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THE

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

## The Birmingham Scandal.

FOR a considerable time the Birmingham Secularists had to deplore the fact that their movement was under a cloud. This was not their fault, but their misfortune. They were unable to obtain the use of a decent hall in a central part of the city. But at last they were able to engage the Bristol-street Board school for Sunday meetings, and, to quote from an old book, they went on conquering and to conquer. The audiences that assembled there were what is generally styled "respectable." They were thoughtful looking people, decently dressed, and positively clean—not at all like the "infidels" of orthodox imagination. Moreover, they were numerous, and that was their worst characteristic. Had they been only a handful, a mere remnant, they would not have excited any particular interest in Christian minds. But when the hall was crowded, and people were turned away from the doors, as was sometimes the case, the matter became really serious. Accordingly a campaign of bigotry was opened against the Secularists. The preliminary skirmishing took the form of letters to the newspapers. Did the School Board, it was asked, know what was being carried on in its own buildings? Then the usual Christian Evidencer appeared upon the scene, with his regulation budget of garbled extracts, and his sinister allusions to the "immorality" of "infidels." Presently a lot of real or pretended (perhaps half-and-half) indignation was expressed at a "shocking" placard issued by the Secularists. A lecture was announced at the Board school on the awful question, "Did God Make Man, or Did Man Make God?" Certainly this question is very pointed, and perhaps it did not sufficiently temper the wind of criticism to the shorn lambs of Birmingham orthodoxy. But it does not contain a single word which the most fastidious taste could find objectionable. It simply puts in plain language the eternal question between Theism and Atheism. To read more into it is a monstrous absurdity. Yet a number of Christians, who are apparently new to controversy, cried out that their Deity was being insulted, and clamored for the expulsion of the Secularists for allowing such a question to be discussed in a public building. This is a fact which should be borne in mind. It shows that the agitation against the Secularists began in nothing but religious prejudice. Other motives have been asserted since, but they are merely the excuses of bigotry. Finally, the (Catholic) Bishop of Coventry brought the matter before the School Board, and then the lying began. The Bishop is a good hand at it himself, and he found some worthy supporters. These lies were contradicted by the Secularists, who sent a deputation to the Sites and Buildings Committee. But this was of no avail. It was easy to see that the bigots would triumph. When it became a question of pleasing the Christians or pleasing the Secularists, the Board's decision could be anticipated. It has now resolved that the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society shall "not be permitted to hire any of the Board schools for a period of twelve months."

This decision is of course applauded by the *Daily Post*. I am surprised, however, at its approval by the *Daily Mail*. This journal had declared, only a few days before, that such a decision would be regarded by the ratepayers as "an interference with the liberty of free speech." The *Daily Argus* has been consistent. It has stood up throughout for the Secularists' rights as citizens. I may mention that the School Board was not unanimous. The voting was ten to five; the

minority consisting of Miss Dale, Rev. Joseph Wood, Rev. J. A. Sharp, Mr. Ansell, and Mr. Titterton. These five the *Argus* calls "courageous defenders of free speech." Moreover, it declares that "the evidence upon which the Secularists were convicted by the Board majority would not suffice to hang a cat."

Let us examine some of the evidence. It is alleged that an indecent or suggestive sentence was uttered by Mr. Sale in his lecture on that awful question as to whether God made man or man made God. Well, if he is guilty, let him be punished. But *is* he guilty? Who is his accuser? The Board is not at liberty to say; the person remains anonymous. What then is the evidence to the contrary? Thirty-seven ladies and gentlemen who were present at the lecture have put their names and addresses to a declaration to the Board, in which they "distinctly deny" that Mr. Sale uttered the sentence imputed to him. Thirty-seven open-faced people against one man (or woman) in a mask! Yet they are not to be believed, and he (or she) is to be regarded as infallible!

Professor Windle, a Catholic member of the Board, produced a postcard referring to one lecture delivered by Mr. Percy Ward, and to another to be delivered by Mr. Joseph McCabe; but it was pointed out by Mr. Cattell, a member of the Secularist deputation, that this postcard was not printed, as Professor Windle had stated, but was written, and bore no signature. The Secularists did not advertise in that way; they advertised openly; and they repudiated all knowledge of, and responsibility for, this ridiculous piece of "evidence," which is worthy of Professor Windle's fellow Catholics in France, who have forged whole bundles of similar "evidence" against the unfortunate Dreyfus.

Objection was raised to the presence on the Secularist bookstall of a copy of the pamphlet which Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant published in order to vindicate the right of free publication. When the prosecution was defeated they ceased publishing this pamphlet. It is out of date and ought to be dropped, as there are more recent, useful, and defensible works on the population question. The Secularists did not admit its "indecent" character, any more than Lord Chief Justice Cockburn did in his summing-up at the Bradlaugh-Besant trial. Still, they offered to remove it from the bookstall, as it was really a thing of no intrinsic importance.

Objection was also taken to certain advertisements in the *Truthseeker*. Personally, I may say that I would not insert these advertisements in the *Freethinker*; but I do not wish to give myself airs on this account, and I do not presume to dictate a policy to the conductors of any other Freethought journal. All I am entitled to say is that, for my own part, I take heed to Paul's distinction between the "lawful" and the "convenient." I have refused advertisements that I have seen in perfectly "reputable" papers, partly because I did not like them, and partly because Freethought is very much in the position of Cæsar's wife, and has to be not only above offence, but also above suspicion. The Birmingham Secularists, for their part, declined to hold themselves responsible for all the advertisements in the papers that might be sold at their meetings. It was absurd to make booksellers liable in this way. At the same time, if anything objectionable were pointed out to them in a friendly way, they would consider the matter in a spirit of equity to all concerned. This was, in my judgment, a sensible and dignified attitude.

These minor matters could have been settled easily, but behind them was a graver matter—at least in the



opinion of the majority of the Board. They tried to conceal that opinion, but it burnt through all disguises. The Rev. J. Hulme, for instance, quoted from "one of the publications sold" a "violent denunciation of Christianity," and said that he "warmly resented the use of the Board schools for attacks upon beliefs which were dear to the hearts of the large majority of the ratepayers." This was a plain confession of religious intolerance. But it was capped by the Bishop of Coventry, who would naturally like to establish the Inquisition in England. This gentleman had got hold of a copy of the Immediate Practical Objects of the National Secular Society, one of which was "A reform of the marriage laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce." This was enough. The Society, he said, was condemned by its own objects. Fancy going in for "equal justice" and anything "reasonable"! I quite understand its shocking a Catholic Bishop. But I venture to point out that England is not yet a Catholic country; that Birmingham is not a Catholic city; that divorce is already permitted by the law of this country, whether Catholics like it or not; and that it is the legal right of every citizen, if he thinks fit, to advocate a reform of the existing law, with a view to increasing the happiness and dignity of both men and women. Nothing more is aimed at than was advocated with imperishable eloquence by the greatest Christian poet of this country, the immortal John Milton. The Bishop of Coventry does not agree with John Milton, but the National Secular Society does; and it may well resent the impudence of this Catholic priest, who thinks that the Society should be denied the ordinary use of public buildings because it differs, in common with ninety-nine out of every hundred Protestants in England, from one of the dogmas of his infallible Church.

That I am right in alleging mere religious intolerance as the real motive of this scandalous ill-treatment of the Birmingham Secularists is further proved by the concluding sentence of the article in the *Daily Mail*, which I disgracefully in less than a week. Writing in approval of what it had previously condemned, the *Mail* says: "Birmingham is a liberal-minded town, but we hope she will consent to see the *Daily* held up to contempt outside and inside a public school where children are receiving their first impressions." We do not stop to expose the nonsense of this sentence. We merely quote it to show the actual, as distinct from the affected, motive of this conspiracy to crush the Secular movement in Birmingham.

It is useless to deny that the bigots have scored. But it is foolish to suppose that Secularism is really crushed in Birmingham. It has to face fresh difficulties, but we daresay it will overcome them. Meanwhile it derives some advantage from a splendid advertisement. Christianity in the capital of the Midlands recognises it as a dangerous enemy, and this fact has been carried home to thousands of people who were previously ignorant or indifferent. Secular propaganda is telling. This is the central fact of the whole affair, and it is a matter for honest congratulation.

Naturally the Birmingham Secularists have had difficulty in obtaining the use of another hall, for the boasted liberality of that city is far from being justified by facts. They have succeeded, however, in hiring the Circus for one Sunday, and I am lecturing there to-day (Feb. 5), having set aside my engagement in London in order to go where I seem to be more needed. My evening subject is "Freethought and the Birmingham School Board," and I have no doubt that a large meeting will share my view of the local situation.

I stated last week that I should have a good deal to say about this Birmingham scandal, and also about other troubles of a somewhat similar character in various parts of the country. Some aspects of the matter are sufficiently serious, and deserve the careful attention of Secularists. I prefer to devote a special article to those aspects which primarily concern ourselves. During the week I have received an important communication from Mr. Sydney Gimson, the President of the Leicester Secular Society, from which I propose (with his consent) to quote certain passages. What I have to say myself will be written with a full sense of my responsibility as President of the National Secular Society.

G. W. FOOTE.

## American Jottings.

THE exceedingly rough passage I had from Liverpool to New York was a severe shock to my nervous system, and for days after my arrival I was far from being in my normal healthy condition. Fortunately, I am now quite myself again, and ready to commence the work that lies before me in this vast country.

In the United States there are plenty of staunch Freethinkers, but Secular organisation is very incomplete. In consequence of this, the arrangements for my lecturing tour were left to be made after my arrival. Those who have any knowledge of the geographical vastness of this continent will quite understand the time it takes, and the labor it necessitates, to plan a few months' lecturing tour in the States and Canada. Mr. E. M. Macdonald, the able editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, came to my assistance, and rendered very valuable aid. To him I shall be indebted for much of the success I hope to achieve. I trust shortly to be busy on the platform. The trouble here is not in obtaining applications for lectures—they have come in numerous enough; but the great difficulty is to fix them so that too much money and time shall not be consumed in railway travelling. I have already received over fifty requests to lecture, and at present I can only accept twelve of them, simply because the places where they are required are from five hundred to a thousand miles apart. To connect them by securing engagements at intermediate places is the task upon which I am now engaged.

Up to date I have given one lecture in New York, two in Philadelphia, and am now filling a three weeks' engagement in Toronto, Canada. These lectures have been most successful, and well attended. My New York lecture was at the Liberal Club, which is supposed to be a society of the *elite* of the intelligence of the city. It is composed of gentlemen of all shades of opinion, and the utmost freedom of thought and expression is not only allowed, but earnestly solicited. Dr. Foote, junr., who is well informed and very discreet, is one of the principal conductors of the Association. Dr. "Ned," as he is called, is a fine specimen of a thorough Secularist and of a true man. The Liberal Club is really a debating forum, and if the speakers cannot find materials for debate in the lecture of the evening, they introduce pet subjects of their own. Discussion they will have, and on the night of my lecture they kept the debate on until after eleven o'clock. Mr. Cooper, son of Mr. R. A. Cooper, late of Norwich, in the old country, presided for me, and informed the audience of my propagandist efforts in Norwich thirty years ago. He also spoke highly of the labors of Mr. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society. It was a most enjoyable evening, for it afforded me scope to indulge in my favorite mental exercise—debate.

A similar gratification awaited me at Philadelphia. In the afternoon over a thousand persons, the President estimated, were present, and in the evening twelve hundred listeners were crowded into the fine hall. Here the debate was continued until after ten o'clock, and what it lacked in quality it made up in quantity. The art of debate is not one of the strongest points of our American friends. Still, I like to hear them, within certain limits, for there is an earnestness and a love of liberty manifested in their advocacy. I admire America and its people. They are most considerate and generous, and it seems a pleasure to them to endeavor to make a stranger happy. The kindness with which I have been treated since my arrival by all with whom I have come in contact has done much to compensate me for the terrible drawbacks of my voyage over.

