

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXII.—No. 36

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1912

PRICE TWOPENCE

As for the truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. With her there is no acceptance of persons or rewards; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and all men do well like of her works. Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness; and she is the strength, kingdom, power, and majesty of all ages.—I. ESDRAS IV. 38-40.

The Existence of Evil.

To a Theist, especially to a Christian Theist, the existence of evil ought to be the problem of problems. Theologians generally feel that they are bound to offer some explanation of the existing order; and the task is so extremely difficult that they never succeed in accomplishing it even to their own entire satisfaction. Dr. Orchard, of Enfield, has made several attempts to solve the mystery; but in his Correspondence Column in the *Christian Commonwealth* for August 28, he practically confesses that he is powerless in its presence. He admits, however, that to the Atheist the existence of evil is not a problem. Its mere existence is for all alike an incontestable fact, but only a believer in a just and good God is called upon to show how the fact and the belief can be brought into harmony. Dr. Orchard frankly acknowledges his utter inability to do it, and makes the following curious statement:—

"Personally, I prefer to believe in God and feel the weight of the problem rather than to part with the problem at the expense of parting also with the belief in God."

In his present article there are several very sensible observations; but the whole of it is vitiated by an underlying mysticism which is inconsistent with the writer's natural love of reason. There can be no rational objection to the poetical personification of feelings and tendencies; but to represent Jesus as addicted to such a habit is an inexcusable blunder. Yet it is a mistake of which we find Dr. Orchard guilty in the following sentences: "To Jesus, God was an impulse moving him to relieve suffering, take away fear, and attack evil. This [impulse] was his 'Father,' and the doing of his will was the only way of knowing him." Nothing is more certain than that to the Gospel Jesus God was a veritable person who actually lived and moved and had his being in the spiritual world, to whom he "offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears," because he believed that he "was able to save him from death." The God of Jesus was an omnipotent, omniscient, and benevolent Being who took care of sparrows and knew how many hairs there were on everybody's head; and in Christian theology throughout the ages the God of Jesus has been looked upon as both Maker and Ruler of the Universe. Now, in the *Shorter Catechism*, which is in general use in Presbyterian Churches, we read of God's decrees which "are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass"; and we read further that he "executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence." Ignoring this

teaching of his own Church, Dr. Orchard addresses a correspondent thus:—

"You assume that the present condition of things is the Divine order, and that you ought to love it. This is an unpardonable reversion of your own instincts. Your theology or your philosophy may drive you to the conclusion that this present condition is what God has willed. But our hearts cry out against this system. To argue to ourselves that it is a Divine order is to crush our intuitions. It would be far better to be an Atheist than to do that. Then why does God allow it to exist? I do not know. All I do know is that I am moved to alter it to accord with quite another order which I feel within me."

Now, we are getting on, as Mr. Asquith would say. We have brought before us two distinct orders or systems, which are in flat contradiction the one to the other; an internal and an external. Dr. Orchard calls this inward order the Divine order, and declares that religion's first admonition "is to put one's faith in this order and to believe that it comes from God." But what about the other order? We are now treated to a regular startler:—

"Then where does the external order come from? I do not know. Yet if I admit that it has a different origin from the order within, surely I have denied all belief in God as supreme. Well, that may be a question for philosophy; it is not a question for religion. My obvious religious duty is to accept what is ethically imperative within, and to believe that this is what primarily concerns me and is supreme for my Universe. This is what I mean by God."

Yes, truly, we are getting on. God has been reduced to a social instinct; and to this social instinct Dr. Orchard is in the habit of addressing prayers and supplications. Is the reverend gentleman really aware what implications lie within his strange doctrine? As he well knows, time was when "this inward order," this social instinct, did not exist, or when God himself was not. This is what comes of playing fast and loose with theological terms. We are of opinion that it would be far better for Dr. Orchard to part with his belief in God than to dethrone and dishonor him in this outrageous fashion. "What is ethically imperative within" is nothing in the world but our own constitution as social beings, which is a product of the long and often painful evolutionary process. It would, indeed, be ineffably silly to inquire whether "this inward order," "this inner spirit, also made or rules the world"; and so Dr. Orchard declines to discuss the point. Do you imagine, he says in effect, that I am so foolish as "to subordinate the highest we know to questions of expediency"? What we are expected to do is to obey "this inner spirit," "this inward order," that is, this social instinct within us, and by obeying, develop and strengthen it. Of course, if Dr. Orchard means what he says, he is in reality as thorough an Atheist as any avowed Freethinker. Unfortunately, he does not mean what he says, for he has already implied that God allows the external order, which is evil, to exist, though he cannot tell why.

