

# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## A Look Round.

THE opening of a new year is the customary time for reflections and resolutions. There is no intrinsic reason why this should be so; there is no break in the continuity of our existence, nor is there any absolute beginning or ending in nature. The very "periods" with which the geologist deals, and the "cycles" beloved of astronomers, are pure figments of the imagination. All there is in nature is an endless, orderly succession of phenomena which we characterise as "development" or "retrogression"; although here, again, nature knows neither one nor the other. Still, for our own convenience, we parcel out time into periods, and give them a beginning and an end. And, as we make one of these beginnings at this point of the earth's revolution around the sun, and have also formed the habit of indulging in a species of intellectual stock-taking at this season, Freethought may serve as well as any other subject of meditation, and better than a great many.

The past year can hardly be called a cheerful or a hopeful one. The South African war still continues to cast its evil shadow over us; the apparently endless stream of men and money flows on, and many of the people who entered upon this struggle in a spirit of almost criminal levity are probably by this time asking themselves whether a little more earnest thinking at a critical moment, and a little less wild shouting, might not have been more profitable. War, however inevitable, is always, and necessarily, brutalising; and its demoralising tendencies extend to those at home as well as to those engaged in actual warfare. Once the fighting instinct is aroused and the savage—skin-deep in the best of us—brought to the surface, all higher considerations are forgotten. The recent disgraceful scenes at Birmingham—which were, after all, merely a drastic repetition of scenes that have been occurring for over two years up and down the country—were only the normal outcome of a people to whom force and the gospel of race antagonism have been so earnestly preached by both press and pulpit.

Necessarily, during the prevalence of the war-spirit, there has been something of a "slump" in intellectual matters generally, and in the work of advanced movements in particular. A reform movement that finds itself at the beginning of 1902 no worse than at the opening of 1901 has little to lament and much to congratulate itself upon. To say, therefore, that Freethought propaganda during this period has been conducted under great disadvantages is only to say that Freethinkers, in common with others, have felt the pressure of the burden under which the country is suffering. Any movement that depends for its machinery upon voluntary workers and voluntary assistance in other directions must be peculiarly susceptible to any condition that disturbs the normal state of affairs. That Freethought has been carried on during the past year, if not with increased power, at least without any diminution of energy, is something—and, under existing conditions, a very considerable something.

Even under normal conditions the forces against Freethought are sufficiently numerous and powerful. We have against us the whole dead weight of custom and tradition. The vast majority of people are Christians, just as they are Englishmen, Frenchmen, or Germans. As Montaigne said, their religion is determined for them by geography, not by conviction. Every new idea, every innovation, must run counter to this inheri-

tance; and in so doing we are fighting one of the most powerful forces in human nature.

It is mainly for this reason that the task of religious advocacy is so (comparatively) easy. The religious preacher is appealing to feelings already formed; the Freethinker has to create his material first, and erect the structure afterwards. It is the power of the dead hand that makes the advocacy of all advanced opinions a matter of so great a difficulty; and, when we add to this the fact that religions are more or less bound up with strong and powerful vested interests, and that, in virtue of these interests, religious influences have a too powerful voice in education, on local boards, and the legislature, it will be seen that the task in front of the Freethinker is incomparably greater than that which faces any other reformer. And when we finally add the abnormal conditions that have prevailed during the last year, all making for a decreased interest in intellectual matters, I repeat, to have held our own is to have performed no mean achievement.

Yet, in spite of all, Freethought—or, at least, liberalism in religion—is on the increase in all directions. And that it is so is evidence of two things. First, there is in the growth of Freethought strong proof of the inherent strength of its teachings. Unlike many other things that might be named, Freethought makes no appeal to passion or prejudice. Its advocates have usually been poor, and far from numerous. And that, in spite of these things, it should be gradually becoming a more pronounced feature of our social life, is the strongest evidence that it is substantially sound. And, secondly, Freethought grows because, to a very considerable extent, its development is not dependent upon conscious propaganda at all. I am, of course, far from under-estimating the power of either oral or written advocacy, yet the fact remains that thousands of people have outgrown, and do outgrow, their religious beliefs without their being conscious either of their own development or the forces that have made them what they are. Current religious beliefs belong to an altogether different stage of social evolution than that which obtains to-day, and the mere fact of an individual being born into different environment inevitably leads to a modification of such beliefs. While religion bristles with narratives of the miraculous, of Providence, and is essentially supernaturalistic, the trend of present-day life and knowledge is in the contrary direction. And, while religious teaching is by its very nature intermittent, the pressure of environmental forces is steady and continuous. Under normal conditions, the issue of such a contest does not admit of doubt. The conscious propagandist may be resisted. The very hearing of an antagonistic opinion is often enough to rouse revolt. But who can resist the silent and insidious pressure of thousands of different agencies, each operating in a different way, and yet all combining to produce the same result? It is in this way that, in a very large number of cases, religious belief slowly withers away, its decease as gradual as its birth; and often those who would repudiate the name of Freethinker can yet be shown to be almost destitute of any real religious belief.

And this form of Freethought propaganda is, as I have before pointed out, full of promise for the success of our movement. A movement that is locked up with a man or a book may be destroyed with comparative ease. There have been scores of instances in the past where religion has grappled with Freethought, and triumphed. The ideas were unsuited to the environment, and they succumbed. It is easy to burn a man

or a book; but how is any Church, no matter how powerful, to grapple with tendencies such as I have indicated? They are impalpable and indestructible. The Freethought propaganda of to-day is, after all, only an expression of these tendencies; and, even though every known Freethinker were wiped off the face of the earth, the forces that have produced them would produce others in their place.

But while Freethought, as such, is indestructible, it by no means follows that there is not plenty to be done by all who value human liberty and happiness. There is much Freethought abroad, but it is incoherent, largely unconscious, and unorganised. And, on the other hand, we have religion as represented by church and chapel, strongly organised, possessed of enormous funds, and showing a dangerous tendency to a still closer union among its various sections. And this organisation is all the more dangerous because it is based not upon serious conviction, but very largely upon class and professional interest. The former we might hope to convert; the latter, as all history shows, is blind and deaf to all appeals.

A further element of danger to the growth of Freethought is to be found, too, in the modifications of religious doctrines everywhere going on. I cannot agree with those Freethinkers who welcome a liberalised Christianity as a gain to our cause. On the contrary, it seems to me that one of our greatest dangers is to be found in this direction. Superstition with a plausible exterior is ever the most dangerous; and the apologetic and liberal attitude taken up by many of the clergy, while welcome enough as indicating the power of Freethought *outside* the Churches, is distinctly threatening from other points of view. It causes a relaxation of the efforts of many, and at the same time keeps others contentedly within the fold who might otherwise be outside. Between Roman Catholicism and complete Freethought there is no logical halting-place, and all the modifications and gilding of ugly doctrines among certain sections of the Christian clergy are but so many attempts to give their superstition with its social evils a fresh lease of life. The pity is that so many Rationalists seem inclined to help them at the game.

The task that lies before Freethinkers in the near future is two-fold. The first is how to organise for purposes of propaganda the vast amount of conscious and unconscious Rationalism that lies ready to hand. The power of religion to-day is largely social, and this might be counteracted if only Freethinkers could shake off the foolish habit of hiding their opinions out of an absurd sentiment of respect for the religious beliefs of other people. It is really time it was recognised that those who, without any sufficient reason, cloak their unbelief as though it were something to be ashamed of are really fighting on the side of superstition. It is not *opinions* that deserve respect, only the right of individuals to hold whatever opinions they please, and to express them. The social prestige of religion is built up by the speech of one class and the silence of another, and a goodly portion of that prestige might be destroyed if the class that remains silent spoke out its real convictions.

The second task is that of seeing to the better equipment of Freethought propaganda. The day has gone by when an expression of unbelief in the Bible, in God, or in a future life can attract by its novelty. Religion is, true enough, always the same at bottom, but it assumes varied forms, and, if the various shifts and subterfuges and apologies of the religious advocate are to be properly met and properly exposed, there is needed something more thorough than the fag-end of a man's energies given to the work after a week of toil. At present no attempt whatever is made to equip the Freethought advocate for his work, and while this condition of things obtains we are by our own backwardness placing obstacles in the way of our work. Let Freethinkers generally recognise that advocacy is not a task that can profitably be undertaken as a dissipation or a mere amusement. It is a serious work, and, if properly performed, a life's work. And it is a work at which all should be pleased and proud to assist. When all is said and done, there is no power in society greater than the power of opinion. All government and all institutions rest finally upon opinion; and the man or woman who helps to mould this is helping to mould the destinies of mankind.

C. COHEN.

## The Clergy and Secular Progress.

At the dawn of the new year it may be interesting to consider how far society is progressing towards personal happiness and national greatness. It may also be an advantage to ascertain, as far as possible, the influential value of the clergy in the promotion of those agencies which contribute to the general comfort and elevation of the human family. By secular progress we mean the advancement made independently, and often in spite of, ecclesiastical machinations. Nothing will be said of the changes and modifications within the domain of theology, although it would be easy to show that the improvements which have taken place in religious professions have been the result of the application of those secular influences which have been so prominent during the last fifty years. The question with which we are at present concerned is, What service have the clergy been in fostering those elements on the wise use of which the future welfare of mankind depends?

We have in this country over fifty thousand clergy men who devote their time to what is supposed to be the instruction of the people. These "servants of the Lord" have had ample opportunity of proving whether or not they were capable of doing practical work in progressive movements. They have occupied almost a unique social position, being admitted into circles where ordinary mortals are seldom allowed to enter. Up to a very recent date clerical influence, both in urban and rural districts, was greater than that of any other public teachers. Partly through mental indolence, and partly in consequence of supposed business requirements, men have yielded to its importunities, women have been won through their emotional natures, while the clergy of all denominations have done their best to monopolise the training of children from the very morning of their lives. Thus the occupants of the various pulpits have had every facility for manifesting what power for good they possessed. And what has been the result? An utter failure to keep in touch with the progressive trend of the general community. Many have remained ciphers while social reformers were busy in devising and aiding to carry out measures for the advancement of the people's welfare. Other preachers of the Gospel have showed themselves determined opponents to whatever was adjudged necessary to enhance the secular condition of the masses. The history of the clergy is a sad record either of stagnation towards, or persistent opposition to, the promotion and consolidation of those principles which are necessary to the extension of individual freedom and national greatness.

Perhaps naught else could be reasonably expected, considering the training the clergy receive and the kind of teachings they have to expound. As a rule, their education has been one-sided, being confined principally to the alleged spiritual requirements of man, leaving untouched the material needs of his nature. The truth of this is evidenced in the following statement recently made by the Rev. Dr. Mitchell, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, and reported in the *Glasgow Herald* of December 14:—

"There were many people who thought that their Churches were getting antiquated, and that the real way to regenerate society was through their bodies, and not through their souls—that sanitary legislation was better than the Kingdom of Heaven, and soup kitchens were far better than the Lord's Supper. They as ministers did not undervalue these material things, but these things did not elevate men. If the churches were closed and the whole world was on wheels on Sunday, as it looked very likely it would be, the whole social condition of the people would be changed. Everyone who helped with the endowment of a church was doing more for his fellow-men than merely providing for their temporal interests."

