

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXI.—No. 51.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1901.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

Christ in the Soudan.

CAN any good come out of Nazareth? asked the ancient Jews. No doubt there are Radicals who will ask if any good can come from a soldier. But this is carrying the anti-military spirit to the point of absurdity. Some historic soldiers have been very great statesmen and administrators. Some, of course, have been nothing of the kind. This, however, only proves that distinguished men vary in breadth and versatility, and that real genius is apt to overleap all calculations.

We shall not apologise for introducing the name of Lord Kitchener. Some have called him "a butcher," but that is an objection to the profession and not the man. War is butchery. It is meant to be. One side kills the other into submission. That is the be-all and the end-all of it. There is no reason, therefore, why anyone's detestation of war—and it is detestable enough—should fall exclusively upon the head of the British Commander-in-Chief in South Africa. Besides, the world is still so warlike that it is super-virtuous to treat the whole military profession as dishonorable.

Lord Kitchener is a great soldier. But he is something more. When a youth of twenty he fought for France in her hopeless struggle with Germany after the capitulation of Sedan. He volunteered for service with the second army of the Loire under General Chanzy, and shared the terrible hardships and dangers of the campaign which won the respect even of the Germans. Call it madness, if you will; but it was a generous madness. The world abounds in much commoner forms of that malady. Many years afterwards this experience served him in some stead. When the London journals—*Punch*, for instance—were behaving like savages over the Fashoda incident, it was Lord Kitchener's tact, more than anything else, that prevented a war between England and France. He recognised something more than a "monkey" in Captain Marchand. The Frenchman's claim was extravagant, but Lord Kitchener would not call it ridiculous, for he bore in mind "the sufferings and privations" of the French expedition, which rendered "the futility of their efforts pathetic." Those were Lord Kitchener's own words, and they did him honor. Instead of sending a subordinate officer, as he might have done, he went up to Fashoda himself. There he dined with Captain Marchand, who was glad to get a dinner, and eased him over the inevitable humiliation, as one brave man might well do to another. Sir William Harcourt was not flattering when he said that the Sirdar's relations with the French officer were "worthy of the knightly chivalry of ancient times." And the result was that when Marchand got back to France he said that the English were—well, the word is unprintable in this country, but Lord Kitchener was a gallant gentleman.

Against all that some people will set the blowing-up of the Mahdi's tomb. People who objected to the whole Soudan business had the right to object to that—but not others. Leaving the Mahdi's tomb there meant the possibility, and even the probability, of having to do the work of repression over again. The tomb was indispensable to any fresh Khalifa who started up. It was, in fact, the stock in trade of the whole "inspired" profession. Blowing it up put an end to their business for ever, at least in that locality. For our part, we do not share the common taste for corpses. And it must be admitted that the Mahdi's was a particularly unsavory one, considering what he is said

to have died of. That he was a remarkable man in many ways is true enough, but, like many other "inspired" gentlemen, he gave way to luxury, cruelty, and the grossest immorality. Indeed, for some years before his death he was making a hell all around him. The fate of his corpse can hardly be of serious interest to any but fanatics. Flaubert even suggested that Mohammed's tomb at Mecca should be blown up, as the greatest centre of religious fanaticism in the East, and one that was constantly baffling the efforts of sober statesmen. Fortunately the alleged tomb of Jesus Christ got lost to the Mohammedans. Besides, he was not in it. But even with that disadvantage it was previously a serious nuisance and a rallying point of popular credulity and priestly imposture.

Differ about this as we may, there is one thing on which Freethinkers, at any rate, will probably agree—namely, that Lord Kitchener rose far above the mere soldier in his request to the British people after the victory of Omdurman. He asked for, and he obtained, £100,000 to establish a Gordon College out in the Soudan, where good education might be provided for the young natives who were willing to accept it. Very wisely he resolved to banish the religious difficulty by keeping off the missionaries and other pious interlopers. If the Gordon College were a proselytising ground for the Christian religion, Lord Kitchener knew it would be shunned like poison by the Mohammedan natives—and they are *all* Mohammedans in that locality. Protests were raised against this policy, but they made no impression upon him. Indeed, he extended this policy, and the whole Christian missionary business was prohibited throughout the Soudan. Naturally this was gall and wormwood to the men of God. They had anticipated a fine opening in the Soudan when Lord Kitchener had done with it. Dr. King, Bishop of Lincoln, as far back as April, 1898, after the fight at Atbara, had said that when Khartoum was occupied a hospital should be erected there to perpetuate the memory of Gordon. A great national subscription was projected for this Gordon Hospital. It was to be open to every suffering creature in the district; but, of course, it was to be worked by *Christian doctors* and *Christian nurses*. That is, it was to be a conversion factory under the pretence of benevolence. From a business point of view, it was no doubt a happy idea; and the dismay of the projectors when Lord Kitchener got in front of them with a better scheme is very intelligible.

Clerical resentment has been smouldering ever since. The Archbishop of Canterbury, on behalf of the entire Church of England, has publicly appealed to the Government to abandon Lord Kitchener's policy and open the Soudan to "the Gospel of Christ." Now a Church tract on the subject is being extensively circulated. It is headed "Is There Not A Cause?" A cause, that is, for the prolongation of the war in South Africa. This cause, according to the tract, is obvious. God is angry with the British nation on account of its "un-Christian" policy in the Soudan. That is why he has allowed the Boers to give the British beans so often in South Africa. Had the authors of this tract been a little more subtle, they might have added that the originator of that "un-Christian policy" is no less a person than Lord Kitchener; and they might have asked how we could expect to beat the Boers when our army in the field is commanded by a General so hateful in the sight of God. But this tract does not even mention Lord Kitchener. It refers to the

"complete and decisive victory" of Omdurman, but ascribes it entirely to "the Lord of Hosts." And how have we "used the victory God gave us"?

"We have subscribed £100,000 to establish a college at Khartoum, in which the Koran, the book of the False Prophet, may be read and taught, but from which God's Revelation of Himself in His eternal word of truth and life is jealously excluded.....We are thus daring to dispute and deny the Creator's right to His own creatures. We are placing ourselves between the Redeemer and the souls He died to redeem. What greater ingratitude could we be guilty of? What more daring sin, what more grievous offence, could we commit against our God?"

Why are we surprised then, the tract asks, at the long war and great loss of life in South Africa? Why are we surprised at our vain efforts to bring the war to an end? "We are fighting against God in the Soudan," the tract says, "and why should He fight for us in South Africa? If we want Him to be with us, we must be with Him." Tit for tat! You scratch me and I'll scratch you! One good turn deserves another! These are the Lord's principles according to the gentlemen who want to open a branch of his (or their) business in the Soudan. Nothing could be clearer. We might knock over the Boers in a jiffy. What a pity Lord Rosebery did not deal with this point at Chesterfield. It would have been worth all the rest of his speech.

But suppose we try this simple recipe. Suppose we let the missionaries loose in the Soudan. Will they consent to be shot if it makes no difference in South Africa? Or will the authors of this tract agree to be shot? Nothing short of this can justify the cocksure way in which they talk of God—as though they dined with him occasionally (like Abraham), and were "in the know" with regard to his wishes and intentions.

A good many people will be apt to think that one religion, one prophet, and one scripture are quite enough in the Soudan. Rivalry might be permitted, however, if the Christians were not so bigoted and insolent. They begin by calling the Koran "the book of the False Prophet." Mohammedans do not speak in that way of Jesus—not even in their own country. Nor do they start with the theory that all Christians are in a state of damnation. They are generally too polite to tell the Christians what they think of the Bible. But it is known that many of them smile at the yarns of the Old Testament and the fictions of the New Testament. Theirs is a religion without miracles. They worship a God (as Gibbon said) without a partner or a son. Their deity is not a joint-stock company. Right or wrong, their creed is a simple one. And it holds its own wherever it is confronted by Christianity. What converts have the Christian missionaries won in the Mohammedan world? What converts would they win in the Soudan if the Government kept strictly neutral? What they want is a fresh field of business. Many missionaries are out of work, and do not wish to take a job in perilous places. They would like something *safe*, where the native is overawed and Tommy Atkins is always handy. Hence the clamor for pushing forward the work of Christ in the Soudan. For our part, we hope this clamor will be resisted. The Soudan seems to be getting on very well. Science and social order are working wonders, the population is steadily increasing, and the greater peace and prosperity of the Soudan are reacting beneficially on Egypt. Keep the missionaries out, and this happy progress will continue. Let the missionaries in, and there will be confusion, fanaticism, and reaction. We have had a great object-lesson in China, and there is really no need to have it repeated in the Soudan.

G. W. FOOTE.

Discussion and the Clergy.

THE note in the *Freethinker* of December 8 on the Rev. Tom Warren's reply to an invitation to discuss the respective merits of Christianity and Secularism reminded me that I had been asked by the West Ham Branch to meet that gentleman, and that it was in reply to this invitation that the reply commented on was received. Personally, I did not expect an acceptance of the invitation, and am, therefore, not surprised at the

result. To attack Secularism from the pulpit, where there is no chance of talking back, and to attack Secularism with someone on the same platform ready to correct errors and expose misrepresentations, are two very different things; and, while the clergy are as fond as ever of the first, they show a growing dislike to the second.

Mr. Warren doubtless considered his sending a text—"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation"—in reply as a very telling retort. To me it looked very much like impudence, and impudence for which there was very little excuse. The Secularists of West Ham did not commence the attack; it was begun by Mr. Warren himself. He thought fit to attack Secularism, and it would have been only a straightforward, manly course of action to have made it possible for the *same* audience to have heard the case argued from the other side. His refusal is only a proof of how little he desires his congregation to know the truth, and how little faith he has in his creed standing fair and open criticism.

But the text as sent was peculiarly inappropriate. It certainly had no application to Secularists. We are not *weak* in the faith; we have no faith whatever in the Christian religion. And a glance at the fourteenth chapter of Romans might have shown Mr. Warren that Paul's advice referred to differences of opinion among Christians concerning details of their religion, not to disputes with outsiders for the purpose of converting them. Finally, he himself was breaking his own reading of the text in lecturing on Secularism at all. "Not in doubtful disputation"! Well, what was Mr. Warren doing in his lectures? Was he not disputing with Secularists? True, he did not allow the Secularists to talk back; but if I discuss the opinions of another man, examine his reasons for maintaining his conclusions, and then controvert them, I am disputing with him, even though I do not accept the invitation to meet him and talk the matter over further. Mr. Warren does believe in disputation, only it is of that unsatisfactory kind where statements can be twisted out of shape and opinions misrepresented without any risk of immediate exposure.

But why not dispute with those who are "weak in the faith"? It seems to me that these are the very people who need disputing with, and so long as we credit them with ordinary intelligence and a sincere desire to find out what is true, we may dispute with confidence and profit. What is the good of preaching only to those who already believe what the preacher is *going to say*? It may be easy or comfortable, but is it profitable—profitable, that is, in the larger and wider sense? Here are thousands of Secularists up and down the country, and to all of them Mr. Warren says, practically: "I will not discuss with you unless you already believe in what I am going to tell you, or unless you are willing to sit at my feet and take my teachings as a child receives instruction from its teacher." Does he ever expect to make any impression upon thoughtful men and women by such infantile methods as these? Men who have read and thought—and upon the face of it unbelief means more *thinking* than belief—must be met and conquered as equals if they are conquered at all; they cannot be convinced by impudence from one whose conduct they feel is dictated more by fear than by a sincere conviction. Probably Mr. Warren has never read Professor Mahaffy's essay on *The Decay of Modern Preaching*, or he would have seen himself bracketed as among those who "are adopting this profession [*i.e.*, the ministry] because they were too dull for any other," and who "cite texts about being *puffed up with human knowledge* about administering the pure Gospel as *milk to babes*, and many other..... texts which are.....wholly irrelevant."

