

THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXI.—No. 40.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1901.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Mr. Stead Corrected.

MR. W. T. STEAD'S "Character Sketch" of Mr. G. J. Holyoake in the *Review of Reviews* was the subject of several paragraphs in last week's *Freethinker*. We pointed out a number of glaring mistakes, which we do not suppose he will trouble to correct. We also expressed our utter disbelief in what Mr. Stead wrote with regard to Mr. Holyoake's longing for a future life and reverence for the Word of God which he found in the Bible. Copies of our criticism were sent to both gentlemen, but no reply was elicited. Silence has been broken, however, by Mr. Holyoake, in answer to one of our readers. Mr. M. Rogers addressed him a letter on the subject, and received the following reply:—

Eastern Lodge,
Brighton,

September 26, 1901.

DEAR SIR,—

You write with such evident good faith that I answer your surprising question. Mr. Stead sent me a proof, but I was not answerable for his impressions and did not alter them. How can an Agnostic testify to the Word of God? I do not know that anybody now believes the Bible to be the Word of God. I told Mr. Stead there were noble passages in the Bible worthy of a God, certainly some, which we could not improve. More than fifty years ago I began the publication of the "Moral Remains of the Bible." I found things human in the Bible, but none of divine origin.

Thank you for sending me the *Review* to verify the grounds of your question. I send you the *Sun*, which will show you how far I am from any "passionate" longing for immortality.

Very truly yours,

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

This is sufficiently reassuring, if any reassurance were needed in view of Mr. Stead's chronic inaccuracy. At the same time, it seems a pity that Mr. Holyoake did not draw Mr. Stead's attention to some of his most serious blunders. It hardly meets the case to say they were his "impressions," as they were to become the impressions of thousands of readers who were very much at his mercy. Besides, they were not given as impressions, but as statements of fact. But it would be unfair to labor the point. Mr. Holyoake's great age entitles him to a certain indulgence, and he has his own rule of action in these matters. Perhaps he will not regard it as an ill compliment, however, that many Freethinkers are anxious not to see him a victim of misrepresentation, particularly when it takes the form of making him contradict what they have always regarded as his convictions.

There is no getting behind Mr. Holyoake's question, "How can an Agnostic testify to the Word of God?" That is if you know just what an Agnostic is. But a great many people do not, and are thus unable to see through Mr. Stead's nonsense. Probably a number of them, especially church-goers and Sunday-school teachers, to say nothing of Christian Evidence men, will go on saying, with a knowing shake of the head, that the famous Secularist, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, hopes for a future life and accepts a good deal of the Bible as the Word of God; and when they are asked for their evidence they will point triumphantly to the *Review of Reviews*, and the special article written by a journalist who interviewed him in his own home.

Whether some things in the Bible—as Mr. Holyoake now puts it—could not be improved, is a point that would last any critical debating society till the day of doom. But whether any passages in the Bible are

worthy of a God is easily settled. Many passages are not worthy of a man. But the superior passages are not worthy of more than a man, for we know that men have equalled them in "profane" literature. And as nobody knows what a God thinks, or how he speaks, any further discussion is unprofitable.

Metaphors are fine things in their way, but a Free-thinker should see to it that *his* metaphors do not play the game of the superstitionists.

Mr. Holyoake's article in the *Sun* on "The Disquieting Activity of the Dead" does indeed show how far he is from any passionate longing for immortality. We wish it could be read by all who have seen Mr. Stead's "Character Sketch." The bane and antidote would then go together. Mr. Holyoake quizzes Mr. Sinnett, who has been mystery-mongering in the *Sun*. Most of the article is jocular and amusing. But here is a serious passage which our readers will enjoy:—

"Mr. Sinnett tells us that 'the progress of knowledge has induced him not to treat Scriptural statements with disrespect, but to read them in a new way.' But you cannot honestly read them in a new way. What is meant by 'reading them in a new way' is disbelieving the truth of what is written, and putting a new meaning on the words, which implies rejecting the meaning sacred in the minds of the writers. This is not 'explaining it,' it is jugglery."

We commend this passage to the attention of the Bible "explainers," from Dean Farrar downwards to—well, any charlatan you please. The same sort of thing has been said again and again in the *Freethinker*—and disregarded. Perhaps the sinners will listen to Mr. Holyoake.

Mr. Holyoake does not deny the existence of disembodied human spirits in the air, but he asks for proof and suggests difficulties. Long ago he lost a little daughter tragically; many years afterwards he was asked whether it would not be a pleasure to hear from her at a Spiritualist table; and this was his answer:—

"I said it would pain me inexpressibly. One so beautiful and full of promise to be employed in so feeble and ignominious a business as making incoherent raps on a table leg, would be indescribably humiliating."

Some men it would be a joy to meet once more in another life, but "we all know a number of persons who do not deserve to live again, and who will be as hateful and pestilent as spirits as they have been as men." Perhaps so; but who knows? Both the speculation and the criticism are metaphysical, and the theme is hardly worth pursuing. Mr. Holyoake's objection is not to another life, only he hopes to be spared some of the things promised in it, and he desires to be "far from the maddening trumpet blare of a Jewish Paradise." Meanwhile this is the best world he has known, and he says nothing against it. Some good friends of his say they know of another world. Well, he differs from them, and they differ from him, and nobody is infallible.

All's well that ends well, as far as Mr. Holyoake is concerned. Mr. Stead is corrected, although indirectly, and the opportunity is afforded him of setting his readers right on the subject of Mr. Holyoake's religious opinions. Whether he will avail himself of the opportunity we know not. We scarcely think he will. He is so often wrong, but he likes to think himself infallible; not theoretically, perhaps, but practically; he *may* be mistaken, but he never *is*. Still, nothing is impossible; and even Mr. Stead may deviate into confession and repentance.

G. W. FOOTE.

Dr. Harnack and Religion.

AMONG the many erroneous statements recently made by Professor Harnack, which we noticed in the *Free-thinker* dated September 22, is the following: "The Christian religion is not one of many: it is *the* religion." Supposing this allegation to be true, all the great religions where the symbol of the Cross is not recognised are delusions and an imposition upon human credulity. This may, or may not, be so, but Christians are not in a position to consistently say so. There are no features in their faith that are not to be found in the other religions of the world. Now, if it were true, as Dr. Harnack states, that Christianity is *the* religion, is it not curious, from the Theistic standpoint, that a unique system should be kept from the world until about two thousand years ago? And, further, is it not equally surprising that, when it did arrive, only a comparatively few of the human race heard of it, and but an insignificant minority accepted it? Before the Professor's assertion can be regarded as valid, these two questions must be satisfactorily answered.

There is one important lesson to be learned from a study of the various religions which, in different countries and ages, have been professed. That lesson is, that we are not indebted to Christianity for the great principles by which life should be regulated. In the sublime morality taught by Confucius and Buddha we have the highest rules given for the guidance of personal and national conduct, and in the person of Mohammed appeared a most persistent opponent of idolatry. He is credited with destroying hundreds of idols, and with saying: "Truth has come; let falsehood disappear." Confucius substituted morality for theology, and, according to the Rev. Dr. Matheson, he

"held up the vision of an infinite in the finite—the establishment of a kingdom of heaven on earth, the existence of a perfected society, the organisation of a divine order out of the elements of time. He pointed to the prospect of a paradise below—to the advent of a pure civil government—to the possibility of a reign whose law would be a universal blessing; and in the suggestion of that hope was supplied the one feature which was lacking to give the religions of the East a power over the present life" (*Religion of China*, p. 97).

We would ask Professor Harnack, or any other Christian exponent, what better teachings can be found in Christianity than the following from Buddha?—

"Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred—hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature." "One may conquer a thousand men in battle, but he who conquers himself is the greatest victor." "As the rain breaks in on an ill-thatched hut, so passion breaks in on the untrained mind." "Let no man think lightly of sin, saying in his heart, It cannot overtake me." "As long as sin bears no fruit, the fool thinks it honey; but, when the sin ripens, then, indeed, he goes down in sorrow." "Let us live happily, not hating those who hate us." "Let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good.....the stingy by a gift, the liar by truth." "Let a man speak the truth; let him not yield to anger" (Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, pp. 128-131).

Here we have the great virtues of love, forgiveness, benevolence, truth, consideration for others, and self-examination, taught hundreds of years before the advent of Christianity. We have also, apart from Christ, the very elements of man's highest religion. How idle it is, then, for people to say Christianity is *the* religion.

Dr. Harnack's notion, that it is only the Christian religion that has caused the intellectual advancement of the world, is shown to be utterly fallacious by a careful study of the nature and influence of most of the other religions. Their leading representatives have, with few exceptions, adapted themselves to the requirements of their followers, which is evidence that a higher cultivation of the human mind has preceded, not followed, improved religious views. The history of Christianity furnishes no exception to this general rule in the career of theological ideas. It contains no special power to overcome obstacles to its progress. Hence the manifestation of its faith has invariably depended upon the intellectual status, or otherwise, of its professors. This fact inspires us, as Secularists, with hope for the future. Progressive intellectual discrimination is rapidly taking

the place of theological stagnation, and the clouds of superstition are being dispersed by the sunlight of reason. There is, as Herbert Spencer says, a germ of truth in all religions; and Professor Menzies, in his *History of Religion*—a work, by the way, which contains some valuable information as to comparative beliefs—corroborates this view by showing the genealogical relationship of all the great faiths of the world, down to the beginning of the Christian era. The old notion that there is but one true religion, and that all others are false, has had to give way in the presence of the fact that religion is a growth. It is either ignorance or prejudice that has fostered the belief in the error that Christianity is the only true religion. In speaking of the hypothesis of development, Professor Tiele says: "Its fundamental principle is that all changes and transformations in religions, whether they appear from a subjective point of view to indicate decay or progress, are the result of natural growth, and find in it their best explanation."

We may mention that whether religious belief has always existed among all races of men is a much-disputed point. Quatrefages, Professor Tiele, and other writers upon the subject, assert that a religious belief is universal; while Lubbock, Burchell, Burton, and Tuttle record instances which are thought to disprove the assertion. Perhaps the accuracy of the allegation will depend much upon the definition given of the term "religion." Dr. Newman, in his *Grammar of Assent*, defines religion to be "the knowledge of God, of his will, of our duties towards him." In this sense the belief in religion is certainly not universal, as the facts given by the four writers named above abundantly prove; but if by religion is meant the dread of some power or powers external to human nature, and the prostration of the mind to mysterious forces, then it is doubtful if any race or tribe has ever been found where such a "religious" belief has been absent. This, however, does not alter the fact that what is understood as religious belief by the Churches of to-day was not to be found existing among the Tasmanians, the Caffres, the South American Indians, the tribes of Central Africa, and many others. Tuttle, in his book, *The God-Idea in History*, gives a long list of peoples who had "no form of religion or worship." No doubt Dr. Tylor's contention is the right one—namely, that any "advanced ideas" now to be found among savage tribes are to be ascribed to some foreign source—that is, they were imported, and not "to the manner born."

The fact is, that in the infancy of the human race, as in the child of to-day, it was undoubtedly guided by what it saw and felt. Men beheld forces exterior to themselves which were more potent than any within, and, not being able to explain the why and wherefore of what they witnessed, and being filled with fear and wonder, they worshipped animals, the stars, sun, moon, and the various phenomena which surrounded them, and which were supposed to influence human affairs either for good or for evil. Upon these various natural objects were based the earliest known religions. Moreover, in the primitive state people believed that certain objects were animated, and that there was an incarnation and transmigration of spirits. Fire, air, and water were also the principal elements in primitive worship. Religion originally was not limited to belief in one supreme power in the universe, but it extended to many. Even the belief of the Israelites in one great principle was arrived at, after they had passed through various mythical and anthropomorphic conceptions. The evolutionary process had manifested itself in all religious faiths. Human intelligence has slowly developed by natural law, and it is not, as some persons allege it is, the result of a supernatural intuition of the species. Of course, the progress from some of the crude religions of the ancients has been gradual, and even now it is comparatively few who have entirely risen above the conceptions of the earlier civilisations. In China we have one of the oldest civilisations, and yet it was for ages impervious to foreign influences; and now it is only among the educated of its millions of population that Polytheism has disappeared. In Italy and Spain, countries whose inhabitants were among the earliest recipients of Christianity, superstition, including image-worship, still remains.