Here we have Christian inconsistency, as usual, allied with fallacy. How long would the rev. gentleman remain Moderator of the Church of Scotland if he did not benefit by the very "material things" he condemns? Beyond doubt "sanitary legislation" is "better than the kingdom of heaven," for without proper sanitary arrangements the "kingdom of heaven" might exist, but health would be impaired and life would be endangered. When such "material things" as science reveals were comparatively unknown, epidemics and

premature death were the result; the kingdom of heaven did nothing to prevent and remove the one, or to enable the other to be avoided. If it be true of the poor that theirs "is the kingdom of God," it will be of very little comfort to them unless they possess the advantages which "material things" afford. To them "soup kitchens" would be decidedly preferable to the "Lord's Supper." It is quite true that the "whole social conditions of the people would be changed" if "the churches were closed." And remembering that the churches have ignominiously failed to regenerate society, the sooner such a consummation is a fact the better for the happiness and progress of the human race.

Where is the proof that "everyone who helped with the endowment of the Church was doing more for his fellow-men than merely providing for their temporal interests"? According to experience, the very opposite is true. For ages the Church has been very much endowed, but it has done little or nothing towards regenerating society. Let anyone who doubts this read Mr. Rowntree's recently-published work, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, and it will be seen that similar services to those performed by Mr. Charles Booth for London have been rendered for York by Mr. Rowntree. There we have a city crowded with churches and over-stocked with the clergy, where scepticism is not even tolerated; and yet the condition of the population is truly appalling. Poverty in every stage, immorality of all degrees, and loose living in its many forms, abound on every side. Mr. Rowntree proves that 7,230 persons, or almost exactly ten per cent. of the population of York, cannot meet the expenditure necessary for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency, and this he describes as "primary poverty." In "secondary poverty" there are living 13,072 persons, or nearly eighteen per cent. of the population. Secondary poverty is defined as that of families whose earnings would suffice for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency were it not that some portion of it is absorbed by other expenditure, either useful or wasteful. The wasteful includes drink, gambling, and thriftless housewifery. Altogether 20,302 persons, equal to 43.4 of the wage-earning class, and to 27.84 per cent. of the total population, were living in poverty. Mr. Rowntree goes on to say that no civilisation can be sound or stable which has at its base this mass of stunted human life. Examining the relation of poverty to health, he shows that in the poorest area one child out of every four dies before it is twelve months old. In one parish of this area one out of every three children dies in its first year. But this is not all—of those who survive a large proportion do so only with seriously enfeebled constitutions. This is truly a deplorable state for people to be in after ages of Christian preaching. No wonder that the Rev. Dr. Horton deplores the failure of the Church, which, he says, "is beyond dispute." Canon Henson preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on Sunday, December 1, in which, in speaking of the Church, he observed:—

"No hierarchy has been so proud as the Christian, no superstition more abject, no zeal more ruthless, no casuistry more depraved; and yet never a week, probably never a day, has passed since the Church was on the earth without the accusing record of the Master being proclaimed aloud in its assemblies. It is the most amazing, the most afflicting paradox in history.....I suppose there never was a time when Christian men boasted so boldly of their religious success. Statistics of progress are the fashion of the hour, and the appeal for the support of spiritual work is drawn on the familiar lines of commercial advertisement, and with good reason. Commercialism has invaded the sanctuary. The churches—here at home in our parishes, abroad among the confused and scandalised heathen—are competing one against another in the spirit and attitude of business rivals, and their methods are borrowed not from the Gospel, but from the Exchange. Make no mistake. This competition of the Churches, in which some insanely exult, is dishonouring the honourable Name by which they all are called, is inflicting infinite damage on Christian character, and going far to destroy the moral worth of Christian effort."

This testimony to the non-success of the Church and clergy as aids to progress is not from the opponents of religion, but from some of its prominent supporters and expounders.

Not only has the one-sided education of the clergy rendered them incompetent as secular reformers, but

the teachings which, if they are sincere, it is their duty to expound must necessarily tend to deprive their efforts of that utility which is essential to secular progress. It is not here overlooked that but few of the more intellectual clergy ever attempt to give practical effect to what they teach. This, however, only shows the defective nature and influence of their faith. The orthodox profession is the hotbed of a huge hypocrisy. Its leading members preach the blessings of poverty while striving their hardest to obtain riches. They proclaim their fidelity to the "Prince of peace," and yet they manifest a disgraceful apathy in reference to war. The Rev. Angus M. Mackay, in his late sermon upon "The Church as a Peace Society," boldly stated:—

"More especially the Church has been neglectful in teaching us that we have to seek to realise that condition of universal Peace the promise of which was contained in the angelic song heard above the plains of Bethlehem and in many a glowing passage of the Hebrew prophets. I have attended the ministrations of the Church of England all my life, have listened to many of her most eminent preachers, and have heard sermons upon all kinds of subjects, the most momentous and the most trivial; but never once have I been told that I had any duty to perform in this matter. Rather the Church has taught me, by her silence, that I had nothing to do but to leave the subject to the diplomatists, and to applaud my country's action when at war, whether right or wrong."

It is too true, as Lecky writes, that the religious teachers of Christendom have been the great producers of war, which, he states in his latest work, *The Map of Life*, "is not, and never can be, a mere passionless discharge of a painful duty. It is in its essence, and it is a main condition of its success, to kindle into fierce exercise among great masses of men the destructive and combative passions—passions as fierce and as malevolent as that with which the hound hunts the fox to its death, or the tiger springs upon its prey. Destruction is one of its chief ends, deception is one of its chief means, and one of the great arts of skilful generalship is to deceive in order to destroy." The National Secular Society, on the other hand, opposed as it is to the teachings of the clergy, has among its "objects" the wise and humane one: "The promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes."

The fact is, when the clergy base their teaching upon knowledge instead of upon ignorance; when they cease to assume a knowledge which they cannot possess; when they are honest and candid in their preaching; and when they propound practical rules to regulate every-day life, then, and not till then, can they be fairly regarded as true workers for the secular progress of humanity. Let us hope that during the year upon which we have just entered rapid advancement may be made towards this desirable end, and then 1902 will prove not only a happy but also a progressive new year.

CHARLES WATTS.

### Mr. Dooley on Boers and Secularists.

MR. DOOLEY was attentively perusing the *American Shamrock* when Mr. Hennessey entered last Tuesday, and the sight of the newspaper seemed to recall something to the latter's mind.

"By jabbers!" said he, "it wuz yer father's son that wuz a-tillin' me about Sickillarists. Oi saw their name in the paper the day before yisterday, an' they've been howldin' riots on Sunday at Pickham Roye to promote payce and thranquility in South Africa."

"It wuzn't the Sickillarists that were consarned," explained Mr. Dooley. "It wuz a row between the Liberils an' Misther Hooligan, an' they had their little divarsion on Pickham Roye instid av goin' to church as usual."

"Ah! the Hooligans are broths av bhoys for foightin'," remarked Mr. Hennessey, with enthusiasm. "It wuz my own mother's sister that married a Hooligan, an' he niver slipt happy till he'd exarsoised his own sprig av blackthorn around somebody's head. He'd licked ivery man-jack in the howl block, an' he wuz niver seen without a black oye. If it wuzn't wan oye, it wuz the other; an' if it wuz naythur, thin it wuz

both. He wuz niver handsome by nature, an' his physiognomy got so covered with shtars an' stroipes that the boys nicknamed him 'the Amirican Flag.' Och! they're powers for foightin'. But did ye say that the Sickillarists were agin the Bores?"

"Divil a bit," replied Mr. Dooley. "They're the bist frinds they iver had. Ivery noight in the week, an' three times on Sunday, a million Sickillarists go down on their binded knees before goin' to bid, an' pray for the success av the Bores. An' De Witt tills his Bores at ivery prayer-meetin' that he'd hev surrendered long ago if he hedn't been cheered up by this morril support."

"Oi belave ye," said Mr. Hennessey. "An' as Father Moran towld us only lasht Sunday, 'The continuil prayer av a just man availeth much.' But are the Bores av the same principls as the Sickillarists?"

"Begorra, no!" exclaimed Mr. Dooley. "They're all phonitic hiritics av the Dutch brand, an' voilently oppowed to ivery other brand av hirisy. Oi till ye, Hinnissy, if the Bores only got howld av a Sickillarist they'd scallup him, an' burn him at the shtake loike Rid Injuns."

"Thin whoy do the Sickillarists pray for thim?" queried Mr. Hennessey, in some surprise.

"That's the Sickillarist principl," rejoined Mr. Dooley. "Ye see their motto is, 'Do good to thim as hates ye, an' pray for thim that parsicute an' calumniate ye'; an' they keep that motto pashted in their hats for riddy riferince."

Mr. Hennessey drained his glass with a meditative air, and pushed it forward for replenishment.

"The Sickillarists are generally at loggerhids with the British hiritics," continued Mr. Dooley, after attending to Mr. Hennessey's requirements. "Ye see they're always down on poiety. They're niver toired av pintin' out that poiety an' croime go together. Whiniver wan av the British clergy gits prosicuted for fraud, or is corrispondint in a divorce case, the Sickillarists make the most av it. Whiniver a woild-cat bank busts, the Sickillarists call attention to the fact that the prisidint av the bank wuz chief taycher in a Sunday-school. An' whiniver a company promother gits found out, they remoind people av the churches he built, an' the gowld plates he prisinted to cathed'hrals. Now ye'll remember, Hinnissy, that a few yares ago the British got thoired av the capers av the Bores in South Africa, an' the way they were thratin' the Yewitlandhers. An' the British priss suddinly dishcovered that the Bores were viry poiious, an' very bad. The papers discribed all the picooliarities av the Bores; an' how they spint their toime in raydin' the Boible, an' wallopin' niggers; an' singin' hymns, an' takin' advantage av negrisses; an' quotin' tixts, an' swindlin' their neighbors. An' the papers said that the Bores niver washed thimsilves, or changed their clothes till they dropped off; an' the consiquince wuz that the odor av sanctity wuz so sthrong in a Bore that ye could smill him to windward eighteen minits before he came in soight; an' he wuz fuller av insicts than a howl museum av intimology. An' the Sickillarists rid the papers an' said such language wuz an infringemint av their copyroight, an' they were the only people to talk av the conniction between poiety an' the rist av the voices. An' whin the war broke out some av the Sickillarists wantid to sit an the fince; because they sid the row wuz between two religions, an' they didn't know which wuz worse. There wuz the hiritic Archbishop av Canterbury an wan soide a-blissin' the British throops; an' Prisdint Kruger an' the other a-blissin' the Bores; an' they sid 'lit the jossar that blisses bist win.' But the others wint solid for Kruger. They sid, said they: 'Here's poiious owld Kruger that's been fillin' his own pockits an' becomin' a millioner; an' if he'd lived in any civiloised counthry he'd have been hung long ago; an' whin he found the British were gittin' too near he bolted with the swag to the tune av twelve million dollars, an' left his South African dibts unpaid; an' lift his owld woife behoind to doie alowne, an' be buried at the xpince av the British taxpayer; an' now he's enjyin' himsilf in Holland at a swill saysoide hotel, whoile his followers in Africa are bein' hunted out av their blissid loives boy the British; an' whiniver he moves out he has gyurls to strew flowers in front av him, whoile the Bores he disarted are dodgin' the

British bullits.' 'He's a grand owld man,' siz they, 'an' we honor him for his consisthincy':—

He's been an *all* soides that give power an' pelf,  
But he's been thrue to *wan* parthy, an' that is himself.  
An' now he's a-quoting the Scriptures in Delf.

'An' he ought to be back in Africa, bliss him,' siz they, 'an' exhibit the binifits av a poiious Government to the wurruuld.' An' now they're a-dinouncin' concintheta-tion camps."

"Phwat's that?" inquired Mr. Hennessey.

