

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXX.—No. 50

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1910

PRICE TWOPENCE

May I look back on life as a long task duly completed—a piece of biography; faulty enough, but good as I could make it—and, with no thought but one of contentment, welcome the repose to follow when I have breathed the word "Finis."—GEORGE GISSING.

Keeping it Dark.

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE, in his life of the famous Earl Granville, says that his lordship was of the religion which all sensible men believe and no sensible man ever tells. He appears to have shrugged his shoulders at Gladstone's religious controversies; and when the Grand Old Man tried to draw him into the stream of disputation, he would fence his impetuous friend off by cool questions such as, "I want to know in what way an Agnostic differs from an Atheist?"

Here are two points of considerable importance. We will take the second first. What is the difference between the Agnostic and the Atheist? Lord Granville could not discover it. Neither can we. How many times we have asked this question, and how long we have waited for an answer! The Agnostic has no knowledge of God, and the Atheist has no God. This is a verbal, not a substantial, distinction. Both the Agnostic and the Atheist are "without God in the world." To deny this is to transform the Agnostic into a Theist. And really if you are without God you cannot be more without God. Consequently the Atheist is as much an Agnostic as the Agnostic, and the Agnostic is as much an Atheist as the Atheist.

Nevertheless, we understand why some people prefer the term "Agnostic." It has been said that an Agnostic is an Atheist with a tall hat on. This may not be the whole truth, but it is true as far as it goes. The great god "respectability" has multitudes of worshipers, and some who despise it in their hearts offer a pinch of incense on its altars. Is it any wonder, then, that those who wish to conciliate what is called "the world" should adopt the least offensive label? The term "Atheist" is an old one, and has a long inheritance of orthodox hatred. The term "Agnostic" is a new one, and children have not yet been trained to detest it. But we may be sure that they will be. It is only a question of time. In the meanwhile, however, the Atheist stands in front of the Agnostic, like a sea-wall that bears the first brunt of the waves. The other gentleman only gets the spray.

We have said nothing yet about positive timidity. But who will deny that there are crowds of timid people in the world, and who can wonder that there should be some of them even amongst those who have brains and originality enough to emancipate themselves from religious superstition? Some excellent men and women, in other respects, are wanting in courage. They cannot face opposition. We see this often in the common affairs of life, where the finer nature is sometimes overborne by the coarser one. Some of these good souls, so devoid of self-assertion—which is, after all, an indispensable part of a satisfactory equipment—give way to all around them; and when they cannot possibly conceal their intellec-

tual dissent from the popular faith, they still shrink from encountering the sour looks, and perhaps the oburgations, of friends and acquaintances, and thus call themselves by a name which excites the least possible amount of unpleasantness. To such persons we extend our sympathy. Theirs is not a vice but a defect of nature. And perhaps their greater sensitiveness to reproach and ill-will makes them suffer, in their own way, as much as the bolder and braver spirits who may even go on to absolute martyrdom.

There is another form of timidity, of course, which is a vice of nature: the timidity which would ever walk in the sunshine, and never dares turn into the shade; the timidity which would play the hypocrite, and even lie, rather than make the smallest sacrifice for conviction. This is a vulgar and purely selfish form of timidity, and is entitled to nothing but condemnation.

And now for the second point in our first paragraph. Lord Granville was of the religion of all sensible men, and no sensible man tells what it is. We take it that this is a certain way of saying that he had no religion at all. It is difficult to see any other meaning in the words. Lord Granville would not publish his irreligion. He concealed it in his own bosom, except so far as he communicated it to those who were not likely to give him away—being, in all probability, in the same predicament themselves. To use the language of the man in the street, he kept it dark. The truth is only disclosed to the world after his death, when it does not matter.

Even so great a man as John Stuart Mill "kept it dark" pretty carefully during his lifetime. His views on religion were only published after his death—and he was far from being a young man when he shuffled off this mortal coil. Yet in a conversation with Mr. John Morley, towards the end of his days, Mill told his younger friend that he regarded Gibbon's style as detestable. Apparently this was because Gibbon dealt in irony, and really meant the opposite of what he said. But every man of decent intelligence knew what Gibbon meant. Why else did the clergy reply to him? They knew very well that (to use Byron's words) he was sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer. There was no real concealment of his opinion of the Christian faith. His masterly and magnificent irony was his defence against the bigots of his day. By expressing himself as he did he evaded the Blasphemy Laws, under which he had seen men cast into English prisons. He was determined that the bigots should never deal with him in that way. But although he attended to his self-preservation, he took care to deliver one of the most deadly attacks upon Christianity. Mill himself never did this, or anything like it. He once told Carlyle that he was the man to bell the cat, but Carlyle was not "having any" either. The "scholars" and "thinkers" kept silent, and the proclamation of the falsehood of Christianity was left to heroic men of the people like Bradlaugh.

How many unbelievers in Christianity are still "keeping it dark"! There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of them in the medical profession alone. There are hundreds of them in the literary profession. There are myriads of them in the business world. Men who never go to church, or as seldom

as possible—but let their women-folk go, and let them take the children there; men who laugh at the popular religion in the smoke room, when they think they cannot be overheard, and believe the jest will not be repeated. If all these unbelievers spoke out, the result would astonish themselves, as well as the rest of the world. Their number is more than legion. They might shake hands and defy all the Churches. What they want is just a little courage. And, after all, in this case, courage is only another word for common sense.

G. W. FOOTE.

Cock-a-Doodle-Do!

HUMILITY is one of the Christian virtues. It is glorified in the press, on the platform, and in the pulpit. Preachers preach themselves hoarse and writers write themselves dry in declaiming to the world the excellence of humility and its glorious expression in the lives of Christians. On this Christians of all classes never weary of dwelling. True, a critic is apt to feel that humility might be better exemplified by greater silence, and that a humility so constantly paraded is apt to wear the air of pride, not to say conceit. But to this the Christian might properly reply that, were he silent, the world might remain quite oblivious of the humility he possessed. And this one is quite ready to believe. For genuine humility is the last quality the casual observer would credit the average Christian with possessing. It is true that the Christian qualifies his position by emphasising the fact that his humility is of the "Christian" variety, and there are few who will doubt the necessity for the qualification. Alexander saw the pride of Diogenes peeping through the holes in his cloak, and one may well suspect quite other qualities lurking beneath the cloak of *Christian* humility.

Christian humility—to paraphrase a well-known saying—takes the whole world for its province. Truth, kindness, justice, generosity, whenever they are referred to, are honored with the prefix "Christian," as though all these things began with Christianity, grew up with it, and could not by any possibility short of a miracle survive its departure. One would imagine that Christianity had invented all the virtues, and that their use by anyone but a Christian involved an infringement of copyright. Freethinkers who lead ordinarily decent lives are calmly informed that they are fortunate in having been born in a Christian environment, and to have had the inspiring and chastening influence of Christians around them. Had they been left to the mercy of their own principles and inclinations the result would have been disastrous. When a non-Christian people, instead of living up to all the offences Christian writers have provided for those who are outside the pale of Christianity, betray a passable consciousness of all the normal human virtues, liberal believers calmly express pleasure that they are approximating to the *Christian* standard of excellence. They will even expand their theology to the extent of expressing pleasure that "God has not left himself without witnesses in the world," but has, so to speak, scattered part of the truth in various parts, reserving the whole truth for the benefit of Christians, properly so-called.

The last two or three elections have not failed to provide illustrations of this peculiar virtue of Christian humility, and at each subsequent election it has assumed a more virulent form. Nonconformists have, of course, the same right to interfere in political affairs that anyone else has. And if there are any laws that press more hardly upon Nonconformists than upon others, they have a strong justification for raising a sectional protest. The peculiar feature of the situation is that they pretend it is as *citizens* they interfere, even while their interference is characterised by constant reference to their non-conformity. They even go further than this. Not

content with the common Christian monopoly of all the virtues, and the habit of claiming for Christianity in general the credit for all progress, Nonconformist humility takes on a more sectional form, and claims that to Nonconformists belong the credit for all the progress made during the past two centuries and a half. They have made this claim so often of late, it is only fair to assume that many of them believe it to be well founded. And as from the past to the present is only a step, the conviction that progress in the past has been due to Nonconformists leads to the belief that progress in the future is dependent upon their conduct in the present. Which, again, is a pertinent illustration of the humility that distinguishes itself as Christian.

Thus the Rev. F. B. Meyer, secretary of the Free Church Council, said the other day to a representative of the *Christian World* :—

"I think we are generally looked upon as the guardians and trustees of such great national questions as Education, Welsh Disestablishment, Temperance, and Social Reform, and we are pledged to see that measures dealing with these matters are registered on the Statute Book."

Cock-a-doodle-doo! We are the guardians of social reform, of education, etc., etc. And not only are *we* the guardians of these things, but we are "generally looked upon" as such. Still further; in a circular issued by the Free Church Council, and signed by the same modest gentleman, we are informed that these guardians of the public welfare are prevented from discharging their trust because "Our efforts have been repeatedly frustrated by the preponderating and persistent opposition of the House of Lords."

Thus have the Lords filled the measure of their iniquity. They have not only safeguarded their own interests, careless of those of others; they have not merely obstructed the will of the House of Commons, but they have frustrated "Our efforts," and, surely, whose sins in this particular deserves damnation.

Now, it is quite possible that the Rev. F. B. Meyer and his brother Nonconformists really believe all they say. Repetition not only has the effect of carrying conviction to those who listen, but also to those who speak. And the picture of the whole nation looking to the Free Church Council for guidance, and feeling its weakness in the inability of these divinely selected guardians to move, would be quite affecting—if only it were true. Who is it that regards Mr. Meyer and his colleagues as the guardians and trustees of the nation's welfare? Politicians, scrambling for votes, may, it is true, tell them so. But no one takes such statements from such men without a little more than the proverbial grain of salt. They will flatter brewers, trade unionists, landlords, churchmen, and others with much the same kind of language. Nonconformists may, naturally, look to their leaders for words of counsel and guidance. But for the Free Church Council to seriously arrogate to itself the title of the nation's guardian, to fancy that the nation is looking to it for guidance, and to charge the House of Lords with having obstructed *our* efforts at reform, is an instance of impertinent conceit difficult to parallel and impossible to beat.

The Nonconformists the guardians of education! Why, it was the Nonconformists who, in 1870, sold the country on this question, and who have, more than any other body ever since prevented its settlement. Had the Nonconformists remained true to their declared principles, State education would have been restricted to its legitimate sphere, and all the obstruction to education, consequent on sectarian rivalry, impossible. But Nonconformists, so frantically eager to destroy State taught religion when it meant the religion of their rivals, became enthusiastic supporters of a State taught religion with which they were in agreement. They whose devotion to principle carried them to the extent of sacrificing the kitchen clock or a presentation teapot rather than pay for the religion of another church, saw nothing wrong in conniving at the taxation of others for the maintenance of their own chapels.

