

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXX.—No. 7

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1910

PRICE TWOPENCE

To any doctrine of individual immortality science opposes an unbroken and impregnable barrier.

W. H. MALLOCK.

Dead and Alive.

THIS is a rough and ready phrase for what Father Robert Hugh Benson has just been saying of the Catholic Church. Father Benson is a son of the late Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury—and the Catholics do not forget to make the most of the fact, although, of course, it is only of personal significance.

Opening a new Catholic place of worship at Glasgow lately Father Benson preached from the text, "As dying, and behold, we live." On this foundation he built up a huge, commanding structure of tribute to the miraculous preservation and longevity of the Catholic Church.

Father Benson dwelt fondly on the "worldly" success of the Catholic Church. It was succeeding as no other society in the world had ever succeeded. They were driven from the councils of kings three hundred years ago; now they were being once more summoned back to the councils of kings. This is true enough, but it is not in the least supernatural. It simply means, at bottom, that freethought and humanity are spreading, and that the Catholics, as well as other people, are reaping the benefit. When the Protestants triumphed they persecuted the Catholics just as the Catholics had persecuted them, and this policy—either continuously on one side or in a perpetual seesaw—would have gone on for ever if other influences had not been at work. Science and scepticism brought in new truths and a new intellectual attitude. Toleration, the child of doubt, broke down Protestant bigotry, and brought Catholics within the pale of the constitution. They now enjoy civil and religious rights, which are to some extent denied to the Freethinkers who shared in the struggle for their emancipation. Thus the calling back of Catholics to the councils of kings, as Father Benson rather grandiosely puts it, is due to influences which are natural and even irreligious. It is like the liberation of State prisoners under a general amnesty. And instead of the amnesty proving the triumph of the liberated prisoners, it proves that they have ceased to be dangerous, and may be treated as a negligible quantity.

There is likewise this to be said. Protestant and Catholic are profoundly aware that they can no longer divide the world between them, or struggle with each other for its sole possession. Other parties claim divisions of the territory. Protestant and Catholic are faced by a great common enemy. They feel that they must unite their forces for the protection of religion, which is threatened not merely in its branches but in its very trunk and roots. It is not this or that form of religion which is in peril, but its very essence. Protestant and Catholic fought each other for centuries over the doctrine of purgatory. That battle sinks into insignificance in presence of the debate as to whether there is a future life at all.

Catholics are in the Privy Council, for instance; yes, and so is John Morley, and so was the late

Professor Huxley. How does this justify Father Benson's jubilation over the "supernatural" success of the Catholic Church?

That the Catholics were driven out of the legislature of England three hundred years ago was simply another aspect of the triumph of Protestantism. Whichever side won trampled on the rights of the other. Father Benson is only piling up superfluous facts. But let us follow him for the sake of argument. He chuckles over an irony of the present political situation. The Catholic party, once outlawed, holds "the balance of power in this legislative assembly." This means, we presume, that Mr. Redmond and his legions command the situation. But they are not "the Catholic party." They are the Irish party. Their object is political; their Catholicism is an accident. And their command of the situation is also an accident. Surely the Rev. Father Benson does not argue that God arranged the recent elections in order to demonstrate his peculiar attachment to the Catholic Church? Such a transparent stratagem would only defeat its own object.

Father Benson would be very ill-advised to press that argument. Proving that Mr. Redmond's lucky position is a *Catholic* and not *Irish* victory, is just the way to bind together the Church of England and the Nonconformists in a common hostility to such a state of affairs. Wave the flag of religious fanaticism, and the question of the Lords and the Budget would soon take a back seat.

Father Benson is just as ill-advised in chortling over the progress of the Catholic Church in America. Its progress there is not a progress of persuasion and conversion; it is a progress of physical generation. Catholics are bred on farm-stud principles. Irish fecundity, priest-inspired and reckless, is the open secret of Catholic multiplication across the Atlantic. It is much the same over here. Indeed, if we look closely enough we shall see that the balance of power between Protestant and Catholic is always and everywhere a matter of breeding. Protestants and Catholics do not convert each other; the balance is not altered in that way by the fraction of a fraction; it is all done through the law of population; the large families carry the day. Instead of being supernatural, the progress of Catholicism in America is as natural as the production of increased supplies of pigs for the Chicago market.

"It is possible almost," Father Benson says, "to speak of New York as a Catholic city." Perhaps so, if you could only get rid of nearly a million Jews. But here again the explanation is easy. The Irishman in America has little taste for country life; he haunts the big towns, and frequently develops an astonishing talent for political thimblerrigging. That is one reason why the Catholic Church in America is aggressive and insolent out of all proportion to its actual strength.

The Catholic Church lasts because it is the real thing. It is the full and final development of religion. Naturally it outlasts imitations and makeshifts. As long as superstitious brains exist it will have a future; as *they* die out it will die out. It was made for man, by man. Its divine origin is a dream hardened into an imposture. Nobody believes it but those who were taught to do so in childhood.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Medical Science.—II.

(Continued from p. 83.)

ALL the influence of Christianity, derived from the Old and New Testaments and the teaching of Jesus, were necessarily hostile to whatever medical knowledge had been acquired by civilised antiquity. Henceforth, for many centuries, the ideas of disease that were in the ascendant were fundamentally indistinguishable from those now rife among contemporary savages. All disease was due either to the agency of God—an idea still expressed in the Church of England Prayer Book in the teaching "Whatsoever your sickness is, know you certainly that it is God's visitation"—or it was due to the activity of Satan or other evil spirits. In either case, the priest was the appropriate and the appointed physician. A supernatural disease called logically for a supernatural cure. If people could be cured of blindness by the saliva of Jesus, of what benefit was it to study the nature of disease and elaborate natural cures? As Lacroix puts it, "Christ healing the sick by the laying on of hands, restoring sight to the blind, and making the lame to walk by an appeal to God, and raising the dead to life in the name of the Father, seemed to intimate to the world that prayer and faith were the best remedies against human ills."

The scientific study of disease was not only useless, it was an act of blasphemy against God. Some of the choicest of their vituperative epithets were showered by the Christian writers upon such as strove to carry on the scientific work of the Pagans. St. Augustine—about the only man of real genius the Christian world held for several centuries—denounces "men called anatomists who inhumanly pry into the secrets of the human body to learn the nature of disease, its exact seat, and how it might be remedied." St. Ambrose declares that the "precepts of medicine are contrary to celestial science," and while "celestial science" taught that "famine, death, foul air, and epidemics are caused by evil spirits who, enveloped in a cloud, flit through the lower regions of the atmosphere," one can easily credit the statement. Tertullian denounced the surgeon, Herophilus, because he had profaned the temple of the Holy Ghost by dissecting human bodies. Gregory of Nazianzus had no doubt that all bodily disease was provoked by demons. So, too, St. Augustine taught "All diseases of Christians are to be ascribed to demons; chiefly do they torment newly baptised Christians, yea, even the guiltless new-born infants." The study and treatment of disease, just escaping from the fetishistic theories of primitive man, was hurled back by Christian barbarism, to wait in Christendom, at all events, nearly a thousand years for its revival.

One by one the ancient centres for the study of medicine and surgery sank into disuse or were closed by Christian malevolence. The Barbarians, in their repeated invasions of the Roman Empire, had respected the existence and objects of the medical schools at Treves, Arles, Bordeaux, Athens, and Alexandria, it was left for the followers of the "Divine Healer" to sterilise their usefulness on account of their serving as a seed plot for non-Christian beliefs. Such schools as were permitted to exist did so at the price of giving currency to superstitious teachings that acted as a fairly effective bar against the revival of saner ideas. The treatment of disease fell almost wholly into the hands of the priesthood, in spite of the fact that both by counsel and legislation priests were forbidden to study the subject in a scientific manner. St. Bernard warned certain monks that to seek relief from disease in medicine harmonised neither with their religion nor with the honor of their order. The Council of Le Mans (1248) and the Council of Rheims (1119) actually interdicted the study of medicine by monks. The Council of Beziers (1246) prohibited Christians applying for relief to a Jewish physician, and this at a time when the only doctors in Christendom were

Jews. The Dominicans, in 1248, banished all books on medicine from their monasteries. Innocent III. forbade physicians practising except under the supervision of an ecclesiastic. Honorius (1222) forbade priests studying medicine; and at the end of the thirteenth century, Boniface VIII. interdicted surgery as being Atheistical.

The Christian world had its own pharmacopœia, which both piety and profit impelled them to preserve. In the matter of specialisation, the religious theory of diseases lacked little. It was, indeed, a monument of ill-spent ingenuity. The human body was mapped out, and each part placed under a special protector, beginning with God the Father and ending with now unknown saints. Diseases were shared out in a similar manner. St. Gall cured tumors, St. Valentine epilepsy, St. Polonia diseases of the teeth, St. Roque the plague, St. Hubert the bite of a mad dog, St. Clara sore eyes, St. Gervaise rheumatism, and so on through every complaint that flesh is heir to. In the case of disease the plan was simple. One merely hunted up the celestial directory, and having paid the necessary fee—a by no means unimportant part of the procedure—one's concern was at an end. With such a crowd of celestial rivals, ordinary doctors, had there been many of them, would have been hard put to it to make a living.

In addition there were innumerable relics which played an equally important part in the Christian science of medicine. The saliva of saints, along with water in which their hair had been dipped, were esteemed of great curative value. Parings of saintly nails, remnants of saintly clothing, and even saintly ordure, were all esteemed as remedies. At Cologne Cathedral was preserved—and is still, for aught I know to the contrary—the skulls of the Wise Men of the East. The relics of St. Rosalia at Palermo had thousands of cures attributed to their efficacy; and even after Professor Buckland discovered they were the bones of a goat, the cures went on just the same. Nor did the trifling fact of their belonging to men prevent the bones of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins demonstrating their efficacy. Sacred pools, streams, and fountains abounded, each with its list of cures. The touch of an anointed person was also of great value, a superstition that lingered on into the eighteenth century, and was exemplified in the cures narrated of Queen Anne. Charles II. is said to have touched and cured over 100,000 people. William the Third's remark to one whom he "touched" for scrofula, "May it bring you better health and more sense," is worth recording in this connection.

Although there was much faith manifested, on the one side, in this belief in the curative power of relics, there was much profit produced on another. Enormous revenues flowed into the churches from this source. Nearly every church and every monastery had its store of relics, and the discovery of a fresh relic was as good as an endowment. The Venetian Republic, being a keen business Power, expended large sums in the purchase of these relics, and we need have little doubt, reaped a fair profit on the investment. There is, therefore, small wonder that the Church made such a fight against the development of scientific medicine. Ignorance was far more profitable than knowledge, and there was a profound truth in the remark by a celebrated eighteenth century theologian, Charlenoix, that "Pestilences were the harvests of the ministers of God." Partly due to the Jewish doctors threatening the revenues of the Church by their practice and teaching was the Anti-Semitism of the clergy, and which certainly led to the expulsion of the Jews from France at the end of the fourteenth century. Christians were told that it was much better to die under a Christian than be saved by a Jew, although at the time that this teaching was current bishops and princes—even the Pope himself—retained their own private Jewish physicians.