However, in this matter Mr. Warren is, after all, but representative of a class, and it is for that reason that I have noticed his ingenuous evasion of the invitation to a set debate. Looking at the clergy as they exist to-day, an independent observer might well ask: "Why should a clergyman care to hold a public discussion on the truth of Christianity?" In any such discussion he stands to lose, without any chance of gaining. He does not hope to convert his opponent, and he certainly does not convert his hearers. No one has ever heard of Secularists being converted as the result of listening

to such a discussion, while hundreds date their first heretical leanings from such an occasion. Besides, it is not the object of the clergy to place *different* views of religion before people, but to keep them as far as possible confined to one, so that belief in that may follow from their never having heard any other. This is the policy which dictates the conduct of every Church in existence; and, from the religious standpoint, it is a wise one.

Of course, one might reply that the love of truth should urge the clergy to submit their teachings to the verdict of a critical audience; and, if that motive were strong with the bulk of preachers, the reply would be a perfectly sound one. But does anyone seriously imagine that this motive operates to any considerable extent? Do we find the clergy acting in even a moderately honorable manner towards new views of religion? Is there not always bitter opposition to new teachings so long as they can be decently opposed, ending with a dishonest attempt to graft them on to the old doctrines? It is not that new views are criticised—that would be wholly legitimate and desirable. The real point is that they are opposed on the grounds that they are in contradiction to what is already received, and their teachers are greeted with storms of angry abuse and ignorant vilification. The treatment meted out to men like Lyell, Darwin, and Colenso is evidence of how much of a truth-seeker is the average parson.

It is really time that we shook off the stupid superstition that the clergy are a high-minded body of men, attracted to the pulpit by sheer love of religion, and in a spirit of devotion to the welfare of the people. It is entered as a profession—as a means of getting a livelihood, often selected by a young man's parents, for reasons far from flattering; and, in spite of all that has been said of late concerning the underpaid clergy, it affords a more lucrative employment for mental mediocrity than any other employment that could be selected. These men are, in the mass, not attracted to the pulpit from any genuine conviction of the truth of religion, and do not defend it from any sincere conviction of its social utility; it is but one of the methods of getting on in the world, and the sooner we recognise this to be the case the sooner we shall appreciate at its proper value much that is otherwise perplexing.

There are two other reasons why the clergy shun discussion, both of which deserve a word in passing. During the earlier stages of the Secular movement discussions between ministers of religion and representative Secularists were both frequent and lengthy. Four and six nights' debates were common, and even ten and twelve days' debates have taken place. Nowadays debates of any kind are hard to secure, and the reason for this has already been indicated. A willingness to debate must argue one of two things. Either it implies the presence of a sincere belief, a conviction that does not flinch from examination, or, on the lower view, a possibility of so imposing upon an audience that it will mistake declamation for argument, and confuse the appeal to prejudice with the demonstration of truth. Neither of these conditions obtains to-day with the same strength as of old. There is no longer that amount of sincere and honest belief among the clergy which will induce them to rush on to the platform in the hope of bringing conviction to the minds of others. I believe it would be almost an impossibility to get an educated clergyman to defend doctrinal Christianity before a public audience. One might be found who would discuss some vague and general subject, such as the existence of God or the belief in a future life; but specific doctrinal Christianity they will not defend under such conditions as those named above.

And while the growth of Freethought has thus affected the clergy on the one side by making their own doctrines nauseous to them, on the other hand it has so permeated the mass of the people that they no longer form such plastic material as they once were in the hands of a "smart" preacher. A discussion between a Freethinker and a parson is no longer a dispute between two specialists, with the people looking on as pure outsiders. They, too, have become specialists in their way. Freethought has found its way into all classes of society, and a preacher on the platform who wishes to retain the sympathy of his listeners has either to refrain from discussing doctrines altogether, or else to

outbid his heretical opponent by giving vent to liberal sentiments, which in the minds of many must raise grave doubts as to his own orthodoxy.

The other condition that makes discussion less palatable to the clergy is the very great and marked decline in their mental ability as a class. When conditions were such that men of real intellectual worth might devote themselves to the service of religion without any very great sense of self-stultification, the Churches could point with pride to many of their champions. But as conditions changed, art, science, literature, and political life, all gave fresh openings for the nation's intellect, with the result that the churches were bound to rely upon an altogether poorer type, to whom intellectual forces could make little or no appeal. Professor Mahaffy—himself a clergyman be it remembered—in the essay I have already quoted from, refers to the number of divinity students he constantly found in class who were simply unable to follow an argument—"men who deliberately adopted the profession of religious teaching with the consciousness that they could not possibly understand what they had to teach. They were, in fact, adopting this profession because they were too dull for any other." Any one who studies the kind of men that fill modern pulpits will see how rapidly this class is increasing; and there is small wonder that such people, quite apart from other conditions, show a strong distaste for anything in the nature of an intellectual contest. They have a natural aversion to it, and when self-interest falls into line with natural inclination the result is tolerably certain.

After all, the position of the clergy nowadays calls more for pity than for the expression of any other feeling. To go through life saddled with the defence of doctrines that are generally discredited by men of culture is no light burden to bear. To feel, in addition, that one's beliefs are threatened by the growth of knowledge and by the very advance of civilisation, and that the only condition of their retention is to fight by fair means and foul against the healthier instincts of humanity, must breed a state of mind that is far from enviable. Probably the truth is that the majority of intellectual men do find such a position intolerable, and so forsake the Churches for other spheres of action. It is thus that the intellect of the Churches grows steadily poorer, and the clergy are left a baffled and despairing minority, preaching a message that few pay any real heed to, and which an increasing number regard with suspicion or disgust.

C. COHEN.

Delusions Concerning Immortality.—IV.

(CONCLUSION.)

THE old fallacy that matter does not control mind is now entirely dispelled. In cases of epilepsy and paralysis mind yields to material forces. No truth is more certain than that too much alcohol impairs and sometimes destroys all consciousness and intelligence in man. Take also the use of anæsthetics. If a patient inhale a small portion of chloroform previously to undergoing an operation, he becomes insensible to pain, and for the time being his consciousness is extinguished. As Professor Tyndall says: "Divorced from matter, where is life? Whatever our *faith* may say, our *knowledge* shows them to be indissolubly joined. Every meal we eat and every cup we drink illustrates the mysterious control of mind by matter." The fact here submitted is, that mind is a part of the material organisation upon which its manifestations depend. In science it is the practice to endeavor to explain things in materialistic terms; and to adopt any other course often tends to the confusion of ideas, and leads many minds into the region of obscurity. I fail to see any justification for ceasing to speak of matter as a form of thought, and of thought as a property of matter, so long as our object is to indicate what we think and feel. It is necessary to emphasize these facts, because every conception of our minds implies not only a form of thought, but an idea of the something thought of. When we formulate a thought, it may be said that we at the same time define it; that is, we lay down a boundary, for to think of a thing is to limit it.

The theological fallacy that morality is dependent upon the belief in a future life is becoming more and more apparent. Even professed Christians rely upon material agencies for the cultivation of ethical conduct rather than upon the belief in immortality. They have more faith in well-devised and justly-administered laws as a protection against crime than in any threat of retribution in "another world." In fact, the greatest criminals have been the very men who avowed their belief in a future life. The frequent revelations in our law courts of criminal conduct upon the part of the clergy of all denominations afford a crushing refutation of the boasted beneficial results of this belief. Moreover, all our prison statistics abundantly prove that, as a rule, the inhabitants of the gaols are, with very few exceptions, believers in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. The dominant consideration which practically influences human conduct to-day is, What will be the effect of one's actions in this life? Cicero uttered a great truth when he told his son that man's morality was the necessary result of reasoning built upon human necessities. Robert Owen was equally correct in his teaching that the ability and inclination to live good and useful lives depend not upon belief, but upon the circumstances that surround the formation and development of man's character.

If belief in Christian immortality were necessary to morality, it is only reasonable to suppose that where the belief was absent immortality would abound. But the very opposite is the fact. Spencer, in his *Synthetic Philosophy*, tells us of tribes who were destitute of all religious belief, and yet they "lead a peaceful and tranquil life"; their "disputes are settled either by arbitration or by a council of five"; and they consider "falsehood as one of the worst of vices." Again, he says the Carnatic aborigines very markedly show "fidelity, truth, and honesty"; and that among the Chakmas "crime is rare" and "theft is almost unknown." From these references (and many more of a similar kind could be adduced) it will be seen how erroneous is the statement that religion is necessary to morality. Besides, it should not be overlooked that with the orthodox Christian the popular notion is that the alleged moral efficacy of the belief in immortality consists chiefly in its deterring influence upon wrongdoing. In the past the preaching of this erroneous doctrine was the strongest feature in Christian propaganda. Among the superstitious to excite fear was found far easier than to evoke love. Popular preachers were not slow to discover this fact; hence they preferred to discourse from their pulpits upon such subjects as "hell fire," "the wrath of God," "eternal damnation," "everlasting torments," and "the devil and his angels." These topics proved more attractive than the "love of God" or the "bliss of heaven."

The error and inutility of such teaching have now, fortunately, been discovered, and, as the result, Christianity is rapidly declining as an active factor in daily life. Of course, it is not here meant that the *profession* of the Christian faith will entirely disappear. It is too profitable as a business speculation; but its errors, its creeds, and its dogmas will disappear before man's cultured intellect, while its truths, like other verities, will become allied with principles which accord with the requirements of a progressive civilisation. It is recognised by the leading minds of to-day that the incentive to virtue and the deterrent of vice have but little, if anything, to do with speculations as to what *may be* after death. The lesson from experience is that the desire and determination to live useful and upright lives spring from right training and proper conditions. As Edwin Arnold says in *The Light of Asia* :—

Pray not, the Darkness will not brighten ! ask
Nought from the Silence, for it cannot speak !
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains ;—
Ah, brothers, sisters ! seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruit and cakes ;
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought ;
Each man his prison makes.

Now, what objection can there be to the Agnostic position in reference to the supposed soul and the alleged future life? That position is based upon the fact that we know nothing beyond our present existence.

The Agnostic does not deny a future life, but, in the words of Colonel Ingersoll, says :—

The tongueless secret locked in fate
We do not know ; we hope and wait.

Whatever our opinions are will in no way affect the reality of the truth or otherwise of a future life. If we are to sleep forever, we shall so sleep despite the belief in immortality ; and if we are to live for ever, we shall so live despite the belief that possibly death ends all. It must also be remembered that, if man possesses a soul, that soul will be the better through being in a body that has been properly trained ; and if there is to be a future life, that life will be the better if the higher duties of the present one have been fully and honestly performed. The Agnostic is, therefore, safe so far, inasmuch as he recognises it to be his first duty to cultivate a healthy body, and to endeavor to make the best, in its highest sense, of the present existence. In reference to the supposition that we may be punished in case we are wrong : if there be a just God, before whom we are to appear to be judged, surely he will never punish those to whom he has not vouchsafed the faculty of seeing beyond the grave because they honestly avowed that their mental vision was limited to this side of the tomb. Thus we may feel quite safe as regards any futurity that may be worth having. If the present be the only life, then it will be all the more valuable if we give it our undivided attention. If, on the other hand, there is to be another life, then, in that case, we shall have won the right to its advantages through having been faithful to our convictions and just to our fellows. As to the feeling of consolation which is said to be derived from the belief in a future life, the Agnostic is safe upon this point also. For if there be a life beyond the grave, we have the conviction that good conduct on earth will entitle us to the realisation of its fullest pleasure. Moreover, this conviction is not marred by the belief that the majority of the human race will be condemned to a fate "which humanity cannot conceive without terror, nor contemplate without dismay." Therefore, despite the hopes, the expectations, and the speculations concerning immortality, it appears to me that when "life's fitful fever" is over we may conclude that "The rest is silence."