It is impossible for us to have an adequate history of

the primitive religions. Our knowledge or opinion in reference to them must be based largely upon inference. It has been attempted to show the nature of the first religions from the science of language; but philologists assure us that, however far back we may trace any language, we find evidence of its being derived from a previous one, for we cannot discover an original tongue. Thus, those who think they can begin with an original religion, and trace all subsequent ones step by step to the present time, will probably find, upon investigation, that they have been deceived. It appears to us that the most that can be done is this: Beginning from our present knowledge of the laws of thought, seeing how ideas are formed, and by what process, from the simple to the complex, all conceptions are formulated, we may ascertain whether we have reasonable grounds for believing that the earliest religions were a reflex of the crude interpretation given to phenomena by minds utterly destitute of scientific knowledge.

But, however the alleged supernatural religions originated, nothing is more essentially true than that Dr. Harnack's statement, that "the Christian religion is not one of many; it is *the* religion," is erroneous. When we find that a leading defender of Christianity indulges in such palpable mis-statements, it is no marvel that less-informed believers become ready victims to the delusions of popular theology.

CHARLES WATTS.

Patronising Science.

FOR some almost undiscoverable reason, there is a sermon preached in connection with the annual meeting of the "British Association for the Advancement of Science." With an exception here and there, the people gathered at these meetings are not professional religionists, nor are the subjects discussed directly concerned with religion. It is true that one section is devoted to anthropology, and here something *might* be said that would be extremely unpleasant to ears religious; but the speeches made in this department are generally framed and delivered with an eye to the susceptibilities of the religious world, and, while facts may be stated, awkward inferences are avoided. Still, there is an annual sermon preached, and one can witness the not very edifying spectacle of a lot of scientific men, any one of whom has probably forgotten more about this world than the preacher of the sermon ever knew, listening to a parson whose sole reason for assuming to guide men through a world of which he knows little is that he is the representative of another of which he knows even less.

I have said that the reason for this annual performance is "almost undiscoverable." Almost, but not quite. Partly it is a historical legacy from the time when the Church claimed and exercised a supervision over all thought, and when the absence of its *imprimatur* would have entailed consequences anything but pleasant to contemplate. There was a time when scientific writers with an eye to their own personal comfort found it expedient to preface their writings with a profession of faith, and to drag in favourable references to religion at every opportunity. The Russian official command,* that all instructors in geometry were, when teaching the properties of triangles, to remind their pupils of the nature of the Holy Trinity, was only a specimen of what was once tolerably universal. So far as official orders are concerned, that state of things has disappeared—we hope, for ever. But there is an unofficial order which is even yet powerful, and the power of social bigotry and social boycott may, and does, perpetuate pretty much the same condition of things. Hundreds, nay thousands, of educated men and women—scientists, doctors, teachers, and men of letters—know well enough what humbug these solemn pretences of the clergy are, and into what unrecognisable fragments modern science really has shivered Christianity. But, while many know this, few say it; and, along with a full consciousness of what a game of make-belief it all is, there goes on a laughably-solemn pretence of belief in the extreme value of religious ideas.

It is all a part of that general social hypocrisy, indolence, or want of thought, which allows the clergy, in virtue of their being the possessors of powers which no educated man or woman really believes them to possess, to interfere in education and in the Legislature, and usually with a sinister consequence. And all this suits the clergy well enough. Although there is not a single useful art or invention or discovery that owes its being to purely religious sources, and despite the fact that the deadliest enemy of rational and orderly development has always been supernaturalism in some form or another, it suits our religious leaders to pose as upholders of the higher life of the nation and as guardians of the national conscience, since by these means they are enabled to retain positions and emoluments which could not be retained if they were claimed upon a frankly supernaturalistic basis. And so the hypocrisy of some, the bigotry of others, and the timidity of all result in the spectacle of a clergyman pronouncing benedictions on the work of a body of men who have banished God from their calculations, eliminated him from their conclusions, and—in spite of their professions to the contrary—are, by their work, making a profession of religious belief more and more difficult to honest and thoughtful people.

This year the British Association met in Glasgow, and the sermon was preached in the Cathedral by the Rev. T. W. M'Adam Muir, on "The Agreement of Religion and Science." Mr. Muir has evidently got beyond the reconciliation stage, and has reached the more modern form of apology. "It is begging the question," he says, "to talk of the conflict of science with religion; it is scarcely quite accurate to speak of even the conflict of science with theology"; and, quoting Fisk with approval, he says:—

"The real historical conflict, which has been thus curiously misnamed, has been the conflict of the more crude opinions belonging to the science of an earlier age and the less crude opinions belonging to the science of a later age.....Religion as religion, theology as theology, must not be considered hostile.....It is the conflict of science with science."

There is a certain mental twist that seems inseparable from religious advocacy, and I quote the above as a healthy specimen of its kind. Religion has not been in opposition to science; it is the scientific conceptions of two different culture stages that have been in conflict. Surely anyone but a clergyman can see that this is a mere play upon words, and is, at best, only stating the old complaint in fresh language. It is perfectly true that, in the conflict between science and religion, we are witnessing a contest between discredited and accepted science, only it is also true that all religion is discredited science. When we examine any religion, we are studying a conception of the world that at one time answered to man's highest belief concerning the cosmos. The belief that the earth was flat, or that the stars were small lanterns but a little distance off, are beliefs as natural to savages as they are to children. The belief that the forces of nature are alive—which is the core of all religions—is likewise an inevitable mistake for men living as our primitive ancestors lived. These, and similar beliefs, constituted their explanation of the universe; it was their science, and, whether we speak of the religion of a modern man or the science of a primitive savage, matters little—they are really two names for the same thing.

Now, what the priesthoods of all religions, ancient and modern, have done is to cling to the earlier interpretation of the universe and reject the later one. The essential difference between a scientific and a religious explanation of a phenomena is that one is mechanical and the other volitional. The world's progress has shown clearly enough that wherever the two have been brought into conflict, and where a decision has been possible, the volitional interpretation has been discredited, and the mechanical interpretation has triumphed. But it is sheer dishonesty to say that, because all religion is fossilised science, therefore there is no quarrel between religion and science, only a conflict between a lower and a higher stage of culture. Take away this fossilised science, and what is there left of religion? Such an apology is as much a display of empty verbiage as is the further plea that "physical things may be physically discerned, and spiritual things

* Issued about 1840.

may be spiritually discerned, but the one is not a contradiction of the other"; as though there were different methods of getting at truth, or that any one truth can be quite independent of another. Such pitiful playing with words is enough to make one pause and wonder whether it is ever possible for a clergyman to use words in a straightforward, legitimate manner.

Like most present-day "advanced" preachers, Mr. Muir is ready to point out how persistently earlier generations of Christians obstructed scientific work, and to solemnly platitudinise upon the same. Take the following as a specimen:—

"The efforts made to stop the advance of Science have been futile. Step by step she has fought her way, remaining not only true in herself, but eventually compelling her claims to be acknowledged where they had been most bitterly derided. Science has had her warfare and her martyrs. In nearly all her departments she has been denounced, and her preachers have been assailed and persecuted. Discovery after discovery has been hailed with hatred and with horror, has been declared to be incompatible with belief in God and with the attainment of salvation. A review of the progress of the centuries, and of the manner in which the progress has been impeded, might almost prompt the question, 'Which of the prophets of physical science did not your fathers persecute?'"

Of course, there is nothing intrinsically remarkable about such a deliverance; the same thing has been said over and over again by Freethought speakers and in Freethought journals. It is only worth noting as having been said in a Christian pulpit—and a Scotch pulpit, above all other places. After all, blasphemy is not determined by the age only; the place has a great deal to do with it, and remarks that are highly objectionable when made by people who are openly fighting Christianity become reverently religious when made by a paid defender of the faith.

One reflection, however, is suggested by Mr. Muir's praise of science, which, needless to say, is not mentioned by him. It is true, as he points out, that science has been a powerful agent in improving the physical, mental, and moral condition of mankind. It has not only given to man correct views of the world in which he lives, but, by pointing out the conditions upon which healthy animal life depends, and the dependence of sane mental and moral states on nervous conditions, it has also brought about an improvement in the higher life of man—or, at least, has indicated the only methods by which such an improvement may be effected. It is further admitted by Mr. Muir that even religion has been purified by science, which is, of course, another way of saying that religious opinions have had to give way before the pressure of scientific knowledge. But if all this is admitted, one is driven to ask, What is the residual value of religion when all these allowances have been made? The Churches tried to teach astronomy, and were in error; they taught geology, biology, psychology, and sociology, and were equally at sea. Even on such subjects as the origin, nature, and history of religious ideas scientific investigators—often complete unbelievers—have had to instruct these supposed guides of mankind. What, then, is the value of religion? Are not such admissions equal to saying that religion really has nothing of any value to tell anybody; but when science has found out what is correct—and religious organisations can no longer suppress its conclusions—then the Churches will give it a patronising word, and say that, after all, it is actually of some value? But why, then, trouble with the Churches at all? What is the use of spending millions annually, and usurping the energies of thousands of men whose only task, even when they are put to their best use, is to smile approval upon scientific discoveries, but whose usual occupation is to prevent their recognition?

But we might excuse even the sublime impertinence of the average cleric patronising scientific men if we could only believe him to be sincere in his admiration of science. But facts are against such a belief. Compare the joy with which a clergyman hears of the impotence of science in the face of certain vexed problems and the eagerness with which he proclaims the failure of scientists, with his carefully-tempered admiration of positive results, and you will see on which side his real sympathies lie. Does anyone doubt, if scientists were to come to a general agreement

that the attempt to explain cosmical phenomena in terms of human reason must be surrendered as hopeless, that such a conclusion would be hailed with shouts of joy by the clergy? Is it not always the weakness and the defeats of human reason rather than its strength and its victories upon which preachers love to dwell? The tardy praise of science from the pulpits is not the recognition by a chivalrous opponent of a victor's superiority; it is rather the fawning adulation of a beaten enemy, powerless to longer inflict injury, and too cowardly to struggle against an almost certain prospect of defeat.

One could not expect even this sermon to close without the preacher pointing out that, when all has been said, science is still inferior to religion. "Science is wonderful, science is admirable, science is indispensable," says Mr. Muir; "but science is not sufficient, it is not everything.....In spite of all the unquestionable benefits which modern culture and civilisation have brought, we need that which culture and civilisation cannot give: we need the assurance that we are not the playthings of caprice, that our life is not mere vanity and nothingness." So much, then, for Mr. Muir's laudation of science; so much, too, for any man's understanding of it who asserts that, unless we have "the inspection which the Gospel of Christ bestows," we are the creatures of "caprice" and our lives "vanity and nothingness." I suppose that, after such an example of mental stultification, it is almost useless asking how there can be room for caprice in a world such as modern science discloses? And it would be also useless pointing out—useless, at least, so far as the clergy are concerned—that so long as the possession of knowledge enables us to understand the world in which we live, and our understanding and labor to make life still more worth living, life cannot be quite "mere vanity and nothingness." Happily all are not constituted as is the Rev. T. M'Adam Muir, and it is, at least, a hopeful sign that a growing number of men and women find in the search for, and the diffusion of, knowledge, and in the exercise of our undoubted capacity, to make human existence here brighter and better, an adequate incentive and reward, even in the complete absence of "the inspiration which the Gospel of Christ bestows." C. COHEN.

Clerical Apologists.

THE "CHURCH TIMES" ON THE INROADS OF SCIENCE.

I ALWAYS have a special time for reading the *Church Times*—on a Friday or Saturday or Sunday night after supper. It is a sovereign remedy for insomnia. Many a placid night's sleep I credit to that soothing and soporific print. If I should unconsciously smile or laugh outright in my slumbers, it is assuredly one of the after-effects of perusing that unrivalled High Church organ wherein the silliest propositions are advanced with owl-like wisdom and a heavy sedateness and solemnity it would be hard to beat.

I love to read its grave pronouncements on the mystery of the Holy Eucharist and all that appertains thereto—on ecclesiology, vestments, saints' days and creeds, and recently I found myself immersed in an enthralling controversy on "plain-song." There is nothing half so humorous in the farcical comedies on the stage. The fun has a living human interest, for the writers are terribly in earnest: you can see that, in some way or other, they really mean what they say; and you turn from the print, and sit and wonder how on earth cultured men could have surrendered their reasons to such unmitigated nonsense. One can perceive occasional indications that the *Freethinker* is not unknown to the *Church Times*, and perhaps the latter might have something to say about us which would not be as complimentary as we might desire. But we hope it will never be laid to the charge of the *Freethinker* that it sends folks to sleep, though that undoubtedly is the effect the *Church Times* has upon hopeless unregenerated like myself.

