

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XIX.—No. 7.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1899.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## Our Propaganda.

HAVING dealt with the Birmingham Scandal and exposed the hypocritical bigots who have deprived the Secularists of the common use of buildings erected and maintained at the cost of ratepayers of all denominations—and perhaps, one should add, of no denomination at all—I proceed, as promised, to deal with certain aspects of the matter, as it concerns our Freethought propaganda.

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the President of the Leicester Secular Society, has written me a letter on this subject, which I mentioned last week, and which I shall now refer to at some length. Mr. Gimson is one who is entitled to be heard. His father was a man of intellectual strength and lofty character, who contributed immensely to the reputation and success of the Secular movement in Leicester. He himself reminds me of that fine personality in many ways. He displays the same devotion to principle, the same good temper, the same philosophical tolerance both in controversy and in the intercourse of life, the same equable enthusiasm in the promotion of Secularism, and the same unostentatious readiness to tax his purse as well as his leisure for freedom and progress. And in his case all these fine qualities are strengthened and mellowed by a culture which early fate denied to his father. For my part, I wish that Secularism had such a strong and staunch friend as Mr. Gimson in every town in Great Britain; although I admit that the wish is rather a wild one just at present.

Mr. Gimson allows unreservedly that the action of the Birmingham School Board is "a piece of religious intolerance." This is clearly proved, he says, by the stress laid upon the placard announcing the lecture on "Did God Make Man or Did Man Make God?" Rightly used, he adds, this incident "will instil new vigor into the Birmingham Society, and prove a blessing in an unpleasant disguise." At the same time, he thinks this is an opportune moment to "call attention to serious indiscretions committed by members of our party, not infrequently and not in Birmingham alone; indiscretions which deprive us of the help and sympathy of thoughtful outsiders, who would not be led against us by theological bigotry alone." Mr. Gimson instances the "rough remarks" made occasionally by lecturers, the "vulgarly crude verse and prose that sometimes achieve the distinction of print," which (he says) alienate "many intelligent refined people who have leanings in our direction," and induce them to side more or less with the bigots when they attack us. Mr. Gimson is far from saying that "the bulk of our advocacy" is open to this criticism, but "if the most are irreproachable the exceptions want warning." "The advocacy of Freethought," he adds, "is difficult enough even when carried on by men and women of the finest feelings and brightest intellects, but tactless blunderers can throw back the cause for years."

In my judgment this is mostly true and well said, but it may need a little qualification. Secularism is not the

only cause that is liable to suffer from fool-friends. Tact is not every man's gift, and some men who find that they can talk never learn to do anything else. We cannot all be Ingersolls, and many Christians in America accuse even the Colonel of coarseness. Evidently something must be allowed for temperament. A very grave man dislikes ridicule, but ridicule is not a weapon to be lightly cast aside; it has been wielded with tremendous and beneficent effect by some of the greatest intellectual emancipators. But of course it is a dangerous weapon in unskilful hands; and a man is not really a wit, though he provokes the guffaws of a few groundlings, if he belches out the first unconsidered joke that occurs to his excited noddle; nor is he a trenchant critic because he says the most exasperating things with what he considers remorseless logic. True humor always rests on a basis of seriousness. Heine himself—one of the greatest of wits—said that wit without reason was only a sneeze of the intellect. One recollects the story of the village wit, who boasted of having put a neighbor to shame. "I did chaff 'im," he said; "I called 'im all the damned fools you could think of." That sort of satire might well be left to the gentleman who was proud of it. But a satire which does not condescend to vulgar personalities, yet transfixes a superstition, a falsehood, or a vanity, is a precious exercise of mental dexterity.

Secular Societies should put a little friendly pressure now and then upon advocates whose enthusiasm outruns their discretion. Some of the older men could do it easily without being misunderstood. Adequate discipline will only come when we are stronger and better organised. Meanwhile we must deal with the difficulty as we can.

Mr. Gimson speaks very strongly about the advertisements that were objected to at Birmingham. Malthusian advertisements, when properly worded, he regards as "clearly right and useful." Generally speaking, too, he holds that "no Society can be fairly held responsible for all the advertisements in the literature it sells." Neither a Society, I would add nor a person. Book-sellers and newsagents would come to grief every day under such a censorship. Nevertheless, it is Mr. Gimson's opinion that Freethought papers should be especially careful as to their advertisements, and I heartily agree with him. One advertisement, which he regards as "pandering to the prurient curiosity and love of morbid excitement that form a portion of the lower side of our sexual instinct," I have declined to insert in the *Freethinker*. A book may be in its place in a library, and out of its place on a drawing-room table. It seems to me idle, for instance, to push the sale of Rabelais and Boccaccio—both very great writers—and pretend that you are promoting the sale of virile literature. You might as well collect all the fig-leaves (or worse) from a sculpture gallery, and offer them for sale on the pretence that you were dealing in classic statuary.

Another advertisement leads Mr. Gimson to write as follows: "There is in the air an impression, not unjustifiable I think, that the Free Lovers are trying to capture our party. I think we may say good-bye to all hopes



of a great future for us if they succeed. Let us keep our movement clean, free from the continual morbid dwelling on the subject of sex that distinguishes the Free Love advocacy. I would give the Free Lovers every liberty to practise or expound their fads at their own expense and on their own responsibility, but do not let us provide them with a ready-made organisation; and, above all, I hope Secularists will not go to Free Lovers for 'advice' on sex matters."

No one can be more opposed to Free Love than I am. In a certain sense, of course, all love is free, for it is a spontaneous affection. But that is not what the Free Lovers mean. What most of them aim at is the abolition of marriage, though not one of them has ever been able to suggest any other agency for the rearing of children, or for the primary moral discipline of men and women. The sexual instinct, in marriage, falls into its proper place, and is seen in its proper perspective. It is consecrated by association with the family, and thence with the city, the country, and the race. To let the most powerful of human passions operate as a free explosive would be to invite chaos and ruin. Every man of sense and feeling knows this, and is apt to watch those who play with fire with a feeling that they will leave it to him at last to put out the flames. Mr. Gimson is right, I think, in his attitude and his prophecy. But I fancy he attaches too much importance to the efforts of the Free Lovers. They certainly did imagine that they were going to capture the Freethought movement. But they were silly to think so. They were never more than a handful, and not half as clever as they looked. Some of them were mere sensualists, who made a principle of their personal inclinations. And sensualists are never brave. That is one reason why many of the Free Lovers ratted during the Bedborough prosecution. It was they who were for compromise and cowardice. Their little party is cowed and scattered. Instead of capturing the Freethought movement it has lost itself.

G. W. FOOTE.

### "Evolution and God."

UNDER the above title there recently appeared an article by the Rev. J. A. Betts in the *Church Gazette*. It was really a paper read last year at the residence of Dr. J. H. Gladstone and at St. Paul's Chapter House. The object of the rev. gentleman was to show that in the theory of evolution there is nothing opposed to the belief in God, to the teachings of the Bible, or to the fundamental principles of Christianity. Whether or not evolution clashes with the existence of God will largely depend upon what is considered to be his nature. But, in my opinion, no amount of ingenuity can harmonise the teachings of the Bible with the true theory of evolution. Moreover, if this theory be true, such fundamentals of Christianity as the creation of man in the Garden of Eden, the Fall, Original Sin, and the Atonement must be relegated to the realms of fiction. As the views propounded by Mr. Betts are professed by many of the leading lights of the Churches at the present time, it may be useful to briefly examine what he says in defence of the positions he has taken up.

The rev. gentleman commences by confessing that "less than thirty years ago the theory of evolution met with strenuous, and often bitter, opposition from many distinguished scientists, no less than from theologians. Now all is changed. Evolution has been generally accepted by the scientific world as a working hypothesis, and every new discovery tends to establish its truth. It has been applied to the elucidation of all branches of science, from physics to theology. In short, the whole order of the universe is seen to be progressive. From the birth and growth of worlds to the most complex forms of human existence, there is one continuous growth, a gradual, but unbroken, evolution from lower and simpler forms to higher and more complex forms of being. Scientific experts have accepted evolution; and now a large body of thoughtful men and women are asking their clergymen and recognised teachers to tell them how the new knowledge can be reconciled with the old Bible doctrines of God, Creation,

the Fall, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, and the Future Life." He further defines evolution as "the statement of a process, not an explanation of the ultimate cause." He then terms evolution "a fact of science," and, quoting Le Conte, Mr. Betts says: "Evolution denotes continuous progressive change according to certain laws, and by means of resident forces." Here it is admitted that birth, growth, and continuous progressive changes are the results of *resident forces*, by which are understood the inherent powers of nature, which are matter and force. But if this be true, where does God come in? Many writers are referred to who do not allow God to be in the process at all. Mr. Betts, however, assures us that what these writers say about evolution driving God out of the universe is false and misleading, for he urges that the theory "confirms the essential truths [of Theism], and helps to interpret more accurately the fundamental doctrines of the Christian creed." As Shakespeare would say, "That's news indeed." Who would have thought that the despised discovery of thirty years ago would become the chief pillar of support, and the great expounder of the meaning, of the faith of Christendom? As is usual with theological writers, throughout the entire article under consideration no solid arguments are presented to support the pretensions made; all is mere assertion, and erroneous conclusions are drawn from false premises. In the *Merchant of Venice* we find Mr. Betts's exposition fairly described in the following words: "Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing more than any other men in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat in two bushels of chaff. You shall search all day ere you find them, and when you have them they are not worth the search."

The rev. gentleman is sorely distressed on account of the conduct of many ministers of religion. He says: "Many of the clergy and ministers of religion even find their tongues tied, and their teaching power paralysed, because they do not feel sure of their ground, and at present fail to see how the old doctrines can be reconciled with the new knowledge; whilst not a few persons boldly declare that time-honored creeds have been shorn of their value, that every new discovery is helping to undermine the Christian faith, and that ere long God will be driven from the universe." Doubtless this is true, and thousands of well-informed men, apart from the clergy, are unable to see how the reconciliation is to be brought about. But if Mr. Betts is correct in his indictment against his fellow-clergymen, these servants of the Lord have, for thirty years, shamefully neglected to call to their aid a theory which, he tells us, is of vital importance in confirming the truth of the essentials of their faith.

In dealing with profound questions much depends upon definitions. Mr. Betts defines Natural Law as "merely an expression of a regularity." So far as it goes, no exception need be taken to this definition. To me the phrase, "laws of nature," signifies only the observed order in the continuous changes taking place in nature, these changes constituting all that is known of causes and effects—an interminable series of the movements of matter, which, being accorded, make up what we term science—a knowledge of things. The rev. gentleman, however, proceeds to argue, and entirely ignores the definition of law just given. He says: "If God is the author of Natural Law, then the unfolding of natural processes is nothing else but the revelation of divine purpose in nature." There is much virtue in an "if." No attempt is made to show that God was the author of nature, but it is assumed that law, instead of being "merely our expression of regularity," is a command or injunction from some authoritative *person* who must be obeyed. Mr. Betts gets sadly confused here. He not only ignores his own definition, but he lands himself into a maze of inconsistencies. For instance, "unfolding" a process cannot be an equivalent to a "revelation" of a divine or any other purpose, although the "processes" might unfold nature's secrets. We are told that "theology is the science of religion," and, in order to make this allegation plausible, Mr. Betts gives a new definition of science. Here it is: "The systematic knowledge of divine thoughts and ways." "A rational system of natural theology." Who ever heard of such a definition of science as this, apart from theological perversions? To my mind, natural processes and



divine purposes are separate ideas as far apart as the heavens and earth; and the same may be said of theology and science. He alleges that "theology is an attempt to state in an orderly and systematic way what is known about God"; therefore, "theology follows the rule of all other sciences" as to the growth of intelligence and the increase of knowledge. Is this really so? I reply, Decidedly not. Can the writer of this palpable fallacy show how any man can *know* of an infinite, incomprehensible God, much less to increase his knowledge of such a being? Why, Mr. Betts himself, in speaking of the triune God, says: "It must be accepted on faith."