"It's a new invintion av the British for carryin' on war," responded Mr. Dooley. "Ye see, it's jist loike this. The farmers an' pisantry in South Africa, bein' all Dutch, soided with the Bores, an' kipt thim supploied. An', if British throops came in the neighborhood, they towld the Bores all about thim; an' if Bores came they towld the British nothin'. An' if the Bores ran away from the British, they hid their roifles in a ditch, an' pritinded they were farmmerrs; an' thin, whin the British turned to go away, they picked up their roifles agin, an' shot thim in the back. An' the humanitharians all said this wuz a roight an' proper way for the Bores to carry an the war. But the British didn't loike it; so they took all the farmers and pisantries, an' their woives an' childrin, an' put thim in concintheta-tion camps; an' burnt the crops, an' desthroyed the provisions, so that the poor Bores that were pottin' the British got nothin' to ate."

"Poor sows!" said Mr. Hennessey, sympathetically.

"An' the humanitharians were all agin the concintheta-tion camps," continued Mr. Dooley. "Ye see, Hinnissy, in the owlden toimes, whin it wuz nicissary in a war to clear the counthry, the ginerals killed all the people they found. There wuz General Tamerlane; he killed ivrybody he mit, an' poiled their hids in hapes for monimints. That wuz a most iffictual plan; an' not a single humanitharian iver objcted. Thin there wuz General Wallinshtoin. His plan wuz to clare out all the ateables, an' lave the counthry people to starve to dith. An' the humanitharians were quite satisfoied. But the British put the Bores in camps, an' gave thim more food to ate than they were used to in their own homes, an' suploid thim with illoosthrated papers an' other looxoories; an' the humanitharians sid it wuz an outrage an civiloisation. An' the Bore childrin fill ill, and the British sint docthors to attend to thim; and the docthors wantid to privint the Bore mothers from givin' thim powdhered beetles an' chalk an' other rimidies, because they wuzn't in the London Pharmacowpica. An' they actually published a British Government Bluebook, condiminin' the poor Bore mothers for paintin' their offsprin' with green paint."

"Phwat?" exclaimed Mr. Hennessey.

"Yis, Hinnissy," said Mr. Dooley emphatically. "The Bore mothers painted their kids green whin they were ill, to show their sympathy with poor, downthrodden Oireland. Whin they had sores, they painted the sores with green paint; an', whin they were viry ill, they painted thim all owver. An' the British docthors actually sid it wuz the green paint that killed the childrin!"

"Begorra!" shouted Mr. Hennessey, jumping about, and flourishing his knobly walking-stick; "don't Oi wish Oi hed a dozen av the spalpeens here. Oi'd batther their thick hids for insultin' the Oirish color.

Whin law privints the blades of grass  
Fram growin' as they grow;  
Whin ———"

"Howld harrud, ye bloighted idiot!" yelled Mr. Dooley. "Shtop that war-dance, an' shut yer big ugly mouth, or the bhoys'll think it's Mrs. Carrie Nation in her timpirance tanthrum; an' we'll have the saloon mobbed an' the police around. Shut it, Oi say, before Oi knock yer crooked yellow teeth down yer scramin' throwt."

"It would make the Bishop of Cashel scrame to listen to such British athrocities," said Mr. Hennessey, calm- ing down. "An' how minny childhrin did ye say had doyed?"

"Oi rid in the *British Midical Journal* that it wuz three hundhred an' twenty-two, point six," said Mr. Dooley impressively. "Think av that, Hinnissy! The British malignithy actually ixtinds to the slaughter av dicimal six av a Bore choild!"

"Turrible!" ejaculated Mr. Hennessey.

"There are hundhreds av British families livin' in distitution in the cowst towns, waitin' for the warr to give owver; an' the British Governmint doesn't give thim raytions an' docthors, because they're ownly English people. There are thousands av British families that have lost childhryn, an' fatherrs, an' brothers in the warr; but the Sickillarists an' humanitharians take no nowtice av thim. As they're ownly British, av coorse they desarve no sympathy."

"Av coorse not," assented Mr. Hennessey.

"An' the British Governmint has taken thousands av Bores prisoners," continued Mr. Dooley. "An' when they've got thim they've sint thim to all the lovliest spots in the British Impoire. Some have gone to Saint Heleny, the foineest sanatorium in the South Atlantic. Some to the Bermuders, where the cloimate is always moild, an' the shkoy blue, an' the say charmin'. An' the rist have been sint to Ceylon, where the spoices scint the air for moiles an' moiles, so that it shmills sweether than New York Cathedhral at Hoigh Mass. An' the Bore prisiners have been supploied with litheratoo in their own languige; an' beer, an' whiskey, an' bacca, an' pockit-money, an' ivirythin's that harrut could desoire."

"Phwat do the British do that for?" queried Mr. Hennessey.

"To carry out the British govornin' principil," replied Mr. Dooley. "As ye'll foind it writ in Magna Charter: 'If thoi inimy be hoongry, give him to ate: if he thurrust, give him to dhrink; an' owvercome evil boi good.'"

"An' do the Bores act on the same principil?" asked Mr. Hennessey.

"If ye weren't a borrun, blitherin', ravin' idiot, ye'd see that they had no need to," cried Mr. Dooley. "The Bores are the inimy, ye fool, an' the British are ownly British. As the Bores are the inimy, it's their business to ate an' dhrink, an' not to supploy ateables an' dhrinkables to other people."

"Oi see it, Misther Dooley! Oi see it!" exclaimed Mr. Hennessey, wringing him by the hand. "An' whin the Sickillarists are towld to love their inimies, av coorse they love the Bores; more power to their elbows. Ye've got a hivinly jaynius for explainin' things, Misther Dooley, an' here's hilt to ye. May ye live a thousand yares, an' niver see purgathory."

C. E.

## The Ethics of Controversy.

IN one of the numbers of the *Sun* edited by Mr. Holyoake there is an article by him on "Consideration in Controversy," which raises a question that is frequently presented to those whose work involves them in intellectual conflict. With the bulk of what Mr. Holyoake says most men of any culture must agree. "Journalists of former years," says Mr. Holyoake, "frequently assumed the existence of perfidy in the advocacy of opinions they thought injurious to the State." It is to be feared this failing was not confined to journalists of former years, or to journalists at all. Mr. John Morley has pointed out that theologians in general were responsible for a vast deal of bitterness in controversy, by accounting for all intellectual difference as the result of moral depravity. With very many theologians and theological writers to this day it is sufficient to differ with them to be accused of baseness. Theology will not allow of honest difference of opinion. And this is inevitable. For the theologian has really abandoned his whole case—whether he perceives the abandonment or not—when he admits that one may honestly doubt it.

Mr. Holyoake seems to suggest that the tone of political controversy in England has been raised "since the days of the elder Mill." That proposition, however, is rather questionable. Certainly Burke and Fox and Pitt could not be placed on a lower level of taste than some of the politicians who now occupy the stage, and one can but say, if there has been an improvement in the general tone, the past must have been very bad indeed. Nor does the present condition of journalism furnish ground for so much complacency. How many newspapers will willingly print letters protesting against opinions, or even correcting errors of statement published by them? The very Birmingham riot which

Mr. Holyoake took as his text was provoked by newspaper incitements.

But, of course, what Mr. Holyoake says in the main is true and necessary to bear in mind: "No man makes his own prejudices or puts limits to his own knowledge. In these days the better class of thinkers are aware that the same facts will appear different in the eyes of other persons." It is far better and far more scientific to criticise principles and opinions than persons. And it is sufficient, as Mr. Holyoake well points out, to show that a belief is false, or a certain policy mischievous, without engaging in the gratuitous discussion of the personal integrity of the believer or the politician. The value of controversy from an intellectual point of view is to be measured by its freedom from personalities.

There is only one word of criticism, however, that one feels impelled to utter. The old fault, according to Mr. Holyoake, was the malice of controversy. One combatant assumed off-hand that his opponent was a knave. That was a grave error. But there really does seem to be the counter-error of assuming off-hand that your opponent is immaculate. Of course the latter is infinitely the lesser defect, for it is preferable to think a man better than he is than to think him worse. But there seems no gain in gratuitously giving certificates of good faith to men whom we do not honestly believe to be of good faith. For instance, Mr. Holyoake at the beginning of his article says:—

"It is a surprise to Continental politicians that our chief party leaders on both sides in Parliament bear themselves with courtesy and even personal friendliness. That is because they know that each party consists of gentlemen, and they do not forget it. The conflict between them is a conflict of opinions, and not of persons; each maintains his own view with all the eloquence he can command, without impugning the personal integrity or honor of those who hold entirely opposite views."

That seems to me an example of the opposite error I have mentioned. To say that all English party leaders bear themselves with "courtesy" to their opponents, or that all members of the House of Commons are "gentlemen," is to rob these words of any real sense. The plain fact is that there *are* party leaders who are grossly vulgar and discourteous to their opponents, and there *are* members of the House of Commons, and even Ministers, who do deliberately say the thing that is not. What is to be gained by shutting our eyes to such facts? If I differ from a man, and am yet perfectly convinced of his honesty, I should act on my conviction and accord him my respect. But if I differ from a man and believe him to be dishonest, why should I simulate a respect I do not feel?

Mr. Holyoake says that the friendliness of English party leaders on both sides is a "surprise" to the Continent. It is certainly one of the things that fill the stranger with a sense of the hypocrisy and unreality of English political life. And that impression has some justification. How can a man regard another as a swindler and liar in public affairs, and go home to dine with him as a man of honor? If you consider the Right Hon. Mr. So-and-So is wilfully misleading the nation, if you have established that he has often made statements when he had information in his possession showing those statements to be false, why should you pretend that his personal integrity is untouched? A man's character is not built in water-tight compartments.

In reality, intellect and character have a relationship to one another, and one can often tell by what a man says, and the way he says it, whether he is honest or not. There is a necessity, therefore, for discrimination. Freethinkers will often meet theological opponents whose sincerity and integrity are apparent, and who deserve to be treated with courtesy and respect. They will often also meet opponents of another kind. To these latter it may be politic to bear oneself calmly, but there is no obligation to affect friendliness. Every man, by his intellectual expression, is registering his moral stature, as much by what he omits to say as by what he says; even the hypocrite is registering it, because he shows by his hypocrisy what he admires or what he would like to be thought to admire. And, though men of the utmost sincerity will differ in their opinions and inferences from facts, yet a clean heart is

a powerful help to clearness of brain. In controversy—especially intellectual controversy—we should assume cleanliness of heart until we are convinced of the contrary, and then it may be well to keep silence. But, since politics involves action, it may well become a public duty to attack the character of a man when we deem that character a public menace.

FREDERICK RYAN.

## A New Proof of Inspiration.

TURNING out, the other day, an accumulation of old papers and magazines, I came across some odd numbers of a religious monthly, edited by the Rev. John Urquhart, and also some copies of a poor, miserable, antiquated Christian Evidence periodical, of a very low class. Looking through the first-named publications, I noticed in one of the series (January, 1896) an article by the editor, entitled "Science Anticipated by Scripture." This reads like a huge joke, but the author seriously places it before his readers as a statement of fact. In the opening paragraph of this article the rev. gentleman says:—

"An authority, speaking the other day, said that the lines of science were approaching those of the Bible more and more. The statement must astound those who have imagined that Science has long since turned her back upon the Bible and left it more and more behind, as she left behind her the ignorance out of which these same people believed the Bible to have sprung."

