

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXI.—No. 45.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1901.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Methodist Boasting.

THE great Hugh Price Hughes is still in retirement, but the Methodist trumpet is safe in the hands of Sir Henry Fowler. This gentleman has been addressing an enthusiastic Methodist meeting at Wolverhampton. His audience wanted to hear something to their own credit, and the orator fairly rose to the occasion. He told them that there were twenty millions of Methodists in the world. Some said thirty millions, but he did not care for a million or two. If they were counted properly, the Methodists would be so numerous as to render such a discrepancy trifling. Those who had "crossed the flood" ought to be included. Then what a host they would be! Those marching to heaven, we suppose, and those already there—the Church militant and the Church triumphant—would make a splendid show together. Perhaps so. But what about the exceptions? It does not seem to have occurred to Sir Henry Fowler that some who had "crossed the flood" had probably reached a warmer destination. Or does he imagine that every Methodist, merely as a Methodist, holds a dead certain through-ticket for heaven?

This wonderful growth of Methodism since the days of John Wesley—by the way, Methodism existed before him—had not, in Sir Henry Fowler's opinion, happened by chance, but by "the undoubted influence of divine permission and control." Now, if these words mean anything in particular, they mean that God Almighty runs the Wesleyan Methodist Church. This, of course, may be true. We are not prepared to deny it. On the other hand, we are not prepared to believe it without evidence. The mere fact of numbers, wealth, and other tokens of "success," scarcely entitles any religion, or any sect of any religion, to claim the special favor of the divinity. In point of numbers, Buddhism beats Christianity; and, under the same test, Catholicism beats Methodism hollow. Whether the comparison be between Christianity and outside religions, or between one division of Christianity and another, the result is bound to be disastrous to some very "cocky" reputations. Nor is it easy to exceed the vulgarity of this kind of measurement. The biggest crowd is not necessarily the wisest. Heads have to be weighed as well as counted. Sometimes one man is on the side of the truth and all the rest of the world is against it. Moreover, as Emerson says, it is easier to touch a multitude to folly than a few to wisdom. Some perception of this truth, though sadly distorted, was enjoyed even by the first Christians. Many are called, they said, and few chosen; one road was thronged, and another nearly deserted; for which reason they had the promise of Jesus that he would be in the midst of the twos and threes gathered together in his name. Indeed, it has always been held by the masters of Christianity, from St. Augustine to Cardinal Newman, that the real Christians have been but a handful in every generation. "Nonsense!" cries Sir Henry Fowler, "here are thirty millions of us!" Ah, if one could only see the sarcastic smile on Newman's face at this raucous exclamation.

Pursuing his Methodist arithmetic, Sir Henry Fowler said that 40,000 soldiers and sailors were declared Methodists, and 10,000 of them were at present fighting in South Africa. But are not the Boers also Christians? And how is it that Methodists and Doppers have nothing better to do than to slaughter each other, after nearly two thousand years of the pretended religion of peace and goodwill? Was it worth while producing Methodists and Doppers for the sake of mutual extermination?

At the end of the day's proceedings, in which Sir Henry Fowler figured, it was announced that £871 had been collected in connection with the opening services of the new Methodist chapel. This is a good sum in its way. No wonder there was loud applause. But what is that £871 in comparison with the single day's cost of the war in South Africa, or even so much of it as may be represented by those 10,000 Methodist fighting-men?

It is rather curious that Sir Henry Fowler, after suggesting that God Almighty runs the Wesleyan Methodist Church, should refer to the various other Protestant Churches in this country. He invites the question, Who runs *them*? Are they conducted by the Devil? Or are they managed by the same God Almighty who looks after Methodism? No doubt, if Sir Henry Fowler were pressed for an answer, he would admit the latter alternative. But in that case another question arises. Why does the same God split his worshippers up into so many rival denominations? There are Catholics, Churchmen, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and—well, see the list of them in *Whitaker's Almanack*. Even the Unitarians, who deny the deity of Jesus, hang on to the end of the procession and claim to be Christians too. That these denominations love each other is an obvious falsehood. That they hate each other is visible under the grimaces of their specious fraternity. There is talk, no doubt, of the coming unity of the Free Churches; but an unfulfilled prophecy is not yet a fact, and may never be so; and the antagonism would still exist between the united Free Churches and the disunited Church of England, and between both of them and the great Church of Rome.

Sir Henry Fowler tries to cover up this difficulty. "The Churches," he said, "were building upon one foundation—the incarnation of Jesus Christ, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension—which was absolutely unchallenged and unchallengeable." This, he said, was a foundation of fact, not of doctrine.

Now we ask any serious student of religion whether this is not childish. How can there be any real unity without unity of doctrine? It is precisely upon differences of doctrine that all the various Churches have been built. The facts alleged by Sir Henry Fowler were always accepted by all of them. But the facts alone were not sufficient to keep them in the bonds of brotherhood. They swore universally by the facts, and fought each other like tigers over the doctrines. Catholics gave Protestants hell here for denying that they were bound to go to hell hereafter, and Protestants returned the compliment whenever they had the opportunity. And if anybody had told them that they differed about the "facts" of the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ascension, they would have joined hands together for a moment and burnt *him*.

Just a word in conclusion about those "facts" being "unchallenged and unchallengeable." They are not challenged by Christian Churches. That goes without saying. But they have been challenged by outsiders from the very beginning. Millions of people in civilised countries reject these "facts." They have been challenged in learned books by eminent critics. We may add that they are even challenged by some who remain within the Christian Churches. If this is not known to Sir Henry Fowler, it is high time that he took a little elementary instruction on the subject. If it is known to him, we are bound to say that he is a fine hand at playing to the Methodist gallery.

G. W. FOOTE.

Secularism and the Masses.

IN several of my articles in the *Freethinker* I have shown that Christianity has failed to solve the various social problems that confront us. Ample proofs have been furnished which demonstrate its weakness as a reforming agency. The highest dignitaries of the Church have confessed its inadequacy to meet and satisfy the requirements of the community. Nowhere has this deficiency been more manifest than among our working classes, by which phrase is here meant those persons who are engaged in manual labor as distinct from those who belong to what is known as a profession. There is no lack of historical evidence of the impotency of the Church in providing remedies for the evils which have long interfered with the emancipation and progress of the masses. Despite the alleged influence of the Christian faith, the toiling millions remain untouched by its power and unaided by its efforts. This is so palpable that only a fortnight since Dr. Farrar, Dean of Canterbury, wrote in the *Christian World* thus:—

"The working classes form the vast majority of the nation. There are all the laborers scattered throughout the length and breadth of our lands engaged in the actual culture of the soil. There are hundreds of thousands of all ages engaged in our manufactures and in large workshops of every kind. There are the countless inhabitants of the slums and poorer regions of our great cities. There can be no doubt that there is a great deal of smouldering discontent in these classes of working men and women, and that they are, to a certain extent, left untouched by the immediate influence of the Church.By the Church we do not at all mean the priests or the clergy, or the adherents of this or that party or institution. We mean the blessed company of all faithful people; we mean all who in sincerity profess and call themselves Christians.....It would be idle to deny that the state of things as regards our laboring classes is not satisfactory, and our illustration of this is the growth of socialistic methods which, if neglected, have often become the germ of dangerous revolutions.....The present serious problem with which the Church in these days has to deal consists in the fact that she apparently is losing all hold on the working classes. It is a fact terrible to think of that not five per cent. of this class attend the religious services in our churches, and scarcely more than one per cent. ever kneel at the table of the Lord. It is the duty of the Church to discover the reason of this, and then steadily set her face to regaining their allegiance. Why, then, has the Church no longer the power of attracting working men?"

Dean Farrar here grants that the masses are dissatisfied with the Church, meaning by that term not merely one branch of the Christian organisation, but "all who in sincerity profess and call themselves Christians." He also states that the "serious problem" is how to deal with the fact that the Church "is losing all hold on the working classes."

Now, the Dean considers that the cause of this lack of attraction upon the part of the Church "may be found mainly" in the fact that "the Prayer Book is not suited to the needs and intellects of the working classes," and that "the curses of drink and gambling provide greater attractions than our public worship." But is not this a further admission of the defective means employed by the Church to meet the needs and satisfy the intellects of the working classes? Further, does it not indicate the utter inability of the Church to successfully grapple with "the curses of drink and gambling"? As it is conceded that the Prayer Book is not suitable to the working classes, why is it retained as a text-book in the so-called national religion? And, inasmuch as Christianity has proved itself incompetent to counteract the attractions of drink and gambling, would it not be better to select and adopt a practical remedy? The Dean suggests "that the chief essentials in the duties of the Church toward the working classes lie in greater reality, a more systematic self-sacrifice, and a more ardent enthusiasm." Here, again, we have the admission that hitherto the Church has been deficient in the principal essentials of a progressive institution. What reason, therefore, have we to expect that her future career will be radically different from her past history? In my opinion, none whatever. Her teachings are impracticable, and her policy is non-progressive. The fact is, the Church has

failed in its duty as a progressive agent, and made itself a stumbling block to the advancement of the masses. Indeed, the condition of our rural population affords ample proof of this. For years these victims of a degrading theology were directly indoctrinated with the Church's teachings; and with what results?—the lack of practical education and of personal independence. It is only since secular instruction has partially supplanted theological teaching in our agricultural districts that self-reliance and united action among the laborers have commenced. The Church has really been tried and found wanting as a progressive institution; it must, therefore, no longer be relied upon, nor must we trust to its power, but rather seek that material, unsacerdotal aid which is alone capable of adding dignity to man, and of conferring benefits upon the human race.

It is thus plain that theology, after a long and fair opportunity, has proved itself incapable as a panacea for both personal and societal wrongs. It is, therefore, necessary to seek elsewhere for a remedy. Even if we fail to discover what we desire, that would be no reason why false remedies should not be exposed, for so long as these satisfy people they will not be inclined to look for others. This false contentment will account, in some measure, for the stagnation and apathy regarding social reform on the part of the Church. Its devotees have deluded themselves with the belief that Christianity has furnished the means whereby the regeneration of society can be secured, but time has shown such a belief to be utterly groundless. In my opinion, the only thorough remedy for the social evils by which we are surrounded is to be found in the philosophy of Secularism, which enjoins, in dealing with social and other problems, reliance upon human reason and experience, not upon faith in any alleged supernatural religion; upon facts, not merely imagination; and upon personal efforts, not upon dependence on "God's help." Having no faith in what are termed spiritual agencies as antidotes for existing wrongs, Secularists recognise only that as being useful—physically, mentally, morally, socially, and politically—which tends to improve the condition of mankind on earth. Considerations about matters that are said to transcend the province of reason, and that make the business of this life simply of secondary importance, Secularists deem to be, at the most, only of theoretical interest, and of little service in the many struggles in which society is constantly engaged. Secularism emphasizes the well-established fact that the duties of the political and social reformer can be usefully performed without the aid of any of the religions of the Churches. Moreover, his labors are likely to be far more successful without such assistance, for the obvious reason that practical work will not be fettered by non-practical teachings. Herein lies the superiority of Secularism over the various Christian systems. It teaches as a duty the study of all proposals that are made for human improvement, regardless of sect or party, with this special injunction, that care should always be taken to discriminate between true and false methods, and not to confound vain theories with practical remedies.

These are a few illustrations of the superiority of the Secular over the Christian method of striving to obtain social reforms. Secularism proclaims the advisability of confining attention to this world, and of devoting our labors to enhance the value of this life, without affirming or denying the possibility of existence in any future world. The man whose mind is distracted with thoughts about an imaginary future life, of which he knows nothing, is not in a mental condition to do his best in the sphere in which he at present finds himself. Personally, I regard the errors of theology to be at the root of the principal evils which mar the happiness and retard the progress of the human family. When these errors are eradicated from the minds of men, they will be in a condition to more readily receive those truths discovered by long and patient study—truths that will form the real basis of the solution of our many social problems.