During my stay in New York, of course, I saw Colonel Ingersoll. I dined with him and his charming family soon after my arrival. It was indeed a pleasant gathering. To know the Colonel and his loved ones thoroughly it is necessary to see them in their delightful home. It is a paradise, where love and harmony prevail in the fullest sense. I had two hours' chat with the Colonel, and the principal topic was his promised visit to England. I asked him for a message to send home to his thousands of admirers in the old country, who were anxiously looking forward to his visit. Here is the message: "My dear Watts, I intend going to England



this summer, and, if possible, will return with you. That, however, will depend upon when you go back, and my legal engagements; but go I shall sure. My intention is to lecture first in the principal towns under the auspices of your Secular Societies, partly for their benefit, and then my agent will arrange a second tour for me." Thus the Secular friends at home will know the treat in store for them. I always believed, since two years ago he gave his promise, that he would come, and my belief is now confirmed. The Colonel is in excellent health, and as active as ever in the lecturing field. He has just started on a long tour, and it is evident he maintains his popularity, for last week, at Cleveland, the large Opera House was crowded at admissions of four and six shillings a head. More than six hundred persons were turned away—"no room." I am to meet Colonel Ingersoll again in Cincinnati in March. I am more convinced than ever that in Colonel Ingersoll man has no truer friend, and the Church no deadlier foe. Under the force of his brilliant tongue, his keen wit, and his withering rhetoric, priestcraft and religious shams have no mercy. With him the Church is the enemy of man and the tempter of woman, fettering human thought and impeding human progress. As he has truly said: "It has done harm enough. It has covered the world with blood. It has filled the asylums for the insane. It has cast a shadow in the heart, in the sunlight of every good, tender man and woman. I say, Let us rid the heavens of this monster, and write upon the dome Liberty, Love, and Law."

I spent last week with Dr. E. B. Foote, sen., at the beautiful watering-place, Larchmont Manor, about twenty miles from New York, where my friend, G. W. Foote, and myself stayed for some days two years ago. The whole of the time I was at this delightful spot I had a happy experience. Dr. Foote is one of the most prominent supporters of the Freethought movement on this continent, and he is as genial in the domestic circle as he is eminent in his profession. He is one of Nature's real noblemen, and is never content unless he is doing his best to make others happy. He possesses a keen qualities and delicacy of manner, allied with a sense of justice and truth, that endear him to all who have the privilege of his personal friendship.

Next Sunday, January 22nd, I commence my Toronto engagement, and in March I am booked to debate in Cincinnati for four nights with a rev. gentleman of whom it is said that he has vanquished all native opponents, and is very anxious to add the "Englishman" to his victims. Well, I will afford him an opportunity to try what he can do.

In my next Jottings I hope to be able to present to my readers a definite plan of my future work ere I return to the "land of my birth." My health is good, and, as usual, I am full of hope.

CHARLES WATTS.

### The Value of a Future Life.

In my recent review of Professor James's defence of the doctrine of human immortality, I carefully refrained from discussing anything but the probable truthfulness of the belief. But, as a matter of fact, the truthfulness of religious beliefs is not impressed upon the people by their defenders so much as their supposed utility. It is the restraining effect of religion on men's passions, or their inspiring influence on conduct, of which one hears most, and this, in its way, is a tacit admission that religious beliefs can no longer be justified on purely intellectual grounds. For it is certain that when a doctrine is believed to be true there is little need to demonstrate that it is useful. In most people there is a fairly strong feeling that the true will be useful, even if the useful is not always true; and it is tolerably certain that few religionists would resort to the plea of utility if it were possible to justify their belief on grounds of accuracy.

It is, therefore, not surprising that we should find an attempt to justify the belief in human immortality upon the grounds of its supposed elevating influence on life, while Secularism is loftily dismissed as having nothing "higher" than this world to offer its followers. And the manner in which this charge is brought against

Secularism is an apt illustration of the theological method of discrediting an opponent's case by implying that there is something degrading about his opinions. When one appropriates to his own special use such terms as higher, nobler, purer, etc., and hurls at others their opposites, a prejudice is created in one's favor that goes a long way towards securing a victory. Everyone likes to be for the noblest, the purest, the highest; and, knowing this, the religious pleader pays far more attention to the sound of the words selected than the strength of the case championed, and often secures an apparent victory by the judicious selection of fine sounding phrases, when certain defeat would be his portion if he relied solely on the reasonableness of his position.

In one sense, the plea that disbelief in a future life robs the present one of all, or nearly all, of its value is only one of the means by which religious corporations seek to perpetuate their existence. Seeing that the whole influence of a priesthood, as a priesthood, is derived from the supposed importance of a life beyond the grave, it becomes essential to the maintenance of their position that this life shall occupy at best only a subordinate position in human thought. Hence the existence of such phrases as "Pleasures of the flesh," "Worldliness," etc., etc., all of which aim at the one end of exalting the next world at the expense of this one. While the interests of this life are subordinated to another, of which the clergy stand as the professional representatives and exponents, their position remains perfectly secure. The stock cry of the religious preacher in all ages has been the vanity and emptiness of life, and, although the cry has frequently smacked of dementia, there has not infrequently been a method in the madness. It is this belief that constitutes the essential condition of clerical supremacy, and therefore the cry of the worthlessness of "this-worldism" from them is just the cry of a business man advertising his wares.

But is it true that the absence of a belief in immortality robs life of its value, or that its presence counts as a force on the side of progress? So far from that being the case, we find that wherever the belief in a future life has been strong and vivid, the present life has been dwarfed, tyranny has been secure, while kings and priests have grown fat upon the misery and degradation of the people. Among the lower races it is easy to trace a connection between their most revolting customs, such as the murder of aged parents, or the wholesale sacrifice of servants on the death of a chief, and their belief in a life beyond the grave. Even among such a comparatively civilised people as the Hindoos the custom of burning a widow on the death of her husband was directly traceable to the belief that it was the duty of the wife to accompany her husband into the next world, and attend him there as she had attended him here. In ancient Egypt, one of the most religious states of remote antiquity, we see essentially the same thing. There has probably never been a people who were so completely dominated by a belief in a future life as were the Egyptians. And with what result? Political instability right through its history, tyranny on the part of its rulers, and the lot of the mass of the people one of squalor, degradation, and misery. If we come down to the Christian ages of faith, the same thing meets us. With the single exception of Egypt, there probably never existed a people who exhibited such an unquestioning faith in a future life as did the people of Europe during the period that elapsed between the fourth and fourteenth centuries. Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory were places as real as London, Rome, and Constantinople. And yet, far from finding this belief exerting any beneficent influence, this period ranks lowest in the civilised history of mankind. It is impossible for anyone who carefully bears in mind the many cruel customs that have resulted from man's belief in a future life, the misery it has caused sensitive minds in reflecting that they would be numbered among the damned, the numbers that have been driven insane by allowing themselves to dwell upon their own morbid fancies, and the degree to which it has been used to check reforms, to count this belief as being anything but an evil one in the history of man.

And it is equally significant that all periods of reform have been characterised by a strong determination to make the best of this world as it is, and to exclude from the domain of justice all forms of supernaturalism



so far as was possible. In antiquity the two most progressive nations, Greece and Rome, were frankly devoted to the interests of this world. Their whole social philosophy was free in its essence from the taint of other-worldism, and, although ancient civilisation was marked by many evil features, it was far superior, on the whole, to the Christian centuries that followed. The central significance of the Renaissance was again the attempt to eliminate from science, philosophy, and sociology the rule of a fancied after-world. And in all the reform movements that followed the awakening of Europe one can trace a growing belief that to make this life self-centred and independent, to find in it a prohibition of every vice and a sanction for every virtue, was the only method of securing permanent reform.

So far, then, as appeal to facts can decide the question, the answer is decisive. The unanimous verdict of history is that every attempt to regulate this life in accordance with the fancied requirements of another has resulted in failure, or worse than failure; while all movements of reform have been coincident with—indeed, dependent upon—a strong conviction of the value of life, judged from the standpoint of this world alone.

Looked at from yet another standpoint, the religious twaddle concerning the inferiority of "this-worldism" represents what Professor Tylor calls a survival—a lingering on of a custom or mode of thought properly belonging to a lower stage of civilisation. There was a time in the history of the race when men did consciously and seriously subordinate this life to the next—not because they considered it ethically higher, but because they considered it safer or more profitable. When the world was regarded as a playground for God and the Devil, it was but natural that people should turn their backs upon what was regarded as the principal means by which Satan sought to get possession of their souls. The world was a fallen world, and every pleasure a diabolic temptation to be fought and conquered. To confine one's attention to this world was, therefore, equivalent to devoting oneself to the Devil. To-day the view of life no longer obtains. The world, as evolution has taught us, is not a fallen world, but a developing one; and even Christians are ready to admit nowadays that this life has its legitimate claims, quite apart from all external or supernatural considerations. Few educated people can now be found who would seriously maintain that the mutual claims of husband and wife, parent and child, friend and friend, are less binding or less valuable because unaccompanied by supernatural considerations. Whatever value these relationships possess they possess because of this world, and not on account of any other; and their value is likely to be enhanced, rather than curtailed, by the conviction that earth is the only certain scene of their manifestation.

This much seems to me certain. If this life is the only one we can be certain of living, there is all the more reason for spending it as wisely and as usefully as lies within our power. Whatever uncertainty attaches to the tenure of our lives here, there is still more uncertainty about the tenure of our lives elsewhere; and to neglect this life for the sake of a fancied another is to act like the dog and the shadow, without the satisfaction of even seeing the shadow. Man, we are told, longs for something higher than this world can offer. That I should be inclined to dispute, believing that all man longs for is a higher development of this world—a desire which is gradually being consummated. But even if it were admitted, it would count for little. Man longs for much that he never gets, and, as he never gets all he longs for in this world, I see no reason for believing that he will fare better in any other.

In brief, the plea that the belief in immortality acts as a power for good, or that the Secularist's frank devotion to the interests of this world robs life of any portion of its value, breaks down upon the most cursory examination. Moreover, the complaint that Secularism has nothing "higher" than this world to offer its followers is one that we bear with the utmost equanimity. For, after all, what has the Christian to offer that is really nobler than this world has to offer? What are the joys of his pantomimic heaven, with its distorted zoological denizens, compared to the joys of an earth made habitable by human wisdom and brotherhood, or a home made bright and cheerful by honest industry and loving

labor? Who is there who would not rather spend his life in the company of well-fed, well-clothed, well-educated men, women, and children, than in the company of all the gods and angels that the imagination of man has called into existence? If Secularism confines its attention to this world, it is because it finds no evidence for the existence or utility of any other. It finds here materials enough to make life all that can reasonably be desired, if only man's intelligence be developed to the point of utilising them properly. It finds, too, that in all ages religious beliefs have been the great obstacles to this being accomplished, and therefore, in putting these beliefs on one side as baseless and useless we are robbing man of nothing he need lament; we are but lifting from the shoulders of the present the burden placed upon it by the past, and thus paving the way for a more civilised and humanised future.

C. COHEN.

## The Agapemone; or, Abode of Love.

A STRANGE STORY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

(Continued from page 69.)

THE history of the settlement in Somerset presided over by the recently-deceased Henry James Prince has its special significance, not so much in the fact that the ex-clergyman was himself sincere and a man of intellectual attainments and culture, as that he justified himself to others of equal status, and did so by reference to Scriptural teaching, which he was probably just as well able to correctly interpret and expound as any one else who was then, or is now, in the Church of Christ. The ex-Rev. Dennis Hird's *Christian with Two Wives* is based rather upon the absence of express Scriptural prohibition; but Mr. Hepworth Dixon, in his exhaustive survey published in 1868, showed how widely the doctrine of spiritual wives was spread at the time he made his investigations, and how, in each instance, amorous visionaries relied upon Biblical support.