The rev. gentleman refers to Herbert Spencer with a view of proving that there is "behind all" an infinite and eternal "Energy," from which all things proceed, and that this "Power" is something higher than "Personality." If this is so, it is higher than a "Personal God." But if "Energy" is behind *all*, it is behind itself. We are told that when Spencer says "Energy," and the theologian mentions God, "they use different words to express the same eternal fact." They do nothing of the kind. If God is the same as Energy, he is merely a name for the natural forces manifested to us. It is unpardonable that a gentleman of Mr. Betts's position should misrepresent Spencer as this rev. writer does. He tries to make Spencer confirm Christian beliefs because he holds that in all religions "there is a fundamental truth." But Mr. Betts does not tell us that that truth, according to Spencer, is "an absolute mystery," and that all attempts to solve it have proved failures. His words are: "The power the universe manifests is utterly inscrutable." Yet the rev. gentleman assumes so much knowledge of what most intelligent persons regard as a mystery as to designate it "God the Father, maker of heaven and earth." He does this although, with that inconsistency which is a prominent feature of Christian believers, he had previously assigned the same function to "resident forces" as accepted in the theory of evolution. This writer does not appear to know what is the legitimate result of accepting the theory of evolution. By adopting an unbroken succession in phenomena by means of "resident forces" in nature, the idea of a God who is the maker, and also the regulator, of the universe is superseded by the recognition of natural forces. By such facts as are at our command, the Oneness of nature, not dual existences, as are implied by God and Nature, is shown.

If the article which we have here briefly considered may be taken as a fair specimen of the productions of "advanced" theologians, it is no marvel that errors in regard to science and to nature are perpetuated. The fact is, theology tends to dim the mental vision and to pervert man's judgment, and thus the progress of the race is retarded. One of the most useful functions of Freethought advocates is to expose the fallacies of Christian writers who thrive upon the intellectual indolence and credulity of their unsuspecting followers.

CHARLES WATTS.

### The Empire of the Dead.

"The tyranny exercised over men's minds is the only real tyranny, because it cannot be fought against. Tiberius, Ghengis Khan, and Napoleon were assuredly redoubtable tyrants, but from the depths of their graves Moses, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed have exerted over the human mind a far profounder despotism. A conspiracy may overthrow a tyrant; but what can it avail against a firmly-established belief? The only real tyrants that humanity has known have always been the memories of its dead, or the illusions it has forged for itself."—G. LE BON, *The Crowd*.

It was one of the many pregnant sayings of Auguste Comte that the power of the dead over the living increases with the passing of each generation. By wills and bequests, by institutions and ideas, by the very physical structure we inherit, the past lives again in our own activities. We hand on and administer property more in accord with the desires of the past than the needs of the present, just as we take from the same quarter our rules of social decorum, and look with contemptuous indignation at all who are bold enough to flout its decrees. It is thus that every reformer has to fight, not only the

vested interests now existing, but, away and beyond these, the dead weight of custom and tradition, without which the contest might be quickly decided. From the cradle to the grave we find ourselves swathed, more or less thoroughly, in corpse clothes; ruled over by a skeleton dynasty; bound to the past by chains that gain strength from their invisibility.

Nor is this tyranny of the dead over the living exercised only by those who were tyrants in their day; far from it. It is mainly the influence of those who stood as reformers to their own generation that acts as obstacles to reform to-day. The selfish, the bad, the indolent, are themselves monuments to their own defects, and we are warned accordingly; but the unselfish, the good, the industrious, by the possession of these qualities, cast a glamor over after generations, render criticism difficult or abortive, and, losing the real lesson of their lives, we foolishly perpetuate their teachings, instead of emulating the spirit that dictated their actions.

Of course, it may be said that the rule of the dead is not always bad, and the increasing intelligence of man may make it less so. If the past dominates, it also guides; if its influence checks the hand of the reformer, its example also urges him on to the completion of his work; while the same channel that transmits evil tendencies and noxious institutions also gives us the clearer brain, wider knowledge, and stronger love of right. And this is true; but we may conveniently distinguish between the past ruling and the past guiding the present. The dead can only be said to really rule when we uphold institutions for no better reason than that they have always been in existence. To adopt existing institutions because examination shows them to be consonant with present-day requirements is not to be ruled by the dead, but to consciously embody in our lives the profits of their successes and the lessons of their failures. It is thus that the influence of the past becomes either a blessing or a curse, just as we permit ourselves to be taught by its experience or coerced by its decrees.

But, as is always the case when one wishes to find examples of fossilised ideas, of customs that have survived beyond their period of social utility, or of beliefs that express a lower stage of civilisation than the one in which we live, one turns confidently to the field of religion. Naturally so, for religion always represents, and must represent, the past rather than the present. Art, science, or sociology appeals for support to man's present knowledge of the world, or to society's unmistakable requirements. Religion prefers an appeal to the past, to the general consent of mankind, or to man's religious instincts, never for a moment facing the position that it is the reliability of these instincts that is called into question, and which demonstrates most clearly the rule of the dead hand. For when we find educated men and women holding to the belief in miracles, in virgin births, the doctrine of hell, with all the paraphernalia of contemporary religion, then we are fully warranted in saying that this is merely the uncivilised or less civilised past impressing itself upon the more civilised present. These beliefs are neither suggested by our experience nor verified by our observation; and one can safely predict that, given a generation of men and women armed with the weapons of modern knowledge and unacquainted with Christian beliefs, not one of them, if suddenly called upon to examine those beliefs, would consider them worthy of credence for a single moment.

It is a plain matter of observation that a people never originate their religious beliefs in the same sense that they originate their scientific or sociological opinions. True, one can trace a long ancestry for all our ideas; but in science we add something to the labors of our predecessors, even while discarding many of their ideas as untruthful. In religious matters, on the contrary, we seldom add, the usual task is to limit—that certainly has been the case during the past five centuries. The work of each generation has been to take something away from the stock of religious ideas they have inherited, until, as a result of this process, we see with advanced (?) Christians the Bible reduced to a mere fragment of a whole set of semitic traditions, inaccurate in science, history, and ethics, the doctrine of hell dismissed as a piece of unbearable barbarism, God Almighty reduced to a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something, of small



value either as use or ornament, and the whole fabric of Christianity brought perilously near the child's definition of a parable—"a heavenly story without any earthly meaning." In this manner we release ourselves to some extent from the rule of the dead, although how much its rule still lingers the most casual observation shows.

It is because our ancestors thought it necessary to maintain a priesthood that should act as an intermediary between them and the supernatural beings they believed to exist that we to-day withdraw an army of forty thousand men from all productive labor, burden the industry of the country with their maintenance, and thus perpetuate an order that must, if it wishes to exist, obstruct all movements that aim at a broadening of the nation's intellectual life. At the command of our ghostly rulers we pretend to guide our lives by a book nine-tenths of which is contradicted by our knowledge of the world and by our conduct in life. At their behest we read to our children Bible stories as though they were literal history, terrify their minds with the fear of an after life, or fill their heads with fears and fantasies that have to be painfully unlearned in after years. And if, finally, we ask why, upon the only day in the week, when working men and women can visit museums, art galleries, and libraries with minds and bodies free from the strain of their ordinary pursuits—why, upon the day when these institutions could be used to the best advantage, their doors are closed, we are referred first to the superstitions of the Christian creed, and ultimately to the remote period when it was believed that anything done on the day devoted to the gloomy Saturn would be bound to produce evil results. It is in the name of the dead past that one-seventh of the nation's intellectual life is to be immolated upon the altars of a degrading Asiatic superstition, this and the sordid interests of a professional priesthood striving to maintain its supremacy.

Could anything be more mentally and morally degrading than the recent attempt to prohibit certain Sunday concerts, that were admittedly of an unimpeachable character, on the ground of desecration of the Sabbath? Of course the clergy did not profess to make this move on purely religious grounds—the day has gone by for that—so it was made on behalf of the working man. It would eventually lead to people working seven days a week instead of the present five and a half. It is astonishing how solicitous the clergy are for the welfare of the working classes, and lamentable how perfectly unconscious the bulk of the latter are to the efforts of these kind friends. It has never been quite clear to me how, by creating a taste for music or reading, or developing the æsthetic faculties of a man, you would thereby awaken a desire for seven days' employment at iron melting, or coal heaving, or factory labor. To me it seems that it is only by such methods that you can ever raise the bulk of the people very far above their present level, and prevent them becoming the degraded tools of cunning and greed in the mad race for wealth. And I have always felt, further, that if the working man cannot be trusted with an opportunity for making Sunday a day of *real* recreation and education without allowing himself to be forced into seven days' labor a week, then he deserves to be made to work seven days a week and twenty-four hours a day.

But it was said people made money out of these concerts. I do not know how much truth there is in the statement, and do not care; but in any case I ask, Why not? Could money be made by anyone in a cleaner or better manner than in providing good music or pleasant entertainments for all who care to avail themselves of the opportunity? Do not the clergy make money on the Sunday? And how much of the money that comes into their possession from employers of labor or Stock Exchange speculators is made by methods as clean and as moral as those by which the promoters of Sunday concerts make theirs? Of course this cry is pure humbug. The clergy do not object to money being made on Sunday; all they object to is anybody making it but themselves. The sole aim of these Reverend Stiggenses and Uriah Heeps is to close all rival establishments on the day that theirs is open, knowing full well that in any fair competition their own miserable gospel of greed and gush would be bound to go under. The plea was pure hypocrisy; but the fact that it commanded the support of so many earnest and

honest people shows aptly enough the power the dead still wield over the living.

In brief, we need not look far afield to find evidence of the existence of this empire of the dead; and while, as I have said, its rule is not necessarily an evil one, it may easily become so unless wisely regulated. The great lesson for man to learn, and the one he finds it most difficult to master, is that, while each generation may have to deal with what are fundamentally the same problems, yet their precise form constantly varies, and consequently demands new solutions. In this respect the past is a valuable book for guidance, but it becomes nought but evil when we attempt to rule our lives by its decrees. Our debt to the past is truly a heavy one, but we are neither profiting by its experience nor fulfilling our duty to the present and the future in seeking to perpetuate its customs and ideas without reference to contemporary knowledge and requirements. It is the life of the present that demands our attention, the problems of to-day that are pressing for solution. And if these problems are to be satisfactorily and profitably solved, it can only be by trying all our ideas at the touchstone of modern knowledge, and testing all our institutions by their ability to develop a higher and nobler generation of human beings.

C. COHEN.

### "Sunday Reading."

It is Sunday afternoon—a climatically dismal day in town, whatever it may be in the happy Riviera, whither many fortunate folks have fled; a day of drizzling rain and murky atmosphere; unpleasantness without; semi-darkness within.

A heavy gloom oppressive hangs o'erhead  
Through Nature shedding influence malign.

Yet Melancholia, even with these favoring conditions, may not claim us entirely as its own. Cowper, a sufficiently sensitive subject, wrote: "At this season of the year, and in this gloomy, uncomfortable climate, it is not an easy matter for the owner of a mind like mine to divert it from sad subjects, and fix it upon such as may administer to its amusement." Nevertheless, though Cowper was, according to James Russell Lowell, the victim of "a dreadful creed distilled from the darkest moments of dyspeptic solitaires," he managed to survive with a fair amount of composure the severities and vagaries of our climate, and even wrote lines in praise of such winters as the capricious dispensation of Providence is pleased to accord us.

So this afternoon, with objurgations somewhat modified by these reflections, I take up a book nearest at hand, also certain periodicals, which together I think ought assuredly to afford some counteracting influence in the way of amusement. The book happens to be one of the successes of more than a few seasons ago—an extravagant piece of fiction, by F. Anstey, otherwise Guthrie, which still remains un eclipsed by the boastful "New Humor," and may be read twice or thrice with the same mirth-provoking results—if the intervals between the readings are sufficiently long. The periodicals are a number of Christian weeklies—(one is always, of course, able to read the *Freethinker*, in London at any rate, a day or two before the Sunday for which it is nominally dated). Here, with Mr. Anstey's novel and the Christian weeklies, there is surely a sufficiency alike of invented humor and of unconscious humor to while away a few hours on this very dismal day.

One of the first things I alight upon in *Vice Versa* is the author's description of the literature known and approved as "Sunday reading," and on which and with that title I notice Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly*, discourses in a new periodical just out. Mr. Anstey's observations constitute a little digression that he permits himself with a view to record his admiration of the kind of reading that, in addition to the Bible, is graciously allowed in religious family circles on the Lord's Day. He regards it as "an exceedingly happy form of compromise" peculiar to the British and, to a certain extent, the American nations. "It has many developments, ranging from the mild Transatlantic compound of cookery and camp-meetings to the semi-novel, redeemed and chastened by an arrangement



which sandwiches a sermon or a biblical lecture between each chapter of the story—a great convenience for the race of skippers. Then there are one or two illustrated magazines which it is always allowable to read on the Sabbath without fear of rebuke from the strictest, though it is not easy to see why. Open any one of the monthly numbers, and the chances are that you may possibly find at one part a neat little doctrinal essay by a literary bishop, and the rest of the contents will consist of nothing more serious than a paper upon "Cockroaches and their Habits" by an eminent savant, a description of foreign travel done in brilliant and wholly secular fashion; and, further on again, an article on æsthetic furniture; while the balance of the number will be devoted to instalments of two thrilling novels by popular authors whose theology is seldom their strongest point. Oddly enough, too, when these very novels come out later in three-volume form with the 'mark of the beast' in the shape of the circulating library ticket upon them, they will be fortunate if they are not interdicted by some of the serious families who take in magazines that are 'suitable for Sunday reading.'