In its latest issue it has a leading article on "Religion and Science," which has had at least the merit of keeping me awake, and must be extremely amusing to those

who have even a superficial acquaintance with the points at issue. Appropriately enough, the *C. T.* points out that the British Association has recently concluded its annual meetings, and that the Church Congress is just commencing its sessions at Brighton; and these it regards, for the moment, as visible embodiments of the two sections of thought. It says there is still "unfortunately a tendency on the part of the public to regard these meetings as hostile camps, and to suppose vaguely that the doctrines of science conflict on crucial points with those of revealed religion." Now, there is no "vagueness" about the supposition. It is a clear and definite conclusion on the part of scientists who have not given themselves over, bound hand and foot, to the popular theology. Any "vagueness" is on the side of religionists. But it is well to notice the careful introduction of the words "on crucial points." That begs the question to a prodigious extent. Who is to decide what are the "crucial points"? There ought not to be *any* points on which a divinely-revealed religion is in conflict with the ascertained facts of science. Truth should be consistent and undivided. Science has disposed of the old story of the Fall, and upon that story is based the Redemption. Is not that a "crucial point," embracing practically the whole scheme of Christianity? What more is wanted? Science has reduced the Scriptures from a historical point of view to a thing of mere "shreds and patches." Isn't that crucial enough?

The *Church Times* naively observes that, "for one thing, science and theology alike are learning—if a crude phrase may be permitted—to mind their own business." The *C. T.* is quite entitled to speak on behalf of theology, and it is something to have the assurance that theology at length is learning to mind its own business. It used not to do so. It is not so many centuries since it wanted to dominate the whole world of thought and investigation, and did so, as far as it could, enforcing its decrees with brutal, systematic persecution, of which it ought now to be thoroughly ashamed. Where are its apologies for the past? Does it imagine that all it has done is blotted out of remembrance—that it starts now with a perfectly clean sheet? If it does so imagine, it is very much mistaken. There are goutts of blood upon that sheet which nothing will ever wash out. So much for theology.

Science has always "minded its own business," as far as it has been allowed to do so. The inferences antagonistic to theology have been drawn by theologians themselves. They have fitted the caps upon themselves, and then sought to destroy those who made them. It is sheer impudence to suggest that science has pursued the same course as theology, and that "both alike" are now learning better. The *Church Times* has, indeed, some glimmering idea of what really was the case in ages past. For it says: "When theology comprehended all philosophy, scholasticism was a part of religious belief, and the Church attempted to decide authoritatively purely scientific matters *a priori* grounds, being as zealous to condemn Galileo as if he had denied the divinity of our Lord." And why is the condemnation of Galileo so airily passed over now, as if he never disclosed that which made the Church tremble to its very foundations? The answer is: Because the Church was forced to surrender, and would now give anything that that persecution should not have taken place. The Church is not, however, to be so readily forgiven as it apparently desires. It has learnt nothing from its mistakes in the past—atrociouss mistakes, which have involved the cruelest forms of human suffering. It has continued its persecution of heretics down to the present day, being limited not by any sentiments of its own of mercy or justice, but simply by the resistance and curbing influence of the great world of indifferentism which has interposed itself between the Church and its prey.

The *Church Times*, continuing its confessions, says: "The same spirit [of condemnation] was shown in a lamentable degree when criticisms first were directed against the literal interpretation of the Mosaic cosmogony." Note the casual introduction of the word "literal." Before science made its discoveries was there anybody who ever supposed that account to be intended as other than literal? If we could shut out of our minds all that we have learnt from scientific sources, and then should sit down and read Genesis,

as it were, for the first time, could we ever doubt that it was intended to be accepted other than as a literal, matter-of-fact narrative?

"The Church had not yet come to see that the domain of natural science is a realm outside her jurisdiction." In other words, she did not then know that she was playing with fire. Now that she has burnt her fingers she wants to give it a wide berth. Having made these admissions, the *Church Times* proceeds to assail the opposite camp. And this is how it does it. It says: "The scientists at various times have fallen into an error exactly similar by claiming the right, on the strength of material discoveries and observations, to modify, and even to overthrow, a creed that, in essence, is spiritual." Now, we absolutely deny that this is to be charged against scientists as an error, and that they have thereby placed themselves on the same level with theologians. In the first place, if they have been in error, they have never endeavored to force their beliefs on the world by persecution, torture, fine, and imprisonment. That sort of persuasion will remain in history as long as the world lasts as the special prerogative of theology. But, apart from that, scientists are not in error, because the Christian creed is *not* in essence spiritual. It is founded on what it calls history, and that "history" is contained in the Scriptures. There can be no Christian creed, spiritual or otherwise, without the Scriptures and the "historical" element contained therein. If part of that history is abandoned, the whole is shaken; and, without the history, it is impossible to construct a tangible and intelligible creed. And here it is that scientists have sapped and undermined the whole structure, so that now it is toppling down as fast as may be expected of a house which is built upon sand.

The *Church Times* admits that there "are necessarily points where religion and science incidentally come in contact. If, at any such points, we meet apparent discrepancies between the teachings of science and of revealed religion, we have no cause for alarm, nor are we bound to assert strenuously that the scientific view is false. On the contrary, probably it is true so far as it goes, but it is imperfect, and in the light of completer knowledge the difficulty will disappear." Now, was there ever such an example of fatuous special pleading? Theologians are to regard all discrepancies as "apparent" until it is absolutely forced upon them that the discrepancies are real; then they are to dismiss the difficulties by supposing that completer knowledge will put everything right again in the end. But has that been the history of past conflicts between religion and science? Has "completer knowledge" re-established the Mosaic cosmogony? Has it not, rather, in the course of years, piled such an accumulation of scientific fact upon it that even the *Church Times* is forced to abandon it as quietly as may be. And has not this process been going on with many other portions of Scripture upon which the Christian faith is built?

Apologetics of this sort do religion more harm than good. Far better to decline to reason about the faith, as the old serpent of Rome does, than to start on argumentation which does nothing but disclose weaknesses and illogicalities which must be apparent to any intelligent inquirer, and cannot afford much satisfaction to those who advance them.

FRANCIS NEALE.

The Shining Record Tells.

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds, both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of unbroken thread,
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpet, ring no bells;
The book of life the shining record tells.

Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad.
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong.
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.

—Elizabeth Barratt Browning.

Acid Drops.

WHEN Mrs. Annie Besant became converted to Theosophy, many years ago, she undertook to tell the British public—and did tell them as far as she was able—how to travel to the stars. She hasn't got as far as that herself yet. She has only got as far as India, where we hear she has settled down, and is founding a school of Hindoo Theosophy. We daresay the precious commodity is more in request out there.

King James I. blew a "Counterblast Against Tobacco," but his royal hatred of the weed did not affect its consumption. It had not been in England long, but it had come to stay. Pope Urban VIII. was still more incensed against smokers. He issued a Bull excommunicating all who took the accursed herb into the churches. Seventy years later this Bull was repeated by Pope Innocent XII. Not even God's vicergerent was able to arrest the smoking of tobacco.

There is not much knowledge of out-of-the-way literature to be found in newspapers—not even in those with some pretensions to learning. The other day the *Westminster Gazette*, for instance, printed a longish letter from "O. B." on Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*. "The book is now, I suppose, rare," this correspondent said, "but I have seen a copy, and read it with much interest." It is not quite so rare, though, as he imagines, and it really ought to be known by the literary editor of a considerable newspaper; indirectly, anyhow, if not directly, for it was several times referred to by Coleridge—who had read almost everything. Coleridge thought highly of it as an exposure of fanaticism; for that is what "enthusiasm" meant in Bishop Lavington's days; the word having then, and for long afterwards, invariably a sinister or contemptuous significance. Regarding true religion as "the most serious thing in the world"—which, by the way, is exactly what Sterne says of *Iust*—the worthy Bishop laid his keen lash upon early Methodism, and showed how its "extravagant freaks" very precisely resembled those of the Papists. He took the writings of Methodists, particularly those of Wesley, and proved through hundreds of pages that they were a species of sanctified madmen like the fanatics and impostors of previous ages. His book is racy reading, and we have often thought of giving our readers a taste of its quality.

The late Rev. Dr. Begg, of Edinburgh, had a son called Walter, who shocked his father by taking to the stage under the name of Walter Bentley. This gentleman has since left off performing in theatres, and now performs in churches. He is rector of All Souls, New York, and doubtless enjoys a good salary. Recently he has been preaching in Belfast, where he advocated the claims of the stage to better consideration on the part of Christians. In the course of one sermon he remarked that in the same year John Calvin died and William Shakespeare was born, and declared that it was "a glorious exchange for the world." A local paper called this a "daring" utterance. Well, perhaps it was—in Belfast, and, above all, in a Belfast church. But in any assembly of reasonable human beings it would have been sufficiently commonplace.

John Calvin was not without a certain perverted ingenuity, but in comparison with William Shakespeare he was like a dark lantern to the midday sun. We mean with respect to his genius. With respect to his humanity, he was not worth mentioning in the same breath with the noblest of all poets. Fancy "sweet" Shakespeare engaged in hunting down a man who differed from him in opinion, getting him burnt to death for that crime, and gloating over the fact that he took half an hour in consuming because green wood was used in the pyre! Why, the thing is unthinkable.

"Why?" asks the *Leeds Mercury*, over a statement that the vicar of Horncastle was appointed paid chaplain to the workhouse at a salary of £40, and that an offer on behalf of the Horncastle Free Church Council to undertake the work gratuitously was declined. The Free Church Council would no doubt have done the work just as well as the vicar of Horncastle, but the idea seems to have been to find the latter a job at the expense of the ratepayers.

The Bishop of Peterborough has been lamenting at Northampton the diminishing number of candidates for holy orders in all parts of the country. Can anyone affect surprise at this falling off in view of the advance in theological criticism, and the general uncertainty that now surrounds much that was once thought to be established and unshakable truth? The marvel is that there are any candidates at all.

How easily gods are made! The Rev. Mr. Bartoli, who has been for many years a missionary in India, relates the following remarkable incident: "One of his fellow-missionaries gave some boxes of matches to the people of a village who had for generations obtained fire by rubbing two flints

together. A few months later Mr. Bartoli found that the people were worshipping these boxes of matches as deities.

A fine commentary on the doctrine of "Trust in God" is afforded by a recent announcement. It is stated that the Bishop of London has sanctioned the administration of the Holy Eucharist by "Intinction"—that is, by dipping the bread into the wine—to obviate any risk of contagion from the chalice, at a certain health resort where tuberculosis is rife.

It is related of the late Bishop Westcott that, on the Sunday before he was consecrated Bishop, he requested the authorities of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, to ask the prayers of the congregation for him. By some peculiar mistake, which will happen even in the best-regulated of churches, the request was inserted in the "Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men," thus: "We commend to Thy fatherly goodness all those who are in any ways afflicted or distressed in mind, body, or estate, especially Dr. Westcott, now about to be consecrated Bishop!"

The *British Weekly* takes a despairing view of woman in relation to the current theology. "In these days," it says, "educated women have had to face the problems raised by science and criticism. The doubtings and questionings of the time send long, far thrills even to secluded homes. Now that we are in the nomad stage of spiritual life the faith of many a woman trembles. Indeed, it seems to us characteristic of women to give up Christianity whenever they have had to abandon any dogma or tradition taught them in their childhood. They have said, 'All or none.'"

Continuing, the *British Weekly* says: "We have been informed, on authority which is unimpeachable, that among educated girls and women in these days there has been a falling away from Christ. It is said, indeed, that many head-mistresses in secondary schools are Agnostics. We do not say that they are scoffers." But it is evident that modern criticism has made its mark amongst them as in other classes.

The old Evangelical weekly, *The News*, commences a leading article by the editor with these significant words: "The general indifference and scepticism of the age seem to me to be a call to the clergy to say something definite and to the point that may save many, especially amongst our young men, from utter, though perhaps not avowed, unbelief. Tom Paine scarcely avowed his unbelief more plainly than some of those who now reject vital truths, and, nevertheless, are allowed to teach in our Church and receive its emoluments. One Church paper inserts sermons and articles which entirely set aside Christ's atoning sacrifice and the truthfulness of Scripture; and this side by side with 'orthodox' sermons. This, indeed, is what is looked for nowadays—truth and error mixed together, with general *indifference* to both."