In the Somerset "Abode of Love" Mr. Dixon found not only Sister Zoe, of whom mention has been made, but Sister Sarah, who was young and tall, and Sister Ellen, who was fifty-five years old. The latter, not an ideal spiritual wife, had been known in the world by the prosaic name of Perry, but as the ex-Rev. Starkey, one of the Brotherhood, explained: "We have now no business with the world, nor has the world anything more to do with us," which is pretty much what is said by the inmates of conventual and monastic establishments everywhere. It transpired that the family name of Zoe—the young lady who had been made the heroine of that mysterious rite in the Abode of Love through which living flesh is said to have been reconciled and saved—was Paterson. Asked if she preferred to be addressed by a visitor from the outer world by the familiar name of Zoe, that young lady smilingly and accommodatingly replied: "Pray do so; it is very nice."

Prince was anxious to explain that the residents of the retreat did not put themselves under the protection of saints as do monks and nuns. They had no saints. Living in the Lord, they followed his leading light, even in the simple matter of names. "They call me," he said, "the Beloved. I call the lady Zoe because the sound pleases me. I call Thomas there Mossou because he speaks French so well." The Beloved personally appears to have made a not unfavorable impression on his visitor, who describes him as having about him something of a woman's grace and charm; his smile was soft, his voice low. "In his eyes, which were apt to close, you saw, as it were, a light from some other sphere."

During his sojourn in the Abode of Love Mr. Hepworth Dixon heard a good many things that he had heard before. Elder Frederick on Mount Lebanon, Brigham Young in Salt Lake City, Father Noyes at Oneida Creek, had each received him in a similar way. In every case he found a clue to the zealots' hearts through avenues opened to him by previous travels in the Holy Land. Everyone had some question to ask about the Grotto in Bethlehem, the Fountain of Nazareth, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Tomb in Calvary. In conversation Prince said he held that all



mankind beyond the walls of his retreat would be lost. Of all the millions and millions of men and women in the world only the sixty souls in the retreat would be saved. The sexes in the Abode of Love were nearly equal; there were no children.

"None at all?" asked Mr. Dixon, thinking of the Great Manifestation, and what was said to have come of it. The reply of Prince was rather vague, being to the effect that they knew no craving after devil's love, but were as the angels in heaven in whom is eternal life.

Prince and the other founders of the Agapemone, previously known as the Lampeter Brethren, adopted as their favorite book the Song of Solomon; reading it in the spiritual sense as a picture of that perfect passion which, in the fulness of time, was to inflame the regenerate soul towards Christ. Hence, Mr. Dixon says, they never tired of murmuring: "Let him kiss me with the kisses of the mouth"; of crying in their zeal for Christ: "Thy love is better than wine." In their dreams they heard a voice saying to them: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away"; and, listening as it were in sleep, they heard a voice in the street cry out to them: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." All the warm words of this Song were on their lips, and all its imageries lay about their hearts. No wonder that eventually they were led to approve of the mystic rite and Great Manifestation in which Brother Prince and Sister Zoe were the celebrants, and the other Brethren and Sisters the spectators.

The Beloved, however, according to his disciples, was not to be judged by common rules. While Prince was still living at Lampeter, Cardiganshire, "two great passions would appear to have absorbed his being: one passion a carnal craving for Martha Freeman, the spiritual mother and pupil whom he had left at Widcombe Crescent; the other passion a mystical desire to become united in body and soul, if such a thing could be, with the Holy Ghost." The real truth would seem to be that Prince had pondered over the Song of Songs until the allegorical and sensuous images of that passionate lyric had got themselves tangled and transformed in his brain, which they ended in turning.

Originally, Prince and his brother-in-law, formerly rector of Charlinch, set up an Abode of Love, on a small scale, at Brighton, and afterwards at Weymouth, preaching in a tavern on the coming of the Holy Ghost. From among the farmers of Dorset and the dowagers of Melcombe the two men made plenty of additions to their flock. "With a sad and sober joy, Prince told his audiences of bucolic squires and ancient dames that in the hour of wrath, when the earth and the skies would be passing away in fervent heat, all those—but only those—who had now received the Holy One (in his own person) would be snatched from the burning wreck." From this followed the building of the Abode at Spaxton, a secluded spot four miles from Bridgewater, the nearest town. The question arose, How could the necessary funds be raised? Scripture, observes Mr. Dixon, with a touch of ironical significance, goes a long way with the pious mind. What had been said in Judea might be said in Dorset. The Brethren began to whisper among their wards that the second Pentecost was come, and all those who would flee from the evil day must sell what they had in store, gather up the produce of this sale, and bring it as an offering to the Lamb. Prince, of course, became the general banker.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon details a remarkable instance of the Beloved's audacity and cupidity, which, unfortunately, can only be too easily paralleled in the history of most religious sects. Briefly summarised, it was a scheme whereby he obtained possession of some £18,000, the inheritance of three spinster ladies who had been silly enough to attach themselves to his *entourage*. These elderly damsels—the daughters of an old Bermondsey merchant who jeered at the pretensions of the Beloved, and declined to receive him into his house—clung all the closer to Prince for what they called this persecution of the world. From Brighton they followed him to Weymouth, and from Weymouth to Spaxton. At Taunton they rested for a few days, the brethren lodging at one hotel, and the three old maids at another. Here a little scene took place which shows the method Prince adopted for inveigling the

foolish women out of their money. Early one day Prince sent over to the other hotel for Harriet, the eldest sister, who went across to him. Then Prince told her, with great concern of heart, that it would be for the glory of God if she would marry his young friend and brother, Lewis Price. The maiden blushed, and answered that she was ready.

"Next he sent for her sister Agnes, a prouder spirit, with whom he felt that he must take a stronger course. 'Agnes,' he said to her, when she came into the inn parlor, 'God is about to confer upon you a special blessing; but ere I tell you what it is you must give me your word to obey the Lord and accept his gift.' Agnes paused; but, thinking it could do her no harm to accept a blessing, she gave her word. 'Then,' said Prince, 'in a few days you will be united in marriage to Brother Thomas.' Such a gift as a husband was unexpected by the lady, and her maiden coyness pleaded for delay, as there would be kinsfolk to consult and settlements to make. 'You will need none of these things,' Prince replied; 'in this affair you must think not of the world, but of God.'"

The maiden lady bowed her head, and could not say him nay. In like manner, we learn, the third sister was persuaded to accept of Cobbe, one of the brethren, and thus their money came into possession of Prince. Later on, while the saints were at Spaxton, a tattling servant informed the Beloved that Sister Agnes was in the way which is said to be desired by ladies who love their lords. The chief was furious. "This comes," he groaned, "of sin. She is faithless, she is fallen; she must be cast away."

As to the Great Manifestation that took place in this secluded retreat at Spaxton, the less said about it the better. Prince gave out that, by the power of God, he was about to take a virgin, as it were, to wife, marrying her as the groom is married to the bride—not in fear and shame, in a secret place and with folded doors, but openly in the light of noon, in the presence of all his male and female saints. And this was done!

The saints had, indeed, studied and taken with all its added mendacious headings representing the "Church's love to Christ," etc. This history of the Spaxton Abode shows, indeed, the length of folly and lust to which religious teaching will lead men and women otherwise sensible and decent. But for this salutary lesson, one would prefer to leave in its congenial obscurity such an unedifying example of pious imbecility, lechery, and greed.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### Confidence Tricksters.

(Tune: "FIND IT.")

THREE jugglers, whose cunning none e'er could excel,  
Performed long ago in the East.  
There were Yahveh, the head one, a mighty great swell,  
And Moses, whose meekness has no parallel;  
And the other was Aaron the priest—  
Poor stuttering Aaron the priest.

Boss Yahveh himself never came to the front,  
But gave his instructions to Mo;  
And Mo tutored Aaron to gather the blunt  
While he did the patter outside on the front  
To tickle the mob to the show—  
To get the folk into the show.

They'd practised in Egypt some tidy long while,  
And with some sort of conjuring stick  
They raised lice and locusts the people to rile,  
Then borrowed their jewels, and skipped with the pile  
(Phase one of the confidence-trick)—  
(The start of the confidence-trick).

When they'd ravished the Gentiles they swindled the  
Jews,  
Till of cash even they were bereft;  
Then the trio took counsel what new kind of ruse  
Would do best the ignorant tribes to amuse  
While they raked in what gold there was left—  
What trinkets of gold there were left.

"I have it," cried Yah, with a seraphic laugh  
And a finger alongside his conk;  
"Go, Aaron, on some other godship's behalf  
And kid them to make you a nice golden calf  
While Moses and I do a bunk—  
While we two are doing a bunk."



So Aaron went forth and did what he was told,  
 And caught the poor sparrows with chaff;  
 He conjured them nothing of worth to withhold,  
 So they brought him their earrings, and all that was gold;  
 Then he built them a beautiful calf—  
 A lovely, magnificent calf.  
 When Yah saw the Israelites prone on the ground,  
 He dispatched his confederate, Mo;  
 Mo put on a temper, and thrashed them all round,  
 Then melted their calf, and the gold that he found  
 He quickly transferred to the show—  
 To prop up the conjurer's show.

T. CLARK.

### Acid Drops.

M. Dreyfus and his government have made another mistake, and this time a very grave one. To interfere with the course of justice by a special Act is a revolutionary proceeding. Moreover, if the Criminal Division of the Court of Cassation is not to be trusted, why should Frenchmen be expected to trust the Criminal and Civil Divisions together? The fact is, the French government has been frightened by the Army, the Church, and the Jew-Baiters; or else it is deliberately playing into the hands of one or other of the political adventurers who want to bring the throne of France out of the lumber-room and get seated upon it.

There will be no peace in France until this Dreyfus affair is settled, and it will never be settled until it is thoroughly sifted. Nothing but an act of justice can save the Republic. It is to the credit of the Socialists that they see this clearly. Dreyfus on the Devil's Island is the symbol of France in the Devil's hands—the Devil of priestcraft and reaction. Zola and the rest of the "intellectuals," as the Church-Army party calls them, are fighting for more than justice to Dreyfus. They are fighting for the very life of France as a self-respecting and self-governing nation.

Hindhead is a sort of literary colony, and on Saturday evening the "literary gents" there held a meeting in support of the Czar's Rescript. Dr. A. Conan Doyle, who presided, said a very curious thing. "They must remember," he said, according to the *Daily News* report, "that there was another Peace Rescript some years ago, from a higher moral authority than the Czar, and that ever since the Gospel of Peace was proclaimed upon earth our wars had increased in number and violence, until we had now reached such a pitch that the military profession, which used to be the calling of a small minority in every nation, was now enforced upon every citizen in the great Continental countries." After this statement of bitter historic truth it was pitiful to hear Dr. Conan Doyle observe that we had "strayed from the ideal of Christianity." What on earth is this ideal? A hundred different Christians give a hundred different answers.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw sent a breeze of common sense and sincerity through that Hindhead meeting. He said that all the statesmen in Europe who were praising the Czar's Rescript were also spending all they could on new torpedo boats and other agents of destruction. It was no use talking Christmas platitudes. Ironclads did not fight, but the men in them; and if they wanted to fight, and had no weapons, they would fight with fists, claws, and teeth. The really hopeful idea was that of arbitration, which in time would lead to disarmament. This is what Mr. Shaw said in his characteristic fashion, and we have said the same thing substantially in the *Freethinker*.

The Lord, poor deity, is not treated to much amusement. Still, he must laugh till his six sides ache when he notices the difficulty His Imperial Majesty the Czar has in making professing Christian followers of the "Prince of Peace" understand that they are using too many torpedoes, shrapnel-shells, Maxim guns, war vessels, and dum-dum bullets to express their sincerity when they jabber about loving their enemies.