To Nonconformist preachers—with the exception of a small minority, *not* represented by Mr. Meyer and his Council—the schools are little more than instruments by which to secure a sectarian advantage over their religious rivals. And far from the Free Church Council being looked upon as a guardian of education, the nation is rapidly growing tired of the bombastic effrontery of a body of men with whom sectarian supremacy and national progress are synonymous terms.

Even on the question of disestablishment Nonconformists cannot be trusted to act with straightforwardness or consistency. True, disestablishment would insist upon the State maintaining a position of absolute neutrality. But Nonconformists welcome State help in the shape of relief from taxation; they crave for State patronage in the shape of official recognition at State functions and in State institutions, and they support all legislation which, by enforcing Christian teaching, or by obstructing attacks on Christianity, favor the maintenance of Christian beliefs. Given a government that proposed the equal and concurrent endowment and establishment of all forms of Christian belief, and there is no real reason for doubting that the bulk of Nonconformists—and nearly all its leaders—would sell the country on the question of disestablishment as it has already sold it on that of education. Their objection is not so much to an Established Church as it is to the fact of the church that is established not being their own.

Who is it that looks on the Free Church Council, or on Nonconformists generally, as guardians of social reform? Is it the Socialists? Well, many of them have allowed themselves to be captured by a certain number of popularity hunting parsons, but they have not yet come to the pass of trusting them as the guardians of social progress. On the contrary, it is the Socialists who claim they are dragging these ministers along at the tail-end of their movement. Is it others, outside the ranks of the Socialists, who take this view of Nonconformist preachers? Hardly; students of the social history of the last hundred years know that there is not a single social movement—the improvement of the factory system, the abolition of the employment of women in mines, the more rational treatment of criminals, the movement for the better housing of the people, or for the equality of the sexes—that really owes its inception to Nonconformists, as such, or that received support until it was strong enough to exist without their aid. Even the Temperance movement received no support from organised Nonconformity until its growth promised profit to official dissent. Nonconformists are, in fact, the opportunists of the political and social world. Given a movement that is weak and struggling, and official Nonconformity will remain respectably aloof, afraid that, by evincing sympathy, it may alienate its supporters. Given the same movement developing and strong, and it will manifest a suspicious interest in its welfare; the more so if it happens to promise hostility to its religious rivals. And it will end by so infecting a movement with its own cant and insincerity that it will go far towards destroying whatever effectiveness it possesses.

Intelligent observers—unfortunately they are in the minority—will not be led away by these clerical cocks crowing upon their heap of decaying superstitions. If only English people had a keener sense of humor such performances would entail their own retribution. At any rate, English political life must be in a sad way if men like Mr. F. B. Meyer and the members of the Free Church Council can successfully pose as the guardians of Education and Social Reform. Sheer impudence will carry some people a long way, but one scarcely likes to believe that the British electorate can, for long, be imposed upon by such ridiculous pretensions.

There was once three tailors of Tooley-street—but most people know this story and will not be slow in seeing its application.

C. COHEN.

Christian Meekness.

CHRISTIAN boasters are very fond of quoting the saying which history has failed to ratify, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." In *Troilus and Cressida* Ajax asks Agamemnon—

"Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I know not what pride is."

Agamemnon answers wisely and somewhat sarcastically, contrasting Ajax with Ulysses:—

"Your mind is the clearer, Ajax, and your virtue the fairer. He that is proud eats up himself: pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle; and whatever praises itself but in the deed devours the deed in the praise."

Then Ajax adds:—

"I do hate a proud man as I hate the engendering of toads."

But from Nestor's illuminating aside, "Yet he loves himself; is't not strange?" and from the emphatic words of Thersites, we learn that Ajax was a veritable braggart.

"Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,—a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning.The man's undone for ever; for if Hector break not his neck i' the conflict, he'll break it himself in vain-glory."

Now, Ajax may fairly be taken as a type of what Christians are in their attitude to non-Christians. They aver that humility is the first, second, third, and last virtue. "Our chief duty is to be humble," they often say. But in their practice there is no trace of humility. They are perpetually running down all religions save their own. Indeed, almost every sect of Christians denounces all the other sects. How often have the Nonconformists asserted at their annual assemblies that if it had not been for them England would have been utterly ruined long ago, and how eloquently Anglican divines have deplored the evils of which Dissent is said to be the cause. There are some who zealously advocate the cultivation of the non-sectarian spirit, although they draw the line at, say, Unitarianism. It is well known that Unitarians are not included in the Free Church Council. But all Christians, of whatever persuasion, are agreed in treating non-Christian religionists as outsiders, as severely excluded from the kingdom of God. The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall, of Hampstead, has just published a sermon, entitled "Jesus and Non-Christian Religions," in which he makes Jesus responsible for ruling them all out of court. He pronounces Judaism the greatest and noblest of all the non-Christian religions; but he has the temerity to add that the best representative of that religion is much lower than the lowest subject of the kingdom founded by Jesus. Take the following as a specimen of Dr. Marshall's spirit:—

"Many folk will assume that, while Christianity is probably the best religion for Europeans, Mohammedanism is best for Arabs, Buddhism is best for the Japanese, and fetishism for Africans. I do not propose to devote time to this notion this morning. I will simply say that it is a view which cannot be supported by any proper understanding of the history of religions, and is just about as sensible as the notion that good sanitary arrangements are best for London, where they happen to be, but the absence of sanitation is best for Peking."

The comparison is apt: Christianity is equivalent to good sanitation, but Confucianism to no sanitation at all. Jesus expressed the absolute truth for all time when he said: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Judged by the light of reason such words only betray colossal ignorance on the part of the speaker. Jesus knew nothing of the great men and women who had lived and taught in the world. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and the long line of Stoic philosophers, were probably not even names to him; but

we know that these were teachers beside whom John the Baptist was not worthy of a place. And yet, simply because it is reported that Jesus regarded the Baptist as the finest flower that the tree of humanity had ever borne prior to the establishment of his kingdom, Dr. Marshall has no hesitation in declaring that no religion in the world possesses any value except in so far as it has served to prepare the way for Christianity. "Jesus did not despise John the Baptist," he says, "but regarded him as his forerunner. In like manner, non-Christian religions are not to be despised, for, in a sense, they actually prepare the way for Christianity."

Let us now see wherein, according to Dr. Marshall, the superiority of Christianity consists. He alleges that Christianity differs in *kind* from every other religion. The great word of the Baptist was righteousness; but the great word of Christianity is grace. The Baptist urged his hearers to save themselves by leading good, honest lives; but Jesus invited his to believe in him and let him do everything for them. According to the former, salvation is by good works; but, according to the latter, through faith in himself, which insures forgiveness. In other words, the supreme merit of Christianity is that it offers salvation to everybody on the cheap, "without money and without price." "It is trust in the unique and absolute Savior of the world." The reverend gentleman is most explicit on this point:—

"Whatever the non-Christian religions may give, they do not give this astounding, miraculous, supernatural, divine Savior,—and we Christians must not hesitate to claim for our Lord the utmost. He is not a mere teacher, or even a mere revealer, but One utterly apart from the rest of mankind in his function as Savior."

In reformation, as such, Christianity has no confidence. Its foundation doctrine is the damnableness of self-reliance:—

"Doing is a deadly thing,
Doing ends in death."

Christianity snaps its fingers at the law of cause and effect. A single act of faith at the close of a life crowded with wrong-doing sets the just laws of retribution at defiance. As the famous Spurgeon said, "Fifty, sixty, even seventy years of iniquity shall all disappear as the morning's hoar-frost disappears before the sun." With this view Dr. Marshall is evidently in complete agreement, because the fatal fault he finds with every Pagan religion is that it lacks "this astounding, miraculous, supernatural, divine Savior." That is to say, Christianity is the only religion on earth which even pretends to be able to over-ride the laws of Nature, the only religion under heaven which has the audacity to say to a man, "It matters not what you are, or what you have done all your life until now, if at this moment you accept Christ as your Savior, God will, the same instant, blot out your entire past, and treat you as if it had never been." "There never was a doubt in the Church," writes Dr. Pusey, "that all who die in a state of grace, though one minute before they were out of a state of grace, are saved."

Now, is this alleged superiority of Christianity a thing whereof an honest man can boast? Is the introduction of "this astounding, miraculous, supernatural, divine Savior," who sets the Universe at sixes at sevens, and who by means of a new law of Grace wipes out some ancient and fundamental laws of Nature,—is this a feat to glory in, to make capital of? Dr. Marshall sheds tears of condescending pity over Confucius and Buddha and Mohammed because they "knew of no Savior and no way to the Father." It matters not that Confucianism has made innumerable good men and true, or that the Chinese have been, and are, as great and noble as the most Christian nation in Europe. What matters is that Confucianism ignores God and has its back towards the Savior. It matters not that the advent of Buddhism resulted in the greatest and most widely spread ethical revival the world has ever seen, or that, in consequence of the sudden awakening of the Japanese, serious doubt has assailed the claim of the West to

moral supremacy. What matters is that Buddha, like Confucius, "shrugged his shoulders at the thought of God," and constructed an ethical code on purely natural lines. Moreover, the reverend gentleman is guilty of misrepresenting the teaching of the Buddha. It is a direct falsehood to say that "he had no doctrine of salvation," and that "he thought life irredeemable, irreclaimable." On the contrary, the Buddha presented a most definite doctrine of salvation—only it was "salvation merely by self-control and love, without any of the rites, any of the ceremonies, any of the charms, any of the priestly powers, any of the gods, in which men love to trust"; and, so far was he from thinking life irredeemable, irreclaimable, that, after his conversion, he spent forty-five years in an almost unbroken enjoyment of it. It matters not that Mohammed was "a strong man and a brave," and that Mohammedanism produced the most splendid civilisation, and kept the love of knowledge and culture alive when Christianity was doing its best to kill it. What matters is that Mohammed "finally turned his back on Jesus and struck the Cross from its place in the Eastern world, and that he that is but little in the kingdom of God is greater—far greater—than Mohammed."

