Boots, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh.	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 16.—2 Pairs of Trousers (made to measure) and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 17.—1 Good Melton Overcoat Length, 1 Suit Length, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 18.—3 Real Scotch Tweed Trousers Lengths (all wool) and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 19.—1 Gentleman's Scarboro'-shaped Mackintosh and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.
LOT 20.—1 Parcel of Odd Lots, including Suit Length, Dress Length, Blouse, Umbrella, Apron, Braces, Belt, and 1 Lady's Mackintosh	...	...	for 20s.

1s. must be added for Carriage.

We cannot send Patterns.

G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* or F. J. Gould's *Chats* and a great heap of Freethought pamphlets to each customer free of all cost.

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

GLADSTONE LITERATURE.

Everyone should read

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Ingersoll's Reply to Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone himself said that "Colonel Ingersoll writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy." (Postage ½d.) | } 4d. |
| 2. The Grand Old Book. An Exhaustive Answer to Mr. Gladstone's "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." By G. W. FOOTE. Post free. | } 1s. |

The two post free for 1s. 4d.

London: R. FORDER, 28 STONECUTTER-STREET, E.C.

Ingersoll's Works.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE LITERARY GUIDE

AND RATIONALIST REVIEW.

THE SEPTEMBER NUMBER CONTAINS:—

Why? By Amos Waters.
Physical Individuality. By Charles E. Hooper.
A Word to Crusoe. By F. J. Gould.
Sketches by a Master.
Tolstoy.
The History of Conscience.
Ancient Christianity and Modern Morals.
A Militant Freethought Novel.
Solving the Social Problem.
Signs and Warnings (gleaned from the Religious Press).
Random Jottings.
The Fatal Rainbow: *The Polychrome Bible*.
Passing Thoughts. By R. Bithell.
Rationalism in the Magazines. Etc., etc.

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