

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

Dropping the Devil.

CHRISTIANITY claims to be a direct revelation from God, yet it has been stated in hundreds of different ways. The Christian creeds that have been formulated—all varying from each other, and often contradicting each other, but all exactly true—would fill an immense volume. One would think there were enough of such documents already in the world. But the Christians think otherwise. They live, alas, in a world which is ever changing, and they must adapt themselves to it in some way or other. They must also adapt their doctrines, or at least the statement of them, in some degree to the march of modern thought. Hence we hear from time to time that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England ought to be revised. Hence it is, too, that leading divines of all the Protestant Churches put forth fresh presentations of the Christian faith, in language of ever-increasing vagueness. Hence it is, likewise, that the Evangelical Free Churches of England and Wales have been moved to publish a new Catechism for use in Home and School. This little publication is issued at the price of one penny, and as it teaches (professedly) the way to heaven we suppose it must be reckoned cheap at the money. Twenty-two Nonconformist divines worked at it, off and on, for two years; representing the Congregationalists, the Wesleyan Methodists, the Baptists, the Primitive Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Methodist New Connection, the Bible Christians, and the Methodist Free Church; the poor Unitarians being left out in the cold. This new Catechism is designed to meet the "growing demand for a modern manual," and it exhibits "the substantial agreement of the Evangelical Free Churches." The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, chairman and convener of the committee, states in an Explanatory Note that it represents "the beliefs of not less, and probably many more, than sixty millions of avowed Christians in all parts of the world"—which will doubtless be very striking to those who believe in the power of mere numbers. Finally, every question and answer in the Catechism has been adopted unanimously; and Mr. Hughes tells us, in Latin, that the glory of it belongs to God only, though some will think it adds very little to the divine magnificence.

We gather from a letter in the *Christian World* by Dr. John Clifford, a member of the Committee, that this new Catechism has "not met with a universal welcome." "There is a widespread fear," he says, "that some special theological or ecclesiastical authority will be claimed for it." But he declares that the fear is groundless, for all the authority it has can only "spring from the names and character of those who composed it." Still, it has many advantages.

"It is a register of theological thinking at the close of the nineteenth century. In this respect it is unspeakably suggestive. The more it is considered the more will this be recognised. Its omissions are as significant as its contents; and its emphasis and tone are as full of meaning as its words. Speaking with the utmost soberness, I can only regard its appearance as a theological and ecclesiastical marvel."

This is mostly true, but Dr. Clifford would not have said it if he had possessed a saving sense of humor.

Let us examine this marvel. The first question is, "What is the Christian religion?" The answer is, "It is the religion founded by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is as illuminating as the statement that

No. 913.

Mohammedanism is the religion founded by Mohammed, or Buddhism the religion founded by Buddha. The second question and answer, however, are more definite. "How must we think of God?" is the question. Here we see the cloven hoof in the word "must." Children who use this Catechism are *ordered* to think—which is as impudent as it is unphilosophical. And the answer defines God in terms of abstract Theism. He is "the one Eternal Spirit," the "Creator and Sustainer of all things," perfect in love, wisdom, power, and justice. Then the child is told of "Our Father in Heaven," who made us in his own image—and bungled sadly over a lot of us, including Mr. Price Hughes, who is no Adonis—and who "loves us far better than any earthly parent can." Now, if this were true, it could hardly be the truth to teach a child. Father and mother should come first in the natural order. But this teaching is not true in the light of facts. God does not feed the little ones whose parents cannot find them bread. He lets them famish in slums and hovels. He lets them die of slow starvation and its attendant diseases. He lets the poor little faces grow white and pinched, and the poor young eyes grow dull and sunken, and the poor little feet stumble into a premature grave.

Children are told in this Catechism that they are fallen, sinful creatures, who cannot cleanse their own hearts, and all because "man was made innocent at the first," and "fell." The ministers who drew up the Catechism know that this is false. Most of them, at any rate, are quite aware that there never was an innocent first man. They are not ignorant that Darwinism has triumphed. They will not, in their pulpits or theological chairs, dispute the scientific truth of the Ascent of Man. Nevertheless, they teach children the Fall of Man. They commit this act of criminal hypocrisy for business reasons. They have to keep up the theological fiction of "sin" by which they live. They preach to sinners, they labor to save sinners, and they must teach that sinners cannot possibly save themselves, or their occupation would be gone. Certainly they say that God is love, but they represent him, nevertheless, as implacably wroth with his erring children. This again is balanced by the action of the Son of God, who is "a Mediator between God and men," and continually makes "intercession" for them; the Holy Ghost standing by all the time to keep him up to his work of salvation. It is also taught, indirectly, in this Catechism that the "life everlasting" is only for those "who are saved in Christ"; in other words, that none but Christians go to heaven; which is a ridiculous bit of egotism, although, of course, it is very conducive to the interests—the *worldly* interests—of the gentlemen who teach children to believe it.

Essentially, therefore, this Catechism is not a "marvel" of novelty. What is important about it is this. First, there is no mention of Hell. Perhaps it is alluded to in "eternal death," which is the lot of those who are not moved to belief and repentance by "the secret power of the Holy Spirit" and saved by the "atonement" of the Son of God. Evidently the clergy are getting ashamed of the doctrine of Hell, or afraid to teach it in the plain old fashion. They stick to the treacle, and only give it a flavor of brimstone; but in time they will find that this medicine will not operate, for it was the brimstone that did the business. Secondly, there is no mention of the Devil. Perhaps he is lumped in with "every spiritual enemy." But he is never named. You have to infer him. Yes, the clergy are getting ashamed of the Devil too.

One of our readers wrote to a member of the

Catechism Committee on this point of the omission of the Devil, and received the following answer:—

"The Devil was, I think, overlooked in the Catechism. But I doubt whether unanimity could have been secured to any answer about him. In a Catechism for so many Churches, something must be lost to attain agreement."

Something had to be lost, so they dropped the Devil. Old Nick is overboard, and no one will throw him a rope. "Let him drown!" they say. He was their best friend for nearly two thousand years, and they leave him to the sharks. Such is the gratitude of the clergy! But they will find out their mistake. Religion is really based upon terror. The finest cry the clergy ever had was, "Flee from the wrath to come." Now they prate of love, love, love, till they make decent people sick. There is no hot Hell, and no active, enterprising Devil. How long then will it be before people ask, What is the use of the clergy? When the house is on fire, people will pay anything for ropes and ladders; but when the fire is allegorical they will discharge the fire brigade. And if there is no Devil, no great incendiary, they will decline to pay extra insurance.

We do not believe that the Devil was "overlooked" in the Catechism. Fancy twenty-two Christian preachers and professors, sitting together at various times during two years, to draw up a statement of their faith, and overlooking the Devil! Not one saw the whisk of a tail, not one spied a cloven hoof, not one smelt sulphur! It is incredible. They might as easily have overlooked God.

About everything in this Catechism there was unanimity amongst the twenty-two. But they would not have agreed about the Devil; that is to say, about the way he should be brought in. So they left him out altogether. Good! very good! It shows that Christianity did not come from God, that it is a manufactured religion like the others, and that the clergy make it up to suit the occasion.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Religion of Despair.

RELIGION is supposed by its adherents to afford the highest possible comfort through life, and to provide the sweetest consolation at the approach of death. It is imagined by some persons that the non-religious man is destitute of the real joys of existence, and that, when the hour of his departure from the world arrives, he is destitute of all that can impart solace in his final moments. This is purely an assumption based upon emotion, and is a misconception of the true source of real consolation. That sincere religionists derive gratification from their belief, we readily grant; and so does the disbeliever in all alleged supernatural religions from his scepticism, if he has been faithful to his honest convictions. Whatever a person really considers to be true is to him a source of confidence and tranquillity of mind. Whoever has accepted Secular philosophy as the result of reasoning, and of an impartial examination of its principles, will find sufficient to support him through life's battle, and to sustain him when the last great scene of all arrives. Fidelity to conviction is the keynote to success in life and to happiness at death.

How far a religion can impart solid consolation depends upon its nature and the disposition and aspirations of its believers. For instance, a humane, unselfish, and just man would derive no pleasure from a religion of cruelty, selfishness, and injustice. In fact, no one possessing a kind and generous nature could actually believe in a religion containing the weaknesses and failings of perverted humanity. That sometimes we see good men profess an objectionable religion is true, and it is much to be regretted that it is true, for such men do not really believe in consequence of investigation; they merely give assent without having any adequate reason for so doing. This will account somewhat for the numerous indifferent adherents in the various churches to-day. They are there, not because they have verified the truth of what is preached to them, but because they think their presence in "a place of worship" will keep them in touch with the prevailing

fashion, and also meet their business requirements. In theological circles mental honesty is a rare quality. As the boy said when asked by his teacher at school: "Is your father a Christian?" "Yes; but he does not work much at it."

The Christian religion was ushered into the world with the proclamation that it contained the "glad tidings of great joy," and yet its teachings are sufficient to fill the human mind with gloom and utter despair. Hopelessness and despondency are evoked by its melancholy inculcations. What are the tidings which this religion of despair proclaims? Just these: That we are born into the world handicapped with a weight of sin, with the committal of which we had nothing to do; that our entire nature has become thereby depraved, rendering us physically and morally degenerated; that we are absolutely helpless to raise ourselves, and that, if we die in our unregenerated state, we are to be punished in hell and to burn for ever; that some of us were ordained to condemnation before we were born, and the few only are to be saved, while the majority are to be lost. Now, in the name of common sense, where are the "glad tidings" in such teachings as these? Where are the seeds of comfort or the elements of consolation? A religion that inculcates such injustice and cruelty as are here set forth is one of unutterable gloom and despair. It robs man of self-reliance, of the utility of personal effort, and is a disgraceful libel upon human nature. The fact that many professed Christians do not believe these repulsive doctrines does not prove that they are not part of their religion. The Bible teaches them in all their naked barbarity, and the rejection of them by the professors of the faith only shows how revolting they appear, even to those who profess the religion in which they are found.

We allege that this "religion of despair" is based upon the Bible, and that the doctrines we have mentioned are taught therein. It is there stated that through Adam's sin we became corrupted; that "our bodies are vile"; that our righteousness is as "filthy rags"; that "our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked"; and that "in sin did our mothers conceive us." This is not a very elevating view of human nature. If it is true, who is to blame? Undoubtedly God himself, for, according to the Christian theory, he made man, and therefore he is responsible for his actions. It is said man fell from his original condition; but why did he fall? That should have been impossible. Even if God gave him a "free will," the deity must have known how it would be exercised, and what would be the result. Why was not the "will" such that it should have influenced Adam to do right rather than to do wrong? And why did God place the temptations around him which made him do wrong?

However, man was made so that he fell, and, sad to relate, he is powerless to raise himself. If this religion be true, he is a poor, downtrodden, miserable specimen of badly-made goods. Here is the language of the Bible: "It is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure." "We are not sufficient, of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upwards." "Though the days of man are few, yet are they full of trouble." "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." This is truly a gloomy view of the condition of man, and to know himself thus is not very cheerful knowledge. It is this kind of person that the Christian religion has to work upon. No wonder the Prayer-book exclaims that we are "miserable sinners." Such tidings as these are far from being consoling. Better never to have been born than to have a nature such as this. Talk of the "desolation of Atheism." Why, it is brilliant sunshine compared to this melancholy notion of humanity.

