

116

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XIX.—No. 39.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1899.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## The Dreyfus Fever.

THERE is something ridiculous in the blazing fury with which a certain section of Englishmen have denounced France and everything French in consequence of the verdict of the Rennes court-martial in the Dreyfus case. One would imagine, if one did not know better, that England had never committed a crime, nor even a mistake. And one can only smile at the talk about boycotting the Exhibition and refusing to purchase goods of French manufacture. Those who talk thus forget two things: first, that in striking at France they attempt to punish the innocent as well as the guilty, the friends of truth and justice as well as their enemies; second, that boycotting is a game that two can play at, and that a French boycott of English goods by way of retaliation would ruin a considerable number of English traders and throw many English workmen out of employment. It may also be pointed out that the friends of truth and justice in France, those who have fought a glorious battle with such magnificent courage and endurance, would be placed at a very decided disadvantage by the practical interference of foreigners. Their opponents would be able to raise against them a terrible odium; they would be pointed at as the allies of the haters of France; and the reaction thus caused might go far to nullify what has been achieved, besides greatly diminishing the chances of further progress.

Still more ridiculous, if possible, is the way in which the English clergy have been improving the occasion. Such antics as theirs account for the too common association of Pharisee with the name of Englishman throughout the continent of Europe. It hardly seems the duty of English preachers to look after the morals of the French nation. Certainly there is still a fine field for their efforts in this line at home. Half of these men are more or less dishonest, and nearly all the other half are sentimentalists, who are always ready to indulge in an orgie of cheap and easy virtue—the virtue which consists in denouncing everybody's vices but your own. The great Edmund Burke said that he did not know how to draw up an indictment against a whole nation, but these professional moralists are prepared to do it at a moment's notice. Some of them declare that France is rotten, and that God is chastising her for her sins. Some assert that she is being punished for her lusts of the flesh, as though England were all sweet and pure, and London had no army of prostitutes, and Piccadilly by night were a scene for angels to play the Hallelujah chorus over. Some affirm that France is being plagued for the idolatries of Catholicism, while others allege that she suffers because she has disowned God. Altogether, it is a remarkably harmonious denunciation; and no doubts the gentlemen who diagnose the disease in this fashion think themselves quite capable of prescribing a certain remedy.

Perhaps the most nonsensical of all these diagnosings is that which fixes the malady of France as an abandonment of God. Why it is religion which is at the bottom of most of the mischief. The scoundrelly Generals who have lied and forged, and committed even darker crimes, to keep an innocent man in frightful torture, are all without Catholics. Behind every one of them stands a man and cunning father confessor of Holy Mother Church. On the other hand, the champions of Dreyfus, the opponents of defiant Militarism, are principally Freethinkers. A few, indeed, are Protestants, but men like Zola, Clémenceau, Guyot, Gohier, Mirabeau, and

Jaurès are pronounced Freethinkers. Picquart himself seems to be an "unbeliever."

When the verdict of the Rennes court-martial is looked upon with a critical eye, it is seen to be a distinct advance. We should not be surprised to learn that it was really arranged by the Generals themselves, in order to cover their retreat and prevent their further disgrace. When one considers the matter calmly, it was scarcely to be expected that seven subordinate officers should return a verdict which would virtually brand their superior officers as liars and rascals; and that is what they would have done if they had acquitted Dreyfus. But two of the seven refused to vote for a verdict of Guilty, while the other five agreed to a rider of "extenuating circumstances." This was absurd in itself, but it prepared the way for action by the Government, making it possible for the President to sign a free pardon without flying in the face of the Army. Such a termination of the Dreyfus case is not exactly ideal. Poetical justice requires the condemnation and punishment of wretches like Esterhazy, Du Paty De Clam, and Mercier. But poetical justice is not often accomplished in this world, however it may be "elsewhere." Probably the Government does not feel strong enough to do more than liberate Dreyfus. To carry the war into the camp of the Generals might be too difficult and dangerous. Moreover, it seems a little too merciless to wage battle any longer over the "poor rag of a body" of the ex-prisoner of the Devil's Island. One man is not called upon to suffer infinitely even in the holiest of causes. One feels that an end should be put to the awful martyrdom of that hapless victim of injustice, that his remnant of life should be restored to his wife and family, that the months or years left him should be filled with comfort and peace. After all, a woman's heart does not yearn so much for poetical justice; she thinks first of her husband and children; and Madame Dreyfus has gone through so much misery, with such noble fortitude, shielding her boy and girl from the world's hard frown, that common humanity calls for a cessation of her martyrdom. One can hardly think of her without feelings almost too deep for words or tears. It is before such a woman that men bow in adoration. Compared with her devotion to her husband's honor, and her children's fair name, what is usually called love is no more than glittering foam on the surface of life. Great calamities have sometimes this compensation, that they reveal the loftier possibilities of human nature, and invest our conception of it with a new dignity.

What will happen after the Dreyfus affair is a subject which I shall treat in my lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (September 24). It is really too vast to be dealt with at the close of this article. Those who think the danger is over do not know the situation. The hatred of the Jews, which is an historic tradition amongst Catholics, is still being worked for all it is worth by the so-called Nationalists—that is to say, the party of reaction, of imperialism, of monarchy, of militarism, and of Catholic supremacy. One key-fact of the Dreyfus case is that he was the first Jew who found his way on the General Staff. No doubt a scapegoat was wanted by the real traitors, but the selection of Dreyfus was very largely determined by his belonging to the hated race of Israel. It was calculated that he would find no friends. Further, it was the policy of the Jesuits behind the General Staff to weed out all but Catholics from the headquarters of the French Army; and the Jews were the worst of heretics, since they descended from the people who crucified Christ. This must be borne in mind by those who wish to understand



the Dreyfus affair. M. Gohier, one of the boldest of the fighting Republicans and Freethinkers, gives some notable particulars of this anti-Jewish crusade in France and her colonies. His article in the current number of the *National Review* is sad reading. Jews in Algiers are beaten and pillaged, their women flogged and outraged, and their old people assaulted in the streets. "A whole community," M. Gohier says, "are hunted like wild beasts." At Nantes, Toulouse, and Avignon there is a renewal of the scenes of the White Terror of 1815. At Orleans a Catholic captain insults and shoots another captain because he is a Jew. A Jewish non-commissioned officer is killed at St. Germain by sabre-cuts with the authority of his colonel. Invisible hands write *Maison Juive* on the dwellings of Jews, or on those of Christians suspected of any sympathy with them. M. Labori's house was covered with these murder-marks. While such things occur, and the cry of "Death to the Jews" is heard in all parts of France, it is evident that the fire of fanaticism is still burning vigorously, and that the flames may easily spread from one set of victims to another; for the Catholic Church has never regretted the St. Bartholomew massacres, and has never ceased longing for the re-establishment of the Inquisition. Would it not be better, then, if those who talk about "punishing" France would sympathise with the party of freedom and progress who are trying to prevent her ruin?

G. W. FOOTE.

### The Future of the Church.

Most readers of the *Freethinker* are familiar with the past history of the Church. They know too well how she has fostered ignorance, stifled free inquiry, opposed scientific investigation, and placed herself against the general advancement of the people. Of course, it is not here contended that the Church has done no good, for, having closed all other channels of usefulness, the few advantages conferred upon society in past ages were compelled to come through the medium of the Church. But so antagonistic was she to all secular progress that the reforms she was compelled to grant were delayed as long as possible; and, when at last they were given, they were deprived of much of their intrinsic value. These facts are so well known to students of history that there is no need of referring to them more fully on this occasion.

The Church of the present is not so great an impediment to human progress as was her predecessor, simply because her power for evil has been crippled, and, to save her own existence, she is forced to "assume a virtue [of reform] if she has it not." No longer is she accepted as a guide in mundane affairs; no longer is she allowed to crush the liberties of a nation; no longer is she permitted to deprive the people of their personal freedom; and no longer has she the power to prevent the onward movement of those elements which promote and consolidate social happiness. Torn asunder by internal divisions, and weakened by external criticism, the Church of to-day has to change her policy, and endeavor, as far as possible, to harmonise her conduct with modern requirements. Although, in our opinion, from the very nature of her constitution and teachings, she can never be a trustworthy servant of civilisation, yet she can be made, with her wealth and vast organisation, useful to a certain extent. At any rate, we hope that the principles of Freethought, which are so extensively permeating the religious bodies, will render the Church of the future impotent as a formidable opponent to human advancement.

We may note that there is not only a distinction, but a difference, between the future of the Church and the Church of the future. As an institution, no doubt, the Church will continue to exist; it requires, however, but little prophetic sagacity to foresee that its character will be entirely changed. Years ago, in his *Conduct of Life*, Emerson pointed this out. In his opinion, the time will come when the Church will be based on moral science and ethical law. If such a period should arrive, the Church will require a very different definition to what is now given it. It should certainly be gratifying to every

friend of progress to know that theology, with its multitudinous evils; that creeds and dogmas, with their follies and absurdities; and that teachings impracticable and injurious to human welfare, will be discarded. But have we solid grounds for believing that this will occur? Frankly, we think not—that is, within the Church. Changes will take place and modifications will be made, but superstition is too deeply rooted in certain minds, and the pecuniary interests of priests, clergy, and ministers of all denominations are too great, to allow us to believe that the Church will ever be altogether free from the superstition that has hitherto impaired its usefulness. The most that we can hope for is that Freethought will emancipate some of the victims who have been held in mental bondage by the shackles imposed upon them by the Church, and that priest-craft will be deprived of its power to practise, unopposed, its pernicious machinations upon the minds of the weak and credulous members of the human race.

The position here taken—that in some form the Church will continue to exist, but that its teachings will be changed and modified—is supported by an article in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled "The Future of the Christian Religion," written by the Rev. Dr. Percival, of America. The writer's desire is to return to the "undivided Church of England as it existed before the sixteenth century." He does not mean the Roman Catholic, but the "undivided" Anglican Church. Such a return, he considers, would be a remedy for the confusion into which Protestantism has fallen in these days. He states his case thus: "Thinking men are being led in one way or another. Either, feeling the shallowness and unsatisfactoriness of the creed they once held, they are in their hearts giving up Christianity altogether as the one, true, and only saving religion; or else they are looking backwards to the days when the Church was undivided, when she presented to the enemy an unbroken front—to the Church as she was when she converted the nations; and they are asking themselves the question: Can we not return in doctrine and practice to the standard of the Church of that day—the Church of the Œcumenical Councils and the Fathers; the Church free alike from the additions and superstitions and vagaries of Rome and Geneva, of Trent and of Wittenberg?"

It would be most interesting to us to learn at what date in the history of Protestantism such a Church as the reverend Doctor here describes really existed. The supposition that at any period the believers in Christianity were undivided in their belief, and were free from superstition, is without the slightest foundation in fact. Almost immediately after the inception of the Anglican Church she became divided, and the establishment of the many Nonconformist sects was the result. Certain it is that history is silent as to the Church converting nations at that period. It is sad to find a gentleman of the Doctor's position wishing to return to an age of intellectual darkness, such as existed before the sixteenth century. An undivided Church, presenting an unbroken front to the enemy, would, if it existed to-day, restore a state of society in which no man would be allowed to express an opinion adverse to that held by his theological contemporaries, without being placed in peril of ostracism, of being thrown into prison, or of being burnt at the stake. What a delightful prospect Dr. Percival holds out to those of us who have learnt to exercise our reason, and to promulgate views that are opposed to the popular religion of our time. Fortunately, there is no danger that the Church of the future will be based upon the ignorance, folly, and cruelty of the past. It must be obvious to those who have studied history that no undivided Anglican Church, any more than a Roman Catholic Church, could be maintained as an authority in religion except by force and fraud. All churches must be the parents of ignorance and misery, and the foes of liberty and progress, if they are undivided and present an unbroken front to their enemies. If the desire to have the theological conditions of the sixteenth century restored to us were general, we should almost despair of human progress. In such a case the accumulated knowledge of recent generations, which has enabled us to solve many important problems, would be comparatively useless. Intolerance would once more reign supreme, scepticism

would find but little favor, and the battle of science with religious bigotry would have to be fought again.