CHARLES WATTS.

Free Will and Necessity.—IV.

WE may be unable to extricate ourselves fully and satisfactorily from all the puzzles that the human mind manufactures to its own bewilderment. Granting that natural antinomies or contradictions are impossible, we may, nevertheless, confuse ourselves with artificial or apparent antinomies which we are not keen-witted enough to explain away* to everybody's satisfaction, or even to our own. If it be true that all events are inevitable—that is, *unavoidable*—it is also true that events (or threatened events) are often *avoidable*, or are *not*

* Bain mentions two cases advanced by a Greek philosopher. (1) It is argued that motion is impossible, because a thing cannot move in the place where it is, and it cannot move in the place where it isn't. (2) In the problem of Achilles and the tortoise it is apparently demonstrated that Achilles will never catch the tortoise, because, when he arrives where the tortoise was, the tortoise is still ahead in a fresh position, and when Achilles reaches this new spot the tortoise is still in advance, and so on continually, the separating distance diminishing each time, but never vanishing entirely. In both these cases most people would find themselves unable to detect and explain the fallacy in the argument, though they at once reject the conclusion as contrary to experience and common sense. In the case of the alleged impossibility of motion, there is no need to suppose that a moving object ever has to be in two places at the same moment. There are an *infinite* number of points of time coinciding (so to speak) with an infinite number of points or positions in space. The puzzle is the puzzle of the infinite, in the shape of the infinitely small or infinitesimal. In the second case, a little arithmetic or algebra proves that Achilles catches the tortoise at a definite distance. If, for example, Achilles moves twice as fast as the tortoise, he will catch it when he has walked twice the distance that the tortoise was ahead of him at the start. The puzzling interminable way of attempting to obtain the answer would be to say that Achilles does not catch the tortoise till he has traversed the separating distance *plus* $\frac{1}{2}$ that distance $+ \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \frac{1}{16} + \frac{1}{32} +$ etc. *ad infinitum*. But the sum-total of this infinite series is only less than two by an amount which reduces itself infinitely, and so becomes less than the least possible quantity. The sum of the whole series, therefore, as a mathematical fact, is exactly two.

inevitable. All practical men must agree, for instance, that what are called "accidents" are largely "avoidable" by due care. To say that all sufferings and crimes are unavoidable would be absurdly untrue, and, as a guide to conduct, such statements or teachings would be cruelly and criminally misleading. How, then, can we reconcile the two contradictory, or apparently contradictory, truths that evils (or undesirable events) are at the same time avoidable and inevitable? We may legitimately suspect that the words cannot be used in strictly corresponding senses, or cannot cover quite the same ground. Let us then finish the two conflicting statements with their implications. We shall have (1) the Necessarian conclusion that, taking all things into consideration, including human motives, reasonings, powers of action, etc., all events are inevitable. Against this, or apparently against this, we have the Libertarian statement that certain undesirable contingencies are avoidable *if human effort* is directed to the prevention of those contingencies or *supposed* possibilities. The Libertarian statement simply implies that *independently of special human effort* certain results would be unavoidable, but that *with* human agency working to prevent or escape them such rocks ahead are avoidable. This does not conflict with the Necessarian view, and it includes all that we can rationally mean by liberty—namely, that human agency has its inevitable effect in shaping events or consequences.

Again, then, as before, we find that Necessity is not inconsistent with Liberty, and that it includes and establishes Liberty in the rational sense of that word. The doctrine of Necessity only excludes the irrational fiction of a lawless, chaotic, self-contradictory, and impossible kind of liberty, which would be as useless and senseless as arithmetic without laws of number.

The Causationist—which term, as I have said before, I prefer to that of Necessitarian—may avoid the extremes adopted by fatalists and predestinarians on the one hand, and those of the believers in uncaused volition on the other. He may safely take his stand on the ground of scientific truth, and he may then feel sure that any apparent inconsistencies in his position are not due to the scientific doctrine of causation, or uniform natural order in the origination or connection of events, but to defects or errors in our ways of presenting or coloring facts or prospects. He may reflect that it is not easy to escape entirely from such influences, since the errors or illusions are imbedded in the language and ideas evolved by the race on animistic, rather than scientific, lines. The feeling, moreover, of liberty is probably innate by evolution, having been favored by Natural Selection.

The orthodox believer in uncaused volition has to face far more serious difficulties or inconsistencies than any that may seem to beset the Secularist who believes in a uniform natural order of events connected by what he terms the law or principle of causation. The orthodox Christian has to believe in the biblical doctrine of predestination as well as in free will. His God knows and decides beforehand everything that happens, from the destruction of half the human race by plague or famine down to the fall of a sparrow from the house-top. All our actions are foreknown to him, and predestined by his will in accordance with his fore-ordained plans. And, at the same time, the men who are the pawns in this pre-arranged game are alleged to be free agents, making all their moves of their own free will, though, at the same time, all these moves are absolutely inevitable, having been pre-ordained by almighty and omniscient power before the foundations of the world. And the kind of freedom alleged—namely, exemption of the will from natural laws of causation—would logically abolish moral responsibility and the possibility of influencing and foreseeing human actions, since volitions would be uncontrolled and uncontrollable.

To those who are still dissatisfied with the scientific doctrine of Causation or Necessity, I would say: You have (you *necessarily* have) liberty to will in accordance with your wishes or preferences. What more liberty of volition *can* you have? What further freedom of the will do you desire? A kind of freedom which would be a contradiction in terms? Liberty to will as you do *not* wish? Liberty to choose the alternative that you do *not* prefer? Liberty to decide contrary to all your motives, feelings, and reasonings? You have real liberty—all

the liberty possible in such cases—and Necessity, or the Law of Causation, or the Uniform Order of Nature (present the matter in which aspect you will), is the foundation and guarantee of this liberty, and is not in the least opposed to it, as people foolishly imagine. You *cannot* will as you do not wish, for the simple reason that willing is only a form of wishing. The will is the strongest wish, the victorious wish, the wish at the moment that it is deciding action. In impulsive, explosive, or otherwise simple types of volition, the wish at once causes action without consideration. But the wish that decides action is often of a complicated character—the persistent wish to act wisely and rightly, or with due caution and consideration, being a prominent portion of the complex wish which finally proves the strongest. Some people, of course, imagine that they *can* act contrary to their wishes, but in such cases they either *wish* to avoid the greater of two evils, or they are moved by a *fantastic wish* to override all other wishes, as when a Libertarian strongly wishes to display or "prove" his "liberty," or a religious person strongly desires to crush all his *ordinary* desires as sinful.

As to the other objectionable or unpleasing aspect or corollary of the doctrine of Causation—namely, the inevitability of events—similar remarks will apply. Would you destroy the inevitability of the modifying effect of human action on the course of events? Is not this certainty, or inevitability of the due effect of each cause, the grand source of reliance and of hope? Is it not the indispensable basis on which all our reasonings and plannings are built? What is there wrong in the matter, except certain childish ideas which need correction?

What is it that you really want? The power to change your preferences? The power to delight in music if you are deaf?—to love virtues which do not please you?—to like pain and dislike pleasure?—to be constitutionally bold if you are constitutionally timid?—to alter yourself and your wishes whenever you wish to be different? All this is not the question of volition or willing, which is but the choosing or preferring from among the apparent possibilities of action or inaction before you. It is the power of working miracles. This is what you really desire, but will never obtain. All that you can do is so to train and environ yourself as to modify your tastes and habits and wishes, as far as is possible, in the desired direction. And this you can only do so long as your wish to do so is sufficiently strong to overcome opposing wishes, which is the same thing as saying that you *will* it. And in this case, as in all others, willing is but choosing, or decisively preferring the most strongly-desired of the possibilities of action or inaction imagined by the mind.

W. P. BALL.

The Resurrection Bone.

THROUGHOUT the Middle Ages it was believed that there exists in man a bone imponderable, incorruptible, incombustible, the necessary nucleus of the resurrection body. Belief in a resurrection of the physical body, despite St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, had been incorporated into the formula made many centuries after his time, and called the Apostles' Creed, and was held throughout Christendom, "always, everywhere, and by all." This hypothetical bone was therefore held in great veneration, and many anatomists sought to discover it; but Vesalius, revealing so much else, did not find it, and was therefore suspected of a want of proper faith. He contented himself with saying that he left the question regarding the existence of such a bone to the theologians. He could not lie, he did not wish to fight the Inquisition, and thus he fell under suspicion. The strength of this theological point may be judged from the fact that no less eminent a surgeon than Riolan consulted the executioner to find out whether, when he burned a criminal, all the parts were consumed; and only then was the answer received which fatally undermined this superstition. Still, in 1689 we find it still lingering in France, creating an energetic opposition in the church to dissection. Even as late as the eighteenth century, Bernouilli having shown that the living human body constantly undergoes a series of changes, so that all its particles are renewed in a given number of years, so much ill-feeling was drawn upon him, especially from the theologians, who saw in this statement danger to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that for the sake of peace he struck out his argument on this subject from his works.

—*Popular Science Monthly.*

The Church's One Foundation.

"HYMNS ANCIENT AND MODERN": No. 215.

(Atheized Version.)

THE Church's one foundation
Is Christ, Almighty "Gawd,"
A "Gawd" of man's creation,
A most infernal fraud.
His Mother was His Daughter,*
His Daughter was His Bride;
The story won't hold water,
It leaks on every side.
Rejected by the nation
To which He owed His birth,
He gets the approbation
Of Gentile "jays" on earth.
The masses, mostly asses,
Whose minds are kept in "quod,"
Extol the "Stem-of-Jesse's"
Hell-fire conducting "Rod."
We see—but not with wonder—
The parsons sore distress;
Their Church is rent asunder,
They'll lose their "feathered" nest.
Our eyes their watch are keeping
On all Her priestly throng,
The fruits of lies they're reaping,
They'll soon be right "off song."
We boil with indignation
To read her crimes galore;
Her gospel of damnation
Has dyed the earth with gore.
But with a vision glorious
Our longing eyes are blest—
Freethought at length victorious,
Mankind no more opprest.
Men daily join our "union,"
They scorn the "Three-in-one,"
His Church has lost communion
With many a Christian son.
Her walls are crumbling slowly,
Encroaching Reason's sea
Will undermine them wholly—
Amen, so let it be!

ESS JAY BEE.

The New Era.

OUR DATE IS AND SHOULD BE, "E. M. 301."

It counts from the 1st of January, Christian Era 1601. This era is called the Era of Science and of Man (E. M.) to distinguish it from the Theological Epoch that preceded it. In that epoch the earth was supposed to be flat; the sun was its attendant light revolving about it. Above was heaven, where God ruled supreme over all potentates and powers; on earth ruled the Pope as the vicegerent of God; below was Hell, the kingdom of the Devil. So taught the Bible.

But in 1600 came the new astronomy, the astronomy of Copernicus, Bruno, and Galileo. It demonstrated that the earth is a globe revolving about the sun; that the stars are worlds and sun; that there is no "up" and "down" in space. Bruno sealed his devotion to the new truth with his life on the 17th February, 1600. During the seventeenth century Grotius wrote the *Rights of War and Peace*, the first work on international law.

Bacon gave the new philosophy; Shakespeare the new drama and theatre. Queen Elizabeth and her people started the settlement of America, opened up Asia, defeated the Armada, and founded the supremacy of the English language, and of those who speak it. Thus began the new "Heaven" and the new earth in which we live, and from which we should date.