But we may be reminded that this religion of despair has a set-off against all these drawbacks, and that is, salvation through Christ. He, we are informed, came to take away the sins of the world, and to redeem man from his unfortunate condition. If that were the object of Christ's mission, he entirely failed, for, when he departed from the earth, he left behind as many sins as he found, and even to-day the world abounds in sin. This may be fortunate for the priests of all denominations, inasmuch as, if we had a sinless world, there

would be no church work for any of them. But even here we have a gloomy aspect of this religion, for, before we can avail ourselves of this supposed salvation, we must go to Christ. That, however, the New Testament says, is not in our power to do. "No man," says Jesus, "can come to me, except the Father draw him." Here, again, we are helpless. Besides, the provision made by this religion is only for the salvation of the few. Christ was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. "Many are called, but few are chosen." The gate of heaven is so narrow that only a portion of those who try to enter will succeed in gaining admission. This is not a bright prospect for believers.

All this is bad enough, but worse remains behind. The wicked and the unbelievers are to be sent to hell, and "have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." They "shall be cast out into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." There these unfortunate victims are to be tormented "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." The Rev. Dr. Talmage, who is the C. H. Spurgeon of America, writes: "God plainly says fifty-six times that there is a hell burning. It has now been burning a long time, and has grown hotter and hotter with its victims. You may shuffle off the whole subject from your attention, but your impenitent course is leading you to hell." And this is the gospel of glad tidings! If the doctrine were true, it would be calculated to fill the earth with the most intense misery. Who could gaze upon vast myriads of his fellow-creatures marching with rapid strides to the Christian hell, and not be filled with the bitterest agony of mind? Who but those in whom a brutal faith has crushed out every feeling of humanity and love?

The Christian religion is the very essence of despair. It blights the happiness of man and destroys the pleasures of life. It says: "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Theologians delight to sing:—

As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed,
So earthly pleasures fade away
When Jesus is revealed.

Well, when the pleasures of earth have faded away, it will be time for the Christians to

Clap his glad wings and tower away,
And mingle with the blaze of day.

CHARLES WATTS.

Human Immortality.

Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine.
By PROFESSOR W. JAMES. (Constable & Co.; 2s. 6d.)

PROFESSOR JAMES is one of America's ablest psychologists. He is an ardent advocate of what is known as the "New Psychology." His writings have a considerable vogue on both sides the Atlantic; and, when the executors of the Ingersoll Lecture Trust selected him to deliver the annual lecture at Harvard University on "The Immortality of Man," there was more wisdom shown in the choice than would have been displayed by the selection of a professional sky-pilot. For, curiously enough, those whose profession it is to expound to man the certainty of a future life are always dependent upon the studies of laymen for whatever arguments they may bring forward in support of their teaching. The man of God, armed with a divine revelation, and what he is pleased to call the "conclusive testimony of the human conscience," is bound to fall back upon more or less illogical deductions from scientific work, oblivious to the consideration that, if the testimony of man's conscience were conclusive, or if the "divine revelation" contained any real proof, his own sermons on the subject would be an absurd waste of time. That there have always been, in civilised times at least, numerous objectors to the doctrine of immortality is sufficient proof that the evidence advanced is not of a conclusive character, while the increase in the number of these

objectors, with the fresh light cast on the subject by anthropological research, casts additional discredit on the whole doctrine.

Nevertheless, the trustees, in selecting Professor James, were on the safe side. He is an avowed Theist, and might, therefore, be trusted to strain every possible point in favor of the belief in immortality; while the presence of a well-known scientific man would give, even to religious dogmas, an air of exactness they would not otherwise possess. And yet I imagine that thoughtful and impartial believers will find little to console them in Professor James's book, for all that is offered them by the lecturer is a tissue of maybe's and suppositions as against the indisputable facts of physiological psychology.

Professor James does not attempt to make out a case for human immortality, only to examine certain objections to it; and there is an obvious advantage in this method of procedure. To show that an opponent's arguments fall short of a complete demonstration often saves one the trouble of substantiating one's own position, and, at the same time, lends one an air of precision and scientific accuracy. If the text of the lecture had read, "Is there any evidence for the doctrine of human immortality?" which is the only scientific shape the question could take, the answer would necessarily have been in the negative. In examining two *objections* to the doctrine, this awkward dilemma was evaded. Of course, Professor James would reply that he had a perfect right to treat the subject as he chose, and I have no wish to question that right; I merely point out this consideration to all thoughtful readers of his book.

The first difficulty examined by the author is relative to the dependence of all mental and vital phenomena upon purely physical conditions. "How can we," asks Professor James, "believe in life hereafter when science has once for all attained to proving, beyond possibility of escape, that our inner life is a function of that famous material, the so-called 'grey matter' of our cerebral convolutions? How can the function possibly persist after its organ has undergone decay?" And, in doing this, it is admitted that science "has only carried a little farther the common belief of mankind. Everyone knows that arrests of brain development occasion imbecility, that blows on the head abolish consciousness or memory, and that brain-stimulants and poisons change the quality of our ideas." All we *know* of the matter would, therefore, seem to point to the correctness of the belief that "thought is a function of the brain," a doctrine that, "for the purposes of my argument, I wish to adoptas if it were established absolutely, with no possibility of restriction."

Of course, one recognises all this as being merely the parade of simplicity made by a clever conjurer prior to the production of some startling conclusion. Even the manner in which Professor James states his thesis, "Does this doctrine logically compel us to disbelieve in immortality?" is clearly an unscientific manner of stating the case, and adopted solely with a view to a desired conclusion. The main point to be remembered is that the theory that mind and life are independent of organisation was already in possession, it has been gradually discredited by the growth of a critical physiology and psychology, and it remains for the believer in the mind's independence to produce proofs in support of his position, not to content himself with asking, "Am I logically compelled to disbelieve it?" There may be many things we are not logically compelled to *disbelieve*; but he is a fool who *believes* them on no better grounds than this. The correct way to put the question would be: Does there, in the light of the doctrine that thought is a function of the brain, longer remain any warranty for the orthodox position?

The lecturer's scientific training prohibits him denying the relation of mind to body as being that of function to organ; but he imagines that a closer examination of the meaning of "function" will prove that the doctrine has, "in strict logic, no deterrent power" on the belief in immortality. The error is, we are assured, in viewing all functions as alike, when in reality there are three kinds. There is a function of production, as when we say that "Steam is a function of the tea-kettle," or "Power is a function of the moving waterfall"; a function of permission, as when the trigger of a cross-bow removes the obstacle that holds the string and lets the

bow fly back into its natural shape; and a function of transmission, as when "the keys of an organ.....open successively the various pipes, and let the wind in the air chest escape in various ways." Professor James adopts the latter view. To him the function of the brain is transmissive; the mind is independent of the brain, operates through it, and, therefore, there is nothing that can prevent one believing in the mind's continued existence after the body has decayed—a view of the matter that is extremely old-fashioned, although it is propounded with an elaborate air of calling one's attention to a neglected truth.

Now, accepting the above threefold division of function, although I imagine a clearer conception of the doctrine of the conservation of energy would show that function was everywhere identical, the question naturally arises, Why should we regard the function of the brain as transmissive rather than productive? All that Professor James says is that "we are entitled to consider permissive or transmissive function." Certainly; and, when we *have* considered it, what evidence is there that this special function is of that particular character? Its propounder gives none, and for obvious reasons. All the proof (?) we get is that, supposing the whole universe of material things to be a mere surface veil of a real world of life and thought, and that our brains are the diffracting media through which this reality manifests itself, then this "life of souls, as it is in its fulness, will break through our several brains into this world in all sorts of restricted forms, and with all the imperfections and queeresses that characterise our finite individualities here below.....And when, finally, a brain stops acting altogether, or decays, that special stream of consciousness which it subserved will vanish entirely from this natural world.....and in that more real world with which, even whilst here, it was continuous, the consciousness might, in ways unknown to us, continue still." And this is all! Without the slightest reason for any such assumption, we are to assume that there exists a "world-soul," that the human organism is the channel by which it differentiates itself, that, after the destruction of the organism, the sole condition of *individuality*, the personality of each continues to exist, and thus as "critics doing police duty among the vagaries of mankind" (p. 39), you discover that "in strict logic the fangs of cerebralistic materialism are drawn" (p. 40). Wonderful! And the method is such a simple one! All that has to be done is to assume that everything is as your theory demands it should be; and, without any attempt to show that the facts correspond with the assumptions made, you "draw the fangs of cerebralistic materialism" and demonstrate (?) the immortality of man. But the method is not a new one, after all. It is utilised by every religious advocate on the face of the earth, high and low, ignorant and educated, although I question whether a great many of them ever imagined they were working on lines of "strict logic," or in agreement with the most advanced scientific speculations.

Professor James hastens to add that "Just how this process of transmission may be carried on is, indeed, unimaginable"; but, "if the ordinary [why ordinary?] materialist should challenge one to explain how the brain can be an organ for limiting and determining, to a certain form, a consciousness elsewhere produced," we may retort by "asking him in turn how it can be an organ for producing consciousness out of whole cloth." But the two cases are not quite analogous. Consciousness, as the accompaniment of cerebral changes, we know; consciousness, apart from such changes, we neither know nor have the means of knowing. Biologically, function is the direction or form taken by the properties of organs, or by the tissues composing organs; and so long as there is an invariable correspondence between the two sets of phenomena, it is for the scientist to treat one as a function of the other—productive function, to adopt the Professor's language—and for those who hold differently to produce something a little stronger than a tissue of "there maybe's" in support of their position.

And, if we were to grant Professor James his theory of a world-soul, it would not prove, or help us to believe in, human immortality. For even on this theory the individualising of this "world-soul," the creation of all that we mean by "personality," is depen-

dent upon the existence of the human organism, and with the destruction of the body there could come, at most, only a re-absorption of the individual consciousness into the "general consciousness," whatever this latter article may happen to be. Some such objection seems to have struck the lecturer himself (pp. 58-9), and, having raised the objection, he hopes that it "*will be seriously discussed by future lecturers.....* But into these higher and more transcendental matters I refuse to enter upon this occasion." Ye gods! And this is Theistic philosophising at Harvard University, U.S.A.! An objection which, unanswered, cuts the ground completely from under him, he quietly recommends future lecturers to deal with. I am unaware if Professor James is Scotch; but he bears a strong family likeness to the minister who, coming to a difficult passage in the Bible, paused and said: "Brethren, it ill becomes us to brush on one side any difficulties that we may encounter in our reading of the book; rather should we wrestle with them until we have brought to light their inner meaning. Brethren, we have come across just such a troublesome passage, and, having looked the difficulty boldly in the face, we will pass on to the next chapter."

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Secular Society (Limited).

REGISTERED OFFICE—376-7 STRAND, W.C.

THIS Society has been incorporated for the purpose of legalising the receipt, holding, and expenditure of funds for the promotion of Secularism. Its objects, as set forth in the Memorandum of Association, comprise every essential for which Secularists are striving. The governing idea of all of them is expressed in this primary clause:—"To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action."

The Society has powers to purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises; to employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants; to publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals; to assist other associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of its objects; to co-operate with any kindred Society in any part of the world; and to do any other lawful thing in furtherance of all or any of the said objects. To this end it is empowered to "have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society."