As a Secularist, I appeal to the general masses to rely more upon themselves, to avoid apathy, and to master the art of self-government. They should organise more firmly, so that by united action they may increase their power and augment their usefulness. It is the duty of every member of the community to be active; no one has a right to disregard his responsibility to

society. Nothing is more gratifying to priests and other would-be dictators of human thought than apathy upon the part of the masses. As J. S. Mill truly wrote, in his Inaugural Address to the University of St. Andrews: "Let not any one pacify his conscience by the delusion that he can do no harm if he takes no part and forms no opinion. Bad men need nothing more to compass their ends than that good men should look on and do nothing. He is not a good man who, without protest, allows wrong to be committed in his name, and with the means which he helps to supply, because he will not trouble himself to use his mind on the subject. It depends upon the habit of looking into public transactions, and on the degree of information and solid judgment respecting them that exists in the community, whether the conduct of the nation as a nation, both within itself and towards others, shall be selfish, corrupt, tyrannical, or rational and enlightened, just and noble."

CHARLES WATTS.

The Pathology of Religion.—II.

IN a previous article I have pointed out that among all religions the deliberate excitation of the nervous system by the use of drugs, by fasting, or by flagellation, has been resorted to in order to induce the sense of communication with supernatural beings. I have also said that between the practices of savages and the practices of Christians, in this respect, the identity is exact; and it is impossible to avoid drawing the same inference in both cases. Take the following two quotations as proof of this. The first is from Tylor:—

"The Malay, to make himself invulnerable, retires for three days to solitude and scanty food in the jungle; and if, on the third day, he dreams of a beautiful spirit descending to speak to him, the charm is worked. The Zulu doctor qualifies himself for intercourse with the 'Amadhloyi,' or ghosts, from whom he is to obtain direction in his craft, by spare, abstemious diet, want, suffering, castigation, and solitary wandering, till fainting-fits or coma bring him into direct intercourse with the spirits. These native diviners fast often, and are worn out by fastings, sometimes of several days' duration, when they become partially or wholly ecstatic and see visions."*

The second is from Lecky, and describes a condition of things that flourished during the really *living* period of Christian history:—

"A hideous, sordid, and emaciated maniac, without patriotism, without natural affection, passing his life in a long routine of useless and atrocious self-torture, and quailing before the ghastly phantoms of his own delirious brain, had become the ideal of the nations which had known the writings of Plato and Cicero, and the lives of Socrates and Cato. For about two centuries the hideous maceration of the body was regarded as the highest proof of excellence. St. Jerome declares, with a thrill of admiration, that he had seen a monk who for thirty years had lived exclusively on a small portion of barley-bread and of muddy water; another, who lived in a hole, and never ate more than five figs for his daily repast; a third, who cut his hair only on Easter Sunday, who never washed his clothes, who never changed his tunic till it fell to pieces, who starved himself till his eyes grew dim, and his skin 'like a pumice-stone'.....St. Besarion spent forty days and nights in the middle of thorn-bushes, and for forty years never lay down when he slept.....Some saints, like St. Marcian, restricted themselves to one meal a day, so small that they continually suffered the pangs of hunger.....Some of the hermits lived in deserted dens of wild beasts, others in dried-up wells; while others found a congenial resting-place among the tombs. Some disdained all clothes, and crawled about like the wild beasts.....The cleanliness of the body was regarded as a pollution of the soul, and the saints who were most admired had become one hideous mass of clotted filth.....Tears and sobs, and frantic strugglings with imaginary demons, and paroxysms of religious despair, were the texture of his life; and the dread of spiritual enemies, and of that death which his superstition had rendered so terrible, embittered every hour of his existence."†

It is a long quotation, but the juxtaposition of the two pictures—the one of a people admittedly savage, the other of a class whom Christian literature dignifies

by the title of "holy"—will bring out more clearly than much writing the identity of religious practices in all places and at all times. Not only amongst savages and semi-civilised people are these austerities practised, but even among the most civilised races the same proceedings are more or less evident. The man who shuns harmless pleasures, or "mortifies the flesh" in various ways, is still looked upon as a being of a peculiarly high religious type; and, although civilised common sense would to-day reject as the ravings of a madman an account of visions seen by one who was leading the life of a thoroughgoing ascetic, there is still enough of the practice left to show how clear is the line of descent of the modern "saint" from the primitive savage.

But it is impossible for one who comes to the study of religion equipped with an adequate knowledge of the physiology of the nervous system to escape the significance of these practices. It removes a large portion of the phenomena of religion from the region of normal history to that of pathology. The visions of the saint, the self-supposed divine illumination, and communing with supernatural powers, are seen, when we search into the physical conditions of their being, to rest upon exactly the same foundations as the visions seen by a shipwrecked sailor who may be suffering the tantalising pangs of extreme hunger and thirst. It is not, as many religious writers assert, that God has withdrawn the gifts of prophecy, inspiration, or of seeing visions from the world, but that the world has very largely abolished the conditions of their existence. It is the mental pathologist, the specialist in nervous disorders, who is in the best position to give us a true account of the meaning of much of the world's religion, not the mere literary student, or, particularly, not the religious believer, whose own mode of life often renders him a victim to substantially the same kind of delusion. As one of our leading authorities on mental disorders puts it:—

"The supernatural powers which were thought to possess and constrain the mind are.....plainly no more than its natural nervous substrata engaged in disordinate, abnormal, or, so to speak, unnatural functions. Thus it comes to pass that the strange nervous seizures, with their peculiar mental concomitants, instead of being outside the range of positive research, are most interesting events within it; they are useful natural experiments, which throw light upon the intricate functions of the most complex organ in the world—the human brain. The painstaking researches of pathology tend steadily to supersede an awe-stricken and impotent admiration of the supernatural in this its last and most obscure retreat; for they prove that in the extremest ecstasies there is neither *theolepsy* nor *diabolepsy*, nor any other *lepsy* in the sense of the possession of the individual by an external power. What there truly is is a *psycholepsy*."*

The study of religion from this point of view—a study so fruitful that it is remarkable that more attention has not been paid it—is not only valuable as enabling us to understand much of its real nature, but also as explaining one condition of its growth and perpetuation. Much is said nowadays of the power of religion and of the religious feelings; but it is not at all realised how much of its influence is due to the presence of deliberately induced delusions, such as have been described above. We dismiss such stories of the miraculous or the supernatural as being either delusion, trickery, or a mixture of both. But to generations they were the unmistakable evidence of the truth of religious beliefs, and it was upon such material as this that the religious consciousness was matured and perpetuated. The mass of the religious world never have lived, and do not even now live, upon the fine-spun subtleties elaborated by modern apologists. These apologies owe whatever force they possess to the circumstance that they are offered to a public possessing as a heritage religious instincts that have been fostered by the half-insane practices of earlier generations. Lourdes has a far greater influence in keeping religion alive than the writings of Harnack or any other apologist. Withdraw from religion all that it has derived from deliberate fraud on the one side, and from the visions of semi-lunatics on the other, and what is left would be scarcely worth troubling about.

Unfortunately, though, even when one has destroyed

* *Primitive Culture*, ii., 414.

† *History of European Morals*, ii., 107-8-14.

* Dr. H. Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, p. 314.

the credibility of the evidences for the supernatural, one does not destroy the consequences of the belief. Modern civilisation may have wiped away the belief that the king is divinely appointed, and that he and the aristocracy represent in some way a different order of human beings to the common run of the world. But, though the belief is gone, the habits of servility and dependence still remain, and monarchy and aristocracy still enjoy privileges, largely because they can appeal to feelings that were elaborated during a period when different and erroneous ideas concerning them were entertained. And, in the same way, religion lives to-day upon credit gained under false pretences, and under conditions which are rapidly disappearing from the midst of civilised humanity.

So far, in considering the pathological basis of religious phenomena, I have dealt only with self-caused abnormal conditions that we may conveniently call artificial; but there remains a large mass of evidence that goes a long way towards establishing a close connection between ordinary insanity (that is, if we enlarge the meaning of insanity so as to cover all morbid mental conditions) and religious phenomena. The connection between downright insanity and the presence of supposed supernatural beings is one of the oldest facts in human history. Among savages there is no other theory of insanity than this. And, as with insanity, so with epilepsy and allied nervous disorders. In each case the presence of the disorder is accepted as the manifestations of some divinity. Emanuel Deutsch says.—

“There is a peculiar something supposed to inhere in epilepsy. The Greeks called it a sacred disease. Boechantic and corybantic furor were god-inspired stages. The Pythia uttered her oracles under the most distressing signs. Symptoms of convulsions were ever needed as a sign of the divine.”*

It is in people suffering from epilepsy that doctors observe a curious, but not uninteresting, exaltation of the religious sentiments, during which they believe themselves possessed by divinity, hearing voices, receiving commands, and, in brief, repeating to the modern observer all the paraphernalia associated with the “inspired” individuals who figure in the Christian or other scriptures.†

There can, indeed, be little doubt that epilepsy alone would account for a very large part of what our ancestors accepted as proofs of divine inspiration. Take, as proof, the following description of the normal symptoms accompanying epilepsy:—

“The patient's senses are possessed with hallucinations, his ganglionic central cells being in a state of what may be called convulsive action; before the eyes are blood-red flames of fire, amidst which whoever happens to present himself appears as a devil, or otherwise horribly transformed; the ears are filled with a terribly roaring noise, or resound with a voice imperatively telling him to save himself; the smell is, perhaps, one of sulphurous stinging, and the desperate and violent actions are the convulsive reactions to such fearful hallucinations.”‡

Let any impartial person study the history of religion in the light of an adequate knowledge of nervous disorders, and then ask himself how many of the phenomena that have gone to build up religions may not have their origin in purely pathological conditions.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Clerical Eccentricities.

ONE is astonished at the temerity of the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, vicar of Hexton. It is not that he goes preaching in Dissenting chapels, or that once or twice he has exhibited opposition to some performances in edifices belonging to his own Church Establishment. We know that he is a violent opponent of Ritualism, and that this is the red rag—perhaps a remnant of the garb of the Scarlet Lady of Babylon—which makes him

rather mad. But why, as a clergyman, did he contribute the other week to a Church paper the reckless article on “The Comic Aspects of Ritualism”?

Willingly one admits that there are many aspects and features of Ritualism which are likely to excite mirth or evoke a sad and pitying smile. But for a benighted clergyman to write about the “Comic Aspects” of services held in his own Church of England edifices savors either of an irreverent or rebellious spirit.

Few people will approve of a parson earning his bread from a Church which he does his best to dissent from in regard to a very considerable and important section of its priests. There are comical aspects about Ritualism, no doubt, but they are shared by religion generally.

We have never seen the Rev. Fillingham, vicar of Hexton, but a portrait of him is presented in the *Church Tower*; and, if it has any resemblance to him (which we are inclined to doubt), he is not the sort of cleric whom we should especially favor. A fighter is a fighter, but he need not look like a prize bull-dog. But a man's looks are no criterion, Lavater and his apostles notwithstanding. There is little doubt that the portrait is a libel, and that Mr. Fillingham looks in *propria persona* very much more agreeable than he has had the misfortune to be depicted in this amateurish Church print.

But though we have a favorable opinion of him personally, and would say nothing which would seem to reflect upon him individually, we cannot get away from his words. They are an incitement to ungodliness generally, though possibly he has not meant them to be so. But when you begin to destroy the Temple partially you are not at all sure what may fall, and, of course, Freethinkers would like to see the whole structure topple down.