Dr. Orchard assures us that "all this is not a device for shelving the theological and philosophical problems that arise"; but we very seriously ask, What on earth is it, then? That he does shelve the problem of evil with a vengeance is beyond all doubt, whether he does it by a set device or not. God allows evil to exist, he implies; but how does

he know that? When and how did he make such a discovery? An infinitely powerful, just, and good God allowing evil to come into existence and to persist and darken life for millions of years, who can tolerate the idea? Yet Dr. Orchard is resolved to retain his belief in God at whatever cost to his intellectual and moral nature. When asked, What do you mean by God? he answers by saying that "this inward order," "this inner spirit," or this "ethical imperative," that is, man's social or moral nature, and God are identical. We are as strong believers in the beauty and power of man's social instinct, or moral sense, as is the reverend gentleman himself; but we fail to discern in it any trace of Divinity. We regard it, rather, as a prize we have won in running the evolutionary race, or a quality we have gradually evolved in the struggle for existence. Dr. Orchard cannot pronounce this view at all unreasonable. He says:—

"It is perfectly possible that someone might prefer to regard this inner spirit as something entirely a part of himself, or as the ideal created by his own imagination. It does not really matter what it is called or thought to be; what does matter is one's attitude towards it."

If that is true, why is the writer a Christian minister, and associated with a denomination notorious for its orthodoxy? As a matter of fact, it does matter what the onward and upward trend in man is called or thought to be. We claim that to call it God, our loving Heavenly Father, or the Savior of the world through the death on the cross, is to do it the grossest injustice. We hold that to worship it as the Holy Ghost is to indulge in a debasing idolatry. What Dr. Orchard gives us, whilst despising theology, is an emasculated specimen of the article. He is soaked through and through with theology, of a sort; and in his way he is quite as dogmatic as John Calvin himself.

We are firmly convinced that "God" is a word that ought to be dropped from human speech, as well as the idea in all its multitudinous forms from human thought. The Christian conception of God is self-contradictory and ethically humiliating; and the Christian salvation as depicted in the New Testament and the Catholic Church is most assuredly not the salvation advocated by Dr. Orchard in the article under review. He says that "the Christian salvation would have no claim to be universal if it depended primarily on what beliefs a man accepted." It is needless to point out that this is in complete disagreement with the teaching of the apostle Paul, who declares, in God's name, that the possession of right beliefs about Christ, especially his atoning death, lordship, and resurrection, is the first essential condition of salvation. One can see that, at bottom, Dr. Orchard is ethically sound, only his theological prepossessions and prejudices handicap him in his endeavors to state the true social Gospel. If he could but shed the theological rags that still cling to him he would be one of the first ethical guides of the age.

The existence of evil is not a problem to the Secularist, but simply a sign of imperfect development. Huxley was undoubtedly mistaken when he asserted that Nature is essentially immoral. He over-emphasised the apparent cruelty of the law of Natural Selection in his eagerness to prove that the world is not governed by benevolence. He wished to make it perfectly clear that "whatever differences of opinion may exist among experts, there is a general consensus that the ape and tiger methods for the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles." On the assumption that the world is governed by benevolence, nothing could be truer; but Huxley ignored the active presence, even pretty low down in the scale of life, of the motherly and neighborly methods whereby the foundations were laid of the social structure which is still uncompleted. Speaking of the human world, the evils that afflict it are due to inadequate adaptation to environment. What Dr. Orchard calls the existing order is an immature, undeveloped

order, and we agree with him in the statement that it is within our power to alter it, to give it vigorous shoves forwards, to diminish the pain and sorrow in it, and to infuse into it better and nobler elements. Before we can do this with any substantial success we must clear out of our minds all the Fables of the Above, and learn to rely upon ourselves alone. This was Huxley's ethical message to his age; and on account of it Dr. Orchard claims him as a man of faith, a saved man in the Christian sense. What Huxley taught was that humanity is now in possession of all the resources requisite to work out its own salvation, without help from above, or hindrance from below.