Such is Christian egotism. It ignores or minimises what is true in other religions, and exalts what is false in Christianity. It belittles morality in order to magnify piety. Ministers of the order of Dr. Marshall pride themselves upon being, not moral teachers, but preachers of salvation through the grace of God. They make all manner of ridiculous claims for Jesus without ever pausing to reflect on the fact that Jesus makes absolutely no claims for himself. With the utmost impartiality Jesus leaves both his friends and his enemies severely alone. Conflicting views of him are cherished and expressed by his professional champions, but he takes no notice whatever. But, Dr. Marshall exclaims, our daily experience confirms the truth of our message. We feel that the blood of Jesus is cleansing us from all sin. But the reverend gentleman is altogether too unsophisticated. He must surely be aware that the devotees of every religion adduce their experiences as convincing evidence of its truth. *What their experience proves, however, is, not that their religion is true, but that they believe it to be true.* Dr. Marshall's argument, if valid, would prove that all religions are equally true for those who believe in them. Does he not admit the reasonableness of this contention? Like the philosophers of whom Gibbon speaks, we look upon all religions as equally false, so far as their supernatural elements are concerned, and are not afraid to characterise the argument from experience—though almost the only one now relied upon—as the weakest and most illogical ever offered in support of the truth of Christianity.

"Where, then, is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law?" By the law of truth and common sense. This is the only satisfactory explanation of the rapidly growing scepticism of the age. With all the other supernatural religions Christianity is doomed, and for the same reason—namely, that the facts of life are all against it.

J. T. LLOYD.

Tolstoi, Davidson, and Others.

SOME kind friend has just sent me *Reynolds's* (November 20), which contains a brilliant contribution, "Here and Hereafter," from the pen of Mr. Morrison Davidson. He disposes of a number of knotty problems. "The current of Secularism," he tells us, "ran mountains high, and to attempt to stem it was no easy task." But all that was a long time ago. Since then wonderful things have taken place. The stemming of the Secularist tide "has, in a great measure, been effected," and the masses have been led on to accept the Cause of the Master (essential Christianity). I find no hint of what Mr.

Davidson means by the Cause of the Master or essential Christianity. He has for years been proclaiming Tolstoi as the great interpreter of his Master, and at the present moment we are all turning more or less attention to the Russian prophet and his teachings. Indeed, the papers are giving us a surfeit of Tolstoi and his religion, though even this is a relief after columns of naval policy, Dreadnought, and fourteen-inch gun. What, then, was Tolstoi's brand of Christianity? "Back to the gospel, the perfect gospel of the preacher Jesus, which has been corrupted by Church and theology." This is a fair summary of his later teaching, according to all the reports I have seen. It may be that he himself would have called it a fair summary of his teaching. But can anybody read his *Gospel* and his *What My Faith Rests Upon* and say that his gospel is the same as Jesus Christ's? It is not that he sets aside the divinity of Christ, Hell, the Trinity, the Resurrection, and Miracles. These are non-essentials. Anyone can be a good Protestant Christian to-day and reject all these doctrines. Have not the progressive revelationists told us again and again that their faith has been strengthened since they threw over these articles of belief? But the whole atmosphere of Tolstoi's religion is out of touch with Christ. He knows "no external, creating God, the cause of all causes." I am not certain that even this is essential to Christianity now. Again, worship and prayer seem to be no part of his Christianity. What has become of the Jesus who prays to a Father in heaven and bids us fix our eyes on the Beyond? Tolstoi's Christianity, or, rather, his interpretation of it, is that the problem of mankind is to save the soul *in and for this life*. Now those who believe in the doctrines of orthodox Christianity believe that their divine Christ will save their souls in the world to come. This is an intelligible position. If Christ was God, and could raise the dead, it doesn't matter much whether he cursed unbelief and poured the vitriol of his wrath on his enemies or not. Such conduct would only prove that to our poor weak humanity even a God may appear to have very bad manners. But those who strip Christ of his Godhead and leave him a bare human teacher cannot use his teaching to save men's souls *in this life*. If present salvation of the soul means a wide and serene outlook upon men and the world, Jesus Christ could not save his own soul. No one held up to veneration so unbounded ever fell so far short of that "freedom from mental perturbation" which was the chief characteristic of Epicurus's ideal man. Some twentieth century preachers read into their Christ just what they want to find, and they read out of him what they don't want to find. But when they tell their flock that their idealisation is the New Testament Christ who, more than once, addressed his fellows as "generations of vipers," and referred to all other teachers as "liars and robbers," they are practising the confidence trick in its meanest form.

Sir Alfred Russel Wallace is quoted by Mr. Davidson as saying that Materialism is dead "for all intelligent minds," that Beauty is a "spiritual mystery," and that the Soul was a separate creation. What is the difference between a spiritual and a material mystery? Sir Alfred's Spiritualism can give no better solution of a mystery than the Materialism which he so scornfully rejects. "Religion is not destroyed." What is left of it? If Tolstoi's Christianity, with his own Slav mysticism superadded, represents Mr. Davidson's conception of a living Christian faith, in the New Testament sense, his idea of the distinction between a living and a dead thing need not trouble us much. Nothing could more conclusively prove the breaking-up of Christianity than the fact that Sir Alfred Russel Wallace, Sir Oliver Lodge, and so many others see the future hope of religion in Spiritualism. Look at the fourth section ("Science and Christianity") of Sir Oliver Lodge's *Man and the Universe*. It is neither theology nor science. "Whatever happened to Christ," he says, "may happen to any one of us, provided we attain the required altitude." Without inquiring

what happened to Christ, and what he means by "the required altitude," we can only put this down as a purely dogmatic statement; and Sir Oliver Lodge's authority for making dogmatic statements is no greater than any other man's. He further tells us that the spirit after death "will retain the power of constructing for itself a suitable vehicle of manifestation which is the essential meaning of the term 'body.'" Has Sir Oliver Lodge ever seen this new corporeal manifestation? Sir Alfred says, more guardedly, "I imagine that the Universe is peopled with spirits"; but can he support his imaginings from his natural science? These two writers have won great names for themselves by their experiments and observations in their own domain. Their efforts to reconcile religion and science will not add to their fame. Rather they suggest a new rendering for a very old proverb: "Let the scientist stick to his laboratory."

It will be objected, of course, that we did not speak in this strain when other scientific men came forward to combat religion. But our contention has always been that the opinion of a physicist, as a physicist, on a subject that stands completely outside of his physics, is no more authoritative than that of another man of equal intelligence. The scientists who, a generation ago, struck out against the special creation of the Bible, were largely acting in self-defence, because the leaders of orthodoxy denounced the "slime theory" as contrary to revealed religion. What Protestant Christians believed then was something at least fairly definite. What they believe now nobody knows. The orthodox dreaded and detested the very names of Tyndall and Huxley, not only because these men were agnostic scientists, but still more because they were masters of clear English and understood the things they attacked. Look at the popular scientific expositions of these men and compare them with the dry, judicial, technical, "popular lectures" of some of our experts. Huxley and Tyndall, discussing either science or religion, or both, were able to communicate impressions of their own facts to average men, the bearings of these facts, their application to the world of problems, lying all round them. But what do Sir Alfred Russel Wallace and Sir Oliver Lodge offer us? Various forms of spiritualism that are to reconcile religion and science, to give men a new faith harmonising naturalism with the essentials of Christianity. The result is a hopeless failure, because neither of them, great scientists though they are, has the scientific and theological omniscience that such an effort demands.

Secularism is dead. It must be a very old corpse. I have been listening to this statement about the death of Secularism (and Materialism) ever since I was a boy, and that's a good while ago. I wonder if those who are constantly announcing the decease read the apologetic books that come streaming from the press daily? All that I have seen refer to "difficulties" and "religious unrest." Have they done anything to stem the current of Secularism of which Mr. Davidson speaks? They have rather strengthened it, as the orthodox critics admit. How often we hear or read that the arguments of these apologists may do more harm than good if preachers venture to use them before an ordinary congregation of believers! The faith has not a robust constitution. Most of these books are, indeed, works of fiction. They want to remove the difficulties of unbelief, and these difficulties are imaginary figments of the theological (or philosophical) brain. It is in belief that the difficulties lie. The natural thing is to reject revelation and Christ, not to accept them. The apologists and reconcilers talk much about natural religion, but there is no such thing in the sense in which they use the words.

A. D. McLAREN.

She: "The Bishop's daughter is shockingly disrespectful."
He: "Yes; she calls him the 'Old Man of the See'!"

From MY Point of View.

God's earth, my dear friends, would a wilderness be
If no more man believed on the thrice-blessed Three,
For he'd want no more parsons—then, what about *me*?

I.

When preaching on Sunday I oft tell my flock
(Which numbers, all told, twenty-seven)
That knowledge is often a stumbling-block
To wayfarers struggling to heaven.
I tell them that every heterodox print
It were well for their souls to eschew;
If problems perplex them I give them this hint:
Believe! never mind what is *true*!
Is blindness salvation? Take heed lest you see,
If you value your souls—and approval from *me*!

II.

The man who the faith of his fathers rejects,
Who asks me for proofs, not assertions,
Knows naught of the pearl of great price he neglects,
Or the rapture attending conversions.
"Man only," he says, "is the lord of the earth,
And *he* its salvation shall win
By love and by labor, and acts of true worth"—
But where does Jehovah come in?
That he's indispensable all must agree,
Or the planet is doomed—and the workhouse for *me*!

III.

That God's in His heaven, hence everything's "right,"
No Christian would dream of denying;
But the Atheist, lacking our spiritual light,
On science (so-called) is relying.
Jehovah and Jesus are myths—nothing more;
With the Devil they're dumped on a shelf;
One creature alone it is meet to adore,
Man's vain, egotistical Self.
O give him your pity! Such dullards as he
Are blind to their interests—so unlike *me*!

IV.

A day will arrive, I have oft heard it said
By people a shade pessimistic, [spread,
When the blight of Freethought o'er the kingdom will
And the "masses" will be Atheistic.
That such things may be it is hard to conceive,
Though false teachers galore may be found;
For 'tis easier far to sit still and "believe"
Than to lifelong "good works" to be bound.
Shall they triumph at last, they who claim to be "free"?
May the day be far off—then it won't affect *me*!

JOHN YOUNG.

THREE AT A TIME ON A RAINY DAY.

The Bishop of Western Michigan arrived in Dublin one cold, rainy morning, and, while riding up town, he found a good many interesting sights that he looked to the cabbie to explain to him. The cabbie felt surly, and answered with the first idea that came into his head.

They passed a public building where there were three pieces of statuary in the foreground. "What do those statues represent, Pat?" Those are the twelve apostles, your rivrince." "But there are only three of them, Pat." "Well, your rivrince, they only come out three at a time on a rainy day."

WHAT HE WANTED.

"That clairvoyant said she would show me some ghosts of the past."

"Well, what of it?"

"I told her that I had come there and planked down good money to find out whether I had a ghost of a future."

NO END OF EXCITEMENT.

Mrs. Townbred: "I don't see how you can endure a little place like Gloomville. Nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to talk about."

Country Cousin: "Nothing to hear and nothing to talk about, indeed! Why, our own church has changed ministers three times within a year, and the other church is having a row with theirs."