The Working Men's Hall, Shrewsbury, has been refused for a lecture by General Phelps, of Birmingham, under the auspices of the High-street Literary Society, on the ground that most members of that Society are Unitarians, and that the Hall is not available to non-believers in the doctrine of the Trinity. Evidently one God is about as bad as no God at all in that quarter. It is a case of three or none.

A pipe belonging to the heating apparatus in Avening Church burst with a loud explosion, just as the parson was in the middle of the Apostles' Creed. A scene of wild disorder ensued, the lady worshippers rushing and climbing out of their pews as though Gabriel had just blown the resurrection trumpet. Fortunately nobody was seriously hurt, and the day of judgment is postponed.

The Christian deity was too much engrossed with sitting on his own right hand last week to think of such a mere

trifle as the death of a little mite aged three and a half who was scalded to death at Silvertown.

Here is a story of a little Freethinker aged five. She was staying at a Christian friend's house shortly before Christmas, and the lady of the house asked her whose birthday was on Christmas Day. The answer was "Santa Claus's birthday." "No, my dear; think again." "Oh, I know, it's Father Christmas's," was the startling and unexpected reply.

The impudence of the so-called "officers" in the Salvation Army requires some check. One of these fellows followed two young girls on to a tram at Hackney, to drag them off and "reason with them," because they had been silly enough to go to the Salvation meeting, and were, for some reason or other, turned out. He applied at North London for a summons for assault against a man who seems very properly to have interfered. Mr. D'Eyncourt: "He was taking the girls' part. What right had you to run after the girls after you had turned them out?" Applicant: "As I said, sir, to take them back and talk to them." Mr. D'Eyncourt: "You render yourself liable to a summons for assault for forcibly taking people back. I shall not grant you a summons."

There was a time when the press did not hesitate to characterise the Salvation Army in a facetious and somewhat insulting manner. That is now a thing of the past, for nothing succeeds like success. Some day, possibly, some enterprising journalist will make a total of the conversions recorded in that truthful publication, the *War Cry*. We should not be surprised if the total adult population of England had not been converted twice over in these amazing records.

The London County Council has made a frightful mess of the Sunday Music question. First of all it stopped the Concerts altogether, ostensibly in the interest of "no Sunday trading," and much to the satisfaction of gentlemen like the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Presently, however, Mr. Robert Newman, of the Queen's Hall, circumvented the Council's order in a way which was essentially defiant. He got an influential Committee to cover his operations, and the Sunday concerts went on at the Queen's Hall just as before. Now the Council has sanctioned the use of the Alhambra Theatre by the Sunday League, on condition that the rent does not exceed £40, that the prices for seats shall range from two shillings to sixpence, and that there shall be not less than two hundred free seats. These conditions are rather grandmotherly; but the great thing, after all, is that the Sunday concerts will continue. The proprietors of the hall do Sunday trading to the extent of £40 rent, not to the extent of £40 profit; so all's for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

This little arrangement aroused a perfect storm of indignation in the breast of the Rev. Fleming Williams, one of the County Council aldermen. Logically, of course, he was quite right; the distinction between rent and profit as "gain" is casuistical. But this does not account for the reverend gentleman's passion. He spoke as a Christian and a Puritan, for he hates Sunday amusements and wants twenty-four hours a week as a close preserve for ministers of religion. On this matter nearly all the men of God are Trade Unionists with a strong leaning to Protection.

At the fifteen-hour prayer farce the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes asked those who prayed to be brief. If anyone inspired them to pray that morning for more than two minutes, he begged to inform them that it would be the Devil—meaning, presumably, the Devil who has been dropped. *Apropos* of this, the *Evening News* has the following:—

The prayers that are answered are prayers that are brief;  
 So speaketh the popular preacher.  
 And his words will be met with a ready belief;  
 But how about teaching the teacher?  
 'Tis the devil who prompts us to pray at great length;  
 This point our instructor is firm on.  
 In prayer, as in wit, in conciseness is strength—  
 But oh for the two-minute sermon.

There is an apocryphal story of Dr. Burnet, the historian, being such a popular preacher that the audience used to applaud when, by turning his hour-glass, he showed his intention of prolonging his sermon. There must be a considerable difference nowadays either in the preachers or the sympathy and interest of congregations. The pleasantest part now of a sermon is the delightful *finale*: "And now to God the Father," etc.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been cackling about Church schools teaching a larger number of the poor than all the Board schools put together. In country districts these schools are imposed on the residents, and parents are forced by the law to send their children, quite irrespective of their sectarian bias. If this were taken into account, the result would look very different.

The Rock of Ages seems indeed "rocky," if we may judge of its stability by present ecclesiastical dissensions. The



"Church's One Foundation" is in imminent peril of finding the superstructure toppling down upon it in a heap of chaos; and generally, at the present time, the Church of England seems to be "on the rocks." The Day of Disestablishment is near, and is ardently desired by a large section of the Church. As to disendowment—well, that is another story.

You can't get married at Cowcaddens Free Church, Glasgow, unless you promise to have no "drinks" at the subsequent festivities. You must toast the happy couple in exhilarating lemonade, in the innocuous Souchong, or the fragrant Mocha. Everybody must eschew intoxicating liquor, and go perfectly sober to bed.

So stipulates the unco' guid minister, the Rev. William Ross, whose proud boast it is that during the last twenty-five years he has never performed the marriage ceremony for a couple who have not previously undertaken to exclude alcoholic liquors from the wedding celebration.

But here this little dictatorial sky-pilot presumes to pose superior to his Lord and Master. What about Jesus turning water into wine at the marriage feast at Cana, when the guests were "well drunk," having exhausted all their supplies?

The claimant to the Poulett peerage hasn't knocked about amongst the poor for nothing. Asked what he would do with his money when he got it, he replied: "I would not give my money to a parson for the poor. No; I'd give it them myself."

Some hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Great Britain are excited about the novel case of an organ-grinder earl. These same good people accept with composure the more extraordinary idea of a carpenter-god.

Medical men tell us that cancer and consumption are on the increase. We are constrained to admit that the Lord is not entirely wanting in fatherly affection for his children.

"Providence" has been active in the city of Mexico. An earthquake has destroyed two hundred buildings there, and injured a great many people. He doeth all things well. Yea, his tender mercies are over all his works.

Mr. Gladstone referred admiringly to the fatherly way in which Providence had fitted the world for man's habitation. The truth of this was recently experienced by a Russian schoolmaster. Returning home one night from a visit to a sick friend, he was attacked by a pack of hungry wolves, torn to pieces, and devoured. No doubt the wolves would recognise the goodness of Providence in furnishing them with a meal.

Many people died of starvation in London last year. But what does that matter? Are they not happier in heaven, or warmer in the other place? Anyhow, the Bishop of London is joining the Archbishop of Canterbury and other prelates in the effort to raise £20,000 for a bishopric in Egypt. And the joke is that they will probably get it.

Christians complain that Freethinkers don't respect their feelings, but they are not very complimentary to each other. At a recent meeting of the National Protestant League in Manchester, the chairman, Mr. Robert Phillips, declared that out of thirty-five prelates of the Church of England there were thirty Romanisers. "There were," he said, "only five honest men amongst them." This statement was greeted with loud applause.

Canon Grant, the vicar of Portsmouth, has had to give in. His Bishop insists on his reading out the Athanasian Creed upon the days appointed in the rubric. Canon Grant obeys against his conscience to oblige his right reverend father-in-God.

Here is an old joke. Why is the Athanasian Creed like a royal Bengal tiger? Because it holds on by its damnation clause (claws).

The Bishop of Manchester tearfully discourses on the fact that places of worship are not nearly so well attended nowadays as twenty years ago. We do not dispute it. He says the secular studies promoted by the County Councils have become so engrossing that they cannot be abandoned even on a Sunday for the worship of God. Why should they?

Still, it does seem a little hard on County Councils—especially that of London—to blame them for contributing to the neglect of religion, considering all the odium they have incurred by their attempts to bolster it up.

A negro child preacher, five years old, from Georgia is said to "discuss religious questions like a veteran clergyman." Nothing wonderful about that.

Football savages read this: A West African, on a visit to England, was shown a collection of photographs. "What is this?" he asked, gazing wonderingly at one of them. "That is a snap-shot taken during a scrimmage at a Rugby football match." "But are there no missionaries to send among these people?" he demanded.

John Bright, as we might expect, was never an admirer of Gordon. Perhaps no one has summed up the pious General's character in terser and stronger language. *Apropos* of the Gordon Memorial College, now an accomplished fact, the New York *Independent* publishes a correspondence which passed between John Bright and Whittier on the subject of the life and character of General Gordon.

Whittier was asked early in 1885 to write an ode on Gordon in connection with the proposal to erect a monument to the General in Westminster Abbey. Whittier wrote that he had thought of doing so, but found himself unable to undertake it. In the same letter, however, he indulged in some "high falutin'" about Gordon being a Providential man, and his mission in an unbelieving and selfish age revealing the mighty power of faith in God. This letter came to the notice of John Bright, who at once dispatched an energetic remonstrance to the poet.

"Is it possible," wrote Bright, "that our (the Quakers') most famous poet, whose writings are a constant defence of justice and mercy, can lend his pen to glorify a man whose reputation is founded solely on his passionate engagement in war in distant countries, with which he had no necessary connection, and from which he had received no injury and no provocation? In religion he was a strange fanatic, bordering on the insane, drawing his inspiration from the horrible stories of the Old Testament wars, rather than from the New Testament and Gospel narratives. He cared little for his own life, and, if possible, still less for the lives of others. It is to me amazing that any Christian man can admire and applaud such a life. If all Christians were heroes of this type, what would the world become?"

The only apology Whittier could offer was to say that, at any rate, Gordon was "a better man than De... he was humane, and never put his prisoners into brick-kilns and under hammers."

Who would be a God, and be worried as the popular idol is? Here is the late Earl of Winchelsea, who could not make his will without pestering the Governor of the Universe. He says in that document, apparently as a much-needed spur: "God save agriculture, and receive my soul, for the Lord Jesus' sake, Amen." Certainly there is here a kind of *quid pro quo*. If the Lord will take care of agriculture, he may have the soul of an Earl.

The Deity, according to the ordinary notions, has had his eye on agriculture for a very much longer period than the Earl, and perhaps knows quite as much about it as his lordship did. Moreover, he "saves" what he pleases to save, and leaves the other to go to the deuce.

However, the Earl, notwithstanding the handsome offer of his soul, might have remembered that the Deity has other worlds to attend to as well as this, and cannot be expected to be so very deeply interested in the market value of wheat, live stock, and mangold wurzels on our miserable little planet.

A special article appears in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the "Princites." It describes the present-day performances of the disciples of the recently-deceased "Beloved" in the handsome church at the corner of Clapton Common, called the Ark of the Covenant. There appears to be nothing specially distinguishable about the form of worship there from that of an ordinary Evangelical church. In an interview with a member of the Church, or Ark, some denials were given to the stories circulated about the Abode of Love, but they were given by a person who evidently knew nothing about the matter—probably some person standing at the door.

"Mr. Prince," said the interviewer, "is charged with having obtained large sums of money from his women adherents to establish the Agapemone." The interrogated replied: "It is a thing that I have not much inquired into, but my own impression is that Mr. Prince had a large fortune himself." That is not so. His mother, who lived in Bath, where he was born, had "seen better days," and she let lodgings to dowagers, invalids, and preachers. The money that Prince drew in to himself was from weak-minded females afflicted with pious hysteria and a turn for spiritual flirtation.