The rebellious vicar of Hexton says: “Ritualism is a danger, most certainly; a danger to the souls of Englishmen, a danger to our national greatness. But it is also a screaming farce.”

A screaming farce! So it is; but all the rest of the ecclesiastical paraphernalia is so. Any phase of the Church of England—High, Low, or Broad—is open to the same remark. The vicar of Hexton discovers a difference between Ritualism and Romanism which is not at all favorable to the former. He says with perfect truth:—

“Romanism has been the curse of humanity; it has filled the world with tears and blood. It has sought to usurp the place of God in the communion of men; it has erected the gibbet and kindled the fire for those who would not submit to its claims; it has paganised Christianity; it has destroyed morality by teaching a ‘moral theology,’ according to which wrong is right and sin a Christian perfection. In all these aspects Romanism has ever been bad, cruel, anti-Christian; but it has never been ridiculous.”

But Ritualism, according to Mr. Fillingham, has ever been ridiculous. He says it is a religion made a pantomime, “with a sham priest for pantaloons.” Then Mr. Fillingham, as though attacking some alien faith, and not a section of his own Church, says:—

“Its theory about itself, to start with, is excruciatingly funny. It tells us that it is the Catholic Church in this country (and doesn't it spell it with big capital C's!). According to your High Churchman, the Church has three branches, all having a right to *one* allegiance in their respective spheres. In the South of Europe the Church of Rome is right—you are a schismatic if you separate from her. In the East the Greek Church is right—you are a schismatic if you separate from her. In England the Church of England is right—forsake her services, deny her doctrines, and you are at once in heresy and schism. That is the orthodox Ritualistic idea of the Church.”

Of course, as the vicar of Hexton presents it—and he is not far wrong—the orthodox Ritualistic notion is “excruciatingly funny.” But it is, perhaps, only fair to give his concluding words on this point, though they show an irreverence which we should hardly have expected in a clergyman—even after having learnt to expect much from the combative Fillingham:—

“Now, just see the delightful conclusion to which it leads us. All these ‘branches’ differ among themselves as to what is of faith and what isn't; so it follows, from the Ritualistic point of view, that what is true in one

* *Literary Remains*, p. 83.

† See a number of cases quoted in *The Blot upon the Brain*, by W. W. Ireland, M.D., pp. 38-42.

‡ Maudsley, *Physiology of Mind*, p. 251.

country is false in another. That is to say: the Pope is infallible at Ostend, but not at Dover; the Virgin Mary is immaculate at Boulogne, but not at Folkestone. Now, I just want my dear Ritualistic apes and pantaloons to tell me this, and, if they can answer me satisfactorily, I'll join them at once. *At what point in the English Channel does the Virgin Mary begin and cease to be immaculate?* Can you restrain your laughter, friends? Is a system of religion of which you have to ask such a question anything but an uproarious pantomime? Can any sane man take it seriously for a moment?"

One point which the vicar of Hexton makes is that whether the Rev. I. Dollates, incumbent of St. Stultus, behaves in an insane way or not, the Rev. Fillingham is prepared to say:—

"I tell you, as a clergyman of the Church of England myself, all the evidence goes to show that we have no apostolic succession, no valid orders, no sacrificing priests in our Church—and, for my part, I'm glad of it. Parker, the first Archbishop of the Reformed Church, was consecrated by Barlow; and Barlow, it is almost certain, was never consecrated a bishop at all, but only appointed by the autocratic Bluebeard, Henry VIII. Of course, no point in history can be absolutely proved; but, at all events, there is the gravest suspicion, amounting almost to certainty, that the Rev. I. Dollates, incumbent of St. Stultus, with his chasuble, his bowings, and his genuflections, is a layman dressed up to imitate a priest. And, if so, his 'solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist,' with its nodding devotees, is a far funnier thing than a Punch and Judy Show."

This is very well, but the question that might be submitted to the Rev. Fillingham is: Should he remain in the Church of England whilst holding these very advanced views, which seem to cover a wider field than Ritualism?

FRANCIS NEALE.

A Protest Against Electrocution.

WRITING in the *Figaro* (Paris) on the electrocution of Czolgosz, the assassin of President McKinley, M. Alexander Hepp—who is neither a Socialist nor an Anarchist—utters the following pointed protest:—"It all took place within the prison walls, with no witnesses but the prison officials and a few picked gentlemen. What, then, becomes of moralisation by terror, of the argument drawn from exemplary chastisement, and the sight of the expiation? They have no longer any force, since all goes on in a parlor of Dame Justice. On the other hand, this privacy, with its shamefaced air, sharpens still more all that is remorseful in our consciences at these reprisals of society. If the exercise of the alleged right to kill, in a public place, with a howling crowd looking on, filled the generous mind with horror, how much more sickening the idea of the silent, secret execution, as if those engaged in it were ashamed of themselves. The conscience feels bewildered when the right to kill seeks to exercise itself with a refinement of cruelty, and calls in to do its work the greatest inventions and the finest fruits of science. No doubt the hand of the assassin was unhesitating, the wounds he made were horrible; but is one horror to be punished or avenged by perpetrating another? If there be really progress, why show it in refinements of penal cruelty, and not in the raising of the mind? This partnership of the savant and the executioner, of modern light and the darkness of the Middle Ages, of so-called free thought with the most sinister survivals of the bad old times, is stupefying."

Deacon Blimber Remarks.

"No, I hain't never been to church where they had music. We only have singin' by the choir here.

"How happy this world might 'a' been of the apple crop had only been a failure in the Garden of Eden.

"Yes, sir-ee! The way of the transgressor is hard, sure enough. I went fishin' on Sunday once, an' I got back so late that everybody had been to supper, an' all the sliced pineapple with sugar on was gone.

"I've knowed lots o' people who was steadfast in the faith, but I never run ag'in anyone whose faith was so unwaverin' as ol' sister Binger's. There had been a long dry spell, an' the dominie sot aside a Sunday for us to come together at the meetin' house an' pray for rain—for rain to come at once, an' plenty of it. I was on my way to the meetin', an' I see Sister Binger sittin' on her stoop. 'Sister,' says I, 'how's this? Ain't you goin' to meetin' to help pray for rain.' 'No, Deacon,' said she. 'I hain't got no umbrella to go home with.' There's faith for you, I guess."

Saint Anthony.

Anthony Archibald Laurence de Vere
Once wrote a tract called *The Gospel Made Clear*,
And with every copy a guarantee, written,
He gave, that the reader should shortly be smitten
With "belief" in the book, which the ghost who is holy
Once wrote on Jehovah and Jesus the lowly;
The Ghost who, as least of the Firm, in his deference,
To his own small "affaire" made but casual reference.

Anthony said that some folk atheistic,
Sad-visaged specimens, dull, pessimistic,
State that the God of the Bible loved bloodshed—
Urged men to shed just as much as they *could* shed.....
This, asserts Anthony, cannot be true;
Jesus his sire most certainly knew;
Jesus believed that his sire was love;
(Jesus had recently dropped from above!)
Jesus extolled his celestial pa;
Jesus spoke sooth, so—um—well, there you are!

Anthony says that, though mainly historical,
Some of the Bible's a "bit" allegorical.
Noah, for instance, did never [I fear,
Mr. Young, that such language would never do here!]
[I beg, sir, to answer, in extenuation,
That the tale is not mine—it is God's revelation.]

I'll proceed, then, to say, in a casual way,
What Anthony tells you is—kneel down and pray.
Whenever in doubt seek not to find out
By natural means what you're puzzled about.
By the Spirit inflated, with face elongated,
Ye shall seek and shall find—so the author has stated.

Anthony Archibald Laurence de Vere
Knows how to make *any* gospel quite clear—
Clear as that one and one added make three
(Which unto Faith is as plain as can be).

"Anthony" everywhere we may meet
Making things "clear" to the man in the street—
Full of Divinity, puffing the Trinity,
As if between them were some strange affinity.
Heaven and hell he seems to know well,
So I wish most sincerely he'd—leave *this* vicinity!
J. YOUNG.

Acid Drops.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has issued the annual Thanksgiving Proclamation. "The season is nigh," he says, "when, according to the time-hallowed custom of the people, the President appoints a day as an especial occasion for praise and thanksgiving to God. This thanksgiving finds the people still bowed in sorrow for the death of their great and good President. Yet, in spite of this great disaster, it is nevertheless true that no people on earth have such abundant cause for thanksgiving as we. The past year, in particular, has been one of peace and plenty, and therefore I designate November 28 as a day of general thanksgiving."

The first thing we have to say about this proclamation is that the President's piety has played the devil with his grammar. "Yet," "in spite of," and "nevertheless," are quite overpowering in that third sentence. It is only Kings and Presidents who are allowed to outrage the English language in this fashion.

For America the year has been one of peace and plenty. No doubt. But the same can hardly be said by the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands. Really, the President doesn't look far enough; and perhaps he thinks that God Almighty doesn't look any farther than he does.

No people on earth have such abundant cause for thanksgiving as the Americans—although they *have* lost their great and good President, which, one would think, is a considerable drawback. This is what President Roosevelt tells them. We take it to be a roundabout way of telling them that they are the greatest people on earth. This is a fact, however, of which a great many of them do not need to be reminded. But, then, as Shakespeare says, truth can never be confirmed enough, though doubt did ever sleep. On the whole, it must be admitted that the new President takes kindly enough to the old game of *tickling*. If he has one eye fixed on the Lord, he winks with the other at the American nation.

A gentleman signing himself Chas. W. Hammond writes us a long and angry letter from 51 Sunnyside-road, Ilford. He appears to have received some "handbills," for which he supposes he is "indebted" to us. We beg to assure him that he is mistaken on this point. We have not wasted our postage-stamps upon him. We beg to assure him, too, that we can afford to smile at his concluding threat. He promiseth, if he receives any more "blasphemy," that he "will send is

back, postage unpaid." Apparently he does not know that we are not compelled to receive it.

We presume this correspondent is a reverend gentleman. He writes like one—with conceit, dogmatism, and intemperance. Still, he may be a layman; for bad manners are apt to spread. Anyhow, the point is not one of vast importance, and we are not inclined to take the trouble of consulting a local Directory.

One extract from this gentleman's letter will perhaps be more than sufficient. It refers to Shelley. "He was a great poet," the writer says, "but he was also a licentious brute, and it is not at all surprising that he should have been an Atheist. His mode of life and want of morals shut out from him the view of God, and his impotence kept him there. He had no alternative but to declare himself an Atheist or to do what he would not do—humble his pride and admit that his life was vile." Evidently the gentleman's real knowledge of Shelley is on a par with his lucidity of composition—particularly as exemplified in the second sentence.

The Consistorial Court has at length given judgment in the case of the Rev. Charles Gordon Young, rector of Chipstead, Surrey, against whom serious charges were preferred by his parishioners. The charge of habitual drunkenness was held not to have been established, but on another curious feature of the case Chancellor Dibdin gave judgment as follows: "It is given in evidence that on the 4th of July Mr. Young was at the Alsatian Club with a woman upon his knee. It is admitted that he was there. We consider that it is proved that he had the woman upon his knee without resenting it, and that he was noisy and talking loudly. The Alsatian Club was a well-known night-club, conducted after all respectable places of entertainment had been closed. He stayed there for three-quarters of an hour. I think it was dangerous to the reputation of a minister of religion. We find the defendant guilty on that charge, and we shall make a report to the Bishop of the diocese accordingly. I desire to say that the Court is unanimous upon the matter."

It is not astonishing that a parson should go wrong. They are made of the same human clay as other people, and "being filled with the Holy Ghost" is only the nonsense of their profession. But in this Young case it is to be observed that the man of God did not see any particular harm in his being at a loose night-club when he ought to have been asleep in his bed. It is worthy of notice, too, that some of his parishioners appear to have liked him all the better for his—well, unspiritualities.