Although devised by Mr. G. W. Foote, this Incorporation has not been entirely dependent upon his legal knowledge. Long and careful assistance was rendered by Mr. Harper, of the firm of Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C., who were acting solicitors to the late Charles Bradlaugh; and the advice of an eminent consulting counsel was obtained before the scheme was printed for registration.

The Society's Articles provide, at present, for the inclusion of 500 members, of whom 130 are already enrolled. Intending members must be proposed and seconded in writing, and admitted by the Board of Directors, which consists of twelve members elected at the Annual Members' Meeting. Each member admitted pays an entrance fee of 10s., and after the first year of his (or her) membership a subscription of 5s. annually.

Secularists and other persons who approve the Society's objects are invited to apply for membership. The only liability they incur is as follows:—The Society, having to be limited in some way, is limited by Guarantee; and if it should ever be wound up—which is a very remote contingency—every member then on the roll would be liable to contribute any sum *not exceeding £1* that might be required in the settlement of liabilities.

Persons of means who approve the Society's objects are invited to insert a clause on its behalf in their wills. This may be done without the slightest fear of misadventure. It would be well, although not necessary, to apprise the Board of Directors of such a clause

having been inserted; or the communication could be made (in confidence) to the Chairman.

Without waiting for the realisation of such bequests, the Board of Directors appeal to members and sympathisers for donations, in order to push on with the Society's work.

It is proposed to form a list of *promises* by those who are not able or disposed to give immediately; and the Board will be glad to hear from persons who will promise to give any amount from £1 upwards, on condition (say) that the response to this appeal is adequate—whether it is adequate or not being left to the promiser to determine.

One member of the Society has promised to give £1,000, and perhaps more, towards obtaining suitable headquarters for Secularism in London. Others may wish their promises to be made for the same specific object, and should notify the Board accordingly.

This legal instrument affords the Secular party an unprecedented opportunity. Various religious bodies are at present rivalling each other in raising large subscriptions to mark the opening of the new century. Secularists are earnestly invited to join in this rivalry; not for the maintenance of superstition, but for the promotion of reason and progress in human affairs.

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Profane Parables.

XXXI.—MODERNITY.

THERE was once a writer whose style was so exceedingly bad that even orthodox journals refused to print his copy. But he was sufficiently shrewd to see that the current creed was hard put to it for a defender.

"I will champion the falling faith," said he. "I will write a religious novel. I will tickle the palates of the orthodox."

So he fashioned an elusive mysticism, and boldly called it philosophy. He eked out a mental nightmare with pretentious phrases, and worked a story round it. He conceived a wilder creed than Spiritism, and clothed it with a more ambitious terminology. But this man had cunning enough to stamp his work with the hallmark of the official faith.

And he sent forth the volume for review. And some critics fell ill, and some died.

But the villa-dames devoured the issue in a se'nnight, and the book ran to its fifty-sixth thousand.

XXXII.—CONTENTMENT.

The bishop sat at his well-spread table.

"How sweet contentment is!" sighed he. "To desire nothing, to envy no one, to trustfully repose on the tender mercies of an all-wise Providence!"

And he poured out another glass of sparkling Medoc.

And there came a starveling curate, who desired the means to live withal.

"This is very sad!" said the bishop.

XXXIII.—RELIGION.

A company of devotees suffered from a widespread malady, and they made themselves cloaks to conceal the signs thereof. And the disease ripened beneath the cloaks.

And, when they had covered themselves therewith, they said: "Behold, we are not like other men; we have no disease."

But now and again one would weary of the mockery, and throw aside his cloak. Whereat the others enwrapped themselves the closer, saying:—

"Behold, the disease is upon him! *He hath thrown off the saving virtue of his cloak!*"

XXXIV.—SCRIPTURE.

"I will give the people a voice in politics," said the reformer.

"What!" cried the clerics. "You miscreant! You traitorous, thieving, blackguardly——!"

"Stay!" said the reformer. "For the nonce, they shall have their sacred book."

"Good, sweet sir!" said the clerics. "Let us embrace thee!"

XXXV.—MEDICINE.

A certain believer suffered from spiritual indigestion; for, having swallowed various miracles with extreme difficulty, he found that they would not rest easily upon his stomach.

So he hied him to a doctor of divinity, who gave him pills compounded of credulity and other things. And the believer tried to take the pills, but could not; for they had an evil savor.

And his internal uneasiness increased, till the unwholesome food was rejected, and the sufferer was himself again. And thenceforth he swallowed no more miracles, and needed no more divine doctoring.

XXXVI.—METAPHOR.

A Christian suggested partnership with a business man.

"Impossible!" said the business man. "Your religion requires you to give to him that asketh; and, when you lend money, you must make a gift on't."

"Tush! tush!" said the Christian. "You take it all too seriously."

"How should it be taken, then?" asked the business man.

"Oh—*figuratively!*" replied the Christian.

E. R. W.

Salvation at the Other Man's Expense.

THE sweet unreasonableness of dogmatic religion asserted itself vigorously in the case of Alfred Archer at Melbourne Gaol last week. He had murdered his mate in cold blood for the sake of £10 and a few perquisites; his efforts to conceal the crime and escape capture were fruitless; he was finally brought to the condemned cell, where a zealous parson ministered long and earnestly to his mortal funkiness, with the result that Alfred Archer became very penitent. Anyway, he *thought* he was penitent, and the good clergyman thought likewise. Nobody can distinguish between the workings of penitence, fear, or hysterical hope in such cases, nor can anybody estimate the value of "true repentance" in any sinner who will be no further exposed to the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The death-sentence had cut this particular penitent off from all risk of backsliding. His ghostly comforter, having persuaded him to "believe," told him to consider himself whiter than snow, and Archer did as he was told. He believed with enthusiasm, and, although he had no appetite for his last breakfast, he certainly went to Glory with a fair show of confidence in his luck. Alfred Archer, of course, had exceptional luck. He might have refrained from murder, and have died a natural death like any ordinary sinner. One never knows how, and when, one may be sent for. Some years ago an English judge died suddenly in a brothel, evidently unredeemed. Accepting Church doctrine, the judge, therefore, died in sin, and was lost for ever. How different the death of the murderer at Melbourne Gaol, as depicted in the local "Ereald!" "God so loved Alfred Archer," said the clergyman, reading the burial-service on the gallows, "that he gave His only-begotten Son, that through Him Alfred Archer might be saved!" Archer, in a firm and unbroken tone of voice, said: "I wish to thank all the officials here, and may God bless them and keep them for that heavenly kingdom in which I am now prepared to meet my God." The fortunate fellow associated his salvation with the prison and all that therein is. He was grateful to the warders who had kept him in the place where salvation is procurable on easy terms, and died practically thanking God that he had "found salvation" through the slaughter of his poor but irreligious mate, who, by all orthodox showing, was damned to save Alfred Archer, Esq.

—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Acid Drops.

COUNCILLOR BOARDMAN, of West Ham, pursues the amateur occupation of a local preacher. We are not surprised, therefore, at his fierce attempt to get the *Freethinker* excluded from the Free Library. In politics he professes himself a Liberal, but he proves for about the ten millionth time that in some matters there are Liberals who can be far more illiberal than many Conservatives. Councillor Boardman made a speech to the Town Council in favor of what he called a compromise—that is to say, he found he would not be backed up satisfactorily, and decided to do a little hedging. He proposed that the *Freethinker* should be still kept in the Library, but not laid upon the table—merely kept in reserve and supplied to readers upon application. How sincere he was in proposing this “compromise” may be gathered from his speech. He said he could always stand Bradlaugh (who is dead), but he could not stand Foote (who is living). He did not object to Freethought being heard. Oh dear no! Everybody knows that. But the *Freethinker* was “filthy”—a statement which will amuse our readers. It particularly amuses us, for we have refused several advertisements that we have seen inserted in highly “respectable” journals, and in some that are devoted to the cause of Christianity.

Councillor Boardman’s “filthiness” simply comes to this. He is enraged at a parody we printed of the Christian hymn, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing,” in which the doings of Christian nations all over the world are contrasted with the fine sentiments they are always mouthing. Well, if this is filthy, what adjective would be adequate to describe some of the contents of the Bible? Councillor Boardman should turn his reforming zeal upon the Scriptures of his own faith. There are hundreds of passages in the Bible that no one dares print separately; passages that we would never pollute our columns with. Yet this man, who finds “filth” in a perfectly clean parody of one of the hymns of his own religion, is ready at any moment to put that Bible, dirt and all, into the hands of any boy or girl in West Ham.

Seriously, if Councillor Boardman believes the *Freethinker* is what he declared it, he is a wretched trickster to support its being taken into the Library at all. Does he really mean that “filth” should be used discreetly, that it should be dealt out “on application”? If so, he ought to be sent to a deoderizing establishment, and brought back to the West Ham Council in the course of (say) six months, when he is thoroughly cleansed.

Alderman Smith supported Councillor Boardman’s proposal. He said that the *Freethinker* should be removed that very night. Surely there was some limit to license! But the Socialist members laughed at this old law-and-order chestnut. Councillors Devenay, Thorne, and Scott spoke handsomely against the bigotry of hiding the *Freethinker*, and when the division was taken 27 voted that “the publication be allowed in the library on the same conditions as formerly,” and only 12 for the noble Boardman’s “compromise.” We congratulate the majority of the Council on their common sense and love of justice.

“Public opinion,” the local *Guardian* says, “is being roused to a high pitch upon the question.” A petition to the authorities is being got up by a pious gentleman called Triggs, and another pious gentleman called Grinyer, who is said to be the author of a book on “Bible Chronology.” This petition is being signed by “members of religious bodies.” Naturally. We know them. Scratch a Christian, and you generally find a bigot. These people hate the *Freethinker* because it is a determined, straightforward, and therefore deadly enemy of their faith. Many of them would like to burn its editor and show him that there is a hell somewhere.

The faithful Triggs told a *Guardian* representative that if the Freethinkers get “this book”—meaning this journal—established in the Library, they will “try to have some of their other publications introduced from Holywell-street.” Poor man! The Freethinkers have no shop in that street, or near it. Besides, that street is coming down shortly, and poor Triggs’s worst trouble will be over.

Meanwhile the Christian Boardman goes on raving in the local press at his fellow councillors, declaring them to be “absolutely unfit to deal with any moral question that may arise.” No doubt they have a similar opinion of his capacity.

The local *Guardian* rather regrets the agitation, because it gives the *Freethinker* a good advertisement. For this reason it holds that the party opposed to this journal “are not pursuing a wise policy.” A somewhat similar line is taken by the *Herald*, which has the grace, however, to add that “it must not be forgotten that many persons in West Ham share Mr. Foote’s views,” that “the law does not deny them any of the rights of citizenship,” that “the libraries belong to them as well as to the orthodox Christian,” and that “censorship must

always be a dangerous thing to play with,” as it “can be used by both parties to the present quarrel.”

The venerable vicar of Hey, Oldham, preached the other day to a large congregation, though he had attained the advanced age of ninety-one years. It is said that he seemed “none the worse afterwards.” The question, however, is: Were the congregation any the better? Because, if not, the venerable gentleman might just as well have sat at home in his armchair and toasted his toes by the fire. Other clerics who have not arrived at ninety years of age would be equally well employed.