Acid Drops.

The Welsh Church Commission has issued its report. The number and holding capacity of Welsh places of worship are given, but no figures as to church and chapel attendance. There is a census of bricks, stones, and mortar, but none of worshippers. Let us wink and pass on.

Church and Chapel love each other in Wales as dearly as ever. "There is some evidence," the report says, "of increase in co-operation between the Church of England and the Nonconformists in those matters which affect the social and moral betterment of the people, but in purely religious matters there is a total absence of co-operation." We suspect that the increase of "social and moral co-operation" is simply in regard to Sunday Closing, in which all Churches believe they have a solid interest.

A recent breach-of-promise action was very amusing as well as edifying. A Birmingham young lady, Miss Marie Newey, sued Mr. Frederick H. Cobb for damages. She alleged that he had broken his contract. He had promised to marry her, and he had promised to become a Catholic, and he had done neither. It appeared, however, that he had tried to become a Catholic (like the young lady), under the ministration of Father Bunce, but he had failed. He was willing to profess himself a Catholic, but the young lady would not be satisfied unless he went to confession, attended church with her every Sunday, and agreed to the children (if any) being brought up in the Catholic faith. In view of this slavery, he thought he had better not marry the young lady at all; and she, on her side, appears to have told him plainly that she would not marry him unless he agreed to her stringent conditions. No wonder the jury decided that the contract between the parties had been mutually rescinded.

Religion was the sole cause of trouble in this case, as it is in so many others. Miss Newey was a Catholic and a bigot. She wanted to force her religion down Mr. Cobb's throat, and when it stuck half-way down she tried to punish him for having an unaccommodating swallow. Her mother also took a part in the tragi-comedy. She not only believed in an eternal hell, but she stated her belief that if her daughter missed going to confession only once, and died before she could go again, she would go straight to the everlasting bonfire. What a cheerful creed, especially when a mother is confident that it applies to her own daughter.

Rev. A. J. Waldron says he is "an enormous believer in the ministry of women." We regret he is not an equally fervent believer in the importance of accuracy. He told a congregation the other day that St. Paul, in his famous advice concerning women, was referring "to women of bad character, who brought scandal on the Church." St. Paul was referring to nothing of the kind. His command is simply that women are to keep silence in the Church; that they are to ask their husbands at home, and to be in subordination to them. Besides, Paul is referring to Christian women. And does Mr. Waldron mean us to believe that Christian women, even in St. Paul's time, were of such notoriously evil character that their being permitted to speak in church would occasion a public scandal? This certainly does not say much for the purity of early Christianity. We have no great faith in Mr. Waldron's sincerity or ability, but he might at least cultivate the habit of dealing fairly with the New Testament.

Rev. Canon F. W. O'Connell, B.D., has been preaching on "Scepticism" in St. George's Parish Church, Belfast—one of the richest churches in the city. The reverend gentleman has a sneaking kindness towards the poor weak "doubter" who goes on "groping blindly for God in the darkness." "There is hope for such a doubter," he thinks; and we agree with him, for *such* a doubter is likely to "find God" at the finish. But what hope is there for the wicked sceptic who pokes fun at Adam's rib, Noah's ark, and Jonah's whale? None at all. He'll never come back again. He is heading straight for perdition. And the reverend gentleman rather rejoices over the fact,—for hardened sceptics are dangerous to his profitable business.

Dr. O'Connell was condescendingly kind to "honest doubt." He ought to know that *all* "doubt" is honest. Real opinions of any kind—that is opinions which are actually held, instead of being merely professed—*must* be honest, if the term is applicable in such a case. Tennyson started the phrase "honest doubt." He was a great master of lan-

guage, but he made a blunder in this instance. Doubt and belief are both *opinions*, and may be correct or incorrect, but how on earth can they be honest or dishonest? Actions may be honest or dishonest; opinions cannot be either.

A preacher is as likely as not to be talking nonsense even when he is preaching on religion. But when he turns to other topics the nonsense is almost a certainty. Thus the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury told a Lyceum Theatre audience, on Sunday last, that "Art, like most of the other things that have been of great good to the human race, began in the temple with the priest." This is downright nonsense. Art began long before there were any temples or any priesthoods. If Mr. Rattenbury will consult any handbook on the antiquity of man, he will discover that art began in the attempts of primitive man to execute rude engravings, on the walls of his cave or on the bones of animals, of things that he saw around him. When religion came along, in an organised form, it exploited other qualities. Afterwards, as priesthoods became the possessors of wealth, they were able to trade on the necessities of the artist and so direct, to some extent, the form under which art found expression. But all the purest and best forms of art found expression in secular architecture before it was applied to religion. Religion, as Ruskin pointed out, for the most part degraded art forms, while always tending to give it an unhealthy expression.

Mr. Rattenbury explains that the reason why the ancient Hebrews were forbidden to make any graven image, or draw a likeness of anything, was because they were unable to see a representation of anything without worshipping it. The idea that the ancient Jews could not see a picture of anything without worshipping it, and that God gave this command to prevent the "sin" of idolatry, is too stupid for anyone but a Christian preacher to entertain. Those who know anything concerning the savage theory of "taboo" will not be at any great loss to understand the reason for the existence of this injunction. But we expect that a scientific knowledge of religious origins is a subject that is quite "taboo" to Mr. Rattenbury himself.

So much for Mr. Rattenbury on art and religion. Now for the same gentleman on morals—all these illustrations are from the same sermon. "We do not want proof," he says, "that God does visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, for you can find it in the drunkard's home." And it being true that the children are punished for the parents' fault, and Mr. Rattenbury believing that God has so arranged it, he is, apparently, quite satisfied with the arrangement. Now, when Mr. Rattenbury has finished admiring the beauty of this arrangement, we would suggest his paying a little attention to its justice. We do not in social life hang the children because the father committed a murder, nor imprison them because the parent did wrong. We even deprecate saddling children with the social disgrace of a parent's faults, and seek to protect them against their almost inevitable consequences. And one would very much like to know by what rule of right or of reason a procedure that is vicious when followed by man becomes virtuous when pursued by Deity? If Mr. Rattenbury believes God is right in punishing the innocent for the guilty, will he have the courage to advocate this policy when he next addresses a Lyceum audience? We should not agree with his policy, but we could at least admire his consistency.

Yale College, we believe, is a fairly orthodox place. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that it spends £12,000 a year on the training of its football team. The principal coach gets £3,000 of that sum. Evidently more, in proportion, is spent on legs than on heads.

Rev. Leonard Packer may be called a muscular Christian. He is rector of Saunderton, Bucks, and he has been fined £4 with £5 9s. costs at High Wycombe for assaulting two furniture removing men, striking one of them in the mouth and cutting the other's thumb open with a club stick. He also locked a solicitor in a room for three hours, and was alleged to have asked a police-sergeant if he couldn't shoot the men. He must have deeply studied the Sermon on the Mount.

"Broadly speaking, Christians have been able to reach the dregs only of Indian society." This is from an article in the *Church Times* by the Rev. C. F. Andrews, cited from a letter by a Hindoo Christian. Mr. Andrews does not question its truth, and it bears out much that has been said concerning missionary work in India. Missionaries are in the habit of explaining this by saying that the Hindoo caste system prevents their influencing the higher classes. The real expla-

nation, we fancy, is that Christian missions trade on the poverty and distress of the lower classes, just as the Society for the Propagation of Christianity Among the Jews trades upon the necessities of the poorer class of Jews in England. If the authorities were to prevent Christian missions from offering charitable assistance to natives, the result of the preaching would be even more insignificant than at present. This is why, during seasons of distress, missionaries who appeal for subscriptions generally advise that they be sent through the missions, and not through any Government agency.

Great damage was done by the several days' heavy rain which marked the end of November and the beginning of December. The floods in Lancashire, the Midlands, and other parts of England were the worst and most destructive for fifteen years. But "he doeth all things well."

"Providence" has been active at the Sea of Azoff. A violent gale drove the water away from the coast, the sea receding in some places as much as three miles. Many ships stuck fast in the sand. The storm on the Caspian Sea wrecked fishing-boats, washed away houses, and destroyed cattle wholesale. "For his tender mercies are over all his works."

We have received an "In Memoriam" cutting from a paper whose name is not mentioned. From the look of the type it may be the *Times*. In the list is the following:—

"WILDE.—On the 30th Nov., 1900, at No. 13, Rue des Beaux Arts, Paris, OSCAR WILDE, Author of 'Salomé' and other works. Fortified by the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Interred at Père Lachaise."

From all one hears of the last days of Oscar Wilde in Paris he must have required a good deal of "fortifying." But the Catholic Church is successful with the worst cases. At least it says so—and who can contradict it?

Dr. Welldon, the Dean of Manchester, offered the following prayer for use during the elections:—

"Lord God, Father of Light, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, Thy illuminating grace to all who, as candidates, or speakers, or voters, shall participate in the political election which is now so near at hand. Help to put away from their hearts the dark spirit of selfishness and malevolence; inspire them with pure and lofty ideals of service for Thee; help them to act with a deep sense of responsibility as patriots and as Christians, and send out Thy light and Thy truth that they may lead them and bring them into Thy holy will and to Thy kingdom for the sake of Him who is the only light of the world—our Savior and Redeemer, Jesus Christ."

Was it in consequence of this prayer that the Conservative candidate for South Manchester was six minutes too late for the nomination, and that the Liberal candidate gained the seat without a contest? This seems to be the only unusual circumstance in the Manchester fight, and is therefore the only thing that looks like being due to the interference of the Almighty. Mr. Glazebrook and his election agent will hardly thank Dr. Welldon for his pious intervention.

Mr. Asquith says the sole issue during the present election is the settlement of the House of Lords question. Mr. Balfour says it is that *plus* Tariff Reform. The Labor Party says the main question is the reversal of the Osborne judgment. There is, however, yet another Richmond in the field. The Imperial Sunday Alliance declares that the great question is that of Sunday observance. Sunday, it says, is "the one institution" which safeguards "for the workers their social and industrial liberties." We wonder what liberty, social or industrial, "the workers" possessed during the palmy days of Sabbatarianism? Really, Sabbatarianism has about as much to do with securing liberty for the workman as it has with determining the causes of the Ice Age. It may have, on the other hand, a deal to do with the demoralisation of the workman, as well as of others. Modern conditions of labor make it more than ever imperative that the workmen should have easy and cheap access to the country, to the seaside, or to rational intellectual recreation and enjoyment during the days they can fairly call their own. And it is precisely these opportunities that Sabbatarianism seeks to abolish. After all, the surest way for a community to retain the liberties it has and to secure others is to keep itself bodily and mentally healthy; and we have yet to discover in what way Sabbatarianism leads to either mental or bodily fitness.