J. T. LLOYD.

Words, Mere Words!

THE Wesleyan Methodists have been holding an East Coast Open-air Campaign, and the reports of its work are of the usual character. That is, they have had—so runs the reports—large meetings, much outpouring of the spirit, and many souls brought to salvation. These things occur with monotonous regularity, the only discordant fact being the steady decrease of Wesleyan Methodism. At Scarborough, although services were forbidden by the bye-laws, meetings were made possible "by the connivance of the police." In face of the police activity in many quarters against open-air speaking by Freethinkers, this police "connivance" is worth noting. Presumably, had any Freethinker been venturesome enough to address a meeting, the police would soon have enforced the bye-laws; and the Freethinker might have found himself dragged before a magistrate charged with lacerating the sensitive feelings that exist beneath the humble uniform of a guardian of law and order.

But if Atheists were not holding meetings, some of them were listening; for we are informed that some Atheists asked questions, and "The missionaries report that invariably the questions revealed moral perversity rather than intellectual difficulty." That is exactly what one would expect—from the Methodists' point of view. We are not told what the questions were, so one cannot express a dogmatic opinion on the matter. Still, one is rather dubious about the existence of this "moral perversity." It can hardly be, if the missionary told the people to be honest, truthful, sober, and cleanly, that an Atheist championed stealing, lying, drunkenness, and uncleanness. And if the questions referred to Methodist doctrines, one does not see where the "moral perversity" comes in. Certainly none but a Christian preacher could detect moral perversity in a question dealing with the existence of God, a future life, or any other point of Christian belief.

The comment is, however, characteristic of Christian advocacy. All our words are more or less, to use Oliver Wendell Holmes' phrase, polarised; and nothing is so easy as to excite feeling against an opponent by the use of an ill-sounding term. To refer to the moral perversity that lies behind an opponent's question not only stamps him as something low, but by contrast it elevates you on a pinnacle of moral excellence that would not otherwise be attained. I have been more than once considerably amused in listening to an obviously shaky character denouncing from a Christian Evidence platform the moral iniquities of Secularism, and in observing the glow of self-conscious righteousness that overspread his face during the process. He may have been lying like a veritable Ananias, inventing facts by the yard, and retailing slander by the bucketful; but all this was washed away by the consciousness that he stood as representative of a pure morality against the moral perversity of Freethought. In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king; and amid the assumed moral depression of Freethought the infinitesimal ethical elevation of the Christian preacher assumes perfectly mountainous proportions.

As a matter of fact, a public questioning of religious doctrines springs from moral strength rather than from moral weakness. Certainly there are Freethinkers whose moral disposition leaves much to be desired. The Churches are not alone in possessing this type, but they satisfy no perverse moral feelings in questioning religious teaching. They stand to lose much and to gain nothing. Conformity will enable them to gratify a hundred and one petty vices with impunity, where nonconformity exposes them to sharp reproof. Nonconformity—provided the number of nonconformists be sufficiently small—always demands a higher level of character, no matter in what the nonconformity exists. In the case of a native born Turk it would take greater moral strength to profess Christianity than to continue worshipping in a mosque. The member of a Methodist family in England who professed Mohammedanism would most likely be the best of the bunch. One always requires strength to go against the stream; to go in the opposite direction one only needs the mere ability to float. The Methodist missionary on the Scarborough sands needed neither courage nor wisdom to proclaim his message. He had the "connivance" of the police and the sympathy of the public. The Atheist who opposed him would have had neither. He had nothing to depend upon but himself, and the man who will operate from that basis is never without value.