The Christian era commits us to the horrible nightmare of theology. It was proposed by the Sythian monk, Dionysius Exiguus, about 525, and was adopted by the Papacy to extend and unify its power about 781. It has no historical truth or basis whatever. No Christ ever came to the earth from heaven. There never was any heaven or hell to come from or to go to. That old date, soon to be 2000, is cumbersome and unwieldy. The new date, E. M. 301, readily preserves the continuity of history. It was recommended by the Liberals of the United States at their Congress at St. Louis in 1887, and should be adopted by Liberals, and so brought into general knowledge and use. (See Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*, pp. 532 and 852, for an account of its adoption.)

—Torch of Reason.

* God is the "Father" of all: therefore Mary was His Daughter!
—Q.E.D.

Acid Drops.

THE December number of the *Review of Reviews* devotes a number of pages to the new Bishop of Worcester, better known as Canon Gore. The quotations from his sermons and addresses do not give one a high idea of his genius. Unfortunately, the photograph portrait gives the gentleman away altogether. It makes him look like the proverbial inspired idiot. There is the long, sad religious face; the solemn, reproachful eye of the professional exhorter, who takes himself very, very seriously; and the small, narrow head, sloping upwards from the forehead to where the bump of self-esteem is supposed to lie. Of course the photograph portrait may do the new Bishop an injustice. We hope it does. But that is less our concern than the concern of himself and his admirers.

Bishop Gore's principles are summarised thus by Mr. Stead: "First, that God is no respecter of persons. Secondly, that all men should, as far as possible, have an equal opportunity of making the best of themselves. Thirdly, that wealth is a trust rather than a right. Fourthly, that every man is his brother's keeper." Now the first of these principles is a rotten falsehood. If there be a God, he certainly is a respecter of persons. There are men in this world, quite as good as Bishop Gore, who are doomed to live in misery and squalor. The second and third of these principles are idle, deceptive platitudes. And the fourth is sheer nonsense. If every man is his brother's keeper, every man has somebody else looking after him instead of looking after himself. That men should be kind and helpful to each other is true enough, and paid preachers are not necessary to make men believe it. But that is a very different thing from constituting every man his brother's keeper.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" was asked by Cain in the old story when Jehovah inquired after the health of his murdered brother Abel. Cain naturally evaded the question, and in answering it with another question he naturally rushed to the opposite extreme. It was not required of him in reason or morality that he should be his brother's keeper. What was required of him was that he should not knock out his brother's brains. In other words, that he should mind his own business, and let his brother do the same.

"Keeper" is an awkward word nowadays. It smacks of the lunatic asylum. Make every man his brother's keeper, and you get the world filled with a sublime assortment of fools and rogues. That is to say, the rogues will be looking after the fools—a thing they have been doing for ages, by the way, and with great vigor and success in the Christian Church.

Bishop Gore was appointed to a vacant canony at Westminster by Lord Rosebery, and we are told that he "accepted the new post with sincere reluctance." We daresay he felt the same "reluctance" in accepting the new appointment to the bishopric of Worcester. It is a way these ascetic and democratic High Churchmen have. They dread the call to "go up higher"—but they go. The new Bishop of London protested his reluctance for weeks and weeks. He has settled down comfortably now, though, and his plaintive wails have died away in contented silence.

President Roosevelt's message to Congress was the longest on record, but it did not afford him room (the *New York Truthseeker* says) to retract his assertion that Thomas Paine was a filthy little Atheist.

According to the *Chicago Journal*, one negro recently killed another with an axe at a religious meeting in Mississippi. The murderer was in the revival line, and had worked the excitement up to a high pitch. But he couldn't get a crowd at the mourners' bench. He therefore implored one negro to go up and get saved—just for a start; and when the colored sinner refused to accept this invitation the evangelist laid the axe at the root of the tree—we beg pardon, about the unsaved nigger's head.

"Who is Jesus?" is the heading of some correspondence that has been going on in the *Haltwhistle Echo*. "Rational Searchlight" has been championing the Freethought side, and some one facetiously signing himself "Free Thinker" the Christian side. This latter writer is a curiosity. He called Voltaire an Atheist, and was corrected. Then he admitted that Voltaire was *not* an Atheist, but he still *was* an Atheist, because he was *worse*. Really this writer is graduating for an asylum. In his final letter he calls his courteous opponent a "gross materialist." How he would squirm if the recipient of this courtesy called him a "rancid believer."

Miss Emily Hampton has been given six weeks by the Epping magistrates to shift her pig, which the inspector

found lying in a beautiful clean bed, with its head resting somnolently on a snow-white pillow. The grunter was known for miles around, and ladies and gentlemen came in their carriages to look at it. Miss Hampton had reared it from babyhood, and trained it to "act like a Christian." This seems to have tickled the fancy of the newspaper reporters. But why should they be so surprised at a pig acting like a Christian when so many Christians act like pigs?

The retiring Bishop of Worcester, Dr. Perowne, in his last Charge, has something to say about the Bible. "The Bible," he says, "has been assailed both from the side of science and from the side of historical criticism, and unfortunately the defenders of the Bible, instead of admitting the facts, instead of acknowledging the existence of errors, have attempted, by means of strained and unnatural explanations, to vindicate the accuracy of the record." The Bishop goes on to notice, and condemn, the efforts of the late Mr. Gladstone in this direction. Mr. Gladstone tried to show that the order of creation in Genesis was confirmed by science, but this "contention was completely demolished by Professor Huxley." "Moreover," the Bishop adds, "I have been assured by three scientific men of the highest eminence that it is quite impossible to reconcile the Biblical account of Creation with our present knowledge of geology and astronomy. It is often said that such scientific objectors are influenced by a sceptical bias; but this cannot be said of any of the distinguished men to whom I have referred—Sir George Stokes, Professor Bonney, and the late Professor Pritchard."

"The story of Creation," Bishop Perowne says, "the story of the Fall, the story of the Dispersion at Babel, the story of the Flood, have all their counterparts in the Babylonian legends"—from which, we beg to add, they were derived. But the difference, the Bishop says, is fundamental. Why? Because the Babylonian legends are mixed up with polytheism, and the Jewish legends are not. But is this really true? The Jehovistic part (or edition) of these stories may be monotheistic, but the Elohist part (or edition) is certainly not so. In any case, the "fundamental" difference is an accidental one; it does not affect the stories themselves, or even the essence of any moral they may contain as allegories.

A late comer (the *Methodist Times* says) clamored for admission at a religious meeting in Glasgow. He was advised to go to the overflow meeting which two well-known ministers were conducting, and "he would be sure to get a blessing." "I dinna want a blessing," he said; "I want to hear John McNeill."

Rev. Thomas Champness, addressing a recent meeting of the London Wesleyan Mission Band Union, said that "often the pledge is the first step to the Cross." Jesus Christ never took it. But he got there. Which is more than Mr. Champness is likely to do.

Pious flunkeys have got up, and other pious flunkeys are expected to buy, a special new edition of the Prayer Book, in commemoration of the return of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The Prince of Wales' feathers and two crowns figure on the cover, and all the references to the Prince and Princess in the prayers are printed in red ink. What a funny comment on the text about God being no respecter of persons!

The *Outlook* comments on the Prince of Wales's subscription of £10 to the Christmas Dinner for Sandwichmen organised by the editor of *Reynolds's Newspaper*. It remarks that "the Republican sentiment" of thirty years ago is dead. It supposes that *Reynolds'* still cherishes Republicanism as "a kind of battle-cry for high days and holidays." But that is all. It is all over with "the blatant 'Down-with-the-Throne' doctrines that used to be preached by Mr. Bradlaugh and his associates at the 'Hall of Science' in Old-street, and under the railway arches of Somers Town." "Blatant" is an adjective of opinion. Therefore we shall not discuss it. But it is not true, as a matter of fact, that Mr. Bradlaugh used to preach "Down with the Throne." He was a Republican, but he knew the English people were only fit for a monarchy, and he often said that if he could bring a Republic by lifting up his finger he would not do it.

There is an odd reference to the late Charles Bradlaugh in the just-published Biography (Longmans) of the late Sir W. W. Hunter. "On Wednesday next," he says in a letter, "John Morley has asked me to go into the camp of the enemy and dine with him and meet Mr. Bradlaugh, to whom I am requested to talk some sense about India, as otherwise Mr. Bradlaugh will talk much nonsense on that thorny subject in Parliament next session. I do not know whether I can do any good, but I feel bound to try." We can hardly believe that Mr. Morley ever spoke or wrote in such a patronising, and indeed insolent, way of Charles Bradlaugh, who was certainly not likely to talk "nonsense" on India or on any other subject.

Dr. Macnamara's article in the *New Liberal Review* on "Children's Witticisms" will not be of much use to the real students of child-life. Most of them bear the stamp of adult manufacture, and some of them are hoary "chestnuts." Who believes that a schoolboy gave the following definition of Monogamy?—"The marriage customs of the ancient Greeks were that a man married only one wife, and this was called Monotony." The definition of Faith as "that quality which enables us to believe what we know to be untrue" was attributed many years ago to an apocryphal divinity student at Oxford. It has been used on the Freethought platform for nearly a generation. As for the story of the boy who said that the reason the angels, who had wings, went up and down Jacob's Ladder, was *because they was a-moulting*—its origin is lost in the mists of antiquity. It was one of the favorite jokes of the late Mrs. Harriet Law thirty years ago. It will be found incorporated, at least as far as its point is concerned, in the chapter on Jacob in Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*.

Jokes that have had their day amongst Freethinkers turn up as novelties amongst Christians. That is because the Christians tramp steadily *behind* the Freethinkers—and pick up their leavings.

The poor representation that women get in the Bible makes the study of the scriptures much less exhilarating to that sex than it is to men, who get a better show in its pages. This discrimination against the sisters has not made them any less firmly convinced of its inspiration and infallibility, and has not prevented the establishment of a "Bible Class for the Elite" in Chicago, with fifty women members, dead set on studying the word of God to a finish. The enthusiasm they bring to the purpose before them is made manifest by the fact, telegraphed to the New York papers, that at the first meeting there were in evidence "such smart turn-outs, such stylish hats and rare feathers, such tailor-made suits and elegant gowns as have not been seen at a Bible class before for years." And it is a warrantable conclusion that a look beneath the surface of these things would have shown that superior articles in the way of union-garments, vests, umbrellas, and miscellaneous lingerie have never been seen at any Bible class whatever. No more promising movement for a clearer interpretation of the language of inspiration has ever blown down the Lake Shore drive. Not a member wore stockings costing less than one forty-eight pair, and as the class is organised under the superintendence of the Moody Bible Institute, where no teacher's job is let out to anybody that doubts a detail of the Jonah episode, the Higher Critics will have to go further West. If the poky old professors won't swear to the scientific verity of every statement in the book, these ladies are able to buy professors who will. The account which gives such an encouraging report about the clothes worn at the first meeting of the alect breaks off before it says anything about the Bibles brought by the students and the progress made towards mastering their contents. That is an item to be accounted for. Perhaps the ladies forgot to bring any; or perhaps—which is a most consolatory thought—the husbands at home desired to look the work through, and find out whether it was the kind of book they wanted their wives to read. A man can't be too careful what sort of reading matter he puts in the hands of the woman who has his honor in her keeping, and who is entrusted with the tender minds of children of both sexes.—*George Macdonald, in New York "Truthseeker."*

Mr. W. T. Stead reiterates his belief, first expressed five years ago, that prayer is "a ringing-up of the central celestial telephone, by which the person who prays is switched on by some invisible agency to those who have means whereby his need can be met." All we have to say is that the invisible agency at the central celestial telephone must be often asleep. Perhaps that is the reason why Mr. Stead steps in with a long and vigorous appeal on behalf of Dr. Barnardo's Homes. We daresay, too, that this is a very meritorious institute. But is not the necessity for it a bitter satire on the Moral Governor of the Universe?