The Bishop of Liverpool, at a Diocesan Conference held last week, said: "The idea of God seems slowly fading from the minds of large sections of our people. The Lord's Day is wantonly desecrated. The Lord's House is ostentatiously neglected. The Word of God is increasingly unread and ignored. Philanthropy, or the service of men, is taking the place of the worship and service of God. Kindness is regarded as a substitute for the fear of the Lord, and education of the mind and body as rendering the care for the soul unnecessary."

The Bishop finds that the spirit of materialism has invaded "our Christianity." He says: "Our churches are run in some cases upon the same lines as those upon which men run their business. To attract a congregation, to extract money, to be able to say that a building is full and subscriptions liberal, are regarded as the chief tokens of success. Money is raised by the inevitable bazaar, at which methods are used which will not bear investigation. The promoters seem to have adopted as their motto the well-known words of Horace, 'Make money, if you can by right means; if not, in any way you can—only make money.'"

A Catholic priest, A. C. V. Crowther, writing in the *Beeston Times*, denies that Confession is a human invention. "The people," he says, "would not invent what humbled their pride and contradicted their passions. The priest would not have invented that which, humanly speaking, he would gladly dispense with." But that "humanly speaking" will not take in any layman with a moderate amount of brains in his head. Humanly speaking, the Confessional is a splendid instrument of priestly power. It makes the masters of the secrets of mankind. Those who confess tell not only their own "sins," but also the "sins" of others. Consequently, the priests know so much that they hold the reputation of most people in the hollow of their hands. As for the pretended secrecy of the Confessional, it is violated—perhaps not directly, but certainly indirectly—every day of the week.

Mr. Hall Caine has been elected by the Ramsey fishermen and others to represent them in the House of Keys—the name of the little parliament of the Isle of Man. We don't suppose it will make any great difference to Manxland. Next summer, no doubt, the tripper will be as much in evidence as ever at Douglas. Still, it is natural that Mr. Hall Caine should think a lot of it. You see his peculiar temperament has to

be taken into account. Parodying the brave words of Latimer to Ridley, as they stood at the stake, he says that he has lighted a candle in Manxland that will not soon be put out. A candle! What modesty is here! Has the gentleman been swallowing some of the drowsy syrups of the East? In other words, what's the matter? Mr. Hall Caine would have been more natural if he had dropped the candle and gone in for an electric light.

The Paris correspondent of the *Times* says the 16,000 monastic establishments of France have about 400,000 inmates, or one to every 100 inhabitants. If to these celibates, says the correspondent, are added the army and the civil service, one finds that every twenty-five Frenchmen have to maintain a monk, nun, soldier, or civil servant. Every five persons possessing an income have to maintain a monk or nun, with the proportionate share in keeping up a religious establishment.

Freethinkers are for freedom all round. That is why most of them are opposed to compulsory vaccination. If a doctor believes in vaccination, let him advocate it, and let him practise it on voluntary patients. But when he knocks at your door, with a lancet in one hand and a bottle of mysterious stuff in the other, and demands that you shall let him make incision and insertion, whether you believe in his nostrum or not, he should be treated like any other ruffian. Kick him off the doorstep and shut the door in his face.

Doctors who want the public handed over to them as a *corpus vile* for their experiments should remember that a good many people are wide-awake nowadays. They see, for instance, the latest medical report from St. Louis, where the administration of diphtheria anti-toxin gave eleven children lockjaw and killed them, besides putting a number of others in a very critical position.

One would have thought that there were already enough evangelical journals in existence. But it seems that another has been added to the list—the *Church Tower*, and it looks as if it had come to stay. With a little broader view, it might be successful amongst Church people. It begins well by advertising Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on "Missions."

In its guilelessness the *Church Tower* seems to fancy that Mr. Cohen is sad because of the conspicuous failure of Church missions, considering the money spent on them. And it speaks of him as a "pessimist." This is hardly the term to apply to Mr. Cohen's attitude in relation to Church missions. We do not think that he has shed many tears or given way to an excessive amount of dejection because these missions—as shown by official statistics—are a failure.

If the editor of the *Church Tower* had seen the pamphlet itself (which really deserves a wide circulation), instead of reproducing some observations upon it from the *Daily News*, he would be aware that Mr. Cohen has no sympathy with Christian foreign missions, and is not at all distressed that they are ineffective in regard to their purely theological aspect and aims.

It must, however, be said in fairness to the *Church Tower* that generally its contents are interesting and liberal, if not entirely acceptable. It has the advantage of being edited by a well-known and clever City journalist, who is the author of an admirable novel, and the proprietor of the paper.

As exemplifying the doctrine of "holy poverty" the *Rock* publishes some very interesting statements. It says: "Outsiders are seriously asked by interested parties to believe that priests, monks, and nuns take vows of chastity, poverty, etc. *The least said about the first article the better.* The revelations of the now famous Senate Document, 1900, brand the Philippine friars as a collection of unredeemed villains, worthy imitators of some of the unholy popes. Orders of the Church of Rome are so poor, so very poor! The property of the Jesuits in France is valued at £2,000,000; that of the Sisters of St. Vincent of Paul at £2,500,000; that of the Little Sisters of the Poor at £1,250,000; and that of the Christian Brothers at £3,500,000."

The *Rock* continues: "No wonder that the French Government (which is not Protestant) has been forced to legislate on the subject of monkery. According to the Pope-blessed, Cardinal-blessed, Bishop-blessed, but abusive Papal London print, many of the Romish missions in Great Britain are in a deplorable condition. Could not the 'Christian Brothers' part with, say, half-a-million of their money to help their needy co-religionists in this wicked country? It would then not be necessary to start funds for the release of souls from the priest's oven, or to offer to say masses at the rate of nine for a shilling!"

The terrible heresy accusation which is now engaging the attention of the orthodox in Scotland, and is directed against Professor George Adam Smith, has not proceeded much

further. The College Committee is considering whether numerous statements in the Professor's book, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, are not directly subversive of the historic truthfulness of considerable sections of the Holy Scriptures and inconsistent with the Divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. It is said, either with real or unconscious irony, that "it will be some time before the Committee can form a decision."

The Bishop of Peterborough ought now to thank the Lord. He will be entitled to take his seat in the House of Lords on the resignation of the Bishop of Worcester. A Church paper (the *evangelical News*) expresses the opinion that the bishops might very well be excused from attendance in the House, except on special occasions. We should say that they might well be excused altogether.

The Church paper referred to asks: "How is it, if the bishops were needed amongst the Lords, the clergy are not needed in the House of Commons?" The answer is: We do not need parsons, as such, in the Houses of Parliament at all.

An Australian Anglican divine, reading the Fourth Commandment in its entirety, is of opinion that the man who does not labor during the six days breaks the Commandment just as much as the man who works on Sunday. This is a point which might be submitted to many Piccadilly swells. But they would only laugh scornfully, or smile indifferently. Poor author of the Fourth Commandment!

Bishop Ryle once said: "The sermon contains almost everything that is *not* in the text." And what is in the text is probably nonsense.

The *Times* gave this amusing bit of news in 1801: "In consequence of the late accident at Kilmarnock, all the church doors are to be made to open *outwards*. There is seldom any danger of any great struggle to *get in*." What the accident was we are not told.

Comments are being made in Protestant papers as to recent appointments to the high judicial Bench. It is suggested that there is an undue preponderance of Roman Catholics. The *Standard* observes that "the ecclesiastical balance is preserved." That is true enough in a limited sense. Mr. Justice Day, who retires, is succeeded by Mr. Justice Walton, both Roman Catholics.

But one might ask, in the interests of general freedom, liberality of thought, and impartial jurisprudence, is it well to have in the Law Courts so many Roman Catholic judges on the Bench? There is a surprising number at the present time, and has been, if one looks to the appointments of the past. One Roman Catholic after another. Not that we suggest, in common with the ultra-Protestant prints, that justice is not likely to be so well administered generally, but it is difficult to imagine absolute impartiality in matters which affect religion, and especially of religious freedom and Free-thought expression, on the part of devotees of Rome.

Mr. Justice North, who has gone into retirement, was a vicious example of bigotry. As far as the bar was concerned, he retired with a conspicuous absence of regret. He is remembered chiefly as an overbearing, and not particularly clear-headed, person. The latter fact accounts for many of his controverted judgments. The ever-present Roman Catholic instinct, by which he was swayed, rendered his retirement a satisfaction to those who were forced to take some interest in him.

A small boy had been in the habit of supplying the evening paper to a certain clergyman, who discovered one evening that he had not the penny for payment. "That's all right," said the boy; "you can give it to me to-morrow night." "But, my boy," interposed the clergyman impressively, "I may not be alive to-morrow night." "Never mind," answered the boy cheerfully; "it'll be no great loss." A shadow fell across the clergyman's face, and he is still wondering whether the boy, despite his look of innocence, was thinking solely of the penny.

A verdict of suicide while temporarily insane was returned at the inquest on the body of the Rev. James Pearse Yeo, vicar of Edenfield, who hung himself in his bedroom. The following passage was found marked by him in a private manual of devotion which he had been reading: "Deliver me from violent disorders or a troubled fancy, and defend me against all delusions of my ghastly enemy. Oh, let him not be able to disturb or terrify me, or in any way prevail against me." Surely the verdict ought to have been one of suicide from belief in the Devil.

They do some things better in France than they do in

England. The Assize Court of Versailles has just quashed a conviction against a man named Latrompette, who was sentenced to six years' penal servitude for burglary, but whose innocence was discovered before he had completed his term of imprisonment. Not only was he liberated, but the Court has ordered the Treasury to pay him £800 damages. In this country he would have been "pardoned" and presented with a cheap suit of clothes and a third-class railway ticket to go home with.

The latest traveller "In the Far East" who is writing his experiences in the *Daily News*, and apparently in other journals, refers to the Buriat Mongols, the aborigines of Siberia. They seem to be better-looking, cleaner, and more moral than the Russians who are supplanting them. They display the usual mildness of Buddhists. "They are fond of making pilgrimages," the traveller says, "to Ourga, where there is a 'living Buddha.' So great is this devotion that a Buriat will frequently surrender the whole of his property to some shrine on condition he receives just enough to live upon." Priestcraft is the same cunning business everywhere.

Tolstoy's *The Meaning of Life*, containing his answer to the Holy Synod on his excommunication, has been confiscated by the Public Prosecutor at Leipzig under the following clause of the German Penal Code: "He who causes a nuisance by blasphemy committed by despicable public utterances, or he who publicly insults one of the Christian Churches or other religious communities enjoying in Germany the privileges of a corporation, or their institutions or rites, shall be punished with imprisonment up to three years." It is not easy to see how the Russian Orthodox Church, a foreign body, comes under this clause. On the other hand, it is hard to conceive how even a German functionary can have the cheek to call Tolstoy's writings "despicable public utterances."

Earl Russell is now "through" with his matrimonial troubles. The law of England, which gave him no relief from the thraldom of his first marriage while he and his wife refrained from committing adultery, has given him complete freedom now that he has been imprisoned for bigamy. Accordingly, he has married in England the lady with whom he contracted a bigamous marriage in America. We suppose, therefore, that it only remains to say, "All's well that ends well."

The following incident was related in the *Daily News*: "In spite of the quietness with which the ceremony was carried out, it had become known at the International Trade Headquarters of the Salvation Army, opposite, that Lord Russell was being married, and the windows of this building, which overlook the room in which the marriage took place, were crowded with interested 'Salvation lasses.'" Human nature again, even under a Salvation bonnet! The female mind can never resist the attraction of a wedding.