The writer of the above (the Rev. C. Bullock) has a special plan of his own for dealing with unbelief. It is a wonderful discovery. He tells us that some years ago he had a conversation with a young man who was about to be ordained in Birmingham. This young man said he knew all about the hard-headed artizans there, and had thoroughly prepared arguments which would disperse their unbelief. The Rev. Bullock did not object to arguments "in their place," but he said: "Suppose you laid your hand in a brotherly fashion on the shoulder of one of these Birmingham sceptics, and said simply, 'I am so happy!' I fancy he would look at you with unfeigned surprise." No doubt he would, and at the same time begin to wonder whether there had not been a recent escape from the local lunatic asylum.

Dean Farrar, like other men of God, must endeavor to "improve" the recent assassination of the President of the United States. Preaching in Canterbury Cathedral, he asked: "By what men are crimes so hideous and meaningless committed? By men who individually and collectively reject the doctrines of Christianity, and so become enemies of the whole human race." This is not true. Guiteau, for instance, was a pronounced Christian. The Phoenix Park murderers were Roman Catholics. Other instances might be cited, but it is absurd to suggest that, because men choose to reject the bundle of incongruities yecept Christianity, they must, therefore, be impelled to senseless assassination.

Dr. Clifford has, at least, some regard for accuracy and fairness. He says: "Nearly all Anarchist assassins have come from underneath the dome of St. Peter's."

Rev. John Alexander, chaplain of the Glasgow prison, recently declared that, of the inmates of said prison, ninety-five per cent. had been Sunday-school scholars.

Christian people ought assuredly to send missions thousands of miles away to the heathen. The population of Greater London is more than six and a-half millions. According to

the recent report of the West London Mission, more than half this number are quite outside all Churches. In some of the districts only one person in eighty enters any place of worship. What is the Lord doing that he allows this neglect?

The parish magazine! What a marvellous production it is. Two or three pages written by the parson, in which he contrives to cram as much bigoted insolence and arrogance as possible, varied at times by maudlin imbecility or sentimental nonsense. A few announcements of names of officials, and of Mothers' or Dorcas Meetings relating to the parish. All the rest, "stereo," addressed to the "wide, wide world."

Even the *Rock* is impelled to admit that "our average parish magazine is dismally dull." It goes even further, and says "many of them are an insult to the intelligence of the average puppy dog, who, with a wisdom beyond his years, tears them up if he finds them!"

No wonder the average puppy dog, as a canine critic, regards them as fit only for destruction. The *Rock* says: "Their stories are simply goody-goody, namby-pamby twaddle; their illustrations are ill-drawn, and worse produced; and the paper and print are worse than those of a penny dreadful. The local parson sticks on a more or less inartistic wrapper containing a bald announcement of the names of himself, his assistant clergy, and his churchwardens, organist, and sacristan, and then he wonders why his flock prefer some penny 'society,' whose very cover they destroy on purchasing because they are ashamed to be seen reading the worldly, but interesting, ephemera." What an age of humbug we live in!

"Observer" writes to the *Church Times* with a terrible grievance. He says he happened to be present at a wedding in the parish church of St. Marylebone. He noticed that the officiating clergyman deliberately omitted from the opening exhortation the statement of the first two causes why matrimony was ordained. He believes that this, unhappily, is a common practice. But if a great deal of this coarse, and, at the present day, largely-inapplicable ceremony was omitted, there surely would be no great loss. The omitted sections are as follows: "First, it was ordained for the procreation of the children to be brought up in the fear and the nature of the Lord, and to the praise of his Holy name. Secondly, it was ordained as a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication, that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body."

These are the words which the parson refrained from reciting in the ears of the blushing bride. But the chief point is contained in the comment of "Observer": "There seems to me to be a sad irony in the fact that this omission was made in the mother church of the borough of Marylebone, which, I think I may say with truth, contains a larger number of well-to-do prostitutes residing within its area than any other borough in London."

But how could the omission affect "well-to-do prostitutes"? They are not likely to present themselves at the altar of Marylebone Church, and, if they did, the omission would be judicious. For the recital of these passages, if listened to, would inevitably create uncontrollable giggles.

The Bishop of Sierra Leone asks permission to "sound the bugle." There is no objection to his bursting himself on the bugle as long as he does not interfere with the peace and quietude of other people. But it seems he speaks metaphorically. He wishes to "sound the bugle and call the people once again to prayer." He says: "We cannot forget Septuagesima Sunday of last year, which was set apart for prayer at the beginning of the present war in South Africa, and how it was immediately followed by the relief of Kimberley, the defeat and capture of Cronje and his army, the relief of Ladysmith, and the capture and occupation of Bloemfontein." Then he suggests it is probably through ceasing to pray that we are not yet able to bring the war to end.

Well, let him "sound the bugle" and call the Churches to prayer. In the meantime, we suppose the Boers will continue praying with much more personal feeling and sincerity than English Christians can rake up. It will only be a little more trouble for the One Above, who, by this time, must be getting very sick of these divergent appeals.

A very pretty squabble is now going on as to who shall preach to the lunatics at Claybury Asylum. Local clerics insist that they are fittest to preach to the lunatics. Local Dissenting ministers claim that they are specially cut out for the job. Meantime the congregation—some of whom are kings, emperors, sultans, great generals, dukes, and Jesus Christs—are waiting patiently until it is settled who shall have the privilege of humbly addressing them. Formerly the Rev. F. Mann, a Church of England clergyman, was the chaplain, and submitted to them the claims of the Gospel,

apparently with acceptance. They seem to have manifested as much intelligence under his ministrations as would ordinary congregations—though that, of course, is not saying much.

But a change came over the spiritual scene at Claybury Asylum when the Rev. F. Mann resigned to take a benefice in Kent. The lunatics are now in a state of melancholy bewilderment. F. Mann they knew, and the chaplain before him they knew; but who is this confounded Congregationalist minister who is put over them? The patients, we are told, are "very unsettled." They have been somewhat mollified by having the Evensong said by the minister (minus the Creed). But they want the Creed. It appeals to them, and they feel lost without it. The vicar of Barkingside, who has interested himself in the matter, says very truly: "It is unsuitable to introduce controversy amongst those mentally afflicted." That, however, cuts both ways.

The lunatics, if left alone, may adapt themselves to Congregationalism as readily as to Church of Englandism. A *modus vivendi* seems to offer itself in the reciting of the Creed. Let the lunatics have the Creed, and all may yet be well in Claybury Asylum.

"Anarchists: A Sign of the Times" is the heading to a letter in a religious weekly by Mr. Henry Law Harkness, of Hove, Brighton. He is a cheerful gentleman, who perceives no end of evils present and ahead. Thus he sighs: "Alas! What a vast amount of infidelity and scepticism prevail in the present day." He doesn't condescend to say what infidelity and scepticism have to do with Anarchism. He probably thinks that they are good words to chuck in. He seems to be a modest sort of person, for he composes and offers a special form of prayer which he thinks the Archbishop of Canterbury ought to adopt and order to be used in the churches.

We should like to hear what gruff old Dr. Temple says (to himself) when he sees it. It is a bit thick to suggest that the Primate, with £15,000 a year, can't compose a special prayer if he wants to without the assistance of H. L. Harkness, of Hove. Not that it would be any better than Harkness's, but you naturally want to do a little bit for your screw.

The prayer is a fine composition. It commences: "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, we approach thy mercy seat through our only Mediator. We intercede on behalf of all kings and rulers; protect them from all evil. Preserve them in their souls and bodies, pour down Thy Holy Spirit abundantly on all flesh."

This is the very essence of cheek. H. L. Harkness, of Hove, Brighton, first of all composes a prayer for the Archbishop, which we are sure his Grace never asked him to do, and does not thank him for. Then he takes, in this prayer, the Almighty by the ear, and tells him what he ought to do. Of course, if God is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, it's his natural business to look after monarchs and rulers—their souls and bodies. True, he doesn't seem to trouble much about it, but he isn't to be goaded into activity by H. L. Harkness, of Hove, Brighton. He is just as likely as Dr. Temple to swear at such impertinent interference. Harkness had better look out. We shouldn't be surprised if the Lord does not arrange for his gas to be cut off by the Corporation as a judgment on his temerity.

We have been moved almost to tears by an account of the unhappy schism in the Church at Natal. We have a few schisms at home, but this kind of thing seems to get more important when they are abroad and no one knows exactly what they are all about. Bishop Colenso—a man who conferred dignity and honor on the episcopacy if any bishop ever did—has left a very considerable following in Natal. But the measly Church hierarchy at home will not recognise them as part of the Church of England, and will not consecrate the man whom they have nominated as bishop. The obvious course for them to pursue is to ignore the clerical curmudgeons in the old country and found a Church of their own. As to the "schism," that will settle itself easily enough. We have shed a few tears over it because the crocodile eye-water of the *Church Times* has been so very moving and infectious.

The *Church Times*, in a leaderette on the paucity of candidates for holy orders, says that it is now one of the most pressing duties of Churchmen to "see that the clerical ranks are kept filled with educated and zealous men." The Church, of course, may call, but will they come? University graduates do not care to commit themselves to life-long hypocrisy in these latter days when the search-light of reason is swiftly swinging about, and creeds are visibly crumbling to dust.

How sad! We really shouldn't have thought it if it had not been for a writer who signs himself "Prayer Book" to a letter which he sends to the *Church Times*. It seems that, in the great Alfred Commemoration at Winchester, "the double

obligation of Friday and of Ember Day" was forgotten. The children were feasted on cakes, and the bishops at the mayoral banquet. "In the case of the children, at any rate, one might have expected their teachers to bid them to 'neglect the cakes' and feasts and so forth on a Friday." But why the children more than the bishops? Isn't the whole objection a piece of sickening nonsense?

The Church Congress has not been free from criticism in regard to the supply of food on Friday. An ultra-pious person says he stayed away from the Congress last year because of the indifference which was exhibited to the Church's rule that Friday should be a day of abstinence. This year he thought he would leave on the Thursday. "Not only do the authorities set the law at defiance in this matter as a rule, but even the Church Army and the Church Lads' Brigade, who are supposed to specially inculcate the virtue of obedience, provide meals at which it is impossible to obtain *maigre* fare." How shocking!

A bigoted, thick-headed specimen of the genus *clericus* has passed away in the Rev. John Wade. In 1861 it was his good fortune to succeed the Rev. Patrick Brontë as incumbent of Haworth. One would have thought that, from a literary point of view, he would have been delighted to associate himself with the home and church of the gifted authoresses of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. But this seems to have been his greatest trouble. Years ago he "renovated" Haworth Parish Church in such a way as to obliterate nearly every Brontë association!

He was very brusque to visitors who came to the literary shrine—especially those who were Americans. He had the memorial tablet removed from the chancel, beside which the Brontës were buried, to an obscure corner in the west end of the church, and otherwise indicated his ignorant contempt for all that invested the wretched little church with an atom of interest.

One thing is certain: the names of the Brontës will live long after that of this "churlish priest" is forgotten—if anybody ever cared to inquire what it was for any other purpose than to swear at him.

The *Church Times* suggests that Modern Wesleyans, in constituting themselves a Church, have thrown their founder over. It is, however, pointed out that Wesley, in his *Notes on the New Testament*, says: "Both heresy and schism, in the modern sense of the words, are sins that the Scripture knows nothing of, but were invented merely to deprive mankind of the benefit of private judgment and liberty of conscience."

At a church not a hundred miles from the Crystal Palace a hymn-book in use there is *Church Hymns*, the editor of which was the late Sir Arthur Sullivan. A lady of the congregation has discovered—somewhat late in the day—that many of her favorite hymns are the composition of "a man who wrote comic operas and dance music!" This discovery seems to have so shocked the good lady that she demanded a withdrawal of the hymn-book. Being a person whose benefactions have always been of service to the church, the vicar did not at once refuse. He has been taking the opinions of other members of his flock, most of whom, needless to say, regard the wishes of the lady with something akin to disgust. Whether the vicar will yield remains to be seen.

Some idiot writes to a Huddersfield paper suggesting that the time has arrived when people might, with advantage to themselves and the nation, supplicate the Divine for rain. He says: "Is it not possible that we, as a nation, are not that God-fearing and really religious people that we fondly imagine we are, and that through such permissions of Providence as the death of President McKinley and universal drought the Lord wishes to draw our attention to our state?"

So the assassination of the late President was a "permission of Providence." This looks as if it would have happened, Providence or not. That sort of Providence might as well be cashiered. As for the rain, a good *douche* of cold water might cool this letter-writer's brain.