Among other things which Dr. Percival seeks to prove is, that in civilised nations the Roman Catholic religion is making no headway, and that the doctrines of the Protestant Reformers are being rejected. He asserts that in France, Belgium, and Spain the proportion of practising Romanists to the population is lower than it was a century ago, and that things are not much better in Italy. This *we* regard as good news. He has, however, discovered what to him is exceedingly shocking. It is this: "But perhaps the saddest of all sights is the spectacle presented by Catholic France, Belgium, and Spain. The vast number of men in each of these countries who are not only not practising Catholics, but are actually hostile to Christianity in any form, is positively appalling." To the rev. gentleman probably it is so; but to us it is a welcome indication that the Mother Church is losing her supporters, and that many of those who were once the victims of superstition have been delivered from their intellectual bondage.

Bad as things are, from the Doctor's point of view, in the countries named, he points to Protestant nations where persons are not required to believe in the words of the prayers they utter, and to other people who are made to repeat the Apostles' Creed, in which they do not believe. He refers to Philadelphia, U.S.A., where, he says, "many Protestant ministers in the hundreds of pulpits find no more interesting and exciting theme for their Sunday preachments than in showing the Word of God to be the erring, and often immoral and ridiculous, word of man." This, of course, is very painful to the reverend gentleman, but to us it is gratifying, inasmuch as it shows that in the two principal Churches, professedly Christian, the faith as it was once taught is rapidly losing its hold upon the people. This induces us to believe that the Church of the future will be more secular than theological, and in its teachings the natural consummation is one "devoutly to be wished."

CHARLES WATTS.

## The Delusion of Freewill.

(Continued from page 596.)

"SIR," said Johnson, "we know that our will is free, and there's an end of it"; and in the same manner Professor Sidgwick remarks (*Methods of Ethics*, p. 55, second edition) that "against the formidable array of cumulative evidence offered for Determinism there is but one opposing argument of real force—the immediate affirmation of consciousness in the moment of deliberate action." But, unfortunately for Dr. Johnson and those who agree with him, the affirmation of consciousness is not the end of it—is, indeed, only the beginning of the inquiry. What a man's consciousness tells him *is* a matter so far as the telling is concerned; but whether his consciousness is informing him accurately, or whether it falls within its province to inform him concerning the matter at all, is open to very grave doubt. The progress of science would indeed have been an easy matter if all that were needed was an interrogation of consciousness. But, as the growth of science has progressed very largely in redressing these *obiter dicta* of consciousness, one looks upon the present testimony as honestly interrogated, what has consciousness to say to the matter? Simply this—and one cannot say it more than in the words of Spinoza—that, when men ask their will "free," "their opinion is made up of the consciousness of their own actions, and ignorance of causes by which they are determined." Consciousness can only testify to the reality of its own feelings and experiences, and no more. All that we are ever immediately conscious of is the act itself, or the motive that have created the motive itself, consciousness can have nothing; this can only be known after prolonged investigation. Consciousness would not tell man even the existence of a brain, and no amount of self-consciousness could ever have taught man the close

connection between particular mental states and the condition of the liver, the heart, or some other of the bodily organs. Indeed, the chief motive of action—habit—lies altogether outside the region of consciousness, because by its very nature it is largely unconscious. In most cases we act as we have been in the habit of acting, and the sum of all our previous actions is expressed in our character at any given moment. Every action we perform lays the foundation of a habit, and with every repetition of that action we find its performance easier. It is in the region of the unconscious that we have to look principally for the determining causes of conduct, and of this vast extent of territory an interrogation of consciousness can tell us no more than a ripple on the surface of a river will give us an accurate knowledge of its depth.

It is also worthy of note that this consciousness of a freedom of choice is strongest with the ignorant and untrained. The child, the savage, the criminal, are at one upon this point. In an individual's life it is a vanishing quantity, strongest in childhood, weakest when maturity has brought him some knowledge of himself and the mutual relations existing between himself and the world. It is as knowledge grows that possibility becomes swallowed up in necessity; the "may be" of the child is replaced by the "must be" of the mature man. The whole aim and tendency of education is to destroy the feeling of uncertainty and deliberation in matters of conduct by the growth of habits that shall ensure the carrying on of desirable actions. The most moral man, the man most to be trusted, is, after all, not the one who is conscious of serious deliberation whether he shall behave honestly or dishonestly, but the one who is impelled by every fibre in his body to do the right, and who is not conscious of any choice in the matter.

A further objection to Determinism, brought forward by Dr. Martineau (*Types of Ethical Theory*, p. 41), is that "either freewill is a fact or moral judgment a delusion," the reason given being: "We could never condemn one turn of act or thought did we not believe the agent to have command of another; and just in proportion as we perceive in his temperament or education or circumstances the certain preponderance of particular suggestions, and the near approach to an inner necessity, do we criticise him rather as a natural object than as a responsible being, and deal with his aberrations as maladies rather than sins." To this one may briefly reply that ethical judgments are in no wise concerned with the question of whether my actions are determined by causes beyond my control, or whether they are the expression of a "self-determining ego." Actions are either beneficial or injurious; and whether those actions are the arbitrary expression of an autonomous will, or the necessary expression of a particular organisation, in no sense lessens our desire to encourage one set and discourage the other. Moral judgments are concerned with two sets of facts, and two only—the sentiments that lead to action, and the effects of that action on self and society. All that lies beyond is a question of psychology on the one hand, and of sociology on the other. But, no matter how such sentiments are generated, their existence is a fact, their effect on society is another fact; and, as praise or blame, reward or punishment, may have their due influence in inducing desirable sentiments and securing desirable conduct, there is here sufficient warranty for the exercise of one or the other, or both.

The same writer also contends (*Types of Ethical Theory*, pp. 34-5), first, that the "moral life dwells exclusively in the voluntary sphere," and that "the impulses of spontaneous action do not constitute character." The latter statement is so far untrue that it is *only* the "impulses of spontaneous action" that do really constitute and express the character of the individual. It is, to my mind, unquestionable that we are far more likely to get an expression of a man's real character in a spontaneous outburst of feeling than we are from actions that are the result of lengthy deliberation or reasoned choice. And of the first statement all that need be said is that, if it were true, it would involve the curious paradox that all moral development renders men *less* moral. For nothing is more certain than that actions persisted in constitute and create habits, and that all actions that spring from habit may be performed

automatically, and unconsciously. So that, on these lines, we eventually reach the paradoxical position that they whose morality is the expression of their whole organisation are less worthy than they who can only do right after a lengthened struggle with other and less worthy impulses, and that, consequently, the most moral men habitually lead the least moral lives.

But the greatest objection to Determinism is based more upon penal grounds than upon any other. "A plain man," says Sidgwick, "does not naturally inquire whether he is 'free' or not to seek his own good.....But, when his conduct is compared with a code to the violation of which punishments are attached, the question whether he really could obey the rule by which he is judged is obvious and inevitable, since, if he could not, it seems contrary to our sense of justice to punish him."\*

Now, punishment can only be contrary to our sense of justice—granting the truth of Determinism—so long as we regard it as wholly retrospective. If punishment begins and ends with *past* action, then it is naturally revolting to punish a man when we recognise that his whole organisation, environment, and training inevitably issued in the conduct we condemn. But rational punishment is not retrospective at all, except in so far as retrospection is necessary to indicate the nature of the defect that is to be remedied. We say, as Determinists, that a man's stealing was the expression of his character; and, as all action is determined by character, in that sense the stealing was inevitable. But we also say, as Determinists, that, in so far as man is a reasonable being, he is capable of appreciating the results of particular actions, and it is upon this principle that praise or blame, punishment or reward, are meted out. As Mr. Melrose puts it: "The adjective 'responsible,' as applied to action, means a 'rational' action, the action of one who is capable of appreciating consequences..... You say that, according to our doctrine, given the set of motives the man had at the time, he could not have acted otherwise than he did. Quite true. Now we add other motives—we make him aware of the reality and unpleasantness of the measures of restraint which we intend to adopt—and this will recast the balance of motives to his future conduct."

One might go even further, and say that it is only on lines of Determinism that punishment can receive any ethical justification at all. If punishment is not to act as a motive to secure right conduct in the future, it becomes a mere act of revenge, degrading both those who suffer and those who inflict the suffering. If, on the contrary, the object of punishment is to secure the performance of desirable conduct, the motive theory of the will is admitted, and, when the time for action has arrived, the "will" must have lost its original freedom, since it is now determined by the thoughts of pains and penalties ahead. On lines of Determinism, punishment has its justifiable place in sociology; it is one of the methods by means of which we seek to train character in a desired direction; on any other conception of human nature it is the mere expression and cause of brutalisation.

The advocate of "freewill" calls in the testimony of consciousness to his assistance. May the Determinist not, with far greater reason, call as a witness the common experience of mankind? Do not people in ordinary life act as though Determinism were an established fact? In estimating a man's probable conduct in the future we reason confidently from his behavior in the past; in studying historical events we all argue from the performance of certain actions, the presence of particular motives; we urge the value of education as a method of training character, of good food and pure air as preventing demoralisation; we urge our children to avoid evil companions, because of their evil influence on their nature. What is all this but a practical admission of all that the Determinist holds? The possibility of self-culture, the whole commerce of daily life, are dependent upon the assumption that the same motives lead to the same actions, that these motives are the necessary outcome of man's heredity, education, and environment, and that we can, by taking certain steps, now determine our conduct in the future.

And, finally, is this hypothetical entity "will" anything more than a mere survival of the "wills" and

"souls" that our less educated ancestors believed animated nature? To earlier generations the world was literally alive. The stars, the sun, the moon, the "whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth," were credited with breathing the same life that pulsed in the human body. One by one these mysterious "souls" have died out. The "animal spirits" that were believed to govern the contraction of the muscles, the circulation of the blood, or the action of the heart, have passed away. Under the searching eye of science the human body is seen to be nothing more than a highly complex machine, more intricate and delicate in its operations than anything else with which we are acquainted, but with nothing fundamentally distinct from the world around. Here and there the old conception still lingers, as in the case of a "soul" animating the body, and another entity, "will," deciding action. These are the last survivors of a once powerful army, and their ultimate destiny is plainly indicated in the fate that has already overtaken their companions.

C. COHEN.

### Why the Book was Rejected.

By some accident the book had slipped into the Leicestershire Secular Sunday-school Library. The father of one of our scholars brought it to me, and looked at me with a reproachful air.

"Is this," he asked, "the sort of thing you want our youngsters to read and digest?"

I glanced over the pages, gave three groans, and consigning the volume to a convenient limbo.

Why was the book rejected?

Because, instead of giving the modern English child a modern English view of life and its problems, it gave what might be called an Egyptian view. Egypt is a very old country, and Theism had its temples thousands of years before the Christian era. The sun-god, Osiris, was supposed to preside over the destinies and experiences of every Egyptian, and rule with equal vigilance over the realm of the dead. The creed of Egypt, and Egypt suited the creed. It would have been a folly, even if it had been possible, to introduce Positivism into the halls of Karnak or the palaces of Thebes. The Egyptian saw all human things reflected in a divine sphere—matter reflected in spirit, body in soul, the visible world in the invisible, the will of man in the will of God, and the universe in Osiris. Nothing could be more proper to the special condition of the human intellect. But the propriety of one age may become the folly of the next. This animism, which thought it saw divine spirits in the sun and moon, and in every crocodile that basked in the sun on the banks of the Nile, has been gradually diminishing. We tend to view all things as a unity. We are economising our explanations. When man began to wonder, and asked Why, he placed God behind phenomena, and found satisfaction in believing that God pushed the universe along as a man pushes a cart. Fortunately, man was not content with his own God, and he continued to search for explanations in the qualities of objects themselves. The more he learned of qualities, the more he saw each thing and each occurrence as a single, positive fact, and the less need he felt for a spiritual existence behind. God is like the shadow of a pole in the tropics. As the sun of human intelligence moves towards the noonday height, the shadow lessens, till nothing is visible but the pole.

Osiris has fulfilled his royal functions, and his memory lies in an eternal tomb. Theism itself is dying. For practical purposes it is already dead; but its forms linger on many lips, and its traces still lurk inconspicuously in our literature. The modern tone and method of secular; but we still fondly retain Theistic survivals in our customs and our books. In our children's books, especially, we allow Theistic absurdities to creep in, which we should exclude with a smile from the columns of the journal, or from the conversation at the dinner-table. This practice shows a marked want of respect towards our young people. We have no right to impose upon them a Theism which we shut out from our serious politics and sociology. We live in England, not Egypt.

\* *History of Ethics*, p. 10.