Mr. Hemmerde, K.C., Liberal candidate for Portsmouth, returned what we fear is a characteristic answer to a question on the Blasphemy Laws which was put to him at an election meeting. He was asked the two questions we

printed last week. "I am in favor of free speech," he replied, "but I deny the right of any person to express his views in offensive language." Could anything be more absurd? We are tempted to say, could anything be more hypocritical? Mr. Hemmerde gave that stupid answer in the midst of a political contest, in which language of the most disgusting offensiveness was freely used. He does not invoke the law to put a stop to offensive language in political discussion. He only wants the law to put a stop to offensive language in religious discussion. Even then he doesn't want to prevent Christians from enjoying that luxury. He is satisfied if Freethinkers are kept under restraint. He approves a legally enforced code of manners for "infidels" which is not to be compulsory on the "faithful." And this is the gentleman who is "in favor of free speech."

Mr. Hemmerde went on to say that he only remembered one prosecution under the Blasphemy Laws, and in that case the man was guilty of using disgusting language. Fancy a K.C.'s information on such a subject being so limited! We suppose he referred to the Boulter case. He was asked whether he had forgotten the barbarous sentence on Mr. G. W. Foote in 1883. Mr. Hemmerde declined to answer. He took the next question. It was an easier one.

One of our lady readers heckled Mr. Shortt, the Liberal candidate for Newcastle-on-Tyne, whether he would vote for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. He replied that he would not,—and went on with the stock nonsense about protecting children and sacred things,—which was loudly applauded by the foolish people (on that point) who were listening to him. Liberal candidates, as well as others, need a good deal of education.

Tennyson had Browning and Allingham to dinner once. The laureate said that the pair of dress boots he had on were forty years old. "We all looked at them," Allingham wrote, "and I said it was good evidence of the immortality of the sole." The pun was not a sign of piety.

"Death of a well-known Antiquarian." This was a headline in the *Westminster Gazette* the other evening. We believe that our contemporary, for some peculiar reason of its own, looks down upon the *Freethinker*. But a good opinion of oneself is no excuse for bad English. Antiquarian is an adjective; the noun is Antiquary. Sir Walter Scott used it properly in the title of one of his novels.

The following telegram from the Chicago correspondent of the London *Daily Chronicle* on November 26 is worth preserving:—

"The opening of a prize-fight with prayer and the singing of hymns was the curious spectacle offered last night at Akron, Ohio, where the prizefighter Kaufmann contested a dozen rounds with Kilbane.

The fight was not to be a brutal one, and in order to make it more popular the Rev. John Biederwolf was asked to lend his presence. When he learned that the mayor was to be at the fight he consented, as he said 'A good sparring match does nobody's soul any harm.'

Before the fight began the mayor introduced the clergyman to the audience, and, to the surprise of everyone Mr. Biederwolf asked them to sing a popular hymn. The hymn was sung while the contestants in the ring waited, and it was an awe-inspiring sight, the spectacle of local sportsmen singing religious music as a prelude to a prize-fight.

Mr. Biederwolf followed the hymn, which he himself led, with a prayer, which came as a second surprise, and then the parson announced that he intended to stay as a spectator. This he did, and nobody enjoyed the points of the match more than he.

The fight ended in a draw."

It reminds us of the civil contest between Michael and the Devil in the book of Jude. We don't know, however, what reverend gentleman was master of the ceremonies on that occasion.

Edison laughs at the Rev. Dr. Charles Aked's sermons on the "Joys of Heaven." It seems to him a funny idea that good people "are going to be raised from their graves on the final day and go to a beautiful shining place where existence is a continual round of praise and song." Edison wickedly adds that: "The preachers themselves do not say always what they think, and some, I fear, do not think at all." We are afraid that Edison is right.

General Henniker, who, we daresay, is a Christian soldier, recommends Sunday musketry practice. On the principle, we suppose, of the better the day the better the deed. One must say, though, that Christianity is the most accommo-

dating faith in the world. In spite of its plainest texts and doctrines, you may do the very opposite, providing it is for the interest of the "classes" and the maintenance of "the powers that be."

Rev. Dr. F. Rymer, West Hampstead, left £15,762. "Blessed be ye poor."

Mr. Ernest Bell, in the *Animals' Friend*, points out that "the Christmas festival is not wholly of Christian origin." He might have made the statement stronger, for the only thing Christian in it is the name. Nor can we quite follow Mr. Bell when he treats Christmas gluttony as a relic of "the pagan ideals of the festival" and wishes that people would return to "the ideal of the early Christians." We thought Mr. Bell knew better than this. The early Christians knew nothing about Christmas. They assigned various dates for the birth of Christ. It was in the second half of the fourth century that the Church—Paganising itself to win over the Pagans—adopted the twenty-fifth of December, which had been from time immemorial the birthday of the sun-gods of antiquity,—being in fact the birthday of the sun in the new astronomical year.

Mrs. Eddy, in America, like General Booth, in England, was one of the best religious organisers, and one of the most despotical temperaments, of her generation. We do not believe, however, that she founded anything permanent, any more than we believe that the Salvation Army will long outlive its first "General." One cause of the great success of the Christian Science Church was fairly well indicated by the *Daily News* in its leader on the death of Mrs. Eddy. In one of its more lucid moments our contemporary referred to a certain tendency in America and England "to abandon rationalism not because of reason but because of weariness. For minds in this twilight state," our contemporary added, "Christian Science offered an attractive amalgam of mysticism and magic without any strain upon the intellect." But there were other causes than that. The bulk of Christian Scientists never were Rationalists. They are recruited from semi-orthodox and even orthodox Christians. Faith-healing through prayer is one of the most striking features of the New Testament. Christian Scientists are like the Peculiar People in this, that they revert to the plainest teaching of Jesus Christ and the primitive Church. In this respect, they are more, and not less, Christian than the ordinary Christian Churches.

Faith-healing is, of course, a fact—though the Christian Scientists push it to an absurd length, besides turning a natural fact into a religious mystery. We repeat that the natural fact is indisputable, but it has nothing to do with "faith" in the theological sense of the word. It is the influence of what is called *mind* over what is called the *body*. It can be seen in an extreme form in hypnotic patients living and acting under "suggestion." It can be seen on a larger scale in the advantage of cheerfulness and resolution over melancholy and dejection. Keeping up a patient's spirits, as doctors and nurses know, is half the battle. Napoleon said that two opposite armies tried to frighten each other, and that the one which succeeded in that effort gained the victory. Atheists are quite as familiar as Christian Scientists are with the natural force of mental suggestion over the nervous system. They object to making it a mystery, and providing room for charlatans to trade on ignorance and superstition. That is all.

We see that Father Day has been telling a large Catholic congregation at Manchester that Christian Science "contradicts the Bible, and stands in eternal contradiction of the revelations of God." The second half of this statement is grandiose bunkum, and incapable of useful discussion. But whether Christian Science contradicts the Bible or not is a definite question. We say it does not contradict the Bible, but is in harmony with the Bible from beginning to end. And we should be happy to maintain it in controversy with Father Day, if he has the courage of his opinions. As we don't believe in either Christian Science or the Bible we think our view of the question is at least disinterested.

Mrs. Eddy did not follow Jesus or Paul in sexual matters. She had three husbands. Successively, of course; not simultaneously. And the old question arises, "Whose wife shall she be at the resurrection?"

Mrs. Eddy, of course, as a good Christian Scientist, was not ill,—she only thought she was ill. Neither is she dead,—she only thinks she is dead. Her decease is an error in judgment.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Queen's Hall, London; 10, London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner.

February 5, Glasgow; 12, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.

March 5, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 11, Liverpool; 18, Abertillery.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 11, Rhondda; 18, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1910.—Previously acknowledged: £277 11s. 1d. Received since:—Three Atheists (2nd. sub.), 10s.; W. Dodd (2nd sub.), £1; J. D. D., £1.

E. C. CORNETT.—Thanks for personal good wishes.

J. J. HANKS.—We know nothing about the book you mention. There are so many religious books by retired military men.

HORACE DAWSON.—Sir Hiram Maxim replied to Basil Matthews' letter, pointing out, amongst other things, that Li Hung Chang really subscribed for the scientific and not the religious part of the "Christian medical college" in China. With regard to getting the *Freethinker* into your local Free Library, you had better write to the Chief Librarian, or the Library Committee, on the matter.

W. HOPPER.—Yes, it is the same Robert Buchanan. He was the author of several novels. There is a collected edition of his poems, we believe in two volumes, at something like 12s. We have not precise information at hand as we write.

R. MCKINNON.—Glad you are grateful for having the *Freethinker* brought to your attention fifteen months ago, and that you prove it by doing your best to introduce the paper to others. Your letter shall be attended to by our shop-manager. Thanks.

ARDENT FREETHINKER (Southsea).—Much obliged. See paragraph.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—Next week. Thanks.

G. SMITH.—The Cardiff Branch is not holding meetings at present.

THOMAS DIXON.—You ought to be fairly satisfied in the circumstances, if you got an answer of "Yes" to both questions on the Blasphemy Laws from Mr. Harold Elverston at Gateshead. His "Unsectarian Religion"—as if such a thing ever did or could exist—is simply one of the shibboleths of Nonconformist Liberals. They will drop it when they see that Secular Education is inevitable.

B. SIGER.—It is brave of you. We shall get along ever so much faster when Freethought women step out into the open, as you did on that occasion.

M. P. (Long Eaton).—Colonel Seely appears to be like a good many other Liberals; in favor of freedom and equal rights in the abstract, but rather doubtful when it comes to "infidels" in the concrete.

F. S. EDWARDS (S. Farnboro').—Mr. Clavel Salters is another of the abstract *versus* concrete gentlemen. He could not have said "No" to the second question if he had understood the first question, to which he had said "Yes."

JAMES GARROW (Walthamstow).—Mr. Carlyon Bellairs, in skipping your questions *re* the Blasphemy Laws, and saying "No" to the question *re* Secular Education, is just what you might have expected. His election address, which you enclose, is worthy of Bedlam.

H. MATTHEWS.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

R. MILLER.—You seem to have lost a dear friend, and the world a true man. Have passed over your letter to Miss Vance to deal with her part of it.

W. H. POMEROY.—Mr. Frank Smith, at Chatham, as Labor candidate, would naturally be in favor of Secular Education. Pleased to hear he answered "Yes" to your question *re* the Blasphemy Laws.

W. DODD.—Mr. Foote is pretty well at present, and sleeping rather better. Thanks.

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 is preparing a special course of lectures for the Sunday evenings in January at the Queen's Hall. A full announcement will be made in next week's *Freethinker*.