De Witt—or, as some would say, Want of Witt—Talmage has been preaching one of his usual kind of sermons on conversions and death-beds. He mentions a variety of death-bed utterances by Christians—more or less delirious. For instance, there is John Janeway—who ever heard of John Janeway?—saying in his last moments, with an assurance that



his New Testament does not warrant: "I shall presently stand on Mount Zion with an innumerable company of angels, and with spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. Hallelujah!"

Then the great Talmage, full of pride over Janeway, says: "Let some one preach a sermon on triumphant infidel deathbeds—that is, if he can hear or read of this latter kind. I never heard of one. Do tell us of one. There never was one." That is as much as Talmage knows.

Now let us tell him of dozens. Authentic particulars are given in Mr. Foote's work, *Infidel Death-Beds*, of the last moments of over sixty famous Freethinkers. There are plenty of triumphant deaths amongst them. Take, for instance, the death of Lucilio Vanini, burnt at the stake at Toulouse for Atheism by Christian persecutors. He went proudly to death, saying "Christ sweated with fear and weakness, but I, I die undaunted!" Modern instances are innumerable.

The Rev. Professor Charles has been delivering, in accordance with the Jowett bequest, a series of lectures on the "Future Life." Of course the lecturer knows no more about a future life than the man in the street or the man in the moon. It is all surmise. And all the Professor's surmises simply mean "wishes." The *Echo* says that when he rejects Mark xiii. 7, 8, 14-20, 24-27, 30, 31, as Jewish Christian Apocalypse by an unacknowledged writer, he cannot be gainsaid. Of course he can't; neither could he if he rejected very much more. Very curious how the Divine revelation is being whittled away.

Emperor William's birthday was celebrated at home by prohibiting Herr Ahlwardt, a Social Democratic member of the Reichstag, from making a speech at Apolda. Freedom is a curious thing when it is "made in Germany."

During ten years various German citizens have spent (altogether) 2,000 years in prison for "insulting" their Emperor. How the great Frederick, who *was* a king of men, would laugh at the sensitive vanity of his histrionic successor.

Canon Fleming preached a sermon on "Recognition in Eternity" when the Duke of Clarence died. Of course he had never recognised anybody in eternity, but that didn't matter. The sermon caught on, and the sale of it realised £1,470 profit. This sum has been divided between the Gordon Boys' Home and the British Home for Incurables. The inmates of the latter establishment ought to find that sermon interesting.

Rev. T. W. George, chairman of the Llantivet Lower School Board, has been fined one shilling and costs for assaulting Mr. Edmund Law, the vice-chairman. The man of God alleges that the layman made offensive remarks about his daughter, but this is denied. Anyhow, the Rev. T. W. George finds it easier to preach than to practise the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus Christ didn't make the necessary allowance for human nature; as, indeed, was proved by his own conduct when he got riled with the Pharisees in Jerusalem.

Everyone to his taste. The Rev. R. F. Ramsey, vicar of Burnham, has been taken to task by his parishioners for ceremonially rinsing the chalice after Holy Communion and drinking the rinsings. If the poor man's taste lies in the direction of "heel-taps," why may he not have them?

John Pym Yeatman, writing to the *Standard* on "Muzzled Professors," mentions that, when he was at Cambridge, the men were divided into innumerable parties, but the majority of them were, in numbers, contemptible by the side of the "great latitudinarian, agnostical, infidel body."

Replying to the vicar of Winsford, he "most solemnly asserts" that Dr. Carter, one of the Dons, did "say or imply that Our Blessed Lord tricked his disciples into calling it a miracle when he converted water into wine by means of a powder or essence."

A Church Army missionary has been provided with a key with which he can open the door of any cell he chooses at Winson Green Gaol, Birmingham, the only restriction placed upon him being that he must not interfere in any way with prisoners professing the Roman Catholic faith. In regard to many of the others, it is likely to be a case of—more free than welcome.

The Trustees of the Peabody Trust have served notices to quit on all their tenants who have obtained a certificate of exemption from vaccination. Perhaps we shall soon hear of the ousting of all tenants who are not members of the Church of England. The impudence of landlords is astonishing when they have tenants at their mercy.

Miss Hoare, of Norwich, had a baby, and as the time is

past for fixing the paternity in such cases on the Holy Ghost, she fixed it on one of the Holy Ghost's commission-agents, the Rev. J. J. Woolsey, vicar of Brightwell, Suffolk. The reverend gentleman, however, was not particularly gratified, and carried the matter to the Norfolk Assizes, where he obtained a verdict of £500 damages from a sympathetic jury.

From the evidence in a recent Will case: "The Will was then put away in the family Bible as being the most unlikely spot for her brother Arthur to find it."

What miserable jealousy! The clergy of Scarborough have passed a resolution expressive of regret at the continued increase of Sunday amusements at that and neighboring resorts.

Dr. Welldon, the new Bishop of Calcutta, has been putting his foot in it pretty freely of late, says the *Evening News*; but he never said a more foolish thing than when he remarked that "it was the duty of England to make India Christian."

"The natives are naturally much alarmed at the prospect of the Bishop going around the country forcibly converting Mohammedans to Christianity; for that is what the Bishop's words naturally suggest to the native mind. Unless Dr. Welldon succeeds in cultivating a sense of responsibility with regard to his public utterances, he is likely to prove the biggest failure in the way of a Bishop that the world has yet seen."

Providence had little regard for his own worship during the recent rain storms and floods in Wales. At Bangor service could not be held in the church on Sunday. The only person to arrive was the curate, and he came in a rather undignified manner, which Providence might well have spared the man of God. He had to be carried on a man's back over the flood.

The Conservative party must look out. It has lost the services of the Rev. and Hon. W. R. Verney, rector of Light-horn, and vicar of Chesterton. The reason of his secession is professional and characteristic. The Conservative government has "heartlessly and shamefully treated the clergy" in the matter of tithes. In this reverend and honorable gentleman's opinion, the parsons must "take off their coats and show they are in earnest." If they are not in earnest over tithes, there is no earnestness left in them.

A lot of pious idiots, many of them belonging to the Church of England, celebrated on Monday the 250th anniversary of the execution of Charles. We wish them joy of their blessed "martyr." The truth is that he died because he was an incorrigible liar. Cromwell did not want his death if it could be avoided, but it was impossible to hold the Army chiefs back after the capture of the King's correspondence on the field of Naseby. It proved him to be an unscrupulous trickster, whose word could not be relied on for a moment. So the men who had fought against him for the liberties of England had no alternative but to kill him. It was his life or theirs for certain, and they naturally preferred it to be his.

The Prayer Book used to contain a service for the celebration of the anniversary of the death of King Charles the Martyr, but it has been discreetly omitted during the present reign. The heads of the Church found that historical criticism had vindicated the Parliamentarians and proved Charles Stuart to be a traitor to the English nation.

The execution of Charles I. did at least one good thing. It taught kings that, in spite of all their divine right, they are anatomically constructed—especially about the neck—like the meanest of their subjects. All the grace of God he possessed was let out through his jugular vein. The monarchs of England still reign by the grace of God in theory, but they take care not to emphasise it as a fact, and the "Dei gratia" is abbreviated into "D. G." on our coinage.

The dear old Pope has been telling the Duke of Connaught why his royal mother enjoys such good health. It is because she is one of the best safeguards of peace. For this reason the Lord grants her in health and wealth long to live, as the Prayer Book expresses it. Of course it is very good of the Lord to deal in this way with Queen Victoria. One wonders, though, why he doesn't extend the favor to many other widows, who are the only barrier between fatherless little children and sheer destitution.

Shocking! Shocking!! Shocking!!! Here the printer cries "Stop it," so we restrain our "admiration." The matter is this: Last Sunday evening—yes, *Sunday* evening—the Playgoers' Club held its annual dinner at the Hotel Cecil. About six hundred male Sabbath-breakers dined and wine; Mr. John Hare made a much applauded speech, and there was music, and ladies "assisted" in the gallery. Again we say, Shocking! (Only once this time, Mr. Printer.) We call upon the London County Council, or the police, or somebody, or something, to put a stop to such flagrant desecration of the Lord's Day.



### Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 5, Royal English Circus, Corporation-road, Birmingham, subjects—11, "The Dying Faith"; 3, "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity"; 7, "Freethought and the Birmingham School Board."

### 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.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your valued weekly batch of cuttings.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks for your budget of cuttings from the Birmingham papers. We wish you all success in your lecturing.

C. H. CATTELL.—Pleased to hear, as you tell us, that "The friends down here (Birmingham) are delighted at your prompt response to our call." Not that we exactly *want* any thanks. It is our duty, as well as pleasure, to be in the front when the fighting is on. We have made use of your statement of the facts of the case, which arrived too late for insertion separately.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to know the Birmingham Committee are working hard for a big success on Sunday, and that the Circus will be made as comfortable as possible; also that contributions are coming in well for the advertising.

W. KIRKWOOD.—We understand that the late J. M. Wheeler's *Life of Voltaire* can still be obtained from Mr. Forder. There is no really full biography of Voltaire in English except the one written by an American, Mr. James Parton. Wheeler's is an excellent monograph, however, and well worth having.

W. SMITH.—Some other friends are trying to get a good hall for Mr. Foote to speak in at West Ham. Better wait until he comes down and addresses a public meeting.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—We have received:—S. Burgon, 5s.

E. R. W.'s "Profane Parables" will be continued in our next issue.

J. FISH.—See paragraph.

W. FURNIVALL.—A special chapter in Mr. Foote's *Book of God* is devoted to Jesus Christ's certificates of the truth of many things which clergymen like Canon Driver and Dean Farrar are giving up in the Old Testament. The chapter goes into details, and you should consult it.

J. GRAHAM.—Please send further announcements on separate slips of paper, and model them on the printed forms in our weekly list.

DEIST.—Voltaire and Paine were, as you say, Deists, not Atheists. They fought Christianity, which was then more vigorous and vicious than it is now. Were they living at present, they would probably go further, and attack the roots of superstition.

W. J. NEWBY.—We have written at length on the Birmingham affair.

W. COX (Liverpool).—Thanks for cuttings. Pleased to hear that your audiences are well sustained. Your program is appetizing.

T. WILMOT.—See "Sugar Plums."

J. HAMPSON (Bolton) is glad to hear that "the natural buoyancy" of our colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, "kept the *Aurania* afloat." This correspondent will be answered by post as to a lecturing visit from Mr. Foote.

STUDENT.—We believe Judge Waite's book is issued or sold by the "Truthseeker" Publishing Co., New York. No doubt Mr. Forder could order a copy for you. Write to him direct at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

W. S. JONES.—You had better wait. Dr. Tylor will soon publish a new edition of his *Primitive Culture*. It is one of the monumental works in the domain of Evolution.

COLLECTIONS AT ANNUAL DINNER.—*Per Miss Vance*: Mrs. Jack, £1 1s.; A. J. Marriott, 2s.; J. Strong, 2s. 6d.; C. Strong, 2s. 6d.; W. Strong, 2s. 6d.; H. Snell, 15s.

N. C. L. (Westgate).—Thanks for your interesting account of your adventures in circulating copies of the Peculiar People pamphlet. Even if only a few read, it is something. The very illiterate who stamped it under their feet are the natural prey of priestcraft and social exploitation. They don't know what they do, so we pity them.

F. H. HOOPER.—Colonel Ingersoll has not replied to Father Lambert. No one in America expects him to do so. He doesn't think Lambert worth answering. He has answered that scurrilous person's betters—Judge Black, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—We hope you will succeed in re-organising the Hull Branch. See paragraph. Mr. Foote is writing you as to a visit.

JACQUES.—There is no really cheap edition of the works of Walter Savage Landor. The lowest in price is the old edition in two large octavo volumes, which is out of print, but sometimes obtainable second-hand. Mr. Crump's edition is in several volumes, and is not complete, though handsomely printed.