Sir William Molesworth, whose life has just been written by Mrs. Fawcett, was a well-known Radical of last century, and his wealth was freely spent in promoting the cause of reason and freedom. He paid £4,000, for instance, to bring the *London Review* under the control of John Stuart Mill. He also devoted a good deal of money to producing a fine edition of the complete works of Hobbes. This fact was used against him when he stood for Southwark. Besides being opposed by a Tory, he had a rival candidate in Edward Miall, the famous Dissenter. This gentleman worked the "infidel" dodge against his rival for all it was worth. The cry of "No 'Obbes" was raised at the hustings, and it was caught up by Molesworth, who, addressing the interrupter, administered the following castigation to Miall:—"You," he said, "have denounced me as editor of the works of Hobbes of Malmesbury. Electors, I am proud of that fact. I will rest upon it as a claim to your support, in opposition to the claim of Mr. Miall. He is the editor of the *Nonconformist*. I am the editor of Hobbes. The works of Hobbes will last

more centuries than the *Nonconformist* will last days. They will be read, age after age, by the studious among the millions of our race who will people the two Americas and the islands of the Southern Ocean, and who will wonder at that ignorant and bigoted herd who dared to assail so great a master of thought and language. As one of that herd, it is your only chance, Mr. Miall, of escaping oblivion." Molesworth polled two thousand votes and won the seat. Miall polled a sixth of the number. Which was good—very good.

Lives were lost in the Queen's Hotel fire at Southsea. But two female servants will not (we suppose) outweigh the jewels of the lady guests. Mrs. Teignmouth Shore alone lost jewels to the value of several thousand pounds. This lady is the wife of Canon Teignmouth Shore, one of the "blessed be ye poor" gentlemen. Perhaps he will explain—if not to the world, yet to Jesus Christ—how the wife of a Christian preacher came to possess all that expensive finery.

Poor China! First the Christian allies plague her terribly, and, when they clear out, "Providence" takes a turn at her. The *New York Christian Herald* sent out a special commissioner to report on that party's doings. He calculates the deaths from famine in Shensi at two and a-half millions, or thirty per cent. of the population. Riding for four days through villages to the north of the Weiho River, he saw hardly two hundred people. The whole region is abandoned and desolate, and he predicts a repetition of the famine in the coming spring.

Will the editor of *Reynolds'* pardon us for suggesting that he should drop "God"? Last week, for instance, after dilating on British misgovernment in India, and pointing out that troubles were coming upon Great Britain in consequence, our contemporary exclaimed, "And God laughs!" Does he now? Well, he ought to know better. Here is the editor of *Reynolds'* in a righteous rage, and God laughing all the time. It is really too bad.

At a dinner in honor of Ambassador Choate, at the Lotus Club, Mark Twain told this story at the guest's expense:—"A firm of lawyers—we'll say Mr. Choate was one of the members of the firm, the other partner being a Hebrew, Mr. Choate's correspondent—were talking one day over the amount they would charge a client for their services—services is what they call it. (Laughter.) The Hebrew drew up a bill for 500 dollars, and Mr. Choate said: 'You'd better let me attend to that.' And the next day Mr. Choate handed him a cheque for 5,000 dollars, saying: 'That's your share of the loot.' Then this humble Hebrew gentleman in admiration said: 'Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.' (Laughter.) And the world said: 'This is a rising man.'"

"The whole power of the Fatherland rests upon this steadfast trust in God." So says Emperor William. We should like to see the smile on the face of Frederick the Great listening to this nonsense.

Mr. Wells applied at the last election for the post of accountant to the Borough of Croydon. He did not get it. Since then he has brought an action for slander against Mr. Ward for saying he was an undischarged bankrupt. The case came on before Mr. Justice Darling, and appears to have afforded a great deal of amusement. The plaintiff was his own lawyer, and proved the truth of the old proverb that every man in that position has a fool for his client. It seems that he gave £250 to a Methodist chapel at Croydon (through his wife) instead of paying the money to his creditors. He accused Mr. Ward of referring to him, in the *Croydon Advertiser*, as "his Satanic Majesty." Mr. Ward denied this. "If they did," said Mr. Justice Darling, "we shall have him bringing an action." Whereat there was loud laughter. And so it went on to the end, when judgment was given for the defendant with costs.

There was a special service at St. Paul's Cathedral on Monday afternoon in memory of those who have fallen in South Africa during the present year. Of course it only applied to those who fell on the British side. The Boers must jog the memory of the Almighty on their own account, and ask him to do his best in the spirit-world for their men who died on the battlefield and their women and children who perished in the concentration camps. 'Tis the same God all round, we know; and that's where the biting part of the comedy comes in.

"Brief life is here our portion" was first intoned by the clergy and choir in procession at St. Paul's. That was sad. Soon afterwards they sang, "Blest are the departed." That sounds glad. Altogether, it was a pretty see-saw. One item on the program was a Litany "for all who have fallen in the true faith of Thy Holy Name that they with us may enter into the rest Thou hast prepared for those who believe in

Thee." This doesn't include the dead soldiers who happened to be Freethinkers, nor those who happened to be Jews—and it is said that no less than two thousand Jews have been serving in the British army in South Africa. Freethinkers, Jews, and all other non-Christians must shuffle into heaven as they can. Anyhow, they get no assistance from the Memorial Service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The service in the Baptist Church, Spalding, had to be closed abruptly on Sunday evening, in consequence of the minister, the Rev. J. C. Jones, falling down in a seizure in the pulpit. We mention such occurrences, not because there is any moral in them, but because there would be if they took place in Secular halls. Mr. Jones himself, of course, has our sympathy.

On Monday morning, at a Papal Consistory, the Pope delivered an impassioned address against divorce. Dear old gentleman! What does he know about divorce? What does he know about marriage, to begin with?

"Apropos of your article in the *Secular Almanack* entitled 'Afraid of Heaven,'" writes a medical friend, "I had an old gentleman addicted to street preaching under my care a few weeks ago, suffering from strangulated hernia. At first he declined to be operated on. And mark his reason! 'If I take chloroform,' he naively confessed, 'I am afraid I shall awaken in glory.' When it was explained to him that the operation might give him a chance of *not* going to 'glory,' whereas the neglect of it would gain him a speedy entry there, he submitted; and I am pleased to say that he is now out of danger of going to that heavenly home of which he prates so much, but seems to dread entering."

Helping Words has an article on "Some Curious Hymns." It thinks the following verse of an old hymn, which was in actual use in some parts of Berkshire ten years ago, could not now be sung seriously:—

Be Thou, O Lord, the Rider,
And we the little ass,
That to God's holy city
Together we may pass.

The time will come when many much-applauded hymns will sound just as silly as that one.

Mr. Joseph Symes is as lively as ever in the *Melbourne Liberator*. In the last number before us he quotes the following verse of an old hymn:—

Jesus the name high over all,
In hell or earth or sky;
Angels and men before it fall,
And devils fear and fly.

The following fresh version is suggested as truer:—

Jesus the weakest name of all,
In hell or earth or sky;
Angels nor men before it fall,
And devils wink their eye.

Poor Spain.

NAY CARDIL contributes to the *Revue de Belgique* a melancholy article on "Intellectual Spain." No person of eminence in Spain but recognises the two chief factors in Spain's misery to be too much of the priest and too much of the soldier. Not even a novel can appear without some priestly personage figuring in it. In everything Spain sees a religious problem. Even a modern writer of distinction will hotly defend the "Holy Inquisition."

The sight of the wretched poverty of the Spanish peasants is heartrending. Many even live in caves, like animals. What they earn is *dérisoire*. Naturally it is not surprising that every year 20,000 Spaniards depart for South America. The pastoral population is even more desperately poor than the peasants. A shepherd will live on a piece of bitter barley bread a day. In many provinces they eat no meat, only cabbages and chestnuts.

Schoolmasters, it is complained, die of hunger in the streets, while any toreador with the least celebrity grows rich. Most teachers only earn £20 a year, so that it is not surprising they should starve; yet, with all this poverty, in no nation are the public moneys more carelessly and wastefully administered. "Our proverbial cruelty," this Spaniard continues, "which is displayed like a black blotch on the pages of our native history, is probably due to these two elements, fanaticism and ignorance—a union which begets barbarism."

Yet, in the midst of this decrepit Spain, another Spain is moving—the Spain which riots in the streets, fulminates at the theatre, and applauds plays against clericalism. In this new and struggling Spain lies the only hope for the Spanish people.

—*Review of Reviews.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 22, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W.; 7.30, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

December 29, Athenæum Hall.

To Correspondents.

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 22, North Camberwell Hall. —Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 29, Stepney, January 12, Sheffield; 19, Birmingham; 26, Glasgow. February 2, Athenæum Hall, London; 9, Liverpool; 16, Bradford.—Address, 24t High-road, Leyton.

II. MARKHAM.—Mr. John Morley is a Freethinker. He has written books on Voltaire and Diderot. See our pamphlet entitled *John Morley as a Freethinker* (price twopence). It contains extracts from his works.

"UNIT" writes: "As one who takes an interest in the *Freethinker* allow me to express my satisfaction at the renewal of 'Book Chat,' a feature which should not have been allowed to lapse, in my opinion. The Shakespeare-Bacon column this week is excellent."

INQUIRER (Swansea).—The first quotation you seek you will find in Ecclesiastes iii. 19-21. You do not quote enough of the second passage for identification.

W. H. DEAKIN.—Thanks. We had not seen the leaflet before, though we had seen similar pious protests to those it contains. We have (as you will see) devoted an article to the subject generally.

GEORGE LEWIS.—Lecture notices for the *Freethinker* should be sent direct to the editor, and should reach him by the first post on Tuesday morning at the latest.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. NAEWIGER.—See "Sugar Plums." The discussion is bound to do good. We hope you will be able to overcome your difficulties at Hull. It is annoying to find that audiences can be obtained, but halls cannot.

INQUIRER.—We would have inserted a letter written by yourself, but three-fourths of your communication consists of extracts from Carlyle and the Bible. With regard to the conditions of life in this world, you must allow that they are so far from being perfect that your argument is futile. If ill conditions are the necessary training-ground of character, what is the use of political and social reform? Do you mean, "the worse the conditions the better the man"? Or what?

S. HOLMAN.—Pleased to receive your letter, and glad to hear that the Porth Town Hall is now available again for Freethought meetings. Mr. Foote will be very happy to pay South Wales another visit as soon as possible.

T. PERKINS.—See "Sugar Plums." We wish the Aberdare effort all success.

J. HERRINGTON.—It will take a long time, much longer than you think, to get rid of the Church of England. Why should Old Age Pensions wait all that while? But we have enjoyed reading your letter all the same. The spirit of it does you great honor.

F. GOODWIN.—Thanks. Always glad to receive cuttings and "bits" on which we can hang a readable paragraph.

M. D. (Liverpool).—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. Mr. Foote goes out of doors now and is steadily improving. You will have an opportunity of seeing and hearing him next month.

STUDENT.—We do not know of any special book to recommend you on rudimentary organs in the human system. There is a good account of them, as far as we can recollect, in the late Dr. Aveling's *People's Darwin*. Darwin's account, in the *Descent of Man*, is, of course, only summary. We quite agree with you that Freethought lecturers should sprinkle their addresses all over with facts. Illustrations are the life of a lecture. Pleased to hear you appreciate our essay now running through the *Freethinker* on "Darwin and Religion."

J. JONES.—Sorry you got the wrapper last week without the contents. Miss Vance has sent you another copy of the *Freethinker*. We hope there will be no recurrence of the accident.

E. CHAPMAN.—We regret to hear of the death of Mrs. Lamb, widow of John Lamb, for many years newsagent for the South Shields Branch. We have already noted that Freethought literature can now be obtained at 109 Bath-street.