The benighted condition of Christendom is the more striking when we turn to the developments that were taking place in Spain under its Mohammedan

rulers. Side by side with the growing barbarisation of Christendom, Jews and Mohammedans in Spain were building up a civilisation far superior to anything that existed in Europe until at least the end of the eighteenth century. Seven centuries before Copernicus and Galileo they were teaching geography with the use of globes, measuring time by pendulum oscillations, and applying mathematics to astronomy and physics. While in Christendom men of intellect were imprisoned and suppressed, in Spain they were treated with the utmost deference and allowed to pursue their labors unchecked. Colleges, schools, and other public institutions were founded. The Spanish Mohammedans were living in well-built, well-lit, well-drained cities, while the rest of Christendom were living in filthy hovels in undrained, unlit towns in which diseases of all kinds were endemic. Alone of the people of the world they followed in the lines of the old Greek learning; they gave to Europe its numerals, imported from India; invented the cypher, introduced the mariner's compass and the manufacture of paper, discovered phosphorus and gunpowder, and by their scientific and other labors made Spain the greatest, the wealthiest, and the most civilised country in the world. To Spain everyone who wished for positive knowledge was compelled to resort. Men like Roger Bacon, Abelard, Gerbert, Dun Scotus, and Albertus Magnus were all taught, directly or indirectly, by the Mohammedan schools. From Spain came the streams of influence that led to the scientific renaissance; and without Mohammedan Spain it is difficult to say when or how Christendom would or could have shaken off the demoralising influences of the Christian faith.

The contributions of Mohammedan Spain to medical science were many and valuable. Practically the creators of a science of chemistry, this, along with their other scientific discoveries, enabled the Jews and the Mohammedans working together to give to Europe the only medical science it possessed until the time of Vesalius. From the schools of Cordova and Granada were derived all the medical teaching of any value that Europe possessed until the sixteenth century. The medical schools of Salerno, Tarentum, Arles, Narbonne, Montpellier, with others, were all founded by Jewish and Mohammedan co-operation. Narbonne was actually under the presidency of a Jew, Doctor Rabbi Abou; the greatest physician in France during the eleventh century was also a Jew—the famous Raschi. Draper says that in the eleventh century nearly all the physicians in Europe were Jews, and Lacroix rightly says that “the mere list of medical works published from the discovery of printing to the close of the fifteenth century is sufficient proof that medical teaching was exclusively Arabic throughout Europe.” There was, as I have said, no other source from which this knowledge could be derived. The Church preferred its more religious and more profitable method of miracle cure. What Europe would have become, if left exclusively to Christian influences, is an interesting subject for speculation, but one that does not give a very pleasing perspective. C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Atheism.

THE Rev. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, of Westminster Chapel, is one of the truly great orthodox preachers of the age. He possesses conspicuous qualifications for arresting and retaining the attention and exciting the interest of popular assemblies. He thoroughly understands his business, and impresses everyone as being profoundly in earnest. He is a typical preacher of the orthodox Christian Gospel. His forte is exposition of Scripture, and his success in that line is quite phenomenal, as is testified by the overflowing crowds that flock to his spacious chapel. Now, the very qualities which contribute to the greatness of

Dr. Campbell Morgan as a teacher of Christianity necessitated his cherishing and expressing all the prejudices and bigotries generally displayed by fervid advocates of the religion of the Cross. If Christianity is the only absolutely perfect religion, if an infinitely good and loving God specially revealed it to man by means of the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of his own beloved Son, it necessarily follows that to be without it is to be in the bonds of iniquity, in the grip of the Devil, and lost to all goodness. Christianity is the only religion Divinely qualified to redeem the world; but any religion, even the worst, is better than none at all. Non-religion marks the lowest depths of human depravity. That seems to be the teaching of Mr. Watts-Dunton in *Aylwyn*; and it certainly is the conviction entertained by Dr. Campbell Morgan.

On the last Sunday evening in 1909, the minister of Westminster Chapel delivered a remarkable sermon, notes of which appear in the *British Congregationalist* for February 3. Its title is, “The Church's Duty to the Present Age.” The Church's duty to the twentieth century is to adapt the Gospel message to its special conditions and needs. The Divine Fatherhood, the sinfulness of man, and the redemption through Christ require to be interpreted afresh in terms appropriate to the times. To be successful, a preacher must study “the facts of our age,” which are Atheism, Animalism, and Abjectness. What a lamentable, humiliating confession to come from an ambassador of Christ, after nineteen hundred years of Gospel preaching. During the whole of that long period Jesus has been proclaimed, by Divinely ordained men, as mighty to save, and as pouring forth upon the world a flood of irresistible love; and yet, in spite of it all, “the facts of our age are summarised in the three words—Atheism, Animalism, and Abjectness.” Has it never occurred to this evangelical orator that, had Christianity been true, such a state of things would have been impossible? He puts the blame upon the Church. “Then, say you, how is it that the Church has failed in this direction? Because the children of the Church have held back part of the price. There has been a succession of Ananiases and Saphiras, as well as of Apostles. Because we have not been true to the Divine Kingship in individual lines we have not been able to realise the Divine in the corporate capacity of the Church and reveal it to our age.” This might have been a valid excuse had the Church been represented as merely a human institution dependent for its success upon purely human means. The claim and the boast have ever been, however, that the Church is a special organisation for the salvation of the world, that it has the Eternal Christ as its head, and the Holy Ghost as its managing director. The failure of the Church is, therefore, the failure of God, and the failure of God proves his non-existence.

Let us now examine Dr. Campbell Morgan's deliverance on Atheism:—

“The fact of the great masses of the people at the present day is Atheism. But the Secularist halls are closed, you tell me. That is a bad sign. It shows that Atheism is more dangerous than it used to be. What is Atheism? It is ‘without Godism.’ And one of its supreme evidences is the frivolity of our age. Men have no personal commerce with God, and therefore it is an age of pleasure, of light literature, of frothiness. It is an age of indifference. There is no sense of God, and therefore there is no worship; there is the mastery of material ideals—Atheism.”

It would be very difficult to pack a greater number of blunders into so small a space. It is not true that “the fact of the great masses of the people at the present day is Atheism.” The great masses of the people have not brains enough, as yet, to adopt Atheism. The intellectually emancipated are but few and far between. The overwhelming majority in most communities are believers in God, however vague and languid their belief may be. Again, the Secularist halls are not closed. Several of them are open every Sunday in London, as well as throughout the provinces. It would do Dr. Campbell Morgan incalculable good to attend one of them and learn,

at first hand, what Atheism really is, and what it desires to accomplish. He would then see for himself what a radical mistake it is to associate Atheism with frivolity, with light literature, and with frothiness. Take the Agnostic literature now in circulation, and you must frankly acknowledge that it would be rank injustice to charge it with being frivolous, light, and frothy. Would any honest critic so characterise the poems and novels of George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and Eden Phillpotts? Only a short time ago, a new story by the last-named writer was most favorably reviewed in a well-known religious journal, by a first class critic who is himself an orthodox divine; and the only fault he could find with it was that it was hostile to Christianity. Were Dr. Campbell Morgan to make the personal acquaintance of a few Atheists, who are Atheists indeed, he would soon discover what a crime it would be to describe them as frivolous, pleasure-loving, and frothy. It is true that they have no sense of God, and that, consequently, they have no personal commerce with him, and offer him no worship; but it by no means follows that they are under "the mastery of material ideals."

"Then there is animalism. That is always the sequence to Atheism." Will Dr. Campbell Morgan be good enough to prove that statement? Several Atheists were present when he made it, and resented it with all the force of their manhood, though they were mannerly enough not to disturb the service by giving it the lie direct there and then. But they are prepared to assert, and to verify the assertion, that there is absolutely no connection between Atheism and animalism. And how easy it would be to turn the tables upon the preacher by depicting, in lurid colors, the horrible immoralities that have often flourished under the shadow of the most firmly established Christian Theism. Has he forgotten the black records of Stephen VI., Sergius III., John X., and John XII., covering a hideous period stigmatised as "the Pornocracy"? Does he not know how pope after pope wallowed in unspeakable sensuality and corruption at the Vatican, and how the comparatively pure pontiffs were constantly denouncing the shameless licentiousness of the clergy? Animalism within the Church has been a perfect scandal in all ages of its history. How would Dr. Campbell Morgan like us to say, "Then there is animalism; that is always the sequence to Christian Theism"? But there are twenty times more facts to support this proposition than there are to justify that propounded by the reverend gentleman. It is quite possible that some Atheists are the victims of sensuality and lust, just the same as multitudes of professing Christians are; but it is neither the Atheism in the one case, nor the Theism in the other, that should be held responsible for so deplorable a fact.

"And this [animalism] leads to abjectness, submission to forces that are destroying the national life without protest—the abjectness that is trying to persuade itself that it is of the essence of courage in its preparation for war; the abjectness that has nightmare if an aeroplane passes over the eastern sky." This is not an exceptionally luminous sentence. "Abjectness" is defined in the Dictionary as abasement, meanness, servility, ignobleness, slavishness, cravenheartedness. Where and when has the reverend gentleman come across a band of Atheists to whom such terms are applicable? Let him boldly descend to particulars, and not cowardly deal in vague generalities in a place where he cannot be challenged. It may be pleaded, as an excuse, that he was ignorant of the real facts of the case; but a public speaker has no right to prefer any charge against his fellow beings unless he is prepared to prove it. Ignorance is no palliation of the guilt of bearing false witness against one's neighbor. Because Dr. Campbell Morgan believes that Atheists ought to be extremely terrible people he does not hesitate to affirm that they are such. And yet he cannot but know that the political scaremongers to whom he darkly refers are mostly ostentatious defenders of the Christian faith.

Dr. Campbell Morgan's erroneous conception and unjust treatment of Atheism is, doubtless, largely due to his false notion of sin. He says that "a new emphasis should be laid upon the fact that the essence of sin is unbelief." For a confirmation of that statement he refers us to the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is true that the Bible is on his side; at least, that most of the Bible gives him support; but the Nature of Things is dead against both him and the Bible. The curious thing is that he insists upon his hearers' acceptance of a false definition of unbelief. Unbelief, according to him, is "not lack of intellectual conviction, but refusal to obey intellectual conviction." And yet this definition, false though it be, is a complete justification of Atheists. They are people who are intellectually convinced that no personal Deity exists, and they obey that intellectual conviction by making a public profession of Atheism and living without God in the world. On Dr. Campbell Morgan's own showing they are guilty of the "sin of sins." They heroically "obey the call of truth." Of course, this is not what the reverend gentleman means. After all, with him, as with all other divines, unbelief signifies refusal to believe in God, in Christ, in the Christian scheme of salvation through the merits of the Atonement. This is the sin that damns to all eternity. We hold, on the contrary, that "the sin of sins" is to believe without evidence, and to base one's conduct on such belief. Atheism relieves the problems of life of all irrelevant issues by giving to morality a natural, human, instead of religious, sanction. And we venture to express our entire dissent from Dr. Campbell Morgan's teaching by calmly and deliberately affirming that Atheism is amply justified by its fruit.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christian Wiseacres.—II.

(Concluded from p. 92.)

FOR many hundreds of years Christian wiseacres, interpreting the Bible literally, contended that the earth was created out of nothing; that it is flat, and not round; that the earth and all that is therein or thereon were made in six days; that the earth is the centre of the universe, around which the sun, moon, planets, and stars revolve; and that all the races of mankind have descended from two individuals named Adam and Eve.

Cosmas Indicopleustes, in the sixth century, taught that the earth is in shape a parallelogram—a quadrangular plain extending 400 days' journey east to west, and exactly half as much north to south; that it is surrounded by four seas, which are enclosed by enormous mountains; that upon these mountains the sky rests, thus forming a vault in which are all the heavenly bodies; and that night is produced by the sun regularly passing behind a huge mountain which is situated on the north side.