A specially contemptible piece of intolerance has been exhibited by the Committee of the Braintree and Bocking Cottage Hospital. Head Nurse Rayney, it seems, is a Roman Catholic, and, the fact being recently discovered by the fussy busybodies who call themselves “hon. secs.,” she has been called upon by them to resign her appointment. No complaint has been made as to the manner in which she has performed her duties, and the question of religious belief was not raised on her appointment. Two of the honorary medical officers have resigned, to mark their indignation at the treatment to which she has been subjected.

East Grinstead (Sussex) Burial Board has declined to have an unused portion of the cemetery consecrated for the use of Church people, objection being taken to the fees that the rite carried with it, and which include one guinea to the vicar for each tombstone erected. In the unconsecrated portion the only fee is one shilling, and that is considered quite enough. All the same, people who are silly enough to attach the slightest importance to “consecration” ought to be made to pay for it. It is rather a pity the parsons do not bleed them even a little more than they do.

Mr. Roberts, who is elected to represent Utah in the United States Congress, is a polygamist, and has three wives. They must take a lot of keeping, and managing; and Mr. Roberts must be a man of great enterprise to add the duties of a Congressman to his previous obligations. An agitation is being raised in the Eastern States against his admission to the legislative house. Christians in that part of the Union forget that the Bible sanctions polygamy. Warren Foster, the defeated candidate for the office to which Roberts is elected, writing in the *Salt Lake City Herald*, declares that, if the Bible is right, polygamy is right. “One of the principal reasons,” he says, “why I cannot accept the Bible as my moral guide is because it teaches polygamy.” He further says that “the only reason why Mormons are any worse than Methodists is because they stick closer to the Bible than do the Methodists.” Warren Foster urges that both Mormonism and the Bible are “grounds too narrow for a liberal man to stand upon.”

“Suppose,” says Warren Foster, “that it was heaven at whose gates Brother Roberts was asking admittance, instead of the United States Congress, and he should be refused admission on the ground of being a polygamist; and he should appeal the case to a jury composed of David, Solomon, and Abraham, what do you think would be his chances for a seat? Think of Abraham refusing Brother Roberts a place in his bosom on the ground that he is a polygamist! Eh? How do you think that would look?”

In the January number of the *Antiquary* there is a minute of the Society of Friends recorded in 1680, when they were full of worldly wisdom and walked circumspectly: “It being proposed to this meeting by G. Watts that there is a complaint that Friends do employ some of the world’s people in printing and binding of Friends’ books, it is upon consideration of this meeting desired and advised that henceforth such as print Friends’ books do for the future employ only Friends, provided it be by the said Friends done as well and as reasonably as the world’s people will do it.”

Mr. Chisholm, in a lecture recently delivered before the Metropolitan Foremen Tailors’ Society, on the subject of the Development of Tailoring, Past, Present, and Future, said: “I have seen it stated in a certain sartorial journal that coats were made by the Deity for our first parents. The text from the book of Genesis is quoted and accepted literally and without question. The only objection I take to this statement of Moses, or whoever wrote the book of Genesis, is a sartorial one. If the coats were made by Deity, it is a great pity that Moses did not take a little more trouble and explain the system by which the coats were cut along with the deviations of the human figure. The tailoring world would have saved many painful struggles for straightness.”

“The inference,” he continues, “which may be drawn from the Biblical illustration is that the maker of the garment was inspired.” But it was the inspiration of experience which the gradual ascent of intelligence commanded. Our progenitors’ weapons of offence became stronger and enabled them to overcome the beasts of the forests, whose skins they adopted as being warmer and more durable than the leaves of trees.

The last bolt of the Clerico-Military party in France has done no mischief to the good cause of freedom and justice. M. Quesnay de Beaurepaire's resignation as a judge in the Court of Appeal has not prevented the Government from obtaining an overwhelming majority in favor of the order of the day pure and simple. This legal gentleman is a writer of stories for the rather questionable *Vie Parisienne*. By nature also he seems more or less unconsciously a *farceur*. Nothing could well be more absurd than his grave complaint that the judges of the Court of Appeal actually provided Colonel Picquart with refreshment when he was tired with giving evidence. And after all it turns out that other witnesses were treated in exactly the same way. There was a bottle of rum and a bottle of water, and any witness who wanted a refresher helped himself. Colonel Picquart preferred it hot, and an attendant heated the water for him. That is all there is in it, as the Americans say; and the upshot of the affair is to cover this runaway judge and his party with ridicule, which is particularly dangerous in a country like France.

M. Baudy d'Asson—presumably the deputy whom Gambetta more than once suspended and had forcibly removed from the Chamber of Deputies for riotous conduct—made a characteristic speech in the debate, and ended by moving that the whole Court of Cassation should be tried by court-martial. All this will do good by opening the eyes of sensible Frenchmen. If the Clerico-Military party were to triumph, there would be no end to the degradation through which they would drag one of the finest nations in the world.

Sixty-seven schools were "warned" by the Education Department in England and Wales last year. Sixty of them were rural schools, and fifty-three Voluntary. This is a significant commentary on the educational vaunts of the Church party, the party of "public money without public control."

"News of St. Paul" was the startling headline on a London newspaper contents-bill last week. It did not refer to the great apostle, however, but to the delayed American liner.

Immediately after the terrible boiler explosion at Barking the vicar appealed to the public on behalf of the widows of the men who were killed. This man of God's philanthropy is described as premature by "An Employer," who points out in a letter to the *Westminster Gazette* that "the law gives each childless widow £200 for the loss of her husband," and that, although the neighbors may be all poor, "it is the employees who are required to pay the compensation." The vicar of Barking seems to take a hasty view of the functions of the clergy.

Half the people in Germany, before very long, will have been in prison for "insulting" Emperor William, who seems to be more tetchy even than his God. Recently the editor of a Social Democratic paper at Magdeburg published a little story, purporting to be a conversation between the Prince of Bagdad and his tutor. A court of law—one need not prostitute language by calling it a court of justice—chose to regard the story as a reference to German affairs and an insult to the Emperor's second son; and this unfortunate editor has been sentenced to four years and one month's imprisonment. One thinks of Shelley's "King-deluded Germany" on reading of these outrages.

A dramatic and touching suicide is reported from Southend. A young wife, only married a couple of months, finding that she and her matrimonial partner did not get on well together, put an end to her life, in order to "free her husband." It was a great act of self-sacrifice, and perhaps the husband now regrets that he has lost the woman capable of making it. But the chief point is this. Our irrational law of divorce will not "free" either party to a mistaken marriage unless one of them is guilty of adultery, or the other of adultery and cruelty. Unless they degrade themselves to that extent the law affords them no relief. What God has joined together—if only like cat and dog—man must not put asunder.

A saint of the weaker sex, aged sixty-six, came before Mr. Plowden. She said: "It was like this: my husband went to 'uncle's' to get out my cloak, so that I could go to church on Sunday, but he brought out the wrong bundle. Of course, I went to 'uncle's' to put things right, and having had a drop of gin and beer, and having a fashion of talking very loud, the pawnbroker sent out for this gentleman (pointing to a constable), who came in smiling, and put his hands on me. As for using bad language—never, never, never in my life. I am more for prayer, and all day yesterday I spent in praying and singing hymns." Mr. Plowden: It is a very sad thing to see a good woman, a religious woman, a saint in distress. You will be fined 10s., or seven days.

Judge Edge, sitting in the Clerkenwell County Court, complains bitterly of the ready manner in which witnesses commit perjury to bolster up their cases. He says he is determined to put down this persistent perjury in his Court. Yet nearly

all the parties are sworn on the Holy Book! Where does the use come in of kissing that precious volume?

The Rev. Russell Finlay, vicar of All Saints, Peckham, probably finding his ordinary ecclesiastical duties somewhat dull, has opened an eating-house in his parish. To his credit, he has introduced very little of the clerical element into the shop, its decorations, and appointments. All that a keen-eyed reporter could discover in that way was "a wall at the back of the counter which had somewhat the appearance of a reredos." The plate-mats bore pictures of English cathedrals. Anything appears agreeable which is a departure from the ordinary clerical rut; and the Rev. Russell Finlay is probably better employed in the cook-shop than his chancel.

According to "Martin West," in the *Church Gazette*, the meanest men are amongst the clergy, and especially amongst the pleasantly-placed ones. He tells of a Cornish vicar, particularly well-to-do, who pulled out his purse on the way to church with another clergyman who was going to preach, and said: "I am very much interested in your mission, and should not like the bag to pass; but I have nothing less than sixpence, so unless you can lend me a penny I must go back and get one." Another flourishing cleric asked a friend to preach for him, and of course entertained him to dinner, which consisted of two red herrings. Even this was improved upon by another vicar, who always entertained the preachers who occupied his pulpit on special occasions, and deducted the cost of the entertainment from the offertory.

Sir Henry Hawkins is reported to have had a theological bout with a Sheriff's Chaplain. "Mr. Chaplain," the famous judge said, "how can you say dogs do not go to heaven? They are more faithful, more affectionate, and more intelligent than any Christian I have ever met." "But, my lord," the Chaplain replied, "the drawback is, they cannot understand one when one speaks to them." "Indeed, Mr. Chaplain!" Sir Henry retorted; "don't you think they may think it a great drawback that you will not understand them when they speak?"

A *Jewish World* correspondent argues that Hebrew can never become a living language. He points out that in the Hebrew Scriptures there are only about 5,000 words, while the English language contains 100,000. And he wants to know where the 95,000 missing words are to come from. Evidently, if the Lord wanted to give us an up-to-date revelation, he would not, because he could not, give it in Hebrew.

The *Christian World*—a paper that tries hard to accommodate itself to the thousand and one sects into which the divinely-established religion of Christ is split up—offers in its latest issue some observations on "Unbelief." There is a quiet insolence about these remarks which is only equalled by their obvious imbecility. The *Christian World* appears to think that unbelievers have still to apologise for their unbelief—the fact, of course, being that nowadays it devolves upon Christians to make some apologetic explanation of their faith. Times and opinions have changed, and the *Christian World* and its sympathetic readers are the people who are on their trial—not unbelievers, who are now prosecutors, instead of prisoners at the bar of Reason.

Here is a sapient remark of the *Christian World*, apropos of Principal Caird's recently-published University Sermons: "Perhaps there never was a time when it was at once so necessary and so difficult to deal with the question of unbelief." The necessity is a disputable point; the difficulty is beyond doubt.

"The position that unbelief is a sin incurring eternal condemnation is increasingly yielding to a tolerance which borders sometimes dangerously on indifference, and to a tendency to emphasize conduct while ignoring the importance of belief." This is very dreadful, but it is reassuring to learn from Professor Caird that, "always excepting the unbelief that is induced by moral causes, the idea that God condemns it is utterly repudiated." This may be a very accommodating concession to the enemy, but it has the trilling fault that it is entirely opposed to New Testament teaching.

Principal Caird says: "It would be to ascribe to his nature an incongruity and self-contradiction more monstrous than to deny him altogether, to conceive him casting into irrevocable darkness souls that here in vain have been groping after the light. I do not hesitate to say that it were better to perish with the unbeliever than to be saved with the believer in such a God as this." The *Christian World* is glad to think that this is a "mere commonplace in the pulpit, and Secularist speakers are wont to express the idea in their own fashion. At the same time, the error it rebuts is sufficiently harmful and deep-seated to lend importance to the unqualified rejection of it which Dr. Caird avows."