After assimilating this, I turn to some of the religious literature, and find how closely these comments made some years ago are applicable to the "Sunday reading" of to-day. Apart from the monthly magazines, there is a swarm of religious weeklies, all apparently doing well—so well, indeed, as to be almost a reproach to Freethinkers, who do not seem always to realise, as Christians wisely do, the importance of supporting the particular and recognised organ of their views. These periodicals are handsomely helped on by subscriptions, advertisements, and, no doubt, by private subsidies; and, if their contents were not so weakly irrational, they might be a distinct power in the land. Some of them seem to be published chiefly in order to reproduce antiquated sermons by C. H. Spurgeon, who, however effective he may have been in the pulpit, is tiresome to read; and of that American preacher, De Witt Talmage, who, in all his outpourings, rarely, if ever, succeeds in saying a smart or sensible thing. Some of these periodicals are "adorned" with illustrations which are often hideous distortions; and there are columns of small paragraphs retailing stories of "infidel" confutations, conversions, death-beds, etc., nearly all of which are pure inventions. With singular similarity of taste, these journals exhibit their intense liking for the use of the word "infidel" applied as a term of reproach, forgetful of course that their Christian readers, and not honest unbelievers, are the "infidels," in the sense that they are faithless to the principles they profess. The conductors of these papers are probably not admirers of Oliver Wendell Holmes; otherwise one might commend to their notice an observation of that writer, one of the latest that he ever made: "There has been so great a change in the theological atmosphere that such abusive words as 'heretic' and 'infidel,' applied to persons who differ from the old standards of faith, are now chiefly interesting as a test of breeding, being seldom used by any people above the social half-caste line."

As to the sermons with which these religious weeklies are crammed—and especially as to the great Talmage's—they serve only to remind us of the caustic remark of Heine: "Christ rode on an ass, now the ass rides on Christ" to notoriety and wealth; and of Heine's commiseration with God on enjoying in these latter days "the homage only of fools."

Taking up Anstey's book again, I open it at the passage where poor Bultitude is in the pangs of a vain attempt to commit to memory a hymn—a distressing task imposed upon him by his irate schoolmaster. The amount of reverence entertained by the author for a certain class of hymns is not excessive. He mentions that, in the one given to Bultitude, "the rhymes 'join' and 'divine,' 'throne' and 'crown,' were so happily wedded that either might conform to the other—a graceful concession to individual taste, which is not unfrequent in this class of poetry."

"I do hate a hymn," said Jolland (one of the scholars); "what's the use of learning hymns? They won't mark you for them you know in any exam. I ever heard of, and it can't save you the expense of a hymn-book unless you learnt all the hymns in it, and that would take you years."

Which was a very sensible way of looking at it. *Apropos* of hymns, I find in one of the current religious

weeklies that a "specially attractive event" has recently happened in Devonshire at the old parish church of Broad Hembury. The vicar has unveiled a beautiful tablet to the memory of the Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, author of the old-fashioned hymn, "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me." This effusion, described on the memorial tablet as an "immortal hymn," was, it may be remembered, one of Mr. Gladstone's favorites, and was repeated at his bedside a few minutes before his death. Let us examine it. Here is a verse:—

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure—  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

What is there intrinsically "immortal" about this? I confess it has never struck me as being other than a badly-rhymed production with an absurd mixture of geological and dropsical imagery, sung to a drawling, droning tune. Poetic license, no doubt, makes great demands, which occasionally are allowable, especially in old-time compositions. But fancy rhyming "blood" with "flowed," and "cure" with "power." Such in-artistic stuff jars on the nerves. Regarded as blank verse, it is no better.

Taking, then, a general survey of the output of the religious press for "Sunday reading," it must be said, in spite of anything Dr. Robertson Nicoll asserts, that the major part of it is very poor stuff indeed, and is probably accountable, in no small degree, for the somnolence that usually marks the blessed Sabbath. Doubtless such literature is, in some respects, entertaining enough to Freethinkers who may chance upon it; but that is probably not the object for which it is printed.

FRANCIS NEALE

## Profane Parables.

### XLIII.—ATTRIBUTES.

At evenfall a man stood upon a hill. And before him lay the undulating plains, rich with the bounty of the sun; and beyond, an infinity of blue; and above, a sky of crimson tinged with gold, shining behind black mountains of rolling cloud. And the glory thereof moved him in its solemn silentness.

And the man saw infinite goodness in the spectacle; and he called it *God*.

Then the flamboyant orb sank sullenly within the sea, and the dark empire of Night began. And a great storm arose; and the piled-up vapors shot forth their livid shafts; and the silence was changed to tumult; and giant trees swayed and fell; and the mountain avalanches thundered as they sped. And the homes of the poor were laid waste that night, while the cries of frightened women mingled with the roar of the electric tempest.

And the man shuddered as he looked, for he perceived infinite cruelty in the spectacle. And he called it *Nature*.

### XLIV.—CONVERSION.

Some prison visitors were shown a convict who was incorrigibly vicious.

"Let us reclaim him," said they. "We will provide him with food and clothing and a weekly stipend."

"He has no mental fitness for honest occupation," said the chaplain. "What do you propose to make of him?"

"Oh, a converted infidel," replied the visitors significantly.

"But I don't think he *is* an infidel," said the chaplain.

And the visitors looked very indignant and coughed violently.

### XLV.—THANKSGIVING.

The marsh frogs were unhappy because the earth was dry, so they prayed for rain. And the windows of heaven were opened, and the rivers were swollen with flood.

"God is good," croaked the frogs.

But while they disported themselves certain hungry storks fell upon them and devoured them.

And the storks lifted up their heads to heaven in thankfulness.



## XLVI.—SALVATION.

The missionary reproached the felon with his sins.

"Y—es!" faltered the felon. "I am something given to the laxities."

"Thou art a moral viper!" said the missionary.

"Ah, kind sir," replied the felon, "do not think too hardly of me. I have a most marvellous firm faith in things unseen!"

"Thank God for that!" said the missionary.

## XLVII.—CUSTOM.

A bee lighted upon a sunflower.

"How happy am I," sang the sunflower. "Here bloom my youthful friends. Here lived my fathers, and here they died. Why do you ever leave us?"

"Well," said the bee, "the fact is—there are other gardens."

"I never heard of them," said the sunflower.

"Perhaps not," buzzed the bee, as he flew away.

"But then you are only a vegetable."

## XLVIII.—NATURE.

"How beautiful is nature!" sang the poet. "I love the genial sun, and the soft fragrance of the flowers, and the sapphire sky, and the empurpled clouds, and the towering hills, and the valleys of rich green."

"Ah!" cried the priest; "how it makes one think of God!"

"Eh?" said the poet.

E. R. W.

## Dod Grile.

THE reference to Ambrose Bierce in a recent issue of the *Freethinker* has induced several readers to apply for copies of his *Fiend's Delight*, which, with his *Nuggets and Dust*, are his two most amusing and blasphemous productions. From inquiries, I find that both are out of print in England, and probably also in America. There are such good things in both of these books that I venture to copy some of them for the new generation that knows not Dod Grile. Here is a gem on the soul: "A scientific religionist has advanced the theory that the soul remains dormant in the body after death, and only leaves it when the last particle is decayed. Our own theory is that it begins to leave as soon as decay sets in, and continues to remove by easy stages during the entire process of dissolution. Its departure is quite imperceptible to the eye, but quite apparent to the nose."

The next I will cite has reference to the Pope, and is as follows: "The report that the Pope has declined a throne of gold that somebody was good enough to present to him is of the kind of reports that are to be eagerly believed. It is like him. If we had been blindfolded, and asked, 'Who declined a golden throne?' we should have unhesitatingly replied, 'The Pope.'"

The next on prayer is not bad: "A clergyman says: 'There is something lacking in the intellectual or moral organisation of the man who lies down at night without saying a prayer.' Ah! at last the parson and the philosopher meet upon common ground, and clasp hands with a mutual respect. For we, also, plead guilty to an holy detestation and contempt for the man who can go to sleep at night without thanking God for not killing him since breakfast."

A prayer of Dod's is also worthy of reproduction, for, besides its almost inimitable humor, it has the merit of much truth: "O Lord, who, for the purpose of this supplication, we will assume to have created the heavens and the earth before man created Thee; and who, let us say, art from everlasting to everlasting, whatever the same may mean; we beseech Thee to turn Thy attention this way, and behold a set of the most abandoned rascals Thou hast ever had the pleasure of setting eyes on. We frankly admit, O Lord, that we are but worms wriggling in the dust. In addition to this, we confess ourselves a sweet lot of smooth-tongued hypocrites, with a goodly sprinkling of healthy sneaks; admit that our villainy is something phenomenal, and that we are capable of any inexpensive enormity. Not one of us has the hardihood to claim a single redeeming virtue. We were born so, and can't help it, and wouldn't if we could. But, in consideration of the fact that Thou sentest Thy only begotten son among us, and afforded us the felicity of murdering him, we would respectfully suggest the propriety of taking into heaven such of us as pay our Church dues, and giving us an eternity of exalted laziness and absolutely inconceivable fun. We ask this in the name of Thy son—whom we strung up as above stated. Amen."

R. FORDER.

*Vanity Fair* is responsible for the following school story:—Diocesan Inspector—"Now, can any of you boys tell me how lying is denounced in Scripture?" Intelligent Pupil—"Please, sir, yes, sir; I know. 'A lie is an abomination unto the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble.'"

## Acid Drops.

WEST HAM is still agitated over the *Freethinker* being taken in the Public Library. Many letters on the subject appear in the local *Herald*. Two good ones on the liberal side are signed W. Callow and William Smith. Some of the orthodox correspondents are disgustingly rabid. When all is said and done, it is obvious that they hate the *Freethinker* because it is anti-Christian. Of course they fling plenty of mud, but that is the manner of their kind. One of them refers to Mrs. Besant's teaching on marriage as "horrible and revolting." Another harks back to Mary Woolstonecraft, and what he calls her "moral decadence" through scepticism. Robert Southey, who was a devout Christian, spoke of her as "that sainted woman." But then he knew her character.

Catholics and Protestants agree for once at West Ham, and when they do agree their unanimity is naturally wonderful. Father Dooley is supported by the Cann Hall Baptist Church, which has passed a resolution about "the demoralising influence" of the *Freethinker*, and asked for its exclusion from the Public Library. The poor weak-kneed Christians who voted for this resolution are anxious about the "young and inexperienced" who are "not prepared to test the statements put forth in the name of Advanced Thought." Is it presumed that they *are* prepared to test the statements put forth by the enemies of Advanced Thought? The humbug of these bigots is transparent.

Some of our friends at West Ham ask us to prosecute the wretches who libel the *Freethinker*. Father Dooley, the gentleman who never saw a copy of it, continues to call it "filthy." Surely, a reader says, this is actionable. Of course it is. But what is the use of prosecuting? Is it likely that the Christians on a jury would give a verdict against one of their co-religionists for reviling an Atheist? We know them too well to believe it. We therefore keep our money—what little we have—in our pockets. We also manage to keep our temper. Freethought has always had to suffer calumny, and it always will as long as fanatical Christians exist.

The only effective reply to some of these orthodox scoundrels would be a good thrashing, but to administer it would be to sink for the moment to their contemptible level. The best way, after all, is to let the vermin squeak and spit. Sensible people, even amongst professed Christians, don't attach as much importance as is sometimes supposed to the malignant slaverings of these creatures.

The Peace Crusade meeting at Swansea was "disturbed" by a Mr. Dowsner, who said that the idea of putting an end to war was against the Bible, which told us that Christ was coming again, and that when he did come there would be wars such as had not happened in the history of the world. Christ would establish peace by "destroying the ungodly," and that was the only way it could ever be brought about. "Dissent and uproar" followed this pious statement. Evidently there is one Christian of the good old sort in Swansea.