The Venerable Bede tells us that the "creation was accomplished in six days, and that the earth is its central and primary object."

"Heaven," he says, "is of a fiery and subtle nature, round and equidistant in every part, as a canopy from the centre of the earth; that it turns round every day with ineffable rapidity, only moderated by the resistance of the seven planets; three above the sun—Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars; and three below the sun—Venus, Mercury, and the moon. The stars," he says, "go round in their fixed courses, the northern performing the shortest circle. The highest heaven has its proper limit; it contains the angelic virtues who descend upon the earth, assume ethereal bodies, perform human functions, and return. The heaven is tempered with glacial waters, lest it should be set on fire. The inferior heaven is called the firmament, because it separates the superincumbent waters from the waters below. The firmamental waters are lower than the spiritual heaven, higher than all corporeal beings, reserved, some say, for a second deluge; others, more truly, to temper the fires of the fixed stars."

Lactantius asserted that astronomers were "mad and senseless." "Is there anyone," he asks, "so

senseless as to believe that there are men whose footsteps are higher than their heads? That the crops and trees grow downward? That the rains and snow fall upward toward the earth?"

St. Basil and St. Ambrose allowed that a man might be saved who believed the earth to be round, and inhabited on its opposite sides; but the great majority of the Fathers of the Church—the wise-*acres par excellence*—utterly denied the possibility of salvation to such misbelievers.

St. Augustine was inclined to yield a little in regard to the rotundity of the earth, but he scouted the idea that men existed on the other side of it, asserting that "the scriptures speak of no such descendants of Adam."

St. Boniface declared that to believe in the existence of the antipodes was a terrible heresy, for it meant that there are men on the earth beyond the reach of the means of salvation.

No wonder, then, that during the Dark Ages the criteria of truth, according to Christianity, were miracle ordeals. When a person was charged with a crime, especially if it were an ecclesiastical offence, he was thrown into a pond; if he swam, he was innocent; if he sank, he was guilty. Or a red-hot iron was thrust into his hand; if it burnt him, he was guilty; if it did not harm him he was innocent. Such ordeals, by which guilt or innocency were presumed to be established, were a disgrace to common sense, and show the value of the teachings of Christianity.

In the fourteenth century two men publicly asserted their belief in the rotundity of the earth. One of these died before the Church could punish him, but the other, who was named Cecco d'Ascoli, was burnt alive for his heresy when he was 70 years of age. Nor was that all the punishment that was heaped upon him; for the great painter Orcagna, whose terrible works may be seen on the walls of the Campo Santa at Pisa, pursued him after his death by representing him to be in the flames of hell.

In the eighteenth century Tostatus, a famous theological wiseacre, argued thus against the rotundity of the earth. "The apostles," said he, "were commanded to go into all the world and to preach the gospel to every creature; they did not go to any such part of the world as the antipodes, and did not preach to any creatures there—*ergo*, no antipodes exist." Such was the chop logic of Christian wise-*acres* immediately before the advent of Columbus and Magellan.

Even after Columbus had discovered the West Indian Islands, and thereupon had greatly strengthened the hypothesis of the earth's rotundity, the Church, by its highest authority, was solemnly committed to the theory of the earth's flatness. Columbus, in his first celebrated voyage, at nightfall on September 13, 1492, being then $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ east of Corvo, one of the Azores, observed that the compass needles of his ship no longer pointed a little to the east of north, but were wearing to the west. The deviation became more and more marked as the expedition advanced, and on its return voyage the variation was exactly the reverse; the variation westward diminished until the meridian in question was reached, when the needles again pointed due north; and thence, as the coast of Europe was approached, the variation was to the east. Columbus, therefore, came to the conclusion that the line of no variation was a fixed geographical line between the eastern and western hemispheres, and passed from north to south just west of the Azores and the Canary Islands.

Now Spain and Portugal had been disputing about their eastern positions, and had referred their quarrel to the arbitration of the Pope, Alexander VI. This Christian wiseacre, having been informed of the discovery of the line of no variation, and being, of course, infallible in his judgment, adopted it as the basis for the settlement of the dispute between these nations. By a "bull," which he issued in May, 1493, he declared that all lands discovered east of this line

should belong to the Portugese, and all discovered west of it should belong to the Spaniards; and this decision was held by the Church as displaying a wisdom equal to that of Solomon.

This was a terrible blow for Spain, but she soon found means to avoid it, and, by doing so, to fix the Papal government in a most awkward dilemma. Her commercial prosperity was of more importance to her than was the infallibility of the Pope. Accordingly, she listened to the representations of one Ferdinand Magellan, who argued that if a water-way could be discovered through the continent of America the ocean which bounded the east coast of Asia could be navigated, and thus, by continually sailing westward, India could be reached, and so Spain, even under the Papal "bull," would have as good a right to its trade as Portugal had. An expedition of five ships, carrying 237 men, was fitted out, and placed under the command of Magellan.

On August 10, 1519, Magellan took his departure from Spain, and made straight for the South American coast. Misfortune, however, waited upon him, but nothing could daunt his spirit. For seventy days he was becalmed on the Line, and his men were appalled by the apprehension that they had drifted into a region where the winds never blew, and that it was impossible for them to escape. At length he reached the American continent, and coasted along it southward. After more than a year he discovered the strait which now bears his name. This strait is situated just south of the Falkland Islands, and not far from Cape Horn itself. He now considered that success was certain, and shed tears of joy that God had at length enabled him to grapple with the unknown dangers of the Pacific Ocean. Firm in his belief that the earth is round, he steered steadily to the northwest for nearly four months without once seeing land. Nothing could induce him to turn back, though his men were driven by famine to eat scraps of skin and leather with which his rigging was here and there bound, and to drink water that had gone putrid. After sailing, according to his estimate, something like 12,000 miles, he struck the Ladrone Islands; and here he was killed, either by the savage inhabitants of the islands or by some of his own men. His lieutenant, Sebastian d'Elcano, now took command of the ship, and steering south-west, after encountering frightful hardships, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and at length, on September 2, 1522, brought his ship, the *San Vittoria*, to anchor in the port of St. Lucar, near Seville. The globular form of the earth was now beyond all doubt. The *San Vittoria*, sailing westward continually, had come back to her starting-point. She had accomplished the greatest achievement in the history of the human race. She had circumnavigated the earth, and had proved that the Christian wise-*acres* were simply blind leaders of the blind.

To point out, even in the most cursory fashion, other extraordinary blunders in regard to astronomy, geology, and other of the sciences which Christian wise-*acres* have made, would be a waste of time. I have said enough, I think, to satisfy any sane man that the wise-*acres* who foisted Christianity on the world have been hoisted by their own petards. The contest between Christianity and Science has been long and bitter; and in every case, no matter how determined the defence of the theologians has been, the former has always been defeated, whilst the latter has been always victorious.

What, then, is the lesson to be drawn from the facts to which I have called attention? Is it not that every man should think for himself, should be fully persuaded in his own mind? The question for each one of us to consider is not whether the Bible be inspired, but whether it be true. So far as my reading has gone, no one has ever argued against the truth that is in the Bible, but simply against the preposterous claims that have been made by Christian wise-*acres* on its behalf. Christian wise-*acres* of the present day, bumptious though they be, are far more modest than were even their immediate predecessors, and necessarily so; for, now that Reason

can, and does, employ the searchlight of Science in her quest after Truth, priestly bombast is treated by all thinking men with contempt. And rightly so! For the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Pope of Rome, knows no more of the Whence we came and the Whither we go than do you or I. To Christian wiseacres I propound these questions:—

"If God's happiness was perfect
In the dawn of Long Ago,
What induced him to impair it
By creating Sin and Woe?
Don't you think, when God created
This world and all therein,
He had shown more Love and Mercy
Had he left out Woe and Sin?"

J. W. DE CAUX.

Acid Drops.

The new Liberal government will lack one of the old members. Mr. Herbert Gladstone is going out as Governor-General of South Africa. We believe few people in England will mourn his loss. Mr. Gladstone just suited the Home Office in one respect. He displayed a policeman's mind. He was authoritative, pedantic, pompous, inflexible, and dull. His own party shrugged their shoulders over his allowing a commonplace North London policeman, who runs a mission hall, to revive the Blasphemy Laws after twenty-five years' abeyance. Hardly anything could be worse than his handling of the Suffragette difficulty. His fondness for the "indeterminate" sentence, in the present state of penal organisation, shocked all the more sensitive men and women who are interested in prison reform. Except for his name we doubt if he would ever have been singled out for the lowest public honor, unless it were on a Board of Guardians or a Watch Committee. We do not dispute his sincerity. He is stupid enough to believe the creed he professes and solemn enough to think every man wicked who smiles at it.

We have several times remarked that Blasphemy prosecutions get started when Liberal governments are at Downing-street. The Liberals were in power in 1882-3 during the *Freethinker* prosecutions; they were also in power during the Blasphemy prosecution of 1908. Another curious coincidence is that Sir William Harcourt, the Home Secretary in 1882-3, and Mr. Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary in 1908, were both Churchmen. There is a moral in this, if one could only dig it out.

Mr. S. Stennett, secretary of the London District Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, speaks out with commendable plainness with regard to General Booth's shufflings over the "Shelter" work in London. "What he has got to justify," Mr. Stennett says, "is paying men *one* shilling for making an article for which other employers pay their workmen *four* shillings." "We don't want any more of these 'replies,'" he concludes, "but a public inquiry." True. But that is what Booth cannot afford.

A woman at Graz complained that she had been "dangerously ill with atheism and rheumatism." Some would say that heat was good for both.

Christianity is the impossible creed. Nobody could practise it outside a prison, a workhouse, or a lunatic asylum—and hardly anybody tries to. It is like shooting at the moon; you never hit anything except by accident. The result is that, of all people in the world, Christians act most in opposition to what they profess to believe. They ought all to loathe and despise money. Yet they are all after it. You can do anything with money in Christian England. Lord Rothschild knows it. He gave £50,000 to the Tory campaign fund, and is ready to give another. He gets his money's worth.

England is a curious country. Bible subjects are not allowed upon the legitimate stage, but they are allowed in concert-rooms and music-halls. Miss Maud Allen dances the story of John the Baptist, and Saint Saens' *Samson and Delilah* has just been produced at Brighton. Perhaps the explanation is that the dramatic censorship is necessary to cramp the mind of playgoers within respectable limits. It is *thinking* that is really dangerous.

How amusing it is to see the New Theologians playing fast and loose with the Bible, and especially with the New

Testament. Rev. R. J. Campbell, for instance, preaches a sermon on "The Eternal Man" from the text of John viii. 23. According to the narrative, the speaker was Jesus Christ, but "it is difficult to believe that literally," he says. Of course it is. It is difficult to believe that Jesus Christ said anything at all which is put into his mouth in the Gospels. And this is the position that Mr. Campbell is coming to. He is on the broad road. He has only got to keep on.

"All that Christian faith has ever asserted concerning the divine dignity of Jesus Christ," says Mr. Campbell, "is true; it must be true, or else the universe is not a moral order." Now that is a straight blow from the shoulder, and the universe has fair warning. If the Christian belief in Jesus is not true the City Temple will impeach the universe as being an unmoral, or immoral, character. Yet we should not be at all surprised if the universe goes on in much the same way as of old. It seems a thoroughly depraved character; quite impervious to the moral thunders of even the Rev. R. J. Campbell.