The Mennonite Church at Rohrerstown, Pennsylvania, has a free-and-easy method of electing its minister. Recently

twelve candidates drew lots for the pastorate. By the rules of the Mennonites, any member may nominate any unattached minister whom he favors. The twelve so nominated at the church in question were each invited to select a Bible from a row on a table near the pulpit. In one of these a scrap of paper had been hidden, and the candidate to whose lot it fell was forthwith installed, and will probably turn out to be quite as useful a person as if he had been installed by a bishop.

In the recent gale Providence exhibited its usual impartiality. The steeple of the Congregational church at Mold was entirely demolished, and some surprise is expressed that no one was injured.

During a recent storm in St. Helen's a large Maltese cross was blown from the gable end of St. Peter's Church. Weighing half a ton, it crushed through the roof and sadly damaged the organ. No doubt the true-blue Protestants of the neighborhood will regard this as a judgment.

Some of Mr. George Bedborough's friends, writing in *Lucifer* (Chicago), claim that his pleading guilty and its result is a "victory." Well, if it is, some people are easily satisfied in this line. Nothing could be more pitiable than the attitude of a number of the Free Lovers. Those who provoked the fight were the first to cave in, and since then they have spent their time in denouncing the firmer attitude of those who came to their assistance. If they get into any further trouble with the authorities, they will get precious little support from outsiders. Those who won't defend themselves don't deserve to be defended.

It is fair to say that Mr. Bedborough himself does not think he won a victory. He admits his mistake, and confesses it was cowardly. In so doing he is far more honest than those who egged him on to the battle, and rendered him such small help when he was in it.

Ostrich-like, the Birmingham *Owl* replies to the *Freethinker* without mentioning it. The force of our reminder that Christians don't build Board schools as Christians, but as rate-payers, is perceived; so the *Owl* changes ground and demands respect for Christian feelings. But suppose the *Owl* and its clients make a beginning in this virtue. It is a poor thing to teach and never practise. Let the Christians who make so much fuss about their feelings pay a little regard to the feelings of Freethinkers.

We learn with great interest from a religious weekly that the Free Church and "U. P." Presbyteries of Aberdeen take a strong stand against Sunday concerts. If rational people would but trouble themselves to take a strong stand against the Presbyteries, it would be "U. P." with them indeed, and the wonder is that even in Sabbatarian Scotland something of the sort is not done. Goodness knows, it is needed badly enough.

Plymouth Wesleyan Methodists are prepared to raise £9,000 towards the Twentieth Century Fund. They had a big meeting last week in King-street Chapel. Some members of the meeting were pickpockets, and eased other members of their purses. Perhaps they thought that, as the money was meant for sinners, they might as well anticipate the Twentieth Century. Nobody knows how long he will live.

Monsignor Vaughan's recent sermon in London is printed in the Catholic *Universe*, under the heading of "The Atheist Answered." It is about the silliest answer we ever read. The brains of a common carpet bug must be adequate to produce such a thing. "Any object," the preacher says, "that bears upon it the mark of design necessarily postulates a designer." Of course it does. But is there a mark of design? That is the question. Monsignor Vaughan proves there is a God in this way. Take a clock; it keeps good time, but it cannot propagate little clocks. Take a butterfly, and it will bring forth other butterflies. Therefore butterflies were made by God. Such is this gentleman's logic, and it is fit—no, it *isn't* fit—for an infant school.

Professor Cooper, having been elected to the Chair of Church History in Glasgow University, went to the Presbytery meeting to go through the usual form of signing "The Confession." Petitions were presented against him on the ground that he was more a Romanist than a Presbyterian, and there was a rare rumpus during the signing business, one man of God being suspended by the Moderator. Professor Cooper never opened his mouth. After writing his name, he lifted his hat and walked out. We wonder whether there will be another heresy trial amongst the "Orthodox, orthodox, wha believe in John Knox."

The *Daily Telegraph* is responsible for the following story. A priest at St. John's (Roman Catholic) Church, Islington, having read the list of the parishioners lying sick, and also the names of those recently deceased, for whom the prayers of the congregation were invited, went on to publish the bans of marriage between certain couples; but, instead of

using the customary introduction, he began, "And your prayers are also requested for, &c." Naturally a titter ran round the congregation.

There are twelve teetotal magistrates out of the sixteen on the Glasgow Bench, and the Sunday Closing Act applies throughout the city. Glasgow, however, doesn't grow more sober, but the reverse. New Year week had a record calendar of arrests, the number being no less than 1,032 on Monday and Tuesday alone, 550 of which were on charges of being helplessly drunk. Glasgow wants less Presbyterian religion, less ugliness, and more joy of life.

Thomas Carlyle was once reading aloud from the book of Job in the house of a friend in Scotland. He went on grandly until he came to the text, "Is there any taste in the white of an egg?" "God bless me," he exclaimed, "I did not know that was here." He closed the Bible with a smack, and retired to his own room. How many people, if they only read the Bible, would find things they didn't know were in it?

Poor "Wandering Scribe," in the *Liverpool Review*, takes nearly three columns to "reply" to about a dozen lines of Mr. Foote's. He talks consumedly about Secularists' manners, and his own articles are a riot of vulgar abuse. We do not intend to give him any more attention. As for his talk about "a prosecution," and his warning to the "editor and publisher" of the *Freethinker*—well, we just smile at it and go on our way. We expect that sort of thing from hard-pressed Christians. When they are worsted in argument they have a common trick of shouting for the police.

"Extreme Ritualism," the *Shields Daily News* says, "is the first step on the down grade to priestcraft—full-blown priestcraft means national ruin and death."

St. Joseph's Young Men's Club, Southampton, held its annual dinner recently. The last item on the entertainment program was conjuring tricks by a London performer. They would have been more interesting if done by a priest. The Catholic Church has always been good at conjuring tricks—in fact, it has half lived on them.

We note a story about the Prince of Wales in the newspapers. It appears that a Scotch parson, ordered to preach at Balmoral, was commendably brief, for which the Prince thanked him. "My dear sir," he said, "you can't think what a relief it was! I have known sermons so long that the very collie dogs have gone up to the pulpit stairs and yawned in the preacher's face."

Jerusalem was cleaned up a bit for Emperor William's visit, but is now settling back into its old filthy condition. The various Churches, all Christian, are occupied in counting up their gains. They are all said to have done fairly well.

"A Bishop Among Gas Men." Such was the heading of a *Daily News* paragraph some days ago. We read it and exclaimed: "What condescension!" Fancy a bishop—a real live bishop—humbling himself in this extraordinary manner! Surely he ought to be canonised during his lifetime. It reminds one of his Master's companying with publicans and sinners. Who shall dare to say now that we have not one Christ-like bishop in England?

This bishop hails from Rochester, and the men he went amongst labor at the South Metropolitan Gasworks. He was allowed to visit them on Saturday last (January 14) at noon and deliver an address. Now we venture to say that this sort of thing is an impudent nuisance. The business of a Gas Company is to make gas, not to provide sermons for its employees, or to exercise any supervision of their religious or other opinions.

We heard a story the other day of a very pious employer who got in a man of God to address his workmen, and stopped their pay during the half-hour the exhorter was addressing them. We suppose this is what they call cheap salvation.

Tunbridge Wells Town Council has tapped a new source of income. The municipal swimming baths were let recently for the baptism of a local lady by a Nonconformist minister. A member of the Baptist Tabernacle, in Calverley-road, has since inquired if further immersions of the kind will be allowed, and was informed that formal application must be made to the Health Committee. The use of the Public Baths in this way would do away with the necessity for Baptist dipping-tanks.

In Eastern lands, with their high temperature, baptism is naturally performed in the open air. Jesus Christ was baptised in the river Jordan. Had he been born in the West, nineteen hundred years later, he might very well have taken his dipping in a Public Swimming Bath, though the scene would not lend itself easily to the romantic accompaniment of the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 22, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road
London : 7.30, "Christianity and War."
January 29, Athenæum Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

- DURING Mr. Charles Watts's absence from England his address will be, c/o *Truthseeker* office, 28 Lafayette-place, New York City, U.S.A.
- G. CRUDDAS.—Mr. Foote has written to you about visiting Stanley, which he will try to manage as you request.
- BARKER HANSON.—We do not know of any good book treating of the origin of the Jewish race—at least, not in English.
- W. A. PYRKE, 38 Alston-road, Dyson's-lane, Edmonton, is the new secretary of the local N. S. S. Branch. Mr. Foote is writing this correspondent on another matter.
- W. COX (Liverpool).—Pleased to hear that Dr. Nicolson gave your Branch a "splendid" lecture on Sunday evening, and that his audience was "good and enthusiastic."
- L. ORGAN.—Such letters as yours in the local press do much good.
- C. HUGHES.—Councillor Boardman lied if he said : "Mr. Mayor, I have met Mr. Foote in debate." He may have spoken after one of Mr. Foote's lectures—hundreds of Christians have done that ; but he has never met Mr. Foote in a set discussion.
- W. S.—See paragraphs on the West Ham affair. With regard to a Branch of the N. S. S., had you not better wait until you can afford to have your name published? You could not keep it private as secretary. Do you not know someone else who would act? Copies of the Peculiar People pamphlet have been sent you.
- E. G. B.—Unfortunately, the report is too brief to permit of our making it the subject of a successful paragraph. Thanks all the same.
- D. OWEN.—Your letter is both interesting and encouraging. We are always glad to hear from readers whom we have helped to their mental emancipation. The promise of a memoir of Gerald Massey was really made by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who probably had the materials by him. We do not know what has become of them, and are hardly able to redeem his promise.
- "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Nemo, 2s.; Admirer, 5s.
- J. JOHNSTONE.—Your sentiments are all right, but you are not yet skilful enough in versification.
- NEMO.—Will deal with it in our next.
- W. E. BLACKWELL.—You would find what you seek in Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*. Unfortunately, it is an expensive work. We really believe that Herbert Spencer would have ten times as many readers if his writings, or at least those of more general interest, such as this one, were published at a more popular price.
- D. COLVILLE.—Thanks for copy of the *Herald*. Councillor Thorne, we see, reminded the Christian Boardman that "some portions of the Bible, too," were not fit for children to read. This was courageous as well as pertinent. The time has really come, has it not? to carry the war into the enemy's camp. They fancy that Freethinkers must always act on the defensive.
- C. CATTELL.—Received with thanks.
- R. E. HOLDING.—Thanks. We have given Monsignor Vaughan a paragraph, which is rather more than he is worth. Pleased to hear from you.
- STEPHEN HATTEN (New York).—Thanks for copy of the *New York Press*. The matter you mark, however, concerns the Socialist rather than the Secularist party, with whom Dr. Aveling had had no sort of connection for thirteen years prior to his death.
- BEEZEBUB.—Mr. Foote is writing you privately on the first matter. With regard to the other matter, if you join the Secular Society, Limited, your name will not, and cannot, be made public without your consent. It will only be known to the Society's officials.
- A. MILLAR.—The initials "B.V." were those under which James Thomson wrote in the *National Reformer*. They are the first letters of Bysshe, one of Shelley's names, and of Vanolis, an anagram of Novalis, a German poet whom Thomson much admired. Indeed, the signature of "Bysshe Vanolis" in full was once used by Thomson at the end of an early contribution of his to the old *Investigator*.
- A. E. ELDERKIN (Watford) is arranging to give two or three free lectures on the new Free Churches' Catechism. N. S. S. Branches should apply to him for a visit.
- G. THWAITES.—Parcel of the Peculiar People pamphlet sent to you as desired. Your 5s. to hand.
- C. H. CATTELL.—See paragraph. Let us know the result at Birmingham as soon as possible.
- T. CLARKE.—Thanks.
- E. R. S.—You ask : "What does the Atheist know of spirit?" Nothing that we are aware of. This may be a shorter answer than you expected, but at least it is definite.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your weekly batch of cuttings.
- J. H. KEELING.—Your answer to Mr. Cohen is far longer than you reckoned. Only about a quarter of it appears this week. We will try to give a longer instalment in our next.
- ANNUAL DINNER.—Per Mr. Hartmann :—A. Fincken, 10s.; S. Hartmann, £1 1s.; R. McKirdy, £2 2s.; Mrs. Miller, 5s.; Mr. Wilson, 10s.; Mrs. Henderson, 3s.; E. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Miss Burgess, 2s.; G. P., 1s.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges :—R. Green, 10s.; Geo. Anderson, £5.