London Freethinkers are reminded that their Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place on Tuesday, January 10, at the Holborn Restaurant, with Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair. The tickets, 4s. each, are now obtainable of the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance. 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Dec. 11) at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, afternoon and evening. District "saints" will please note. Reserved tickets (1s. or 6d. each lecture) can be obtained at the Hall or from the secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 49 Penrose-street, Everton.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (Dec. 11) at the Theatre Royal, Tonymandy, under the auspices of the new Rhondda Branch. We have a good many readers in that district, and we hope they will all do their best towards securing Mr. Lloyd good meetings.

Mr. A. B. Moss's visit to Birmingham on Sunday seems to have been pleasant in everything but the weather. Old friends were pleased to meet him again, and new ones were delighted with his lectures.

Miss Kough occupies the King's Hall platform at Birmingham to-day, both afternoon and evening, and the local "saints" will be pleased that her return visit is so early.

Mr. Harry Snell, the Labor candidate for Huddersfield deals with many questions in his election address. What concerns Freethinkers particularly is that he is in favor of Secular Education. We have not seen the other candidates' addresses.

An "Internationalism and Peace" Demonstration takes place on Saturday evening (Dec. 10) at the Royal Albert Hall. Tickets must be obtained beforehand at the office of the Independent Labor Party, 23 Bride-lane, Fleet-street. Mr. Keir Hardie is to preside, and the list of speakers includes Jean Jaurès (France), Hermann Molkenbuhr (Germany), Emile Vandervelde (Belgium), W. T. Mills (U. S. A.), and J. Ramsey Macdonald and W. C. Anderson (Great Britain). No doubt there will be a big gathering. But what a pity it is that even Peace meetings must be so sectional.

George Meredith gave a number of his manuscripts to Miss Nicholls, his nurse, and they were sold by auction for her at Sotheby's on Thursday, December 1. The manuscript of "The Tale of Chloë" (1870), realised £171; "The Tragic Comedians" (first published in 1880), £220; "A Conqueror in Our Time," £260; and "Diana of the Crossways" (95 pages), £165. Portions of an early unpublished version of "The Amazing Marriage" sold for £96. In the manuscripts of poems, the principal prices were: "The Sage Enamored," £53; portion of "A Reading of Earth," £205; "Jump to Glory, Jane," £105. The Meredith manuscripts brought in a total sum of £1,866. Surely these must be record prices for manuscripts by an author so lately deceased. Meredith's death occurred only about eighteen months ago.

The New York *Truthseeker* reproduces from our columns Mr. Foote's article on "The 'Why' of Ethics" and Mr. Heaford's article on "Theophilo Braga."

Secular Thought, Toronto, is bravely sustained by Editor Ellis. We are pleased to see he draws upon us for a reprinted article on "Melchizedek" in the last number to hand.

Great Britain, France, Spain, and Italy have recognised the new Republic of Portugal. The Ministers of those countries called at the Foreign Office in London Nov. 9 and announced that they were authorised to resume negotiations with the Portuguese Government on current affairs. The United States should have been the first to recognise the new Republic, but it seems that our State Department officials are too busy hobnobbing with Gibbons and other Catholic dignitaries to give the matter proper consideration. —*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Missionary in the South Seas.

"Many very good people derive all their ideas of foreign lands from the platform of Exeter Hall, and country chapel tea-meetings, where evangelist lions from the four quarters of the globe give interesting accounts of the perils they have undergone, and the number of souls they have snatched from 'error's chain.' Children would be apt to form contemptuous notions of the doings of the Apostles, after listening to the model records of these good men."—JULIAN THOMAS, *Cannibals and Convicts* (pp. 139-9; 1887).

"The truth is, that all the churches—Free Church, Wesleyan, Roman Catholic, and Anglican are bitter enemies in these regions (the South Seas), and would rather a native remained as he was till they could get at him with their special nostrum than let him slip away to heaven by another route."—EDWARD REEVES, *Brown Men and Women* (p. 262; 1898).

"Seeing and deeming himself superior in every respect to his charge (the missionary), considers that he is entitled to live a life of ease, at the expense of the native and of the mission funds in Europe and America, the contributors to the latter being kept in a state of felicitous delusion as to the real conditions, by the circulation, through the medium of the Religious press, of unverified and highly tinged reports."—FRANK BURNETT, *Through Tropic Seas* (p. 163; 1910).

"With the advent of missionaries all is changed now. Cropped heads, no paint, no flowers worn, no songs, dancing, wrestling, sports."—C. F. WOODS, *A Yachting Cruise in South Seas* (p. 27; 1875).

IN the history of the missionary movement there is no point more dwelt upon by mission advocates than the conversion of the South Sea Islanders from heathenism to Christianity. This is held up for our admiration as the bright particular star of the movement. The crown and justification for the vast sums already expended and of those they hope to collect.

In the missionary magazines—the great advertising department of the missionary business—we are ceaselessly exhorted to compare the present condition of the natives with their state before the missionary appeared upon the scene, when they are represented as unclothed, degraded cannibals of the lowest type.

Mr. Frank Burnett, who has made a tour of the Fiji, Samoan, Tongan, and Gilbert Islands in his yacht, the *Laurel*, has investigated the subject—among other things—at first hand, calling at many islands untouched by ordinary vessels because of the absence of safe anchorage and landing-places.

Millions of money have been spent in Christianising the natives, and Mr. Burnett asks: "Have the results justified this vast expenditure of money?" After a thorough investigation during this and a previous cruise through the South Pacific, the author was compelled reluctantly to come to the conclusion that it has not.

The missionaries take great credit to themselves for having clothed the natives; the effect of this has been deadly. Mr. Burnett observes:—

"The insistence of the latter-day missionary—or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, of his wife—upon the adoption by the native, especially by the women, of the European standard of clothing, in pursuance of the ridiculous theory that modesty and good morals are dependent upon a civilised mode of dress,* has been, without doubt, one of the principal causes that have led to the disastrous decrease in population in most of the groups; in some cases to at least fifty per cent. of what it was when they were discovered. This is the opinion of most medical investigators into the reason for the great decrease in the number of inhabitants of the different archipelagoes in the South Pacific since the arrival of the white race." (P. 164.)

In the native state the body, being saturated with cocoanut oil, sheds the water like a duck's back, and in a few minutes after the shower, in a tropical sun, he is perfectly warm and comfortable. On the other

hand, when clothed, he sits cowering in his drenched garments, says Mr. Burnett, "with the result that phthisis, a disease unknown amongst the Islanders previous to the advent of the Europeans, has been generated, and has increased the death rate to an appalling extent." However, no doubt the missionary is satisfied with his handiwork if they all die "saved."

But it is on the moral and religious regeneration of the natives that the mission advocates lay most stress. In the missionary magazines we read of the enthusiasm the natives throw into their religious devotions, in contrast with the cold and formal way in which they are performed at home, the hymns especially being sung with a fervor which would put an ordinary English congregation to shame. It is a shining surface—from a religious point of view—but let us examine underneath.

It is true that the natives are passionately fond of singing, and converts will sing together through the night.* But—as it has often been pointed out—people may be religious without being moral, and this is a case in point. Mr. Burnett tells us:—

"One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that the Christianity of the South Sea Islands is of the most superficial character. The people are steeped in hypocrisy and are absolutely unreliable; while the women are devoid of all morality, according to our standard. They can see no inconsistency in a woman, married or single, being a harlot and a wanton throughout the week, and on Sunday a sacred hymn player and prominent church worker, singing in the choir and giving open testimony of her faith."

Moreover, the missionaries have engendered a most bitter spirit of Sabbatarianism in the people. At Rakahanga, one Sunday, their hostess was unable to supply them with water for supper, as the supply—drawn Saturday—was exhausted. So strong were her religious convictions on the subject that the author had to draw it from the well and carry it himself. "Yet," he tells us:—

"Yet this woman considered it no impugment of her moral character, and quite consistent with good conduct, to consort with, and have at her house on the previous evening, women, both married and single, who were absolutely without any idea of morality and who, to the apparent enjoyment of church elders present, would laughingly talk and sing in the most indecent way, accompanying the singing with grossly sensual gestures. And next morning, these women themselves led the choral services at church and took part in an animated debate on some vexed question of Christian doctrine."†

Mr. Burnett charges the natives with "hypocrisy," this is a hard saying; it is a case of measuring the uncivilised by the civilised standard. "The law," says Mr. Julian Thomas, an experienced traveller in these regions—

"sits very lightly on many of these warm-blooded, sensuous children of Polynesia. The flesh with them is still weak. Their natures, inherited from generations of ancestors, with whom to love was enough, cannot be changed in a day; so much ground for scandal is often given by male and female teachers."‡

The fact is, the change accomplished by the missionary is merely on the surface. As Mr. Reeves, another South Sea traveller, truly observes. The heathen, if freed at all from his baser superstitions, is freed more by contact with European ideas than by the doctrines of religion. He adds:—

"All barbarous races hail with delight the introduction of a new god with novel and interesting powers and attributes. They are eager to worship him with gesticulations and songs. To be raised to the importance of native missionary, to attend mass meetings where all are dressed in white uniforms, and where prayers and hymns are shouted, is, to the brown man, a delicious intoxication."§

* Mr. Edward Reeves says of the South Sea Islanders: "Before the advent of missionaries, and especially of missionaries' wives, to teach them a new sin, they knew neither the shame of nakedness nor the increased sexual attraction of the human form artfully draped" (*Brown Men and Women*; 1898; p. 77). For a statement of the moral injury inflicted on natives by the adoption of clothing, see an article by the present writer in the *Freethinker*, September 6, 1898.

* Mr. Burnett says that "the hymns received with the most favor were of a decidedly sanguinary nature, such as 'There is a fountain filled with blood' and 'Washed in the blood of the Lamb.'" Strange hymns to teach a race recently practising cannibalism.

† *Through Tropic Seas*, pp. 27, 28, 29.

‡ *Cannibals and Convicts*; 1887; p. 19.

§ *Brown Men and Women*, p. 288.

But, as the same author remarks, "To him the cultured ethics of a Farrar, a Ruskin, a Spencer, a Huxley, are as the buzzing of flies."

The missionaries attempt to force upon these children of nature a complex and unnatural system of thought and manners developed in a cold country, the outcome of totally different conditions to those prevailing in the tropics, and utterly unsuited to their mode of life. Is it surprising, then, if the result of their labors is the production of a race of hypocrites?