"A minister of one of our important city churches recently told his Bible-class that there was no truth in a large part of Genesis, Judges, and Ruth!" So writes a Sunday-school supporter in the *Rock*. His observations, which are made more in sorrow than in anger, are devoid of novelty. The same kind of thing is being, and has long been, heard throughout Christendom.

Professors, he says, are lecturing with the avowed object of allaying alarm. Nevertheless they are telling their audiences that, "whatever the early chapters of Genesis may be, they are *not* history."

Thomas Paine, in his unanswerable *Age of Reason*, said so long ago. His statements have been fully confirmed, but still his memory is reviled by self-styled believers who are not beyond the suspicion of hypocrisy. In the case of the highly-paid clergy, it is quite a question whether some are not absolutely dishonest—from an intellectual-fidelity point of view.

This same writer in the *Rock* points out that exegetical professors, if asked whether the patriarchal history is true, say the question can be answered "Yes" and "No." He concludes from this that the evident purpose is to impress people with the conviction that "the early Scripture history, at least, must be surrendered."

Then he says what is obvious to Freethinkers as well as to himself—that when confidence in the early Scripture history is surrendered, "confidence in the Bible, as a unique and complete revelation, will necessarily follow." Naturally; that is the end of belief in "God's Holy Word."

It is interesting to learn from Mr. Henry Kirke's *Colonization in British Guiana* that the Chinese make much better Christians than do the negroes. This probably means that

the Celestial, "child-like and bland," is a bigger religious fraud than the woolly-headed black. Mr. Kirke informs us that the negroes in British Guiana have even now only a "varnish of Christianity." That is a description comically applicable to the bulk of so-called Christians at home.

Voodooism, otherwise the worship of the serpent, still exists, Mr. Kirke tells us, as a living faith, and its revolting rites are still practised. Children are offered up as sacrifices, and their blood poured out on the altar of Voodoo, "after which their flesh is cooked, and eaten amidst a scene of revolting debauchery."

Mr. Kirke is good enough to say that it is a "standing reproach against many Englishmen residing in our tropical dependencies that they are not better examples of the Christian religion which they profess." The probable explanation is that there are Christian hypocrites abroad as there is an abundance of them at home. But why didn't Mr. Kirke make this damaging statement whilst he was amongst the people he talks about in British Guiana?

Says the *Church Times*, in its lordly kind of way: "Historians have ever seen in the close proximity of Lambeth House to the Royal Palace of Westminster, which it seems to confront, the symbol of the Church as the champion of popular freedom."

Have they, indeed! But whether they have or not is hardly worth while discussing. We have to deal with modern estimates and modern knowledge, which show that the primates at Lambeth Palace and the prelates in the House of Lords have consistently and persistently been the opponents, rather than the champions, of popular freedom. The *Church Times* had better look up its history, and, when it has done so, it should, as a matter of honesty, refrain from suggesting as true of the present day what has been absolutely untrue from the commencement. The present occupier of Lambeth Palace, who is so vigorously upheld, might have something to say.

Difficult, isn't it, in the present day for the best-natured friends to find excuses for £15,000 a year and two palaces for a preacher of the Gospel which says, "Blessed are the poor!"

The following advertisement appears in the *Times* :—

ADVOWSON.—Suburb of a great City. Income £700, increasing instead of decreasing. Veritable "rus in urbe." Dry soil, great educational and social advantages.—Apply, etc.

Who is prepared to bid for the "veritable *rus in urbe*," with the great "social advantages"? And what about the parishioners—who are, indeed, a "flock," and a silly fat-headed flock to allow themselves to be thus sold and driven?

The London County Council exhibits its usual stupidity by issuing music licences which stipulate that the persons holding them shall not open their "said houses or places on the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday." Mark the unctuous ring about this silly phrase. Why shouldn't people have music in their "said" houses and places, if they want it, even "on the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday"?

This last piece of legal phrasology shows that there is some difficulty in making it clear which day it is that the sky-pilots and black-beetles want for themselves under the absurd pretence that it is for the Lord.

On every side there appears a determined disregard to the self-interested demands of these interferers with recreation on "the Lord's Day." It is, of course, nothing but a question of "Shop, shop, shop!" with the white-chokered gentry, who by the way have, as a rule, the best part of the week to rest in. And these are the people who apparently would move heaven and earth to stop harmless recreation on "the Lord's Day, commonly called the Sunday."

"Old Testament Criticism" was the subject of a recent address by Professor W. H. Bennett, at New College, Hampstead. After mentioning various difficulties in regard to the canon of the Jewish Scriptures, he says: "Still less can we rely on the New Testament for evidence as to the authorship of the Old Testament books. Quotations are ascribed to the wrong books; the Psalms are indiscriminately referred to David; there is no distinction between first and second Isaiah. In general, the current uncritical opinions of the time are accepted both by our Lord and the disciples."

This is the way in which the sky-pilots endeavor to rid themselves of the incubus of Old Testament "history."

Christ—who, by the way, is represented to be God—"accepts the current uncritical opinions"! Well, perhaps he did so, and for the sufficiently good reason that he knew no better.

The Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon took to romancing at the National Congregational Council. He said: "Of open aggressive unbelief we have little at present. Biblical criticism has severely damaged the Infidels' Bible. The old argument, that if Eve's serpent did not talk and walk, therefore the beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' is not true, has had the bottom knocked out of it. The man in the street is no longer caught in that net."

The cool impudence of this would be astounding if we were not accustomed to noting the superabundant display of clerical "check." In the first place, there is plenty of "open, aggressive unbelief." This journal, and kindred journals in America, in the colonies, and elsewhere, are a sufficient evidence. But the best evidence is afforded by the constant lamentations of the men of God themselves, who, when it suits them, can not only perceive, but lament, the "open, aggressive unbelief." This is when they want to rope the shekels in.

The mendacious attempt by the Rev. Gibbon to gloss over the destructive effect of modern Biblical criticism needs no comment. Those who know anything about the subject know perfectly well that "infidels" have always disassociated the so-called history from ethical teaching. The latter they have taken on its merits, but they have declined to accord it any special divine authority, seeing the ridiculous "historical" rubbish with which it is linked.

This quite too assertive and dogmatic man of God is obliged to admit that there is "a vast deal of silent, latent unbelief among all classes. Many profess themselves to be Agnostics, and for many more, who had no depth of conviction before, the constant attacks on the historicity of the Bible have had sad effects."

Here is another admission by the Rev. Gibbon: "Again, our English Sunday, like our English Bible, was long held to be a thing that could not be shaken. But, partly because its Christian title was never clearly made out, partly for other causes, our English Sunday is fast ceasing to be a Sabbath. The Lord's Day seems as if it were about to depart from our country, and our week of seven common days were to be left unto us desolate."

Where does the "desolation" come in when the complaint is that people apply themselves with unrestricted enjoyment to cycling, golf, billiards, music, boating, and any rational recreation or pastime that affords pleasure?

Two shots were fired through the bedroom window of Cardinal Steinhuber in the precincts of the Vatican, but no damage was done except to the furniture. Probably the outrage will be put down to the credit of Atheism. Priests, however, are sometimes shot at for personal reasons, into which we need not enter. Every man of the world will understand what we mean.

We have often said that the Catholic Church is making no real progress in England, and that its chief strength in this country lies with the Irish colonies. This view seems to be supported by the *Catholic Times*. "Without indulging in unwarrantable pessimism, and certainly without any wish to croak like Cassandra," that journal says, "we cannot close our eyes to the truth that for fifty years we have been lifted up on the crest of a tide of immigration from Ireland. The masses of English people have ignored us—for they ignore all religion."

The Manchester and Salford Savings' Bank, on which there was such a run lately, has the Bishop of Manchester as its President. That ought to have assured the depositors that their money was all right. But it didn't. They preferred better security.

Fancy a Bishop the President of a Bank! Jesus Christ said: "Carry neither scrip nor purse." The Bishop of Manchester says: "Empty your purses here, and we'll convert it into scrip." Other times, other manners.

Succi, the Italian fasting-man, beat Jesus Christ's performance hollow. The latter fasted forty days, and the former fifty-two. It was a wide margin, and Succi's triumph was flagrant and indisputable. Madame Christensen, who has just been fasting at the Royal Aquarium, had a more modest ambition. She only attempted a thirty days' fast, which left a clear superiority to her Savior.

One courageous thought will put to flight a host of troubles.—*Tiruvalluvar*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 10, North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road; 7.30, "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy."

November 17, Bradford; 24, Leicester.

December 1 and 8, Athenæum Hall; 15, Liverpool; 22 and 29, Athenæum Hall.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 10, Athenæum Hall, London; 17, Athenæum Hall; 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.—November 10, Stanley; 17, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 22, Unitarian Hall, Forest Gate; 24, Athenæum Hall, London. December 1, Sheffield; 8, Manchester; 15, Athenæum Hall, London.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

H. WESTNEY.—Booksellers'-row, alias Holywell-street, no longer exists. It has been demolished in the widening of the Strand and the construction of a new thoroughfare. We are glad to hear that you were so pleased with Mr. J. M. Robertson's lectures in the Secular Hall, Glasgow. He is undoubtedly possessed of great ability.

E. F. SMALL.—Why not write to the editor of the paper in which the article appeared? He is the proper person to give you his "authority" for the facts, and will doubtless do so. We believe the editor of the *Two Worlds* to be a gentleman.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Glad to see you are having Freethought lectures again at Huddersfield.

FUND FOR MRS. FOOTE.—T. T., 5s.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your welcome cuttings.

A. C. BROWN.—We said that the Fund for Mrs. Foote was closed with our Final Statement. Thanks, all the same, for your kind attitude. Mr. Foote, having made his Final Statement with respect to his affairs, will add the few words promised on the subject of this Fund for Mrs. Foote after the hearing of his application for discharge, which takes place very shortly. That seems the most fitting occasion.

S. HOLMAN.—See paragraph. What is being done in South Wales? We should much like to hear.

ANONYMOUS.—Thanks for the cutting. The Rev. H. M. Kennedy, vicar of Plumpton, Cumberland, must be very vain and silly to imagine that God answers his prayers for bad weather at public gatherings he does not approve of. What a curious idea! God Almighty wielding a celestial water-can, and Parson Kennedy telling him when and where to discharge its contents. Talk about the blasphemy of Atheists—what is it to the blasphemy of Christians?

T. WILMOT.—See "Sugar Plums." You did not send particulars of the second lecture.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We are sorry to hear of the death of Mr. B. Parsons, one of the oldest members of the Birmingham Branch. Your communication shall be dealt with by the proper hands.

AMARANTH (Oxford).—Shall appear.

G. W. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. C. BURROWS.—See paragraph. We hope Mr. Hewitt will have a good meeting.

A. R. MORGAN.—The articles by Mr. Foote on Etienne Dolet, to which you refer, appeared in the first volume of the *Freethinker*, nearly twenty years ago. They won the praise of Charles Bradlaugh, who, in the *National Reformer*, expressed a hope that they would be reprinted in a more durable form. This may be done shortly, as Mr. Foote is preparing a volume of his longer and more literary papers for publication.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Daily Post—Two Worlds—Discontent—Freidenker—Yorkshire Evening Post—Manchester Guardian—Christian News—La Raison—Book Queries—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Newsagent and Bookseller's Review—Torch of Reason—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker (New York)—Brighton Herald—Public Opinion (New York)—Stroud Journal—Sydney Bulletin—Liverpool Express.

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.

Sugar Plums.

A FILTHY fog prevailed in London on Sunday evening. It was so bad in some parts that people absolutely lost their way, and all sorts of antiquated illuminants were brought into requisition. Nevertheless there was a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall; rather larger, in fact, than that of the previous Sunday evening. Mr. Foote's lecture on "Lord Kitchener on the Bible and War" was followed with the deepest interest and much applauded.