J. BURROWS.—We know nothing of the gentleman you mention, and therefore cannot advise you in the matter. Your other letters are distributed. You must understand, however, that the N. S. S. Executive's ordinary meetings are held monthly.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Open Court—Truthseeker (New York)—Freethought Magazine—Torch of Reason—Blue Grass Blade—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Lucifer—Public Opinion—Yorkshire Evening Post—Crescent.

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.

MR. FOOTE has so far recovered from his bad cold that he is able to go out of doors. All last week he was confined to the house, and was unable to keep his engagement at Liverpool on Sunday. He has promised to pay the Liverpool friends an early visit in the new year.

The Athenæum Hall platform will be occupied this evening (Dec. 22) by Mr. Foote. His subject will be "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." This is seasonable, and should interest Christians. Perhaps our London readers will let some of them know of it.

Mr. Cohen had a good audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. His lecture on "Christ, Christians, and Christmas" was much appreciated.

Mr. Watts delivered three lectures at Glasgow on Sunday. The weather was of the most miserable description, and of course the audiences suffered to some extent on that account. Mr. Watts was in good form himself, and his lectures were followed with much attention and appreciation. This evening (December 22) Mr. Watts lectures at Camberwell.

During the past week, from Monday, December 16, to Saturday, December 21, inclusive, the London *Sun* has been edited by Mr. G. J. Holyoake; just as, last year, it was edited for the same week by the Rev. Dr. Parker. An arrangement like this shows that Mr. Bottomley is a man of enterprise. His enterprise, however, is not without discretion. He is too judicious to let the *Sun* pass for more than six days per annum out of his own control.

On the Saturday evening before Mr. Holyoake began this journalistic experiment a complimentary dinner (organised from the *Sun* office) was given him at the National Liberal Club. Mr. Foote was invited to attend, but was unable to do so. He was confined to the house with a bad cold, and if he had been able to move about it would have been his duty to fulfil an engagement at Liverpool. He wrote a letter to that effect to the promoters of the dinner, and added some special words of congratulation in reference to Mr. Holyoake. Mr. Foote's name was included in the list of senders of letters in the *Daily News* report. It was omitted from the *Sun* report on one of the two pages "edited by G. J. Holyoake." We should be sorry to conclude that Mr. Holyoake, having been imprisoned for blasphemy himself, and being still apparently very proud of it, at least as far as the imprisonment is concerned, is afraid of being too openly connected with more up-to-date prisoners for the same "crime."

Mr. Bottomley stated, ostensibly on Mr. Holyoake's authority, that "When he asked Mr. Holyoake to act as editor, that gentleman pointed out that it was some sixty-five or seventy years since he had occupied the editorial chair of a daily newspaper. Further, the aged reformer urged that that effort landed him within His Majesty's prison within three months." Are things what they seem, or are visions about? Can it be that Mr. Holyoake has been imprisoned twice? Once was for "blasphemy." That is certain. And blasphemy, not in a paper, but at a public meeting. We should like to read the particulars of that second imprisonment; not out of idle curiosity, but in honor to the martyr.

The Freethought Publishing Company has taken advantage of Mr. Holyoake's six days' editorship of the *Sun* by speculating in a bold and expensive six days' advertisement of the *Freethinker*.

Porth Town Hall was engaged by the local "saints" for Sunday, December 15, without being sure whether they could obtain a lecturer. They had to apply to Mr. Foote for assistance in the matter at the finish. Mr. Foote instructed Miss Vance to ask Mr. W. Heaford to go. Mr. Heaford kindly went, had three good meetings, and a very cordial reception. Mr. Treharne-Jones took the chair at each meeting. We are glad to hear that the South Wales friends feel encouraged by the successful day's proceedings.

Aberdare friends should note that Mr. T. Eynon, of New Tredegar, lectures in the New Public Hall of their town this

evening (December 22) at 6 o'clock, on "Why I do not Believe in God." In the afternoon, at 2.30, a business meeting will be held, when the advisability of forming a Branch of the National Secular Society will be discussed. There is a strong wish in this direction, and from twenty-five to thirty Freethinkers can be relied upon for work in the district.

The Glasgow Branch had a Grand Children's Party last year. This year's will take place on Sunday evening, December 29. Christians will cry "Shocking!" but Freethinkers reply "The better the day the better the deed." The entertainment will be largely contributed to by the children themselves, and, thanks to the liberality of a number of friends, each youngster will receive a suitable present on leaving. The tickets for the function, which may be had from Mr. Baxter, 126 Trongate, or at the hall, are having a brisk sale. No doubt the hall will be crammed on the last Sunday evening in the year.

The Manchester Branch holds its annual social gathering on New Year's Day. There will be a good tea at 5.30, to be followed by a good entertainment and dancing at 8. No doubt there will be, as there should be, a large and happy party on this occasion.

Wonders will never cease. The writer of "Among the Churches" in the *Daily News* notices the *Secular Almanack* for 1902, which is said to contain "pungent articles against religion." Extracts are given from the articles of Mr. Foote and Miss Mary Lovell.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1902 is still prophetic (so to speak), for we are yet in the year 1901. Copies remain on sale at our publishing office. We hope they will not remain there long. Every Freethinker ought to have a copy of this publication. It is well worth the threepence it costs, and whatever profit is realised goes into the N. S. S. exchequer.

Mr. F. J. Gould replies to our query as to James Thomson ("B. V.") having resided for nine months at Kirby Muxloe. We had forgotten that this was the residence of the Barrs family, with whom Thomson spent a good deal of time during the last year or two of his life. Of course he was a guest there. It was the word "resided" in connection with James Thomson and Kirby Muxloe that threw us off the scent. We thank Mr. Gould for his communication.

We may as well take this opportunity to correct another mistake, which nobody has noticed. In a recent article we said that the Gregorian Calendar was not adopted in England until the early years of the reign of George III. We should have said the last years of the reign of George II. The date was 1752. We don't often make such slips, but when we do we like to own up, if only not to mislead others.

The *Hull Daily Mail* continues to print correspondence on "A Real Heaven and a Real Hell." One of the latest contributions is a long and excellent letter by "Ixion," who writes as an Atheist. Fair play is shown by the editor to all parties.

In Mr. Foote's enforced absence on Sunday the Liverpool friends did their best, and everything passed off as well as could be expected. Several friends who came from a distance—five from Chester—were of course disappointed, but they were full of sympathy for the "sick President." Mr. Small kindly volunteered to lecture in the morning on "The Origin of Life," and Mr. Hammond in the afternoon on "The Curse of Christianity." In the evening there was vocal and instrumental music, varied by an address from Mr. Hammond. The evening meeting passed a unanimous vote of sympathy with and confidence in Mr. Foote, and requested that he would visit Liverpool again as soon as possible.

We are happy to state that Mr. Francis Neale is somewhat better. He is able to get up from bed and sit by the fire. But it is likely to be some time before he is able to go out of doors, and he is still unable to do any work for the *Freethinker*.

Owing to the Christmas holidays the next number of the *Freethinker*, dated December 29, will be published on Monday, December 23. This will enable the trade to get the paper distributed before Christmas Day. Lecture notices for that number must reach us by Saturday morning, December 21. Trade orders should also be sent in by that date.

Up to Date.

Sunday-school Teacher—"What was the last thing that God created?" Little Girl—"The Joneses' baby."—*Woman's Journal*.

The English Burns.

But who is he with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

—WORDSWORTH.

ONE of the most pathetic figures in English literature is that of John Clare, the son of a Northamptonshire peasant. He was born at Helpstone, in that county, on July 13, 1793. His parents were amongst the poorest of the poor, and lived in a narrow, wretched hut by the roadside. John, from his birth, was delicate; but, owing to the poverty of his parents, he was compelled to work in the fields before his seventh year. At school, when his father could afford to send him there, he was very diligent and attentive. Occasionally he would receive a few pence from his teacher as a reward, and these he invariably spent in the purchase of books. Among his first possessions was Defoe's immortal *Robinson Crusoe*, which fired his imagination and whetted his appetite for further knowledge.

Clare loved poetry before he could read it. Nothing gave him greater delight than to hear his father—poor scholar as he was—recite poems out of the few books which found their way to the hovel. His love of poetry was born in him. The first complete book of verse he had ever seen was Thomson's *Seasons*, which ever had a fascination for him. By dint of hard saving he was able to purchase a copy, and on the way home threw himself on the grass in Burghley Park, and read it through. It was a revelation to the boy of thirteen. Thomson depicted a life with which Clare was familiar. The fields, the trees, the birds, the woods, were all parts of his very existence. Small wonder he was entranced by Thomson's verse. It led him to the composition of poetry himself; and his first piece, *The Morning Walk*, was written to commemorate this event.

Shortly after he quitted field-work, and became a gardener at "Burghley House, by Stamford Town," the seat of the Marquis of Exeter. He was soon back to his old home and the fields, working like a horse, and spending his evenings in writing poetry. He was too poor to buy paper, and had to use old envelopes, old notebooks, and often writing with charcoal. His father did not encourage his poetical fancies; bread was to him more necessary than literary fame. But John persevered. Many a time he would take up a book, pretend to read from it, and recite a poem of his own. "John, my boy," his father would say, "if thee could'st make such verses that would do"; at which the poet would feel elated.

At the age of nineteen he was seized with a desire for martial glory, and enlisted in the militia, but soon left. His military career, short and unsatisfactory as it was, gave him some slight pleasure. With his pay he bought a copy of *Paradise Lost* and a volume of Shakespeare. Next, he obtained a situation as a farm laborer, working fourteen hours a day for ten shillings a week. The year following he was employed at a lime-kiln, and discharged for writing poetry during working hours. No poet ever rose on the wings of Pegasus from such miry fields.

In 1820, his fame having spread, a publisher was found for his first volume, *Poems, Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*. This had a tremendous reception from the literary world. Edition followed edition, so great was the demand. The rustic poet was invited to London, and for a season was the lion of the town. Rossini set his verses to music, Mdme. Vestris recited them to crowded and enthusiastic audiences. He was even called "The English Burns." Sir Walter Scott presented him with a copy of his *Lady of the Lake*. Charles Lamb gave Clare a copy of his works with "Kindest remembrances." Byron spoke of him as "a deserving poet." Everything pointed to a successful career. But all this flattery did not benefit the poor laborer. He was in such terrible destitution that he was compelled to apply for parish relief. A subscription was started to help the poet. Among the subscribers were a prince, three dukes, and about a dozen earls. A total sufficient to produce £45 per year was obtained. Upon this annuity Clare embarked upon the troubled waters of matrimony. Clare's second book, *The Village Minstrel*, appeared in 1821. It was a

decided advance on his former work, but met with a cool reception.

Next year Clare again visited London, and made the acquaintance of many notable men, whose friendship he afterwards enjoyed for years. Among these were Hood, Allan Cunningham, Cary (the translator of Dante), James Montgomery, and Bloomfield. From London he returned in a discontented mood. The splendid mansions he had seen seemed to him to belong to another world. He tried farming, but failed. His third book, *The Shepherd's Calendar*, was still-born from the press. Knowing of his distress, Allan Cunningham offered him assistance, which Clare proudly refused. Clare preferred to tramp round the country-side, offering his poems for sale to a people uninterested in literature. A year or two of prosperity followed, in which he did some journalistic work. Then slowly and imperceptibly his intellect gave way. In 1835 his fourth and best work, *The Rural Muse*, was published. It contains his finest and most mature work, and brought him £40, which was of considerable moment to the poet in his pitiable condition, with a wife and children dependent upon him. Clare's literary life virtually closes with this book. His insanity continued to increase, and he was removed to an asylum. There is no doubt as to Clare's insanity; but, with bitter irony, the certificate which consigned him to a madhouse gave, as a reason for his incarceration, that Clare was—

Addicted to writing poetry for many years.