The Bishop of Newcastle has been holding forth at Hexham on original sin—a matter on which a good many of the clergy are first-hand authorities. His lordship put in a plea for the personality of Satan as the great tempter, but he was good enough to say that the story of the serpent in the book of Genesis was "an allegory." Perhaps he will now say whether the farcical story of the temptation of Jesus was also an allegory.

The Aldershot School Board had a long and animated sitting recently. By a majority of one it was decided to teach the Creed in the schools, the Roman Catholic member helping the Church party to secure this victory. The Progressives hope for a majority at the next elections, when they will sweep the Creed out of the schools again. All the while the children are the *corpus vile* which the various parties of religious instruction practise their theories upon.

As if there were not already enough clownish tricks resorted to by revivalists, especially in America, we are told in the New York *Christian Advocate* of a revivalist who said: "I am going to have a crowd, if I have to announce that I will stand on my head in the pulpit in order to get it." The writer in that journal adds: "The mischief is, that few of those brought to a decision by these meretricious methods have persisted in their profession of religion."

An Evangelist, one Peter Atherton, of the Evangelist Church Association, Strand, has been fined at Leicester £2 and costs, or a month's imprisonment, for cruelty to a horse by working it whilst lame.

The German Kaiser says a mistake has been made in the Czar's war against war. So long as unredeemed sin prevails among mankind, says the Kaiser, so long will there be war, hatred, envy, discord, and a few other delightful things. Mr.



Engström had better offer His Imperial Majesty a place among his lecturers. Such bed-rock orthodoxy is rare nowadays, and an Emperor recruit would tone-up these rag-tag and bobtail evangelists.

Canon Venables thinks it a great grievance that the average man, when he goes to church, is compelled to kneel on his hat or to put it under his seat, where he wipes his feet upon it. A daily paper gravely remarks: "Clergymen would do well to look carefully into this latest scandal, which is slowly but surely undermining the Establishment."

The newspapers have recently been full of articles on Ritualism and the Catholic Revival. The Catholics evidently do not agree with the discussion of religious matters in the columns of newspapers. Of course! Inquiry is the unpardonable sin, the one never forgiven. Implicit faith and fearless inquiry have in all ages been enemies. Most Catholics would deem it profaneness and irreverence to call an ape an ape, if it but wore a monk's cowl on its head.

Pastor Chiniquy, who has just died at Montreal, and who for many years was a noted Protestant champion, thus describes an incident which exhibits Romish procedure in no unjust light:—"On one occasion I was preaching in a rich parish in Canada, and, after an address in the afternoon, was proceeding with the cure to the parsonage for supper. When half-way between the church and the parsonage we met a poor man, trembling and miserable, covered with rags. He said to the priest: 'Mr. Priest, my wife died, you know, some days ago, and she is in purgatory, and will you please sing five masses to save her soul from those flames?' The priest replied: 'Yes; but you must give me twenty-five shillings.' 'Sir,' said the poor man, 'you know that I have not a cent.' 'But you cannot have masses without money,' said the priest. 'As I passed your house I saw a sucking-pig; give me that, and I will say a high mass.' I was so disgusted that I left the priest and the man and went my way."

A church in London still possesses an income originally given to it for the purpose of buying fagots for burning heretics.

A special piece of clerical tyranny has just been exposed. The *Morning Leader* first published details of the matter, and now the *Church Gazette* gives publicity to the facts with comments. This is what that paper says: "Lady Northwick is a liberal person, in both senses of the term. Her truly laudable desire has been to found a Working Men's Institute for Blockley, in Worcestershire, for the benefit of all, without any distinction as to politics or creed." A really sensible and worthy object.

"In its inception the project was stultified by a demand from the vicar that baptism should be a condition of membership of the proposed institution; although it might have been thought that persons who were unfortunately not baptised might have shared in the temporal benefits. But at length such narrow objections were apparently overcome, and the work of building, etc., went on, of course at the expense of the liberal Lady Northwick."

"As soon as it was completed, something rather queer happened; the vicar, the Rev. Edward S. Houghton, announced his intention of renewing the test as to baptism! The result is not yet known. But once more we ask, When will parsons have some common sense? And in this case we may add, some sense of fair dealing!"

The master bakers are marching with the times. They have started a "crusade against hot cross buns." Their Protection Society held a meeting the other day at the Holborn Restaurant and decided that these articles were "most indigestible, their consumption was against the public health, and their manufacture was the cause of much overwork for the journeymen." So this symbolic Christian food, like Christian doctrine, seems in a fair way to be abandoned—as indigestible.

The "tune poet" of the *Evening News* has sung the dirge of the Good Friday lump of indigestion. Here is a verse:—

For, oh, it has a subtle charm,  
Which never yet has been defined;  
It does the constitution harm,  
Appealing only to the mind;  
It lieth heavy, cold and dead,  
Upon the chest of every one;  
But none the less, when all is said,  
It still remains—a hot cross bun.

Lady Wimborne stated, in the course of the Ritualistic controversy, that a donkey was introduced into a church procession at Bournemouth. Great horror and many denials have followed from Churchmen. A sidesman at the church in question has been interviewed. He says: "I never saw a donkey in the church, and I know for a fact that one has

never been inside it." What, never? Well, of course, the poor man was only thinking of quadrupeds.

But why all this horror of a donkey figuring in a religious procession? What about Christ's entry into Jerusalem on an ass? It is not clear whether he did not even ride on two—like a circus rider. The Gospel narrative says: "And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them. And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they sat him thereon" (Matt. xxi. 7-8).

Says the *Church Gazette*: "We wonder when parsons will come to have a little sense." We have wondered about this a long time, many years before the *Church Gazette* was started. By the way, some of the old, stupid, staid Church journals speak rather disparagingly of the *Church Gazette* as "our youthful contemporary." Certainly, it is youthful, and has all the vigor of youth, and is the brightest and best of the Church journals going at the present time. Its great recommendation is that it is not afraid of speaking out.

It has, for instance, some notes on a vicar in the North "who seems to have sacraments on his brains and his nerves." This idiotic person seems to have come to the conclusion that his bellringers were not as holy as they might be. He comes down on them suddenly, and insists that they must be communicants. They struck, and the bells are now silent. He tried the same thing with the choir, with the same results. "So now the old organ does its best to keep up appearances, along with a stray voice here and there."

Asking for bread, he received a stone. On several occasions the Rev. George Paton, vicar of St. Paul's Church, Ramsay, has had to complain of individuals putting stones and buttons in the collection bags. He says it is an insult to God, but it is probably a want of appreciation of his own performances. One would have to hear the Rev. Paton before deciding that he was unjustly appraised. The gift of buttons may be an indication that his hearers think him "a button short."

"She dearly loved the clergy" was the observation of a married woman who kissed a curate in his surplice. According to revelations in the law courts, it has happened that this kind of thing has been reversed in regard to the respective parties. The only explanation that can be afforded of the conduct of the lady in the present case is that she was either spirituously drunk—or spirituously "off her balance," as were the ladies who hung round the neck of the lately deceased ex-Rev. Prince, otherwise "the Beloved."

In the asinine fashion common to his order, the Rev. W. P. Hurrell has been creating trouble in connection with his St. James's Schools, Northampton. To bolster him up, a memorial has been sent to the Education Department by about thirty alleged Nonconformist parents of scholars at these schools. The memorial expresses "great satisfaction with local clerical authorities and affairs," and states that the memorialists' children have never suffered any disadvantage or disability by reason of their Nonconformity.

But the Education League have examined this memorial, and find that some of the signatories are actually not Nonconformists; some have never had any children, and some send what children they have to other schools! What price the Rev. Hurrell now?

"A Secularist lecturer," says the *Christian World*, "recently announced as the subject of a discourse 'Does God Make Man or Man Make God?' We should say at once 'Both,' and be rid of our Secularist." Quite a brilliant flash of wit on the part of the *Christian World*. It is only lacking in intelligibility. The sapient writer must surely be a descendant of that clear-headed Irish orator who said: "It is alleged against the Committee that one-half of them do the work, and the other half do nothing at all. But I assure you that this is not true; it is quite the reverse!"

A man of God who has been acting as curate-in-charge of the parish of Sevington, Kent, and whose name is the Rev. David Davies, seems to have been having a "high old time" in that locality. He entered the police superintendent's office at Ashford in a very drunken condition, and with a bottle of whisky in his pocket. He said he had been robbed of £2,000 in the streets, and as he would not leave the office he was ejected. Outside he caused a disturbance, and was arrested. He was now fined 7s. 6d.

Sheriff Boyd, of Glasgow, says that "excessive Bible reading is just as much a dissipation as excessive novel reading." He had before him a man charged with cruelly neglecting his children. This person, it seems, never attempted to get work, saying that he was persecuted because he preached the Gospel of God. For the past two months his wife had supported him and the children, while he sat at home and read the Bible. Asked if he wished to make a statement on oath, he said the Bible commanded "Swear not at all." He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but kept up his



character to the last by shaking the dust of the Court from off his feet as he left the dock.

Having relinquished the stage for the Salvation Army platform, Miss Ada Ward, of course, has nothing very complimentary to say of the members of her late profession. Some reflections she recently made at a series of meetings at Portsmouth have been indignantly resented, artists who attended objecting particularly to being termed "dear brothers and sisters of the profession." It is curious how "cracked" some people become immediately after conversion.

Fancy leaving £1,000 for the free distribution of Spurgeon's sermons, as if there were not already many more copies of his discourses in circulation than are ever likely to be read. No wonder the relatives opposed the probate. It is satisfactory to know that they have, at least, prevented two-thirds of the amount from being thus thrown away.

Sabbatarians, wake up! Here is another chance for a howl. The Middlesex Rifle Association have passed a resolution expressing the opinion that rifle shooting on Sundays should be permitted at the Bisley ranges during the summer.

The *Country Gentleman* says the following announcement was made by a Somerset parish clerk: "Plaze take notice that on Zunday next there will be no Zunday, as master be a-gwain fishing with another gentleman."

What is the English equivalent of "Incredulo"? The *Catholic Times* has rendered it "Atheist," thereby laying itself open to correction. It seems that, a little time ago, the *Salesian Bulletin* gave an account of a visit which was once made to Don Bosco by Victor Hugo. The Roman Catholic journal, translating the narrative, said: "The poet represented himself as an Atheist, but, on leaving, said he would reflect upon the words of Don Bosco, who had been arguing on the immortality of the soul." Seeing this reproduction, the *Salesian Bulletin* complains of being made to apply the name of "Atheist" to Victor Hugo. And now the *Catholic Times* has compared its translation with the Italian original, and finds that the word "Incredulo," which occurs twice in the latter, has been "somewhat superabundantly rendered into English by the word 'Atheist,' when 'Unbeliever' or 'Freethinker' would have been a more exact translation."

The error, however, is very similar to that which is often made by Christian advocates who speak of Voltaire and Paine as Atheists, when the slightest acquaintance with their works would show that they were believers in God. The translator in the above case could have known very little about Hugo to have made so astonishing a blunder.

If a Freethought leader had dropped down dead whilst officiating at the funeral of a brother Freethinker, when would the religious world have ceased to talk about it? The tragic end of Dr. Berry, who died whilst praying at a funeral service at Bilston, seems to have no moral for Christian people, except the very worldly one that, being ill, he should have refrained from public work, and any kind of excitement.

"An act of God" is not accepted as a valid plea at the Marylebone Police Court. A carman was summoned there for failing to exhibit a light in his vehicle. He pleaded that it had been blown out by the wind, and that this was an "act of God," for which he could not be held responsible. The stipendiary, of course, could not fine the Deity, so he fined the carman, and recommended him to get a lamp which would resist the vagaries of the winds of heaven.

The Bishop of Manchester has been thanking Almighty God for the work done by the Religious Tract Society. If the Almighty has anything to do with the publications of that Society, it is a pity he does not inspire them with a little more accuracy and common sense. The Bishop suggests that "in these modern times, when the Word of God is attacked by all the weapons of infidelity," such publications as the *Leisure Hour* and the *Sunday at Home* should be more vigorously pushed. It is really too bad of him to point out a way in which we can be so easily overthrown.

The latest example of "Christian Science" folly is furnished by the conduct of the family of Judge J. W. Eller, in Omaha. The judge, his wife, and two of their relatives were severely burned a few days ago by the explosion of a gasoline stove. No physician was called, the family relying exclusively upon the prayers of two "Christian Science" healers. The unfortunate woman died; and then her husband, himself in a precarious condition, declared that his faith in the efficacy of the "healers'" prayers had not been shaken!

There is only one town in which the singing of music-hall songs in the streets is prohibited. That is Southampton, and the prohibition extends only to Sundays. It does not appear from the paragraph from which we take this announcement whether hymn-singing in the streets is prohibited.