Mr. Campbell also says the "earth man is not the real man; this unselfish, unlovely you is not the real you." Presumably this is intended as a dose of super-refined mysticism; and as this means to most people mystification, it will no doubt please many. Still we venture to point out that the real man *is* the earth man, and every other man is purely imaginary. The very best qualities of man are developed on the earth, they belong to the earth, and have no possible application anywhere else—unless we imagine man living on another earth, which is a mere change of place without any alteration of conditions. Whether one loves or hates, is selfish or unselfish, good or bad, his qualities are all equally rooted in his earthly nature and equally dependent upon his earthly relationships. And however transformed any human quality may become, it can never sever itself from the *animal* base in which it is rooted. The "higher" human qualities of man are not something added to, or operating through, the "earth man"; they are developments from it, and do not admit of separation. And any philosophy that ignores this is mere verbal fustian.

The Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Clubs have been remonstrated with by the riverside clergy for fixing the date of the boat race during Holy Week. It is found, however, that the date cannot possibly be altered this year. The race cannot be rowed before March 23, and if it is postponed after that date the crews will have to go on training and rowing over Good Friday and Easter Day, which would be even more objectionable than the present arrangement. The desecration will therefore have to go forward, and the poor dear clergy must bear it as they can.

The pastorate of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, was offered to the Rev. J. H. Jowett, of Birmingham. After a little hesitation, and seeking of the Lord, he declined it. It was then offered to the Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan, of Westminster Chapel, and he also has declined it. The stipend is £3,000 a year. Enough to make all the twelve apostles' mouths water! We do not hear what salaries Dr. Jowett and Dr. Campbell Morgan are at present enjoying. Pretty good ones we guess. Christianity has undergone a great financial change since the days of the poor Carpenter.

There is an unintended commentary on the Christian claim to have promoted the Brotherhood of Man in Lord Cromer's recently published *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*. The author points out that there was really less race antipathy—particularly between races of different colors—in ancient than exists in modern times. He also says:—

"Antipathy based on differences of color is a plant of comparatively recent growth. It seems probable that it received a great stimulus from the world discoveries of the fifteenth century. One of these results was to convince the white Christian that he might, not only with profit but with strict propriety, enslave the black heathen....The fact that the institution of slavery was closely identified in the eyes of all the world with difference of color must have helped to bring into greater prominence the idea of white superiority, and thus to foster a race antipathy which, by a very comprehensible association of ideas, was not altogether confined to those colored races who were enslaved."

This is no more than a statement of the bare truth. The Brotherhood of Man came far nearer realisation under the Roman dominion than ever it has done under Christian rule. Racial and national antipathies were, too, far less pronounced under the Empire than was afterwards the case. Christian slavery, too, it is worth noting, was the most degraded slavery the world has seen. The Romans admitted that slavery was a mere matter of convention, and could claim

no sanction from the "law of nature." It was Christianity that supplied slavery with a religious sanction, and so gave a colossal iniquity that "moral" sanction Christians are so fond of. Not that it ever prevented Christians perpetrating any iniquity they found it profitable to practise.

The Kensit preachers are claiming £3,000 damages against the Rev. and Hon. L. Tyrwhitt, rector of Rolleston, and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the King, for alleged slander in a sermon preached at St. Paul's, Burton-on-Trent. The reverend gentleman is alleged to have described the preachers as a "peripatetic troupe, known as the Kensit clowns." Fancy wanting £3,000 for that! How much might the Pharisees have got (or claimed) if they had brought an action against Jesus, who called them "whited sepulchres," "generation of vipers," and "children of hell." But perhaps they didn't think so much of themselves as the Kensitites do.

Religious papers, when they are not dreary, are frequently—even if unconsciously—amusing. The *British Congregationalist* for February 3 contains a review of a book by a Mr. Henry Sturt, on *The Idea of a Free Church*, which has saddened the reviewer because it says things about Christianity. The reviewer finds a redeeming feature in the fact that Mr. Sturt is not a "vulgar Atheist." We would not, of course, deny that there are such people as "vulgar Atheists," although we fancy "vulgar" is here used as an equivalent of "uncompromising." Still, accepting vulgar in its proper sense, we would point out that vulgar Atheists are not nearly so common as vulgar Christians, nor is their vulgarity thrust so impudently upon other people. For real vulgarity, there is no one on the face of the earth who can hold a candle to a certain type of Christian whose lack of consideration for, and offensiveness towards, other people is notorious. Mr. Sturt's redeeming feature appears to be that he believes in God, a future life, and the necessity of prayer. It is these redeeming pieces of folly that, in the reviewer's opinion, saves Mr. Sturt from being classed as a "vulgar Atheist."

The reviewer finds it hard to argue with a man who writes as follows:—

"Of all the terrible intellectual disasters of Europe the Bible has been by far the greatest, mitigated only partially by the wild romantic savagery of the Old Testament, by the sweet natural beauty of the preaching of Jesus, and for us by the old-time nobility of the Jacobean translation. What an irreparable injury to the intellectual growth of England that week by week for centuries the people have had presented to them 'lessons' from the records of an Arab tribe, unapproachably distant in culture, in national sentiment, and in spiritual aspiration. Who can estimate the degree to which our poetry has been starved, our national genius crushed, our history cheapened and thrust out of sight by this alien oppression?"

We quite see that it is hard for a religious person to argue with one who writes like this; and the difficulty is entirely due to its truth. Christians have talked for so long about the incomparable benefits conferred on the world by the Bible, and most writers have been so chary of setting them right on the matter, that when the truth, or a portion of it, is told, it naturally comes on the Christian with a shock. We have no doubt whatever that anyone who makes a close and impartial study of English history will endorse all that Mr. Sturt says, and add more on his own account. How repressive the influence of the Bible is may be seen by a study of the decline of literature and the higher arts of life in Scotland when the Bible and its Protestant worshippers gained the upper hand. The same influence may be also traced in England in the seventeenth century. And if on the positive side we count the encouragement to savage beliefs, such as those of witchcraft and demoniacal possession, and the opposition to scientific development, we may safely say that Mr. Sturt might have made the case much stronger without overstraining it.

A foolish priest, who worships a God that ought to be in a museum, is the Rev. Mgr. Grosch. Preaching to a large congregation at St. John's Church, Duncan-terrace, Islington, he argued that the floods in France were probably—he would not say certainly—sent by God to punish the French people for their wicked conduct towards the Catholic Church. Mgr. Grosch declared that "the Christian faith had been banished from the schools in France." This is perfectly true, but the schools are civic schools, and only civic teaching is allowed in them. Religion is not persecuted by being kept in its proper place. Mgr. Grosch also declared that "the Christian priests had been forbidden to teach the youth of France." But this is an absolute falsehood. The priests are perfectly free to teach all the children they can get hold of. What has happened is that the State declines to collect the

children for the priests to manipulate. They have to do their own collecting, and they scream at this policy as the most terrible injustice. There is no pleasing these priests unless you let them have their own way in everything.

Mgr. Grosch's real object, of course, was to frighten his English congregation. Let them beware of the God of Floods. He might give England a turn if he were provoked. Fancy even Duncan-terrace under water! Awful thought! If they wanted to prevent such a calamity they should resolve to give no countenance to Secular Education. That was the devil's most devilish work. "In one generation you would have some Christians left, but in two generations there would be no Christianity worth speaking of in the land." This is the declaration of a Catholic priest, and it confirms all that we have ever said about religion being an artificial thing only kept in existence by taking advantage of children's minds before they are able to judge for themselves. We have Mgr. Grosch's word for it that Christians must be manufactured. They do not come in the ordinary way of nature. That is why the priests cry "Give us the schools!" And it is also the reason why Freethinkers should cry "We'll give you Hades first!"

Another man of God, this time a Protestant, who has just been sent up "higher" in the Church of England, was once guilty of the same folly as Mgr. Grosch. We refer to the Rev. Prebendary Poyntz. Some twelve years ago a statue of Charles Darwin was erected at Shrewsbury, and very soon afterwards a great gale blew down the top of St. Mary's Church spire. According to the reverend gentleman this was God's way of showing his grave displeasure. One would have thought that God would have gone for the statue of Darwin instead of the spire of his own house. But the gods were always a strange lot. So are the Godites.

According to the *Greenock Telegraph* the "falling off in the attendances at a local church has reached an acute stage." Things cannot last as they are; there must come a change in the pulpit or the pew. "That is plain enough," our contemporary says. Yes and it is plain enough in many places besides Greenock.

Dr. Percy Gardner, in his *Modernity and the Churches*, says that it is quite a mistake to imagine that when we have traced religion back to primitive beliefs, which are admitted to be unsound, we have disposed of it. He claims that we have yet "to consider the value of religion—whether it is good, and why. And if it be good, it would be absurd to reject it from any rationalist scruple." Well, as the world goes, the Rationalist admits that pushing back religious beliefs to their origin in discredited savage ideas does not dispose of them. It would do, and it ought to do so, if people were sufficiently developed. All he claims is that this does, at all events, disprove the truth of religion. A religion that rests upon no better foundation than the exploded theories of savages ought not to gain acceptance among civilised people. The question of the utility of religion remains, although Freethinkers have a healthy conviction that ultimately the truthful and the useful coincide. Still, even upon this lower ground the reply is easy and obvious. The claim set up for benefits conferred by religion ignores the various social forces with which religion, in the course of its history, has been associated. Allow for the play of these, and it will be seen that there is little left to place to the credit of religion. Morality and all the arts of life have been more or less associated with religion, because in primitive life superstitious fears cover the whole of existence. Advancing civilisation corrects the error of these primitive generalisations; and a still further degree of civilisation should banish them altogether from modern life.

Bishop Welldon has been praising church attendance. "It was in the service," he said, "that they quickened their desire for love and for good works." "He sometimes thought that the people who never came to church must be made of another nature." Perhaps a good many of them are. It doesn't seem to have occurred to Bishop Welldon that there are people who stay away from church on principle. There would be a difference between such people and those that Bishop Welldon meets at the tabernacle.

The Bishop of London admits that "the Church of England has never been in time." We should put it differently. We should say that the Church of England has always been behind date. But what of that? Every Church is behind date. So the Bishop needn't weep too much.

Rev. W. Hume Campbell, principal of St. Christopher's College, Blackheath, finds fault with the clergy for being such miserable ill-users of the human voice, which has in it the music of every other instrument. "If a doctor, a barrister, a musician, or an actor," Mr. Campbell says, "tried to practise his profession with an ignorance of its technique such as is common amongst us clergy, he would starve in a week." Poor beggars!

"A horrible story of the lynching by a mob of Mohammedans of a blasphemer comes from Constantinople. The victim, says a Central News message, was a common laborer, Suleiman Hountitch-Saraili, and it appears that in the course of drunken vaporings he gave utterance to certain blasphemous remarks, which roused the listening crowd to frenzy. The man was dragged into the yard of an adjacent house, and held down whilst a quantity of lead was melted. He was then ordered to open his mouth, and, as he refused and kept it tightly closed, his lips were forced apart and his teeth broken, after which the molten lead was poured down his throat. The dying wretch was afterwards stripped and horribly mutilated, his ears, nose, and hands being cut off. The perpetrators of the outrage are said to be well-known members of the community, but the police have taken no action."—*Westminster Gazette*.

The fact that he is himself a Roman Catholic did not justify the Lord Mayor of London in sending £1,000 to the Paris Relief Fund to be distributed amongst Roman Catholics by the Archbishop of Paris. It is difficult to see in what way Roman Catholics have suffered specially from the floods. We do not say the Lord Mayor meant it, but that £1,000, while ostensibly expended in charity, will virtually be expended in advertising the benevolent virtues of the Catholic Church. We regard the Lord Mayor's action as a gross infringement of the principle that money subscribed by all sorts and conditions of citizens for the relief of suffering shall not be diverted into sectional or denominational channels. What a row there would have been if a freethinking Lord Mayor had sent £1,000 to the Freethinkers' League in Paris! But no Freethinker, of course, would ever think of acting in that way. It is only Christians who are capable of such things.