The book which I rejected contained three stories. The first was a story of rustic life, and, among other things, described how a certain sensible Farmer Grey improved his land by manuring and draining it. "If God wills," he said, with pious inconsequence, "ere many years go by it will yield good crops." Yet the excellent result was manifestly the work of the guano, and not of God at all. Farmer Grey advised his neighbors to fill up their cesspools. "I have a notion," remarked the farmer to a poor village dame, "that God lets bad smells come out of such muck just to show us that, if we breathe them, they will do us harm; the bad air which comes out of the muck mixes with the air we are always taking into our insides, and that makes us ill. You had one child die last summer of fever, and one is now ill." This is a very thin species of theology. God's bad smells would have continued to carry off the village population if Farmer Grey had not stepped in with his homely fragments of science. Sanitation is not the least of the enemies of the God-idea. People begin to see so clearly the direct connection between typhoid fever and dirt, and between cleanliness and health, that the divine intervention appears to be less and less called for. It has yet to be proved that soap, without the aid of heaven, is powerless to remove the smut if unassisted by soap. If, however, heaven and soap appear to be unrelated agencies, what must one think of battle and prayer? Our theological story-book gives us this full-length portrait of a Christian soldier:—

"James, who had been taught to pray when he was young, became a man of prayer. Yes; the dark, sunburnt, fierce-looking soldier prayed every day, morning and night, lying down or marching; and often in the midst of battle, while bullets were flying about, shells were bursting, and round shot were whistling through the air. He read the Bible, too, and spoke of it to others."

I believe the late-lamented Blondin managed to cook a mutton chop while standing on a tight-rope which was suspended over the Falls of Niagara. But this was a very fifth-rate performance compared with the skilful James's capacity for carrying on systematic devotions in the midst of a storm of bullets, shells, and round-shot. I am not surprised that the intense effort rendered him "fierce-looking." But I am very much puzzled to know what he could have prayed about all this time. If for peace, he must have had more faith than wit. If for his own safety, he must have been an insufferable prig. I can only suppose he must have been praying for an explanation of the fact that he, though a follower of a teacher who counselled non-resistance, should have become a sunburnt, fierce-looking soldier, promenading amid round-shot and shells.

The Bible, which was so intelligently read by the fierce-looking James, frequently turns up in these pages. The second story in the collection narrates the adventures of Tom Trueman, the sailor. Tom sees the seventy-seven and more wonders of the world, and, amid them all, he frequently meets the Bible—a book which, so the author tells the children, was "written by God's order."

On a certain Pacific island Tom and his companions encounter some natives, whom they suspect of cannibalism; but they are reassured when they find that the chief reads, every day, the Bible "in his own language." We English ought to envy the ex-cannibals, since we do not possess the Bible in our own tongue. It is notorious that there are large portions of the Authorised Version (and even of the Revised) which are absolutely incomprehensible to the man in the street. Take, for example, the following verse from Isaiah:—

"They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord."

The average shopkeeper or City clerk would be nonplussed by this dark verbiage. But perhaps the ex-cannibals, whose digestive faculties have had a peculiar and superior training, can assimilate such passages without difficulty. The narrator of Tom Trueman's exploits, however, does not name the portions of Scripture to which the Pacific islanders gave special study. I have often wondered if the missionaries give a complete and

unabridged translation of the Bible to their Fijian and other converts; and, assuming that they do so, I wonder still more how the Fijians, etc., meet the literary problems which have taxed the ingenuities of European critics.

The third story in this objectionable book entertains the juveniles with accounts of the labors and hairbreadth escapes of Canadian settlers, and the tale winds up with an expression of thanks to God "for having brought them to a country where their industry and perseverance had been so fully rewarded." This is truly an insolent sort of ethics. A fair-dealing deity would reward industry in any country whatsoever. Honest work should, from the point of view of abstract morality, always receive its meed. God has no right to make capricious acknowledgment of virtue. In Paradise or in the desert labor should be alike blessed.

Juvenile literature is flooded with these obsolete and worse than Egyptian views of life and nature. Parents should refuse to purchase, or place in the hands of their children, books which contain antiquated doctrines of Providence, prayer, and revelation. Booksellers and publishers would take the hint. F. J. GOULD.

### Acid Drops.

REV. WILLIAM PIERCE, preaching at the West Hampstead Congregational Church on "The Moral Lessons of the Dreyfus Case," had the effrontery to say that "most of the defenders of Dreyfus were Protestants." There are certainly some Protestants, like Pressensé, fighting for Dreyfus; but the most conspicuous and energetic friends of that unhappy man are Freethinkers; such men, for instance, as Zola, Clémenceau, Mirabeau, Gohier, Guyot, and Jaurès. Probably the Rev. William Pierce reckons all Frenchmen who are not Catholics as Protestants. But that only shows his ignorance.

This reverend gentleman also hoped that Dreyfus would be the means of winning gentler treatment for the Jews throughout Europe. He also trusted that "the case would yet reveal the workings of Christ to all the world." Vicarious atonement again! God has poor Dreyfus tortured in order to create sympathy with the Jews. That appears to be the divine method, according to the Rev. William Pierce; but, if a man were to act in this way, he would be an object of execration.

It is amusing to hear the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes denounce the "perjurers and forgers" of the French General Staff. One would imagine that Mr. Hughes himself had a perfectly clean record, whereas on several occasions he has been proved to have kept at a very respectful distance from the truth.

Naturally this vehement sentimentalist joins at the top of his voice in the cry for boycotting the Paris Exhibition. He does not pause to reflect that if every country that had committed a great crime were boycotted, no two nations would be holding any intercourse with each other. Nor does he stop to think whether it is wise and just to punish the innocent with the guilty. There are hundreds, thousands, of Frenchmen who have made a more gallant fight for Dreyfus, truth, and justice than Mr. Hughes has made for anything in the whole course of his life.

"Hubert" of the *Sunday Chronicle*—that is to say, Mr. Hubert Bland, the Fabian Socialist—contributed to the last number of that journal a long and in some respects interesting article on the Dreyfus case. In the course of it, however, there was some great nonsense about the Catholic Church in France. "French Catholics," according to Mr. Bland, "have suffered bitter things at the hands of the Republican Government. They have been plundered, outraged, and insulted. Successive ministries, men of Panama, have gone out of their way to inflict wound after wound upon Christian susceptibilities. Attempts have been made, with official cognisance, to teach Atheism in schools, where the Christian symbols have been torn down from the walls in the sight of little children. The French Catholics would be something more or less than human did they not seek any and every opportunity of hitting back at their tyrants."

Mr. Bland has evidently been listening to loose Catholic cackle, or he has been drawing upon his own imagination. There is not a word of truth in the whole of this diatribe against the French Government, except in the passage relating to Catholic symbols in the public schools. It is true that the Government has prevented Catholic teachers from putting up Christian pictures, crosses, and madonnas, in the schools which belong to the nation, and in which the children of

parents of all varieties of religious and irreligious opinion have to be educated. But to complain of *this* as an act of injustice is very strange on the part of a Socialist who once stood as a "secular education" candidate for a seat on the London School Board. As for the rest of Mr. Bland's diatribe, we tell him—and defy him to prove the contrary—that it is falsehood and rubbish. The Catholics cry out that they are ill-used when they are prevented from domineering over Protestants and Freethinkers; and that is all there is in it.

No attempt has been made, for instance, to teach Atheism in the French schools. In some cases, as in Paris, religious words, such as God, have been cut out of the school-books, on the ground that if teachers explain such words to their scholars they cannot help imparting either religious or irreligious instruction. But this is not teaching Atheism. It is merely banishing religion from the public schools—the schools of the nation, the schools of *all* denominations, and therefore of *no* denomination. No doubt Mr. Bland has a sneaking love for Catholicism, as he has for Militarism and Conservatism, but he might express his affection a little less crudely.

Why on earth does not the Lord Chancellor, or somebody whose duty it is, send round to all magistrates' courts a copy of the proper form of affirmation under Bradlaugh's Oaths Act? Only the other day, at Porth Police Court, Mr. Frederick Heyward, visiting inspector of the Muller's Orphanage Institution, was called as a witness, and, on his applying to take the affirmation instead of the oath, the Clerk stated that they had not the form in court. Mr. Heyward then proceeded to say that he would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This, however, did not satisfy Sergeant Edwards, who demanded that the witness should go through the regular formality, which the worthy officer furnished on a slip of paper. And this is what it was: "I swear by the Almighty God that I answer at the great Day of Judgment that I speak the truth, etc., etc." The witness said he did not know it was necessary to swear in making an affirmation, but he read out the formula before him, and then gave evidence. It was a most ridiculous farce, and such scenes should be put an end to.

Alexander Gray, wearing the Salvation Army uniform, was summoned at Bournemouth for arrears on an order for the maintenance of his wife. In his pious and playful way he declared that the voice of the Lord told him not to pay, but the magistrate called it a poor excuse and sent him to prison for a month. The voice of the magistrate is more important than the voice of God in these cases.

Sir Archibald Geikie, the eminent geologist, addressing the geological section of the British Association at Dover, said that one hundred million years would suffice for that small portion of the earth's history which is registered in the stratified rocks of its crust. What price Genesis and its six thousand years now?

Some of the American clergy affect to see the hand of God in the sudden death of Colonel Ingersoll. But they don't seem to see the hand of God in the sudden death of Christian ministers. Only the other day we noticed two cases of this kind in one morning newspaper. Rev. W. H. Langworthy, chaplain to the Lambeth Workhouse, fell down dead in the Clapham-road; and the Rev. W. J. Lowenberg, rector of Penshaw, near Durham, died suddenly in the midst of divine service at St. Mary's Parish Church, Whitby.

The following letter, written by a Christian minister to the *Chicago Times-Herald*, speaks for itself:—

"DEAR SIR,—In your valuable editorial, 'The Hopeless Scene at Colonel Ingersoll's Bier,' printed Sunday, July 30, you had little thought of inflicting distress upon a far-off and insignificant individual, but so it is. I have in my little church household a few admirers and distant followers of Ingersoll, who, without intent, give me hours and hours of uneasiness for their souls. (May God have mercy on them!) One of them reads to me your quotation from the *Omaha World-Herald* and your comment thereon: 'There is no answer to these questions in the empty "logic" of the Agnostic,' and the conclusion of your article: 'The unbeliever's death may be beautiful and painless to him. But to those he leaves behind? Let the scene at the bier of Ingersoll answer.'

"Now, these followers of Ingersoll place before me the antithesis of this, recalling a funeral scene occurring in our little church but a few days before Ingersoll's death. They ask honestly:—Mr. McWilliams, if the scene at Ingersoll's bier represents the eternal loss to the wife and daughters of this unbeliever, please tell us what was represented around the coffin of your brother Strumlich, whom we buried last week from your church, whose widow and daughters and sons, strong, full-grown men, and all, like the deceased, thoroughly consistent Christians all their lives, now had to be removed by the united force of friends in order to permit the undertaker to finish his work? When the piercing shrieks and awful screams which revealed their grief shocked

the entire assemblage, and the persistent swoon of one daughter and one son threw us all into the liveliest fear for the result? Now, what was represented there? Please tell us.' I acknowledge inability to reply—this entire family being intimately known as actual 'pillars of the Church,' whose faith in the promises of God was as near like the typical 'grain of mustard seed' as any I ever encountered in a long life of preaching and criticising religious principles. Who will, through God, come to my relief? Prayerfully yours,  
(REV.) WILLIAM MCWILLIAMS,  
"Liberal, Kan."

An Austrian astronomer states that next year a comet will buck the earth into kingdom come, and toss it disembowelled to fertilise the furrows of space. Some Christadelphians near Bournemouth seem already to have espied this comet in the shape of a red star in the heavens. That being one of the signs of the millennium, the local Christadelphians, it is said, determined to cease business and take passages to Jerusalem. It was even hinted that a prominent Christadelphian had already departed wearing a new suit of clothes and mounted on a black horse! As the "end of the world" was expected to take place last Saturday, it is obvious there must have been some mistake in the calculations.

Here is a little believer safe for a golden harp for which he has graduated with a "mouf organ." At an inquest held at Stratford "the kid" was asked: "Do you know what it is to tell the truth?" Witness: "Yus." The Coroner: "And if you tell a lie, what then?" Witness: "Go to 'ell." The Coroner: "What happens if you tell the truth?" Witness: "Then I am safe for 'eaven, guv'nor." His evidence was accepted.