RECEIVED.—Glasgow Evening News—West Ham Herald—New York Truthseeker—Lucifer—Yarmouth Mercury—Isle of Man Times—Ethical World—Boston Investigator—Daily Telegraph—Progressive Thinker—Liverpool Evening Express—Brann's Iconoclast—Shields Daily Gazette—Western Morning News—Universe—Two Worlds—Crescent—Freidenker—West Ham Guardian—Stratford Express—Public Opinion—Yorkshire Post—Liverpool Review—Shields Daily News—Freedom—South Wales Democrat—Birmingham Owl—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Edinburgh Evening News—Justice.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

THERE was a large audience at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Christianity Up to Date; or, the New Free Churches' Catechism." Much applause and still more laughter greeted his analysis of this document. When it came to the dropping of the Devil, and the explanation of how it happened, the risibility of the audience was so tickled that the lecturer had to stop and give them time to recover. A large quantity of the Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills was shifted from the bookstall.

Mr. Foote lectures at the Athenæum Hall again this evening (January 22), taking for his subject "Christianity and War," with special reference to Mr. Stead's crusade and the present attitude of the Churches. Incidentally, also, he will have something to say about M. Gohier's book, *L'Armée contre la Nation* (the Army against the Nation), which is being prosecuted by the French Government. This lecture should be of great interest to Freethinkers, and not less so, in some respects, to open-minded Christians.

Our editor's Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills with regard to the Peculiar People, their beliefs, and their treatment by their fellow Christians, is getting well into circulation. We appeal to Freethinkers all over the country, particularly in London, and most specially in East London, to distribute copies of this pamphlet as widely as possible. The terms on which supplies can be obtained will be found in our advertisement columns.

We have received a letter from our friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, who, as our readers know, is at present on a lecturing tour in America. This letter gives an account of his dreadful voyage across the Atlantic, and his greeting by friends on the other side. It did not arrive in time for insertion in this week's *Freethinker*, but will appear in our next issue.

One of our ever-welcome American exchanges, the *Free-thought Magazine*, conducted by H. L. Green, at Chicago, has just reached us in its January number. The frontispiece is a portrait of Mr. Charles Watts, of whom a biographical notice appears further on. A high compliment is paid to his powers of oratory. It is not correct, however, to say that Mr. Watts "has for a number of years been one of the editors of the *Freethinker*." Mr. Watts is a regular and valued contributor; but there is only one editor, Mr. Foote, and there has been only one sub-editor, the late J. M. Wheeler. Editor Green is good enough to say that the *Freethinker* is "one of the ablest Freethought papers published in the world," and that "thousands of copies ought to be taken" in America. He also says that Mr. Watts's visit is "opportune," and that he ought to be engaged every day he is in the States.

Verestchagin, the great Russian painter, whose new pictures are now exhibiting in London, is the subject of a long notice in Mr. Stead's *Review of Reviews*. "Over the religions of the world," we read, "Verestchagin looks with the eye of a philosopher. They are all but so many attempts to jog human nature more rapidly along the slow spiral by which it is destined to crawl æon after æon nearer the ideal." Verestchagin says he has found many Mussulmans, but no Christians. The followers of Mohammed obey his teaching; the followers of Jesus Christ don't obey his teaching.

The *Kölnische Zeitung* says: The Brussels Socialistic Workmen's Union deliberated on the 5th inst. on the form of an anti-clerical union for election purposes. The Assembly appointed five representatives, who will have to deal with all Liberal parties in Belgium. The Liberals declare that, in case of need, they would be ready to "come to an arrangement with the Devil," against the clerical party. The clericals reply that they are on the point of "concluding an arrangement with God in heaven." These declarations have caused great amusement, but it is understood that the union against the clerical party will soon be an accomplished fact.

The demonstration, which took place on the 8th inst. at Brussels, of the anti-clerical parties of Belgium, in honor of the exponent of Freethought, Marnix de Aldegonde, was the first united effort of the anti-clerical triple alliance. Whilst singing the song "Gensen," a procession consisting of Liberals, Progressives, Socialists, and Freemasons went to the Square de Sablon to deposit their wreaths at the foot of the Marnix Monument.

The most striking sign of the whole procession was the flag of the Belgian Freethinkers, covered with crape. As the Government had prohibited the unfolding of the flag in a public place, the procession went to the hall of St. Michel, where the leaders of the different parties made speeches in support of freedom of conscience. M. Furnemonix declared that the demonstration showed that the work of Marnix, started three hundred years ago, had not yet been completed. If, in the sixteenth century, the idea of the suppression of Freethought was possible, nowadays the notion was ridiculous. The speaker said: "Let us work some months together, and we shall be victorious."

M. Vanderkindere said that, without Liberalism, Belgium would be a second Spain; for, in spite of all the Papal endeavors, Belgium had found a place amongst the nations that fought for truth, freedom, and justice. The clerics wished to get people into the stream of reaction as in France. He urged upon his hearers to throw off the clerical yoke.

This speech was followed by applause and cries of "Down with the clergy!" M. Robert, leader of the Progressives, spoke of the reactionary conspiracy which followed the principle of *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbis*. M. Julius Hoste spoke on behalf of the Flemish Liberals. The whole proceedings are to be printed at length and published.

Quite too sensible to continue a parson. The Rev. Arthur Thompson, vicar of Little Marlow, and formerly British chaplain at Berlin, speaking the other day at the Wycombe Board of Guardians and Rural District Council, said he was profoundly interested in sanitary work. He proposed to give up his cure in order to devote himself to the sanitary needs of the district, for he regarded work of that kind as being quite as holy and necessary as that of a clergyman. A very sensible determination, and a choice that does Mr. Thompson credit.

Mr. Joseph McCabe paid Birmingham a second visit on Sunday, and lectured to a crowded audience in the evening under the auspices of the N. S. S. Branch. Partly, no doubt, in consequence of its persecution by the local bigots, the Branch has made sixteen new members during the past fortnight.

A most successful meeting of the Great Yarmouth Freethinkers' Association was held in their hall on Sunday, when J. W. De Caux, Esq., J.P., delivered an exceedingly able and interesting address on "Moses and the Commandments." The chair was taken by Mr. R. Forder. An interesting discussion followed by Messrs. Barker, Smith, and Headley. Judging from the success of the meetings, the future of the Association is assured.

Our Radical contemporary, the London *Star*, has had eleven years of vigorous and useful life. It is a go-ahead paper, for, being established on January 17, 1888, it celebrated its birthday on January 16 this year—a day in front of old Father Time. Its double number, to commemorate the event, was a wonderful halfpennyworth. In addition to the ordinary news, there was a special story by Zola and a new poem by Swinburne; the latter being a Prologue to Cyril Tourneur's drama, *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The following lines show that Swinburne has lost none of his old heretical fire:—

So, when dark faith in faith's dark ages heard
Falsehood, and drank the poison of the Word,
Two shades misshapen came to monstrous birth,
A father fiend in heaven, a thrall on earth:
Man, meanest born of beasts that press the sod,
And die: the vilest of his creatures, God.
A judge unjust, a slave that praised his name,
Made life and death one fire of sin and shame.

Lombroso, the great Italian criminologist, offers a word of warning to the people of the United States. "Let them beware," he says, "of militarism; for this is the source of all the evils that are ruining our Latin races."

Colonel Ingersoll Replies to the Clerical Critics and Asks a Few Questions.

I HAVE read the letters and interviews with ministers that have been published in the *Journal* on the subject of my last Sunday's lecture. Some of them seem to be very sincere, some not quite honest, and some a little of both.

The Rev. Robert S. MacArthur takes the ground that very many Christians do not believe in a personal devil, but are still Christians. He says they hold that the references in the New Testament to the devil are simply to personifications of evil, and do not apply to any personal existence.

These statements seem to me utterly absurd. The references to devils in the New Testament are certainly as good and satisfactory as the references to angels. Now, are the angels referred to in the New Testament simply personifications of good, and are there no such personal existences?

If devils are only personifications of evil, how is it that these personifications of evil could hold arguments with Jesus Christ? How could they talk back? How could they publicly acknowledge the divinity of Christ?

As a matter of fact, the best evidences of Christ's divinity in the New Testament are the declarations of devils. These devils were supposed to be acquainted with supernatural things, and consequently knew a God when they saw one, whereas the average Jew, not having been a citizen of the celestial world, was unable to recognise a deity when he met him.

We are also told in the New Testament that Christ was tempted by the devil—that is, by a "personification of evil," and that this "personification" took him to the pinnacle of the temple and tried to induce him to jump off.

DID THIS DEVIL ACTUALLY EXIST?

Now, where did this "personification of evil" come from? Was it an actual existence? Dr. MacArthur says that it may not have been. Then it did not come from the outside of Christ. If it existed, it came from the inside of Christ, so that, according to MacArthur, Christ was the Creator of his own devil.

Then, of course, MacArthur will tell us whether it was a "personification of evil" that offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and whether Christ expelled seven "personifications of evil" from Mary Magdalene, and how did they come to count these "personifications of evil"? If the devils, after all, are only "personifications of evil," then, of course, they cannot be numbered; they are all one. There may be different manifestations; but, in fact, there can be but one, and yet Mary Magdalene had seven.

In my lecture on "Superstition" I did say that to deny the existence of evil spirits, or to deny the existence of the devil, is to deny the truth of the New Testament; and that to deny the existence of these imps of darkness was to deny the words of Jesus Christ. I did say that, if we give up the belief in devils, we must give up the inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, and we must give up the divinity of Christ.

PROOF OF CHRIST'S DIVINITY.

Upon that declaration I stand, because, if devils do not exist, then Jesus Christ was mistaken, or we have not in the New Testament a true account of what he said and of what he pretended to do. If the New Testament gives a true account of his words and pretended actions, then he did claim to cast out devils. That was his principal business. That was his certificate of divinity, casting out devils, which authenticated his mission, and proved that he was superior to the hosts of darkness.

Now, take the devil out of the New Testament, and you also take the veracity of Christ. With that veracity you take the divinity. With that divinity you take the Atonement; and, when you take the Atonement, the great fabric known as Christianity becomes a shapeless ruin.

Now, let Dr. MacArthur answer this, and answer it not like a minister, but like a man. Ministers are unconsciously a little unfair. They have a little tendency to what might be called a natural crook.

QUESTIONS FOR DR. BUCHANAN.