A new Press Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council in India. It includes the worst features of the old gagging laws in England a hundred years ago. Newspapers will have to deposit money as security for good behavior. Customs and Postal authorities are given authority to detain and examine printed matter. Local governments are empowered to seize and forfeit any newspaper, book, or document. Amongst the press offences created by this Bill is exciting to "racial, class, and religious animosity, and hatred and contempt of the Government." No paper is safe under such a law. The Government has every agency of publicity by the throat, and can grip tight whenever it pleases. Surely it is idle to suppose that three hundred millions of people under modern conditions will consent to be treated in this way a moment longer than they can help. We are heading for catastrophe in India, and the Liberals with Lord Morley are just as bad as the Conservatives with Lord Curzon. We extend our sympathy to Hindu publicists, and especially to the Freethinkers among them, who are likely to have the worst time of all.

The National Free Church Council, assembled at the Memorial Hall, were startled by a speech from Sir J. Compton Rickett, M.P., who objected to the banning of polygamy by the missionaries amongst native converts in Africa. He said it was a positive hindrance to the work. Polygamy was "a harmless native custom" and was not favorable to immorality but a protection against it. Besides, Europe had been developing morally for 2,000 years, and the African natives could not leap forward in a moment. We quite agree that there is a good deal of sense in this, but it is a pity that the speaker stopped where he did. He might have told his audience—we presume he knows it—that Christianity is not, strictly speaking, a monogamous religion. The Bible does not contain one word against polygamy. So far as the early Christians were Jews they were quite free to be polygamists, and some of them (who could afford it) most certainly were so. It was only so far as they were Greeks or Romans that they were monogamists. The Pagans had outgrown polygamy before the Jews, and so Christianity entered into a moral inheritance created for it by a secular civilisation.

According to Mr. Clarence Rook in the *Daily Chronicle*, the Gbaris, who speak a language that is scattered all over Northern Nigeria, are "absolutely Pagan, industrious, sober,

and honest." We are not surprised. Our wonder is whether the missionaries will leave them so.

It is believed that the damage done by the Paris floods will much exceed the original estimate of £40,000,000. Good old "Providence"!

Mr. Balfour's orthodoxy has secured a certificate. Rev. Dr. James Robertson, minister of Whittingehame, and Moderator of the Church of Scotland, writes as follows to the *Daily Chronicle* with reference to Mr. Harold Begbie's article which was dealt with on our front page last week:—

"I have seen nothing in this electoral contest more painfully unworthy than this endeavor to poison the public mind in regard to a great and high-minded man, who has devoted his brilliant abilities for so many years to the service of the State. I know Mr. Balfour. I have known him since he was 17 years of age. He is a member of my congregation, and attends worship and Communion regularly while at his home here. I have pleasure in his presence whenever I preach, for I know that I have in him a believing, responsive and eminently understanding hearer. He is a regular and liberal subscriber to the enterprises of the Church, and has done the Scottish Church service for which a multitude of its ministers are grateful."

That's all right! We have no desire, for our part, to claim Mr. Balfour as an "unbeliever." But in spite of Dr. Robertson's testimonial there are doubtless some wicked people who will "wink the other eye."

Mr. Edward Clodd says that Meredith's letter to Mr. Watts-Dunton on the death of Swinburne brought him the following reproof from some pious busybody:—

"What a sad pity your letter to Watts-Dunton did not contain some such passage as the following: 'We grieve his earthly loss; but you and I, in full and happy confidence in the blessed redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ, are certain of his eternal welfare; and you and I in old age, resting in simple faith in our Lord, do look for a reunion with him in the presence of our Father whom we have all loved?' No; no word of trust and hope in God; not one word of religion can I find in all the meandering balderdash Swinburne wrote, and which not one in a thousand, and probably not even himself, could understand. Why, oh why, do you clever men try to be more clever than God? You are all clay, and in your wonderful cleverness how He has you in derision.—H. J. N."

We have received hundreds—we might say thousands—of such letters in our time. Nine out of every ten of them, at least, are anonymous, and more or less abusive. Those who sign their names generally write in a maudlin vein. They tell us how they yearn over our lost condition, what grand work we might be doing in the Lord's vineyard, and how they would be delighted if we accepted their invitation to come to Christ. Sometimes a pious lady says: "Won't you come, dear Mr. Foote?" The dear creature! But we are obliged to decline.

A correspondent of the *Church Times* says that "the *Freethinker* has always been a strenuous critic of the Socialist movement." This gentleman has a strenuous imagination. The *Freethinker* attends to its own business, which does not include criticising or defending Socialism.

Professor Carré deals with the reign of Louis the Fifteenth in the eighth volume of his *Histoire de France*. Louis was weak, cruel, sensual, and pious. He would go straight from confession or divine service to debauch some young girl who had been procured for him by the keeper of his harem. "He follows the processions," Professor Carré says, "kneels in the street when the viaticum is carried, but neither his piety nor his dread of hell preserved him from a single vice." Shelley noticed the same phenomenon amongst the devout Catholics in Italy. Religion had no necessary connection with any one virtue. It was often a stimulus, never a restraint.

Nobody is going for Pigott just now. The virtue of our public journals is always subservient to business. Pigott waits, therefore, until his pursuit is once more profitable. That is to say, until the "forty millions, mostly fools" can be stirred up once more to the purchasing point about this stock villain. During the lull of exhausted morality the news leaks out that Pigott's secretary, Mr. Charles Stokes Reed, has just died of heart failure. He was nearly sixty years of age, and he never recovered from the effects of the assault upon him when the Agapemone was raided in November 1908, by some persons who combined aggressive righteousness with a keen eye to newspaper copy.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 13, St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, London, W.; at 7.30, "Shakespeare's Personality." With Special Reference to Mr. Frank Harris's New Book.

February 20, St. James's Hall; 27, Birmingham Town Hall.

March 6, St. James's Hall, London; 13, Liverpool; 20, Leicester; 27, St. James's Hall, London.

April 3, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 13, Glasgow.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 13, St. Pancras Ethical Society; 20, Liverpool; 27, St. James's Hall. March 6, Manchester; 20, St. James's Hall; 27, Holloway.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged. £151 18s. Received since:—A. G. Lye, 5s.; H. Shaw, 2s.; T. Bailey, 2s.; James E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.; A. S. Vickers, £1; Manchester, 4s. 6d.; D. Wright, 5s.; F. H. Davey, 5s.; W. Palmer 2s. 6d.; J. T. Griffiths, 10s.; A. Rowley, 5s.; Rev. U. Dhammaloka (Buddhist Tract Society, Rangoon), 10s.; Tome (S. Africa), £3 10s.

Mr. J. MARTIN, 342 Edge-lane, Liverpool, is now the Secretary of the Liverpool Branch, and all communications concerning the Branch should be sent to him.

A. G. LYE.—Pleased to know you will "always feel indebted" to us "for wisdom and light."

H. SHAW AND T. BAILEY.—Your letter, at once amusing, pathetic, and encouraging, shows what can be done through individual missionary effort. Thanks for it. Your concluding query shall not be forgotten.

J. KNOX.—Don't be silly.

JOSEPH BATES.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

JAMES E. STAPLETON.—Pleased to have your "whole-hearted appreciation." Glad to read the rest of your letter.

W. SHAWCROSS.—We note your pleasure at seeing "such a fine appreciative audience" at our Stratford Town Hall lecture. Thanks for cuttings.

W. T. O'CONNOR.—Nothing can be sold in the London County Council's parks and open spaces without the Council's permission. This is a sensible, and indeed a necessary regulation. All such regulations, of course, are bound to operate more or less against unpopular causes. Our own *Bible Romances* is under the Council's ban. In the same way, the *Freethinker* is excluded from the Camberwell and other Free Libraries. Such things must be expected to happen while Christians are numerous and powerful. It is impossible to fight the London County Council on such an issue. We must leave rushing against brick walls to those who like it or think it good policy.

J. T. GRIFFITHS writes: "It is six or seven years since I heard you lecture at (Glasgow on 'The Wee Frees, the U. Frees, and the disputed Cash Box.' I had taken an odd number of the *Freethinker* previously, but I have not missed an odd number since." This correspondent is thanked for the information re the Wakefield election.

W. PALMER.—Pleased to hear from one who has read this journal since its first number. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

F. H. DAVEY.—Our compliments to the few Freethinkers at P— Post Office who subscribe through you (we keep back the full name), and our thanks for their efforts to "push the circulation of the good old *Freethinker*."

T. FOWLER.—May find room.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

"TOME" (S. Africa), sending annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I sincerely hope that this year the £300 will be reached. It's not too much to expect from the cause."

T. W. HAUGHTON.—The *Northern Whig* article merits your description, but it is difficult to discuss a review of a book with much advantage. Newspapers print the praises of religion on commercial principles. They would do the opposite if it paid.

A. ROWLEY.—Pleased to hear you have taken four copies of the *Freethinker* weekly for over two years and "spread them around." You say it is the best paper you ever subscribed to, and that you are "astounded" at its not having a large paying circulation. So are we sometimes. But we soon recollect what Thackeray said about "the long ear of the dear public."

J. G. WALKER.—Much obliged. We will get the book and deal with it.

H. MORTON REID.—The Protestant Church of England was established and endowed by Acts of Parliament. We intend publishing something on that matter shortly. The Bishops' salaries are paid by the Ecclesiastic Commissioners, who are appointed by the State.

FREE LANCE.—Such silly things abound during Lent. Glad you regard this journal as "a triumph of reason."

J. TOMKINS.—Thanks.

B. BROWN.—We are tired of saying that Tuesday is too late for paragraphs, and please remember that we do not undertake to write out secretaries' lecture notices from printed bills,

J. V. BARLOW.—Too late for this week.

L. BARKER, J. CARRUTHERS, and L. CHEETHAM.—In our next.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote takes the two middle Sundays in February at St. James's Hall. In response to many importunities he is devoting both to Shakespeare again. The first lecture (this evening, Feb. 13) will deal with the question of Shakespeare's personality, which has been so strikingly raised lately in a book that has been so much talked and written about—Mr. Frank Harris's *The Man Shakespeare*. Mr. Foote will, as usual, present his own view of the subject, and it differs a good deal from Mr. Harris's. The lecture should be intensely interesting. On the following Sunday evening (Feb. 20) Mr. Foote's subject will be a most delightful one—"Wit, Wisdom, and Humanity in Shakespeare's Comedies."

These new Shakespearean lectures will be fairly well advertised, but there is plenty of room left for the private efforts of the "saints" in this line. They can at least talk about the lectures to their friends and acquaintances. They can also obtain neat little printed announcements from Miss Vance, and put them into circulation. Frankly, we cannot say that the London "saints" have made the most of this St. James's Hall opportunity. Even allowing for the elections and the January weather. We wish to rouse them up a bit.

Mr. Foote had grand meetings at Manchester on Sunday. The Secular Hall was crowded to the doors in the afternoon as well as in the evening, and the enthusiasm of the audience was unbounded. It was another red-letter day, and a singular comment on the favorite clerical text that Secularism is ready for burial.