There is a freedom from cant about the *Church Gazette* which makes that journal much more readable than any other Church paper. Relative to the requirement of a City incumbent that we should kneel at prayers, the *C. G.*, in its latest issue, says: "Unless kneelers are of a Spartan type, kneeling becomes vivisection, and to pray in torture may be saintly, but is a difficult feat to perform. To respond to the cry, *Sursum corda*, one ought to forget that such a thing as one's body exists; but if muscles, bones, sinews, nerves, and all the rest of it, are aching, how can one?"

Some while ago Mark Twain wanted rest, and to ensure it he left the United States for England. He took some trouble to hide from his acquaintance the place where he proposed to immure himself. His friends wearied of the silence concerning him, and Bronson Howard, the dramatist, wrote a letter addressed "Mark Twain, God-knows-where, England." It was no small testimonial to Mark Twain's celebrity that the letter was delivered. Mark Twain at once replied that he considered it fortunate Mr. Howard had sought for him (Mark Twain) by means of an appeal to the Almighty. "If the letter had been directed 'Devil-knows-where,' it never would have reached me." The challenge was at once accepted, and it may be added that Mark Twain's prediction proved incorrect.

A little American girl is very much up to the times. At her prayers, the other night, after the usual appeal for her loved ones, she added: "And please, Lord, take great care of yourself, too, for if anything should happen to you we couldn't have anyone but Mr. McKinley to depend upon, and he isn't doing as well as papa expected."

A hairdresser at Wolverhampton has been prosecuted for exercising his business on the Lord's Day. Considerable discussion took place on the point whether a hairdresser is a tradesman. The stipendiary decided that defendant was a tradesman, as he had sold a stick out of his window four years ago. A small fine was imposed. At Merthyr, Benjamin Lewis, who set up the defence that he was a "professional" man, and not a tradesman, was fined five shillings for a similar offence.

Contemptible cant is the only phrase applicable to recent utterances of sky-pilots on Kipling's works. Let the reader call to mind all the stark, staring, shocking obscenity of the Old Testament, and then listen to the hypocritical comments of the Pharisees who sit in judgment on Kipling's productions. The Rev. W. W. Rand, of the American Tract Society, says: "I would not have Rudyard Kipling's works in my library, and certainly not in my Sunday-school. I consider him decidedly dangerous and pernicious to young people." The Rev. Robert Deeming says: "The language is decidedly strong for impressionable boys, and Kipling's works are not such as one can wisely and prudently offer to children." The Rev. T. Olmstead says: "We have none of Kipling's works in our library for children. Womanhood should be sacred, and Kipling makes a mockery of it."

Now did ever one hear such contemptible, canting, inconsistent bosh? With a Bible absolutely reeking with filth, in which woman is degraded to the lowest possible level, in which there are a whole series of stories calculated to corrupt "impressionable boys" by the vice of suggestion—with all

this hanging round their necks, these sky-pilots have the impudence to find fault with Kipling as unsuitable reading for the young! Suppose he is profane, there is nothing in his pages so demoralising as the undisguised nastiness of so-called Holy Writ.

The father of a boy who died in Guy's Hospital after being run over in the street complained to the Coroner that a fatal operation had been performed on his son, who was a Roman Catholic, before time had been given to call in the priest to baptise the boy. "As it is now," the father added, "it is awful to contemplate." The Coroner thought the complaint was "rather sentimental." Many other people will think so too, though the father's feelings were entitled to be as far as possible respected. Does it not, however, strike believers that, in such cases, it would be more in accordance with prudence and common sense to dispense with ceremonies that suggest to the patient that his end is possibly near?

Old Lady (to tramp begging)—"Why don't you work?" Tramp—"Me religious convictions won't allow me to, mum." Old Lady—"I never heard of a religion against honest labor. What is your religion?" Tramp—"It's a noo religion, mum, wot me an' my mates foller; it's called the 'Oly Horrier of Restful Souls.' It's somethink like the Protestant religion, mum, honly, instead of 'avin' one day of rest, we 'as seven days of rest a week. It's a bootiful religion, mum! I feels 'oly an' restful all over me when I thinks of it! Will yer kindly 'elp a pore, unfortinit religious man, mum?"—*Judy.*

The sexton of Weston Parish Church, near Spalding, seems to be a heavy-handed Christian. A little boy, eleven years of age, committed the heinous offence of laughing in church on Sunday, the 20th ult. The sexton thereupon struck him with so much violence as to bring on bleeding of the nose, and the boy became so faint from loss of blood that a doctor had to be called in. The sexton was ordered to pay five shillings and costs, and was cautioned not to strike boys in church.

In a rather small country town away down in the West of England the vicar and the Wesleyan Methodist minister both rejoiced in the possession of an exactly similar name. They were not the best of friends, and on one occasion the vicar received through the post a parcel duly addressed to the "Rev. So-and-So," which should have found its way to the Nonconformist's house. He forwarded it immediately to his rival, with a would-be dignified note saying: "If you had not assumed a title to which you have no right, this mistake would not have occurred."

Shortly after, as luck would have it, the Wesleyan minister received from London a bundle of written sermons, to serve for the next few months, which should have been delivered to the vicar. The Nonconformist seized the opportunity thus afforded him, and sent them across to the vicar, with the following note: "If you had not assumed an office for which you are not qualified, this mistake would not have occurred."

Canon Cheyne, preaching in Rochester Cathedral, asked: "What is it that emboldens us to face the probability that many of the narratives in the Scriptures respecting wonderful works of holy men may be unhistorical?" Well, what is it that imparts this courage? Canon Cheyne says: "The answer is: We derive courage from the certainty that Christ has given us that the ultimate source of life is a moral Being." A curious reason for recognizing the fables of the Bible.

Mr. J. K. Sykes keeps things humming at Southend. He is a constant thorn in the side of orthodoxy. Plasters and plasters won't get rid of him. Naturally he is detested by the gentry, especially the anonymous ones. The local *Echo* sent a letter from one of these gentry, warning friend Sykes that there is a hell, as hot as anything, and plainly warning him that a place is booked for him in No. 1 oven. The answer doesn't put it quite so pointedly, but that is what he means.

The *Morning Leader* reviewer is not bound to like Mr. Mackenzie's *Brimstone Ballads*, but he need not have canted about "blasphemy," or denied the author's "sincerity of purpose." When he says that Mr. Mackenzie's work is of the "gutter order" he is simply talking wilful and ill-considered nonsense. One looks for better criticism than this in a paper like the *Morning Leader*. We hope our conscientiousness is not going over "body and soul" to the Nonconformist Conscience party.

A party of Freethinkers got out of that train at Victoria Station, Manchester, just before it was telescoped. A few minutes earlier "Providence" would have got hold of the victims. At least we are assured so by one of the Freethinkers who escaped the accident.

The *Phoenix* prints some sarcastic paragraphs at the expense of the Essex Baptists, who have allowed a Mr. E. B.

Barnard to open a bazaar in aid of their Chapel Building Fund. Our contemporary says that this pious bazaar-opener was warned off the English and French turf for dishonorable practices. The sentence was for the term of his life, and it still stands, although the Jockey Club has frequently been asked to remove it. "Yet the man convicted of such practices," the *Phoenix* exclaims, "is now a shining light amongst the Baptists, and takes a lead in their social ceremonies."

Janet Kingston, of Derby, a young nurse employed at the local hospital, committed suicide by swallowing strychnine. According to the evidence at the inquest, she suffered from religious mania. She was found dead, with an open Bible by her side, and a note addressed to her mother, in which were the words, "I died trusting in Jesus." Of course the jury brought in the usual verdict of "temporary insanity."

By the way, if too much religion is insanity, the inhabitants of heaven must be all insane, for they seem to have religion, and nothing else, in that establishment.

Christianity had to advertise itself in the beginning by suffering some species of martyrdom, but it goes to work differently now. After persecuting science, the Churches are seeking the aid of science in various ways. They put lightning-conductors on the top of their gospel-shops, and are even using electricity to illuminate what is called "divine service." Nor is this all. There is a church in Chicago which advertises itself by placing electric arc lights up the steeple, no less than 225 feet above the level of the street. What a sight it would be for J. C. and the twelve apostles if they could only pay the world another visit! Perhaps their astonishment would be equally intense if they entered that Chicago church and listened to the sermon.

The Rev. Mr. Sheldon, who has been agitating the religious world with the question, "What would Jesus do?" is asking for a million dollars to start a Christian daily paper. Yankee journalists say that isn't enough. Such a paper would have a very small circulation, for it would be so dull that hardly anybody would read it, and the million dollars for its maintenance would have to be subscribed over and over again.

According to a native Poona gentleman, if we may believe a *Daily News* paragraph, it is of no use for the government and the doctors to fight the plague in India. "God," he said, "had sent the plague to India, and when it pleases him God will remove it, though doubtless some civilian will get the credit of it." No doubt this sounds strange to English ears; but, after all, is it not the doctrine of all our Churches—at least on Sunday?

John Morgan has been let off with a nominal fine for an assault. He is an officer of the Boothite Army Corps at Leeds, and he tried rather vigorously to persuade a listener at one of the meetings to take his hat off. The consequence was a scuffle, in which the vigorous persuader got the worst of it; whereupon he took out a summons for assault against the man with the hat, and the stronger fist. Morgan lost in the police-court, however, as well as in the struggle; for the magistrate fined *him*, in spite of his protest that he was "only trying to convert" the other man.

William Medway Davis, a Whitechapel missionary, went to Hyde Park, recited Macaulay's "Horatius," and passed round the hat. When told that he would be prosecuted for this breach of the Park regulations, he replied: "All right. Last time I was convicted at Liverpool the Clerk of the Court dropped down dead, and two others died shortly after." This warning, however, did not save him, for he was subsequently fined forty shillings or twenty-one days—and the magistrate still lives.

The Spalding Vicar who has been painting with his own hand the exterior of his church and schools has had a good advertisement, if that is what he desired. It is not quite as certain that the buildings have had good coats of paint. He may be a better painter than preacher—that is quite possible. If so, he need not be surprised at receiving invitations to go round and paint other churches in Lincolnshire that are sadly in need of similar renovation. But if this is a genuine bit of work for the Lord's sake, the Vicar seems to have been an excessively long time engaged upon it—four weeks, and still it is not finished.

There is a saying to the effect that a man may do more work with his coat on than by taking it off. It is not to be doubted that in four days or less the Vicar might have raised the money for the painting, and given the work to those who earn their living by that sort of labor, and who might be counted upon not to make a botch of it. But, then, where would have been the advertisement—the numberless newspaper pars?

The snobbery of church-goers who profess that all men are equal in the sight of God when they approach his footstool in church is exposed in a recent issue of the *Madras Times*.

That journal details the experiences of a British soldier who, whilst in uniform, strayed into a local church, and took his seat in a back pew. A young lady who was sitting in it at once moved into another, while his pew was obviously shunned by other worshippers, who crowded into other seats, leaving this one empty. Tommy Atkins is made a great deal of fuss of when there is a bit of fighting to be done, but at other times he often gets the cold shoulder.

There are three persons and one God in the Christian Trinity, and there are three parsons with a parliamentary vote each for the vicarage of Lady Margaret, Walworth. The present vicar has just been placed on the voting-list, and the two previous vicars still remain upon it because no formal objection has been raised against them.

A split is threatened amongst the Peculiar People. A certain section of them, who appear to be frightened by the late prosecutions, are in favor of calling in a doctor to their sick children, while ignoring medical aid during their own illness. This would be a very weak compromise. If the Lord cannot cure children, he cannot cure adults either; and if the doctor is not necessary for sick adults, how is he necessary for sick children?

A Dublin firm, wishing to sell a certain "remedy" for epilepsy, advertises a number of testimonials from clergymen. This is a new use for sky-pilots. Perhaps it is thought that anybody would invest in a bottle of "Remedy" on the recommendation of a holy man of God; or perhaps it is thought that, as J. C. often cured epilepsy, his ministers ought to be good judges as to its nature and treatment.

The altar used to support the throne. Now, according to Emperor William, the throne supports the altar. It is the king at the head of the people, he says, who is the one really sure support of religion and morals at the end of the nineteenth century. This is perhaps true, as far as religion is concerned; but we doubt whether the Churches will appreciate the compliment.