The coincidence noted in the case of Lincoln's assassins, that all concerned in the conspiracy were Catholics by education, holds good with respect to others who have taken, or attempted, the lives of rulers. The European variety of assassins, to which Czolgosz belongs, are of Catholic antecedents.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Apropos of the lying suggestion that Anarchist-assassins are Atheists, it may be mentioned that the speciality of Guiteau was the endeavor to answer Ingersoll before Young Men's Christian Associations.

Christian scientists in North Carolina are charged with the responsibility of three deaths in twelve months. In each case medical treatment was denied the patient.

Zion's Herald has taken up the sad case of the preachers in Chicago, who seem to have become very despondent. It mourns that "the preachers hereabouts are anxiously watching the heavens for a sign of increased salaries. Potatoes have gone up; round steak has jumped; brown sugar has advanced; flour is higher; coal is booming; and what are we to do, who could scarcely make both ends meet at the old prices? Weddings are scarce and funerals are less common, for mortality rates are low. Some Elisha must speak to the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal."

It used to be said "the better the day the better the deed"; but it does not seem that the holier the errand the safer the end. Recently Canon McCarthy, parish priest of Ballincollig, co. Cork, died suddenly. He was driving in a covered vehicle to a high mass which was to be held in memory of the late Archdeacon Coughlan, but on arrival at the church the coachman found the reverend gentleman was dead. The cause of death was apoplexy.

When we saw the newspaper heading, "Tinned Bishop," we began to think of the Cannibal Islands, and wonder whether the natives, having more clerical flesh on hand than they could dispose of, were importing some high-class joints into this country. But it seems it was only the description given by a Billingsgate fish porter of Mr. Carlile's Monster-phonograph at St. Mary-at-Hill, Monument, where short speeches by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Bishop of London are daily poured forth to congregations in the dinner-hour, followed by a cup of coffee served in the vestibule to the congregation on retiring. "Splendid," said one of the hod-bearers on tasting the beverage, "to wash down tinned bishop."

President Roosevelt falls into the error of most of his predecessors in imagining that he has been installed as high priest of the nation as well as its chief executive. His first official act, says the *New York Truthseeker*, was to appoint a day of national prayer, and to advise the people to go to church on that day.

War, stern and bitter, rages between the vicar of Chappel, a quiet, pretty little village in Essex, and the managers of the village school. Once more the cause of battle is the eternal religious question. The vicar claims that the religious instruction in the school should be given under his supervision, and, as the managers won't agree, he has padlocked the school door, and so put a stop to any kind of teaching whatever. What curious things are done in the name of religion! And how pitifully the Founder of that religion would smile were He to visit these pugnacious followers of His!—*Sun*.

We see by the newspapers that a loss on the year's trading of £10,924 is shown by the report of Thomas Sowler & Sons, Limited, the proprietors of the *Manchester Courier* and the *Manchester Evening Mail*. This is a curious commentary on the chucklings of some Tory and pious papers over the fact that the *Freethinker* does not yield a handsome profit.

Merely to keep a weekly Freethought journal going has always been a task of great difficulty which few men have been able to accomplish. Charles Bradlaugh did it, and Mr. Foote has done it. Who the next one will be is a question that time alone can answer.

The difficulty does not merely lie in the comparative smallness of the public to which a weekly Freethought journal appeals. There is the active or passive bigotry of wholesale newsagents and retail newsvendors. There is the fear that business people have of advertising in a Freethought organ. Were it not for these obstacles, the *Freethinker* would be an excellent property.

The *Morning Leader* is sarcastic at the expense of the Bishop of Llandaff. It appears that this right reverend Father-in-God was to have attended a memorial meeting at St. John's, Cardiff, but the preacher had to apologise for his absence on the ground that he was "so overwhelmed with work this week." His lordship, however, was able to attend the distribution of the prizes at the Cardiff "Sheep Dog Trials" in company with Lady Quin, Lady Hill, and Sir E. Hill. "The Bishop," the *Leader* says, "is to be congratulated on having discovered a novel method of looking after the interests of his flocks."

Mr. Gladstone dwelt with fondness on the fatherly way in which Providence had fitted up the earth for man's habitation. He spoke like the happy occupier of Hawarden Castle. Had he lived in India, he might have seen matters differently. In that country, in the single year 1899, no less than 27,565 people were killed by wild beasts, and 24,619 by snakes.

More "Providence" in China! The floods in the Yang-tsze district have rendered ten million people homeless. But then, as the *St. James's Gazette* remarks, ten millions of Chinamen don't matter. It is only the Christians that count.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 6, Town Hall, Birmingham; 3, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 7, "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy." Admission free.
 October 13, Hull; 20 and 27, Athenæum Hall.
 November 10, Camberwell; 17, Bradford; 24, Leicester.
 December 15, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 6, Athenæum Hall, London; 13, Camberwell; 17 (Thursday); Wood Green. November 10, Athenæum Hall, London; 24, Birmingham. December 8, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 15, Glasgow; 22, Camberwell. All communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.
- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 6, Glasgow; 13, Leicester; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Liverpool. November 3, Birmingham; 10, Stanley; 17, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 24, Athenæum Hall. Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.
- A GLASGOW FRIEND subscribes £5 to the Fund for Mrs. Foote "with best wishes." He says that now Mr. Foote's enemies are showing their teeth it is the time to show he has plenty of friends.
- A GLASGOW HERETIC, subscribing £10 to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, says: "At the present moment when your vindictive friends are trying to discredit you in the eyes of the party you have given your life-long services to, it is pleasant to know that the party proper have risen to the occasion, and given you that vote of confidence which it was evidently the wish of these supposed benevolent microbes that *they* should have. It is no wonder that so few men of your calibre can be found to sacrifice personal and family interest to the common good. You are so continuously beset by inflated lilliputians (supposed to be of the party, but whose interest is personal notoriety) trying to trip you up. My mite to this Fund would have been contributed before, but I did not know whether the money was fully secured to Mrs. Foote. You did not say every week where subscriptions should be sent, and I wanted my contribution to get into the right hands. Possibly there may be other careful men who are waiting."
- J. ELLIS.—Date for Mr. Foote's visit booked. We hope the Liverpool friends will have a "good time" at their social reunion this evening, and a prosperous winter under the new auspices in the Alexandra Hall.
- G. JACOB.—It was only the difference—not at all substantial—between the adverb and the adjective. You seem hypercritical this time.
- E. A. CHARLTON.—The precise words used are all-important, and they are not before us. We do not think Mr. Heaford is likely to cast any sort of slur on the memory of Charles Bradlaugh. There must be some mistake.
- VERITAS.—We do not keep letters that are not inserted. A paragraph was already in type, based upon the Secretary's letter, and there was no call for another, as we thought you would have seen.
- J. H. GILLILAND.—Pleased to hear the Ethical Society is doing good work in Belfast. Of course it is one of the detachments of the army of progress. Still, we should like to see a definite Freethought propaganda, also, carried on in your city.
- J. PARTRIDGE, secretary of the Birmingham Branch, advises that country friends who attend Mr. Foote's lectures to-day (Oct. 6) can obtain tea near the Town Hall.
- D. KERR.—Thanks for cuttings. The secretary had already sent a lecture-notice.
- W. STOURTON.—It would be an insult to return your "mite," but we never expected really poor Freethinkers to give to such a Fund, and we would rather they did not.
- D. FRANKEL.—We wish the East London Branch success in its new enterprise.
- C. J.—Pleased to have your letter. It is impossible to judge you harshly for having misjudged us. Like many others, you were misled by plausible falsehoods; and, like them, you now know the truth, which generally comes out all right in the end.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your welcome cuttings.
- MARTIN WEATHERBURN, the Northumberland stalwart, sending a second subscription to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, writes: "How glad I am that her home is not to be broken up! I think that after the unselfish and untiring way that Mr. Foote has devoted himself to the cause, our party should not be content with the mere saving of the home, but should continue its subscriptions until the whole of the debt is cleared off."
- S. FELLOWS.—See acknowledgment in this week's list. Sorry you had the trouble of writing again.
- "CHILPERIC" writes: "I observe 'Acid Drops' endeavors to set Mr. W. T. Stead right. Stead is invariably and irrevocably wrong in every statement he makes. I have long since given up troubling to get to the bottom of any question of the day. I rely on Stead's infallibility. If he takes a side upon any point, that side is the wrong one. The sage says one may be wrong in 100 different directions, but only right in one. Stead will go wrong in all the 100 directions, and never find the 101st." Poor Stead! To think a man should wear prison clothes for two whole days to earn a tribute like this!

'LIVERPOLITAN,' who takes two copies of the *Freethinker* weekly, sends his "humble £1" to the Fund for Mrs. Foote—delayed in consequence of indisposition—and thinks a certain person "ought to blush with shame."

HAROLD ELLIOT.—Hope to find room for it shortly.

M. ROGERS.—Much obliged. We have dealt with the matter in our leading article.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker (New York)—Discontent—Crescent—Eastern Post—Two Worlds—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Public Opinion (New York)—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Christian Life—Sun—El Libre Pensamiento—Edinburgh Evening News—Sydney Bulletin—La Raison—Philosopher—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Friedenker—Northern Weekly Leader—Essex Daily News—L'Asino—East Kent Gazette.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

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

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

Personal.

As I do not wish to make *two* final statements, I reserve what I have to say until I have certain official papers before me, which I have to apply (and pay) for, as my solicitor informs me. I should have done this a few days ago, but I was busy preparing for my visit to Glasgow, which took a big slice out of a week. There was a ten hours' journey on Saturday, a lot of hard work on Sunday, and another ten hours' journey on Monday. Even if I had the official papers referred to, I could not do justice to the subject this week. As soon as I get the present number of the *Freethinker* off my hands I will set to work on the clearing-up process, with a view to getting this "Personal" matter done with once and for all. A good deal remains to be said, and I want to say it carefully.

Meanwhile I wish to draw attention to a certain paragraph on my bankruptcy, to which *my* attention has been drawn by two friendly correspondents. It appeared in the *Christian Life*, a Unitarian paper, I believe, for I don't read it; and it runs as follows:—

"The evidence given last week in the Bankruptcy Court, during the investigation of the affairs of Mr. G. W. Foote, the editor of the *Freethinker*, was a curious chapter in the records of the Secularist movement. The utter collapse of Secularism is one of the most curious chapters in the English history of the last thirty years. At the time when the *Christian Life* was established, Secularism possessed a powerful journal, an active platform, eloquent leaders, and a rapidly growing body of adherents. Its adherents are now scattered, its lectures are deserted, its central hall is sold, its only influential journal is extinct, its only surviving journal is insolvent and moribund."

Now the last clause of the final sentence is distinctly libellous, and I have no doubt that the Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company, at their next meeting, to be held in a few days, will instruct the Secretary to write to the editor of the *Christian Life*, demanding a prompt and ample public apology. The *Freethinker* has belonged to the Company, and not to me, for the last two years. It is not *moribund*, but that may be called a matter of opinion. It is certainly not *insolvent*, for that is a matter of fact. It does not owe anybody on the face of the earth a single penny. Nor is the Company insolvent, for it does not owe anything either. Our Unitarian contemporary's malice has overshot the mark this time. My bankruptcy has nothing to do with the *Freethinker*, as the editor of the *Christian Life* might have seen if he had taken the trouble to read the newspaper reports of my public examination with ordinary carefulness.

There is no need to waste words on the rubbish of

this paragraph. The "collapse of Secularism" has been talked about by the pious ever since I first knew it. But what does that matter? While a man is alive, and in good health, he can afford to smile at a report of his funeral.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivers two lectures to-day (October 6) in the Town Hall, Birmingham. His subject in the afternoon at 3 will be "Anarchism and Assassination," and in the evening at 7 "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy." For an hour prior to the evening lecture musical selections will be rendered by the Florence String Quartette, and solos will be sung by Miss Davis, Mr. A. Davis (tenor), and Mr. F. Matthews (baritone). The admission is to be free, with a collection towards defraying the expenses. It is to be hoped that the Birmingham friends will do their utmost to get the vast Town Hall filled on both occasions.

In spite of the rain, which never ceased till late at night, Mr. Foote had exceptionally good morning and afternoon audiences at Glasgow on Sunday, and in the evening the hall was densely crowded in every part. His welcome, too, was most enthusiastic. Recent events, instead of inuring him in that great centre of Secular activity, have only rallied his friends and put a fresh ardor into their support. Warm handshakings were the order of the day. Nor were other signs of amity neglected, as will be seen by the acknowledgments in this week's list of subscriptions to the Fund for Mrs. Foote. Happily the President was in first-rate physical condition, and able to do justice to himself, his audiences, and his subjects. Prior to the evening lecture he gave a reading from *Hamlet*, which was evidently much appreciated. There were questions and discussion (an unusual thing) at each meeting, so that it was really a very hard day's work.