Mr. Julian Thomas also observes: "Like the African-American negroes, the Kanakas delight in worship. Somebody has remarked that this is because they are nearer nature." But the explanation is, says Mr. Thomas, "he is not level-headed, as we are, and that he 'splurges' over in his religious forms." What does a Kanaka convert know, as a rule, of the spirit underlying the forms of Christian faith? To him it is only a new and mysterious tabu, which he receives as the great thing that makes the white man powerful. This is the sermon preached by a native Fijian teacher in New Britain:—

"See what the lotu [Christianity] has done for us; we have a big ship to come and visit us, and bring us cloth and beads. Mr. Brown has a big house, and is a powerful chief; all this has been given us; then how good a thing lotu is."*

Then the oft-told tale of the hardships and privations undergone by the missionaries—at any rate, in these regions—is a pure myth. For they have instituted a system of training natives for mission work. These natives being sent out to far-distant and outlying groups. Says Mr. Burnett:—

"While the white missionary lives with his family in luxury and ease, with all the adjuncts of civilisation, in the Samoan, Fijian, Tongan, and other islands which the white man has well under control. When he wants to visit his native brethren, he does so in a palatially fitted auxiliary schooner like the *John Williams*, staying at each island just long enough to round up the faithful and make the annual levy. How the money contributed by the pious people in the Old and New World for Oceanic Mission purposes is expended is a mystery. All the islands touched at by the *Laurel* are not only self-supporting, as regards the churches, but pay a considerable levy to the mission vessels when they make their annual call. As far as the alleged self-sacrifice of the missionary is concerned, it is purely a myth. Wherever missionaries have been enabled to enrich themselves and their descendants, by dispossessing the native of his land, notably, as already stated, in the Hawaiian Islands, they have done so."†

What does become of the enormous sums invested and collected by the Missionary Societies? It is spent on the army of officials in London, who batten on the money left, largely by old ladies and collected from school children, to convert races not nearly so vile as the dwellers in the slums of all our large cities. Upon this point we have the express testimony of a bishop, himself a missionary in the South Seas. Mr. Julian Thomas tells us, "Bishop Selwyn, as a young man, was vicar of a parish in the Black Country. Knowing the locality, I remarked on the ignorant brute life led by some of the people there. 'Yes,' said the Bishop, 'in my parish there were thousands of men more degraded, more brutal, and more thorough savages than any of the natives of the Pacific.'"‡

There is no danger now to the missionary from the Islanders; there never was much, says Mr. Reeves, "to a man willing to learn their language, respect their prejudices, and treat natives fairly." The Rev. Mr. Baker, "the martyr" of Fiji, owed his fate entirely to his own folly, says Julian Thomas. "He preached to the heathen, and dared the chief to harm him, as he was specially protected by the Divine power." The Chief argued, "If we cannot hurt him, what harm the blow of a club? If it does knock out his brains, it proves he is a liar and

deserves death." "Thus the Chief reasoned; so the missionary was ignominiously clubbed and afterwards eaten."*

Another missionary myth is the claim that the missionary has been the pioneer in humanising the savage and so made the path easy for the trader. But "this contention," says Mr. Burnett, "is not justified by the facts of the case. In nearly every instance the traveller was the forerunner of the missionary, even so far back as the arrival of the *Duff*. When she reached Otaheiti, where all the missionaries, with one exception, were landed, traders were in advance of them.....and the same conditions existed in the different islands throughout Oceania."†

Their much vaunted claim to have abolished cannibalism is also quite untrue, as Mr. Burnett points out: "This state of affairs, notwithstanding the untiring efforts of the missionaries to obtain its abolition, through their influences with the Chiefs, continued until they passed into British control" (p. 142). And, as he further observes:—

"The fact is, and it is indisputable, that the advancement of the Polynesian from a semi-savage state is due almost entirely to the introduction of civilised institutions by the several European nations who have, from time to time, annexed the different groups. Chief among these is the British, who are endowed with innate genius for the government of barbarous races, and for improving their social condition. The missionary has, in truth, been a contributory factor in the civilising process only to a very limited extent."‡

But if he has failed to do much good he has done an immense amount of harm. The same writer tells us:—

"Numerous instances could be cited illustrative of the intolerant, autocratic, and uncharitable spirit which animates the majority of missionaries laboring throughout Polynesia at the present day, also of their overwhelming anxiety to obtain as much as possible of the world's wealth, and of the questionable methods employed in its acquisition."

The text as to not laying up treasure on earth "is evidently considered not to be applicable to themselves, but rather to the unsophisticated native." They "are to be found in the front rank of capitalists, this position having been attained in most instances at the cost of the Islander." The most glaring instances of which are to be seen in the Hawaiian Islands, and would have been repeated in other islands "if the British Government had not intervened and prevented the susceptible, improvident native from alienating his lands to the present day missionary cult."§

And as to the intolerance of the missionaries, our author declares:—

"These sects not only fought and quarrelled amongst themselves, through buying converts one from the other with tobacco, but also urged the pugnacious and excitably inclined native to take sides in their unseemly squabbles to such an extent that the Government had to parcel the islands out among the three different warring religious communities in order to prevent the imminent danger of anarchy and lawlessness, with its bloody consequences. No attempt was made by the Protestant missionary, for instance, to obtain converts from the Catholic fold by theological arguments; but the most blatant bribery was practised to attain that desired end, and *vice versa*. Then, when the intelligent and discerning native, disgusted with such practices, relapsed into Paganism, the contending missionaries, instead of changing their methods, hurled, simultaneously, denunciations and anathemas at his defenceless head."||

While Mr. Burnett was at Sarawa, in the Gilbert Islands, a law had to be passed prohibiting the sale of "Native Food" except at such a price as would prevent any dealing in it by the missionaries; as the Catholic mission were buying up for tobacco all the

* *Cannibals and Convicts*, p. 21.

† *Through Tropic Seas*, p. 169.

‡ *Cannibals and Convicts*, p. 39.

* *Cannibals and Convicts*, p. 379.

† *Through Tropic Seas*, p. 172.

‡ *Through Tropic Seas*, pp. 172-3.

§ *Ibid*, pp. 164-5, 163.

|| *Ibid*, p. 166.

"Native Food" they could secure, so that when the famine period came on, and the cocoanut-tree ceased to bear during the term of drought, the natives would have been completely at the mercy of the priests.

How things went under the rule of the missionaries before the British protectorate was proclaimed may be judged from the following, which reads like a description of one of the ferocious Holy Wars of the Middle Ages, and shows what Christians are capable of when they obtain full control:—

"At Tapuleuea, under combined chief and missionary rule, the Christians, who numbered at least two-thirds of the population, becoming very zealous in the interests of, and with the view of propagating, the faith, gave their Pagan brethren the alternative of either at once embracing the Christian religion or of being cleared root and branch from off the earth, thereby emulating the Jewish chosen people in their treatment of the Canaanites. The minority proved unreasonable enough to refuse compliance with such a righteous demand; consequently they were, without any delay, attacked by the Christian section, led on by the native missionaries, and, after severe fighting, were defeated; whereupon they, with their wives and families, barricaded themselves in the large Maneappa or Council House on the island. An attempt to storm this place of refuge having failed, after mature consideration it was deliberately set on fire, with the result that, including those who were ruthlessly slaughtered while attempting to escape the flames, the lives of from 1,200 to 1,500 men, women, and children were sacrificed by Christian zealots for their 'holy cause.'"

Such is the result of the murderous superstition with which the natives have been inoculated at the cost of so many millions.

Mr. Reeves, in his book, *Brown Men and Women*, has a valuable chapter on missionaries, founded upon a mass of official and other documentary proofs. He begins with the conversion of the Tongans and Samoans to the Wesleyan religion, sixty years ago, under King George I. of Tonga, the original "King of the Cannibal Islands" of fabulous history.

The mainspring of this enterprise was the Rev. Shirley Baker, nicknamed "Burley Shaker." Mr. Reeves declares that,—

"from a religious point of view, his domination from first to last was a theocracy of iron doctrine and ceaseless prayer; where subscriptions were wrung from terrified natives by armed policemen, and crops were seized in the name of God; harmless games were forbidden, women were not allowed to smoke tobacco, and where draconic laws punished, by conveniently heavy fines, that intercourse of sexes considered, from time immemorial, chaste by native custom. The strictest puritanic principles of the cold Covenanters of Scotland, and of Cromwell's metaphysical Independents, were thrust down the throats of tropical men and women to whom they were quite unsuited. The literal meaning of Tongabatu is 'Sacred Tonga'; so, under Mr. Baker's regime, the kingdom of George I. was known, in the profane colonial world, as Holy Tonga."

Mr. Baker was deposed by the Wesleyan Missionary Society, ostensibly because of his theocratic government, really because of being too independent in his manipulation of the enormous Church fund squeezed out of the natives. Mr. Reeves quotes from the *Report of Sir Charles Mitchell* (1887) that "the surplus of subscriptions received in Tonga, and spent out of Tonga by the Wesleyan Church, was admitted in 1876 to have exceeded £2,000"†

Mr. Baker was replaced by Mr. Moulton, and Mr. Baker counters by getting himself appointed Prime Minister to King George I., and persuades that monarch to have a church of his own. King George "is delighted with the idea of having his own gods and the subscriptions all to himself. And so the fight begins." Mr. Baker institutes a series of petty persecutions against the adherents of Mr. Moulton, harasses them with new laws, lays burdens upon them. "Lands, long occupied, he vexatiously takes away on the plea that they are the private property

of the King, and only lent till he required them for his own use."

Mr. Moulton retaliates by attacking Mr. Baker from the pulpit, and even goes so far as to attack the King himself. Assuming the rôle of an ancient Jewish prophet, says Mr. Reeves: "In the presence of the old King's dying grandson Albert, Mr. Moulton denounces him, tells him that God has already slain his only son because of his persecution of the saints," and threatens "as glibly as if the keys of life and death, of heaven and hell, had been entrusted to the Wesleyan Methodists, and were then in the reverend gentleman's pocket.....'The Lord has visited you. Your son, David Uga, has died, and your grandson Albert will die. God is angry with you for threatening his Church,' foams this modern Amos" (p. 273).

To those unacquainted with missionary methods this chapter will prove an eye-opener. As Mr. Reeves remarks:—

"In this dispute between rival Churches the miserable truth about the grasping missionary system comes out with a vengeance. I do not know which is the most damaging—the charges against Mr. Moulton, his defences, or Mr. Baker's replications."*

The dispute ended by Mr. Baker being deported, at the instance of the British Consul.

We will conclude this article with a crowning instance of the cruelty and inhumanity engendered by religion—and Mr. Reeves quotes it from a Government Blue-book: "In some provinces of Fiji it was forbidden for those in church fellowship to assist at the birth, and in the nurturing, of children born out of wedlock." The natives forwarded a protest to the Governor, pointing out that this placed "both mother and child in a pitiable position." Also that they did not consider it was a matter to be judged of by the missionary, "but rather a matter becoming us as human beings and as a people to decide, and we are of one mind to follow our old customs in respect of this thing, seeing it is to care for children and their mothers." The Governor's reply is refreshing: "If any injury result from neglect of the kind referred to, those who have been guilty of it will be severely punished."† If they had not been restrained by the civil power, the missionaries would have established another Inquisition. We quite agree with Sir Hiram Maxim in his wish for a militant Anti-Missionary Society.