Mr. Foote lectures in the Camberwell Secular Hall this evening (Nov. 10). The subject selected by the Branch is "Mr. Hall Caine's Dream of Christian Democracy." No doubt there will be a strong rally of the South London "saints" on this occasion. It is a considerable time since Mr. Foote lectured in that locality.

Mr. Charles Watts occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Nov. 10), taking for his subject "Buchner's Last Plea for Materialism," with the story of why he wrote *Force and Matter*.

Mr. Cohen had distressful weather at Birmingham on Sunday. It was foggy and bitterly cold. But his audiences were above the average both morning and afternoon, and the hall was full in the evening, when a good collection was taken up for the aged widow of Mr. Parsons, who died the day previous.

Mr. H. Percy Ward does not work Bradford (his new home) exclusively. He lectures twice to-day (Nov. 10) at the Friendly and Trades' Club, Northumberland-street, Huddersfield; his afternoon subject being "The Delusion of Spiritualism," and his evening subject "Why I am an Atheist." We hope the local Freethinkers will give him a hearty welcome, and do their best to secure him good audiences.

"We are going on fairly well in Bradford," Mr. Ward reports, "and are gradually improving." Mr. Foote delivers three lectures there next Sunday (Nov. 17).

Mr. F. J. Gould, as many of our readers will recollect, is a member of the Leicester School Board. Naturally he does what he can in favor of Secular Moral Education. Recently he moved: "That an inquiry be held into the present scope and method of moral instruction given in the schools under the Board, in connection with the Bible Reading, and that a scheme be prepared with the object of (1) rendering the moral instruction more systematic, and (2) strengthening the moral element in the school training generally." This was supported by Mr. Chitham, a Churchman, but was rejected on a division. The Board resolved to stick to the present scheme of Bible Reading, but to "include a course of moral lessons in the curriculum of secular teaching." Which seems to imply that Bible Reading and moral lessons have very little connection with each other.

The Free Christian Church, at Brighton, honored itself by inviting Mr. G. J. Holyoake to deliver an address on Sunday evening from its pulpit, after the religious service had been conducted by the Rev. H. M. Livens. Mr. Holyoake chose for his subject "Alfred the Great." That his address was racy and interesting is a matter of course. We are pleased to see that he paid a passing tribute to Hume as an historian. Mr. Holyoake calls him "a Scotch Tory." That, however, is a very accidental circumstance. Hume was a great philosopher, and there are never more than a few of that species in the world at one time.

This story was once told in the *Omaha World-Herald* as partially accounting for Colonel Ingersoll's hostility to the Church: "One day a deputation called and asked for a contribution toward building a church up near his own home. Bob said he would like to give something, but had no money just at that time. The delegation asked him to put down his name for whatever he would pay in the future. He declined, but said he might pay something when he had it. This did not satisfy the men, and they began urging as a reason why he should subscribe that the church would advance the value of his property. This made Bob mad, and he expressed himself in a forcible manner. He declined to give to the Lord in order to increase the value of his real estate." We cannot vouch for the authenticity of this tale, nor for the further statement that "in a couple of weeks he accepted an invitation to deliver an address before the Society of Freethinkers

in Fairbury, and in that address made use of that famous sentence, "An honest God is the noblest work of man."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The *Stroud Journal*, noticing the decease of Major Fisher, prints the following paragraph: "Once, when a member of the School Board, Major Fisher, if not exactly ranking himself among the higher critics of the Bible, fell foul of some of its contents. The occasion was the selection of passages for the edification and instruction of the children taught in the Board schools. The chapter submitted to members contains the account of Jael's act of treachery towards Sisera. Although we are led to believe that this woman was serving the divine purpose by driving a nail through the temples of the man she had inveigled into her tent, the Major flushed up with righteous anger at what he called a 'gross breach of the rights of hospitality.' In the name of moral rectitude he protested against such barbaric practices being held up for the admiration of English children, and I am happy to say he carried the day."

We see from *La Raison* that a volume of Renan's correspondence will be published during the winter. The letters belong to his youthful period, when he was still training for the priesthood, but was studying problems and reaching conclusions that made him leave the church for ever. The letters to his sister Henriette have already been published. These new letters were addressed to his mother. He explains his doubts, his scruples, and his resolution in the most tender way to the dear good mother, so pious but so loving, of whom he speaks with such filial devotion in his *Souvenirs*.

A little organ of Anarchism reaches us now and then from Home, Washington. It is called *Discontent*. We noticed that it was mentioned during the mad police panic after the shooting of President McKinley. We are not sure that the editor was not put under arrest or surveillance. But there was really no justification for anything of the kind. *Discontent*, whether right or wrong, argues philosophically, and trusts to intellectual and moral suasion. So far from approving the deed of Czolgosz, it says that "the cause of Anarchy has been set back and retarded more than a thousand such men as Czolgosz could have helped it in a generation."

The Camberwell Secular Hall is to be used on alternate Sunday mornings by the Social Democratic Federation and the National Democratic Federation. This morning (Nov. 10) Mr. G. Hewitt, London organiser of the S. D. F., leads off with a lecture on "Socialism and the Decline of English Trade." Mr. W. G. Killick occupies the chair. Admission is free, and discussion is invited. The lecture starts at 11-45, and is to be preceded by half-an-hour's musical program.

Mr. G. Hewitt lectures in the evening for the East London Branch on "Social Democracy and Freethought." This will be in aid of the Tower Hamlets School Board Election Debt Fund. Mr. Hewitt was himself the "Secular Education" candidate, and nearly succeeded in winning a seat.

Miss E. M. Vance is returning from the country to London. She has not quite regained her strength, but she is tired of the long inaction, and thinks she would be better back in town. She will take up her work again little by little, so as not to distress herself or run the risk of another illness. The following resolution concerning her was passed unanimously at the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive: "That this Executive greatly regrets the serious illness of the secretary, Miss Vance, but is very much pleased to hear that she is now recovering, and will be delighted to welcome her back to her duties when she is fully able to resume them."

We have decided to republish Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God* in the columns of the *Freethinker*. So many years have elapsed since Darwin's death that the bolder sort of Christians—some would say the more reckless and unscrupulous—are trying to persuade the gullible public that he was not an Atheist, nor an Agnostic, nor even a Freethinker. Dr. John Clifford has already included him among "Christian Leaders," and now we see that the Rev. G. T. Manley "has not found in Charles Darwin's writings anything contrary to Christianity." This imbecile or dishonest finding, as we read in "Among the Churches" in Monday's *Daily News*, is set forth in Mr. Manley's lecture at Simla on "The Views of Modern Science," published by the Church Missionary Society. A great deal of this lecture consists of old, thread-worn statements about the orthodoxy of Newton, Herschel, Faraday, Sir George Stokes, Lord Kelvin, etc.—statements that have no value whatever, except to those who prefer the truth of authority to the authority of truth.

Mr. Foote went systematically and carefully, not only through Darwin's writings, in the ordinary sense of the word, but also through his letters and other pertinent literature. He gathered together pretty well everything

bearing on Darwin's religious (or irreligious) views. It would be a wise thing, therefore, on the part of readers of the *Freethinker* to place the copies of this journal containing the reprint in the hands of their less heterodox friends and acquaintances. By so doing, they would help the circulation of this journal, and assist in checking a nefarious attempt by professional Christians to hoodwink the British public with regard to the opinions of the greatest scientific genius of the nineteenth century.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1902, issued by the National Secular Society's Executive, and edited by Mr. G. W. Foote, will be on sale next Wednesday. The Calendar has been brought into smaller dimensions; other retrenchments of standing matter have also been made; and more room is thus secured for original contributions. Special articles have been written by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, Woodward, and "Mimnermus." There is also an article by a lady which is calculated to make some of the men "sit up." She pitches into them for not trying as they should to make Freethinkers of their women folk, with the consequence that their children too frequently grow up to be mere superstitionists. Altogether this issue of the *Secular Almanack* should have a good circulation. The price is only three-pence.

We overlooked the *Birmingham Daily Post's* long and careful report of Mr. Foote's lecture in the Town Hall on "Anarchism and Assassination." Somehow or other it did not occur to any of the local friends to send us a copy. The reporter was good enough to say that "Mr. Foote is a polished orator."

The South Wales Freethinkers hold a special meeting this evening (Nov. 10), at 6 o'clock, at the City Restaurant, Pontypridd. All local "saints" are earnestly invited to attend.

Treasonable Prayer.

(The *Daily Twaddlegraph* reports that the Rev. David Wilcox was charged at Kimberley with sedition, for having publicly prayed for General Cronje, and heads the report "A Treasonable Prayer.")

I THOUGHT, O *Daily Twaddlegraph*,
You were a Christian journal.
Unless you quickly change your staff,
You'll go to—realms infernal.

O *Twaddlegraph*, go to, I say!
'Tis treasonable, quotha!
For followers of Christ to pray
For Cronje or for Botha!

Your Christian readers must suppose
That "Nick" the Devil hath you.
Said gentle Jesus, "Love your foes,
And pray for them." (See "Matthew.")

You'd have a Briton sent to quod
For praying for a Dutchman.
I don't believe the Son of God
Would own you—no not much, man.

If Christ would only now reside
In London for a season,
You wouldn't have Him crucified,
You'd have Him hanged for treason.

Was gentle Jesus off His nut,
And, if so, why not say so?
Perhaps you'd feel inclined to, but—
"Large Circulations" pay so!

ESS JAY BEE.

The Belief in God.

The belief in God has often been advanced as not only the greatest, but the most complete, of all the distinctions between man and the lower animals. It is, however, impossible, as we have seen, to maintain that this belief is innate or instinctive in man. On the other hand, a belief in all-pervading spiritual agencies seems to be universal; and apparently follows from a considerable advance in man's reason, and from a still greater advance in his faculties of imagination, curiosity, and wonder. I am aware that the assumed instinctive belief in God has been used by many persons as an argument for his existence. But this is a rash argument, as we should thus be compelled to believe in the existence of many cruel and malignant spirits, only a little more powerful than man; for the belief in them is far more general than in a beneficent Deity.—*Charles Darwin*.

Darwin and Religion.

INTRODUCTION.

ONLY a few feet from the tomb of Sir Isaac Newton, in Westminster Abbey, lie the bones of Charles Darwin. The two men are worthy compeers in the scientific roll of fame. Newton's discovery and establishment of the law of gravitation marked an epoch in the history of science, and the same may be said of Darwin's discovery and establishment of the law of natural selection. The *Principia* and the *Origin of Species* rank together as two of the most memorable monuments of scientific genius.

In a certain sense, however, Darwin's achievements are the more remarkable, because they profoundly affect our notions of man's position and destiny in the universe. The great English naturalist was of a modest and retiring disposition. He shrank from all kinds of controversy. He remarked, in one of his letters to Professor Huxley, that he felt it impossible to understand how any man could get up and make an impromptu speech in the heat of a public discussion. Nevertheless, he was demolishing the popular superstition far more effectually than the most sinewy and dexterous athletes of debate. He was quietly revolutionising the world of thought. He was infusing into the human mind the leaven of a new truth. And the new truth was tremendous in its implications. No wonder the clergy reviled and cursed it. They did not understand it any more than the Inquisitors who burnt Bruno and tortured Galileo understood the Copernican astronomy; but they felt, with a true professional instinct, with that cunning of self-preservation which nature bestows on every species, including priests, that the Darwinian theory was fatal to their deepest dogmas, and therefore to their power, their privileges, and their profits. They had a sure intuition that Darwinism was the writing on the wall, announcing the doom of their empire; and they recognised that their authority could only be prolonged by hiding the scripture of destiny from the attention of the multitude.