Mr. Cohen lectures twice to-day (Feb. 13) in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow. District "saints" will please note, and notify other people. Amateur advertising is very good work in such cases.

Mr. J. Allanson Picton, who has just died at the age of seventy-eight, was a good Radical in his best days, and to a certain extent a good Freethinker. But he never abandoned supernaturalism, and towards the end he coquetted rather flagrantly with the New Theologians. He seemed to attach a special value to the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, and a peculiarly sacred character to the Bible, although he denounced the low morality of the Old Testament. He once wrote a book on the *Mystery of Matter*. We should say he had no mean share in him of the matter of mystery.

Mr. Picton was sound on one thing, at any rate. He was a member of the first London School Board, and stood on the "free, compulsory, and secular" ticket. He never wavered on Secular Education. He was one of the speakers at the meeting at which the Secular Education League was founded.

Primitive Buddhism, orthodox Buddhism—the Buddhism of its founder, Guatama—is a philosophy rather than a religion. It is indeed atheistic, as the late Professor Max Muller frankly admitted. Our readers will therefore not be surprised to see a Buddhist "reverend" in this week's list of

subscribers to the President's Honorarium Fund. In many parts of the East the Buddhist monks—men of learning and refinement, who shun the wealth which Christian priests hunt after—are strenuously and successfully opposing Christianity. Rev. U. Dhammaloka, who writes from the Tavoy Monastery, Rangoon, says: "I am always glad to see that Mr. Foote, your President, is ever on the march, fighting against the forces of Christian superstition; and I trust he may long be spared to continue his noble work in the cause of Free thought and mental liberty and truth."

This Atheist monk travels about himself a good deal, preaching his own gospel, and is sometimes away from Rangoon for three months together. There is always someone at the monastery, however, in Godwin-road, who will be glad to welcome any member of the N. S. S. travelling that way. "This week," the Rev. U. Dhammaloka writes, under date of January 17, "One of the members of the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. called at our office, and we gave him a hearty reception. He is a steward on board —," but it may be discretion to omit the particulars.

Mr. Leonard Cheetham, who is trying to form an N. S. S. Branch at Sheffield, asks us again to draw the attention of Sheffield Freethinkers to his address, Waleswood, near Sheffield, as there seems to be some doubt in the minds of local "saints" as to whether this postal address is sufficient. He also asks Mr. Campbell, of Sheffield, to correspond with him.

British Christians, professional ones—in spite of the *entente cordiale*—are fond of talking about the moral decadence of infidel France. The Paris correspondent of the *Nation*, however, tells a different tale. Writing of the floods he says: "It is an experience worth remembering to have assisted at so splendid a demonstration of courage and coolness, of humanity and solidarity, as Paris has given to the world during the terrible week. We have been treated during the last few years to many laments over the decadence of morality in France. Paris has given the lie to the croakers. We need not be concerned for the future of a people that has faced a disaster as this has been faced."

The Narratives in Genesis.

JACOB, THE BELOVED OF THE LORD.

WE have the authority of Holy Writ for saying that "the Lord" loved Jacob, even before that patriarch was born, and that that impartial deity hated Esau from the same pre-natal date: moreover, having once bestowed his divine affection upon the younger brother, no act of that individual could cause its withdrawal. The crafty Jacob, as we have seen, took advantage of the necessities of his elder brother to rob him of his "birthright"; later on, he obtained by fraud his father's blessing—which blessing was believed by the ancient Jews to carry with it its literal fulfilment; hence its importance. The story of the latter event takes up the whole of chapter xxvii., and is from the pen of the Yahvist.

According to this narrative, Jacob deceived his purblind father by personating his brother, and lied with a clear conscience. "Art thou my very son Esau?" asked the old man, whose mind was troubled with doubts. "I am," answered the practised liar. The Lord, looking down from his throne above the clouds, noted this "terminological inexactitude," and entered it to Jacob's credit in his note-book. The father Isaac then bestowed on Jacob the blessings intended for his elder son Esau, which blessings included the possession of plenty, dominion, and pre-eminence. Later in the day, when Esau entered the room, the father discovered the deception, but was able only to give his elder son a secondary blessing, one portion of which contained the following prediction:—

"And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck" (xxvii. 40).

The last-named event took place in the reign of Jehoram king of Judah—"So Edom revolted from

under the hand of Judah, *unto this day*" (2 Kings viii. 22). Hence, the Yahvist who concocted this story of "the blessing" lived some time *after* this revolt. The same writer tells us that Esau threatened to kill his brother as soon as their father died, and that Rebekah having heard of the threat arranged that Jacob should go and stay with her brother Laban in Paddan-aram until the elder brother's anger had cooled.

The next paragraph (Gen. xxvii. 48 to xxviii. 9) is by the Priestly writer, who knows nothing of the story of "the blessing," and consequently assigns a totally different reason for Jacob's journey: this is, that that wily patriarch might take a wife from the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother. "And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel," etc. According to this writer, Jacob reached his destination without incident; but according to the Yahvist (Gen. xxviii. 10-16; 19) he lay down to sleep at a place called Luz, where he had a dream in which he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, "and behold Yahveh stood above it." The last-named deity then made the same promises to Jacob which he had formerly made to Abraham. Jacob's lying and deceit did not lower him one whit in the sight of "the Lord," who concluded by saying: "Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land," etc. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Yahveh is in this place.....and he called the name of that place Beth-el"; that is, "the house of God."

To this story the Elohist adds verses 18, 20, 21, 22, in which he represents Jacob making the following vow to his god; for even in his dealings with "the Lord" Jacob took care to have the best of the bargain:—

"If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my god.....and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (xxviii. 20-22).

This vow was, no doubt, very disinterested—for Jacob. That pious patriarch was clearly on the right side; for if "the Lord" failed to protect him and make him prosperous, he would of course be at liberty to renounce his allegiance to that deity. Jacob's vow was made in accordance with the commands afterwards delivered to the Israelites in Num. xxx. 2; the promise of tithes was given in compliance with the command in Lev. xxvii. 32. That Jacob was unacquainted with these regulations is a mere detail which no ancient Hebrew historian would trouble his head about.

The story of "Jacob's Ladder" is, of course, a little fiction invented by the Yahvist to account for the name "Beth-el." It would be the height of absurdity to suppose that a man travelling through a strange country *could* change the name of a place in that country, and could do so, too, when not a single inhabitant of the locality was present to hear the new name or grant him permission to alter the old one. According to the narrative, Jacob next day resumed his journey to Paddan-aram, where he entered the service of his uncle Laban, with whom he stayed for twenty years. At the end of this period he returned to Canaan a much-married man, with four wives, eleven children, and large flocks and herds—a large proportion of the last-named having been fraudulently obtained from his uncle as wages. After his return, the Elohist says (Gen. xxxv. 6-7):—

"So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan (the same is Beth-el), he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el, because there God was revealed unto him when he fled from the face of his brother." The Septuagint has "Beth-el," not "El-beth-el," which is evidently an error.

From the foregoing it would appear that Jacob changed the name, not when leaving Canaan, but upon his return twenty years later. But we have not done with the subject yet; for here the Priestly

writer takes up the narrative (xxxv. 9-15). He says:—

"And God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him.....And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he spake with him..... And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him *Beth-el*."

Now we know the when and wherefore of this change of name. Jacob called the place *Beth-el*, not when leaving Canaan, but upon his return; not because he had had a dream there of a ladder reaching to heaven, but because there "the Lord" appeared to him in human form, blessed him, and conversed with him face to face. The accounts of the Yahvist and Elohist are thus in direct conflict with that of the Priestly writer, as well as with each other. Which, then, of the three is the correct version? The answer, of course, is—not one of them. In the account of the division of the land amongst the Israelites, some centuries later, we find it stated—

"And the lot for the children of Joseph went out from the Jordan at Jericho.....going up from Jericho through the hill country to *Beth-el*; and it went out from *Beth-el* to *Luz*, and passed along unto the border of the Archites," etc. (Josh. xvi. 1-2).

Luz and *Bethel* were in existence as separate places when the book of Joshua was written: the name *Luz* was never changed at all. Moreover, the mythical patriarch Jacob, even assuming him to be historical, had no power or authority to change the name of any place in Canaan.

There is, however, as a matter of history, a connection between the name Jacob and an ancient city in Palestine. On the temple walls of Karnak, amongst the list of towns in Canaan which submitted to the arms of Thothmes III., we find *Jacob-el* ("Jacob the god") and *Joseph el* ("Joseph the god"). The first of these appears again on the inscriptions of Ramses II. and Ramses III.; while in the latter reign we find also a Canaanitish city named *Levi-el*. In other words, we learn from the ancient Egyptian monuments that between B.C. 1600 and B.C. 1200 there were cities in Canaan in which Jacob, Joseph, and Levi were worshiped as gods; which fact is a clear proof that the Bible accounts of these reputed ancestors of the Jews are not history, but mythology. Again, the name *Gad*—another reputed son of Jacob—was the name of a Canaanitish deity—the god of Fortune.

Now, with regard to *Jacob-el*, it is significant that though this place was for centuries a city in the land of Canaan, the name is not to be found in any of the Hebrew books. The book of Joshua, for instance, names hundreds of ancient Canaanitish towns and villages—but no *Jacob-el*. The latter name, then, has clearly been changed. We find, furthermore, that in the narratives of all three writers of Genesis the name of the mythical Jacob is associated with a city having the same termination "el," whose name he is represented as changing. It thus appears highly probable that the city of *Bethel*—which is not amongst the list of towns conquered by the Egyptian kings—was in more ancient times that which was known as "Jacob-el."

ABRACADABRA.

Father and Son.—II.

(Concluded from p. 86.)

BUT even the most rigid Christianity cannot freeze all the warmth of the human soul. It is pathetic to read in this book how the natural feelings of the author's parents would persist in breaking through the fetters that suppressed them. His mother was sometimes extremely gay, "laughing with a soft, merry laugh," and there were certain stock family jests which seldom failed to appear at the breakfast table. The declaration of war with Russia brought the first breath of outside life into their Calvinist cloister, and though they had schooled themselves to put their heavenly citizenship above all earthly duties, and would deny that they were "citizens of

any earthly state," yet when the newspaper arrived announcing the battle of Alma,

"both seemed deeply excited. My father broke off his reading when the fact of the decisive victory for England was assured, and he and my mother sank simultaneously on their knees in front of their tea and bread and butter, while in a loud voice my father gave thanks to the God of Battles."

Upon another occasion, at a time when much interest had been excited among naturalists by the discovery of a certain rare species of moth in an Islington stable—

"We were sitting at family prayers, on a summer morning in 1855, when through the open window a brown moth came sailing. My mother immediately interrupted the reading of the Bible by saying to my father, 'Oh, Henry! do you think that can be *Boletobia*?' My father rose up from the sacred book, examined the insect, which had now perched, and replied: 'No, it is only the common *Vaponer*, *Orgiyya Antiqua*!' resumed his seat, and the exposition of the Word, without any apology or embarrassment."