Not far from Leicester (a correspondent writes) there is a Dame school where the following grace before meals set the Assistant Mistress and children thinking: "May the great architect of the universe make us thankful for the good gifts of his providence, and make us mindful for the wants of others." This sounds all very nice; but whilst the head dame indulges in pork pies, ham and eggs, stout, etc., and the produce of this miserable vale of tears, the want of others is met in dishing up a poor half-cooked rice pudding, chiefly water. It is high time to reach in the near future one class of the community with Freethought literature, and that is the teachers of both sexes throughout the country. This side of the question on Freethought propaganda has been overlooked.

### Stead on Buchner.

THERE fell into my hands the other day a copy of one of the late issues of the Masterpiece Library, Penny Popular Novels, edited by W. T. Stead. No. 80 is *Fathers and Sons*, by Ivan Turgeneff. Specially translated.

As it is announced as "abridged," there is no fraud or pretence about that detail; but, after a perusal of this sample, one is forced to think that condensation run mad is a poor way to honor a writer of whom the editor, in his Introduction, writes so highly. Certainly the fifty-eight small pages give, in this case, a very poor impression of Turgeneff as a writer. This opinion is not the purpose of this note, but something else.

Two sons—the expression of the new generation—are discussing the past generation, as represented by the father of one of the speakers, and considering what is to be done to bring the old gentleman up to date.

".....You ought to give him some sensible book to read."

"But what can I give him?"

"I think you might begin with Büchner's *Kraft und Stoff*."\*

To which we have a footnote, which seems quite Stead-like in its naive, child-like bigotry and slovenliness; it can hardly be ignorance:—

\* *Matter and Force*, a text-book on Materialism, which, at that period, was very popular in Germany, but it is quite antiquated at present.

Can any purpose be served by such stupid minimising of a great work? What ostrich-like tactic to first maltreat a well-known title by reversing the usual order, and secondly disrate it. Critical readers will, however, observe a slip. Whether intended or not, the editor uses a word which considerably qualifies the adverse judgment conveyed.

"At present" is not at all the same thing as "now," in using which word there would have been a suggestion of finality, which is not in the term "at present." Mr. Stead's English, of late, seems to partake of some of his general dry rot.

T. S.

### Special.

I AM now back in London from my lecturing tour in the North, and my first business, over and above my ordinary duties, will be the carrying forward of the project which has for several weeks been before the attention of my readers.

The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, is duly registered. It was no use waiting an indefinite time for further promises of support. The response to my appeal was gratifying and encouraging, and I have no doubt that the whole nominal capital of the Company—£5,000 in £1 shares—will be subscribed during the approaching winter.

The signatories to the Memorandum and Articles of Association are C. Cohen, S. Hartmann, C. Watts, G. W. Foote, R. Forder, A. B. Moss, J. G. Neate, and George Anderson. Many other representative Freethinkers, such as W. Heaford and G. J. Warren, were ready to sign, but there was no necessity for their doing so, and their goodwill is quite assured.

The Board of Directors must not consist of less than three members or more than seven. We start with the golden mean of five. Their names are printed in the Articles as first Directors. They are G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, Robert Forder, Samuel Hartmann, and George Anderson. Mr. Hartmann, it will be remembered, is the N.S.S. honorary treasurer; and Mr. George Anderson is a veteran and generous friend of the Freethought movement, who takes a large number of shares in this Company. It would hardly be possible to start with a more representative Board of Directors. Of course they all live in London, which is at present an indispensable qualification.

The first Board meeting will be held soon after this number of the *Freethinker* goes to press. At that meeting the Prospectus will be passed, after which it will be printed and sent out immediately. Forms of application for shares will accompany it, and those who have favored me with their promises are invited to fill up these legal forms and post them back to the Secretary, with the requisite remittance, which will be clearly indicated.

The Prospectus, with application form, will also be inserted in every copy of one week's (probably the next) issue of the *Freethinker*; and it is to be hoped that all who intend to take shares will do so with the least possible delay. If they can only take a few shares, or even one, it is much better than nothing. Perhaps they will be able to take more later on.

I am anxious to get this Company in working order as soon as possible. It is going to do a great deal of good for Freethought, by extending the circulation of the *Freethinker*, and improving and increasing the supply of Freethought books and pamphlets. Moreover, it will release me from much drudgery, and enable me to devote my time, energy, and thought more freely to the special work of my position. Now my life is slipping away. I do not mean that I feel at all near death, but I mean that even at my age every day assumes a graver importance. I would not lose an hour's opportunity of doing the best that is in me for the cause I love.

Another great advantage will be this. At present our agencies are scattered in London. What I propose to do is to concentrate them, and bring the N.S.S., the Secular Society, Limited, and the new Company all together in the same premises, or rather under the same roof. By this means the N.S.S. official expenses may be greatly reduced, as they should be, for they are much in excess of the work to be done at present. Miss Vance can easily attend to increased duties and her salary will be drawn from three sources instead of one. Moreover, I shall be "on the spot" for everything when I am at the offices, and the direction of affairs will be simpler and easier. It will also be possible for friends and supporters of the movement to see me in decent surroundings, and generally without the tedious formalities of correspondence and appointments; and I know from experience that this is a matter of very considerable importance, especially to the financial welfare of our party.

I cherish the hope of still greater concentration in the future, but I do not wish to attempt too much at once, or to raise expectations and risk disappointment; and therefore I keep this hope for the present as a personal dream, though I believe it will ultimately be realised. I am confident that, by pursuing the path of sound organisation, we may wield the forces of Freethought into a splendid and powerful army, with policy, resources, and discipline, and without the least sacrifice of personal freedom.

G. W. FOOTE.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, September 24, Athenæum Hall, London; 7.30, "After the Dreyfus Affair: or, Will the Church and Army Win in France, and What would be the Result to England and Europe?" October 1, London; 8, Leicester; 15, Manchester.

**To Correspondents.**

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 24, Birmingham. October 1, Sheffield; 8 and 15, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 22, Hull. November 12, Liverpool. December 10 and 17, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

LOUIS LEVINE.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Charlestown Sunday News*. Accept our thanks for your kindness in sending us so many American papers and cuttings.

FIAT LUX.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We are always pleased to receive usable cuttings. We are obliged to you for your good wishes.

S. E. W. H.—See paragraph.

W. MACKENZIE.—We have no room for a reply to what we never said. We spoke of the frightful crime of an avoidable war, and you start by saying that we "advocate war." What is the use of going further? You should really read what you undertake to answer.

C. SEDGWICK.—Thanks for the cutting, though we had already noticed it. You think it a strange thing that you have not noticed "a single voice of condemnation of the Dreyfus verdict from Roman Catholic priest, layman, or pressman." But there is really nothing strange in it. Cardinal Vaughan and his colleagues are shuffling in this matter. They know very well that the Catholic organs in France have pursued that unhappy Jew with frightful malignity and unwearied vituperation.

E. R. W.—Received with thanks.

MENTOR.—See "Acid Drops."

R. EDWARDS.—Mr. Schaller's obituary of the late Mr. Strong was already in type. We are glad to hear that the *Marylebone Mercury*, in reporting the funeral, spoke of Mr. Cohen's "eloquent" address.

T. WILMOT.—The notice of the opening of the Camberwell Hall fell, as it happened, in the "Cohen" paragraph, as he was the lecturer. We are sorry to hear that your members failed to see it there.

W. WADDELL.—Thanks for the Motherwell library list. The matter shall be seen to as soon as possible.

A. HINDLEY.—We are not likely to forget the part that Freethinkers have played in the great Dreyfus battle in France. Still, your reminder is well meant, and we take it in the same spirit.

C. D. STEPHENS, while regretting that he cannot afford to take more than one share at present, says that the new Company is "not merely desirable, but absolutely essential to the success of our movement."

C. A. STEEL.—This journal does not take sides in party politics, and never will while the present editor controls it. Thanks.

F. B.—We did not keep that number of the *Torch of Reason*, and cannot tell you the date of it, though it must have been about three weeks before the date of our reference.

G. J. WARREN.—Thanks for your kind letter. We quite understand, and it is all right as it happens.

L. WRIGHT.—We are obliged to you for the information, though we do not intend to refer to the matter again at present. Perhaps you will have the "pleasure" of seeing and hearing Mr. Foote at Bristol some time this winter.

MISS VANCE informs us that the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, is in correspondence with her concerning the open letter in last week's *Freethinker*. When the correspondence is concluded something will be said about it in our columns.

JAS. G. FINLAY (Coolgardie, Western Australia), who takes twenty shares in the new Company, writes: "I have often thought of such a plan as this, but did not like to obtrude the suggestion upon you. The advantages are obvious; but I think the greatest of all will be if you have more time to devote to the active fighting of the cause."

EDWAR (Edinburgh).—Please send your lecture-notices for the *Freethinker* direct to our office, not to Miss Vance.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.—We have received the following fresh intimations from intending shareholders:—J. G. Finlay, 20 shares; J. T. Haworth, 1; J. Therington, 1; C. A. Steel, 2; C. D. Stephens, 1; R. Davison, 5; H. G., 2; W. Mumby, 5; J. T. Ives, 2; Horace W. Parsons, 10; John Allan, 2.

R. W. PARSONS.—Your order was handed over to Mr. Forder.

R. H. H.—Sorry we cannot make use of it.

ALFAR.—Your suggestion would be a good one if we had time to carry it out. It shall be borne in mind. James Thomson's allusion in the *City of Dreadful Night* is not to any statue he had seen in London. "The melancholia that transcends all" is described by him from the suggestions in Dürer's famous drawing—a copy of which, cheaply framed, was one of Thomson's few artistic possessions.

JOHN ELLIS, newsagent, 14 Rockhouse-street, Liverpool, E., a member of the local Branch, supplies the *Freethinker* and other secular publications. He will be happy to hear from any of the late Mr. Stocker's customers.

W. DEY (Aberdeen).—Will try to give it a paragraph in our next.

R. DAVISON.—Thanks for your letter and enclosure. You ask when we will give you a chance of showing us a little of your Irish scenery. Not this year, we are afraid; but we hope to put you to the trouble some day, and perhaps next year. The only Irish city we have visited is Belfast, and the only Irish scenery we know is the neighborhood of the Giant's Causeway, where we admired the magnificent headlands.

T. ROBERTSON (Glasgow) acknowledges with thanks the receipt of parcel of literature for distribution from F. W. M. (Ealing).

SYDNEY H. SMITH.—We thank you for your trouble, but the Glasgow deputation is quite ancient history by now. Certainly though, as you say, the Rev. Dr. Hunter's speech did him much credit.

ST. THOMAS.—Nobody knows what Jesus was doing from twelve to thirty. One of the so-called Apocryphal Gospels describes him as working with Joseph and stretching doors when they didn't fit.

S. HOLMAN (Porth).—Pleased to hear that Mr. Heaford continued to have capital meetings in your locality, that he acquitted himself so well in debate, and that you are all anxious to see him again.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Aberdeen Free Press—West Ham Herald—Brann's Iconoclast—De Vrije Gedachte—The Ethical World—Sydney Bulletin—Daily News—Blue Grass Blade—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Torch of Reason—New Century—Public Opinion—Southend Echo—Isle of Man Times—Free Sunday Advocate—Truthseeker (New York)—Progressive Thinker—Sunday News (Charlestown)—Manchester Evening News—Liberator—Bexhill Observer—People's Newspaper—Metropolitan—South Wales Daily News—Glasgow Evening News—Consett Chronicle—New York Journal—Two Worlds—Phonetic Journal—Progressive Thinker.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

**Sugar Plums.**

MR. FOOTE is back in London, and will lecture this evening (Sept. 24) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road. His subject will be "After the Dreyfus Affair: or, Will the Church and Army Win in France, and What would be the Result to England and Europe?" This is a subject of great and grave interest to all, and especially to Freethinkers.

After lecturing at South Shields, and spending a couple of days in Newcastle, attending to literary work, Mr. Foote proceeded to Glasgow, where he found that Mr. Percy Ward was lecturing in the district and giving great satisfaction to his audiences. Mr. Foote lectured on the Wednesday evening at Paisley. There was a good meeting and some discussion. Another good meeting was addressed at Motherwell on Thursday. Mr. Baxter, who came over from Glasgow to sell literature, and had a fine display in front of the platform, said it was a record evening. The next night Mr. Foote paid his first visit to Carluke, where the hall was crowded, and several persons were unable to gain admission. On this occasion, at any rate, the Carluke audience was most orderly and attentive; it cheered pretty frequently, and sometimes laughed in spite of itself. Several questions were asked and answered, though the time did not admit of much discussion; but, if Carluke is no better than Motherwell in this respect, very little was lost. They say that Carluke is much better than Motherwell, which could hardly be beaten in its own line, producing, as it does, the rarest crop of orthodox fools who ever stood up to oppose a Secularist lecturer.