The name of this "authority" is omitted, no doubt for an excellent reason. Had it been given, we should doubtless find that the "authority" was no authority at all. This, however, is merely introductory; for the writer of the article contends on his own authority that "the Bible has sprung from a thought that knew in those old rude times all, and more than, science teaches or knows to-day"—which, being interpreted, means that the sacred writers were inspired by a mind acquainted with all that science has yet discovered, or may ultimately discover. In proof of this contention the reverend apologist quotes a number of passages from the Old Testament in which, he asserts, the Bible writers display a knowledge of scientific facts unknown in their time. It is scarcely necessary to say that the passages adduced evince no such knowledge, though one of them, at first sight, appears to possess the character claimed for it.

Respecting this particular passage (Eccles. i. 7) Mr. Urquhart says:—

"I wish the reader specially to notice what is said about the rivers: 'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.'.....Now, what can be meant by the rivers returning again to the place whence they came?.....This is the statement to which the Scripture commits itself: that a volume of fresh water now apparently for ever mingled with the salt immensity of the ocean is somehow yielded up again, and is borne back to the lofty heights from which it descended, and once more pours down the hillsides.....and flows along through valley and plain.....till at last it sweeps once more through the yielding waves of the sea. Science has solved that riddle, and has shown how in very truth the fresh water is separated from the salt, and literally goes back to the place from whence it came. But the Scripture did not wait till science could yield us this service. It has long ago explained the mystery, and 1,100 years before the beginning of the Christian era gave us a meteorology to which our present science can, in this particular, add nothing, and which, indeed, has pointed out the pathway along which discovery is even now pushing its way."

Thus is science anticipated by Scripture.

Looking, next, through the odd numbers of the Christian Evidence rubbish, I noticed, to my surprise, two references to the same Old Testament passage. In the first of these (September, 1899) the editor of the paper says:—

"It is a remarkable fact—and one which the Atheist cannot gainsay—that the Scriptures contain many statements now known to be scientifically correct, but which, in the days when the Bible was written, could not possibly be understood, owing to the primitive state of scientific knowledge. For instance, in Eccles. i. 7 we read: 'All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not

full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.' Of course, it is evident that the rivers run into the sea; but that they return again 'to the place from whence they come' is a fact understood only within the last century or two. Nobody has ever seen the phenomenon, for the vapor rises invisibly to the clouds, and it is evident that nearly three thousand years ago nothing but a divine revelation could have discovered this fact to a man."

This remarkable fact, "which the Atheist cannot gainsay," is noticed again by the same editor in a later number of his journal (June, 1900). In this second edition the writer, after quoting the text (Eccles. i. 7), says:—

"This is a very remarkable statement of the theory of aqueous circulation in the atmosphere—a theory established by modern science.....Who gave the wise man his science? What a marvellous illustration of the Divine wisdom and the Divine beneficence! Will infidels explain, if the Bible is not inspired, how Solomon was able to state with scientific precision what scientific men were unable to discover until nearly three thousand years afterwards?"

It will be noted, in the first place, that the Bible statement asserting "All rivers run into the sea" is ascribed by both editors to "the wise man," the probably mythical King Solomon, who, if a historical personage at all, must have known that the only river of any importance in Palestine—the Jordan—does *not* run into "the sea," but into a comparatively small lake below the sea level.

Next, as to the silly and vainglorious challenge to "infidels": How, if the Bible is not inspired, was one of the writers of the Old Testament able to state "with scientific precision" what scientific men were unable to discover until comparatively recent times? Now, I have long ago found it to be an axiom that inspiration taught the Bible writers nothing. It would be strange indeed, then, if the inspired author of Ecclesiastes, any more than his inspired brother of Genesis, should have been acquainted with matters not discovered until long after his time. So improbable, in fact, does the possession of such knowledge appear that the suggestion at once arises: "First verify the quotation." Turning, then, to the chapter and verse named—it is unnecessary to examine the Hebrew text; the Revised English Version is in this case perfectly correct—we find, as might safely be predicted, that the inspired writer did *not* know what the Rev. John Urquhart and the bragging Christian Evidence man credit him with knowing. Here is what that writer says:—

"All rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; into the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again."

In other words, the author of Ecclesiastes states that all the rivers of the globe continue without intermission to discharge their waters into "the sea"; yet, notwithstanding this ceaseless influx of fresh water, the sea never becomes any fuller. This is all; and the sacred writer's mention of the fact proves that it was to him, as to everyone else in his time, one of the mysteries of nature which no one in that age could solve. Were not this the case, there would be no sense in his referring to the fact. The inspired writer certainly did not know anything about evaporation, or why "the sea is not full." Thus the proof of inspiration deduced from this writer's knowledge of matters undiscovered in his day vanishes into thin air.

The most discreditable part of the affair, with regard to the quotation of the passage in Ecclesiastes, is that the two Christian editors must have known perfectly well that they were misleading their readers by quoting a mis-translation; for they both make use of the Revised Version when it happens to favor the views they desire to establish, and one of them actually does so in the article which first caught my attention. The latter editor, referring to the verse in Ecclesiastes which precedes the one under discussion, says: "Notwithstanding the agreement of the Authorised and the Revised Versions, verse six really runs thus:—" Since this editor compared verse six in the two versions, it is not unfair to assume that he also compared verse seven in the same chapter.

No rational person, of course, can blame the author of Ecclesiastes for not being acquainted with matters unknown in his time, more especially since that author

makes no claim to the possession of any superior knowledge. No one would ever think of noticing his statements, but for the claims made on his behalf by our present-day Christian advocates who attribute the knowledge with which they are pleased to credit him to a revelation from God.

It is really amusing to be told by one of these apologists that "Science can add nothing to Scripture," and that the latter has, in fact, "pointed out the pathway along which even now discovery is pushing its way."

ABRACADABRA.

### Acid Drops.

WHAT really is the state of President Kruger's health? According to the newspapers, a Transvaal lady visited him recently and found him in a condition of senile decay, the greater part of the time of his secretary being employed in writing out texts of Scripture. But is that a sign of senile decay—and in the eyes of *Christians* too? What a rumpus would have been raised if a Freethinker had been guilty of such blasphemy! Jesus Christ said "Search the Scriptures." President Kruger follows the injunction, and his co-religionists say it proves he is in his second childhood.

The Pope fulminates against the new Divorce Bill before the Italian Parliament. He implores all who are concerned in it to desist. Christian marriage, he declares, is a sacrament; the marriage bond is made perpetual by the Divine law, and can never be dissolved by any human law. Yes, but has not the Pope himself granted a divorce to eminent persons who wanted one, and whom it was politic to humor? This, however, was perhaps the divine power correcting the divine law; for is not the Pope the representative of God on earth?

The Socialists and the Clericals are at one in Milan. Hitherto the famous La Scala opera house has been subventioned by the Milan Town Council to the tune of some £12,000 annually; but this grant is now opposed by the Socialists on the ground that the theatre is a mere luxury for the rich, and by the Clericals on the ground that the theatre is immoral. Between them they have persuaded the administrative electors to vote against the subsidy by a majority of 11,460 to 7,314, and the result is that La Scala is closed. Probably the lovers of good music, who regard it as a refining and elevating influence, will be tempted to cry "A plague on both your houses!"

Mr. Justice Phillimore had before him the other day a witness who kept punctuating his replies to counsel by banging the Testament on the ledge before him. His lordship, who is a pious gentleman, was very properly horrified. He reminded the witness that the book he was handling with so little respect was sacred, and ordered the usher to remove it from his reach. Shocking, no doubt! But had not Mr. Justice Phillimore already banged the Testament himself, at least metaphorically, in conniving at an oath being taken on the "sacred" book which says "Swear not at all"? Hitting the cover of the Testament is surely a less heinous offence than violating its contents.

A Testament lasts from nine to twelve months at Marlborough-street Police-court. During that period it is kissed some thirty thousand times. What a sloppy, feculent, diseased state it must be in at the finish! No wonder it is becoming a common practice to carry one's own Testament into a court of law. The spot to be kissed, in that case, can always be treated with a little disinfectant.

Roman Catholics often refuse to kiss the Testament if there is no cross upon the cover. They are not so much Christites as Crossites. It is not reported, however, that they are particularly careful as to the amount of truth which transpires after the osculation is completed.

Holy Innocents' Day is always marked by a special and impressive service in Westminster Abbey, which is quite a feature of the Christmas season in London. It is supposed to commemorate the massacre of the innocent, helpless children by that wicked tyrant, Herod the Great. Of course the massacre never occurred. Every student of history knows that. But what does it matter? Religion starts just as well with a fancy as a fact—indeed, rather better. Herod's massacre is not history, but none of the other features of the Gospel story are history either; so, after all, it's no use straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel—and Herod's massacre may pass. It's as good history as anything else taught in churches. Indeed, it's as true as Gospel; and what more can anyone want—unless he's a wretched, cavilling, everlastingly damned sceptic? For of such is the kingdom of hell.

Here is a curious instance of the bigotry and ignorance of the law which prevail in a good many courts of justice. One

of our readers applied for exemption under the Vaccination Act, and when he claimed to affirm instead of swearing his evidence, the magistrates told him that they could not grant him a certificate if he did not take the oath. The Act, they said, laid upon them the duty of finding whether he had a conscientious objection, and how *could* he have a conscientious objection if he had no conscience—a fact which was shown by his reluctance to swear? Really this takes the cake. It displays considerable ingenuity, no doubt; but it is a very perverted ingenuity, which throws great discredit upon those who make use of it in a position of grave responsibility.

Two days before Christmas a flue was overheated in St. James's Church, Hereford, and the result was (under Providence) that the sacred edifice was completely destroyed. Had this happened to a Secular hall, there would have been "a moral" in it. There is none now.

Two brothers, William and Edward Allen, perished in the snowstorm on Knighton Beacons the other day. They were only three hundred yards from their home, which they had vainly tried to find. They were found lying in the snow with their arms round each other's neck. The elder one had wrapped his overcoat over the younger one's shoulders before death. It was a beautiful deed, and we suppose "Providence" looked down upon it with a smile. But the smile was a sarcasm after all.

"Providence" has been going it again in America. Intense cold, heavy snowstorms, raging rains, roaring floods, storms on the coast, shipwrecks, and railway disasters have been the order of the day. Surely these evidences of Design must be convincing to the most stubborn sceptic.

Careering round the globe, "Providence" just stopped at Saff, Tangier, to blow up a waterspout, deluge the lower part of the town, overwhelm the shops in the principal street, sweep the goods into the sea, and drown about two hundred natives.

The *Daily Telegraph* leading article on the "Horos" and "Swami" case was in some respects singularly like our own. The writer of it evidently knew a thing or two. He referred to "the blend of religion and sensuality" which has been "common enough in all ages of the world." "Any impostor at the present day," our contemporary added, "with impudence enough to lay claim to sufficiently preposterous and supernatural powers, and to gabble a meaningless jargon about 'higher life,' 'mental science,' 'occult influences,' and other rubbish which is the dangerous plaything of the hour, can attract an audience and find acceptance as a prophet among his ignorant dupes."

The *North Star* delivers itself on the "Horos" and "Swami" case under the heading of "A Warning to Secularists." This is extremely rich. Both those filthy impostors professed to be very religious. One of the names they traded under was "The Theocratic Unity." Our northern contemporary is decidedly original.