The general atmosphere of the home, however, was one of considerable gloom and "other-worldliness," and though Mr. Gosse takes great pains to assure us that their life was not so stiff and dreary as life strictly dedicated to religion generally is, we gather that his young soul was planted, not in a carefully tended garden of beautiful flowers, but on a ledge split in the granite of some mountain. Its growth was painfully stunted, and it is not surprising to read that the child soon began to confuse his father with God, and vaguely identified a lady who attended the meeting-room, and whom he cordially disliked, with a personage much spoken of in the family circle—the "Personal Devil." Sometimes he was half beside himself with ghostly fears that caused him to dream and scream out in his sleep, and often culminated in a fit of hysterics, during which he lost all self-control and sobbed and banged his head on the table. As he grew older, the question of the efficacy of prayer began to trouble him, and the results were ironically amusing:—

"My parents said: 'Whatever you need, tell God and He will grant it, if it is His will.' Very well; I had need of a large painted humming-top which I had seen in a shop window. Accordingly, I introduced a supplication for this object into my evening prayer, carefully adding the words, 'If it be Thy will.' This, I recollect, placed my mother in a dilemma, and she consulted my father. Taken, I suppose, at a disadvantage, my father told me I must not pray for things like that. To which I answered by asking 'Why?' And I added that he said we ought pray for things we needed, and that I needed the humming-top a great deal more than I did the conversion of the heathen or the restitution of Jerusalem to the Jews, two objects of my nightly supplication which left me very cold."

Not being able to reply to this argument, his father curtly forbade his son to pray for things like humming-tops. The boy submitted, but his faith in the efficacy of prayer was a good deal shaken:—

"The fatal suspicion had crossed my mind that the reason why I was not to pray for the top was because it was too expensive for my parents to buy, that being the usual excuse for not getting things I wished for."

His tiny brain worried itself for a long time over the mysterious question of prayer. It puzzled him greatly to know why a child ought not to ask his Heavenly Father for toys and sweets and smart clothes. And hearing so much about idolatry at a missionary meeting to which his parents took him in his sixth year, he determined to test for himself the assurance that God would be very angry, and would signify his anger, if anyone bowed down to wood and stone:—

"One morning, when both my parents were safely out of the house, I prepared for the great act of heresy. With much labor I hoisted a small chair on the table close to the window. My heart was now beating as if it would leap out of my side, but I knelt down on the carpet in front of the table, and, looking up, I said my daily prayer in a loud voice, only substituting the address 'O Chair!' for the habitual one. Having carried this act of idolatry safely through, I waited to

see what would happen. God would certainly exhibit his anger in some terrible form, and would chastise my impious and wilful action. I was much alarmed, excited, and defiant.....But nothing happened..... Presently I was quite sure that nothing would happen. I had committed idolatry flagrantly and deliberately, and God did not care."

The psychology of a child's mind is very cleverly analysed in the earlier chapters of the book, and the result of all these questionings and childish tests and misunderstanding of things, the meanings of which are not agreed upon even by the most learned divines, was a gradual disillusionment which is described at length. Both his parents were devoid of sympathetic imagination; they accepted the literal meaning of every word in the Bible, and for them it contained nothing symbolical or allegorical. After his wife's death, the father's sombre character deepened. He became moody, silent, and soured; financial difficulties were added to the tragedy of his wife's death, and the cold reception, even by the orthodox, of a book which he wrote in defence of the first chapter of Genesis against Darwin's bomb-shell almost broke his spirit. His devotion to his creed became more intense, and as a result the motherless boy suffered acutely both in mind and body, so that people began to say, with the usual air of snug resignation, "That dear child is not long for this world," and "He is going home to Jesus"; and no wonder, when we remember that the boy was actually forced to keep a solemn fast for a whole day when only ten years of age!—a fast ordered to be kept by the whole of the congregation because of the shocking immoralities practised by the worshippers. Dry bread and water, an early prayer meeting in the freezing chapel, and devotional readings, were the order of the day for the delicate child; and, as a result—

"In the afternoon, my governess, seeing my white cheeks and the dark rings round my eyes, besought leave to take me out for a walk. This was permitted, with a pledge that I should be given no species of refreshment.....The day ended by our tramping through the wet to another prayer meeting, whence I returned in a state bordering on collapse, and was put to bed without further nourishment."

He was publicly baptised as an adult member of the congregation at the age of ten—an event which caused a great sensation and aroused much religious fervor throughout the countryside. Its only effect was to change the sensitive boy into an "insufferable prig":—

"Alas! if I may be loyal to the truth, I must record that some of the other little boys presently complained that I put out my tongue at them in mockery, during the service in the Room, to remind them that I now broke bread as one of the Saints, and that they did not."

But in a fatal moment his father allowed him to read a work of fiction—*Tom Cringle's Log*—for the first time, and that was the beginning of a development of the boy's character on a side that had been totally neglected:—

"My soul was shut up, like Fatima, in a tower to which no external influences could come, and it might really have been starved to death, or have lost the power of recovery and rebound, if my captor, by some freak not yet perfectly accounted for, had not gratuitously opened a little window in it and added a powerful telescope. The daring chapters of Michael Scott's romance of the tropics were that telescope and that window."

Curiously enough, the works of another and greater Scott—Sir Walter—first opened George Eliot's window of life; and, as in her case, the opening of the window for Edmund Gosse was followed by a series of events that changed the boy's thoughts and ideas in a manner that boded no good for the Christianity in which he was reared. How he went to school; how he improved greatly in bodily health by associating with other lads, and how his morbidness quickly disappeared; how he met an old gentleman who had been an actor and a poet "before the Lord had opened his eyes to better

things," and who turned out to be James Sheridan Knowles; how Mr. Knowles introduced him to Shakespeare's works; and how all these events made him no longer to desire so keenly to "testify for his Lord, in season and out of season," by tackling passers-by and asking "Have you found Jesus?" are related in a delightfully humorous manner by Mr. Gosse. The advent of a step-mother who, though pious, took no more interest in a harvest of roses than in a harvest of souls, and who, "brought a flavor of the fine arts with her, for she had watched old Crome painting, and had taken a course of drawing lessons from Cotman," opened a new life for the boy. Many other things than his faith took a prominent place in his mind, and he began more and more to keep his religion for use on Sundays only. Then came another of those little episodes that unconsciously increased his natural dislike of "holiness." A religious acquaintance of his father had been arrested for appropriating trust moneys, and at his trial he defended himself by claiming that—

"he had only done his duty as a Christian, in preventing this wealth from coming into the hands of an ungodly man, who would have spent it in the service of the flesh and the devil. Sternly reprimanded by the judge, he made the final statement that at that very moment he was conscious of his Lord's presence in the dock at his side, whispering to him, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant!' In this frame of conscience, and with a glowing countenance, he was hurried away to penal servitude."

The gradual broadening of his son's views did not seem to alarm the father at all. The boy's improvement was put down to a "happy sense of joy in Christ," and the pleasing success of his latest book, *The Romance of Natural History*, which is still a standard work, diverted the paternal attention for an interval. And in that interval the boy turned from the grave-yard poetry of his childhood, of which the following lines are a fair specimen:—

"If death were nothing, and naught after death—
If when men died at once they ceased to be—
Returning to the barren Womb of Nothing
Whence first they sprung, then might the debauchee."

He began to read all the modern poetry he could obtain, and then to gather all he could pick up about the Greek gods and their statues; and when in his fifteenth year he departed to a boarding-school, the rift between his soul and his father's widened a little more, for Keats and Shelley, Shakespeare and Scott, steeped his horizon with all the colors of sunrise, and filled his whole being with music and romance. He tells us how shocked he was to hear an elderly man, fat and greasy, who was denouncing at a meeting the spread of infidelity, describe Shakespeare as a "lost soul now suffering for his sins in hell"; and during the holidays he was greatly wounded and offended when his father burned a copy of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, which he had taken home from school.

This development of his intellectual powers was not, however, immediately followed by any spirit of doubt or hostility to the faith. On the contrary, an extraordinary reaction set in, only to finally seal his fate. For a time there came "a considerable quickening of fervor," and he translated Apollo and Bacchus into terms of exalted Christian faith! One summer's day, an immense wave of emotion swept over him, and he imagined that some great change was approaching:—

"I gazed into the tender-colored sky, and broke irresistibly into speech. 'Come now, Lord Jesus,' I cried, 'come now and take me to be for ever with Thee in Paradise. I am ready to come. My heart is purged from sin, there is nothing that keeps me rooted to this wicked world.'.....I raised myself on the sofa, and leaned upon the window-sill, and waited for the glorious apparition.....I waited awhile, watching.....Still I gazed, and still I hoped. Then a little breeze sprang up, and the branches danced. Sounds began to rise from the road beneath me. Presently the color deepened and the evening came on."

But the sounds were only those of every-day life,

and nothing happened. The Lord Jesus failed to put in an appearance, and from that moment—

"the artificial edifice of extravagant faith began to totter and crumble, and my father and I, though the fact was long successfully concealed from him and even from myself, walked in opposite hemispheres of the soul, with 'the thick o' the world between us.'"

But truth cannot be concealed for ever, and the pain, sorrow, and antagonism caused by its full realisation to the grim old man whose ambitions were centered on his child, is described in the most painful chapter of the book. For years he battled with what he termed his son's "horrid, insidious infidelity," though without success, and the final separation was preceded by the shattering of all his hopes, so that it came filled with unspoken bitterness. As we near the conclusion we almost cry out with pity of it all, for the helplessness of the actors in the tragedy is overwhelming. The father's last appeal was a letter written to the son in London; a touching letter, imploring him to lay hold on God's grace once more: "If it were granted to you," he wrote, "oh! how joyfully should I bury all the past, and again have sweet and tender fellowship with my beloved son as of old."

So ends a remarkable impeachment of the Christian superstition, and one of the most valuable sidelights on the workings of the faith in its sincerest form. *Father and Son* is one of the few works published in recent years that Freethinkers need to read. And so tenderly is it written, so lovingly are the portraits of his parents drawn by one who was fortunately able to escape from the coils of a creed which blighted both their lives, that the book is not only an important religious document, but a noble piece of literature, full of poetry and beauty—especially in the description of Devonshire scenery, and yet steeped in surprising simplicity. When I closed the volume my dominant feeling was one of thankfulness that Christianity, of which Puritanism is not the only poisonous and loathsome brand, is gradually and surely disappearing out of the lives of men. "It invents virtues which are sterile and cruel," writes Mr. Gosse in a trenchant passage: "it invents sins which are no sins at all, but which fill the heaven of innocent joy with futile clouds of remorse." Other creeds of Christianity create tragedies as cruelly unnecessary as that of *Father and Son*. Supernaturalism, whether in the form of Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism, or the hundred and one sects of Nonconformity, has been the wretched cause of more silent anguish and poignant suffering than any other evil that has darkened human life.

THOMAS MOULT.

Brief Biography of Mr. Mangasarian.

M. M. MANGASARIAN was born of Armenian parents about forty-nine years ago. The Armenians are the oldest Christian people in the world. The national Church of Armenia is the *Gregorian*, which is much like the Catholic Church, with the Pope left out. Both of Mr. Mangasarian's parents were Protestants, and were members of the Congregational Church. His mother, who is still living, being the daughter of a devout Christian, had vowed to bring up her son to be a preacher of the Gospel. With this in view he was sent to college, later to the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Princeton, N.J. After graduation Mr. Mangasarian became the pastor of the Spring Garden Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. When he could no longer preach the Westminster Catechism he made a trip to Boston to confer with James Freeman Clarke and Edward Everett Hale. Soon after this he tendered his resignation, not waiting for a heresy trial to convince him that he was a heretic. After four years of independent lecturing in St. George's Hall, Philadelphia, Mr. Mangasarian was invited to New York to lecture for the Ethical Society in that city, and later, replaced the lecturer of the Ethical Society in Chicago. In 1900 a few friends assisted Mr. Mangasarian to organise the Independent Religious Society, whose lecturer he has been during the past nine years.—*The Rationalist Bulletin*.

The Light of Liberty.