Mr. Turnbull took the chair both morning and afternoon. He also contributed with his brothers to the excellent musical program at the evening meeting. Mr. Black presided at the third lecture. He is making progress as a speaker. We hear that he has been addressing meetings with much "acceptance" on the Green.

Altogether the Glasgow Branch is in the best fighting trim. Harmony prevails in every department, a lot of good work is mapped out, the new season has opened brilliantly, and the prospect was never brighter.

Mr. Cohen follows Mr. Foote at Glasgow. He delivers three lectures to-day (October 6) in the Secular Hall, and we hope the local "saints" will see that he has three good meetings.

Mr. Charles Watts's two nights' debate last week with Mr. H. Bibbings in Chesterfield, on "Is Spiritualism True?" was a great success. The first night 450 persons were present, and on the second evening over 500 attended. The audiences were exceedingly fair, and enthusiastically applauded both disputants. Mr. Watts speaks very highly of Mr. Bibbings as being an able and courteous opponent.

Mr. Watts occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (October 6), taking for his subject "The Growth of Freethought." This will be his first appearance there during the present season, and he will doubtless have a good audience.

The Camberwell Branch to-day (October 6) brings a most successful outdoor season to a close. Brockwell Park, which at first seemed a veritable hotbed of bigotry, is now a stronghold of Secularism. Sunday after Sunday an expectant crowd awaits the arrival of the Freethought lecturer, and the appearance of the platform is always the signal for a general exodus from the other meetings. Peckham Rye and Station-road still hold their own.

This evening (October 6) the Camberwell Branch re-opens its Hall (which has been closed during the summer) with the first monthly conversazione. On the following Sunday the first indoor lecture of the season will be delivered by Mr. Watts.

"Thomas Paine's House at Lewes" is the subject of a paper by John Werge in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. It is an interesting contribution, but the author of a local guide book, who says that Paine wrote the *Age of Reason* at Lewes, is mistaken.

Mr. H. Percy Ward now sits in the editorial chair of the *Bradford Truthseeker*. He opens the October number with a spirited article on "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist." The motto

he selects is Mr. Foote's: "The whole philosophy of life consists in knowing what is true in order to do what is right." A good motto, which is none the worse for owing something to Voltaire. We wish our young colleague all success in his new sphere of activity.

Correspondence on "Bible Criticism" is continued in the *Northern Weekly Leader*. We note an excellent letter from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Yarmouth.

The East London Branch, having finished its outdoor work for this year, has engaged a room at the Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, for Sunday evening meetings. A beginning is to be made this evening (October 6), when Mr. A. B. Moss will lecture. The admission is free. Prior to the lecture, at 6 o'clock, a members' meeting will be held, and prompt attendance is requested.

The Christian Evidence Society had a set-back in Hyde Park on Tuesday evening (September 24). The Rev. Z. B. Woffendale was announced to deliver his famous lecture on why he rejected Freethought and gloried in Christianity, but as the Secular platform was not far distant the people gathered round it instead of around the C. E. S. rostrum, and the "famous" lecturer had to retire disconsolate at the thought of having failed to achieve his expected brilliant success.

Mr. J. F. Haines, the well-known East London Freethinker, is also a strong anti-vaccinationist. We are pleased to see that his local friends and admirers have presented him with an illuminated address and a purse of fifty guineas. The address was signed by Mr. John Brown, Mr. William Catmur, Mr. Jabez Hunns, Mr. George Reynolds, and Councillor G. J. Warren; and the presentation was made at the Progressive Club, in the Mile End-road. Mr. Haines acknowledged the testimonial in an interesting speech, giving an account of his experiences as a reformer during the last forty years. A report of the proceedings appeared in the *Eastern Post*.

The Liverpool Branch opens the winter season to-day (October 6) with a social gathering in the Alexandra Hall. Members and friends are invited to attend. Light refreshments will be provided. The function commences at 7 p.m.

The *Boston Investigator* reproduces J. A. B.'s rondeau, "Ye Fools and Blind," from the *Freethinker*.

The National Secular Society's Executive has spent the best part of £100 on the open-air propaganda during the summer season which closed with the last Sunday in September, having opened on the first Sunday in May. Seventeen lectures have been delivered every Sunday in various parts of London. This is independent of the Freethought Demonstrations, which were addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen, and which were attended by vast concourses of interested listeners.

The Fund for Mrs. Foote.

A Stockton Friend, £1 1s.; J. F. Turnbull, 10s.; A Glasgow Heretic, £10; A Glasgow Friend, £5; Liverpoolian, £1. Glasgow Branch:—Collected at the door after Mr. Foote's evening lecture, £5 11s. 6d.; Personal subscriptions: Mr. and Mrs. Macwhannell, £1; C. R. Clemens, £1 1s.; Mr. Hanny, 5s.; Mr. Johnstone, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Bedgar, 7s. 6d.; Mr. Glencross, 2s.; Mr. Watson, 2s.; Mr. Fleming, 2s.; J. Laird, 2s. 6d.; J. Hamson, 5s.; Mr. Cardiff, 2s.; D. Black, 2s.; J. W., 1s.; H. Dykes, 1s.; Mr. Smith, 2s. 6d.; A. MacCrone, 4s.; Tom Dodds, 2s. 6d.; J. Morrison, 2s. 6d.; A. Walker, 2s. 6d.—Total, £10 1s. 6d. Stamps, 1s.; C. J., 1s.; W. Stourton, 6d.; M. Weatherburn (second sub.), 10s.; S. Fellows, 10s.; J. Stephens (second sub.), 5s.

Contributions to this Fund can be sent direct to Mr. Foote, or to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E. C. All contributions are expressly for Mrs. Foote, and for no other person or object whatsoever.

Obituary.

JAMES HENRY DRANE, born December 25, 1850, was killed September 26, 1901, at the Beach Station, Great Yarmouth, between the buffers of a goods train. He was for many years prominently connected with the local Freethought movement, having delivered several lectures in the Freethinkers' Hall, and was always a prominent figure at all Freethought meetings, and took a keen interest in their discussions. He was buried in the Yarmouth Cemetery on Monday, September 30, the service being conducted by Mr. J. M. Headley, member of the Board of Guardians, who read the Secular Burial Service and delivered a short address at the graveside. This is the first Secularist funeral that has ever been held in Yarmouth.

Early Christianity and its Competitors.

THE average believer imagines that his faith started out of the blank—that it suddenly blazed out of darkness, and dazzled an astonished world that had never dreamed of anything like it before. This idea is, of course, entirely owing to the believer's lack of historical education. He is familiar with the writings of the Jewish kingdom and the Captivity, and has a slight acquaintance with the so-called Apocrypha. But Philo of Alexandria to him is but a name, and he has never realised the condition of the Greco-Roman world at the commencement of the era. The controversialist is fond of asserting that the Jewish people had a distinguishing enthusiasm for "holiness." But holiness was the prevailing disease of the period. If one had gone into Syria in the first century B.C., and got a pound's worth of silver from his banker's, he would have found written upon every one of his coins "holiness" to something or another—"Ascalon, the holy and free"; "Tyre, the holy and free"; "Aradus, the holy and free"; "Gebal, the holy"; and so on. The only city of importance that did not issue silver coins declaring its holiness was Jerusalem; and Jerusalem itself followed suit during the revolt under Nero, by striking pieces bearing the legend, "Jerusalem, the holy." And, as it is with this claim to holiness, so it is with all the others; Christianity brought forth no novelties, and, as far as our knowledge goes, it was indistinguishable from the other superstitions of the Greco-Roman period.

The prevailing religions of that period were not concerned with the veneration of the deities chiefly described in our Greek and Roman mythologies. The real living forces resided in the worships of Isis, Serapis, Orpheus, Sabazius, and Mithras. Had Christianity not triumphed, it would have been regarded as a kindred superstition to those mentioned, differing from them only in its relative insignificance. All these cults manifested themselves in "mysteries"—not the *mysteries* so dear to the theologian when he is at a loss for an explanation, but religious ceremonies of a complicated character. The object of these mysteries seems to have been in all cases the establishment of a close relationship between worshipper and deity. But the manner in which this relation was formed naturally varied. In some cases it was by a sacrifice of communion. Sacrifices of communion are, of course, of great antiquity. They belong to the most sacred stratum of the superstitions of many barbarous tribes. Their cultus centres in the periodical festival at which some victim, which is regarded as embodying the common life of the community, is slain and eaten in common, to renew the life of the tribe; and Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* devotes several valuable chapters to this subject. Among tribes at a higher level of civilisation these beliefs lived on in a modified form. Food was spread for the gods, which they were supposed to enjoy; or at funeral feasts the dead were supposed to be mysterious participants at the meal. The Dionysiac and Mithraic mysteries differed from these rather in symbolism than in essence; the Mithraic rite, like the Christian sacrament, consisting in the distribution and consumption of bread and wine; and at Eleusis a special drink, called *kykeon*, was partaken of by all. By eating and drinking the worshipper came near to his divinity. In other cases the chief feature of the mysteries was a sacred representation in which the sufferings and triumph of the deity were set forth. Clement of Alexandria informs us that the Eleusinian mysteries celebrated, by the light of torches, the abduction of Persephone, the wandering journeys, and the grief of Demeter. In imitation of Demeter, the votaries fasted, sat on the "joyless rock," and wandered on the shore; and, like her, they rejoiced when the underworld gave up again her daughter. In the Dionysiac mysteries the death and the resurrection of the young deity were celebrated by the worshippers; and similar representations took place in the mysteries of Isis and of Cybele. By these and other means it was supposed that it was made possible for the worshipper to enter into the life and passion of the deity, and for the deity to come near to the worshipper. Sometimes this relationship to the deity became so close that the worshipper was, as it were, absorbed into the worshipped. The identification of the ministering priest

with his deity continually meets us in ancient religious cult. In the mysteries, the official priest being less important, this close relation to the deity became possible to all worshippers. Furthermore, the deity of the mysteries was regarded as identifiable with any or every power of nature and the unseen world, and there was but a step from this to the idea that the said deity was supreme in the universe.

When the participants in any of the Pagan mysteries tried to express in a word the benefit they looked for from their initiation, they said it was *soteria*—i.e., salvation. The fourth-century Christian writer, Firmicus Maternus, mentions a distich from one of these rituals: "Be comforted, *mystæ*; since your god is saved, you too shall be saved from all your ills"; which is, of course, the identical argument of Christianity. In his work on the ancient mysteries, Dr. Anrich says that "the surest and most important fact in regard to the mysteries is this, that the end and aim of their celebration was the attainment of *soteria* guaranteed to the initiated. This consisted in the first and most important place in a blessed immortality hereafter; in the second place, in a new life on earth in the society and under the protection of the deity worshipped." M. Gasquet also says: "The mysteries of Mithra, as in general all the mysteries of antiquity, had for object to explain to the initiated the meaning of the present life, to calm the apprehensions of death, to reassure the soul as to its destiny beyond the tomb, and, by purification from sin, to release it from the necessity of future expiation. This salvation came through the intervention of a savior-god who had himself undergone a 'passion,' and had gone through the eclipse of a transient death in order to revive young and triumphant."

The renewal of the life of the individual by a solemn service, in which a fresh union between the deity and the individual was brought about, was frequently spoken of in the Pagan mysteries as a new birth, especially in the Taurobolium, which properly belonged to the religion of Cybele, but which seems to have become a part of the cult of Mithras also. The votary was in this ceremony sprinkled with the blood of a slain ox, and was thereby (as it is expressed in extant inscriptions) *renatus*, or *renatus in æternum*.

The ideas and the terminology of these sectaries are, therefore, in the closest possible accord with Christianity; and this fact has been recognised by all students of the question. We may cite one of the most recent authorities—M. Cumont: "Like the Christians, the followers of Mithras lived in closely-united societies, calling one another father and brother; like the Christians, they practised baptism, communion, and confirmation, taught an authoritative morality, preached continence, chastity, self-denial, and self-control; like the Christians, they believed in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead—in a heaven for the blessed, and a hell which was the abode of evil spirits."