J. HEADLEY (Yarmouth).—We hope you will be returned as a member of the local School Board on the "Secular Education and Higher Grade School" ticket. The labor party ought to rally to your support.

RECEIVED.—Public Opinion—New York Truthseeker—Salesian Bulletin—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Liberator—Isle of Man Times—Ethical World—Bradford Truthseeker—Stroud Journal—Lucifer—Boston Investigator—Birmingham Post—Birmingham Mail—Birmingham Argus—Freidenker—Huddersfield Examiner—West Sussex Gazette—Liverpool Review—Freethought Ideal—Blue Grass Blade—Two Worlds—Torch of Reason—Crescent.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Sugar Plums.

THERE was a fine audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity." For an hour and a half the meeting listened with the profoundest attention to the recital of Paine's services to liberty and progress. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote gave a brief memorial address on the late Charles Bradlaugh.

Secularists in the whole Birmingham district should do their utmost to see that Mr. Foote has crowded meetings in the Circus to-day (Feb. 5). The occasion is a very important one, and the Birmingham Committee are advertising the meetings extensively; but of course the time is rather brief for adequate preparations.

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured on Sunday evening in the Bristol-street Board school, Birmingham—the last meeting there for the present, which is, in its way, a certain distinction. Mr. Robertson's known ability renders it almost unnecessary to say that his lecture was very highly appreciated.

At the close of Mr. Robertson's lecture a telegram was read from Mr. Foote in reply to one sent him at the Athenæum Hall, stating that the Circus had been secured for the following Sunday, and asking whether he would come down and lecture there. By the kind assistance of Mr. Leate a reply was dispatched to the effect that Mr. Foote *would* come, and would send his subjects by the night's post. We are informed that his telegram was greeted with "vociferous cheering."

Subsequently the following resolution was moved by Mr. C. H. Cattell, seconded by Mr. Porter, and carried unanimously: "That this meeting of members and friends of the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society protests against the exclusion of this Society from the Board schools for a period of twelve months, as a violation of the principle of free speech, and as an unjust infringement of their rights as citizens."

The Athenæum Hall platform, in Mr. Foote's absence, will be occupied this evening (February 5) by Mr. A. B. Moss, who will lecture on "The Drama of Christianity." We hope he will have a good audience on this occasion.

Mr. Charles Watts's second letter from America, which appears on another page, will be read with interest by Free-thinkers. It contains a message from Colonel Ingersoll to his friends and admirers in England. We conclude that the Colonel will come over in the summer, and we are writing him personally on the subject of his visit.

Wigan Freethinkers gathered on Sunday evening at the Dog and Partridge Hotel. There was a good muster, and the meetings will be continued. This evening (February 5), at 7.30, Mr. Edward Hodgkiss will read a paper on "The Grammar of the Mind." All are welcome.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner lectured in the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening. Previous to the lecture she performed the interesting ceremony of "naming" a child. After the lecture a presentation was made to Mr. R. P. Edwards in recognition of his services to the Branch during



the summer disturbances on Peckham Rye. The presentation was made by Mr. Victor Roger.

Mr. Percy Ward lectured to fair audiences on Sunday at Chester. His evening lecture was highly appreciated and much applauded. The Chester friends intend to have him there again at an early date.

Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture trip began on January 8 at Cleveland, where six hundred people were turned away, and all the books were sold out before he stepped upon the platform. The halls are filled wherever he goes, and his new lecture on "Superstition" is in great demand.

Mr. G. D. Conrad Naewiger, 12 Sydney-terrace, Londesboro'-street, Hull, has resumed the secretaryship of the local N. S. S. Branch, and earnestly invites all Freethinkers in the town to join afresh. Subscriptions will start from the present. A Propagandist Fund is being started, and literature for distribution will be received very gladly. Mr. Foote has been invited to visit Hull and give the revived Branch a good start.

Mr. Conway's monumental *Life of Thomas Paine* is being translated for French readers by M. Felix Rabbe—the gentleman, we presume, whose book on Shelley has been translated into English. M. Rabbe's translation will be published by the famous Maison Plon.

Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the Peculiar People is being briskly circulated. As we stated last week, a second supply has been printed, and this is on the road to exhaustion. During the imprisonment of Thomas George Senior for being a sincere Christian this pamphlet ought to be circulated indefatigably by Freethinkers in all parts of the country. The terms on which copies can be obtained will be found in our advertisement pages.

Mr. Foote has given this pamphlet, for the present purpose, to the Secular Society, Limited, which is responsible for its publication. He could easily have made several pounds out of it himself in the usual way of business. Readers of the *Freethinker* may remember that he had announced his intention of issuing a pamphlet on the subject. All he gets out of the present publication—which, by the way, he advertises *gratuitously* in this journal—is the announcement that his Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills is reprinted by permission from the *Freethinker*, and that the said paper is published every week at the price of twopence. How amusing, then, is it to read in a certain journal, which we will not honor by naming, that the issuing of this pamphlet, at the special request of the Board of Directors, is the beginning of the "exploitation of the Secular Society, Limited." This is the sort of thing that Mr. Foote's Jesuitical enemies are constantly saying about him. However, their insults do not rise to the level of his disdain. He simply smiles at their malice. No doubt the Board of Directors will smile too when they read that they are mostly Mr. Foote's "employees." He must be getting quite a man of substance all at once to have so many paid servants. As a matter of fact, the Directors were all elected at a legal, fair, and open Members' Meeting, and, although Mr. Foote held a large number of proxies, he never used one of them.

This same journal, no doubt under the prompting of a handful of renegades, refers to the *Freethinker* as Mr. Foote's "private organ." "Private" is distinctly good. Other persons are just as free to conduct Secular journals as Mr. Foote is—if they can. Undoubtedly the *Freethinker* is his organ. He founded it, worked hard on it for nothing, went to prison for it, and for several years sustained it out of his earnings in other directions. For all this he has been ostracised by the general literary world, and is sneered at by men who couldn't get a dozen people to hear them speak, or induce a dozen people to read their articles if they put their names to them. Yes, the *Freethinker* is Mr. Foote's organ, and one would like to know whose else it ought to be.

Ingersoll's grand new lecture on "Superstition," which is attracting immense audiences in America, is being reprinted for English readers in the form of a handsome sixpenny pamphlet, which will be on sale next week at Mr. R. Forder's, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. It is a faithful reproduction of the American edition.

Mr. Foote's new volume entitled *The Book of God* is now on sale. The shilling edition is neatly bound in stiff paper covers, and the two shilling edition in substantial cloth boards. The volume is well printed on good paper, and should have a place in every Freethinker's library. We cannot, of course, say anything about the quality of the writing; but we may say that Mr. Foote has taken great pains with all the twelve chapters, and those who are familiar with his compositions will be able to form an idea for themselves of the character of the volume.

## "Holy Coins."

DURING the last two or three years we have had a succession of assertions about alleged discoveries of early Christian antiquities, and it is noteworthy that these have all emanated from Roman Catholic centres. First came the *graffito*, from the Palace of the Cæsars, which Professor Marucchi pretended to be a contemporary drawing of the Crucifixion, but which was really a sketch of a rope-walking performance. Then came the portrait upon the Holy Shroud. In the Cathedral of Turin is a large piece of linen said to be the identical shroud in which the body of Jesus Christ was wrapped. It has marks upon it resembling the outline of a human body. Its history does not seem to go back very far, and it was first fully described in A.D. 1624 by J. J. Chiffletius, in his *De Linteis Sepulchralibus Christi*. Last year the Bishop had a photograph taken of the shroud, and the photographic plate exhibited features and details which were claimed to be those of J. C. himself. As, however, the copies of this photograph clearly show that the face is that of a very old man, it can hardly have anything to do with the Hebrew prophet, who was executed at the age of thirty-two. The most probable explanation is that the cloth originally had a full-length figure painted upon it; but the painting has faded away, so that it is now only visible by photography. As the original represented an old man with his hair dressed in mediæval fashion, it was most likely intended to commemorate some prominent ecclesiastic of the Middle Ages; but when the painting had faded, and its original subject became forgotten, monkish credulity saw in it the shroud of Jesus Christ. Shrouds and mummy-cloths often have outlines of the body upon them; but it is hardly to be expected that they would exhibit the features of the deceased. An acute photographer could easily produce a photograph with the traditional features of Christ, which would look far better than the published pictures of the Holy Shroud of Turin.

The latest instance of this craze for discovering early Christian antiquities is of a still more rubbishy character. The fateful find was made by one hitherto unknown to fame, but who rejoices in the name of Monsieur Boyer d'Agen. He was rummaging amongst the contents of a Parisian rag-and-bone shop when he came across a brass coin about an inch and a half in diameter, upon the back of which his experienced eye recognised Hebrew characters "of the earliest type." Dissembling his joy, he forthwith bargained with the proprietor of the rag-and-bone emporium, and, after a lengthy wrangle, the inestimable relic finally changed hands for the magnificent sum of *ten centimes*, or one penny sterling! According to the newspapers, the proud possessor then showed the "coin" to the most eminent numismatists in Paris (names not stated), who assured him that he had indeed exchanged his wealth for a treasure far above rubies. The *Daily Mail* published an enlarged engraving of this wonderful "coin," which bears a head upon one side, and upon the other a Hebrew inscription which the *Daily Mail* carefully printed upside down. The publication of the article brought down upon the journal a shower of correspondence from people in England who had similar "holy coins," and the *Daily Mail* came out a few days later with another article, in which it repeated a string of ridiculous conjectures taken from a foolish book written by the Rev. R. Walsh some sixty or seventy years ago. A book which was evidently popular at the time, for it passed through three editions, but which is now totally forgotten. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

Mr. Walsh asserted that his brass medal must be very old, because it had no nimbus round the head of Christ: the nimbus was very often omitted in Italian medals of the Renaissance period. Because it had a Hebrew inscription it must have been made by a Jewish convert shortly after the death of Christ: but the inscription is in *modern square Hebrew letters*. Behind the head is the letter *Aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, therefore it must have been struck in the *first year after the Resurrection!* Poor Mr. Walsh knew no Hebrew, or he would have seen that there was another totally different explanation. On the obverse of the coin is the head of Christ, and the word Jesus (*Yeshua*) is written



across it in Hebrew characters, the head dividing the third and fourth letters, thus

ושי (bust) נ

This inscription contains two glaring errors. Firstly, it is written backwards. Secondly, the final letter is written *Aleph* instead of *Ayin*. The proper way to write "Jesus" in Hebrew is ישוע. It is, therefore, obvious that the letter *Aleph* has nothing whatever to do with the Resurrection, or the date of the medal; it only demonstrated that the designer of the medal did not know much Hebrew.

The Hebrew inscription on the reverse of the medal is scarcely intelligible. It is quite ungrammatical, and the engraver was not familiar with the Hebrew alphabet, so that he has blundered the letters terribly, although they are not really as bad as the *Daily Mail* illustration makes out. The legend appears to be intended for "The Messiah has reigned; he came in peace; and, being made the light of man, he lives"; but one or two slightly different readings have been suggested.

The medal can never have been intended for a "coin," because it has a loop for suspension, so that it could be attached to a necklace or a rosary. The *Daily Mail* figures do not show this loop. The medal is a common one, and perfectly well known, and it is utter nonsense to represent that numismatists could be puzzled over it.

We have authentic Jewish coins with Hebrew inscriptions ranging in date as late as the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 135), and in every case their inscriptions are in the Samaritan character. Full particulars of these coins will be found in F. W. Madden's *Coins of the Jews* (London, 1881) and *Les Monnaies Juives*, by Theodore Reinach (Paris, 1888). M. Reinach is careful to state that "one may be certain that any Jewish coin with an inscription in square Hebrew is a modern forgery." A fact well known to numismatics, though M. Boyer d'Agen does not appear to be aware of it.