The *Guardian*, in writing on this case, makes the following observations:—"We are accustomed to think of the age in which we live as an age of scepticism. That, however, is no reason against its being also an age in which superstition and credulity abound. Rome in the time of the Emperor Tiberius had ceased to believe in the deities of the Roman Pantheon; that did not prevent Oriental superstitions from becoming rife, and we know that vain attempts were made to expel Chaldean astrologers from the city. In a very similar way there are thousands of men and women in England at this moment who would glory in having cast off the cramping fetters of traditional orthodox belief. They cannot bring themselves to accept the Biblical cosmogony, or they see no evidence that the Scriptures are more inspired than the sacred books of any other nation, or they are contemptuous of Christian eschatology, or they find one of a score of other reasons for abandoning the faith in which they were brought up. Some of these persons no doubt become consistent Atheists, or Positivists, or Agnostics. But with a large number the case is very different. They feel the need of some substitute for religion, and, after straining at the gnat of orthodoxy, they end by swallowing the camel of superstition. In the last quarter of a century one craze after another has obtained a certain vogue. Some superstitions have been imported from the United States, where the vagaries of an ignorant eclecticism have been even more pronounced than on this side of the Atlantic. Others have claimed to derive their origin from the ancient religions of India. Some, like Christian Science, profess to be consistent with Christianity—to be, indeed, a discovery of its real teaching, or a reaction from the corruptions which are supposed to have impaired and obscured it. Others, like Esoteric Buddhism, are professedly non-Christian or anti-Christian. We do not pretend to speak as experts in the various forms of Theosophy. But it is notorious that in lecture-halls and drawing-rooms in London and elsewhere men and women—many of them people of average, or more than average,

intelligence in the ordinary affairs of life—have assembled, and still assemble, to listen to Swamis from India, or Mahatmas from Thibet, or to swallow the trivial futilities which spiritualistic mediums put before them as the outcome of their intercourse with the world behind the veil. Palmists, crystal-gazers, clairvoyants, and psychognomists pursue their trade with little interruption from the law, and, it is believed, with considerable profit to themselves. There is a market for every superstition, however extravagant; an opening for every impostor, however vulgar. We do not know whether Satanism, which has its devotees in Paris, has yet found its way to London, but there can be few forms of Occultism which are not in some way represented amongst us."

This is, in the main, undoubtedly true. There are people who see through Christianity, but have a superstitious temperament, and must have some form of religion. They keep changing about generally because they have brains enough to see through one delusion after another. But they always find a fresh one.

Rev. Dr. Withrow, of Boston, U.S.A., preaching on the death of President McKinley, whose life was prayed for so extensively, said that "It was the greatest answer God could give us when he let him die." This is an odd declaration, but it was always "heads we win, tails you lose" with the clergy. According to Dr. Withrow's logic, it would seem that the safest course is to pray for the opposite of what you want. Had the American people prayed for the death of President McKinley, the Lord might have let him live, to show how much better he understood their requirements.

The *Stewartry Observer* is responsible (as far as we are concerned) for the following story: "Soon after Lord Galloway entered the House of Lords he presumed so far upon his relationship to the Marquis of Salisbury as to write to Disraeli to ask for the office of Master of the Buckhounds, and he was favored with a reply which read somewhat as follows: 'I am sorry that I cannot recommend you for the office of Master of the Buckhounds, as Her Majesty dislikes having anybody in connection with the Royal Household who uses bad language; but I will recommend you for the Lord High Commissionership to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.' And, sure enough, Lord Galloway held the Lord High Commissionership to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland both in 1876 and 1877."

President Roosevelt's insult to Thomas Paine, which we have referred to before, occurs in his *Life of Gouverneur Morris*. The passage is quoted in full in the *New York Truthseeker*. It runs as follows:—"One man had a very narrow escape. This was Thomas Paine, the Englishman, who had at one period rendered such striking service to the cause of American independence, while the rest of his life had been as ignoble as it was varied. He had been elected to the Convention, and, having sided with the Gironde, was thrown into prison by the Jacobins. He at once asked Morris to demand him as an American citizen—a title to which he, of course, had no claim. Morris refused to interfere too actively, judging rightly that Paine would be saved by his own insignificance, and would serve his own interest best by keeping still. So the filthy little Atheist had to stay in prison, 'where he amused himself by publishing a pamphlet against Jesus Christ.'"

No doubt this was said in ignorance by President Roosevelt. He did not know better, and he thought it safe, perhaps even pious, to be as spiteful as possible about an "infidel." Thomas Paine was not filthy. He was scrupulously clean until his last illness, when he could not attend to himself properly. Thomas Paine was not little. He was tall and well-made; much taller, in fact, than President Roosevelt. Thomas Paine was not an Atheist. He wrote warmly and far more beautifully than President Roosevelt will ever be able to do, in favor of the belief in God.

Cuvier was asked what he thought of the definition of a crab as a red fish that walks backwards. "Well," he said, "the crab is not a fish, it is not red, and it does not walk backwards. With those exceptions your definition is admirable." This can be applied to President Roosevelt's description of Thomas Paine.

Australasian Secularists should help their own and only journal to the uttermost, for it is doing their work and their children's work. The Christians, and all who are in the swim with them, would raise such a Hallelujah! if this paper were to collapse. I have had some indirect proofs of this in what has taken place lately in regard to Mr. Foote. As our readers will remember, a false friend made Mr. Foote bankrupt; and journals, which quite ignored his existence till then, at once set up a howl of mingled execration and rejoicing. Amongst the worst of the lot was a Unitarian journal, which maliciously gloated over the supposed bankruptcy of the *Freethinker*, just as orthodox journals would do over the death of the said Unitarian sheet. Fortunately, Mr. Foote's bankruptcy does not affect the *Freethinker*, and his journal

goes on as usual—much to the chagrin of the venomous Christians. Besides, Mr. Foote himself appears to be now out of his troubles, with his home and books rescued from the clutches of his foes. The fact that Freethought journals are so bitterly hated by all Christians should rouse all Freethinkers to help them.—*Joseph Symes, in the "Liberator" (Melbourne).*

The High Church party have been holding a Round Table Conference on the value of Confession, with Prebendary Wace in the chair, and a number of Church of England priests being present, as well as Viscount Halifax. This reminds us of nothing so much as a Conference of wolves on the value of mutton. Every priest in the world knows the value of confession. It is a method of learning people's secrets, and thus getting them in your power.

The Zionist movement feels it must have money to succeed. The rich Jews don't show any disposition to leave London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and New York, and settle down on a patriarchal farmstead on the slope of some holy hill in Palestine. They can sing Hallelujah just as well where they are.

Victoria is to have three new bishoprics, so the colony must be progressing in wealth if not in sense. We do not know what the salaries of the new Bishops are to be, but we daresay they will be a long way from bringing their possessors within the range of "Blessed be ye poor." Say, a couple of thousand a year each. That would enable them to follow Christ comfortably, at the distance usually observed by his more distinguished clerical disciples.

The Highlanders' blood is up in the Island of Lewis. They have driven out the sheriff's officer and stoned the police. It is now probable that the soldiers will be sent for, and then we shall see how far the Highlanders are prepared to go. They are opposed to any change in their old religion, and will not accept the recent union of the Churches in Scotland. That may do for the north of the adjacent Island of Great Britain, but not for the Island of Lewis.

It is astonishing to find a man like Professor Goldwin Smith maintaining that morality expires with the doctrine of a future life—as he does in a letter to the *New York Sun*. Here are his own words:—"Since the subversion of religious belief, morality has been dragging its anchor, and its state of transitional perplexity is the real source of much of the practical disturbance of the world. Immortality is an idea which my mind fails to grasp, as it fails to grasp the ideas of eternity, infinity, omnipotence, or first cause. But if this life ends all, I do not see how conscience can retain its authority. The authority of conscience, it seems to me, is religious. The sanction of its awards appears to be something beyond and above temporal interest, utility, or the dictates of society and law. In the absence of such a sanction, what can there be to prevent a man from following his own inclinations, good or bad, beneficent or murderous, so long as he keeps within the pale of law or manages to escape the police?"

Professor Goldwin Smith should be reminded, to begin with, that every man *does* follow his own inclinations; only, when he lives in a state of society, he has to follow them along the line of least resistance, or he finds himself in gaol. All the talk in the world will not make a five-foot man six feet, or a fragile man burly, or a white man black, or a clever man foolish, or a foolish man clever, or effect any other serious change. Nor will all the talk in the world turn a congenital criminal into a respectable citizen. We are all of us first what we are born, and secondly, in a slight degree, what we are made, for the limits of the making are very narrow. There have been good men inside all the creeds, and quite as good men outside them; which proves that the creeds do not make men moral, but that the morality of good men props up their foolish creeds.

The authority of conscience is social, let Professor Goldwin Smith say what he will. Bentham showed, and Mill after him, how the religious sanctions fail when the social sanctions are against them. Duelling went on amongst the upper classes in spite of the churches and even the law of the land; because the class sentiment—and nearly every man's class is his world—was opposed to the religious and the legal sentiments, and it carried the day. Nor have all the sanctions of religion been able to procure an approximate conformity to the plainest teachings of Jesus Christ. The religious sanction prevails on Sunday—which is an off-day; and the social sanction prevails on every other day of the week.

Seriously, does Professor Goldwin Smith really think that most men are kind to their wives and children for fear of the police—or from fear of hell? If he doesn't mean that, what *does* he mean? And if he *does* mean that, we venture to say that he has spent a long life in this world without understanding the common elements of social existence.



**Mr. Foote's Engagements.**

Sunday, January 5, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, W.; 7.30, Debate with the Rev. J. J. B. Coles on "Christianity and Civilisation."

January 12, Athenæum Hall; 13, London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner; 19, Liverpool; 26, Manchester.

**To Correspondents.**

CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 5, Leicester; 12 and 13, Bradford; 26, Porth, South Wales. February 9, Camberwell; 23, Liverpool.—Address, 24 Carminia-road, Balham, London, S.W.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 12, Sheffield; 19, Birmingham; 26, Glasgow. February 2, Athenæum Hall, London; 9, Liverpool; 16, Bradford.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

A. F. BULLOCK.—Magistrates often do very strange things. Mr. Bradlaugh's "Oaths Act" does not "expire soon." It will never expire unless it is repealed. Under it you are legally entitled to affirm instead of swearing in any court whatsoever. All you have to state in support of your claim to affirm is, either that you have no religious belief, or that the taking of an oath is against your religious belief. Do not be drawn into a discussion. State your objection, and repeat it if necessary, but do not add another word. Of course your claim to affirm has nothing to do with the Vaccination laws. The magistrates have no right to mix up such different things. If you have to give evidence in claiming exemption for your child, proceed at once to offer to make affirmation, and refuse to say anything about vaccination until you have gone through the affirmation form prescribed by the Statute. Should you experience further difficulty or ill-treatment, write us again, and we will try to have the matter brought to the notice of the chief authority.

THE "FRANCIS NEALE" FUND.—F. S., £5; Major John C. Harris, R.E., £1; John Young, 5s.; W. H. Harrap, 5s.; C. Mascall, £1; G. Taylor, 10s.; P. Rowland, 5s.; J. Roberts, 5s.; John Reid, 5s.; M. Dye, 2s.; E. Self, 2s.; J. Little, 2s.; R. Richards, 5s.; C. A. W., 1s.; C. J. Peacock, £2 2s.; T. Dunbar, 2s.; James C. Banks, £1; F. J. H., £1 1s.; H. C. Shackleton, 1s.; Henry Watson, 1s.; B. Dobell, 10s.; R. Daniel, 2s. 6d.; J. W. de Caux, £1; E. M. Vance, 5s.; W. C. Middleton, 5s.; T. M. M., 3s.; M. Christopher, 10s.; W. Shawcross, 1s. 6d.; J. Hockin, 2s.; A. Webber, 2s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 5s.; J. H. R., 2s.; Miss Ridley, 2s.; J. P., 2s.; Richard Johnson, £2 10s.