The religion of Mithras had its origin among the Zoroastrians of Persia. By some revolution, of which we have no historic record, the sun god, Mithras, acquired a pre-eminent place in their pantheon. Strabo says that in his time Mithras was the one deity of the Persians. The later Zoroastrianism, which gave rise to the present religion of the Parsees, was the result of a later reformation. Mithras was the deity of the pirates of Cilicia in the first century B.C., and, when Pompey overcame and dispersed the robber band, the cult of their deity spread into the Roman Empire. At first it made its way but slowly, none of the inscriptions belonging to it being of an earlier age than the first century A.D., and it did not attain its full dominion for two centuries more, when, as the religion specially favored by the Roman Army, it spread to all the frontiers of the empire. The religion of Mithras, therefore, became known to the Romans through the slaves brought from Asia Minor by Pompey. The religion of Isis likewise came with the slaves from Egypt. And Christianity had the same servile origin, for the names in the New Testament are those of slaves and freedmen.

Although Mithraism and Isism were so widespread in the Roman Empire, it is obvious that no ruler of ability could give them official recognition and pre-eminence. Mithraism was the religion of the Persians, the chief enemies of the Emperors; consequently it would have

been suicidal to have adopted it. The worship of Isis was Egyptian; and Egypt was a turbulent, populous country. The adoption of an Egyptian religion would have given too great a color to the pretensions of the Egyptians, and have wrecked the State. The only safe course was to adopt some of the minor superstitions as the Imperial religion. Christianity was the property of no State, except, perhaps, the Jewish; and the Jewish power had been effectually broken by Titus and Hadrian. Christianity was, therefore, one of the safest cults that Constantine could have adopted. It had no militant nationality at its back, and it was too insignificant at the period to do anything more than take shelter under the Imperial power.

CHILPERIC.

Echoes from Everywhere.

FROM A CHRISTIAN ANARCHIST.

MR. J. MORRISON DAVIDSON'S fondness for italics and small capitals damns his literary work, and his predilection for Jesus blasts his philosophy. A good writer does not rely upon the compositor for his effects. And the real philosopher does not allow a more or less legendary personage of antiquity to color all his ideas.

Mr. Davidson can write brightly and well on other than theological subjects, and he handles these quite capably when the personality of Jesus is not concerned. But Jesus, to Mr. Davidson, is what King Charles's head was to Mr. Dick. He struggles continually, and without success, to keep "Him" out of his MS. But "He" will get in, and, once there, plays the very mischief with the writer's common sense, to say nothing of his personal pronouns!

FROM AN AFRICAN MISSIONARY.

"Carrying mud for Jesus" does not seem a particularly happy head-line for a paragraph in the *Christian Herald*. At first sight it looks like a contemptuous allusion to the Christian Evidence Brigade. But it is really nothing of the kind. A veracious bishop of the Niger River is telling us about a native convert who was proud to carry mud for the purpose of making the foundation of a church—the church's mud foundation.

The moral of all this appears a little involved. I suppose we must assume that mud is an essential element in Christianity, and that every good Christian will become the vehicle of its transmission. Take heart of grace, noble army of mud-rakers—you are raking for Jesus!

FROM THE FESTIVE GAUL.

The French Associations Law is causing a general exodus among the religious orders. If it continues, France will be relieved of a sombre multitude—Jesuits, Assumptionists, Jaunes, Dominicans, Sacristans, Benedictines—*toute la salaté et toute la bêtise!*

Some alarm is felt at the prospect of alienating so much wealth. For the Orders are immensely rich. The priest takes the vow of poverty, but that does not matter. The wealth belongs to the Orders, not to the individuals who compose them!

France should let the vermin go, and their money too. It would be a good riddance at any price. "Out" should be the word. "Out, monks and friars, crosses and crucifixes, soutanes and celibates!" But will they really go? The talk of going is incessant, the preparations are noisy. But the whole business is rather too theatrical, and will probably end in farce.

FROM THE EVANGELISTS.

With a feeling of uneasiness almost amounting to horror, I read the following item in a Christian contemporary: "Mr. William Forbes, the evangelist, had a number of theatrical women to tea at Bloomsbury Chapel."

Where are the police? This shocking example of evangelical turpitude calls for stern and immediate attention. That a Scotch evangelist should so far forget the traditions of his country as to invite a number of ladies to tea, theatrical ladies too!—chorus girls, perhaps, or even danseuses!—and in a chapel, of all places in the world!—is a scandal of the gravest nature. We are not told how the affair leaked out, but must conclude that the wretched man was caught *in flagrante delicto*.

E. R. WOODWARD.

Missionary Thieves in China.

News has reached America from Peking that Mr. H. G. Squiers, first secretary to the United States Legation to China, is on his way home with several cartloads of very valuable porcelain, bronzes, and carvings. The whole assortment is loot, which Mr. Squiers and others have purchased from Bishop Favier, the French head of Catholic missions in China. Favier stole it out of the palace of Yen Li Sen, the treasurer of the empire.

This theft by Favier was particularly atrocious. Other missionaries have justified their plundering of Chinese houses on the ground that the owners were Boxers, but Yen Li Sen was not a Boxer. He was a friend of the foreigners. For a long time Chinese ambassador to Berlin, he was familiar with the Powers of the Western world, and had the courage to warn the Empress Dowager that, unless the legations were released and protected, the trumpets of foreign armies would be heard under the walls of Peking within a month. He even went further than that. When the Empress Dowager issued her orders to the governors of the provinces to kill all the foreigners, it was Yen Li Sen who changed the order before it was promulgated so that it became a mandate to protect all the foreigners. He had also been very active in protecting, so far as he could, the foreign religious institutions and those connected with them. In fact, so conspicuous were his efforts in behalf of the foreigners that, through the influence of Prince Tuan and others about the Empress, he was arraigned before her majesty, with the result that by her order he was led out and instantly killed. This man was, therefore, virtually a martyr to the cause represented by the bishop—as much so as any missionary or native convert slain by the Buddhist fanatics. But all heathen look alike to the missionary, Catholic or Protestant, and the moment the allied forces captured Peking Bishop Favier made a descent upon Yen Li Sen's palace, stripped it of everything of value, and put the goods upon the market.—*Secular Thought* (Toronto).

What Good Has Christianity Done?

HAS Christianity done any good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, more honest? When the Church had entire control, were men better and happier? What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland? What has religion done for Hungary and Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could these countries have been worse without religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity? Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more blood-thirsty had he believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders? Would the Dutch have been more idiotic if they had denied the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost, and worshipped the blessed trinity of Sausage, Beer, and Cheese? Would John Knox have been any worse had he deserted Christ and become a follower of Confucius? Take our own dear, merciful Puritan Fathers. On the door of life they hung the crape of death. They muffled all the bells of gladness. They made cradles by putting rockers on coffins. In the Puritan year there were twelve Decembers. They tried to do away with infancy and youth, with the prattle of babes and the song of the morning. The religion of the Puritan was an unadulterated curse.—*Ingersoll*.

Troubles of Brer Williams.

"De ways er Providence," said Brother Dickey, "is past findin' out. Take Brer Williams, fer instance: Fer six days en dat number er nights he constant prayed fer rain, en w'en de rain come hit drowneded de only mule he had en washed his house sideways. Den he lit in fer ter pray fer dry, and de sun shine so hot dat his co'nfiel' wuz burnt ter a frazzle, and de new mule what he buyed on a credit wuz sunstroked, en what wuz lef' er his house ketched fire, en sence de well done dried up he didn't have no water to put it out! Den he got so mad he gone off in a corner ter swear in private, en de preacher, comin' dat way, hearn 'im swearin' en had 'im up befo' a speshul committee en turned 'im out de church! En de las' time I seen 'im he wuz settin' in de place whar his house use ter be a-readin' er de book er Job!"—*Atlanta Constitution*.

Free Thoughts.

Most Christians follow Jesus where he never went. The church is a place where women go to show God their good clothes. There is the same difference between morality and religion as there is between a live tree and a dead log. Man never would have crossed the ocean in five days if he had been obliged to wait for God to reveal the steamship.

Washington Not a Christian.

In the May number of the *Searchlight* I had an article which showed that Washington was not a church member. In this article I shall present some evidence to show that he was not even a believer in Christianity.

The pastors of the churches which Washington attended while a resident of Philadelphia, and to which Mrs. Washington belonged, were (as I stated in my previous article) Bishop White and Dr. Abercrombie. Had he been a believer in Christianity his pastors would have known it, and would have claimed him. They did not claim him. Bishop White says: "I do not believe that any degree of recollection will bring to my mind any fact which would prove General Washington to have been a believer in the Christian revelation" (*Memoir of Bishop White*, p. 193).

When Dr. Wilson interrogated Dr. Abercrombie concerning Washington's religious belief, his reply was: "Sir, Washington was a Deist."

The Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green was chaplain to Congress during Washington's administration, and dined with the President nearly every week. To his nephew, Hon. A. B. Bradford, Dr. Green said: "While Washington was very deferential to religion and its ceremonies, like nearly all the founders of the Republic, he was not a Christian, but a Deist."

Dr. Green further said: "He (Washington) had no belief at all in the divine origin of the Bible."

When Washington died, Thomas Jefferson made the following entry in his journal regarding his belief: "Dr. Rush told me (he had it from Asa [probably Ashbel] Green) that, when the clergy addressed General Washington on his departure from the government, it was observed in their consultation that he had never, on any occasion, said a word to the public which showed a belief in the Christian religion, and they thought they should so pen their address as to force him at length to disclose publicly whether he was a Christian or not. However, he observed, the old fox was too cunning for them. He answered every article of their address particularly, except that, which he passed over without notice. I know that Gouverneur Morris, who claimed to be in his secrets, and believed himself to be so, has often told me that General Washington believed no more in that system [Christianity] than he did" (*Jefferson's Works*, vol. iv., p. 572).

The Rev. Dr. Wilson, who thoroughly investigated the question of Washington's religion three-quarters of a century ago, says: "I think anyone who will candidly do as I have done will come to the conclusion that he was a Deist, and nothing more."

Robert Dale Owen, writing seventy years ago, says: "He (Washington) left behind him not one word to warrant the belief that he was other than a sincere Deist."

Again, Mr. Owen says: "It has been confidentially stated to me that he actually refused spiritual aid when it was proposed to send for a clergyman."

The Rev. Dr. Miller, of England, who also examined this question, says: "My researches do not enable me to affirm that Washington, on his death-bed, gave evidence of Christian belief" (*Notes and Queries*).

Dr. Moncure D. Conway was employed by a historical society to edit a volume of Washington's letters. From a monograph of his on *The Religion of Washington*, the following extracts are taken: "This great historic personality represented the Liberal religious tendency of his time. In his many letters to his adopted nephew and young relatives he admonishes them about their manners and morals, but in no case have I been able to discover any suggestion that they should read the Bible, keep the Sabbath, go to church, or any warning against Infidelity. In the thousands of his letters I have never been able to find the name of Christ or any reference to him. Washington, too, had in his library the writings of Paine, Priestly, Voltaire, Frederick the Great, and other heretical works. Augustine Washington (his father), like most scholarly Virginians of his time, was a Deist.....Contemporary evidence shows that in mature life Washington was a Deist. Many clergymen visited him, but they were never invited to hold family prayers, and no grace was ever said at table."

General A. W. Greeley, U.S.A., wrote an article on "Washington's Domestic and Religious Life," which appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal* for April, 1896, and from which I quote the following: "The effort to depict Washington as very devout from his childhood, as a strict Sabbatarian, and as in intimate spiritual communication with the Church, is practically contradicted by his own letters. He was not regular in attendance at church. From his childhood he travelled on Sunday whenever occasion required. He considered it proper for his negroes to fish, and on that day made at least one contract. It is, however, somewhat striking that in several thousand letters the name of Jesus Christ never appears, and it is notably absent from his last will."

The *Catholic World* says: "In all the voluminous writings of General Washington the holy name of Jesus Christ is never written."

The *Western Christian Advocate*, organ of the leading Protestant denomination of this country, says: "He (Washington) belonged to no church, and was not, perhaps, a Christian in that experimental sense necessary, by the New Testament standards, to constitute a child of God."

Judge J. B. Stallo, President Cleveland's minister to Italy, in an argument before the Superior Court of Cincinnati, said: "The men who assembled in Philadelphia to frame our Constitution were, many of them, imbued with the spirit of Free-thought, then prevalent." This, he said, was especially true of Washington.

The Rev. Dr. Swing, of Chicago, in a sermon on Washington and Lincoln, said: "It is often lamented by the churchman that Washington and Lincoln possessed little religion except that found in the word 'God'.....The colonies so hated England, and so admired France, that most of our early statesmen reduced Christianity to that French Rationalism which was quite well satisfied with the doctrine of a Creator."