Twenty-two years later, on May 20, 1864, the peasant poet passed away, and his fame, such as it was, had been eclipsed by many a wave of fashion. Dark and weary and full of sorrow was his life, but out of his sadness and bitterness he has sung songs which make brighter the lives of others. Long ere the end he was indeed tired of life's fitful fever. But it was because his life was dark, bitter, and lonely, and he knew that life could be sweet, bright, and happy. The troubled brain was at length at rest. Nevermore will his tear-blinded eyes and breaking heart strain and throb after ideal visions of loveliness. He has forgotten them all in the solemn hush of death. Sad are the words that are most fitting to his memory, and sad is the heart of one who here lays a spray of cypress and of bay on the tomb of the dead poet.

MIMNERMUS.

Darwin and Religion.—VII.

LIKE other men who were nursed in the delusion of personal immortality, Darwin had his occasional fits of dissatisfaction with the inevitable—witness the following passage from his *Autobiography* :—

"With respect to immortality, nothing shows me so clearly how strong and almost instinctive a belief it is as the consideration of the view now held by most physicists—namely, that the sun with all the planets will in time grow too cold for life, unless, indeed, some great body dashes into the sun, and thus gives it fresh life. Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it will be an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully admit the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of our world will not appear so dreadful."*

Had Darwin been challenged on this passage, I think he would have admitted its ineptitude, for he was modest enough for anything. The thought that every man must die is no more intolerable than the thought that any man must die, nor is the thought that there will be a universe without the human race any more intolerable than the thought that there was a universe without the human race. On the other hand, Darwin did not allow for the fact that immortality is not synonymous with everlasting felicity. According to most theologies, indeed, the lot of the majority in the next life is not one of happiness, but one of misery; and, on any rational estimate, the annihilation of all is better than the bliss of the few and the torture of the many. Nor is it true that everyone would cheerfully accept the gift of immortality, even without the prospect of future suffering.

* *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 312.

Every Buddhist—that is, four hundred millions of the human race—looks forward to "Nirvana," the extinction of the individual life, which is thus released from the evil of existence. Even a Western philosopher, like John Stuart Mill, understood this yearning, as the following passage proves :—

"It appears to me not only possible, but probable, that in a higher, and, above all, a happier condition of human life, not annihilation, but immortality, may be the burdensome idea; and that human nature, though pleased with the present, and by no means impatient to quit it, would find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained to a conscious existence which it cannot be insured that it will always wish to preserve."*

Mr. Winwood Reade, on the other hand, indulged in the rapturous prophecy that man will some day grow perfect, migrate into space, master nature, and invent immortality.† It is all a matter of taste and temperament. Both wailings and rejoicings are outside the scope of philosophy, and belong to the province of light literature.

A PERSONAL GOD.

We have already seen that Darwin remained a Deist after rejecting Christianity. Not only in the letter on Dr. Pusey's sermon, but in his *Autobiography*, Darwin discloses the fact that his belief in a personal God melted away after the publication of his masterpiece. Speaking of "a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man," he says: "This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*; and it is since that time that it has very gradually, with many fluctuations, become weaker."‡ By the time he published the *Descent of Man*, in 1871, the change was conspicuous. He was then able to treat religion as a naturalist; that is, as one who stands outside it, and regards it with a feeling of scientific curiosity. Not only did he trace religion back to the lowest fetishism; he also analysed the sentiment of worship in a manner which must have been highly displeasing to the orthodox.

"The feeling of religious devotion is a highly complex one, consisting of love, complete submission to an exalted and mysterious superior, a strong sense of dependence, fear, reverence, gratitude, hope for the future, and perhaps other elements. No being could experience so complex an emotion until advanced in his intellectual and moral faculties to at least a moderately high level. Nevertheless, we see some distant approach to this state of mind in the deep love of a dog for his master, associated with complete submission, some fear, and perhaps other feelings. The behaviour of a dog when returning to his master after an absence, and, as I may add, of a monkey to his beloved keeper, is widely different from that towards their fellows. In the latter case the transports of joy appear to be somewhat less, and the sense of equality is shewn in every action. Professor Braubach goes so far as to maintain that a dog looks on his master as a god."§

This is not very flattering, for the dog's attachment to his master is quite independent of morality. Whether the dog belongs to Bill Sikes or John Howard, he displays the same devotion.

Darwin quoted with approval the statement of Sir John Lubbock that "it is not too much to say that the horrible dread of unknown evil hangs like a thick cloud over savage life, and embitters every pleasure."¶ He also referred to witchcraft, bloody sacrifices, and the ordeals of poison and fire, cautiously observing that "it is well occasionally to reflect on these superstitions, for they show us what an infinite debt of gratitude we owe to the improvement of our reason, to science, and to our accumulated knowledge"—in short, to the slow and painful civilisation of religion.

That the universal belief in God proves his existence Darwin was unable to admit. "There is ample evidence," he says, "derived not from hasty travellers, but from men who have long resided with savages, that numerous races have existed, and still exist, who have

* *Three Essays on Religion*, by J. S. Mill, p. 122.

† *Martyrdom of Man*, by Winwood Reade, pp. 514, 515.

‡ *Life and Letters*, vol. i., p. 313.

§ *Descent of Man*, pp. 95, 96.

¶ *Prehistoric Times*, by Sir John Lubbock, p. 571.

|| *Descent of Man*, p. 96.

no idea of one or more gods, and who have no words in their language to express such an idea."* On the other hand, as he remarks in the same work:

"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."†

Attention should here be called to a silent correction in the second edition of the *Descent of Man*. Referring to the question "whether there exists a Creator and Ruler of the universe," he said: "This has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that have ever existed." This was altered into "some of the highest intellects." Darwin had discovered the inaccuracy of his first statement, and learnt that some of the highest intellects have been Atheists.

Two important passages must be extracted from his *Autobiography*. After remarking that the grandest scenes had no longer the power to make him feel that God exists, he answers the objection that he is "like a man who has become color-blind," which is a favorite one with conceited religionists.

"This argument would be a valid one if all men of all races had the same inward conviction of the existence of one God; but we know that this is very far from being the case. Therefore I cannot see that such inward convictions and feelings are of any weight as evidence of what really exists. The state of mind which grand scenes formerly excited in me, and which was intimately connected with a belief in God, did not essentially differ from that which is often called the sense of sublimity; and however difficult it may be to explain the genesis of this sense, it can hardly be advanced as an argument for the existence of God, any more than the powerful, though vague, and similar feelings excited by music."‡

Further on in the same piece of writing he deals with a second and very common argument of Theism:—

"Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason, and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty, or, rather, utter impossibility, of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man, with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man. This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the *Origin of Species*; and it is since that time that it has very gradually, with many fluctuations, become weaker. But then arises the doubt, can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?"§

This handling of the matter may be somewhat consoling to Theists. One can hear them saying: "Ah, Darwin was not utterly lost." But let them see how he handles the matter in a letter to a Dutch student (April 2, 1873).

"I may say that the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe, with our conscious selves, arose through chance, seems to me the chief argument for the existence of God; but whether this is an argument of real value I have never been able to decide. I am aware that if we admit a first cause, the mind still craves to know whence it came, and how it arose. Nor can I overlook the difficulty from the immense amount of suffering through the world. I am also induced to defer to a certain extent to the judgment of the many able men who have fully believed in God; but here again I see how poor an argument this is. The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man's intellect; but man can do his duty."¶

"Man can do his duty"—a characteristic touch! The man who said this did *his* duty. His scientific achievements were precious, but they were matched by his lofty and benevolent character.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Defence of Blake.

"With the slanderous stain of madness
Staining his fame and life."

—Adapted from J. E. BARLAS: *Ode to Euterpe*.

THE charge of insanity, when made against *any* genius, whether in the Arts or Science, Industry or War, Statesmanship or Philosophy, is so easy to support, since all genius is abnormal, and so difficult to rebut, since the abnormal *may* be disease, that there need be no surprise had "Mimnermus" made out a colorable plea for his contention that Blake was mad. Indeed, the last decade has witnessed the growth of a school of specialists, beginning with Lombroso in Italy and reaching to Nisbet in England, which, starting with the modest theory that, as "Mimnermus" phrases it, "artistic ability [or inability?] is no disproof of insanity," has reached the comprehensive conclusion that all genius has its root in madness, the greatest genius being but a great madman. Mr. Nisbet—as courageous in opinions as is "Mimnermus"—charges even Shakespeare with madness, and considers that "his death would accord with a paralytic or epileptic seizure,"* paralysis or epilepsy presuming insanity. It is, after this, perhaps hardly necessary to add that, having satisfied himself as to the insanity of our greatest genius, Mr. Nisbet has no qualms about asserting the insanity of every other genius, whether native or foreign.

However, leaving Mr. Nisbet's general charge, and coming to the particular one made by "Mimnermus," I am inclined to believe that, for our present purpose, lunacy may be divided into two main classes: the obviously mad, who exhibit, as described by James Thomson,

An outward madness not to be controlled,
but have

A perfect reason in the central brain;

and those who, whilst obviously sane, and whom no one would for a moment recognise as mad, yet have a seated *unreason* in the central brain, to borrow and alter Thomson's line. Now, to the former division "Mimnermus" admits that Blake did not belong. Outwardly, Blake's life was most sane; he was free from any coarse ambition, content with his wages as an engraver (which may be accepted as not exceeding thirty shillings a week, take his long life through), frugal and temperate, friendly, and a firm lover of liberty, helpful to the soldiers of Freedom (as in the case of Thomas Paine, whom Blake saved from imprisonment by aiding him to escape from England), and warm-hearted, brave, and sympathetic to an exceptional degree. If, then, "Mimnermus" is to sustain his charge against Blake, it can be only from Blake's writings or drawings; for I think, really, it is carrying *le poivre jusqu'au fanatisme* to urge that the engraved portrait of Blake, in his old age—it is a miserably poor and niggled print, from an original sketch or painting, I forget which, of apparently little insight or breadth—be admitted as an evidence of his insanity.

Better take Phillips's magnificent portrait, engraved by Schiavonetti, in the *Blair's Grave*. In that portrait we have one of the most notable countenances ever given to us by an artist; Beethoven-like in its massive power of intellect and imagination—nay, exceeding in intellectual beauty any bust or portrait of Beethoven I have seen. Now artists are apt to flatter women, but they do not, as a rule, take the trouble to flatter their male sitters; and even if Phillips did—as I believe he did—flatter Blake, it was surely because he was under the influence of Blake's character and intelligence that Phillips gave us this transcendent portrait—which shows us the face of a man of fiery imagination and of noble character; and probably it was under precisely that influence that Schiavonetti so magnificently translated the picture into the engraving.

If, then, "Mimnermus" thinks with me that any evidence in proof of Blake's insanity must be sought not in his life, but in his works, I am content to leave the question there for those of your readers who are, or who may be hereafter, readers of Blake to decide for themselves.

Years before Lombroso and Nisbet, James Thomson wrote that "all genius is disease." Therefore, although I would rather hold all genius to be health, it may be likely that I am wrong.

Certainly, if all genius is disease, I think we may put the case of Blake as follows: If every man of genius is or was insane, then Blake, being a genius, *was* insane; but if some only of men of genius are or were insane, then assuredly Blake was *not* mad.

Nisbet's theory ought to be a consolation to dullards. Huxley himself had a dread of genius, once saying that, did he believe in the utility of prayer, the only thing he would pray for, for a son of his, would be "a broad chest and a strong digestion."

Still, even against such respectable authorities, I hold to the side of the madmen, from Homer and Archimedes to Shakespeare and Galileo, and would be proud to be the insane author of *The Sunflower*:—

Ah, sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun,

* *Insanity of Genius*, p. 154.

* *Descent of Man*, p. 93.

† *Ibid.*, p. 612.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 312.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i., pp. 312, 313.

¶ *Ibid.*, vol. i., pp. 306, 307.