J. ROBERTS.—We saw the mistake at once. It was very natural. Was it not, now?

B. STEVENS wants to know what Mr. Watts means by trying to prove that the belief in a future life is a delusion, and then quoting Ingersoll to the effect that he does not know but hopes and waits. "Does he hope," this correspondent asks, "that what he is satisfied is a delusion and an absurdity, and therefore false, may after all turn out to be true?" This is not a question that we can answer.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your cuttings.

B. DOBELL, responding to our appeal on behalf of Mr. Francis Neale, hopes we shall "be able to raise a considerable sum for him."

J. W. DE CAUX sends a donation to the Francis Neale Fund with "sincere sympathy for a brother in Freethought." After suggesting that we should publish an Index to this journal, this correspondent writes: "As regards yourself, I hope you are now entirely out of the clutches of the Philistines. But you must take great care of yourself, for the cause cannot spare you. Take a month's holiday every year, and don't be above looking to Freethinkers for the wherewithal to enjoy it thoroughly with your family. Give me a hint at the proper time."

JOHN REID always had "much pleasure" in reading Francis Neale's "manly articles."

F. J. MORRIS.—Your letter abounds in good sentiment, but it is very long and does not contain a practical suggestion.

H. C. SHACKLETON.—Your order has been handed to Miss Vance.

T. DUNBAR.—Let us do our best for Freethought, whether others do their best or not. Those who charge home on the enemy die happy if they fall; happier, at least, than those who despise themselves in their own hearts.

JAMES C. BANKS.—Pleased to have your appreciation of Mr. Neale's "valuable services"—of which appreciation you furnish a tangible witness.

A. J. says that Mr. Foote's expression, "shadow of a shade," also occurs in one of the songs of W. S. Gilbert's *Mikado*. We are glad of the reference, but it happens that Mr. Foote has never seen that opera.

W. A. HALL.—Miss Vance has handed us your letter. Mr. Foote will be lecturing in Manchester on the last Sunday in January.

H. PERCY WARD.—We reciprocate your new year's good wishes.

R. DANIEL, sending a subscription to the Francis Neale Fund, says: "Men of ability and moral backbone are not so numerous that we can afford to miss any in the unpopular cause of Freethought."

C. A. W.—Mr. Neale will value the good wishes of all readers of this journal.

M. DYE.—Yes, a most trying past year, as you say; but, after all, it is not so much in the bright sunshine as in the black shadow that men are tested. Still, we hope your wishes will be realised for a less trying new year.

DAVID CLARKE.—Thanks; but you will see that the reverend gentleman has arranged to hold a friendly debate with Mr. Foote this evening (Jan. 5).

D. FRANKEL.—See "Sugar Plums."

E. R. WOODWARD.—Sorry the Camberwell notice was omitted last week, but it did not reach us till late on the Monday, and we explained that, owing to the holidays, we had to go to press on the previous Saturday.

THOMAS PERKINS.—Your letter arrived too late to be dealt with in our last. Thanks for your good wishes.

INQUIRER.—The "conditions of the universe" are neither right nor wrong "in essence." There's nothing good or ill, as Hamlet says, but thinking makes it so; and all thinking is relative to the thinker and his environment. Those who talk about absolute morality talk absolute nonsense.

HORACE DAWSON.—Always glad to receive useable cuttings or "bits."

A. B. MOSS, subscribing to the Francis Neale Fund, says: "I endorse all you say about his ability, sincerity, and modesty, and his services to the cause of Freethought. I hope all the friends will rally to your appeal."

RICHARD JOHNSON (Manchester) always enjoys reading Mr. Neale's articles in the *Freethinker*, and forwards a solid testimony of his appreciation.

G. A. KERSLEY, referring to Mr. Ryan's recent letter on "The Passing of Swinburne," says that "the identification of the Freethought party with a particular school of politics, which some people seem so anxious to establish, is a source of weakness to Freethought organisation. There is really need for someone to write a work on 'The Wrecking of Rationalism.'"

LANCASTRIAN.—Mr. Foote is gradually shaking off his cold, but it seems very reluctant to go in this wretched weather, and the feverishness of it has brought on a partial attack of the old insomnia, which is not quite disabling, but decidedly unpleasant.

W. C. MIDDLETON.—Glad to hear you were so pleased with the last two numbers of the *Freethinker*, particularly with the front-page articles. The numbers have been forwarded to the address mentioned. Your letter recalls old times when we first visited North Shields. We hope you keep well.

J. G. NEATE.—Thanks for your good wishes. We value them.

B. H. FLETCHER.—(1) You have so entirely misread all we have written on the subject that it is useless to argue with you. It is an infamous suggestion that we would persecute the mother of an illegitimate child and let the father go scot free. Your inferences and conjectures are not our principles and statements. (2) We do not see that the text you quote from Corinthians is a censure of polygamy. If it is so, the writer took a very roundabout way of saying what he meant.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Evening News—Freidenker—Lucifer—Liberator—Morning Advertiser—North Star—Boston Investigator—Holloway Press—Truthseeker (New York)—Literary Guide—Hereford Times—Birmingham Daily Mail—Secular Thought—Blue Grass Blade—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Public Opinion—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Awakener of India.

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.**

THERE is no front-page article from Mr. Foote's pen this week; for which some of his enemies who read the *Freethinker* every week, just to nurse their wrath and keep it warm, may exclaim, "Thank God!" The fact is, he had written a great deal of his rejoinder to Mr. George Anderson's reply before he decided *not* to publish it this week, but to postpone it till next week, and thus show how much he feared Mr. Anderson's getting a good hearing. A man who has a triumphant case can afford to be magnanimous.

Mr. Foote had an excellent audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, in spite of the wretched weather and the unseasonable time for large meetings. His lecture on "Hopes and Fears for the Future" was listened to with very marked attention, and was warmly applauded. Mr. Foote occupies

the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (Jan. 5)—but not entirely, for he has arranged to hold another friendly debate with the Rev. J. J. B. Coles, a courteous opponent, who comes amongst Secularists to challenge their principles like a gentleman, instead of blackguarding them from outside. "Christianity and Civilisation" is to be the topic of discussion. Equal time, of course, will be allotted to both speakers. As there is pretty sure to be a large gathering, those who wish to secure seats should come early.

London Freethinkers should note the date of their Annual Dinner. It takes place, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive (yes, and the result appears in the yearly balance-sheet, in spite of Mr. George Anderson), on Monday evening, January 13, at the Holborn Restaurant. There will be a good dinner, a few good speeches, some good songs, and some good instrumental music. What is wanted besides is good weather and a good company. The weather cannot be depended upon. We hope there will be a good company, anyhow. Mr. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Messrs. Watts, Cohen, and other well-known Freethinkers.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures twice to-day (January 5) at Leicester. No doubt he will have good meetings.

In the absence of Mr. Cohen, who was unfortunately unable to lecture in consequence of a severe cold, Mr. W. H. West addressed the meeting at the Stanley Temperance Bar, Stepney, on Sunday evening. This evening (January 5) the lecturer is Mr. E. B. Rose, late of Johannesburg, who will give "Reminiscences of a Transvaal Uitlander."

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, having finished his week's editorial labors on the *Sun*, returned to his pleasant home at Brighton, whence he has written us the following letter:—"Dear Foote,—I heard your letter read at the Dinner with pleasure. It was appreciated by the company, and I intended to thank you for it; but, as you can surmise, all my time was taken up with my duties. Everyone regretted the cause of your absence. Not one of us at the *Sun* office was aware of the omission of your name from the report of the Dinner, and when it was observed we immediately printed your letter in full. I had to be at my desk by seven in the morning until late in the evening, and I was obliged to neglect my friends; but I was as well at the end as at the beginning of my work." We are glad to hear it. At the same time we are happy to know that Mr. Holyoake is not to continue working like that at his time of life.

For the eighteenth time in succession, the Leicester Secular Society gave a Christmas dinner to aged folks. One hundred and forty-one elderly men and women partook of a hot meal of beef, mutton, rabbit, plum-pudding, cheese, and celery. Churchwarden pipes were handed round, and, while the smoke curled upwards in a hundred wreathing columns, an entertainment of music and recitations was dispensed. Tea and mince-pies followed, and the familiar notes of "Auld Lang Syne" bade farewell to a highly-satisfied gathering.

The Oldham Secular Society has been reconstituted, with Mr. J. Winterbottom president, Mr. W. Ainsworth treasurer, Mr. J. E. Broadbent financial secretary, and Mr. James Rothwell corresponding secretary. Mr. Foote has been invited to come and lecture in Oldham on a Sunday, with a view to rallying the local Freethought forces for a fresh effort.

The editor of the *Hull Daily Mail* is evidently alarmed at the force of the letters by "Scot" in the correspondence on "A Real Heaven and a Real Hell." He thought it necessary to reply to "Scot" himself in a long footnote. "Scot's" answer was not inserted. Clearly the editor thinks "Scot" a serious danger to the orthodoxy of Hull.

Freethinkers of the district are invited to attend a meeting at the City Restaurant, Pontypridd, to-day (January 5) at 6 o'clock. Arrangements are being made for a visit by Mr. Watts on January 26.

The third lecture of the series of four on "The Pioneers of Humanitarianism," organised by the Humanitarian League, will be delivered on Tuesday evening, January 14, at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, by Mr. W. Jupp. His subject will be "Ruskin." The chair will be taken punctually at 8 o'clock by Mr. J. A. Hobson. Admission free, and discussion invited.

The lecture we announced by Mr. Thomas Eynon, of New Redegar, was duly delivered in the New Public Hall, Aberdare, to a crowded and sympathetic audience, with Mr. E. Treharne-Jones occupying the chair. It was the lecturer's first appearance before the public, but he acquitted himself with ability and courtesy to the satisfaction of all. At the private meeting held in the afternoon it was decided to form a Branch of the National Secular Society in Aberdare. Mr. Thomas Perkins was appointed secretary, and hopes soon to report a satisfactory inauguration. A bundle of literature sent down from our publishing office was distributed to

advantage. Two hundred copies of Ingersoll's "Christianity and the Family" were given away outside a large chapel opposite the Public Hall, and several intending worshippers crossed the road when they found a lecture was going on over the way.

The *I. L. P. News*, the monthly organ of the Independent Labor Party, says: "There is an agreeable contrast between the style in which Mr. G. W. Foote, the Freethinker, deals with the question of anarchy and assassination, and that commonly adopted in the Christian pulpit and press." Our contemporary adds a telling extract from a report of Mr. Foote's late lecture on the subject.

*Reynolds' Newspaper* notices the *Secular Almanack* for 1902 as "an excellent compilation of great assistance to Freethinkers."

Mr. Francis Neale believes he is making progress towards recovery, although he is in a very weak condition, and a considerable time must elapse, in any case, before he is able to resume work. He has had to be removed to the Walworth Infirmary, at East Dulwich, where he can receive the medical and nursing attention that became impossible at home when his wife broke down and fell seriously ill herself. Miss Vance has called on Mrs. Neale, and Mr. Foote is in communication with Mr. Neale, who cannot be seen at the Infirmary, as visitors are not allowed in consequence of the small-pox scare. Mr. Neale writes cheerfully, and is very grateful for the help extended to him in his extremity.