The popular triumph of Darwinism must be the death-blow to theology. The Copernican astronomy destroyed the geocentric theory, which made the earth the centre of the universe, and all the celestial bodies its humble satellites. From that moment the false astronomy of the Bible was doomed, and its exposure was bound to throw discredit on "the Word of God." From that moment, also, the notion was doomed that the Deity of this inconceivable universe was chiefly occupied with the fortunes of the human insects on this little planet, which is but a speck in the infinitude of space. Similarly, the Darwinian biology is a sentence of doom on the natural history of the Bible. Evolution and special creation are antagonistic ideas. And if man himself has descended, or ascended, from lower forms of life; if he has been developed through thousands of generations from a branch of the Simian family, it necessarily follows that the Garden of Eden is a fairy tale; that Adam and Eve were not the parents of the human race; that the Fall is an oriental legend; that Original Sin is a theological libel on humanity; that the Atonement is an unintelligible dogma, and the Incarnation a relic of ancient mythology.

Let it not be forgotten, however, that Darwinism would have been impossible if geology had not prepared its way. Natural Selection wants plenty of elbow-room; Evolution requires immeasurable time. But this could not be obtained until geology had made a laughing-stock of Biblical chronology. The record of the rocks reveals a chronology, not of six thousand, but of millions of years; and during a vast portion of that time life has existed, slowly ascending to higher stages, and mounting from the monad to man. It was fitting, therefore, that Darwin should dedicate his first volume to Sir Charles Lyell.

Darwin was not a polemical writer; on the contrary, his views were advanced with extreme caution. He was gifted with magnificent patience. When the *Origin of Species* was published he knew that man was not exempted from the laws of evolution. He satisfied his conscience by remarking that "much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his

history," and then waited twelve years before expounding his final conclusions in the *Descent of Man*. This has, indeed, been made a subject of reproach. But Darwin was surely the best judge as to how and when his theories should be published. He did his own great work in his own great way. There is no question of concealment. He gave his views to the world when they were fully ripened; and if, in a scientific treatise, he forbore to discuss the bearing of his views on the principles of current philosophy and the dogmas of popular theology, he let fall many remarks in his text and footnotes which were sufficient to show the penetrating reader that he was far from indifferent to such matters, and had very definite opinions of his own. What could be more striking, what could better indicate his attitude of mind, than the fact that in the *Origin of Species* he never mentioned the book of Genesis, while in the *Descent of Man* he never alluded to Adam and Eve? Such contemptuous silence was more eloquent than the most pointed attack.

DARWIN'S GRANDFATHER.

Before Darwin was born, his patronymic had been made illustrious. It is a curious fact that both Darwin and Newton came of old Lincolnshire families. Newton was born in the county, but the Darwins had removed in the seventeenth century to the neighboring county of Nottingham. William Darwin (born 1655) married the heiress of Robert Waring, of Wilsford. This lady also inherited the manor of Elston, which has remained ever since in the family. It went to the younger son of William Darwin. This Robert Darwin was the father of four sons, the youngest of whom, Erasmus Darwin, was born on December 12, 1731, at Elston Hall.

The life of Erasmus Darwin has been charmingly written by his illustrious grandson.* Prefixed to the Memoir is a photographic portrait from a picture by Wright, of Derby. It shows a strong, kind face, dominated by a pair of deep-set, commanding eyes, surmounted by a firm, broad brow and finely-modelled head. The whole man looks one in a million. Gazing at the portrait, it is easy to understand his scientific eminence, his great reputation as a successful physician, his rectitude, generosity, and powers of sympathy and imagination.

Dr. Erasmus Darwin practised medicine at Derby, but his fame was widespread. While driving to and from his patients he wrote verses of remarkable polish, embodying the novel ideas with which his head fermented. They were not true poetry, although they were highly praised by Edgeworth and Hayley, and even by Cowper; but Byron was guilty of "the falsehood of extremes" in stigmatising their author as "a mighty master of unmeaning rhyme." The rhyme was certainly not unmeaning; on the contrary, there was plenty of meaning, and fresh meaning too, but it should have been expressed in prose. Erasmus Darwin had a surprising insight into the methods of nature; he threw out a multitude of pregnant hints in biology, and once or twice he nearly stumbled on the law of Natural Selection. He saw the "struggle for existence" with remarkable clearness. "The stronger locomotive animals," he wrote, "devour the weaker ones without mercy. Such is the condition of organic nature! whose first law might be expressed in the words, 'Eat or be eaten,' and which would seem to be one great slaughter-house, one universal scene of rapacity and injustice." Mr. G. H. Lewes credits him with "a profounder insight into psychology than any of his contemporaries and the majority of his successors exhibit," and says that he "deserves a place in history for that one admirable conception of psychology as subordinate to the laws of life." Dr. Maudsley bears testimony to his sagacity in regard to mental disorders; Dr. Lauder Brunton shows that he anticipated Rosenthal's theory of "catching cold"; and a dozen other illustrations might be given of his scientific prescience in chemistry, anatomy, and medicine. He was also a very advanced reformer. He believed in exercise and fresh air, and taught his sons and daughters to swim. He saw the vast importance of educating girls. He

* *Erasmus Darwin*. By Ernst Krause. With a Preliminary Notice by Charles Darwin. (London: Murray, 1879.)

studied sanitation, pointed out how towns should be supplied with pure water, and urged that sewage should be turned to use in agriculture instead of being allowed to pollute our rivers. He also sketched out a variety of useful inventions, which he was too busy to complete himself. Nor did he confine himself to *practical* reforms. He sympathised warmly with Howard, who was reforming our prison system; and he denounced slavery at the time when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel held slaves in the Barbadoes, and absolutely declined to give them Christian instruction.*

No one will be surprised to learn that Erasmus Darwin was a sceptic. Indeed, there seems to have been a family tendency in that direction. His sister Susannah, a young lady of eighteen, writing to him at school in his boyhood, after some remarks on abstinence during Lent, said: "As soon as we kill our hog I intend to take a part thereof with the Family, for I'm informed by a learned Divine that Hog's Flesh is Fish, and has been so ever since the Devil entered into them and ran into the Sea." Bright, witty Susannah! She died unmarried, and became, as Darwin says, the "very pattern of an old lady, so nice looking, so gentle, so kind, and passionately fond of flowers."

Erasmus Darwin's scepticism was of an early growth. At the age of twenty-three, in a letter to Dr. Okes, after announcing his father's death he professes a firm belief in "a superior *Ens Entium*," but rejects the notion of a special providence, and says that "general laws seem sufficient"; and while humbly hoping that God will "re-create us" after death, he plainly asserts that "the light of Nature affords us not a single argument for a future state." He has frequently been called an Atheist, but this is a mistake; he was a Deist, believing in God, but rejecting Revelation. Even Unitarianism was too orthodox for him, and he wittily called it "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian."

His death occurred on April 10, 1802. He expired in his arm-chair "without pain or emotion of any kind." He had always hoped his end might be painless, and it proved to be so. Otherwise he was not disturbed by the thought of death. "When I think of dying," he wrote to his friend Edgeworth, "it is always without pain or fear."

Such a brief account of this extraordinary man would be inadequate to any other purpose, but it suffices to show that Darwin was himself a striking illustration of the law of heredity. Scientific boldness and religious scepticism ran in the blood of his race.

DARWIN'S FATHER.

Darwin's father, Robert Waring Darwin, the third son of Erasmus Darwin, settled down as a doctor at Shrewsbury. He had a very large practice, and was a very remarkable man. He stood six-feet two, and was broad in proportion. His shrewdness, rectitude, and benevolence gained him universal love and esteem. He was revered by his great son, who always spoke of him as "the wisest man I ever knew." His wife was a daughter of Josiah Wedgwood, and her sweet, gentle, sympathetic nature was inherited by her famous son. She died in 1817, thirty-two years before her husband, who died on November 13, 1848.

There is little, if anything, to be gleaned from any published documents as to the *opinions* of Darwin's father. Upon this point Mr. Francis Darwin has been too zealously discreet. Happily I have been furnished with a few particulars by the Rev. Edward Myers, minister of the Unitarian chapel at Shrewsbury.

Mrs. Darwin was herself a Unitarian, and she attended with her family the Unitarian chapel in High Street, Shrewsbury, of which the Rev. George Case was then minister. The daughters were all baptised by Mr. Case, and their names entered in the chapel register; but the sons were for some reason baptised in the parish church of St. Chad. Charles Darwin attended Mr. Case's school, and was by him prepared for the Shrewsbury Grammar School. Up to 1825, when he went to the University of Edinburgh, he, with the Darwin family, regularly attended the Unitarian place of worship. But in 1832, after the erec-

tion of St. George's Church, Frankwell, they left the chapel and went to church.

"Dr. Darwin," says Mr. Myers, who succeeded Mr. Case, "was never a regular attendant at the Unitarian chapel, but he went occasionally. Indeed, he never regularly attended any place of worship, and his extreme views on theological and religious matters were so well known that he used to be commonly spoken of as 'Dr. Darwin the unbeliever,' and 'Dr. Darwin the infidel.'"

The question naturally arises, How could Dr. Darwin have seriously intended his son to become a clergyman? Mr. Myers offers, as I think, a sufficient explanation. The Church at that time was looked upon as simply a professional avenue, like the law or medicine; and, as Mr. Gladstone remarks in his *Chapter of Autobiography*, "the richer benefices were very commonly regarded as a suitable provision for such members of the higher families as were least fit to push their way in any other profession requiring thought and labor." But, the reader will exclaim, how was it possible to include Charles Darwin in this category of incapables? The answer is simple. Darwin was not brilliant in his youth. His great faculties required time to ripen. He failed as a medical student because he had an unconquerable antipathy to the sight of blood, and was so afflicted by witnessing a bad operation on a child that he actually ran away. He was always regarded as "a very ordinary boy," to use his own words; and his father once said to him, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs, and rat-catching, and you will be a disgrace to yourself and your family."* It was a singularly infelicitous prophecy, but it shows Dr. Darwin's mean opinion of his son's intellect, and enables us to understand how "Dr. Darwin the infidel" devoted his unpromising cub to the great refuge of incapacity.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence

THE REAL VALUE OF JESUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Does Mr. Cohen really believe that "the historical Christ has, indeed, been pretty well demolished"? When we remember the intellectual giants who have believed, and who to-day believe, that Jesus did walk this earth, it surely is sufficient to utterly expose the fallacy of such a statement.

It is strange to see this question raised in a publication dated 1901 A.D. To date a paper from a particular historical event, and then to raise the inquiry as to whether that event ever occurred, appears somewhat inconsistent.

In the article immediately following the above there is a quotation from Matthew Arnold. This reminds me of his writings, and surely his evidence should count for something, especially with Secularists. He not only acknowledges and accepts the fact of Christ's historical existence, but considers it possible to know sufficient concerning him to discover wherein his actual teaching differed from the reports in the Gospels. His contention was that Christ had not been correctly represented; but he did not question his historical existence. Professor Blackie speaks of Christianity with the advantage of an admitted historical basis—as historical as Julius Cæsar.

There is something pathetic in Mr. Cohen's complaint that "the results of criticism take a long while to sink into the minds of the people." Perhaps he is thinking of the past 1900 years, during which criticism and persecution have, indeed, been a failure from his point of view. There are hundreds of churches and chapels in London, but, so far as I am aware, not one hall owned by Secularists. Our friend may indeed groan, for, if he is to destroy the influence of Christ, then he has a task none will envy. There is one consolation: he need never fear having no work to do.

The statement quoted by Mr. Cohen, that "the world contains no monument to Christ," is surely an argument in favor of our position, for how wonderful must be that power which, destitute of these material advantages, yet exerts so mighty an influence on the world to-day. "The fragment of history" we possess is still far more potent than all the forces of infidelity.