Seeking after that *sweet* golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done ;
Where the youth pined away with desire,
And the pale virgin shrouded in snow,
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my sunflower wishes to go ;

or of a handful of lines from *The Proverbs of Hell, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Songs of Innocence, and Songs of Experience.*

Dulness and incompetence are surely evidences of insanity. Who, indeed, among horsey or doggy men would assert that every Derby winner was a mad horse, and that every exceptionally intelligent collic or every winner of the Waterloo Cup was a mad dog? In answer I hear Monsieur Legrand drumming his "Dum ! dum ! dum !" SIRIUS.

Correspondence

"THE PASSING OF SWINBURNE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The letter of Mr. F. H. Watts in last week's *Freethinker* is the expression of a frame of mind that one is glad to think was never shared to any extent by the Freethought party, but which the whole country is now rapidly outgrowing; though, indeed, there is evidently plenty of educational work still to be done. Militarism and freedom are enemies, and in my article on Mr. Swinburne's outburst I endeavored to emphasize this fact. Militarism is frequently acclaimed as noble. I pointed out its effect on the people at large. Mr. Watts asks me, do I overlook the self-sacrifice of doctors, nurses, and ambulance men? One wonders at such trifling. Housebreaking, I suppose, sometimes calls for a display of courage on the part of policemen. Is Mr. Watts an advocate of war in general? Does he argue that these incidental displays of nobility are any serious offset to the bloodthirstiness of Press and pulpit and platform so much in evidence for the last two years? Does he combat my contention as to the debasing effect of the war-fever? Or is he merely endeavoring to find fault with the presentation of a case which he is unable to answer?

In truth, however, my critic is singularly ill-informed, or singularly disingenuous. Take train-wrecking, for instance. There was a train derailed at Waterval on August 31st, reported in the newspapers of September 2nd, 1901, in which Lieut.-Colonel Vandeleur and several men were killed. But this train also contained civilians, and if Mr. Watts will turn to the *London Times* of September 6th, 1901, he will find a message from its Pretoria correspondent illustrating and bearing out my point. This train, it will be observed, though conveying ordinary passengers, including women, was used by the British to convey soldiers—armed, and under the command of a Lieut.-Colonel. The British thereby, patently, convert the train into a military train. Yet when it is attacked they cry out about the "brigandage" and the "atrocities" of the Boers in attacking women. The *Times*' correspondent, in his dispatch, says: "In the meantime, the passenger coaches, in which were *officers and civilians, men and women*, were riddled with bullets." And he goes on to describe "what unfortunately must be regarded as a brutal murder"—viz., that of a German maid, who, I believe, is common with various other such Boer victims, has since come to life. But the whole tenor of the description is as of a foul and dastardly act. This is one example, taken from the *Times*, and in such a matter I can only appeal to the experience of my readers as to whether such descriptions are not common in the newspapers for the last couple of years. There was no necessity, therefore, for me to go to Dr. Leyds, whom Mr. Watts, without any bigotry of course, regards as the incarnation of untruth. If Mr. Watts keeps his eyes open, he will find plenty of atrocity-mongering in the British Press. He must be perfectly aware of this, and it is ridiculous to endeavor to pretend that the thing is so rare we must go abroad for it.

It is this note of pretence, of assumed surprise, of mock horror, that is the most striking all through the militarist advocacy; it is, I suppose, its inevitable moral defect. The Boers are only doing what I presume Englishmen would do, Mr. Watts included, if their country was invaded; they would try to make it too hot for the invaders to hold. The Englishman, therefore, who blames the Boer for doing what he himself would do has so far departed from reason and equity; he is under the sway of passion, and is so far less a Rationalist.

But Mr. Watts should really have been more adroit. He might have posed as the moderate, scrupulous deprecator of extravagance. The last paragraph about the concentration camps gives him away. Again we have the note of pretence. Mr. Watts's astonishment that I should say what politicians, from Mr. John Morley to Mr. John Burns, have said—what, in fact, nine out of ten men of good feeling in these countries have said—that astonishment is touching. Does Mr. Watts live in the moon? I described the measure, proved and admitted, of placing the women and children of the burghers in the field on reduced rations—so that the burghers might be hit through

the punishment of their women-folk—as "fiendish ingenuity." I find Mr. Morley described it as an "infernal atrocity." And I am afraid I prefer to be "bigoted" with Mr. Morley than to remain calm and callous with Mr. Watts in presence of this horror. But there is worse. The children in these camps are dying like flies. The *British Medical Journal*—which I suppose is not one of the thousand organs controlled by Dr. Leyds—has shown that the mortality in the Transvaal, Orange River, and Natal Camps during four months was at the rate of 322.6 per 1,000 per annum—a rate which, if maintained, would not leave a Boer child alive in little more than three years. In face of what is happening, it is, therefore, difficult to write calmly in answer to a gentleman who asks if we have ever known such tenderness and mercy as this. Frankly, I have not—and I trust I shall never hear of such "tenderness" and "mercy" again. It is to me, at any rate, a matter of shame that a Freethinker—who ought to be a lover of humanity—should be found capable of descending to such a level of hypocritical callousness. Happily, however, Mr. F. H. Watts is an exception, and I doubt if half-a-dozen Freethinkers, at this stage of affairs, could be found to share the temper which he shares with the most retrograde religionists in the country. Whatever may be the fact about Liberal Imperialism, I do not believe that Freethought Imperialism ever had any following worth serious consideration.

FREDERICK RYAN.

MR. BEADLE'S CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On perusing the current issue of the *Freethinker*, I found there a letter referring to me, which, so far as surface is concerned, is somewhat humorous; and my challenger, who is bold enough to hide under the *nom de plume* of "Truth," states that the converted Atheist boasted of by the Rev. H. Moulson is Mr. Andrew Beadle, and that statement kindly allow me to verify. A subsequent sentence quotes that a very severe illness and a Christian wife, assisted by Mr. Moulson, were the real factors leading to my conversion, and that I used to pose as an Atheist, but those who knew me best always considered me doubtful.

This is quite new to me, and I will reply in facts; but I ask that you, in due fairness, will give the same publicity to this letter as to that of my challenger.

I affirm that during my illness no minister, or person bringing religious teaching, entered my sick-room; but, on the contrary, before undergoing the operation, I wrote that the Secular principles which had sustained me through life were quite sufficient to assist me through my great trouble.

Now, if you will allow me to travel back a few years, I have no doubt that you will remember the existence of the Leyton and Walthamstow Branch of the N. S. S., which was organised by a friend and myself, and I then was unanimously elected President and representative on the Council (when, if "Truth" was present at that meeting, he voted in favor of a doubtful Atheist), thus remaining in these respective positions for the greater part of the Branch's existence; and, further, with very few exceptions, I was elected chairman at the outdoor meetings held both at Leyton and Walthamstow; and for you, Mr. Editor, when delivering your lecture at Workman's Hall, Walthamstow, on behalf of our Branch, and also at the same place for the brilliant debate between Mr. Cohen and Rev. W. Hetherington.

Duty has called me to the distressed, and to the deathbed and graveside of Secularists.

These, Sir, are a few of many facts, that I do not enjoy having to mention, but feel compelled in defending myself against "Truth's" remarks as a hitherto doubtful Atheist.

Mr. "Truth," with his self-appointed name, I brand as a coward, for, in the first place, he is ashamed to expose his name, and surely no man need be afraid of the truth if he speak it; and, secondly, he challenges contradiction. Well, Sir, I contradict him. He has endeavored to harm me, in the darkness of his *nom de plume*, and if he cares to crawl out again to throw another dart it will be treated with silent contempt, for a coward does not deserve toleration; so, thanking you in anticipation for the publication of this letter,

ANDREW BEADLE.

31 Wilmot-road, Leyton, Essex, Nov. 9, 1901.

The following resolution was passed at a recent meeting of the Criminal Law and Prison Reform Department of the Humanitarian League: "That this Committee of the Humanitarian League begs to call public attention to a sentence of a very unusual and disgusting character passed at the last session of the Central Criminal Court on two men of mature age, who were ordered to receive eighteen strokes of the birch rod. This punishment is indescribably loathsome, and would be impossible in any other European country except Russia. Such sentences will have the sure effect of either debasing the public mind, or of so influencing jurymen that, with the possibility of this mode of flagellation being inflicted, they will refuse to convict in cases of a particular class."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

LONDON.

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."
NORTH CAMBERWELL HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "Freethought: its Nature and Progress."
EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 7, F. A. Davies, "The Myth of Jesus."
EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Old Ford, E.): 7, J. McCabe, "Christmas Legends."
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, ante-room, first floor): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "The Gospel of Love."
SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Personality of Christ."
WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (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, H. Lewellyn Davis, "The Ethics of Monopoly."
BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, H. Percy Ward—11, "A Rough Outline of Darwinism"; 3, "Voltaire: the Great French Freethinker"; 7, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"
CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. P. Edwards, "A Merry Christmas."
GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): 12 Discussion Class—Open discussion, "The Origin of the God Idea"; 6.30, D. Black, A Reading from *Evolution and Religion*.
LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone-gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "A Year on the School Board."
LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Hammond, "Does Man's Personality Survive Death?"
MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, A lecture. HULL (No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion-street): 7, Gustave Smith, "Energy: Directed for Good or Evil."
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Extra Pleasant Sunday evening—Vocal and Instrumental Music.

H. PERCY WARD, 1 Victoria-chambers, 17 Little Horton-lane, Bradford—December 22, Birmingham.

Works by the late R. G. Ingersoll.

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

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

Crown 8vo, with Illustrations, price 2s. 6d.

EVOLUTION AND ITS BEARING ON RELIGIONS. By A. J. DADSON.

London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., Ltd., Paternoster-square, E.C.

FISH.—My 2s. 6d. and 3s. 6d. Basses Fresh Fish give the greatest satisfaction. You should try one. They contain 8lbs. of Fish, carriage paid.—J. W. WITTERING, Fish Docks, Grimsby.

TO FREETHINKERS WHO SHAVE.—"Gre Mos," registered, gives a cool, easy Shave, without the use of brush or water. Post free 6½d. per box, two boxes 1s. W. Myers, Spring Bank, New Mills.

50 GEESE

AND

50 TURKEYS

WILL BE GIVEN AWAY FOR

CHRISTMAS.

To be distributed among the 100 persons sending for the largest number of the undermentioned Parcels between November 23 and December 23. The minimum number, to be a winner, must be at least 3 Parcels.

No. 1. 1 Gent's Single or Double-breasted Overcoat, any color. Give chest over vest measure; your height and length from centre of back to end of sleeve.	No. 2. 1 Gent's Lounge Suit, square cut front or rounded corners, black, blue, brown, or grey. Give chest over vest and inside leg measure, and also your height and weight.	Lot 3. 1 Pair Pure Wool Blankets. 1 Pair Large Bed Sheets. 1 Beautiful Quilt. 1 White or Colored Tablecloth. 1 Large Sample of Free Clothing Tea.	Lot 4. 1 Dress Length, any color. 1 Pair Best Sunday Boots. 1 Silver-mounted Umbrella.	Lot 5. 1 Parcel of Oddments in any kind of Drapery or Clothing. State requirements, and you shall have a bargain.
---	--	--	---	--

Parcels 21s. each.

These Gifts are made to advertise our Goods.

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

THE BEST BOOK

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE

TRUE MORALITY, OF 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 Immoralities, 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 Freethought—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.

LONDON FREETHINKERS' ANNUAL DINNER

(UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY)

AT

The Holborn Restaurant, London,

On MONDAY, JANUARY 13, 1902.

Chairman - - - - - G. W. FOOTE.

Dinner at 7.30 sharp. Tickets 4s. each.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Sec.*, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, E. C.

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, Mary Lovell, 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.