There is enough of it in the thoroughfares of other towns on Sundays in the summer, not to mention Salvation Army brass bands and big drums. Here the police seem quite prepared to resignedly exclaim: "Let 'em all come!"

The Rev. George Williams, vicar of Trefonen, near Oswestry, must be an eloquent and entrancing preacher. The other Sunday he found it necessary to give notice that persons wishing to read whilst he was preaching should retire during the singing of the hymn before the sermon. Apparently, folks who were simply inclined to go to sleep might remain.

During the present "crisis in the Church" many plain home-truths are being spoken. Lord Grimthorpe writes of the northern primate as one "who invents wholly illegal services for sham holy days whenever he likes." The Ritualists have taken to speak of the Church Association as the "Church Ass."

The military authorities have sanctioned the opening of a room at Aldershot in which the Soldiers' Christian Association may pray to the Prince of Peace and learn how to "turn the other cheek" to the smiter.

The Rev. Dr. Moses, of Richmond, Virginia, once ran a blockade in the War of Secession with 300,000 Bibles. He has had his reward. The Lord recently let an electric street-car run over him and kill him.

"Tatcho" is said to make the hair grow; but, according to a superstition in some parts of Bucks and Bedford, having babies christened by the clergyman makes them grow bodily, hair and all. We have a shrewd suspicion as to who had a hand in starting that delusion.

Being otherwise engaged, probably with the "Crisis in the Church," Providence let a snow-slide on the Canadian Pacific line near Roger's Pass entomb seven railway men, all of whom are believed to have been killed.

At Cologne there is enshrined a branch of the staff of Moses, a vessel from the marriage with Cana, and earth from the spot where the angel announced to Mary the birth of Jesus. The cathedral, however, has recently come into possession of a relic of the first order, an arm of St. Andrew, which had mysteriously disappeared, and is now miraculously recovered. It is intended to organise a great pilgrimage from all parts of Germany to view the relic. And this is, observes the *Echo*, the nineteenth century!

The Rev. R. Wilberforce Starr, formerly a Wesleyan minister, has committed suicide in Leeds by hanging himself. The *Christian World* says: "His admirers had marked a high place in British Methodism for him." The high place he marked for himself seems to have been a few feet from the floor.

The Rev. John Grainger, Roman Catholic priest, has died worth £23,652. It was too much, of course, to expect him to sell all and give to the poor; but he hoped, somehow or other, to wriggle into heaven, and with that object has left £265 for masses for his soul.

The curate in a South London church last Sunday was preaching his farewell sermon. When he had finished and said his ecclesiastical "good-bye," the vicar said "Now let us sing," giving out "The strain upraise of joy and praise."

The *Christian World* draws attention to two proverbs in what it describes as the "so-called Second Epistle of Peter." That description is good to commence with. Then this journal proceeds to point out that a German scholar, Dr. Paul Wendlahd, has traced the sayings to an obscure philosopher of Ephesus, who flourished about 600 B.C. It adds: "It is interesting to find a minute fragment of early Greek wisdom in the New Testament." It might have said that it is interesting to find a minute fragment of any kind of wisdom in that much-belauded book. The discovery, of course, is not impossible, but it takes some weary searching.

The *Record* is very wrath with some parts of a recently-published work called *God's Gentleman*, by the Rev. R. E. Welsh, M.A. It declines to accept his description of the Y. M. C. A. man as "a stockish and lack-lustre creature," and does not see why that individual should be pilloried as "anemic, insipid, naively thin, and with scarcely imagination and spirit enough to be bad."

"General" Booth will be seventy years of age in April next. Bramwell Booth thinks the occasion should be marked by a big achievement in work. Amongst other things, he wants £70,000 to be raised. All the glory is to be "laid at God's feet." The £70,000 is to be "placed in the General's hands." An agreeable allocation, thoroughly characteristic of the Salvation Army.



Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 12, Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow : 11.30, " True Religion Up to Date ; or, the New Free Churches' Catechism " ; 2.30, " Christianity and War " ; 6.30, " Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts."

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.

C. HUGHES.—We believe Mr. Joseph McCabe is still living at Leicester, and that a letter addressed to him at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, would find him. Unfortunately, what you suggested was impossible. We wish it had been otherwise. Mr. Foote is more than willing to come down and speak at West Ham, but there seems to be great difficulty in obtaining a hall. He was asked to come to-day (Feb. 12), but could not set aside his Glasgow engagement.

S. FRENCH.—Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on " Superstition " is published this week at Mr. Forder's, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. See advertisement on another page.

G. W. BLYTHE.—We don't agree with it a bit. The " cat " is degrading under any circumstances. When you say that those who show no pity should get none, you are proceeding upon the principle of personal vengeance, whether you know it or not. The question must be discussed on other grounds—grounds of social science and social welfare.

C. COHEN writes that he has sent two copies of the *Age of Reason*, supplied by Mr. George Anderson, to the Library of Toynbee Hall, and that the Committee have acknowledged the receipt of same with thanks.

J. G. FISHER.—Any sort of help is welcome.

A. HURCUM.—Your letter is interesting. Bigotry and priestcraft are the same everywhere. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay Cardiff another visit one of these days.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—You will hear in time.

JOHN GRAHAM (Wigan).—Pray attend to this. Your lecture notice must be written on a separate slip of paper, and be modelled on the items in our weekly list.

W. H. MORRISH.—Pleased to know you " greatly admired " our article on the Peculiar People, as we always reckoned you a good judge in such matters. Your couple of hundred copies are sure to be judiciously circulated. We are writing you on the other matter you mention.

P. SABINE.—It is good news that you have already enrolled thirty members for the new Branch at Peckham, and that the members' forms are being sent on to Miss Vance. Mr. Foote will certainly come down and lecture if you can obtain a suitable hall. We note the other point you refer to. You will understand why we say nothing.

M. E. PEGG.—Date booked for Manchester.

ABRACADABRA.—Thanks. Will appear in our next.

T. MACLEISH.—Glad to hear that some progress is being made at Dundee. Keep pegging away. It is quite right to keep our movement free from such entanglements. Freethinkers may belong to this or that social movement individually, but they must not be allowed to commit Secularism to their particular views and inclinations. Pleased to know that the Dundee friends cordially approve our articles on the Peculiar People and the Birmingham Scandal.

T. HIBBOTT.—Mr. Foote will see that you are proposed as a member of the Secular Society, Limited, at the next Directors' Meeting. The splenetic criticism you allude to was beneath our notice. Of course, the Secular Incorporation will not succeed in five minutes. It will take time, but it will win its way in the end.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Obituary inserted. We have read your copy of the address at the grave with pleasure. Sorry we are unable to find room for it in the *Freethinker*.

H. PERCY WARD.—Thanks. We reserve the *Catholic News* for next week.

JOSEPH ALLEN.—Regret we cannot use it.

A. SCOT.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Always glad to receive your packet.

T. WILMOT.—Date booked. Subject in due course.

WALTER WILLIAMS.—It shall be seen to.

R. P. EDWARDS desires us to announce that he and Mr. Heaford are endeavoring to resuscitate the Battersea Branch. Bills are printed calling a meeting at the Park Gates to-day (Feb. 12) at 11.30. Mr. Edwards said he hopes to get the Branch in working order by the end of March.

A. B. MOSS has changed his address from 44 to 46 Credon-road, S.E.

A. G. HANN.—Sorry you have taken so much trouble over such a poor creature as Reader Harris. He may be all right at the bar, but in theology he is simply childish. Mr. Cohen's article on " The Tyranny of Speech " deserves your compliments.

J. TITHERINGTON.—Excellent sentiments, but the verse wants much revision.

LETTERS addressed to the following members of the Secular Society, Limited, as per address-book, have been returned through the Post Office :—Messrs. Thomas Harrison, W. Cox, F. Symonds, R. Taylor. Miss Vance (Secretary) would be glad to receive corrected addresses.

J. PARTRIDGE, secretary, N. S. S. Birmingham Branch, writes :— " On every hand nothing but praise was heard for your splendid efforts on Sunday. We were all delighted to see you in such grand form, and sincerely hope the strain has not had any ill effects on your health. Committee beg to acknowledge with all thanks the prompt manner you undertook to come down, and nothing can exceed the admiration of the way in which you handled our case and administered to the bigots their deserts."

W. COX (Liverpool).—You would have looked in vain at the Birmingham papers, with the exception of the *Argus*, for news of Sunday's meetings. After giving the fullest publicity to the attacks on the Secularists, the other papers boycott their defence. It is a fine comment on journalistic gush about " the freedom and independence of our great city." Glad to hear the Branch is making headway at Liverpool, in spite of all difficulties.

OLD SECULARIST.—The Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills is still circulating briskly. A third supply will probably be required. Mr. Forder and Miss Vance have charge of all the copies printed, and will eventually account for them to the Secular Society, Limited.

A. J. HOOPER.—Thanks for the notice.

RECEIVED.—Birmingham Daily Argus—Aldershot News—Newcastle Daily Leader—Christian World—Open Court—Sydney Bulletin—Two Worlds—Ethical World—Progressive Thinker—West Ham Herald—Flaming Sword—New York Truthseeker—Westminster Gazette—West Ham Express—Isle of Man Times—Blue Grass Blade—Crescent—West Ham Advertiser—New York People—Liverpool Review—Freidenker—South Wales Daily News—Free Society—Leeds Daily News—New Century—Der Arme Teufel—Torch of Reason—Huddersfield Examiner—Secular Thought—Manchester Guardian—Humanity—The Zoophilist.

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

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

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

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.

MR. FOOTE runs down to Glasgow to deliver three lectures there to-day (Feb. 12) in the Brunswick-street Lecture Hall for the Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society. He returns to London on Monday. Eight hundred miles' travelling and three lectures in about forty-eight hours make pretty stiff work. On the following Sunday the Athenæum Hall platform will see Mr. Foote again. He will deliver a special course of lectures there.

Sunday was a red-letter day with the Birmingham Secularists. Being driven by bigots out of their old meeting-place at the Bristol-street Board school, they had engaged the Royal English Circus, in Corporation-street, for a special visit by Mr. Foote, who threw up his London engagement in order to go down and help them in their emergency. Like most circuses, this one is a wilderness; and, in the absence of heating apparatus, a little warmth was supplied by lighted gas and by two great kettle-fires kept burning on either side of the horse-ring. Unfortunately, the weather was very inclement. Snow had fallen and made the streets positively beastly, and the air was raw and foggy. Nevertheless, the Secularists and their friends and sympathisers gathered in strong force. The morning meeting was a most promising one, the afternoon's was still better, and in the evening there was a splendid and enthusiastic assembly to hear the lecture on " Freethought and the Birmingham School Board." Mr. Ridgway occupied the chair then, as Mr. Cattell and Mr. Percy Ward had occupied it in the morning and afternoon.

There was no mistaking the sentiment of the audience when Mr. Foote stepped upon the improvised platform in the morning. Tremendous and prolonged applause seemed to say : " We have got this building to meet in after all; here is the President of the National Secular Society amongst us, and we are going to have a good day, in spite of all the bigots in Birmingham." And they had a good day. It was heavy work for Mr. Foote, but he got through it without catching a cold, although he contracted a little hoarseness. He had to keep on his overcoat until he rose to speak, and put it on again as soon as he had finished. Somehow the taking off of that coat tickled the people immensely. Perhaps it suggested business. Anyhow they laughed and cheered each time.



Mr. Foote let himself go for all he was worth in the evening, and the scene was one of extraordinary animation. Every hit against the bigoted majority on the School Board told; every point in favor of the Secularists was caught up and applauded to the echo; and the hurricane of cheers at the close of the impassioned peroration was worth a journey to hear. Of course discussion was invited as usual, and one man rose and made a tedious defence of the School Board. He talked about liberty and license; but as he went along it was evident that liberty and license were only terms for his own likes and dislikes. He was listened to with wonderful patience, for it turned out that nobody agreed with him. A gentleman in the gallery jumped up and said the meeting ought not to separate without passing a resolution of protest against the action of the School Board. This suggestion caught on immediately. The resolution was proposed, seconded, and put to the vote, in less than sixty seconds. A forest of hands went up for it. "To the contrary!" cried the chairman, who looked all round for a dissident. At last he spied one. A single hand was held up against the resolution—that of the prosy speaker aforesaid. "Carried, with one dissident!" shouted Chairman Ridgway. Whereupon all those hundreds of people went wild for a minute. Men waved hats and women waved handkerchiefs. They said it was like the old times when Bradlaugh was appealing to the people against the bigots who barred his way to the House of Commons.