## Personal.

I THOUGHT to begin the new year in peace, but that is not permitted. Mr. George Anderson did not respond to my invitation to send what he had to say to the *Freethinker*; he has chosen to burst upon the world with a pamphlet. I expected something of the sort when he made an amazing application the other day for a list of the subscribers to this journal. Of course he did not obtain it, nor could he have obtained such a thing in the way of honor from any journal in the kingdom. Now the pamphlet is published I have not been favored with a copy, but I have seen one, nevertheless. Mr. Anderson applies to have it advertised in these columns, and I have had his advertisement inserted. So far from wishing to "burke" his pamphlet, I have pleasure in bringing it to the attention of my readers. I tried to draw Mr. Anderson, and I failed; he has now come before the public voluntarily. Freethinkers will be able to see the worst he can say against me. The full measure of my iniquity is poured out. At the same time Mr. Anderson explains why he made me bankrupt; that is, if anybody can discover the reason in these twelve large pages. Seriously, I can well afford to let Mr. Anderson's reply get a week, at least, in front of my rejoinder. It contains nothing that can do me the least harm in the opinion of those who have read my careful statements in the *Freethinker*. Still, it requires an answer, because it abounds in wrong figures, confused dates, and monstrous inaccuracies—which I should call by a harsher name if I did not recollect Mr. Anderson's age, or if I thought he had really followed the details of the action carried on by his lawyers.

As far as the Freethought party is concerned, I do not dread the widest circulation of this pamphlet. I hope it will be read by all my friends. It may injure me in outside circles where my statements do not penetrate, and perhaps that is one of the writer's objects in adopting this method of publication. Certainly it has been the object of some who have attacked me before.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain my rejoinder, and it will be a thorough one. I will do the job once for all. In particular, I mean to show the value of Mr. Anderson's dates and figures—especially the figures.

But there is something in this pamphlet that must be challenged immediately. Mr. Anderson goes out of his way to throw mud at the National Secular Society. This is a great pity. Mr. Anderson was a vice-president of the Society in Mr. Bradlaugh's time, and has remained one ever since. Yet he permits himself to write as follows:—

"I am now of opinion that there is no N. S. S. I have been a subscriber for years, but have never seen a balance-sheet of its doings. Some branches have seceded, and

managed their own affairs; some have become social clubs, with no lectures. I should like to see a balance-sheet of any year since Mr. Foote became President."

The nonsense about branches may be passed over. Let us deal with the balance-sheet. I do not wonder that Miss Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary, sends me a letter of passionate protest against this slander. "At his own request," she says, "he received from me within the last three weeks the printed balance-sheets for 1900 and 1901." The N. S. S. has always printed a balance-sheet every year "since Mr. Foote became President." The yearly balance-sheet is always audited by two members elected at the previous Conference. It is printed, sent round before the annual Conference to the Branches, and distributed to all members at the Conference. A copy has been posted to Mr. Anderson, in common with other vice-presidents, annually. Even if this were not true, the discussion and adoption of the balance-sheet has always figured in the Conference report in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Anderson might have seen it there once in a way. Enemies of the Freethought movement, including Christian Evidence journals, have often criticised the N. S. S. balance-sheet adversely; but here comes Mr. Anderson and says practically that the N. S. S. has never had a balance-sheet at all. He really owes the Society an apology for this outrage. I will even tell him who has printed the balance-sheet for the last eight or nine years. Perhaps he will walk round to 17 Johnson's-court and consult Mr. Charles Watts on the point—and then write that apology. Meanwhile I am bound to lay this matter before the N. S. S. Executive.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Darwin and Religion.—IX.

### DIVINE BENEFICENCE.

THE problem of how the goodness of God can be reconciled with the existence of evil is at least as old as the Book of Job, and the essence of the problem remains unchanged. Many different solutions have been offered, but the very best is nothing but a plausible compromise. Even the Christian theory of a personal Devil, practically almost as potent as the Deity, and infinitely more active, is a miserable makeshift; for, on inquiry, it turns out that the Devil is a part of God's handiwork, exercising only a delegated or permitted power. The usual resort of the theologian when driven to bay is to invoke the aid of "mystery," but this is useless as against the logician, since "mystery" is only a contradiction between the facts and the hypothesis, and the theologian can hardly expect to be saved by what is virtually a plea of "Guilty."

Like every educated and thoughtful man, Darwin was brought face to face with this problem, and he was too honest to twist the facts, and too much a lover of truth and clarity to submerge them in the mysterious. He preferred to speak plainly as far as his intellect carried him, and when it stopped to frankly confess his ignorance.

Writing to Dr. Asa Gray (May 22, 1860), Darwin puts a strong objection to Theism very pointedly:—

"I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do, and as I should wish to do, evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the ichneumonidæ with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. On the other hand, I cannot anyhow be contented to view this wonderful universe, and especially the nature of man, and to conclude that everything is the result of brute force. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion *at all* satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect."\*

The latter part of this extract about "designed laws" is modified by a subsequent letter, already quoted, to the same correspondent. The first part is the one to be dwelt upon in the present connection.

Dealing with the same subject sixteen years later in his *Autobiography*, Darwin gives his opinion that happiness, on the whole, predominates over misery, although he admits that this "would be very difficult to prove." He then faces the Theistic aspect of the question.

"That there is much suffering in the world no one disputes. Some have attempted to explain this with reference to man by imagining that it serves for his moral improvement. But the number of men in the world is as nothing compared with that of all other sentient beings, and they often suffer greatly without any moral improvement. This very old argument from the existence of suffering against the existence of an intelligent First Cause seems to me a strong one."\*

Darwin is perfectly conscious that he is advancing no new argument against Theism. An age of microscopical science was, indeed, necessary before the internal parasites of caterpillars could be instanced; not to mention the thirty species of parasites that prey on the human organism. But such larger parasites as fleas and lice have always been obvious, and the theologians have been constantly asked why Almighty Goodness prompted Almighty Wisdom to provide humanity with such a sumptuous stock of these nuisances. It may also be observed that while cholera, fever, and other germs, are modern discoveries, such things as tumors, cancers, and leprosy have always attracted attention, and they are more telling instances of malignant "design" than the ichneumonidæ in caterpillars, as they immediately affect the gentlemen who carry on the discussion.

Darwinism does, however, present the problem of evil in a new light. It shows that evil is not on the surface of things, but is part of their very texture. Those who complacently dwell on the survival of the fittest, and the forward march to perfection, conveniently forget that the survival of the fittest is the *result*. Natural Selection is the *process*. And if we look at this more closely we discover that natural selection and the survival of the fittest are the same thing; the *real process* being the *elimination of the unfit*. Those who survive would have lived in any case; what has happened is that all the rest have been crushed out of existence. Suppose, for instance (to take a case of artificial selection), a farmer castrates nineteen bulls and breeds from the twentieth; it makes a great difference to the *result*, but clearly the whole of the *process* is the elimination of the nineteen. Similarly, in natural selection, all organic variations are alike spawned forth by Nature; the fit are produced and perpetuated, while the unfit are produced and exterminated. And *how* exterminated? Not by the swift hand of a skilful executioner, but by countless varieties of torture, some of which display an infernal ingenuity that might abash the deffest Inquisitor. Every disease known to us is simply one of Nature's devices for eliminating her unsuitable offspring, and a cat's playing with a mouse is nothing to the prolonged sport of Nature in killing the victims of her own infinite lust of procreation. Place a Deity behind this process, and you create a greater and viler Devil than any theology of the past was capable of inventing. Accept it as the work of blind forces, and you may become a Pessimist if you are disgusted with the entire business; or an Optimist if you are healthy, prosperous, and callous; or a Meliorist if you think evolution tends to progress, and that your own efforts may brighten the lot of your fellows.

Darwin put the case too mildly in his first great work:—

"When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply."†

Professor Huxley, in his vigorous and uncompromising fashion, has put the case with greater force and accuracy:—

"From the point of view of the moralist, the animal world is on about the same level as a gladiator's show. The creatures are fairly well treated, and set to fight—whereby the strongest, the swiftest, and cunningest live to fight another day. The spectator has no need to turn his thumbs down, as no quarter is given. He must admit that the skill and training displayed are wonder-

\* *Life and Letters*, vol. ii., p. 312.

\* Vol. i., p. 311.

† *Origin of Species*, p. 61.

ful. But he must shut his eyes if he would not see that more or less enduring suffering is the meed of both vanquished and victor.\*

Dr. Wallace, on the other hand, argues that the "torments" and "miserics" of the lower animals are imaginary, and that "the amount of actual suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is altogether insignificant." They live merrily, have no apprehensions, and die violent deaths which are "painless and easy." Really the picture is idyllic! But Dr. Wallace's optimism is far from exhausted. He tells us that "their actual flight from an enemy" is an "enjoyable exercise" of their powers. This reminds one of the old fox-hunter who, on being taxed with enjoying a cruel sport, replied: "Why the men like it, the horses like it, the dogs like it, and, demme, the fox likes it too."

G. W. F.

### Definitions: Unholy, but Righteous.

A GOD 's a "word," not yet defined,  
By mortals manufactured;  
A myth, a phantom of the mind  
In skulls too thick, and fractured.

The Bible is the book of "jaw"  
That perjurers beslobber;  
Don't scorn it, or beware the Law!  
Beware the "Lord High Jobber!"

The Savior's one that Jews denied,  
With blasphemy they taxed him;  
He came to "bring a sword," and died  
For folks who never "axed" him.

A Christian's one who sets his mind  
On Christ, and ne'er forsakes him;  
He follows Jesus—miles behind,  
And never overtakes him.

A parson's one who puffs the firm  
Of "Father, Son, and Holy"  
To people who (excuse the term)  
Are rather up-a-poley.

The Devil "men of God" blaspheme;  
They ought to sing his praises:  
Without him all their Christian scheme  
Would go to "hell and blazes."

No "Devil" means no "fall of man,"  
No "fall of man" no "Jesus";  
No "Jesus" no "sky-pilot" clan,  
No "cash" of which they ease us.

A heav'n is God knows where and what,  
The place, we're told, where God is;  
Around his throne the people squat  
Who haven't any bodies.

'Tis called a "radiant, golden shore,"  
For Christians worship money;  
Some cows and bees are kept there, for  
It "flows with milk and honey."

'Tis "up above" the parsons swear:  
Where's that? God only kenneth;  
What's "nadir" to one side our sphere  
To t'other side is "zenith."

An angel is a "bird" we glean  
From many a tombstone shaper;  
Its "feathered" form we've often seen—  
On canvas, and on paper.

A hell's a phantom "lake of fire"  
That "devil-fishes" swim in,  
The "souls" who've raised Jehovah's ire  
As honest men and women.

A House of God's a gambling place,  
Where well-dressed dames and "swellahs"  
Shell out their cash for promised "grace"  
To priestly fortune—"tellahs."

A pulpit is the "shooting box,"  
The "castle of a coward,"  
From whence amongst his trusting flocks  
His poisoned shafts are showered.

A missionary's one who goes  
To aggravate the savage,  
And make for us a few more foes,  
Whose country we can ravage.

An Atheist is one who thinks,  
And forms his own conclusions;  
He scorns the gods of men, nor shrinks  
From calling them delusions!

ESS JAY BEE.

### The Jews.

WHEN WILL THEY FIND CANAAN'S HAPPY SHORE?

WHEN I was a child I was taught that the Jews were an exceedingly hard-hearted and cruel people, and that they were so destitute of the finer feelings that they had a little while before that time crucified the only perfect man who had appeared upon the earth; that this perfect man was also perfect God, and that the Jews had really stained their hands with the blood of the Infinite.

When I got somewhat older, I found that nearly all people had been guilty of substantially the same crime—that is, that they had destroyed the progressive and the thoughtful; that religionists had in all ages been cruel; that the chief priests of all people had incited the mob to the end that heretics—that is to say, philosophers—that is to say, men who knew that the chief priests were hypocrites—might be destroyed.