ONE night I slumbered, and methought
I rose to watch the darkness flee;
And all the earth gleamed white with nought
But light of Liberty.

The fires of morning set ablaze
With flame that kissed the hills and sea:
And living creatures waked to gaze
On light of Liberty.

And beauty filled each morning hour,
And over all the things that be
There breathed the presence and the power
Of sacred Liberty.

By sun and shower, till day was dead,
By winds that raced across the lea,
On man and beast and flower was shed
The peace of Liberty.

And children sang that happy day,
And maids and men laughed loud with glee;
For strife and care had slunk away
At sight of Liberty.

And man seemed fearless, noble, wise;
His mind and limbs at last were free:
No clashing creeds or priests of lies
Can dwell with Liberty.

No longer human beasts of prey
Reared up false idols shamelessly.
In hearts of men the Truth held sway—
Truth! god of Liberty!

Then night returned; and from my gaze
The light of dreams slipped suddenly,
And into ashes sank the blaze
Of banished Liberty!

O Liberty! O, light of earth!
Fain would our hearts be filled with thee,
For love and sweetness, joy and mirth,
Are one with Liberty.

Man walks to-day with labor'd breath
And falt'ring step—so wearily!
His path is dark and leads to death
For lack of Liberty!

O Liberty! that men would lift
The dimness of their eyes to thee!
That men would seek Life's noblest gift—
Thy light, O Liberty!

THOMAS MOULT.

Correspondence.

HOW TO PUSH OUR PAPER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice in your issue of January 30 you appeal to all Freethinkers to push the sale of your paper, and it seems to me that Freethinkers, as a body, do not realise their duty to you as Editor and as President of the N. S. S.

It should be a simple matter for each reader (or subscriber) to see that his copy reaches the hands of one of his friends or acquaintances (a thinker for choice), and the actual merits of the paper should induce him or her to take it in regularly.

The following is my own actual experience:—

It is only within the last month or so that I have had two copies of your paper delivered to me weekly, so that I might leave one at home and take the other to business.

My "business" copy I showed to a friend and he now has one sent regularly every week. Moreover, he showed his copy to one of his neighbors and he (the neighbor) now takes a copy.

Having succeeded so far, I turned my attention to another friend and he is now not only a subscriber, but, at his own suggestion, he came with me on January 23 and 30 to hear the lectures at St. James's Hall, and he was so impressed that he intends being there next Sunday.

I am sure you will understand that I am not writing this out of egotism, but because I feel that Freethinkers cannot recognise that they have, or should have, a share of the work to do; and if each reader undertook to get, say, ONLY ONE new subscriber, the circulation would be practically doubled. It should be so easy if our friends would only try. If it were more difficult I think they would do it.

A FREETHINKER.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Great Portland-street, London, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Shakespeare's Personality." With Special Reference to Frank Harris's New Book.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Church-street, Upper-street, N.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "Secularism."

OUTDOOR.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 (noon), Sidney Cook, "Paley and Design in Nature."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Tuesday, Feb. 15, at 8, "The Thomas Paine Centenary and Religious Opinions of To-Day"; Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 8, "The Influence of Religion upon Morality."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon) and 6.30, C. Cohen, Lectures.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Charles Wilson, "Social Democracy and Current Topics."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Bert Killip, "The Failure of Christianity."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Vegetarian Café, Nelson-street): 7.30, Joseph Bryce, "Buddhism: Its Influence and Teaching."

NOTTINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Cobden Hall, Peachey-street): 7.30, Joseph A. E. Bates, "Death, Man's Soul, and the Great Beyond."

OUTDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Horsefair): 11.30, Bert Brown, "Decay of Christianity."

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT

By G. W. FOOTE.

First Series, cloth 2s. 6d.
Second Series, cloth 2s. 6d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon Street, E.C.

BUSINESS CARDS.

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

FREETHOUGHT BADGES.—The new N. S. S. Badge Design is the French Freethinkers' emblem—a single Pansy flower. Button shape, with strong pin. Has been the means of many pleasant introductions. Price, single, 2d., postage 1d.; three or more post free. Reduction to Branches.—N.S.S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

HARRY BOULTER, the Freethinker's Tailor, Leysian Offices, 108 City-road, 2nd floor, 'phone 7930 Central. All things being equal, deal with a Freethinker. Overcoats, 30/-; Suits, 37/6; Ladies' Costumes, 42/-. Easy terms arranged.

27s. 6d. **LOUNGE SUITS to Measure.** All New Goods for Spring. Latest styles. Fit and satisfaction guaranteed. Samples and self-measure form free.—H. M. WILSON, 22 Northside-terrace, Bradford.

H. PERCY WARD'S Great Debate on Spiritualism with Will Phillips, also 2s. worth of other Freethought Literature, all for 1s. 6d., post free.—A. DYSON, 696 Bolton-road, Bradford.

CLEARING all my 50s. Winter Suits to Measure for 33s. Send for patterns and self-measure form to-day.—J. W. GOTT, 28 Church-bank, Bradford.

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

Being a Three Hours' Address to the Jury before the Lord Chief Justice of England, in answer to an Indictment for Blasphemy, on April 24, 1883.

With Special Preface and many Footnotes.

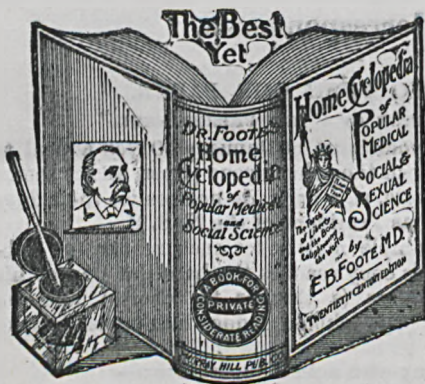
Price **FOURPENCE.** Post free **FIVEPENCE.**

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle street, Farringdon-street E.C.

A LIBERAL OFFER NOTHING LIKE IT.

Greatest Popular Family Reference Book and Sexology—Almost Given Away. A Million sold at 3 and 4 dollars—Now Try it Yourself.

Insure Your Life—You Die to Win; Buy this Book, You Learn to Live.



Ignorance kills—knowledge saves—be wise in time. Men weaken, sicken, die—not knowing how to live. "Habits that enslave" wreck thousands—young and old. Fathers fail, mothers are "bed-ridden," babies die. Family feuds, marital miseries, divorces—even murders—All can be avoided by self-knowledge, self-control.

You can discount heaven—dodge hell—here and now, by reading and applying the wisdom of this one book of 1,200 pages, 400 illustrations, 80 lithographs on 18 anatomical color plates, and over 250 prescriptions.

OF COURSE YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW.

THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.

THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.

THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.

THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.

THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.

THE CURIOUS—How they "grew" from germ-cell.

THE HEALTHY—How to enjoy life and keep well.

THE INVALID—How to brace up and keep well.

Whatever you'd ask a doctor you find herein, or (if not, Dr. F. will answer your inquiry FREE, any time).

Dr. Foote's books have been the popular instructors of the masses in America for fifty years (often re-written, enlarged, and always kept up-to-date). For twenty years they have sold largely (from London) to all countries where English is spoken, and everywhere highly praised. Last editions are best, largest, and most for the price. You may save the price by not buying, and you may lose your life (or your wife or child) by not knowing some of the vitally important truths it tells.

Most Grateful Testimonials From Everywhere.

Gudivoda, India: "It is a store of medical knowledge in plainest language, and every reader of English would be benefited by it."—W. L. N.

Triplicane, India: "I have gone through the book many times, and not only benefited myself but many friends also."—G. W. T.

Panderma, Turkey: "I can avow frankly there is rarely to be found such an interesting book as yours."—K. H. (Chemist), Calgary, Can.: "The information therein has changed my whole idea of life—to be nobler and happier."—D. N. M.
Laverton, W. Aust.: "I consider it worth ten times the price. I have benefited much by it."—R. M.

Somewhat Abridged Editions (800 pp. each) can be had in German, Swedish, Finnish, or Spanish.

Price **EIGHT SHILLINGS** by Mail to any Address.

ORDER OF THE PIONEER PRESS,
2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation

Dated this day of 190.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Free-thought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommensurable dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes

A GOOD RESOLUTION.



No. 55 C,

8s. 6d.

Post free.

Send at once for a sample pair of our "BUSINESS MAN'S" Box Calf Boot. Lace or Derby patterns. 8s. 6d. post free.

Also made in Glace Kid at 10s. 6d. post free.

Sizes 6 to 10.

Money returned if not approved.

Whitehouse & Co., Boot Factors, Stourbridge.

TRUE MORALITY: Or, The Theory and Practice of Neo-Malthusianism IS, I BELIEVE, THE BEST BOOK

ON THIS SUBJECT.
superfne Large-paper Edition, 176 pages, with Portrait and Autograph, bound in cloth, gilt-lettered, post free 1s. a copy.

In order that it may have a large circulation, and to bring it within the reach of the poor, I have issued

A POPULAR EDITION IN PAPER COVERS.

A copy of this edition post free for 2d. A dozen copies, for distribution, post free for one shilling.

The National Reformer of September 4, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes's pamphlet.....is an almost unexceptional statement of the Neo-Malthusianism theory and practice.....and throughout appeals to moral feeling.....The special value of Mr. Holmes's service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation, with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Albutt, and others, have also spoken of it in very high terms. Orders should be sent to the author,

J. R. HOLMES, EAST HANNEY, WANTAGE.

PAMPHLETS by C. COHEN.

- Foreign Missions their Dangers and Delusions 3d.
Full of facts and figures.
- An Outline of Evolutionary Ethics ... 6d.
Principles of ethics, based on the doctrine of Evolution.
- Socialism, Atheism, and Christianity.. 1d.
- Christianity and Social Ethics ... 1d.
- Pain and Providence 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon street, E.C.

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

AT

ST. JAMES'S HALL,
GREAT PORTLAND STREET, LONDON, W.

From January 9 to March 27, 1910 (inclusive.)

(Under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

TWO LECTURES BY G. W. FOOTE.

FEBRUARY 13—

“Shakespeare's Personality.”

With Special Reference to Mr. Frank Harris's New Book.

FEBRUARY 20—

“Wit, Wisdom, and Humanity in Shakespeare's Comedies.”

Seats, 1s. & 6d.

Back Seats Free.

Doors Open at 7.

Lecture 7.30.

Under the Ban of the London County Council.

THE POPULAR EDITION

(Revised and Enlarged)

OF

“BIBLE ROMANCES”

BY

G. W. FOOTE.

With a Portrait of the Author

Reynolds's Newspaper says:—“Mr. G. W. Foote, chairman of the Secular Society, is well known as a man of exceptional ability. His *Bible Romances* have had a large sale in the original edition. A popular, revised, and enlarged edition, at the price of 6d., has now been published by the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, for the Secular Society. Thus, within the reach of almost everyone, the ripest thought of the leaders of modern opinion are being placed from day to day.”

144 Large Double-Column Pages, Good Print, Good Paper

SIXPENCE—NET

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

America's Freethought Newspaper.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.

CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.

G. E. MACDONALD EDITOR.
L. K. WASHBURN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscription in advance	\$3.00
Two new subscribers	5.00
One subscription two years in advance	5.00

To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra
Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of
25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.

Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies,
which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,
62 VESKY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

A NEW (THE THIRD) EDITION
OF

FROM FICTION TO FACT.
By F. BONTE.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

REVISED AND ENLARGED.
SHOULD BE SCATTERED BROADCAST.

SIXTY-FOUR PAGES.
PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.