We can forgive the suggestion of hypnotism; only, why not say theosophy? This hypnotic influence is justly described as risky. "Risky because there is a constant danger of being found out." According to this, Christianity could not at any

* *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*. Edited by his son, Francis Darwin. Vol. i., p. 32.

* *Erasmus Darwin*, p. 47.

time have relied on such an aid. Otherwise, how could it for 1900 years survive the constant danger? Evidently Mr. Cohen has answered his own sneer.

Then, again, who are the astute preachers that are beginning to hedge? Certainly none of those who are exerting the greatest influence, for they all preach "Christ and Him crucified."

If Mr. Cohen had said that "To the Atheistic mind there is something ridiculous in harking back to a Syrian peasant for advice," then we could have understood him; but when he speaks of "the impartial mind," it is hard to grasp his meaning, for surely he does not so describe himself or his party. If the opponents of Christ claim impartiality, surely his friends may do so too.

The statement that "People find in him an inspiration because he happens to be the official figurehead," and the assumption that "From other teachers similar inspiration would be derived," simply demonstrate that the so-called Freethinker who decries dogmatism in Christians can himself be most dogmatic when it appears to suit his purpose. If his argument proves anything, it is that any religion is better than Atheism. No one ever heard of inspiration derived from that source.

While Christ-inspired men and women were being torn to death or burnt in the arena at Rome rather than gain liberty by recantation, the Atheists were hiding their disbelief in the then popular worship under a cloak of paganism. This is a fact stated by Gibbon, who, I understand, is accepted as an authority by Secularists. If other teachers could inspire as Christ inspires, why were these Atheists not inspired to openly avow their disbelief in paganism in the same way as the Christians did? In face of this, it ill becomes an Atheist to attempt to belittle the inspiration given by Christ.

Not until now did I hear that Christ taught that the earth is flat. I for one thought that he held the modern scientific theory concerning its form. Otherwise how explain Luke xvii. 33-36, for how could Christ state that there would be on this planet day and night simultaneously, if he believed in a flat earth. But why all this talk of science? Does the Secular party conduct any science classes? Yet in connection with the Y. M. C. A. you find them, so that it looks as though science is regarded more as a friend by Christians than by Secularists.

Judging from the character of some Secular publications, the sexual teaching of the Gospel should be a point in its favor.

So far as social life is concerned, Matthew Arnold says: "A sentence which sums up the New Testament, and assigns the ground whereon the Christian Church stands, is: 'Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity' (2 Timothy ii. 19)." Surely the practical application of this teaching is likely to have some effect on social matters. The followers of Christ are to-day in the van of social reformers. Take one instance: Orphanages exist founded by Christians in which children of Atheists as well as others are sheltered, simply because the mighty forces of Secularism are unable to cope with the difficulty. Christ has said sufficient to satisfy any impartial observer that he does recognise man as a social being. However, the complaint of his silence is answered in the next paragraph, where the writer admits that good teaching was associated with his name.

Mr. Cohen is ready to accept those utterances of Christ which appear to be open to criticism, but rejects others equally authentic, with which fault cannot be found. Then we are told that Christ did not say enough, and, finally, he never existed. So we see that some of the teaching is too bad, some too good, some he did not utter at all, and, finally, he never taught anything. Secularism must, indeed, be in dire straits when it has to argue in this fashion.

The writer appears to be unwarrantably complacent when he says: "It is merely a question of time for this apology—i.e., that His existence does not matter—to go the way of its predecessors." Quite so. Considering that there is no need for such apology, it is only natural it should go; but, in forsaking apology, we shall not forsake the Christ. After His opponents have been forgotten, and their influence entirely obliterated, He will continue to inspire men, women, and even children, to deeds of goodness and noble self-sacrifice until that great day when "to Him every knee shall bow."

W. J. RUMBLE.

[This correspondent informs us that he is a member of a Christian Church. He is employed in a large factory, where some of his fellow workmen are Christians, while others are avowed Atheists. He has lately taken to reading the *Freethinker*, and it has been suggested that he should reply to Mr. Cohen's article. Hence the above letter, which we insert partly out of courtesy to the writer and his friends, and partly in order that Mr. Cohen may have an opportunity of replying to *bona fide* objections.—EDITOR.]

The Cathedral Spire.

It soars like hearts of hapless men who dare
To sue for gifts the gods refuse to allot;
Who climb for ever toward they know not where,
Baffled for ever by they know not what.

—William Watson.

The Good God.

(From the French of De Berenger, by James Thomson
("B. V.").)

ONE day the good God got out of bed
In a very good humor for us, 'tis said;
He put his nose to the window light—
"Perhaps their planet has perished quite."
Not yet: in its corner very far
He saw it twining, our little star.
If I can think how they get on there,
Said he, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

Black or white, frozen or boiled
(He said, like a father to children spoiled),
Mortals whom I have made so small,
They pretend that I govern you all;
But, God be praised, you shall also see
That I have ministers under me:
If I don't give the sack to one or two pair,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

To make you live in peace divine,
Have I not given you women and wine?
Yet in my teeth with prayers and boasts
The pigmies call me the Lord of Hosts!
And even dare to invoke my name
When they light the murderous cannon's flame!
If I ever commanded column or square,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

Who are these dwarfs so richly drest,
On gilded thrones in sumptuous rest?
The head anointed, so proud and pert,
These chiefs of your insect-swarms assert,
That I have blessed their rights of place,
That they are kings by my special grace.
If it is by me that they reign thus there,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

Then these other dwarfs, all black, of whom
My poor nose hates the incense fume:
They make of life a dismal fast
And in my name fierce curses cast
In their sermons, very fine, said he,
Only, by gad, they're Hebrew to me:
If I believe anything they declare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

Children, enough of this: no sect
But the good kind hearts shall be my elect:
Make love to each other and live in joy,
Without any fear that God will annoy;
Laugh down the great and the canting crew—
But suppose the *mouchards* should hear me! adieu.
If into heaven those fellows fare,
My children, the Devil may take me, I swear,
The Devil may take me, I swear.

Too Slow.

Deacon De Goode—"Why don't you go to church, neighbor?" Neighbor—"No time. Churches are too slow for this age. They don't fit into our twentieth century, mile-a-minute civilisation, no sirc." Deacon De Goode—"Um—well, what would you suggest?" Neighbor—"Can't say exactly, but it ought to be some sort of a put-a-nickel-in-the-slot-and-save-your-soul machine."

William Leverich Brower tells a story of the recent annual meeting of the Particular Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in this city. A friend passed the church, in the portal of which a newsboy was reading the afternoon papers. "Can you tell me what is going on in the church, my lad?" asked Mr. Brower's friend. "Yep; dey's a meetin' o' de Particular Sinners in dere," readily responded the newsboy, who couldn't understand why the inquirer smiled.

"Mr. Dickson, are you a member of the African Church?"—"Not dis year, sah. I jined that church in good faith. I giv' ten dollars to de preachin' of the gospel the fust year, and de church people all call me 'Brudder Dickson.' De second year, my business was not so good, and I only giv' five dollars. Dat year de people call me 'Mr. Dickson.' Well, sah, de third year I feel very poor, sickness in de family, and I didn't gib nuffin fir de preachin'. Well, sah, arter that they called me 'ole nigger Dickson', an' I left them."

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, "Büchner's Last Plea for Materialism."

NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Hall Cairne's Dream of Christian Democracy."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 7, G. Hewitt, "Social Democracy and Freethought."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, H. Snell, "What is Left to Believe."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Lewis H. Berens: "The Works of George Eliot."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "To him that hath shall be given."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Hyde Park): Lectures every Thursday at 7.30 p.m.; Sundays at 11.30 a.m.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (York-street Lecture Hall): 3.45, "Origin and Growth of Priesthoods."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, F. Hanks, "If Christ Came to Birmingham."

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 17 Little Horton-lane): Fred Bramley—3, "The Ethics of Socialism"; 7, "Socialism and War." November 14, at 8, H. Percy Ward will lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Joseph McCabe, "Catholicism as a Religion and a Polity."

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class—Open discussion, "Free Trade v. Protection"; 6.30, Social Meeting.

Huddersfield (Friendly and Trades' Societies Club, Room No. 5, Northumberland-street): H. P. Ward—3, "The Delusion of Spiritualism"; 6.45, "Why I am an Atheist."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall, Room No. 2): 7, A lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, J. M. Robertson—11, "The Collapse of Liberalism"; 6.30, "The Reformation."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, T. E. Rhodes, "Montaigne."

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Arthur Woolerton, "Robert Owen: His Life and Work."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday evening—Musical and other Recitals, etc.

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

H. PERCY WARD, 1 Victoria-chambers, 17 Little Horton-lane, Bradford.—November 10, Huddersfield; 24, Manchester. December 1, Hull; 8, Glasgow; 15th, Failsworth; 22, Birmingham.

Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH. Funeral Orations and Addresses. 1s.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. 1s.

THE DEVIL. 6d.

SUPERSTITION. 6d.

SHAKESPEARE. 6d.

THE GODS. 6d.

THE HOLY BIBLE. 6d.

REPLY TO GLADSTONE. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 4d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning. 4d.

CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS. 3d.

ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN. 3d.

ORATION ON VOLTAIRE. 3d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

PAINE THE PIONEER. 2d.

HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION. A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

MYTH AND MIRACLE. 1d.

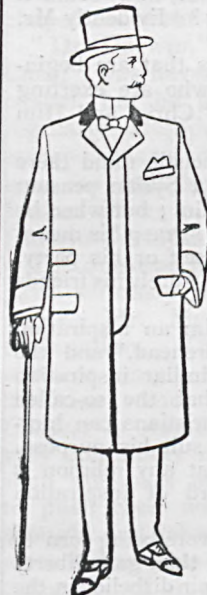
REAL BLASPHEMY. 1d.

REPAIRING THE IDOLS. 1d.

CHRIST AND MIRACLES. 1d.

CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY. 1d.

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



21s.

EACH.

In Black, Blue, Brown, Fawn, Grey, or Green. State chest over vest measure; also height and weight.

LOT II.

THE OLD FAVORITE.

Thousands sold annually.

1 Pair of Pure Wool Blankets.

1 Pair Twilled Bed-sheets.

1 Beautiful Quilt.

1 White Tablecloth.

1 lb. Free Clothing Tea.

1 Shillingworth of Literature.

21s.

BRUNO CLOTH

For Ladies' Costumes

2s. per yard.

50 in. wide.

16 different Colors to select from.

The best in the world at the price.



25s.

EACH.

In Black, Blue, Brown, Fawn, Green, Grey, or Heather. In all sizes. State chest over vest and inside leg measurements, also color required.

BRADLAUGH BOOTS

FOR WINTER WEAR.

These Boots we keep in all sizes at 12s. 6d., 14s. 6d., and 16s. 6d. per pair. Made from the finest selected leather, and every pair warranted to give satisfaction.

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 Inmoralities, 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.

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.

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.

Ingersoll's Last Lecture.

"WHAT IS RELIGION?"

An Address delivered before the American Free Religious Association, at Boston, June 2, 1899.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

London: The Freethought Publishing Company, 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.

In stout paper covers, 1s.; cloth, 2s.

THE BOOK OF GOD

In the Light of the Higher Criticism.

With Special Reference to DEAN FARRAR'S *New Apology*.

By G. W. FOOTE.

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

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

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

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

Ready on November 13.

THE SECULAR ALMANACK FOR 1902.

Edited by G. W. FOOTE

AND

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

AMONGST THE CONTENTS ARE:—

A Calendar—Information about Freethought Societies at Home and Abroad—Special Articles by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, "Mimnermus," A. B. Moss, W. Heaford, E. R. Woodward, etc.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

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

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.

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.