These week-night lectures in the Glasgow district were inaugurated under Mr. Foote's old Lecture Scheme. Up to that time nothing worth speaking of had been done to propagate Freethought in that populous part of Scotland. By its means, however, Branches were started at several fresh places, and the old Paisley Branch was revived. At present the Glasgow Branch—which is in a most flourishing condition—is financing these week-night lectures, as well as looking after the general arrangements.

On Sunday last Mr. Foote delivered three lectures in the Secular Hall, Glasgow. The morning audience was good, the afternoon's on the Dreyfus case was capital, and in the evening the hall was packed, standing room being occupied. For nearly two hours the meeting listened with breathless attention to the discourse on "Colonel Ingersoll: Living and Dead." Mr. Turnbull officiated as chairman all day. After the evening lecture Mr. Black begged to say a few words to his fellow Freethinkers. He observed that the death of leaders like Bradlaugh and Ingersoll ought to make them more zealous in supporting Mr. Foote, who was the true leader of the Freethought party in Great Britain. In particular he thought that all should try to make Mr. Foote's new enterprise, the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, a brilliant success. It would do great good to the movement, and would also enable Mr. Foote to devote himself more exclusively to the higher duties of his position. Mr. Black's remarks were loudly applauded.

Collections were taken during the day for the Glasgow Branch's propagandist work in the surrounding district. Six lectures, it was announced, had been delivered at various places during the preceding week, and many others were arranged for in the immediate future. It is obvious that the Branch means business in this direction. Altogether, the prospect is a bright one in that part of Scotland. Mr. Baxter is vigorously pushing the sale of literature, Mr. Robertson is a most capable and zealous secretary, and the Committee are attentive and hardworking. We wish some other parts of the country would take an example from Glasgow.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured to a good audience in the Athenæum Hall, London, upon "Dreyfus and the Shame of France." He was in excellent form, and his defence of the French martyr was enthusiastically applauded. It was gratifying to see so many ladies present. Mr. Harry Brown presided, and spoke briefly upon the subject of the lecture. A few pertinent questions were asked, to which Mr. Watts replied.

To-day, Sunday (Sept. 24), Mr. Watts lectures, morning and evening, in Birmingham, opening the winter session for the Branch.

Mr. Cohen reports that he has not yet heard anything from the London County Council about his sale of literature in Victoria Park. "Perhaps I may," he says, "after the Parks Committee meet." Perhaps yes, and perhaps no.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings on Sunday at Manchester. He is going to South Wales to hold a debate in the Workman's Hall, New Tredegar, on September 26 and 27, with Mr. Mayo, on Theism. Freethinkers in the locality should all make a note of this discussion.

The Camberwell Branch has discontinued the outdoor evening lectures, and is now carrying on evening lectures in the Secular Hall, which ought to be well patronised by South Londoners. The morning and afternoon outdoor lectures will be carried on as long as the weather permits.

Cardinal Vaughan admits that he was mistaken in calling Colonel Picquart a Catholic.

Mr. Joseph Cameron, in the *Phonetic Journal*, gives a long account of Ingersoll from a reporter's point of view. "Men whom I have reported," he says, "include Gladstone, Bright, Caird, Spurgeon, George Gilfillan, but none of these could approach the matchless rhetoric of Ingersoll. Those who looked upon the man—on the strong intellectual face, the leonine head, the massive jaws, the kindly mouth, and the sparkling eyes—and were brought under the influence of his magical voice—that voice whose range, flexibility, and melodious sweetness surpassed that of any other I have heard—could never forget him."

Mr. Cameron says the Colonel was very popular with pressmen. "His fervent declarations for the natural rights of man, and his eloquent and impassioned pleading for the disinherited and the lowly poor in all lands, roused in them feelings of admiration. From the purely shorthand-writer's point of view, despite his almost perfect enunciation, his clearly-cut and carefully-rounded sentences, and his splendid voice, he was in some of his loftiest flights difficult to follow. Old hands, grown grey in the work of note-taking, and who believed themselves equal to any emergency, found themselves, in the wild race, often left far behind in their attempts to commit to paper the torrents of words that came rushing upon them, resistless as the waves of the Atlantic."

"The characteristic of Ingersoll's utterances," continues Mr. Cameron, "was their lucidity, and, unlike Gladstone's, there were no parentheses within parentheses. If the reporter were capable, he would experience no serious difficulty in reproducing the *ipsissima verba* of Ingersoll. At the outset Ingersoll spoke slowly and with great deliberation, increasing

very rapidly in speed as he became influenced by the magnificence of his audience. His rate of utterance ranged from 100 to 170 words per minute, but seldom, even in his loftiest flights, did he exceed 180. The other day, looking over some old note-books, I came across one containing Ingersoll's tribute to Horace Seaver, once the editor of the *Boston Investigator*, and I send for reproduction a page of shorthand notes of the peroration of the address as the words dropped, red-hot, from the lips of the greatest orator which the Western Republic has yet produced." The *Phonetic Journal* reproduces the page of notes referred to.

Eloquent and obviously sincere expressions of grief over the death of America's great Freethinker have appeared in the Freethought papers of England. There is no less mourning among our English brethren than among the Liberals of America. There have not been, and there cannot be, paid to the memory of any man more feeling tributes than those of Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. G. W. Foote in the *London Freethinker*.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Judge Young, of Marion, Illinois, having been asked whether there is any truth in the story circulated by preachers, that Colonel Ingersoll was once indicted in his younger days, replies that he has taken the trouble to go through all the records of the Circuit Court, assisted by the clerk of the court and his deputy, and is "able to say that there is no indictment against R. G. Ingersoll in the files or anywhere on the records in said office, or in any office in the county." Judge Young adds that the clerk of the court will give any applicant a properly-authenticated certificate for one dollar.

The West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. has asked the Corporation to place another copy of the *Freethinker* in the library, as the copy at present supplied is used so much. It is pointed out that the ratepayers' money is spent on ten copies weekly of a certain paper that falsely describes itself as the official organ of the borough.

"It is to be hoped," the *West Ham Herald* says, "that anything that is done in this direction will be done quietly. We don't want to give any more free advertisements from the council chamber." Of course not. You would like to burke the *Freethinker* silently. But you can't do it.

"Toby" King's funeral was reported in the *Beechill Observer*, including a full reproduction of Mr. Foote's address, which was read by Mr. Forder. Our contemporary also gave a long account of Mr. King's "remarkable character" and varied career.

The *Motherwell Herald* reports that Mr. Foote's lecture "was a very able one, and was listened to with the deepest interest by a large audience." It also gives a fair report of Mr. Percy Ward's lecture. "The quantity of atheistical and freethought literature," the *Herald* says, "which found purchasers at the Secularist meetings, held this week in our usually orthodox town, was simply astonishing."

The *Conssett Chronicle* reports Mr. Foote's lecture at Stanley, notes that the hall was "packed to the door by a friendly and appreciative audience," and praises what it is kind enough to call his "magnificent peroration."

Mr. H. Percy Ward did good service by sending to the *Glasgow Evening News* a correction of the story it printed about Ingersoll and Beecher. It was that silly old crutch story, which does more credit to Christian imagination than to Christian intelligence. Mr. Ward gave Ingersoll's denial of the story and his racy comments. We believe that Beecher denied the story as well as Ingersoll.

### Ingersoll Stories.

Since Ingersoll's death a number of clever sayings have been appearing in the papers. When he was on his first visit to the Pacific Coast he was shown through the depths of the Comstock mines, and, as he came out, he remarked, sententiously: "If there's any hotter place than this, I'll join some Church." While he had his law office in Washington a bolt of lightning struck and practically burned a church situated in the same block with his office. Ingersoll said: "An offended deity may have intended that thunderbolt for my office—but what marksmanship!" In response to an inquiry about Robert Collyer, he said: "Collyer, the blacksmith? He is a great soul. Had such men as Robert Collyer and John Stuart Mill been present at the burning of Servetus, they would have extinguished the flames with their tears. Had Dr. Paxon and the Presbytery of Chicago been there, they would have quietly turned their backs, solemnly divided their coat-tails, and warmed themselves."—*The Sun*.

### The Irreducible Minimum.

In mediæval times, when disputatious monks and scholars apparently had nothing better to do, a subject of prolonged controversy was: How many angels can stand on the point of a needle? Nowadays a question under grave consideration is: How many Churches can stand on the needle's point represented by the minimum of Biblical belief? In other words, how far can the basis of faith be narrowed down? how much of the Bible can with safety be dispensed with? on how small a foundation can Christianity poise without danger of toppling over?

To most believers who have kept pace with the times—to all who have made themselves familiar with the results of what is called the Higher Criticism, or, as it might be better named, the New Criticism, though much of it is not new—the possibility of arriving at the irreducible minimum is a matter fraught with the most serious consequences. For, if that minimum should be found to be greater in bulk and in its bearings than is warranted by modern knowledge and established opinion, there is nothing for it but a total abandonment of faith in so-called divine revelation, and a search for some other and firmer basis on which to establish the regulation of life and conduct.

It does, indeed, seem a pity that Voltaire, Thomas Paine, Richard Carlile, and the whole host of heroes and martyrs of Freethought whose bodily remains have long since crumbled to dust, but who still live in their works and in the grateful remembrance of the present generation, could not return, and take one glimpse at the result of their labors. How pleased and amused would they be at the way in which the stubborn Church of their time has since relented, and now professes to accept of its own accord, and even to have discovered, the very truths for which it persecuted those who first gave them to the world. Can we not imagine the grim smile of the author of the *Age of Reason* when he found a modern rector resigning his living because he could no longer believe in the Bible, and suggesting that the Church he left "owed to the clever and much-maligned Thomas Paine an apology and a monument"?

The whirligig of time has brought round its revenges. The pioneers of Freethought did not live and suffer in vain. The Church has revised its judgment, and availed itself of conclusions it once condemned. The Bible is fast finding its level. A century or two hence it will be suggested from religious circles that Voltaire and Paine were open to criticism, not for their rejection of the Scriptures, but for their crude conceptions of the Power animating the universe, which, in their ignorance, they were pleased to call God. No one knows how far, in the progress of time, present superstitions will be either refined down or obliterated altogether. The world is ever young.

In the meantime it is interesting to observe the general anxiety of believers to unload. Like the sailors with whom, according to the Biblical yarn, Jonah embarked, they are prepared to pitch anything or everything overboard in the effort to save the ship. Or, to the simile, they are like aeronauts, who, finding that the balloon is sinking, begin to throw out ballast. If this relieving process continues at the rate it has recently gone on, one begins to wonder how much will be left. Certainly we are making rapid strides to the irreducible minimum.

Miracles have been thrust aside, if not as *à priori* impossibilities, certainly as being incredible from the lack of sufficient evidence. The Old Testament is merely a collection of Hebrew records in which one may, by searching, find spiritual aids and matters for reflection. The pronouncements ascribed to Jehovah, but obviously emanating from Moses, or from those who attributed them to Moses, are to be taken for what they are worth. They were mostly superseded by the new dispensation, and must be regarded as the efforts of an early race striving to attain, in barbaric surroundings, the spirituality which we find fully developed in the present day. The Genesaic cosmogony is, of course, too absurd for belief. The Garden of Eden and all that happened therein is a poem. The Fall of Man is a fiction, though the Redemption is a fact. The prophets either wrote after the events, or their predictions

were mere efforts of human sagacity, and sometimes were falsified by events. Heaven, as opened up to us in the Apocalypse, is mere Oriental symbolism, not of the highest order. Hell is an invention not to be entertained for a moment. The Immaculate Conception is a mystery about which one may legitimately entertain doubts. Demoniacal possession was a delusion of the time that we are not at all called upon to believe in to-day. Some of Christ's injunctions were addressed to his disciples, and had reference mainly to the period in which they were uttered. Not all of them are applicable to the changed conditions in which we now live.