Sunday is over and gone. The Birmingham Secularists have had their red-letter day of protest and defiance. So far so good. But what will they do now? That question was asked at the evening meeting in the Circus, but it could not be answered there and then. The local Branch committee is trying hard to obtain a suitable place for Sunday meetings. It is also discussing the immediate future from every point of view. Mr. Foote will help as far as he can with advice and co-operation, and if necessary he will appeal to outside Free-thinkers to assist their persecuted brethren at Birmingham. They have fought gallantly, and they deserve support in their battle against tremendous odds.

A good and fair report of Mr. Foote's evening lecture appeared in Monday's *Daily Argus*. The "large gathering" is duly noted; also the resolution strongly condemning the action of the School Board that was "carried with only one dissident." Naturally the passage is given in which Mr. Foote praised the *Argus* for "standing up for justice and fair play to every section of the community in Birmingham." We are also glad to see the passage quoted in which the Bishop of Coventry was reminded that there were hundreds of texts in the Bible which he dared not read out to a mixed congregation, unless he was prepared to see all the women leave the church and find all the men waiting for him outside.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, and found "great acceptance," as they say in religious circles. This evening the platform will be occupied by Mr. William Heaford, who lectures on "Miracles and Medicine." He should have a large audience and a hearty reception.

Mr. F. J. Gould has accepted the post of organising secretary to the Leicester Secular Society, in succession to Mr. Joseph McCabe, who prefers to devote himself exclusively to lecturing and writing. Mr. Gould seems admirably qualified for the work he has now undertaken. It will, we hope, leave him some time for literary labor, and his bright articles will always be welcome in the *Freethinker*.

The Moral Instruction League holds a public meeting on Monday evening (Feb. 13) at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, E.C. The chair to be taken at eight o'clock: admission free. Amongst the speakers are Mr. H. H. Quilter, Mrs. C. E. Schwann, Mr. J. M. Robertson, and Mr. Harry Snell.

Owing to illness in the family, Mr. Sterry was unable to give his lecture on "A Freethinker's View of the Life of Christ," on Sunday at Yarmouth. J. W. de Caux, Esq., J.P., ably filled the gap by reading Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, "Difficulties of Belief," supported by Messrs. Smith, Forder, and Headley. The question of the Colonel's visit to England was mentioned; there was a strong feeling for arranging a lecture by him in East Anglia, at either Yarmouth or Norwich.

We understand that a mass meeting will be held outside the "Gates," Stratford Station, on Saturday (Feb. 11), at 12 noon, to demand fair play towards the *Freethinker*. Alderman Athey will preside. Mr. Foote would have been happy to attend, but he has to travel to Glasgow. We have asked Messrs. Moss and Heaford to go and speak, and perhaps one of them will be able to do so.

Mr. Watts informs us that at the time of his writing, January 27, he was filling a three weeks' engagement in

Toronto, Canada. Next week he has promised to send some more jottings in reference to his American trip. His health keeps good, and up to date the weather in Canada was pleasant, not too cold, slight snow with brilliant sunshine. Mr. Watts sends hearty greetings to all his English friends.

Dr. J. H. Bridges, writing in the *Positivist Review* on "Christianity and Peace," notes sarcastically "how very short a way the teaching of the Gospels will carry us in the practical conduct of life." During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, he says, Christianity was the direct stimulant of wars. Since then, whatever its ethical influence, it has been politically powerless "except for purposes of reaction and discord." "Alternately flattering socialist dreams and fomenting anti-republican conspiracies, it shows itself equally hostile to order and progress."

Professor Beesly, the distinguished Positivist, declines to join Mr. Stead's "Peace Crusade." He tells this romantic—some would say *hysterical*—apostle of the Czar's Love-Feast that he has done his best to stimulate the craze of Imperialism in its worst forms. "You are doing positive mischief by your Peace Crusade," Professor Beesly adds, "because you are diverting the attention of ignorant sentimental people from the real causes of war."

Mr. Malcolm Quin, another Positivist, and head of the Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has also declined to join this Peace Crusade for similar reasons. He has just issued the third of his "Political Tracts" in the form of a letter to Earl Grey, who presided over Mr. Stead's meeting in the Tyneside capital. Mr. Quin hopes nothing from "a transitory movement of vague enthusiasm," especially when the enthusiasts give their sanction to a policy which is "too often flagrantly inconsistent with any intelligible purpose of peace." He turns away from public men who profess a platonic respect for the Czar's rescript, and at the same time are "actively feeding the fires of international hatred and strife."

The *Outlook*, in acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Foote's *Book of God*, says it "evidently contains more Higher Criticism." Of course it does. It carries the Higher Criticism to its final altitude, which is absolute Rationalism. We look forward with some interest to seeing what some journals, particularly the religious ones, will say about this volume. Perhaps they will prefer to say nothing, as the safest course.

Mr. Cohen visits Dundee on Sunday, February 12, and lectures three times under the auspices of the local Freethought Society. The Society has secured the Plumbers' Hall, Wellgate, for these lectures, and the committee hope to see a good muster of "saints" at each meeting. Friends in Monifeith, Carnoustie, and Broughty Ferry are also invited to be present. The hall is only a few minutes' walk from the East Station, and is, therefore, conveniently situated for visitors from these places. Freethought literature will be on sale at the meetings, and Mr. John Bowman will be glad to take orders for any publications that do not appear on the stall.

Mr. Cohen, being away from London, is unable to reply to Dr. Keeling until next week. We hope the two disputants will narrow down the issue between them as far as possible.

Amongst those who are remembering the Secular Society, Limited, in their wills is a veteran who was a strong admirer and supporter of Charles Bradlaugh. He bequeaths a hundred pounds to the Society, and wishes it was a thousand. He hopes that many others will do likewise, and that the Society will soon be well supplied with funds. "I have no objection," he writes, "to your mentioning the bequest in the *Freethinker*, but you need not give my name. There are many Freethinkers here, but scarcely one that can afford to speak out." He adds that it cannot be very long before the Society gets *his* legacy, for he is already eighty years of age. No doubt the average Christian would be astonished at the spectacle of a Freethinker facing death in this cheerful fashion.

### How to Help Us.

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



## One by One.

I HAVE the heartache sometimes. The pain is acute when I think of the men who ought, but do not, serve in our ranks. Just now I am suffering from a severe attack of this distressful malady. My thoughts involuntarily go out to a gifted worker in the camp of the enemy, one who has not yet passed through his twenties. He is a Nonconformist minister of more than ordinary breadth of view, and, as is the case with all such, his mental position is best described as chaotic.

I first made the acquaintance of the object of my thoughts about four years ago. It was at the outset of his ministerial career, when even he himself was not quite sure whether his title to the prefix of "Reverend" was valid or not. He was assistant pastor of a church in the town where I then resided. At that time his attitude towards the sacred book of the Christians was one of peculiar nonchalance. Frequently, with a tone of flippancy, he has referred to it in my hearing as "the H. B." His pulpit comments thereon were also at times most unguarded. I have indeed a lively recollection of an incident which occurred during the delivery of one of his Sunday morning sermons. His remarks so scandalised one elderly deacon, who occupied a front bench, that he ostentatiously rose in his place, and deliberately quitted the chapel. Those days are gone by, and my friend is now settled in a pastorate of his own. We are sundered by more than a hundred miles, and our intercourse is mainly restricted to letter writing. I do not know whether he ever refers to the inspired volume as "the H. B." in these days. Certainly in his epistles it is a style he has dropped. Probably he reflects that a mode of speech admissible in an embryo parson would be indecorous in a full-blown "reverend."

Of course, my friend is a Theist; but his theory of God is nebulous to the last extreme. I have never heard him venture upon anything more definite than that "God is the moral ideal of the soul." But the astounding feature in the belief of this unconventional cleric is that he does not claim, after the manner of the great bulk of Protestant Christians, to have found God by searching in his revealed Word. He asserts that he has discovered God through the study of philosophy. It does not seem to have occurred to my friend that this is a meagre gospel to carry to men and women who, by reason of lack of leisure or other causes, are precluded from the luxurious pastime of wading through the pages of philosophy. It is, moreover, an unsatisfactory explanation to offer to those who for many years have been devoted students of philosophy, and yet have found therein no God. Of such the name is legion.

My friend's Christianity is of an equally misty type. The supernatural element he rejects for the most part, although he once naively wrote me: "I do not say I disbelieve all the miracles." His interpretation of the teaching of Jesus inclines very much to the Tolstoyan standpoint. He is also prone to pulpitise on the "Back to Jesus" plea; and, at the same time, with charming inconsistency, he professes to be a convinced evolutionist.

This heterodox parson is, on all social questions, a sound Progressive. He is an outspoken land-nationaliser, an ardent republican, a strenuous peace advocate, and an enthusiastic poor law reformer. He is a sturdy opponent of the Establishment and other religious inequalities, and is true to the core on all labor movements.

Of my friend's personal qualities I speak with hesitation. I should not like to embarrass him, and it might do so if this article should be brought under his notice. I can only say that as a man he is winsome and attractive; as a speaker he is eloquent and inspiring; as a worker he is indefatigable and possessed of limitless stores of energy.

It has been my endeavor to faithfully outline the position of this modern disciple of Jesus Christ. We, as onlookers, naturally find it difficult to comprehend what such a man conceives to be his business within the pale of official Christianity. It is pertinent to ask for the ground common to his cloudy Theism and the every-day belief in a personal God current in Christian societies? Where is the link which unites his lofty conception of Jesus to the "blood-filled fountain" and other sanguinary

twaddle of popular Christology? There is a further question which we may put with even more appositeness. Where is the point of contact between the *ideals* of such a man and the *ideals* of any branch of the Christian Church? It is not too much to say that his beliefs, his doctrines, his aspirations, his ideals, are directly opposed to those of any conforming or nonconforming sect.

It is indeed at this point that we arrive at the gist of the whole matter. *For all essential purposes the ideals of my friend are our ideals.* The feat he attempts is, without doubt, an impossible one. His sympathies are with us, but his labors—though not willingly—help to defend the ramparts of the adversary. He cannot fight our battle whilst he remains in the camp of the enemy. No man can serve two masters, and he who essays the task accomplishes but the ruin of his own life-mission.

My friend stands as a type—advanced, perhaps—of a considerable and growing class of laborers in the Christian vineyard. And the pain surges again in my heart with bitter throbs when I think upon the magnitude of the misdirected energy which this class represents. Here are priceless lives being wasted. Here are men and women who have allied themselves with an institution which makes against all their ideals. I have, however, more than a suspicion that, in the lives of all such, there come moments when they are partially conscious of the truth of these allegations.

One of the most urgent questions which confronts the Freethinker is the right method of dealing with paralogists of this order. It is important to remember that they are men who have a claim upon our sympathy. They have, without an exception, discovered that there is no power in conventional Christianity which can redeem the earth. We shall invariably find that they are men of great ideals and sterling purpose. They have at least been staggered by the apathetic attitude of professing Christians towards social reform. My friend, upon one occasion, went so far as to write bluntly: "The Churches believe in MONEY—first and foremost." This, it should be noted, is the verdict, not of an avowed sceptic, but of an accredited Nonconformist minister. Men such as he recognise at heart that modern Christianity is a ghastly imposture. It is this identical knowledge which drives them despairingly to seek shelter in that last ditch cleft "Back to Jesus." Their aim is admirable, but their error is pitiable. They desire the welfare of humanity, but they perceive not that this comes alone by the steady forward movement of the hands upon the dial. They apprehend not that reversal spells ruin.

But we must not rest content with imparting our sympathy. These men demand strenuous effort, for they are well worth our winning. Worth our winning! We cannot, indeed, bear the cost of their loss. We cannot afford that they should be swallowed in the vortex of conventionality and inanity. We *must* win them. Willing or not willing, it is imperative we should force upon their understandings that this demand to go "Back to Jesus" is an impossible one; that they who raise this cry will but defeat the object they have at heart. We must convince them it is not practicable to dissociate the name of Jesus from the doctrines and the ideals which receive the sanction of the Christian Churches. There is no feasible middle course. A man must either accept Jesus as he is understood by the rank and file of orthodox Christians, or reject him. It were as easy to go "Back to Odin" or "Back to Jupiter" as to go "Back to Jesus."