The head upon the medal is the traditional portrait of Jesus Christ; though the first *Daily Mail* illustration made it appear to be that of a French criminal of the lowest type. This traditional portrait was first popularised in the twelfth century, by the forged "letter of Lentulus." In the earliest Christian sculptures and paintings Christ is always represented as a beardless youth. He did not grow a beard till the fifth century.

M. d'Agen's medal was struck in Italy in the sixteenth century, and was first described by numismatists in the early part of the seventeenth. It is a very poor example of the Italian medals of that period. It must have been very popular in its time, and been sold in large quantities, for specimens are found all over Europe. Every now and then some ignorant person, like M. Boyer d'Agen, gets hold of one and tries to get up an excitement about it; but at this time of day it is rather surprising to find a London newspaper giving prominence to such a worthless fabrication.

CHILPERIC.

## Dr. Keeling's Reply to Mr. Cohen.

(Concluded from page 76.)

THERE is not time for more than the very briefest glance at some other points which Mr. Cohen raises. All are easily answered. Thus at par. 6 he objects to the word "noumena"—says it is obsolete and scholastic. Yet he uses freely the word "phenomena." As a literary man, he is aware that "noumenon" is the correct, if not current, antithesis of "phenomenon," and related to it as reality is to appearance, object to subject, cause to effect. Both terms are of the same age and origin, the only difference being that one has "caught on," the other has not.

Par. 11, 12. What Mr. Cohen and Dr. Maudsley say about mind and organic structure (brain-cells) is, of course, true as regards *protoplasmic* mind, and is in accordance with the biologic syllogism I have given. Why does my critic not say that I insist (see chap. iii. of *Quero*), even more strongly than himself, on the indissoluble connection of animal intelligence with nerve-cell? Why confuse this subordinate, small form of intelligence with that infinitely superior factor for which I contend?

Par. 16; *Law and Chance*. In discussing scientific points, I always use the word "law" as Mr. Cohen does—viz., in its proper scientific sense; not with a forensic, nor even social meaning. "Chance" in the same way, and as Darwin uses it. The "chance" which I rule out is *absence of cause*.

Par. 9; *Products—Sugar of lead, Mind, etc.* Products can contain nothing which was not previously contained in that from which they are produced. The merest tyro in chemistry knows this. Sugar of lead contains nothing which was not previously present in the acetic acid and lead out of which it was formed. Is sweetness present in sugar of lead? No more than whiteness and coldness are present in snow. Mr. Cohen knows as well as I do that sweetness, whiteness, coldness, do not exist as qualities without the co-operation of a sensitive and perceiving nerve-area. Such a booby-trap can never catch men of Mr. Cohen's calibre; but how about an unwary reader?

Animal (including human) intelligence considered as a *product*. A product from what? My critic talks vaguely of the "forces of the universe," the evolution of nebular gas, the "long, unbroken line of mechanical causation," and the probable reduction of all "cosmical phenomena to problems of atomo-mechanics." The grandest generalisation of modern science is, that Energy (the scientific name for Mr. Cohen's "forces of the universe") is in all probability dependent on, possibly identical with, the *Motion* on matter; and that subordinate forces, such as heat, light, and electricity, are but modifications of motion. But this generalisation is accompanied by the dictum that matter and energy are physical only, and therefore no source of what is mental. Somehow this "unbroken line" is interrupted somewhere, or does not start thick enough, or another line joins it. We cannot get the product, mind, out of that which does not contain it. But we have to evolve it from something, for it is there; hence the need of my third factor. As Professor Beale, a far higher authority than Mr. Cohen or I, says: "The laws of the living world.....belong to an order or category different and apart from that in which physical law is included. The laws of matter and energy are not *the laws of life*" (italics are his. *Op. cit.*, p. 74).

Par. 19. Here Mr. Cohen discovers another little mare's-nest, containing three "fallacies." The first turns on the meaning of the word "depends." In the objectionable sentence he quotes I am merely saying that evolution cannot evolve the forces of the universe. Whether the universe is dependent on, or independent of, its included forces is, of course, for him to say. Again, he makes me state that the Materialist declares evolution to be "a form of physical energy." I wish my reviewer would quote sufficiently. In the passage which I think he alludes to I am merely inquiring whether the Materialist will have evolution as a *power*, and, as such, a "form of physical energy," or whether he regards it as a movement set a-going by power. I am glad to find no "thoughtful" Materialists dream of evolution as being in itself a power, but I fancy that some thoughtless ones still do. My third "fallacy" consists in saying that "evolution is itself a thing to be accounted for, and needs a cause." Well, say it is a "process"; is a process a thing, or is it no thing (nothing)? A process needs a cause, whether it began in the beer we made yesterday, or in a nebula millions of years ago, or though it never had a beginning.

Par. 21; *Anthropomorphism*. It is surely time to abandon this venerable scarecrow. So far from its being possible to find a physical god amongst educated Theists of the present day, I think it would be difficult to find one who accepts a matter-god, a force-god, or an intelligence-god, in any shape. I am surprised that Mr. Cohen thinks it worth while to trot out the old arm-and-leg god again. As an ancient "curio" he may be interesting, but amongst thinkers he was obsolete long before science had got any further than the "fire, air, earth, and water" stage of Empedocles. He was dead and buried whilst men still believed that sun and firmament turned round a stationary earth, and still sought the "philosopher's stone," brewed elixirs of life, touched for "King's evil," burnt witches, believed in "fixed stars," "phlogiston," heart as seat of emotion, arteries as conduits of air, and tadpoles as offspring of



mud. As we hope for mercy from succeeding generations, we must be lenient with old fogies who did the best they could at the time. We could no more have a Martineau or a Hamilton in those early days than a Newton, Kelvin, or Darwin; under the circumstances, I think old Job did exceedingly well. We do not always bear in mind how archaisms cling. The sun *rises* and *sets* as persistently as though Copernicus had never lived; we cannot do without the *hand* of justice nor the *arm* of the law; we might dispense with the *tongue* of scandal, but the *finger* of scorn is still useful; a man's heart remains *kind*, *hard*, *heavy*, *light*, though we know it for a mere muscle-pump which drives, not good or bad spirits, but blood—in fact, our poor language is so hopelessly saturated with imagery and metaphor that we cannot open our mouths but a figure, emblem, symbol, or image tumbles out. Why trouble? Man is, and must remain, "anthropos"; his language and thought are inevitably anthropic, and must forever bear the impress of the human instrument which fashions them. Fortunately he is eminently a progressive animal, and the anthropomorphism which formerly infested both science and religion is disappearing.

Mr. Cohen deals very briefly with the second part of *Quæro*, wherein Agnosticism is discussed; I will follow his example. In chap. iii., which treats of the method and limits of sense-cognition, as taught by physiology and psychology, it is shown that causal reality must be admitted as underlying phenomena, if these are to be explained at all. In his fifth and sixth paragraphs Mr. Cohen examines causal reality, and ultimately extracts from it a very queer monster—viz., "a non-causal, non-phenomenal being that really equals nothing at all, and is absolutely valueless as an explanation of anything"; he also declares that its existence is "hypothetical." I should say, very. In any case, he must take charge of it; it is his creature, not mine.

My critic does not seem to see that in attempting to destroy or render useless causal reality it is he, not I, who is committing suicide. In sawing off the branch on which I am sitting he has forgotten that he, too, has his root on it. I agree with him when he says "science is concerned with a classification of causal relations among phenomena," but not, if he means thereby that this is her sole concern anent phenomena. On the contrary, she is every bit as anxious to find the real causes of phenomena as to discover relations, causal or other, amongst them. Mr. Cohen asks me in one place to think; I now ask him to do the same, lest he lose his Materialism altogether and get sublimed into one of those metaphysical idealists who admit nothing but appearances. There is real danger of this for anyone who seriously denies causal reality. If there be no such thing, then a man sitting on a chair is only one bundle of phenomena sitting on another bundle. The happy roysterer, "wi' just a wee drap in his een," who gets felled in the street by a rascal who takes his watch, has nothing (no thing) to complain of. No *thing* has happened; merely one set of phenomena has causally knocked down another set, and causally separated a few of its phenomena (vulgarly known as "property") from the rest. Without underlying reality, Mr. Cohen, despite his talent and activity, has no personality; he is merely a causal group of phenomena, I am another, our courteous Editor is a third. But Christmas and pantomime are over. Let us get back to science, and hear a final word from her. So bent is she on finding a cause for phenomena that she does not hesitate to invent one when necessary: it is to the *imagination* of science that we owe those parlous things called "atoms," which no one has ever seen or touched, whose existence has never been proved; they are conceptions which form a part of the corpuscular theory of matter—a theory which science tells us is at present the best she can set up, and to which she is forced by the necessity of finding a cause for undoubted phenomena which otherwise must remain unexplained. The same is true with respect to "ether." When vibration was found to hold, not only for *sound*, whose vibrations are conducted by air and other media adjacent to us, but also for light and radiant heat from the sun, ninety-three millions of miles away; when, further, it was found that our atmosphere extended only a few miles towards the sun, gradually thinning away to nothing, and so ceasing to be a medium which could

further carry vibration of any kind, the question arose: What carries the vibrations of light and heat through airless space? No one knew, and no one could find out; but there must be something. If there were vibrations, there must be something which vibrated. The imagination of science again fell pregnant; presently "ether" was conceived, and, in due time, born into the world to the delight and satisfaction of everybody. So with sundry other scientific necessities. The abstractions which we call "matter" and "energy" are necessary, but are *conceptions only*; conceptions of that causal reality which must exist if phenomena have any basis at all. We cannot have conceptions of *nothings*. Those who insist blindly on matter and force forget that these are only scientific generalisations referring, not to phenomena, but to the cause of phenomena; that they are conceptions of that causal reality which underlies phenomena, unless these latter are nothing more than deceptive illusions. The Materialist cannot have his precious "matter" and "force" in any other form than as conceptions of causing realities, of whose existence he may well be certain, but of whose nature he knows absolutely nothing. As to psychic phenomena, since they are in an entirely different category from physical, and cannot through any form of "atomo-mechanics" be produced by physical causes, we need for them another factor, which I designate by the name of Intelligence. Of its nature I am just as ignorant as Mr. Cohen is of the nature of matter and force; but I am certain of its existence, in the same way as he is certain of the existence of matter and energy: all three are proved to us by their phenomenal manifestation—that is, in the only way which our neuro-psychic instrument, the thinking brain, permits of. All three are simply the named conceptions of underlying causal realities which we are compelled to admit as common-sense people, and which science equally insists on. The alternative is to melt away—phantoms in a phantom world.

Agnosticism, which is a mode of thought or attitude of mind rather than a deduction from science, has none the less a perfectly tenable position as regards phenomena and the Causal Reality underlying them. The latter is, for a scientific Agnostic, the "Unknowable," into which he cannot go, which eludes all his instruments of research, whose nature is beyond his comprehension, but whose existence is certain. It means for him just what the conceptions of matter, force, and mind, mean for the scientist.

When carefully examined, it is startling to note how closely parallel the Agnostic and Theistic conceptions run; indeed, to my thinking, their lines are not parallel, but converging. Some day they will meet, and for fusion, not smash. The issue of the future lies, in my opinion, between Agnosticism and Theism. The Büchner and Bradlaugh type of it is on the wane, and if Materialism is to live at all, it will be by adopting a psychic factor of some kind, either the Monistic, the Pantheistic, or some analogue of the "mind-stuff" of the late Professor Clifford. How widely his view differed from that of Mr. Bradlaugh is clearly shown by Professor Karl Pearson (see his *Grammar of Science*, p. 353).