St. Paul spoke for himself. We are not absolutely bound by what he was pleased to say; it is enough to be saddled with all that is attributed to his Master. St. James was a minor personage who had a craze about restoring the sick by anointing with oil and laying on of hands. No man in his senses, no judge on the Bench, could accept anything of that kind to-day. It is not to be supposed that all who believe not will be damned. The heathen may be excused for their ignorance. Infidels may find their way into heaven if they are sufficiently respectful to the "bishops, clergy, and ministers of all denominations." After all, they may not make the acquaintance of the devil—for the devil is dead.

As to the predicted end of the world and the second coming of Christ, the Apostles were a little too previous in their expectations, and the prophet Baxter is an ass. The world seems likely to continue long enough to cover any leases or other time engagements into which Christians may choose to enter. As for the authenticity of many of the books of Scripture, nothing is certainly known, and life is too short to go fully into the matter. In the Scriptures we know we have eternal life, but what it will be like no one knows, and many busy people have not time to care.

The general idea is to go to church or chapel regularly because it is respectable, and to invite the clergyman or minister to one's house because he may be socially agreeable.

This seems to be about the irreducible minimum we have arrived at. It serves. There is something so delightfully vague and indefinite about it that it answers all purposes. We are not troubled with doubts, because anything that is too incredible to accept or too absurd to follow we abandon at once. It is unessential—not worth while disputing about: we never have accepted it. Still, we believe in the Bible as containing the Word of God somewhere or other. If you are so rudely persistent as to inquire in what part—well, ask the vicar of our parish. We have subscribed for his new reredos, and he ought to be able to answer a simple question like that.

Such is the present state of theological belief—not in Salvationist circles, but in Society. The only point on which it is possible to extract from the modern and cultured worshipper a definite opinion is that he believes there is a Superior Power—and there, having got down to the irreducible minimum, he seems for the present disposed to remain.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### Twice Told Tales.

ONE of the results of the composite character of the book of Genesis is that many events are related twice, and, as might be expected, one version often contradicts the another. In order that this fact may be clearly seen, the following examples, taken from the narratives of the Jehovist (who is also called the Yahvist) on the one side, and from those of the Elohist or of the Priestly writer on the other, are placed, so that they may be easily compared, in parallel columns:—

#### THE CREATION OF ALL LIVING CREATURES.

"And Elohim created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kinds, and every winged fowl after its kind.....And Elohim made the beast of the earth after its kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that

"And the god Yahveh formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.....And the god Yahveli said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the god Yahveh

creepeth upon the ground after its kind.....And Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them. And Elohim blessed them: and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.....In the day that Elohim created man, in the likeness of Elohim made he him; male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. i. 21, 25, 27, 28; v. 1, 2).

Here we have two separate and independent accounts of the creation of man and the lower animals. The second story is not a continuation, or a more detailed account, of the first story, as ignorant and uncritical apologists assert. The two narratives are the work of different writers, and are quite independent of each other. The first Creation story (Gen. i. 1-ii. 4) is from the pen of the Priestly writer who lived after the Exile, and who, amongst other peculiarities, speaks of the Hebrew deity either as Elohim (*i.e.*, God) or as El Shaddai (God Almighty). The second Creation story (Gen. ii. 4-25) is by the Jehovist, who lived two or three centuries before the Exile, and who in speaking of the Jewish god almost invariably employs the proper name Yahveh.

The two accounts are mutually contradictory upon many points. The chief of these are the following:—

(1) In the first story man was created *after* the lower animals; in the second, he was made *before* them.

(2) In the first account man and woman are created together as the last work of creation, and are blessed together; in the second account the man is made first, and the woman at a later period.

(3) In the first narrative it is clearly implied that the man and woman were created in the same manner; in the second they were not created at all, the man being made out of dust, and the woman formed out of one of the man's ribs.

(4) In the first account man is made the lord of all the earth, which implies that he was free to go and live where he pleased; in the second account he is placed in a garden and given work to do.

(5) In the first narrative both man and woman receive the common name "Adam"; in the second the man only is so named, and he gives a name denoting sex to the woman himself. He also knows exactly how the woman was made, though he is stated to have been in a "deep sleep" while the work was being done.

#### THE WICKEDNESS OF THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE.

"And Yahveh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Yahveh that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And Yahveh said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground" (Gen. vi. 5-7).

#### COMMAND TO NOAH TO TAKE ANIMALS INTO ARK.

"Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee seven and seven, the male and his female; and of the beasts that are not clean two, the male and his female; of the fowl also of the air, seven and seven, male and female: to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. ....And Noah did according unto all that Yahveh commanded him" (Gen. vii. 2, 3, 5).

formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto the man to see what he would call them: and whatsoever the man called every living creature that was the name thereof. ....And the god Yahveh caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: and the rib which the god Yahveh had taken from the man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called man-ess (*Ish-shah*) because she was taken out of man" (*Ish*) (Gen. ii. 17, 18, 19, 21-23).

"And the earth was corrupt before Elohim, and the earth was filled with violence. And Elohim saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And Elohim said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold I will destroy them with the earth" (Gen. vi. 11-13).

"And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of the fowl after their kind, and of the cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. ....Thus did Noah; according to all that Elohim commanded him, so did he" (Gen. vi. 19-22).

#### THE GOING INTO THE ARK.

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of everything that creepeth upon the ground, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, male and female. ....And Yahveh shut him in" (Gen. vii. 7-9, 16).

"In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; they, and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after its kind, and every fowl after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh where-in is the breath of life" (Gen. vii. 13-15).

#### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FLOOD.

"For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ....And it came to pass after the seven days that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. ....And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. ....and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth" (Gen. vii. 4, 10, 12, 17).

"In the six hundred years of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. ....And the flood was upon the earth; and the waters prevailed, and increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters" (Gen. vii. 11, 17, 18).

#### THE DEATH OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE.

"And every living thing was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and creeping thing, and fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark" (Gen. vii. 23).

"And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both fowl, and cattle, and beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth: and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land, died" (Gen. vii. 21, 22).

#### THE ABATEMENT OF THE WATERS, ETC.

"And the rain from heaven was restrained; and the waters returned from off the earth continually. ....And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro until the waters were dried up from off the earth. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him. ....And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; and the dove came in to him at eventide: and, lo, in her mouth an olive leaf plucked off. ....And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent for the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more. ....And Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried" (Gen. viii. 2, 3, 6-13).

"And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days. And Elohim remembered Noah and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and Elohim made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped. ....And after the end of an hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, were first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. ....And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth. ....And in the second month, on the seventh day, was the earth dry" (Gen. vii. 24; viii. 1-5, 13, 14).

From the foregoing paragraphs it will be seen that we have two independent accounts of the Deluge, which have been cleverly pieced together by some later editor—the only matters not common to the two stories being the sending out of the raven and the dove in one, and the statement that the ark rested on Mount Ararat in the other. The account in the column to the left is from the pen of the Jehovist; that on the right is by the Priestly brother. The latter, it will be observed, has a style and mode of expressing himself altogether his own. His language, to use the words of Canon Driver, "is that of a jurist rather than a historian; it is circumstantial, formal, and precise." It will be noticed that this Priestly writer pays particular attention to chronology, and knows the exact day, month, and year of all the

imaginary occurrences connected with the legendary Deluge, as he does also of the mythical Exodus (Ex. xii. 40, 41). In this writer's account of the going into the ark (Gen. vii. 13-15) we have an example of what Dr. Driver calls his "lawyer-like circumlocution," in which paragraph are also found two of his characteristic expressions—"the self-same day" and "after their kind," the latter also occurring in his account of the Creation.

The only important contradiction in the two stories is that relating to the animals which Noah was commanded to take into the ark—in one case, *seven* pairs of *all* birds and of "clean" beasts; in the other, *one* pair only both of birds and beasts without distinction. The reason why the Jehovist represents "the Lord" as commanding Noah to take in more of the "clean" than of the "unclean" animals will be seen from the following addition which he makes to the narrative:—

"And Noah builded an altar unto Yahveh; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And Yahveh smelled the sweet savour" (Gen. viii. 20).

But for the writer's foresight in making provision (in his story) for these sacrifices after the coming out of the ark, all the domestic animals would have been saved only to be cremated. But even this provision for sacrifice is only made in the *command* to take the animals into the ark; the writer forgot to make seven pairs of birds or clean beasts actually enter that vessel. In his account, as in the other, the animals went in "two and two," male and female.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

Book Chat.

THAT exceedingly up-to-date magazine, the *Butterfly*, is still a thing of beauty and a joy to its numerous readers. The September issue contains a most blasphemous contribution, entitled "A Vision of Judgment." It is appropriately and cleverly illustrated by that most profane artist, Mr. S. H. Sims. The same number also contains a portrait of the Despot of All the Russias, which would ensure the printer, publisher, and editor of this magazine a prolonged holiday in Siberia, or worse, provided it was issued in the Czar's dominions. Luckily, we shall be spared the spectacle of the *Butterfly* being broken on the wheel of officialism.

In a recently-published *History of the Religious Tract Society* it is stated that fiction has always played a most important part in the Society's propaganda. We know it! The R.T.S. is chiefly responsible for the continued circulation of that veteran yarn about Thomas Paine's death-bed. Lying for the glory of Gawd is still one of the fine arts with Christians.

Obituary.

We regret to hear of the death of Dr. R. B. Westbrook, whom we had the pleasure of meeting at our lecture in Philadelphia. He was a fine-looking, scholarly old gentleman. His death occurred on August 21, and he had reached the age of eighty. In 1839 he was a Methodist preacher; in 1852 he left the Methodists and joined the Presbyterians. He became secretary of the American Sunday-school Union in 1854. Leaving religious employment, he was admitted to the bar in 1863. Dr. Westbrook wrote some Freethought works, and was for three years President of the American Secular Union.

It is my painful duty to record the funeral of Mr. Strong, a well-known and respected member of the West London Branch, which took place on Monday at Marylebone Cemetery, East Finchley. There was a large gathering of his relatives and friends, some of whom are orthodox, and I feel sure that the rational and eloquent address delivered by Mr. Cohen must have made a good impression on the latter. The members of the Branch would have been more numerous but for the fact that they did not know of the event until very late.—F. SHALLER.

The goal which we endeavor to attain is scientific truth, the one test of which is that it will bear untrammelled and admitted investigation. Such truth must be not only verified, but always verifiable. It must welcome every test; it must recoil from no criticism, higher or lower, from no analysis and no scepticism. It challenges them all. It asks for no aid from faith; it appeals to no authority; it relies on the dictum of no master.—Daniel G. Brinton.

Correspondence.

DR. ST. GEORGE MIVART REPLIES.  
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Charles Watts has, in your last number, very courteously criticised my recent *Nineteenth Century* article on "Continuity." As one who has been a Freethinker from his youth, I venture to ask you to grant me space in your journal to make a few explanations to avoid misapprehension.

My paper was not directed to support the *truth* of any theological views held by Christians, but to criticise, from a new point of view (that of objective external facts exclusively), the modern doctrine of Anglican "Continuity." The original title of my article (which the editor, to my surprise, changed) was not "What Church has Continuity?" but, simply, "What has Continuity?" and I briefly considered the conditions of objects animate and inanimate in this respect.

Mr. Watts refers to some former publications of mine declaring "that there was some happiness in hell." But I did not really attempt to declare what *are* the conditions of faulty persons in a future life, about which, as yet, I have neither experience nor knowledge. My object was to show that, upon Catholic principles, there must be not only "some" happiness in hell, but happiness far exceeding that professed in this life by even the most fortunate of mankind.

Mr. Watts assumes that I am at a disadvantage in examining Church matters on account of my "theological training." But I never had any—beyond being brought up, as other boys, at ordinary English schools. Before I was seventeen, however, I became convinced that the Anglican position was logically untenable, and from that conviction I have never swerved. But my views have undergone many other modifications, such as freely-acquired knowledge seemed to me to make necessary. "To cease to change is to cease to live," and to cease to change as regard the intellect seems to me to cease to live the highest kind of life.

My critic thinks I attach an exaggerated importance to the fact that "abstractions" are but "abstractions." But looking back on my own life, and seeing how I have been subject to delusions due to a non-recognition of that truism, and also perceiving what widespread delusions now existing are due to the same cause, I do not think I have exaggerated the need of recognising the fact that "abstractions of abstractions" can never be "concrete existences."