It is useless attempting to ignore the fact that "Jesus" has become the party-cry of a self-seeking and incoherent mob. Therefore, let a man hesitate before he gets upon his feet and shouts, "Glory be to Jesus." Let him not expect the crowd will apprehend any unusual connotation in the words he uses. They will take for granted that he means *their* Jesus. His reservation may be extremely lucid to himself, but it will not be apparent to his hearers. If a man will blend his voice with the popular cry, he must not anticipate that his unique note will be heard above the tumult. He will but help to swell the universal chorus.

In the ranks of the orthodox there is a society known as the "One by One Working Band." The declared object of the Band is "by prayer and individual effort to bring souls to Christ." Here we have an admirable scheme, one which we Freethinkers will do well to copy.



That there is no method which, in the long run, answers so well as this quiet, persistent, "one by one" propaganda is a fact of which I am satisfied. I have reason to be convinced upon the point, for my own conversion is attributable to no other plan. It is indeed "by prayer and individual effort" alone that our cause is to be won. There is, of course, a certain disparity between the Christian and Freethought systems. The Christian recognises in "prayer" and "individual effort" two distinct operations; the Freethinker unifies them, and so avoids the confusion of relying sometimes upon the one, and sometimes the other. Nevertheless, I am sure we need to be more alive to the imperativeness of our individual responsibility in this matter.

A year of opportunity lies before us. Who amongst us will this year adopt the "one by one" system? We all of us know at least someone who stands in the dubious ground occupied by my friend. Can we not persuade one such? Who will in this year, 1899, make the "individual effort"? Who will prove himself wise to win souls?

DONOVAN (G. DAWSON BAKER).

### Catholicism and Progress.

THE appearance of a new Catholic journal with the rather curious title of *The New Era*—we thought Catholicism purported to be unchanged and unchangeable—is an interesting circumstance in view of the debated question, how far Catholicism is gaining ground in England. The delightful rows and disturbances in the Established Church over pettifogging follies of ritual may, of course, send numbers of people over to Rome, though it must doubtless also have the effect of disgusting the more sane and level-headed with the whole business. The idea that the "Power manifested in a hundred millions of suns" is vitally interested in the results of Mr. Kensit's pugilism, or the exact length of another man's skirts, is surely too grotesque not to make the remnant of thinking church-goers, if there are any such, pause.

As for the *New Era*, it professes its mission, in one of its editorials, to be the "advancement and elevation of Catholic journalism." It would, of course, be invidious for us to comment on this pronouncement, or inquire how far this "elevation" is needed. Certainly, it must be admitted, the *New Era* is a more readable and a more plausible paper than the average religious sheet. And—doubtless as a result of the "elevation"—we miss those edifying personalities which are the distinctive mark of many of its contemporaries.

In fact, so plausible is the *New Era* that at times we can scarcely believe our eyes. Thus in the first editorial we read—by way apparently of justifying religious newspapers—that "there has been an evolution; germs have grown, expanded, and branched. Needs that did not exist in pre-Christian times have now become comparative necessities." And then the writer proceeds as follows—and the passage is curious enough to be worth reproducing:—

"So might it be said that what would be considered singular and grotesque in the past is in our age an acknowledged custom. There are certain races to-day that make themselves remarkable by their persistent adherence to their ancient dress and other characteristics. Their mannerisms at the royal table are only tolerated, not approved of. Their attachment to ancient forms are more commiserated than admired. They are looked upon as representatives of benighted races not far removed from barbarism. In our days this spirit sometimes receives the name of Conservatism, of stability, of wisdom. Not a few brand as visionary, unpractical, and misguided those who in miscalled wildness of idea depart from old-fashioned ways. It is a case of history repeating itself; for facts attest, almost unexceptionally, that whenever an invention has been made, or a great discovery achieved, an incredulous public subjected the chief actors to severe censure and unsparing criticism. Never yet was there a great cause without its hero, which pre-supposes that its advocacy entailed undue labour and unmerited suffering."

After this we will next be prepared to read a glorification of Bruno (put to death by the *New Era's* own Church) or of Galileo, persecuted by the ecclesiastical

predecessors of those to whom the *New Era* now acknowledges obedience. We may even be surfeited with an "elevated" biography, say of Darwin or of Bradlaugh, pointing out that they were subjected to "severe censure and unsparing criticism"—to put it mildly—by Catholics of authority. Perhaps, if only Darwin or Bradlaugh had seen the *New Era*, they might have lain down with the lion—or is it the lamb?—and lived in an elevated odour of politeness and sanctity.

Amongst the articles in the paper is one on the "conversion" of England—which, it seems, is one of the main objects of the journal in question. And the writer, with half-conscious humor, remarks: "We ought not to cherish illusions. England is far indeed from the day of conversion. None of us will live to see it. When we talk of so tremendous a change it is like the Christians of the year 200 discussing whether Rome would ever set up the Cross over its heathen temples." Setting aside the elevated suggestion that the English are "heathen," we gravely fear the gentleman is right. In fact, we would not mind hazarding the prophecy—why should not a Freethinker have a shot at prophecy like the rest?—that England will be converted to Rome at the Greek Kalends.

In order, however, to falsify this prophecy, the editor of the *New Era*, in his opening article, from which we have quoted, rather vigorously protests that Catholicism ought, so to speak, be abreast of the age. Again, his indignation is worth quoting in full. He says:—

"We are convinced that in matters which concern Catholicism a time has come when the adoption of modern methods in advancing the cause of Truth, and propagating the doctrines of Holy Church by means of the products of a learned age, must be seriously considered and promptly put in practice. If those who impede, oppose, and vilify the Church's teaching use efficient engines in the promotion of unholy warfare, is it becoming that we should meet them, not with the armaments of the end of the nineteenth century, but with the futile weapons of the ages of barbarism? If refined secular learning, if false philosophy, if the most perfect printing-press of the day is employed (unfortunately oftentimes with effect) to impede the progress of Catholicism, is it praiseworthy that we, the representatives of a great cause—the most important of all causes—should cling to arms that are effete, and to systems that have become antiquated and decayed?"

Certainly not. We sympathise with the editor. By all means let God Almighty have the advantage of the very latest printing machinery and good paper and type. It is perfectly monstrous that these weapons should be employed by his enemies whilst the friends of God have to rely on "the futile weapons of the ages of barbarism." Why, indeed, should not God be up-to-date? If he will not employ the newest machinery, competition will really cut down prices, and he runs the risk of being under-sold in the open market.

Seriously, however, we do not regard the *New Era* as of much import. It may even do good. In so far as it is anxious for Truth—and it says it is; in so far as it is at all fair, and it makes fair professions, it must tend to be, so far, less an engine of reaction than the organs it displaces. If it is fair, it must honestly tell us that thousands of the best and bravest men of the race have rejected the religion it teaches, whilst some of the foulest deeds in history have been done in its name. If it is really jealous of Truth, it must give hearing to all those to whom Truth is as precious as to itself, and it must point out that only by the honest examination of all opinions can Truth be attained. For, unless the *New Era* can do these things, its professions of fairness and truth-seeking are but shams, and must be detected in an age when all opinions are coming more and more under the test of knowledge.

For, despite all the whooping and wailing, not all the *New Eras* which the best machinery ever turned out can put us back, say, to the days of witchcraft and the Inquisition. There may be small reactions and periods of comparative stagnation; but the world moves withal, and even Catholicism is broadened and modified and rendered less malignant by the very process which has caused her to employ weapons and methods which she herself in the past has denounced. That very science of which she now avails herself she did her best to strangle, and if to-day the world is better and more educated than it was in what the Catholic journalist calls "the ages of barbarism," the thanks in the main are



due, not to the Catholicism of the past, but to those who fought for progress and for knowledge, often against the might of her anathemas, her dungeons, and her stakes.

FREDERICK RYAN.

### Book Chat.

MESSRS. BLACKWOOD and SONS will issue a new series of monographs under the title of *Modern English Writers*. Amongst the names already announced are those of Stevenson, George Eliot, Ruskin, Huxley, Froude, Browning, Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Thackeray, and Dickens. We are pleased to note that the George Eliot volume is in the capable hands of Mr. Sidney Lee. No doubt he will do justice to the Freethought side of her life and work.

\* \* \*

Hall Caine says the finest novels fall short of the stories of the Bible. There is a self-abnegation about this. He doesn't except the *Christian*. Yet he is probably true. There is no fiction equal to that of the Bible.

\* \* \*

Mr. G. W. Stevens, certainly one of the smartest living journalists, achieved success with his book, *With Kitchener to Khartoum*. We are now to have this book in paper covers at the modest price of sixpence.

\* \* \*

We hear a great deal about the spread of knowledge. We overheard recently in a railway carriage two well-dressed "gentlemen" discussing the merits of Mr. Stevens's journalistic work. "Devilish clever," said one; "but the best thing he ever did was his story of *Treasure Island*."

\* \* \*

The revival of Jew-baiting as a pleasing pastime for the followers of the meek and lowly Jew, Jesus Christ, and the persecution of Alfred Dreyfus in France, makes a book which gives an account of the cruelties and oppressions meted out to the Jews for over a thousand years a topical publication. This volume, *Twelve Centuries of Jewish Persecution*, by Gustav Pearlson (Hull; James Lightowler), is a most terrible indictment of the Christian religion, and the more convincing because written in temperate language. Each country has a division to itself, and England's own record is enough to make a bronze statue blush; but it is nothing compared to the fiendish atrocities committed in France, Germany, Austria, and Spain. This book should make any decent Christian blush for shame, and the terrible record blasts for ever the fair fame of those who, eternally prating of loving their enemies, meted out such treatment to their neighbors.

\* \* \*

The latest addition to the monthly magazines is the *Puritan*, which is intended to cater for the Nonconformist conscience, which, by the way, is a very elastic article. The modern Puritans are losing some of their gloom, and, if they take the advice of the editor of this magazine, we may expect to find before long an alteration in the cast of countenance peculiar to the Nonconformist followers of Our Blessed Savior. Indeed, the new magazine makes a strong protest against the "misuse" of the title of Puritan, and encourages all wholesome sport and recreation, while exhorting its readers to fulfil zealously their duties as followers of the Lamb. In his attempt to infuse a little sweet reasonableness into the disciples of the Man of Sorrows, the editor of this periodical has our entire sympathy; but we do not envy him his task. He is assisted in his forlorn hope by Ian Maclaren, Coulson Kernahan, and other popular writers.

\* \* \*

The recent issue of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which bears the date 1898 on the covers, gives us the touching information in the article "Africa" that as the book is going to press the editors are informed of the death of Dr. Livingstone. This unfortunate event, we understand, happened a generation ago.

\* \* \*

We note with pleasure that Mr. Seymour's editorship of the *Adult* has not diminished the interest of this unique magazine. The February issue contains a most important contribution to the literature of the Sex Question, entitled "Polygamy considered from a Muslim Standpoint."

\* \* \*

*Humanity* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for February contains an interesting article on the founder of Buddhism. It is the first of a series on "Pioneers of Humanitarianism." The writer is Mr. Howard Williams. Reformers should support this excellent little monthly, which is conducted by one of the most devoted apostles of the nobler life, Mr. H. S. Salt. The address of the Humanitarian League is 53 Chancery-lane, London, W.C.

\* \* \*

Some idiot across the herring-pond has published a volume called *Intimations of Heaven, and Other Poems*. He has been "gone for" by the *Scotsman*, which says: "If it is right to

suppose that the author of this volume is a parson (and there are many things in the book that support that idea), then it is not strange that he should be less ridiculous when dealing with topics of divinity than when vainly endeavoring to twang an erotic lyre. He certainly reaches extreme depths of bathos in his sonnets, and meanders through a multitude of topics, drawing lessons of piety of the common pulpit order."

### Correspondence.

#### CHRIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After reading the article in a recent issue headed "Christ," by Mr. Russell, I feel that one or two comments would not be out of place. I fail to see that when speaking of Christ we necessarily admit the divinity of Jesus. Christ, or Jesus Christ, is a name commonly understood by all to refer to the Jesus of the New Testament, and is generally uttered to drive home forcibly his peculiar personality. It is quite new to be told that in exclaiming the word Christ, when arguing with a person or addressing the public, we inevitably believe, or, as Mr. Russell will have it, "virtually" admit, that Jesus was, and is, the son of an actual divinity. I think most Secularists will not agree with this statement, which appears to me to be pure presumption.

Now, I submit to your readers that the question, "Was Christ a wise teacher?" is one worthy and important enough to be answered by every Secularist, and is not an entirely gratuitous one as claimed. In proving to our fellow-men the impracticability and absurdity of Christ's teachings we are pointing out that he was not divine, and that another system is needed which allows for the exigencies of human nature and is able to be carried out.