I also found that Christians had committed more of these crimes than all other religionists put together.

I also became acquainted with a large number of Jewish people, and I found them like other people, except that, as a rule, they were more industrious, more temperate, had fewer vagrants among them, no beggars, very few criminals; and, in addition to all this, I found that they were intelligent, kind to their wives and children, and that, as a rule, they kept their contracts and paid their debts.

My opinion is that in the early days of Christianity all sensible Jews were witnesses against the faith, and in this way excited the hostility of the orthodox. Every sensible Jew knew that no miracles had been performed in Jerusalem. They all knew that the sun had not been darkened, that the graves had not given up their dead, that the veil of the temple had not been rent in twain—and they told what they knew. They were then denounced as the most infamous of human beings, and this hatred has pursued them from that day to this.

There is no chapter in history as infamous, as bloody, as cruel, as relentless, as the chapter in which is told the manner in which Christians—those who love their enemies—have treated the Jewish people. This story is enough to bring the blush of shame to the cheek, and the words of indignation to the lips of every honest man.

Some of the best people I have ever known are Jews, and some of the worst people I have known are Christians. The Christians were not bad simply because they were Christians, neither were the Jews good because they were Jews. A man is far above these badges of faith and race. Good Jews are precisely the same as good Christians, and bad Christians are wonderfully like bad Jews.

In the first place, at the bottom of this prejudice lies the coiled serpent of superstition. In other words, it is a religion question. It seems impossible for the people of one religion to like the people believing in another religion. They have different gods, different heavens, and a great variety of hells. For the followers of one god to treat the followers of another god decently is a kind of treason. In order to be really true to his god, each follower must not only hate all other gods, but the followers of all other gods.

The Jewish people should outgrow their own superstitions. It is time for them to throw away the idea of inspiration. The intelligent Jew of to-day knows that the Old Testament was written by barbarians, and he knows that the rites and ceremonies are simply absurd. He knows that no intelligent man should care anything about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, three dead barbarians. In other words, the Jewish people should leave their superstition, and rely on science and philosophy.

The Christian should do the same. He, by this time, should know that his religion is a mistake, that his creed has no foundation in the eternal verities. The Christian certainly should give up the hopeless task of converting the Jewish people, and the Jews should give up the useless task of converting the Christian. There is no propriety in swapping superstitions—neither party can afford to give any boot.

When the Christian throws away his cruel and heartless superstitions, and when the Jew throws away his, then they can meet as man and man.

—Robert G. Ingersoll.

\* "The Struggle for Existence," *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1888, p. 163.

Correspondence.

A HOLIDAY PUZZLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Ball's reference to the old sophist "problem" of "how Achilles is to overtake the tortoise" may do to exercise the ingenuity of some of your readers just now. The problem is thus stated: "Place a tortoise 20 paces before Achilles, and suppose the fleetness of Achilles to that of the tortoise to be as 20 to 1. Whilst Achilles moves 20 paces the tortoise moves 1; whilst he moves the 21st pace she gains the 20th part of the 22nd pace; and whilst he gains this 20th part of the 22nd pace she gains the 20th part of the next 20th part of the same 22nd pace, and so on, *in infinitum*."

I do not know how this puzzle has been resolved, nor do I understand Mr. Ball's solution. Personally, I am clear that, by the terms of the race, Achilles never can catch the tortoise, and here are my reasons. First, the problem is so stated that the race is to be run in heats of 20 distances each, the tortoise always having 20 distances' start, and being, by the terms of the race, always one distance ahead at the end of each heat. It is therefore clear to me that, were the heats run to Doomsday, the tortoise could never be caught by Achilles, and this result would be just the same whether the distances were diminished—as in the problem—in each succeeding heat, or increased in each succeeding heat in a like manner. Secondly, the race, on the original conditions, can never reach to 22 paces, and does not comprise in its terms a distance sufficient to enable Achilles to overtake the tortoise.

The problem can be, I think, made easily understandable in the following manner:—

Heat No. 1 is run for	20 distances of 1 yard each		
" " 2 " " "	20 " " "	1/20th	yard each.
" " 3 " " "	20 " " "	1/30th	" " "
" " 4 " " "	20 " " "	1/40th	" " "
" " 5 " " "	20 " " "	1/50th	" " "
" " 6 " " "	20 " " "	1/60th	" " "
" " 7 " " "	20 " " "	1/70th	" " "

It will be seen that the "problem" is the same each time; the tortoise, no matter how the 20 distances may nominally alter, always having 20 distances' start, ending one distance ahead.

I do not see how such a simple "catch" need have caught anyone, especially such metaphysical cracks as De Quincey and Coleridge. As the terms of the case do not allow the tortoise to be caught, why on earth, in reference to this "problem," need De Quincey have talked about the "perplexity which besets decimal fractions," or Coleridge about "indivisibility of space and the corresponding infinity of time"; or either of them have believed that the "difficulty" of Achilles and the tortoise had "puzzled all the sages of Greece."

Anyhow, if it really did puzzle those sages, as it certainly puzzled our two metaphysicians, it may not be out of place as a pastime for your readers during the holidays.

To my mind, the problem is a plausible verbal trap, and I don't think any sage need have been puzzled by it.

GORGIAS.

P.S.—It is not my fault if, by its terms, the problem infolds a physical impossibility—viz., the tortoise running a race of a distance of 1-64,000,000th of a yard as early as the 7th heat; but as that distance would be much shorter than the point of a needle, the race would be so like sitting on an arm-chair that it might be run without effort after the biggest yuletide feast by the laziest of your readers. G.

"THE PASSING OF SWINBURNE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was anxious that the agony of controversy on the above subject should not be unduly prolonged, but there was so much of the unreasonable thinker in Mr. Ryan's letter of December 22 that I feel constrained to once more encroach upon your space.

When I drew your readers' attention to the fact that Mr. Ryan indulged in the same little weakness that he properly charged Mr. Swinburne with, I was hopeful that he (Mr. Ryan) would have taken my comments in a kindly spirit, and at least have attempted to answer my inquiries; instead, he favours us with a further dose of extravagancies, and fails to answer a single question. In his original article, referring to the derailing and firing "on a train conveying military," Mr. Ryan stated that "even Lord Kitchener" called it "wanton murder." I doubted the accuracy of the statement at the time; but now that he can only quote the message of a newspaper correspondent as an "illustration" of his point, I must come to the conclusion that the statement is the outcome, and an "illustration," of Mr. Ryan's ubiquitous imagination.

With regard to the bogey of "fiendish ingenuity," which Mr. Ryan, in the plenitude of his rational thought,

still insists upon, I should like to quote Lord Rosebery: "I cannot in any way support the vile and infamous falsehoods which have been spread on the Continent as to the conduct of the Army" (at Chesterfield, December 16). Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman: "I have again and again gone out of my way to testify to the exemplary conduct of the British Army" (at Dunfermline, December 10). Sir E. Monson "expressed the certainty that the time would come when due justice would be done to those who had maintained in active service on the field our traditionally high standard of humanity and generosity to the enemy" (at Paris, December 10). Lord Onslow: "The Boers who had escaped from the concentration camps had returned in a hungry and emaciated condition begging to be taken back" (at Crewe, December 9). These excerpts, I think, speak for themselves.

Pray, Mr. Ryan, what is your authority for stating that I regard Dr. Leyds as "the incarnation of untruth"? I believe even Mr. Swinburne to be incapable of such an extravagant misinterpretation.

I was not aware that Dr. Leyds controlled a "thousand organs." But perhaps this is another instance of Mr. Ryan's little weakness. Truly, one living in glass houses should not throw stones.

In what sense have I descended to a level of "hypocritical callousness"? To me this remark is wholly unintelligible—is rather the obfuscated expression of an immature thought. But it is comforting to be told that "back even of unintelligibility there is some thought struggling for expression, and when we get to the clear expression of the thought we can reduce it to rational terms" (Frederick Ryan, *Freethinker*, p. 787). I should like the "clear expression," please.

Alluding to my reference to the self-sacrifice exhibited by the medical staff, Mr. Ryan likens the nurses, etc., to "policemen" (what utter puerility!), and superciliously passes over the noble work they have performed on behalf of Briton and Boer.

I hate and detest war as much as any man; but in the present lamentable conflict, the Boers having been the aggressors, and not being a follower of "Smite-the-other-cheek" party, I really cannot conscientiously wish the Government to sue for peace; and the sooner Mr. Ryan and those who think with him recognise the inevitableness of the final overthrow of Krugerism in South Africa, the sooner will peace be proclaimed, and the better will the cause of Humanity be served.

FRANK H. WATTS.

MR. BEADLE'S CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you kindly allow me to answer the letter in your issue of December 22, signed "Andrew Beadle," but really written, I feel convinced, by that phrenological luminary, Mr. Moulson?

Mr. Beadle denies the truth of my statement. I am not surprised at this, as he is known to myself and some others as a "perverter of the truth." No doubt he will remember the expression.

I adhere to every word of my former letter, and, if it be worth while to investigate, it can be proved to be true. I was careful to say that he was considered doubtful by those who knew him best. There were many deceived by him—myself among the number—for a time. It is true we elected him as president of the Leyton and Walthamstow Branch. In the first place, we had no one else willing to take the position; secondly, unfortunately, none of us were endowed with the phrenological acumen of Mr. Moulson—we did not know the man. But when we found him out we refused to re-elect him, and put another man in his place—a fact which he very carefully conceals. In passing I may say that, after his election, I was warned "to be careful and not trust him too much," by one who knew him—a warning that has been justified by events.

Mr. Beadle waxes very indignant because I have hidden my identity under a *nom-de-plume*, and, like an angry woman, screams "coward." This, from a man who deliberately turned his coat through fear of death, is decidedly good. You, sir, know what Christian persecution means. I am a poor man, having a wife and family to support, and, living as I do in a Nonconformist-ridden place like Leyton, I cannot afford to give Messrs. Beadle and Moulson the opportunity they evidently so much desire. Thanking you in anticipation, I again sign myself,

TRUTH.

[Mr. Beadle's letter, which we inserted, was signed by him, but it was not in his handwriting.—EDITOR.]

Obituary.

LAST Saturday Mr. Joseph Hayes died, after a long and painful illness. One of the old stalwart Freethinkers, he had consistently battled for his opinions throughout a long life, and held his principles to the last. He was buried at Highgate cemetery, Mr. W. J. Ramsey conducting the funeral service.—THEOMACHOS.

## 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, Debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. J. J. B. Coles on "Christianity and Civilisation."

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

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney, E.): 6, Members' meeting; 7, E. B. Rose, "Reminiscences of a Transvaal Uitlander."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow Road): 7, Stanton Coit, "Am I my Brother's Keeper?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall): 7, J. McCabe, "Hypatia."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, aite-room, first floor): 11.15, Stanton Coit, "Lead, Kindly Light."

RALEIGH COLLEGE HALL (Effra-road, Brixton-hill): 7, "The Claims of Christian Ethics."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. ("Victory," Newnham-street, Edgware-road): January 9, at 8.30, Monthly meeting of members.

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, A lecture.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms): 7, A lecture,

BRADFORD (Bradlaugh Club, Victoria Buildings, 17 Little Horton-lane): H. Percy Ward—3, "A Rough Outline of Darwinism"; 7, "If a Man Die, Shall he Live Again?"

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. P. Edwards, "What must we Do to be Saved?"

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): No meeting.

HULL (No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion-street): 7, W. Hill, "Pioneers of Democracy."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Social Gathering and Reunion.

MANCHESTER (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Lecture or Reading.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Has Man a Soul?"

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