W. MANN.

THE ETERNAL SPHYNX.

If we were obliged to canvass the multitudinous arguments for and against Theism as a "theory of the universe" our task would be utterly hopeless. Examine all that has been written on this perennial controversy, and what is the result? Nothing but weariness and vexation of spirit. Man is not born to solve the mystery of Nature. He can never pierce her depths nor scale her heights. Her subtlety, as Bacon said, far exceeds the subtlety of man. Extend the borders of science as we will, what, after all, is our achievement? Of what importance is it except to ourselves. Beneath our solid-seeming kingdom of knowledge, as Carlyle said, there is the "great deep infinitude of Nescience, on which all science swims as a mere superficial film." Such is the verdict of the transcendentalist. Nor does the verdict of the philosophical scientist in anywise differ. Huxley declares that all our knowledge is based on "silence and impenetrable darkness." The eternal sphynx hides its secret, and will hide it for ever; and all the clamor of our vaunts and prayers cannot perturb its everlasting forthright regard.—G. W. Foote, "The Folly of Prayer,"

* Mr. Reeves tells us that in times of famine the mission stores have been filled with copra wrung from the natives. Mr. Moulton charges Mr. Baker with levying a debt of 10,000 dollars upon the natives when they had nothing to contribute. Mr. Baker retorts, that if it was wrong of him to levy a debt of 10,000 dollars, it was wrong of Mr. Moulton to levy a debt of 5,000 dollars upon them. Both admit the facts.

† *Brown Men and Women*, pp. 264-5.

* *Through Tropic Seas*, pp. 122-3.

† *Ibid*, Note, p. 275.

Correspondence.

THE FUTURE OF FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have read with great interest your correspondent's letter dealing with "The Future of Freethought." What a gloomy person he must be. Fancy anyone being sceptical of success for no other reason than that "it becomes every pessimist to be so."

Your correspondent argues that the masses are leaving the churches because they are "sick of their slavery." Is it not more feasible to assume that they are leaving the churches because they are only just realising that they are slaves?

The average Christian stands, as it were, surrounded on all sides by a good substantial wall of ignorance and superstition. You can't get over it, you can't knock it down, and consequently you can't get at him. He, on his side, does not know he is imprisoned. He thinks his little enclosure is the world; and only when he hears the voices of those outside, who have gained their intellectual freedom, does he realise his captivity. And then he sends his wall crumbling to the ground.

Then, your correspondent continues to argue that the masses, having left the Church, will become appalled at the "terrible evils of Nature"; "the facts"—by which, I presume, he means the facts of the universe—"will strike them as things too terrible for men to even dream of conquering"; "they will see.....how Nature still.....brutalises man," etc., and in their helplessness will return to the old solution of God and a Devil.

To begin with, what is meant by the "evils of Nature"? Nature itself produces no evil. Every evil that has ever existed, does exist, or ever will exist, is the direct result of the breaking of one or another of Nature's laws. Keep men religious, and therefore ignorant, and they will continue to break those laws, arguing that their offence is due to temptation which they, being but human, cannot always resist. Educate them out of their religion, wake them up to a sense of their responsibility,—not only to their fellow-citizens, but to the whole human race, present and future,—and the result will be less abuse of Nature and, consequently, less evil.

As regards the dream of conquering Nature, surely, outside a lunatic asylum, no such dream exists. That Nature brutalises man I also deny. If such were the case we should be led, naturally, to the conclusion that a man whose life was above the level of the animals had already conquered Nature, so far as he had thrown off Nature's influence.

Your correspondent asks, "How do you know that this reaction, this blind falling back to a mere credulity, is not likely to occur?" I say it is not likely to occur because it would be in direct opposition to mental evolution; because, in fact, it never has occurred. The step from Christianity to Atheism is not an experiment; it is a distinct advance.

Even if one found no final satisfaction in Atheism, the next step would instinctively be a search for something still more advanced—something beyond all known creeds and philosophies.

In conclusion, however, I do heartily agree with your correspondent that Christianity is not beaten. The greatest enemy to Freethought to-day is the man who goes about insisting that the fight against Christianity is a farce. This man will tell you that, with Bradlaugh's death, the need for a militant Atheism ceased to exist.

Perhaps the fact that this view is so largely held is due to the comparative friendliness of the Church. This friendliness, again, is due to the inability on the part of the Church to recognise its enemy's strength. At present the hundred-and-one sects are too busy quarrelling amongst themselves to notice the advance of Atheism. When they do recognise their danger they will certainly fight. They will be strong, with the strength of despair; we, with the strength of unity—and we shall win.

CLARA GUNNING.

THE TRUE SECULARISM.

Waste no thought on the Almighty;
Seek, with all thy soul's endeavor,
How to make thine earthly dwelling
Bright and fair, in God's despite!

Only for a day thou livest!
Make that day, so quickly fleeting,
For thyself, for all thou lovest,
Beautiful with light and joy.

—Robert Buchanan.

Free Thoughts.

BY L. K. WASHBURN.

As far as Christian theology is concerned we are Atheists.

The statutes of Massachusetts are holier, and far more sensible, than the laws of God as given in the book of Leviticus.

The Pope's temporal power is growing smaller by degrees and beautifully less.

Faith in immortality is gambling in stocks of the future.

Christianity ought to adopt a more civilised method of saving man than by the blood of Jesus.

Good books have killed the Bible.

What keeps the world going right six days in the week is of vastly more consequence than what keeps it solemn and stupid one day.

A Christian has to give the priest a tip in order to get served well at the table of his Lord.

The Christian believes in a trinity of gods on the ground that three heads are better than one head.

"Believe and be saved" is being saved cheap. Cheap salvation is for cheap people.

The only one who can speak for God is God, and he says nothing.

The Israelites may have been made in the image of God, but we are glad that some others were not.

We want in this world the peace which doesn't pass understanding.

When Paul fell to earth in fright he must have beheld the headlight on an automobile.

Bread and butter has more "saving grace" than faith.

Uncle Sam! The Pope is going to get you if you don't watch out.

Many a doubt can be settled by the dictionary, but not one by the Bible.

Religion is only a sanctified prejudice.

The Lord God in his character of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde did his best work as the doctor.

A life in this world is worth an eternity in the next.

A crusade against the cross must soon be started.

Why keep on saying "Sure as hell," when hell is no surer than heaven?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Obituary.

I REGRET to have to acquaint you with the particulars of the death of Mr. Robert Child, of 29 Osborne-road, Palmer's Green, which took place on the morning of the 26th ult. He was in his 79th year, and for the greater part of his fairly long life was an open and avowed Freethinker. In his early manhood he resided at Brighton, and was then an earnest member of the Congregationalist body; but at that period he became acquainted with the late Mr. George Jacob Holyoake. From this date his vigorous intellect began to investigate the claims of Christianity, with the result that he soon bade good-bye to all supernatural, so called, explanations of natural phenomena. It was at this period that he began the accumulation of a library of advanced literature, and, although never a rich man in the ordinary sense, his collection has become a large, valuable, and highly interesting one. He was well known and respected, and always had generous access to the columns of the local press, where he championed Freethought with ability. On the 24th ult., about thirty-six hours before his demise, he dictated several matters to his daughter, one of which was: "I die an Atheist—by which I mean Anti-Theist—and I desire that my body may be cremated." On the same day his wife brought up the *Freethinker*, but, noticing that he was dosing, laid it on the bed. Shortly afterwards he awoke, and called out: "Bring me my *Freethinker*." He read through "Acid Drops," and glanced at a good deal of the general contents, expressing satisfaction therewith. This was the last effort of his sinking powers. I saw him on Tuesday night, when the lamp of life was burning low; all was then peace and serenity. I have seen in my earlier days, when I was a believer, great numbers of Christians die, but none that died with that fortitude and manly resignation that Robert Child displayed.—A. LEWIS.

I REGRET to report the death of Mr. John Glendening, 130 Beaufort-hill, Beaufort, South Wales. He was a member of the N. S. S., and proud of the fact. The cause of his death was consumption, from which he had been suffering for three years. He died on Monday, November 28, and was interred on Thursday, December 1, at Brynmaur Cemetery. He had a Secular funeral. His wife is nigh heart-broken at her loss; they were an ideal pair, and respected by all.—ROBERT MILLER.

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.**

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30 E. C. Saphin, "Christianity—Sun-Worship." Illustrated with lantern slides.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno and S. J. Cook.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): Miss K. B. Kough, 3, "Christianity and Progress"; 7, "The Old Creed and the New Credulity."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class; 6.30, C. R. Clemens, "Evolution of Man." With lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, a Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): C. Cohen, 3, "Ideas as Social Forces"; 7, "Man's Search for God."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, a Lecture on "Esperanto, the New Universal Language."

RHONDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Theatre Royal, Tonypany): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "God, Man, and the Devil"; 6.30, "If Man is Responsible, to Whom, or What?"

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Ante-Room): 3, Business Meeting—Election of Officers, etc.

ARTHUR B. MOSS,

Freethought Advocate of 30 Years Experience,

Is open to lecture for Freethought and Ethical Societies on Sundays in London or the Provinces. His subjects embrace the whole field of controversy between the Christian and the Free-thinker. He also lectures on the Poets and the Drama.

For Dates and Terms, apply:—

42 ANSDALL RD., QUEEN'S RD., PECKHAM, S.E.

FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT

By G. W. FOOTE.

Contains scores of entertaining and informing Essays and Articles on a great variety of Freethought topics.

First Series, cloth 2s. 6d.

Second Series cloth 2s. 6d.

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

THE**MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA.**

An Address delivered at Chicago by

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

Will be forwarded, post free, for

THREE HALFPENCE.

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

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.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY

(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON. E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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.

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 VESY STREET, New York, U.S.A.

TRUE MORALITY:

Or, The Theory and Practice of Neo-Malthusianism

IS, I BELIEVE,

THE BEST BOOK

ON THIS SUBJECT.

Superfine 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-Malthusian theory and practiceand 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. Allbutt, 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.

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 or 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.

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

AT

**Queen's (Minor) Hall,
LANGHAM PLACE, LONDON, W.**

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

January 1.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

„ 8.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

„ 15.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

„ 22.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

„ 29.—Mr. G. W. FOOTE,

Vocal and Instrumental Music Before each Lecture.

Questions and Discussion Invited.

Front Seats 1s. Back Seats 6d. A Few Seats Free.

Music from 7 to 7.30. Lecture at 7.30.

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.