The Rev. W. D. Buchanan does not seem to be quite fair. He says that every utterance of mine impresses men with my insincerity, and that every argument I bring forward is specious, and that I spend my time in ringing the changes on arguments that have been answered over and over again for hundreds of years.

Now, my dear Mr. Buchanan, I wish to ask you some questions. Do you believe in a personal devil? Do you believe that the bodies of men and women become tenements for little imps, goblins, and demons? Do you believe that the devil used to lead men and women astray? Do you believe the stories about devils that you find in the Old and New Testaments?

Now, don't tell me that these questions have been answered long ago. Answer them now. And if you say the Devil does exist, that he is a person, that he is the enemy of God, then let me ask you another question: Why should this Devil punish souls in hell for rebelling against God? Why should the Devil, who is an enemy of God, help punish God's enemies? This may have been answered many times, but one more repetition will do but little harm.

The Rev. J. W. Campbell I rather like. He appears to be absolutely sincere. He is orthodox—true blue. He believes in a devil—in an active, thinking devil, and a clever devil. Of course, he does not think this devil is as stout as God, but he is quicker; not quite as wise, but a little more cunning.

THE DEVIL A BUNCO STEERER.

According to Mr. Campbell, the Devil is the bunco steerer of the universe—king of the green goods men; but, after all, Mr. Campbell will not admit that, if this Devil does not exist, the Christian creeds all crumble; but I think he will admit that, if the Devil does not exist, then Christ was mistaken, or that the writers of the New Testament did not truthfully give us his utterances.

Now, if Christ was mistaken about the existence of the Devil, maybe he was mistaken about the existence of God. In other words, if Christ made a mistake, then he was ignorant. Then we cannot say he was divine, although ignorance has generally believed in divinity. So I do not see exactly how Mr. Campbell can say that, if the Devil does not exist, the Christian creeds do not crumble; and, when I say Christian creeds, I mean orthodox creeds. Is there any orthodox Christian creed without the Devil in it?

Now, if we throw away the Devil, we throw away original sin, the Fall of Man, and we throw away the Atonement. Of this arch the Devil is the keystone. Remove him, the arch falls.

Now, how can you say that an orthodox Christian creed remains intact without crumbling when the original sin, the Fall of Man, the Atonement, and the existence of the Devil, are all thrown aside?

QUESTIONS FOR DR. CAMPBELL.

I ask the Doctor this: That when the Devil invited Christ into the wilderness to tempt him, and adopted some disguise that made him look more than usually attractive, does the Doctor think that Christ could not see through the disguise? Was it possible for the Devil with a mask to fool God, his creator? Was it possible for the Devil to tempt Christ by offering him the kingdoms of the earth, when they already belonged to Christ, and when Christ knew that the Devil had no title, and when the Devil knew that Christ knew that he had no title, and when the Devil knew that Christ knew that he was the Devil, and when the Devil knew that he was Christ? Does the reverend gentleman still think that it was the disguise of the Devil that tempted Christ?

I would like some of these questions answered, because I have a very inquiring mind.

So Mr. Campbell tells us—and it is very good and comforting of him—that there is a time coming when the Devil shall deceive the nations no more. He also tells us that God is more powerful than the Devil, and that he is going to put an end to him.

Will Mr. Campbell have the goodness to tell me why God made the Devil? If he is going to put an end to him, why did he start him? Was it not a waste of raw material to make him? Was it not unfair to let this Devil, so powerful, so cunning, so attractive, into the

Garden of Eden, and to put Adam and Eve, who were then scarcely half dry, within his power, and not only Adam and Eve within his power, but their descendants, so that the slime of the serpent has been on every babe, and so that, in consequence of what happened in the Garden of Eden, flames will surround countless millions in the name of the most merciful God?

MR. KRAELING ORTHODOX.

The Rev. E. C. J. Kraeling, pastor of the Zion Lutheran Church, declares that those who do not believe in a personal God do not believe in a personal Satan, and *vice versa*. The one, he says, necessitates the other. In this I do not think he is quite correct. I think many people believe in a personal God who do not believe in a personal Devil, but I know of none who do believe in a personal Devil who do not also believe in a personal God. The orthodox generally believe in both, and for many centuries Christians spoke with great respect of the Devil. They were afraid of him.

But I agree with the Rev. Mr. Kraeling when he says that to deny a personal Satan is to deny the infallibility of God's word.

He further says, and I agree with him, that a "Christian" needs no scientific argument on which to base his belief in the personality of Satan. That certainly is true, and if a Christian does need a scientific argument, it is equally true that he never will have one.

Of course, there cannot be any scientific argument proving the existence of the Devil. At the same time, I admit, as the Rev. Mr. Kraeling says—and I thank him for his candor—that the Bible does prove the existence of the Devil from Genesis to the Apocalypse, and I do agree with him that the "revealed word" teaches the existence of a personal Devil, and that all truly orthodox Christians believe that there is a personal Devil, and the Rev. Mr. Kraeling proves this by the Fall of Man; and he proves that, without this Devil, there could have been no redemption for the evil spirits, so he brings forward the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. At the same time that Mr. Kraeling agrees with me as to what the Bible says, he insists that I bring no arguments, that I blaspheme, and then he drops into humor, and says that, if any further arguments are needed to prove the existence of the Devil, I furnish them.

How a man, believing the creed of the orthodox Mr. Kraeling, can have anything like a sense of humor, is beyond even my imagination.

Now, let me ask the reverend gentleman a few plain questions, with the request that he answer them without mist or mystery. If you, Mr. Kraeling, had the power to make a world, would you make an exact copy of this? Would you make a man and a woman, put them in a garden, knowing that they would be deceived, knowing that they would fall, knowing that all the consequences believed in by orthodox Christians would follow from that fall? Would you do it? And would you make your world so as to provide for earthquakes and cyclones? Would you create the seeds of disease and scatter them in the air and water?

Now, answer fairly. Do not quote Scripture; just answer, and be honest.

Would you provide for the settlement of all difficulties by war? Would you so make your world that the weak would bear the burdens, so that woman would be a slave, so that children would be trampled upon as though they were poisonous reptiles? Would you fill the woods with wild beasts? Would you make a few volcanoes to overwhelm your children? Would you provide for earthquakes that would swallow them? Would you make them ignorant, savage, and fill their minds with all the phantoms of horror? Would you?

Now, it will only take you a moment to answer these questions, and, if you say you would, then I shall be satisfied that you believe in the orthodox God, and that you are as bad as he is. If you say you would not, I will admit that there is a little dawn of intelligence in your brain.

At the same time, I want it understood, with regard to all these ministers, that I am a friend of theirs. I am trying to civilise their congregations, so that the congregations will allow the ministers to develop, to grow, to become really and truly intelligent. The process is slow, but it is sure.

—New York Journal.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

Dr. Keeling's Reply to Mr. Cohen.

FIRST of all, my best thanks to the Editor, and to my able Reviewer. Men need not quarrel because their opinions differ. Next, one word to any reader who may honor me: please note that (C.) in brackets means Cohen, (K.) means Keeling. Number Mr. Cohen's paragraphs; there are twenty-two; what he and I say can thus be better followed. Pardon apparent egotism; "I" is shorter than a roundabout, and space is precious. Lastly, please bear in mind that quotations, *without context*, are often misleading. Mr. Cohen's text is before the reader, mine is not. Therefore, to prevent error, I will send to any reader, post free, an "Analysis" (written six months ago) of the book in question; it is short and clear. Apply for it to Dr. Keeling, Sheffield. Further, until the end of February, the book itself may be obtained by *written* application, enclosing one shilling, to the Manager, Messrs. Taylor and Francis, Red Lion-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C. The shilling is for postage, packing, and a trifling commission for trouble. The book is not on sale; if it were, its price would certainly not be less than five shillings. Now to business. I should much like to follow my formidable antagonist over the whole of his six columns, but that would require another six, which I dare not ask for. A few chief points must suffice.

First, as to *positions*; par. 3; (C.). It is good generalship to carry the war into the enemy's country. This my reviewer has done from the outset, by changing my book from what it chiefly is—viz., an attack on certain weak points in Materialism and Agnosticism—into "A Fresh Plea for Theism." The tactic is excellent, if only one makes sure of the enemy's position. This Mr. Cohen has not done; consequently some of his shot hit nothing—at any rate, not me. He appears to have before him some obsolete, conventional view of Theism, which, from old habit, he proceeds to rend in pieces, the review of my book serving as occasion. This may be a useful occupation, but it does not answer my argument. The object of my book is chiefly to mark out the scientific basis which all must abide by, and to show that modern Materialism does not abide by it. The consideration of this scientific basis takes up nearly two-thirds of the whole book, and a single page of this part would hold all its Theism. There is not a scrap in chapter iii. (more than one-third of the volume), and even my critic calls this chapter "interesting and instructive." It is amusing to note how persistently a well-known type of Materialist tries to monopolise Science, and bend her to his will. Science is creedless, and cares just nothing at all for either Materialism or Theism. She leaves her votaries to select whatever "ism" they like best, provided they remain faithful to her. It is quite as correct to speak of scientific Theism as of scientific Materialism, and quite as incorrect. Both are misnomers. Science has abundance of conjecture and speculation of her own; but it all relates to her own affairs. As to the various "isms" which men try to pin to her skirts, she waives them aside with serene indifference. Materialism is not a science, but a belief or theory, like several other "isms." If there are many Materialists among men of science, so are there many Theists, whose distinction is quite as great, and who find no difficulty in harmonising their science with their faith. Except to strip them off like barnacles, I do not touch "isms" until the last chapter. There they are in their place. On pp. 126-7 there is a table of six of the most important; Materialism and Theism are with the rest. The comparative merits of each are briefly discussed, and option is left to the reader. Being a Theist, I of course prefer the theistic view; but I suspect that *Quæro* will not, as a plea for Theism, find much favor with theologians.

Pars. 6, 7, 9, 10; (C.); *Causation*. Going now into such detail as space will permit, I beg to point out that causation is taken for granted. As evolutionists, neither Mr. Cohen nor I can dispense with it; and we both regard evolution as a *process*. Produced by what? The answer to this brings out my position with the utmost clearness, *for the first part of the book* wherein Materialism is dealt with. Thus science, according to me, reduces all causes to three—viz., matter, energy, and intelligence. The third as necessary as the first

two, if we are to account reasonably for the marvellous intricacy and harmony of the phenomena of matter and force. And it is an original, co-operating, producing factor; something entirely distinct from, and superior to, that *protoplasmic* intelligence which appears very late, is limited (so far as we know) to the animal life of our little planet, only *observes* and *learns*, never *causes* except in the way of handing down its inherited self. Never causes, that is, in originating or contributing to the primary forces and constituents of nature. Within certain limits man can, and does, control and adapt; for instance, when he constructs and runs a steam-engine. His intelligence is then co-operating, on a small scale, with matter and energy; much in the same way as my third factor—extra-human or superhuman intelligence—co-operates with them on a vastly larger scale, and as a co-cause of equal rank.