In his concluding paragraph Mr. Cohen speaks of my "surrender." It is a Parthian shaft, keen but unlucky, for it hits friend as well as foe. Science, in her time, has made many surrenders, and will make more. She is always ready to abandon what she has for something better. She has surrendered her primitive four elements and adopted over seventy, entirely different. She turns the earth round the sun now, instead of the sun round the earth. She has cast behind her the picturesque rags of astrology and alchemy, and appears now in the severe garb of modern astronomy and chemistry. I call this advance, not surrender; but if Mr. Cohen still thinks the latter is the proper term to apply to my movements, so be it; the surrender, however, has been the other way—viz., of Materialism for Agnosticism, and of this for Theism. Advance, as I think, not surrender.

I beg again to express my best thanks to the Editor for his great courtesy, and to my able reviewer for his kindly treatment of a beginner.

JAMES HURD KEELING.

[The book *Quæro*, which has given rise to the discussion between Mr. Cohen and Dr. Keeling, and also an analysis of it, can be obtained as per advertisement in this week's *Freethinker*.]



### The Birmingham School Board and the Secularists.

No doubt with the best possible motives—as the way to the end of all mischief is said to be paved with good intentions—the Sites and Buildings Committee of the Birmingham School Board will make an endeavor, at the meeting of that body on Friday next, to set up a moral and religious inquisition. The Committee—and we are given to understand that the members were unanimous—will recommend that, in consequence of the report received concerning meetings held at the Bristol-street school on Sundays, under the auspices of the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society, that Society be not permitted to hire any of the Board schools for a period of twelve months. The chief—if not the only—allegation against the Secularists is that they permitted to be sold literature of a nature which ought not to be in the hands of immature persons at meetings which were attended by young people in their teens. If this were so, the Board might have asked the Society to discontinue the sale of publications, or an equally effective step would have been to place the facts as to the nature of the publications and their sale before the Chief Constable, since the prevention of the circulation of a certain class of prints is a matter for the police. But the exclusion of citizens, who are members of the Secular Society, from the use of the Board schools for a year on the rather loose allegations made appears to us in the light of a false move altogether. As a preventive, such a proceeding must fail, for the sufficient reason that the Secular Society will be sure to find another place of meeting. It stands to reason that the public proprieties are far more likely to be observed in a Board school, though Birmingham has yet to be convinced that anything has been said or done by the Society itself which is calculated to demoralise the community. Anything which savors of a restriction of free speech and the rights of citizenship will be regarded in Birmingham with a very jealous eye, and, unless the Committee can make out a far stronger case against the Society than was heard at the last Board meeting, the only effect of such an arbitrary step will be to stir up general sympathy with the Secularists. We call attention to the matter at this stage because it is highly desirable that the City should satisfy itself that the denial of rights of meeting to the members of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. is justified by some very serious offence against the general well-being. The constitution of the Sites and Buildings Committee would certainly suggest that the recommendation will only be made as the result of dire necessity, for we cannot imagine such champions of free speech, as we see in the following list, denying to others the privileges which they have claimed for themselves. The Committee is constituted as follows:—Rev. Joseph Wood, Chairman; Rev. E. F. M. MacCarthy, Rev. J. Hulme, Rev. W. E. Ivens; Messrs. G. H. Kenrick, W. Kirby, V. G. Milward, J. G. Pentland, & Titterton.

—Daily Argus, January 24.

The recommendation of the Sites and Buildings Committee, which will be laid before the Birmingham School Board at its next meeting, to prohibit the local Secularists the use of any Board school for a period of twelve months, is likely to give rise to a good deal of outside discussion. The question is one of more than ordinary importance. The majority of the ratepayers at Birmingham probably have no sympathy with the Secularists and their opinions, but if the recommendation is adopted it is likely to be construed as an interference with the liberty of free speech. If a Secularist is a ratepayer, it is open to serious question whether he has not as much right to hold a meeting in the Board schools as the Friends of Peace or the Young Men's Christian Association. The point at issue was whether objectionable announcements should be permitted to be placarded outside the Board schools. To stop this would have been generally approved, but to deny the use of the Board schools to any section of the ratepayers is a doubtful policy to adopt. And why should the prohibition be limited to twelve months? If it is desirable, why not make it permanent?

—Daily Mail, January 24.

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### National Secular Society.

REPORT of Monthly Executive Meeting held at 377 Strand, W.C., on Thursday, January 26; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were present: Messrs. E. Bater, H. Brown, T. Gorniot, W. Heaford, W. Leat, B. Munton, A. B. Moss, F. Schaller, J. Neate, G. J. Warren, T. Wilmot, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed; cash statement received and adopted. Twenty-one applications for membership were received—seventeen from the Birmingham Branch and four for the parent Society—which, after examination, were accepted.

The President reported upon the difficulties which had recently arisen in connection with the Birmingham Branch and its place of meeting, and expressed his determination to visit that town if necessary.

Mrs. L. Dobson, of Huddersfield, was appointed Collector under the Treasurer's Scheme.

The Secretary received instructions to send out the usual circular inquiring which of the Branches desired to invite the Conference, and the meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

N.B.—Branch Secretaries will oblige by sending in all fresh applications for membership without delay.

### Correspondence.

#### DR. KEELING'S ILLUSTRATION REVERSED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of January 22 Dr. Keeling adopted a method of argument which is not a little surprising as coming from a writer of his ability and controversial power. Here we see Paley's famous watch somehow transformed into an ingenious motor-car. The evidences of design in natural phenomena must be shown to be *generic*, and not *specific*, before one can attach any value to the universal design theory of the Theists. The illustration used by Dr. Keeling to convince the Materialists of their total blindness to the alleged manifestations of design in nature is worthy only of men like Hugh Price Hughes, and not of a professor of gynaecology, who scarcely can have seen, in the course of his professional experience, any cogent proofs for beautiful and *intelligent* designs in the occurrence of those diseases to which women are subject. Intelligence might have easily contrived a better, cleaner, and more decent plan for sending the new babes into this world than that of parturition, with its attendant dangers and horrors. If the Intelligence delighted in such an unseemly process which must be gone through before the advent of every new-born infant, he ought to have so constructed man that, instead of feeling disgusted and sickened with that cruel and painful process, he could have felt a delight in, and admiration for, the contrivance of *Intelligence*.

Let us illustrate the sublime, harmonious, and directing influence of Intelligence on human destiny. An intelligent cabman, driving four intelligent persons to a certain railway station, whips the intelligent and restive horse too often. The horse kicks, bolts, and falls into an adjacent ditch with the cab and all the intelligent persons. The injured are hastily hurled into two ambulance vans. One of the two ambulance vans, driven by an intelligent driver, with two helpless and bleeding creatures, on its way to the nearest hospital, collides with a steam-roller. The van is wrecked, and the injured persons are killed on the spot. Out of the three injured men who were safely deposited in the hospital one returns home with both legs minus. The other two die in the hospital under the care of an intelligent, skilled surgeon; one dies in consequence of the cardiac failure due to the administration of chloroform, and the other dies from septic poisoning. On reading this sad affair in the local newspaper a hard-hearted Materialist sarcastically remarks: "What else could you expect with such machines, horses, and men that were made by Intelligence; driven, looked after, and directed by intelligence; nothing but riot, disaster, and anarchy." Now look at the gloomy destiny that may befall our own planet in spite of its supervision by "Intelligence," writ, matters little, howsoever large. A wandering, erratic comet tumbles into the sun; the heat of the sun is raised to such an astounding intensity that our terrestrial chariot, driven and guided by Intelligence, is reduced to "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors."

A MEDICAL STUDENT.

"My friend," said a clerical looking passenger to the travelling man in the next seat, "do you every drink?" "Is that an invitation or only a question?" asked the wily drummer. "Merely a question pertaining to your future welfare," said the c. l. p. "Then," observed the other, "I never drink, sir; never."—*Chicago News*.



## 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, A. B. Moss, "The Drama of Christianity."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Dance and Entertainment.  
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Ethical Riches."  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.  
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion on "Schopenhauer"; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Defence of Carlyle."  
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, B. Bosanquet, LL.D., "Self-interest and the Common Good."  
WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): A Parliament every Tuesday at 8. February 9, at 8.15, Mr. Boyce, C.E.S., "The Mosaic Account of Creation." February 8, at 9, Meeting of West London Branch.  
WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. Calvert, "History of the Shakespearean Drama—Part II."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. Pack.

## COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Royal English Circus, Corporation-street): G. W. Foote—11, "The Dying Faith"; 3, "Thomas Paine's Work for Humanity"; 7, "Freethought and the Birmingham School Board."  
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "The Conflict between Miracles and Medicine."  
GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen—11.30, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 2.30, "Morality without Religion"; 6.30, "Religion and Man."  
GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7.30, E. V. Sterry, "A Freethinker's View of the Life of Christ."  
HUDDERSFIELD (No. 5 room of the Friendly and Trades Hall): R. Law, F.G.S.—3, "How the Rocks about Huddersfield were Formed"; 6.30, "Evidence of Pre-historic Man on Yorkshire and Lancashire Moors."  
LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, J. D. Shallard, "Survival of the Fittest: A Socialist Standpoint."  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Rhodes, "Sidney Lee's New Life of Shakespeare."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, M. W. Simpson, "Reasons for Rejecting Agnosticism and Theosophy."  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Mr. Foreman's, 1 Grainger-street): 3, Members' meeting.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "A Defence of Evolutionary Progress."  
SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; 7.30, "Schopenhauer."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—February 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.—February 12, Sheffield; 19, Birmingham. March 26, Birmingham. April 16, Glasgow.

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<p>This is a very quiet part of the year in the Tailoring business. To find some work for our hands we offer two pairs of our ordinary 15s. trousers for 21s. carriage paid.</p>	<p><b>SPECIAL.</b></p> <p>I HAVE to-day, December 19, purchased a Manufacturer's Stock, consisting of 2,000 garments of Lady's New Paddock Mackintoshes, with Bishop Sleeves and Ventilated Saddle. Not one of the garments was made up a month ago, so that the stock is positively new and fresh, and absolutely the latest style in cut. The goods include about twenty different designs and colorings, including brown, fawn, and grey mixtures, checks and diagonals, and the lengths at back vary from 50 to 56 inches. To have bought these in the ordinary way I could not have sold them at less than 21s. each. However, I have bought them at a clearing price, and one that must have been ruinous to the manufacturer, and so I am in for creating a sensation with these goods. I have chopped my own profit down to a mere trifle. I offer them as follows:—One for 10s. 6d., carriage paid, two for 20s. Every customer ordering seven, either separately or altogether, will receive one free of cost as bonus. I here undertake to return 12s. in every case where one fails to give satisfaction in value. In conclusion, to all my best friends I say, try one of these Mackintoshes, and you will be glad.</p>	<p>The "Record" Parcel</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONTAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Magnificent Floral Quilt.</li> <li>1 Lady's Dress Skirt (to measure). Give Waist and length measure.</li> <li>1 Good strong hardwearing Trouser length.</li> <li>1 Lady's Fur Necktie (a splendid imitation of real Sable).</li> <li>1 Gent's Umbrella. Cover warranted for twelve months.</li> <li>1 Lady's Umbrella. Cover warranted for twelve months.</li> <li>1 Beautifully-figured Cushion Square.</li> <li>1 Pretty White Apron.</li> <li>1 White Irish Linen Handkerchief.</li> <li>1lb. Free Clothing Tea.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">All for 21s. Carriage Paid.</p>
<p>State color and stripe, mixture or check, preferred.</p>		
<p><i>Measurements required</i> :—</p> <p>Width round waist.....</p> <p>Length inside leg .....</p> <p>Length outside leg .....</p> <p>Lined or unlined.....</p>		
<p><b>Buy now, and you will save Money.</b></p>		

To every reader of the *Freethinker* who will send his or her name and address on a post card we will gladly send large sample of our Free Clothing Tea. It is a marvel of cheapness.

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