The Rev. Minot J. Savage, of New York, in a sermon on Washington, said: "That he was an Evangelical Christian is almost certainly not true."

Boston's greatest preacher, Theodore Parker, in his *Four Historic Americans*, says: "I suppose his (Washington's) theological opinions were those of John Adams, Dr. Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson."

The Rev. John Snyder, of St. Louis, in the *Globe* of that city, says: "If Thomas Paine is in hell on account of his religious opinions, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson are in his company."

—*Searchlight*.

J. E. REMSBURG.

Chary Chary-ty.

'Tis very sad, this startling news
From Church and Chapel quarters,
That worshippers their cash refuse
(According to reporters).
It seems with buttons plates they fill
(Oh, dear, what hearts of marble!);
If this goes on, their youngsters will
Assuredly thus warble:
"Two, four, six, eight,
Pa puts buttons in the plate!
Eight, four, six, two,
Ma is saving up a few!"

According to report, alas!
From many a church and chapel,
'Tis done by e'en the better class—
How *can* we with this grapple?
If this goes on, collection folk,
Who'd see poor funds a-mounting,
Will suffer much from Worry's yoke,
And thus they'll be heard counting:
"Two, four, six, eight,
Nought but buttons in the plate!
Here's a thousand buttons more!
Still they come—God help the Poor!"

—*Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*.

Anthropomorphism.

Only by a long and weary training through study and experience has man, after surmounting countless steps of error, reached that pure clearness of free and unprejudiced thought in which all scientific minds now move, or ought to move. Deep ignorance of the laws of nature surrounding him, and a very intelligible fear of the natural forces pressing on him and threatening him, in conjunction with a belief in the continuance of the principle of life after death, which was incomprehensible to him, must necessarily have led the earliest man, when he came to consider a little, to anthropomorphic ideas and fancies of a divine and supernatural government of the world, which belief, being fostered and worked upon by ambiguous priests, has brought so much misery and such great trouble on suffering humanity.—*Büchner*.

Onward!

One must look at the future, stretch out one's neck to see the horizon, sling one's self forward, put down one's head, and on quickly, without listening to the wailing voice of tender memories, which would fain call one back to the valley of everlasting sorrow. One must not look into the abyss, for in its depths there is an inexpressible charm that draws us down.—*Gustave Flaubert*.

As long as the majority of men will cringe to the very earth before some petty prince or king, what must be the infinite abjectness of their little souls in the presence of their supposed creator and God?—*Ingersoll*.

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, C. Watts, "The Growth of Freethought."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7, Conversazione.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11, Mr. O'Dell, "The Irreligion of Omar Khayyam."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Joseph McCabe, "Catholicism as a Religion."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, H. H. Quilter, "The Holy Grail."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stephen, E.): 7, A. B. Moss.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall): 3.45, J. H. Gilliland, "Butler's *Analogy and Modern Thought*."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Town Hall): 3, G. W. Foote, "Anarchism and Assassination"; 6, Musical Selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Hall-Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy."

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): H. Percy Ward—3, "What is Secularism"; 7, "Is There a God?" October 10, at 8, Mr. Ward will lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen—11.30, "The Problem of the Criminal"; 2.30, "The Growth and Prospects of Freethought"; 6.30, "Christianity at the Bar of History."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Vocal and Instrumental Concert.

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, W. A. Rogerson, "The Mechanism of Life"; lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "The Way to Salvation"; 3, "Faith, Hope, and Charity"; 7, "Methodism's Onslaught against Unbelief." Weather permitting, the morning lecture will be given near the Monolith. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Capt. Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

H. PERCY WARD, 1 Victoria-chambers, 17 Little Horton-lane, Bradford.—October 6, Bradford; 13, Birmingham. November 3, Sheffield; 10, Huddersfield. December 8, Glasgow; 15th, Failsworth; 22, Birmingham.

Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH. Funeral Orations and Addresses. 1s.	WHAT IS RELIGION? 2d.
MISTAKES OF MOSES. 1s.	IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.
THE DEVIL. 6d.	LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.
SUPERSTITION. 6d.	GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.
SHAKESPEARE. 6d.	FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE GODS. 6d.	GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.
THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.	THE DYING CREED. 2d.
REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 4d.	THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.
ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.	HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.	ART AND MORALITY. 2d.
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.	DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.	SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.
ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.	MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.
PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.	SKULLS. 2d.
HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.	THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.
ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.	LIVE TOPICS. 1d.
THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.	MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.
LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.	REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.
	REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.
	CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.
	CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

London: The Freethought Publishing, Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

Recently Published, 24 pp. in cover, price 3d. (with a 'valuable Appendix),

Spiritualism a Delusion: its Fallacies Exposed.

By CHARLES WATTS.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

PURE Undyed Natural Wool Vests, Pants, Body Belts, Ladies' and Children's Vests, Bodices, and Combinations. Write for prices.—The Direct Supply Hosiery Company, Blakey's Buildings, Bridlesmith Gate, Nottingham.

GREAT SUMMER SALE!

21s. PARCELS that contain £2 worth of Goods.

- 0—1 Gent's Ready-made Lounge Suit, any size or any color. State chest over vest, and inside leg measure.
- 1—2 Splendid Suit Lengths, Tweed or Serge, any color.
- 2—4 Trousers Lengths, wear guaranteed, Stripe, Check, or Mixture.
- 3—2 Full Dress Lengths, with lining and buttons complete.
- 4—3 Dress Skirts, made to measure from any kind of material.
- 5—Complete Costume, to measure, and a Silver Mounted Umbrella.
- 6—1 Suit Length, 1 Dress Skirt, to measure, and 1 Beautiful Crepon Blouse.
- 7—50 yards High-class Flannelette, in 5 different designs.
- 8—11 yards very deep Pile Velveteen, black or any color.
- 9—1 Gent's Scarboro' Mackintosh and 1 Trousers length.
- 10—1 Gent's Umbrella, 1 Trousers length, 1 Dress length, and 1 Lady's Umbrella.
- 11—1 pair All-Wool Blankets, 1 pair of Large Sheets, 1 Quilt, 1 Tablecloth, 1 pair Curtains.
- 12—1 pair of Trousers, 1 Dress Skirt, 1 Gent's Umbrella, and 1 Lady's Umbrella.
- 13—15 yards of Suiting for Boys, very strong and durable.
- 14—30 yards Remnants for Children's Dresses, all good in color and quality.
- 15—2 pair All-Wool Blankets.
- 16—2 Night Dresses, 2 Chemises, 2 pairs Knickers, 2 Skirts, 2 pair Stockings, 2 Handkerchiefs, 1 Fur Necktie, and 1 Silver-mounted Umbrella.
- 17—2 Men's Wool Shirts, 2 pairs Drawers, 2 Under Vests, 2 pairs Socks, and 1 Umbrella.
- 18—1 Youth's Suit to measure; chest, over vest, not to be more than 32 inches.
- 19—3 pairs Trousers to measure, all different.
- 20—Parcel of Goods made up of anything you name in reason. Please remember that during Sale we are selling everything at about half ordinary price. This will be a guide as to what you might ask for.

During our great Summer Sale—to October 10—we shall put into each parcel, absolutely free of all cost, one of our ready-made Lady's Jackets, left in stock from former seasons. These jackets have been sold at from 15s. to 30s. each.

EACH PARCEL 21s.

AGENTS wanted in every town and village in the United Kingdom. You can easily add 10s. to 30s. weekly to your income. Write for terms.

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

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. Orders should be sent to the author,

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

The Safest and Most Effectual Cure for Inflammation of the Eyes is

Thwaites' Celandine Lotion.

Cures inflammation in a few hours. Neglected or badly doctored cases. 3 or 4 days is sufficient time to cure any case. For Sore and Inflamed Eyelids. Nothing to equal the Lotion for Dimness of Sight. Will remove Skin or Film that sometimes grows on the Eye. As the eye is one of the most sensitive organs of the body, it needs the most careful treatment.

Cullpeper says in his Herbal Book that if the virtues of Celandine were generally known it would spoil the spectacle-makers' trade. 1s. 1½d. per bottle, with directions; by post 14 stamps.

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

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

FOR

FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

Edited by G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

A NEW EDITION, REVISED, AND HANDSOMELY PRINTED.

Contents:—Part I. Bible Contradictions—Part II. Bible Absurdities—Part III. Bible Atrocities—Part IV. Bible Inimoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

Cheap Edition, in paper covers, 1s. 6d.; Best Edition, bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

BIBLE ROMANCES.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Contents:—The Creation Story—Eve and the Apple—Cain and Abel—Noah's Flood—The Tower of Babel—Lot's Wife—The Ten Plagues—The Wandering Jews—Balaam's Ass—God in a Box—Jonah and the Whale—Bible Animals—A Virgin Mother—The Resurrection—The Crucifixion—John's Nightmare.

THE SECOND (REVISED) EDITION COMPLETE.

160 Pages.

Bound in Cloth.

Price Two Shillings.

Free by Post at the Published Price.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD.

By G. W. FOOTE.

A MORAL AND STATISTICAL ESSAY ON WAR.

SHOULD BE IN THE HANDS OF ALL REFORMERS.

Price Twopence.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

A VINDICATION OF DE WET.

AN OPEN LETTER

TO THE

Editor of the "Birmingham Daily Post."

By IAKOFF N. WOLFE.

Price 4d.

Post free 5d.

London: The Freethought Publishing Co., Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

PECULIAR PEOPLE.

An Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills.

On his sentencing THOMAS GEORGE SENIOR to four months' imprisonment with Hard Labor for Obeying the Bible by not calling in a Doctor to his Sick Child.

By G. W. FOOTE.

16 pp.

Price ONE PENNY.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.

FREETHINKERS should READ the striking and unconventional work:

EPICUREAN ESSAYS in Prose and Verse, by W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A. (Trin. Coll., Camb.).

It contains thirty-seven pieces—essays, poems, stories, etc. Some of the essays are of special interest to Freethinkers; such as "A Strike in the Top Storey" (amongst the angelic host); "The Possible Application of Mechanical Discoveries to the Propagation and Maintenance of Religion"; "Three Fallacies (1, That Christianity has transformed the world; 2, High and Low; 3, The supposed evidence of men of genius in favor of religion)"; "The Myth of Duty," etc., etc.

The book is bound in cloth, contains 216 pages, and its published price is 2s. 6d.; but it will be supplied to readers of the *Freethinker* at the

REDUCED PRICE of 1s. 6d. post free on application to the publisher,

G. STANDRING, 7 and 9 Finsbury-street, London, E.C.

WORKS BY F. H. PERRYCOSTE, B.Sc.

TOWARDS UTOPIA, 2s. 6d. The Cry of the Children, 1s. The Organisation of Science, 6d.

Post free from the Author, Polperro, R.S.O., Cornwall.

NOW READY.**NOW READY.****The Twentieth Century Edition**

OF THE

AGE OF REASON

BY

THOMAS PAINE.**WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION & ANNOTATIONS**By **G. W. FOOTE.**

And a Beautiful Portrait of Paine.

ISSUED BY THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

Printed in fine New Type on Good Paper, and Published at the
Marvellously Low Price of Sixpence.

Postage of Single Copies, 2d.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C

NOW READY.**FOREIGN MISSIONS:****THEIR DANGERS AND DELUSIONS.**By **G. COHEN.***Contents* :—General Considerations—Financial—India—China and Japan—Africa and Elsewhere—Converting the Jews—Conclusions.

Full of facts and figures. Ought to have a wide circulation.

Price Ninepence.

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.

BIBLE HEROES.By **G. W. FOOTE.**

Mr. Adam—Captain Noah—Father Abraham—Juggling Jacob—Master Joseph—Joseph's Brethren—Holy Moses—Parson Aaron—General Joshua—Jephthah & Co.—Professor Samson—Prophet Samuel—King Saul—Saint David—Sultan Solomon—Poor Job—Hairy Elijah—Bald Elisha—General Jehu—Doctor Daniel—The Prophets—Saint Peter—Saint Paul.

THE ONLY CANDID HISTORY OF THESE WORTHIES.

*Single Numbers One Penny each.**Parts I. and II., paper covers, 1s. each.**The Whole Work in cloth, 200 pp., 2s. 6d.*

THE FREETHOUGHT PUBLISHING Co., LTD., 1 STATIONERS' HALL COURT, LONDON, E.C.