On the other hand, a Materialist of Mr. Cohen's type admits only two causes—matter and energy. He will not suffer the presence of intelligence amongst the forces of the universe; says, if it *were* there, it would only cause disturbance and uncertainty; and he educes protoplasmic intelligence (the only form he recognises) from matter and force alone. Why? Not from the necessities of the case, but because he has nailed his colors to matter and force only; consequently is obliged to thrust intelligence, protoplasmic or general—some advanced Materialists are admitting the latter—into matter and energy, into which it will not go; for, as Science teaches, matter is "*inert*" and energy is *physical*. There is no provision in either for what is *psychic*, the highest class of universe-phenomena. That is why I posit intelligence, as a necessary factor, by the side of matter and energy. Not as *the* cause, as Mr. Cohen persists in saying I do, but as *a* cause, co-operating with two others, but quite as indispensable. It is curious how differently the same evidence affects different minds. Here is my reviewer (par. 18) deducing, from the unchanging order, regularity, and harmony of the universe, a proof of the *absence* of intelligence; whereas I, from the same data, extract the proof of the presence and perfection of intelligence. But that may be only another of what Mr. Cohen calls my "fallacies." Well, it is a fine, resounding word; I have used it once myself in *Quæro*. After all, it only means that Mr. Cohen's "doxies" and mine differ.

To illustrate universe-automatics, and to show the superfluity and disturbing effect of intelligence, let us consider a case. Take a motor-car, running on a line of rails. The line twists and turns in various directions, and has shunting-points whereat the car can pass on to other lines. It is moving rapidly, smoothly, and with perfect regularity, taking the points with the utmost precision. It has no driver. (Motor-cars have not quite got to this yet; but give them another twenty years, and motor them with electricity. Even now, as an experiment, a driverless car could easily be constructed to run of itself on a fixed line of rails; even to stop, go on, reverse, change direction, if the mechanician were expert enough.) Two bystanders are watching the car, and admiring the skill manifest in its construction and complicated movements.

"Rubbish," says a knowing fellow at their elbow; "skill has naught to do with that car."

"But who made it?"

"Nobody made it; it never was made; it was always there."

"But the machine is full of rods and cranks and valves and regulators; who contrived these?"

"Don't I tell you there's no contrivance about it; the machine was much simpler at first, and formed its own valves and regulators as they were wanted."

"I see," with a wink at his companion; "the whole affair, inside and out, grewed, like Topsy."

"Yes; but no one who knows what he is talking about speaks nowadays of such things 'growing,' they are 'evolved.'"

"Ah! that makes it much plainer. But say, who laid those rails down, anyway?"

"Why, of course, the car lays down its own rails, as anyone can see but an idiot like —"

Just then a sturdy keeper from a neighboring asylum marched off the speaker, and presently there was a loud crash—the car lay in ruins.

Said one to the other: "What else could you expect

with a machine that made itself, and runs itself, and has no one to look after it?"

All this, I dare say, is very absurd, but I do not see how the absurdity is lessened by increasing the size of the machine. Expand the thing indefinitely, even to the dimensions of the universe, the difficulty remains—nay, increases, so long as we have nothing but physical matter and force with whatever evolution can make of them to help us. As time rolls on, the matter-force coach becomes crowded with passengers, the offspring of the coach which carries them. At last there appears among them a group of creatures who can observe, think, and talk, and some of the cleverest of these finally assure us that the whole show, passengers included, is nothing more than the outcome of "atomo-mechanics."

JAMES HURD KEELING.

(To be continued.)

Eternal Nature.

THE thought, or thing, we apprehend as "Space"—
 The all-persistent fact, without, within,
 Which is, for us, with "Time" its younger Twin,
 The warp and woof of Nature's figured face—
 Extends beyond the following of Thought;
 For Thought destroys itself whene'er it tries
 To limit that in which the limit lies;
 So, therefore, Space is boundless—if 'tis aught.
 The thought, or thing, we apprehend as "Cause"—
 The constant antecedent seen and known,
 Or forced upon our mind—is backward thrown
 Through all the past, with ne'er a break nor pause;
 The vista fades, but fadeless is the thought
 That "Causal limit" stultifies the mind;
 Thus forced to think, this verdict we must find,
 That nature is eternal—if 'tis aught.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Book Chat.

SOME very interesting things are given in a *Westminster Gazette* article from a book which has recently caused a great sensation in Vienna. It is written by Dr. Constantine Christomanos, late tutor in the Greek language to the Empress Elizabeth, who fell under the knife of the assassin. The young Greek tutor had many conversations with his imperial pupil, who drew forth his admiration for her character and intelligence. Some of her sayings recorded by him show that she thought for herself. She told him, for instance, that she did not believe in medicine, or only a little in homœopathy. "People," she said, "want to be deceived, and the small doses do them the least harm." One day, after a political conversation with Emperor Joseph, she remarked: "The whole thing is humbug. Politicians hope to guide events, and are always surprised by them. Everything that happens happens of itself, by its own necessity, and diplomats only record facts."

* * *

The Empress was a great advocate of freedom for women. She said they were often more worthy of liberty than men, and cited Georges Sand as an example. But she was dead against the so-called culture of women; indeed, she said that the less a woman learned, the greater was her value. Her opinion was that women know everything by intuition. In the countries where women learn little they were far more real women than the Vienna bluestockings. "The friends of emancipation," she continued, "contend that more educated mothers would produce more talented sons, but that is a deception. On the contrary, they would be better mothers if they were like the trees—free, under the open sky, from every bondage and crippling restraint. It is not the mission of women to help men in their business by suggesting ideas and counsels. Their mission is rather by their mere presence to evoke in men beautiful ideas which men must work out for themselves." A very good statement of one side of the truth. What is commonly called education, but is really only instruction, is most useful in itself up to a point; though it ceases to be useful when it injures the physique, or inspires discontent with the inevitable conditions of domestic and social life.

* * *

The favorite play of Shakespeare's with the Empress Elizabeth was the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Titania adoring Bottom suggested to her the reflection: "That is the ass's head of our illusions which we are continually embracing." Finally, we may note her compliment to the English. On board her yacht she took a goat to which she was attached. "My goat makes the journey without enthusiasm," she said; "but she has a sense of duty, for she is English. That is worth more than any amount of æsthetics."

The *Academy* had a difficult task in awarding two prizes of one hundred and fifty guineas to the authors of the two most meritorious books published during the year. Last year one hundred guineas was awarded to Mr. Stephen Phillips for his volume of poems, and fifty guineas to Mr. Henley for his essay on Burns. This year the amount has been divided amongst three writers. Mr. Sidney Lee gets fifty guineas for his *Life of William Shakespeare*, Mr. Maurice Hewlett the same for his *Forest Lovers*, and Mr. Joseph Conrad another fifty for his *Tales of Unrest*.

* * *

Mr. George Meredith has presented some books to the new Dorking Public Library, accompanying the gift with a letter to the President, Sir Trevor Lawrence. Mr. Meredith would have been present at the opening if the state of his health had permitted. "Country audiences of the present day," he wrote, "are of an intelligence to require no exposition of the virtue residing in books, or, we may hope, exhortations to consult them. I trust that the library may flourish, and shall take a constant interest in its development to the satisfaction of all classes of readers."

* * *

Mr. W. T. Stead has started a new periodical with the alliterative title, *War Against War*. The second number will contain an article by Mark Twain. The following tit-bit from Mark's article will be welcomed by our readers: "The Czar is in favor of disarmament. So am I. There ought to be no difficulty about the rest of the world."

Correspondence.

PECULIAR PEOPLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your open letter to Mr. Justice Wills under the above heading, though it reads most plausibly, admits, from a Freethought standpoint at least, of easy refutation, and with your permission I will proceed to rebut it: (1) The words of the Savior, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," are undoubtedly a simile, and there can be no question but that Jesus intended to convey that, as those bodily feeble needed a physical doctor for their cure, so those sunk in sin required a spiritual one to heal them, otherwise the statement is no simile. (2) The text you quote from the last chapter of Mark, "They shall lay their hands upon the sick and they shall recover," as also the one from the fifth chapter of St. James's Epistle, "The prayer of faith with anointment of oil shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up," refer in the one case to believers only, and in the other to their faith. If, therefore, a supposed believer attempted either method unsuccessfully, such person ought to infer that either his belief was in fault or his faith, and should not again repeat the process on any child or person for whose bodily health he was responsible. I urge, therefore, that these people should be permitted a single trial, and, if unsuccessful, warned that a second offence would be punished. But I also consider that the sentence should not entail hard labor; as the offence is one only of an error of judgment, they should be treated as first-class misdemeanants.

J. EDWARDS.

[We hope Mr. Edwards, whoever he is, whether Christian or Freethinker, is not proud of his "easy refutation" of our Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills. He mistakes the real point at issue. We do not defend the efficacy of prayer, or the intellectual acumen of the Peculiar People. What we contend is that Thomas George Senior followed the Bible and obeyed Jesus Christ, and that it is ghastly and cruel hypocrisy for professed Christians to send him to prison for doing so.—EDITOR.]

Profane Jokes.

SALVATION CAPTAIN—"There seemed to be a rather acrimonious discussion going on as I went by headquarters." "Yes," said the Salvation Lieutenant sadly; "Brother Jones, who beats the drum, happened to say to Brother Smith, who does most of the preaching: 'Actions speak louder than words.'" —*Indianapolis Journal*.

Sky Pilot—"I need a prolonged rest." Deacon—"That is so, Mr. P., and let me tell you we need a rest as much as you."

Mamma—"Well, Edie, what did you see at church?" Edie—"A man came in with his nightgown on, and was so 'shamed he hid his face in his hands 'fore he could say a word."

"Why are church bells more obedient than the organ?" "Because the bells ring when they are tolled, but the organ says, 'I will be blown first.'"

He—"I see another sheriff has been convicted of the crime known as embracery." She—"Well, I never. I thought they had done away with all those Blue Laws."

Georgia—"Do you folks ever have family prayers before breakfast?" Albert—"No; we only have prayers before we go to bed. We ain't afraid in the daytime."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Christianity and War."
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, J. W. White's Dramatic Company in "My Awful Dad."
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Chilperic Edwards, "Ancient Monuments and the Bible."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. Snell, "What is Left After the Questionings of our Time?"
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion on "Buddhism"; 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Christian Science."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, "Life and Death."
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Faith and Finance."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board School): W. Dyson—11, "The Age of Faith"; 7, "The Age of Reason."
BLACKBURN (Power-loom Weavers' Large Room, Clayton-street): January 26, C. Cohen, "Religion and Man." January 27, C. Cohen, "Morality without Religion."
BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, C. J. Atkinson, "Why I Object to Trade Unions."
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Indestructibility of Freethought."
DERBY BRANCH (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. H. Whitney, "Freethought."
GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7.30, Mr. Smith, "The Christian Doctrine of Hell."
LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "A Twelfth-century Freethinker."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Dr. Nicolson, "Islamism and Buddhism."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. Percy Ward—11, "Shelley, the Poet of Progress"; 3, "How to be Happy though Damned"; 7, "The Sins of Jesus."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "The Search for God"; 3, "Morality without Religion"; 7, "Religion and Man." Tea at 5. Members' and friends' social dance on Wednesday evenings at 8.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; 7.30, A Reading.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—January 22, Sheffield; 24 and 25, Preston; 29, Bradford Labor Church; 31, Huddersfield. February 1, Huddersfield; 5, Glasgow; 7, Carlisle; 8, Wishaw; 9 and 10, Motherwell; 12, Dundee; 26, Liverpool. March 5, Liverpool; 12, Birmingham.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—January 22, Manchester; 29, Chester.

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