My comparison of theology with biology Mr. Watts criticises on the ground that doctrines supposed to be revealed can never change. I am no theologian, and cannot pretend to decide whether, on Church principles, they *can* change or not. All I am certain of is the concrete fact that they *do* change. Many doctrines believed to-day are practically novel, and, for my part, I am convinced that anything which has been believed (*Semper, utique et ab omnibus*) is most probably untrue, as also that, speaking generally and on the whole, "that which is newest is truest." My contention, that the one thing needful is faithfully to follow the dictates of conscience, is declared by my critic to be "good advice, provided the conscience was properly trained." This qualification I cannot allow. As long as a man really thinks, however mistakenly, that a thing ought to be done, or abstained from, he is morally bound to do it, or abstain from doing it, according to what his conscience tells him. Even a Spanish Inquisitor would have recognised this, and said to the man he judged to be a heretic: "As long as you really believe your heresy to be true, you should adhere to it, though I am sorry to tell you that on public and other grounds I feel bound to let you be burnt alive for doing that which you are morally bound to do."

In conclusion, I would assure Mr. Watts I quite agree with him in hoping that education will soon diffuse amongst the many knowledge which, as yet, is the exclusive privilege of the few.

ST. GEORGE MIVART.

September 11, 1899.

Free the Woman.

Can man be free if woman be a slave?  
Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,  
To the corruption of a closed grave!  
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear  
Scorn heavier far than toil or anguish, dare  
To trample their oppressors? In their home  
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear  
The shape of woman—hoary crime would come  
Behind, and fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.  
—SHELLEY, *Revolt of Islam*.

The spirit of liberty is not merely, as some people imagine, a jealousy of our own particular rights, but a respect for the rights of others, and an unwillingness that any man, whether high or low, should be wronged or trampled under foot.—Channing.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Dreyfus Affair."  
BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Animated photographs.  
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and English Foreign Policy."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, E. Pack.  
BROCKWELL PARK (near Herne-hill Gates): 3.15, E. Pack.  
CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, F. A. Davies.  
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lectures every week evening at 8. Sunday, at 11.30, Stanley Jones.  
HAMPSTEAD HEATH (Jack Straw's Castle): 3.15, Stanley Jones.  
HAMMERSMITH (The Grove): 7.15, W. Heaford.  
KILBURN (Glengal-road): 7.15, R. P. Edwards.  
KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.  
MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss; 7, S. Jones. September 27, at 8, E. Pack.  
PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, W. Needs.  
S. L. E. S. (Peckham Rye): 11.15, A lecture. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A lecture.  
STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, A. B. Moss.  
THE TRIANGLE (Salmon-lane, Limehouse): 11.30, R. P. Edwards. September 26, at 8, E. Pack.  
VICTORIA PARK (near the Fountain): 3.15, W. Heaford.

## COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): C. Watts—11, "The Emancipation of Thought"; 6.30, "Colonel Ingersoll as I Knew Him."  
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday School.  
EDINBURGH (Moulders' Arms, 105 High-street): 7, Mr. Stratton, A lecture. Discussion.  
GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, A lecture.  
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, A Musical Evening, conducted by Mr. Lowe.  
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Hammond, "Theistic Fallacies."  
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "A Scientific Confession of Faith"; 3, "The Dying of Death"; 7, "The Origin of God." Tea at 5.  
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (1 Grainger-street): 3, Members' Meeting—important business.  
PORTH BRANCH (100 Primrose-street, Tonypany): 5, A Meeting.  
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, A lecture.

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.—September 24, Manchester. October 1, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—September 24, m., Mile End; e., Stratford.

R. P. EDWARDS, 9 Caxton-road, Shepherd's Bush.—September 24, m., Limehouse; a., Hampstead; e., Mile End.

E. PACK, 10 Henstridge-place, Ordinance-road, St. John's Wood.—September 24, Battersea Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—September 24, Derby. October 1, New Brompton. 8, Liverpool. 15, Birmingham. 22, Leicester. 29, Huddersfield. November 5, Birmingham. 12 and 19, Manchester. 26, Birmingham. December 17, Birmingham.

## POSITIVISM.

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

Information and publications on the Religion of Humanity may be obtained free on application to the Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

## Ingersoll's New Lecture.

# THE DEVIL

Price 6d. post free.

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

## Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH. Funeral Orations and Addresses. Handsomely printed and bound. 1s.  
THE DEVIL. 6d.  
SUPERSTITION. 6d.  
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. A Five Hours' Speech at the Trial of C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy. 6d.  
SHAKESPEARE. 6d.  
THE GODS. 6d.  
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.  
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With a Biography by J. M. Wheeler. 4d.  
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.  
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.  
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.  
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.  
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.  
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.  
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.  
TRUE RELIGION. 2d.  
THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.  
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.  
WHAT IS RELIGION? 2d.  
IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.  
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.  
GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.  
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part I. 2d.  
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? Part II. 2d.  
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.  
GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.  
THE DYING CREED. 2d.  
THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.  
HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.  
ART AND MORALITY. 2d.  
DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.  
THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.  
SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.  
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.  
SKULLS. 2d.  
THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.  
LIVE TOPICS. 1d.  
MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.  
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.  
REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.  
CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.  
CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

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. 13 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. 132,688.

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

Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 8s. 6d., 4s. 6d., and 5s. 3d. Dr. Palfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 3s. per doz. All prices post free.

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

**Books to Read.**

- A Concise History of Religion.** By F. J. GOULD. 3 vols. Vol. i., 2s. 6d.; vol. ii., 3s. 6d.; vol. iii., 5s.  
*The First Volume* unveils the superstitions of savages and primitive man, and delineates the characteristics of the religions of America, Finland, China, Egypt, Arabia, Chaldaea, Syria, India, Japan, Persia, the Kelts, Greeks, and Romans. *The Second Volume* takes to pieces the whole of the Old Testament literature, and explains the origin of the various parts. *The Third Volume* plunges into the most difficult historical problems, traces the growth of the Christian movement, the lives of Paul and Jesus (with due separation of the mythical elements), and affords a Rationalistic analysis of the whole of the New Testament books.
- Ethics of the Great Religions.** By C. T. GORHAM. 108 large pages, 1s., by post 1s. 2d.
- The Trial of Theism.** By G. J. HOLYOAKE. (The author's *magnum opus*; only a few copies in print.) Cloth, 2s. 6d. net.
- The Origin and Nature of Secularism: Showing that where Freethought commonly Ends Secularism Begins.** By G. J. HOLYOAKE. Cloth, 2s. 6d.
- A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction.** By M. GUYAU. Cloth, 3s. 6d.
- Modern Rationalism.** Being a Sketch of the Progress of the Rationalist Spirit in the Nineteenth Century. By JOSEPH McCARE. Cloth, 2s. 6d.
- London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

**FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT**

BY  
**G. W. Foote.**

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

**CONTENTS:**—Luscious Piety—The Jewish Sabbath—God's Day—Professor Stokes on Immortality—Paul Bert—Converting a Corpse—Bradlaugh's Ghost—Christ and Brotherhood—The Sons of God—Melchizedek—S'w'elp me God—Infidel Homes—Are Atheists Cruel?—Are Atheists Wicked?—Rain Doctors—Pious Puerilities—“Thus saith the Lord”—Believe or be Damned—Christian Charity—Religion and Money—Clotted Bosh—Lord Bacon on Atheism—Christianity and Slavery—Christ Up to Date—Secularism and Christianity—Altar and Throne—Martin Luther—The Praise of Folly—A Lost Soul—Happy in Hell—The Act of God—Keir Hardie on Christ—Blessed be ye Poor—Converted Infidels—Mrs. Booth's Ghost—Talmage on the Bible—Mrs. Besant on Death and After—The Poets and Liberal Theology—Down among the Dead Men—Snurching a Hero—Kit Marlowe and Jesus Christ—Jehovah the Ripper—The Parson's Living Wage—Did Bradlaugh Backslide?—Frederic Harrison on Atheism—Save the Bible!—Forgive and Forget—The Star of Bethlehem—The Great Ghost—Atheism and the French Revolution—Piggottism—Jesus at the Derby—Atheist Murderers—A Religion for Eunuchs—Rose-Water Religion.

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

**Christianity and Agnosticism.**

Now Ready.

A Correspondence between  
**A CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH IN SCOTLAND**  
 AND  
**GEORGE ANDERSON, Agnostic, London.**

This Correspondence was not intended for publication, and is all the more interesting on that account. It arose out of an application by the clergyman to Mr. Anderson for a subscription towards repairing his church.

Price Sixpence.

London: Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's-court, E.C.; R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

**NON-POISONOUS PAINTS.**

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

**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 teeth on platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18 ct. gold, 15s.; on 22 ct. gold, 2s. 6d.; extraction, 1s.; painless by gas, 5s.

**MRS. BERRY, the Mount, 86 Central-drive and Read's-road, Blackpool.**—Public and Private Apartments. Good accommodation. Moderate terms.

In 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.

“I have read with great pleasure your *Book of God*. You have shown with perfect clearness the absurdity of Dean Farrar's position. I congratulate you on your book. It will do great good, because it is filled with the best of sense expressed with force and beauty.”—*Col. R. G. Ingersoll.*

“A volume we strongly recommend.....Ought to be in the hands of every earnest and sincere inquirer.”—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

“Mr. Foote takes the Dean's eloquence to pieces, and grinds the fragments to power. His style, as a whole, is characterised by a masculine honesty and clearness.”—*Ethical World.*

“Mr. Foote is a good writer—as good as there is anywhere. He possesses an excellent literary style, and what he has to say on any subject is sure to be interesting and improving. His criticism of Dean Farrar's answers fully justifies the purpose for which it was written.”—*Truthseeker (New York).*

“A style at once incisive, logical, and vivacious.....Keen analysis and sometimes cutting sarcasm.....More interesting than most novels.”—*Literary Guide.*

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

Now Ready. Cloth, 192 pages, 2s. 6d.

**BRIMSTONE BALLADS**  
 AND OTHER VERSE.

By G. L. MACKENZIE.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY G. W. FOOTE.

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

Just published, price 2d., by post 2½d.,

**Men “after God's Own Heart.”**

BEING

BRIEF SKETCHES OF THE LIVES OF NOAH,  
 ABRAHAM, MOSES, AND DAVID.

By CHARLES WATTS.

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

**New Pamphlet by C. Cohen.**

**PAIN & PROVIDENCE.**

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

**HERB BEER.**

The best is made from

**THWAITES' 6d. PACKET OF MIXED HERBS.**

One Packet will make 8 gallons of real genuine Herb Beer. Directions with each packet. By post 6 stamps.

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

Agents Wanted.

## INGERSOLL'S LAST LECTURE.

# "WHAT IS RELIGION?"

*An Address delivered before the*

AMERICAN FREE RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION, AT BOSTON, JUNE 2, 1899.

Freethinkers should keep a copy of this Lecture always by them. It was Ingersoll's last utterance on the subject of religion. It shows him to have been a "rank Atheist" to the very end. Moreover, it is a summary of his life's teaching, and embalms his ripest thought.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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

Now Ready.

## THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

BEING

FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.,

BY

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

Beautifully Printed on Fine Thick Paper and Handsomely Bound.

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

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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

## PREPARE FOR WINTER.

2 Leading Lines with which I Defy all Competition.

### LOT 11.

- 1 Pair Pure Wool Blankets.
- 1 Pair Large Bed Sheets.
- 1 Beautiful Quilt.
- 1 White Tablecloth.
- 1lb. Free Clothing Tea.

All for 21s. Carriage Paid.

### THE "RATIONAL" OVERCOAT

TO MEASURE.

Single Breasted, 28s.

Double Breasted, 30s.

Materials:—Meltons in Black, Blue, Brown, or Fawn. Beavers in Black or Blue. Friezes in Grey, Brown, or Fawn Mixtures.

Patterns and Self-Measurement Form Free.

To my Rationalist Friends Everywhere.

I ASK one favor from you, and one only, and that is send for my patterns and quotations. Compare them fairly with what you can get elsewhere; then buy where you can get best value. If anyone buys anything from me at any time that does not give perfect satisfaction, I will return either all or part of the money. If there is any man or woman who would like to add a little to their income, I can and will give them a share in business. So let all such people write to me at once for further particulars.

J. W. GOTT, 2 and 4 Union-street, Bradford.