At the present moment we have quite enough, and perhaps more, than we can manage in propagating our system and defending it against misrepresentation and untruth. It is part of our work to be aggressive to Christianity, and I think that it would more become Mr. Russell to fight with us all to obtain our natural rights of freedom of thought, speech, and action before picking faults (which, if allowed, are merely trivial) in our methods of warfare. HENRY R. WRIGHT.

#### Obituary.

I HAVE to record the death, on the 28th ult., of Francis Pearce, at the advanced age of eighty-five years. Born at Leominster, Herefordshire, in 1813, of very religious parents, deceased at an early age came to the conclusion, from close study of the Bible, that the whole Christian creed was a mockery and a delusion. In 1849 he emigrated to South Australia, and, after a very hard experience, was fairly successful in the gold diggings. Later he settled at Riverton, where he held a position of considerable responsibility for many years. In his public capacity he had to visit points some seventy or eighty miles from Riverton, and wherever he went he never lost an opportunity of sowing the good seed of Freethought. He was a consistent and uncompromising Atheist throughout his career. The following is an extract from his Will: "I direct that my funeral may be conducted in the most simple and inexpensive manner possible; that my body shall not be taken to, or inside, any church or chapel, nor any religious form or ceremony gone through at the grave." Having personally promised the deceased that I would see that his wishes in this respect were carried out, I arranged with the widow (who, although a Christian, expressed a desire to act in accordance with her late husband's directions) to attend at Finchley and say a few words at the graveside. I made a couple of selections—from Ingersoll's *House of Death* and Austin Holyoake's Burial Service—and strung together a few words of my own; and, having committed this short address to memory, I delivered it at the graveside.—HENRY R. CLIFTON.

It is with deep regret that I record the death, at the age of sixty-three, of Mr. Thomas Teasdale, on Saturday evening, February 4. He was for over thirty years in the employ of the firm of Rylands and Sons, Manchester, and won the respect of all with whom he came in contact, from the Directors down to the workmen, who were immediately under his supervision, for his honesty, his integrity, and his blunt straightforwardness. Under a rough exterior he carried a true and tender heart, and a mind that was incapable of a mean action. He was a downright, upright man, meant what he said, and generally said it. Respectful, but never obsequious, to those placed above him, his naturally independent character won esteem where subserviency would have failed. For very many years a thoroughgoing Radical and Freethinker, he never cloaked his opinions or trimmed them to suit other people, and died as he had lived—a Freethinker. A good husband, an affectionate father, and firm friend, his sterling qualities and homely virtues will always be cherished by those who knew him best—his family.—H. J.



## 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, W. Heaford, "Miracles v. Medicine."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. Standring, "The Church and the People."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, H. H. Quilter, "The Revolt against Religion."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road, E.): 8, J. F. Haines, "The New Poll-tax: By Edict of Mr. Chaplin, President of the L. G. B."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 10.45, Discussion; 7, Dr. W. Sullivan, "The Anarchists."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethics of Empire."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): A Parliament every Tuesday at 8. February 16, at 8.15, Debate on "The Dreyfus Case" between Messrs. Marriott and Samuels. February 11, at 7.30, Branch Concert at the Athenæum.

WINCHESTER HALL (33 Peckham High-street): February 15, at 8, J. E. Dobson, "Why Secularists Should be Socialists."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Marriott, "The Dreyfus Case."

## COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. J. Lewington, "Industrial Strikes and their Usefulness in Improving the Condition of the Workers."

DERBY BRANCH (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, Mr. Buttle, "Spiritualism."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote—11.39, "True Religion Up to Date"; 2.30, "Christianity and War"; 6.30, "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts."

GREAT YARMOUTH FREETHINKERS' ASSOCIATION (Freethinkers' Hall, bottom of Broad-row): 7.30, W. Barker, "Freethought and Social Reform."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, No. 2 Room): G. E. Conrad Naewiger, "The Bible and Teetotalism."

LEICESTER SECULAR CLUB (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Concert (arranged by Mr. Lowe).

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Ross, "Who Wrote the Bible?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. McCabe—3, "Rome and Reason"; 7, "Why I Seceded." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): H. Percy Ward—3, "Thomas Paine and his *Age of Reason*"; 7, "Man's Reason and God's Revelation." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business Meeting; 7.30, "Kant."

WIGAN (Dog and Partridge Hotel): 7.30, E. Hodgkiss, "The Grammar of the Mind."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—February 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.

## POSITIVISM.

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

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

Price 3d., by post 4d.,

## The Secular Almanack for 1899.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Contents:—Calendar for 1899.—The Future of Freethought. By G. W. FOOTE.—The Work Before Us. By CHARLES WATTS.—Outgrowing the Gods. By C. COHEN.—A Freethinker's Prophecy. By F. J. GOULD.—The Hooligans of Superstition. By A. B. MOSS.—The Unrealities of Superstition. By W. HEAFORD.—The Secular Society, Limited.—Information Concerning the National Secular Society.—Freethought Lecturers.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH (N. S. S.) A Smoking Concert will be held at THE ATHENÆUM HALL, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W., on Saturday, February 11, 1899. Tickets can be obtained at the door, price 1s. and 6d.

## FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT

BY

G. W. Foote.

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

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

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

## THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,

TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Important Caution.

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

LOOK FOR AUTOGRAPH REGISTERED TRADE MARK

*W. J. Rendell*  
No. 182,688.

In Red INK ON EACH BOX, WITHOUT WHICH NONE ARE GENUINE.

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 3d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

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

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



Now Ready.

# Ingersoll's Grand New Lecture

ON

# SUPERSTITION,

Which is attracting immense audiences in America.

Forty-eight Pages.

Price Sixpence.

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

Price Sixpence.

## SHAKESPEARE,

A LECTURE BY

### COLONEL INGERSOLL.

HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

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

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

Price 3d., by post 4d.,

## The Secularist's Catechism.

An Exposition of Secular Principles, showing their Relation to the Political and Social Problems of the Day.

By CHARLES WATTS.

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

## Thwaites' Household Doctor.

THE BEST BOOK

to have by you whenever you are not as well as you would like to be. Within its pages you will find a Treatise on most Diseases, and how to Cure them with Herbs, which are Nature's Remedies.

PRICE SIXPENCE—POST FREE.

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

List of Prices Free.

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TEETH on VULCANITE, 2s. 6d. each; upper or lower set, £1. Best Quality, 4s. each; upper or lower, £2. Completed in four hours when required; repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above, they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

Just issued, cloth, price 2s. 6d. post free,

## THE METAPHYSIC

OF

## CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM.

A SYMPHONY.

By MAJOR-GENERAL D. M. STRONG, C.B.

(Late Indian Army), Author of "Selections from the *Bostan of Sâdi*, translated into English Verse."

Contents:—Chapter I.: Jesus and Gotama. Chapter II.: God and the Cosmos. Chapter III.: Soul, Self, Individuality, and Karma. Chapter IV.: Heaven and Nirvana. Chapter V.: Some Concluding Remarks. Appendix.: Buddhistic Legend and Scripture.

The author's aim has been to give prominence to the many excellent qualities possessed by Buddhism, with a view to clearing the way for an impartial appreciation of this religion by those who have never yet bestowed their attention on, or extended their sympathies to, the subject with unbiased minds.

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

## THE ADULT.

An Unconventional Journal. Edited by HENRY SEYMOUR.

Price 3d., by post 4d.

CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY:—The Anti-Anarchist Conference, by Louis Michel; The Moribund Morality, by J. Banaston; The Determination of Sex (II.), by Verax; The Rabbi Lion, by James Platt; The Money Monopoly, by G. O. Warren; Polygamy from a Muslim Standpoint, by W. H. Abdullah Quilliam; Lilies in Corruption, by John K. Prothero; The Conquest of the Air (II.), by the Editor.

London: The Bijou Press: 51 Arundel-square. Wholesale: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

BY CHARLES CATTELL.

Gems from the Ocean of Truth. (Pub. 1s. 6d.) Second edition, 6d.

Thirteen Essays on Various Subjects. (Pub. 1s.) 6d.

Emerson and Modern Thought. 2d.

Post free on receipt of Postal Order for One Shilling, or separately at above prices, from the author, Charles Cattell, Emerson, Pokesdown, Hants.

## NON-POISONOUS PAINTS.

Resist all Atmospheric Influences. Samples Free. J. Greevz Fisher, 78 Chapel Allerton, Leeds; or S. R. Thompson, 25 Chatsworth-avenue, Walton, Liverpool.



NOW READY, STOUT PAPER COVERS, 1s.; CLOTH, 2s.

# THE BOOK OF GOD

IN THE LIGHT OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

With Special Reference to Dean Farrar's New Apology.

By G. W. FOOTE.

*Contents* :—Introduction—The Bible Canon—The Bible and Science—Miracles and Witchcraft—The Bible and Free-thought—Morals and Manners—Political and Social Progress—Inspiration—The Testimony of Jesus—The Bible and the Church of England—An Oriental Book—Fictitious Supremacy.

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

## PECULIAR PEOPLE

An Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills

On his Sentencing THOMAS GEORGE SENIOR to Four Months' Imprisonment with Hard Labor FOR OBEYING THE BIBLE.

BY G. W. FOOTE.

ISSUED BY THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LTD.), 376-7 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

Price One Penny.

Copies can be obtained for free distribution at the rate of Two Shillings per Hundred. Gratis parcels of copies can be obtained by N. S. S. Branches, &c., by applying to Miss VANCE, Secretary, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., or to Mr. R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

## GREAT CLEARANCE SALE.

Every Parcel Guaranteed to Give Satisfaction, or Money Returned in Full.

- LOT A.—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Length, 1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Lady's Umbrella, 1 pair Curtains, 1 Table Cover.  
 „ B.—1 Overcoat, made to measure. Any color. State chest over vest and sleeve measurement.  
 „ C.—1 Ready-made Suit. Any color or any size. Worth at least 35s.  
 „ D.—1 Dress Length, 1 Umbrella, 1 pair Bloomers, 1 Striped Skirt, 1 pair Boots or Shoes, 1 Fur Necktie.  
 „ E.—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 Skirts, 2 pairs Cashmere Hose, 1 pair High-class Boots or Shoes.  
 „ F.—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Lady's Paddock Mackintosh. State Lengths.  
 „ G.—2 Boys' Suits or Overcoats, 2 pairs Boys' Boots or Shoes, 10 yards strong Shirting.  
 „ H.—50 Yards good, strong Twilled Flannelette. 5 different patterns.  
 „ I.—40 yards Remnants. Suitable for Children's Dresses. Mixed Colors and Lengths.  
 „ J.—15 Yards Remnants. Suitable for Boys' Suits.  
 „ K.—1 Lady's Paddock Mackintosh and 1 real Bear long Victoria-shaped Fur. Total value 50s.  
 „ L.—1 Very fine West of England or Worsted Suit Length. Latest Designs and Colorings.  
 „ M.—11 Yards finest Velveteen. Any color, and sufficient Linings for a Dress.  
 „ N.—2 Black Dress Lengths. First-class qualities, in Alpaca, Serge, Figure, or Habit Cloth.  
 „ O.—1 Lady's Paddock Mackintosh, and 1 finest Black or Colored Dress Length.  
 „ P.—1 Pair Gent's Boots or Shoes, 1 Scarboro' Mackintosh, or a good Suit Length.  
 „ Q.—4 Trousers Lengths. All different, and warranted Pure Wool.  
 „ R.—1 Suit Length, 1 Umbrella, 2 Under Vests, and 2 pairs Under Pants. All Wool.  
 „ S.—3 pairs Trousers made to measure. Give inside leg and waist measurements.  
 „ T.—10lbs. Free Clothing Tea. When you have had 25lbs. you get a new suit free of cost.  
 „ U.—About 35s. worth of Lady's Goods, including Dress Goods, Underclothing, Boots, etc.  
 „ V.—About 35s. worth of Blankets, Sheets, Quilts, Curtains, Rugs, Mats, etc.  
 „ W.—About 35s. worth of Flannel, Flannelette, Calico, Shirting, Prints, etc.  
 „ X.—About 35s. worth of Boy's Suits, Boots, and Shoes. State requirements.  
 „ Y.—About 35s. worth of anything a Customer cares to name.  
 „ Z.—Parcel of Odds and Ends. All new goods. Value 40s.

21s. Anyone of the above Parcels Carriage Paid 21s.

Testing Sample ( $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.) of Free Clothing TEA enclosed in each Parcel.

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