Presumably, this Methodist missionary belongs to the class of preachers who cannot understand what reason there can be for a man leading a decent life if he is not a believer in religion. Like some of the older preachers, he looks into the human heart and discovers that all is vile. Nothing but the fear of punishment, or the love of Christ, or the conviction of a day of judgment can make men decent; and, therefore, there can be no doubt as to the moral state of the unhappy Atheist. Self-analysis is a very good thing, but it may be carried too far. If a Christian preacher says that he has his own sufficient religious reasons for keeping on the right side of decency and the law, the Atheist is quite willing to let his statement go for what it is worth. But he objects to all human nature being measured by the same poor rule. The Atheist does not expect a day of judgment, he does not profess a love for Christ, he has no fear of future punishment. But, he says, there are husbands and wives, parents and children, friends and neighbors, and these surely ought to count for a deal in our moral calculations. Human nature may be a poor thing, but it is the best thing we know. It is capable of heroism and sacrifice; it can rise to great heights, as it can sink to great depths. The Atheist says there is enough here to find all necessary sanction and inspiration for the loftiest endeavors. The orthodox Christian denies it and denounces it as a demoralising position, and discovers moral perversity as the root cause of the Atheistic belief.

One of the American preachers that are at present honoring London with their presence said the other day at the City Temple, "If you want to find an Agnostic, you must seek him in the midst of a Christian civilisation, where he has gathered his inspiration and his ideals from that Christianity which has been the dominant faith of his time." And another well-known preacher reminds us that, in considering the morality of the Atheists, we are apt to forget that the Atheist usually comes of a Christian parentage, and has the advantage of a Christian environment. There it is! If the Atheist is bad, and really morally perverse, it is because of his Atheism. If he is not bad, it is because he comes of a Christian ancestry, and because, from the Christians around him, he learns the lessons of goodness, and kindness, and all the numerous graces of human nature. True, this Christian ancestry and environment very often fails to save Christians themselves from being thorough-paced blackguards; but that is one of the peculiarities of the position, apparently. It has a better moral effect on those

who reject Christian teaching than on those who accept it.

It is all an example of the hypnosis of mere words. People use these expressions without ever realising what they mean by them. Others hear them and applaud them in the same non-reasoning manner. Disbelief in Christianity is no rare phenomenon. There is probably not a dozen Christians in any town or city in the kingdom that are not acquainted with some unbelievers. And they know quite well that these people are certainly no worse than their fellows. They know they are not moral perverts. They meet them in all kinds of public life, sit with them on all sorts of committees, stand by their side in workshop and office. And yet, when the familiar phrases are repeated, phrases to which all their experience give the direct lie, they accept them as an accurate summary of the situation.

Religion always breeds true to type. In primitive society, where morality has little or no place in religious beliefs, the heretic is killed because he is a social danger. The gods may be angry with him and wreak vengeance on the whole of the tribe. At a later stage, the heretic is condemned because he is a centre of spiritual corruption, and may infect docile members of the Church. Later still, when social growth has affected religion, and moral judgments forced themselves on religious observances, a new name for an old policy has to be discovered. A moral reason must be invented, and so it is assumed that the heretic is one who claims liberation from all social and moral law. It is not always possible to kill him, but it is easy to slander him. He is one from whom all good men and women will shrink. The great objection to his opinions are their influence on his moral disposition. Gradually even this begins to lose its force. As Freethinkers multiply, they become better known. And becoming better known, it can be seen that, if they are not better than their neighbors, they are certainly not worse. Still preachers keep up the old pretence. It is all they can do. The stereotyped phrases must be repeated, even though they are losing their vitality. For the religious man to openly admit the social and morality equality of Freethinkers is to confess the utter uselessness of his own peculiar beliefs.

C. COHEN.

"Special" Seaside Superstition.

AT all the seaside resorts that I have ever visited, whether in the North, South, East, or West of England, I have always found numerous representatives of the Great Black Army of Superstition on the lookout for such visitors as they think would be willing to have shouted into their credulous ears "the glorious tidings" that all men are sinners, and that a good, kind Heavenly Father will never forgive man his sins unless he will believe the incredible story that God sent a part of himself down on earth to die—who, being eternal, could not die—to blot out sins against an all-good, all-powerful God, who could have prevented them being committed had he chosen, but who deliberately decided to let them be committed, and therefore was responsible for their performance. This incredible creed these representatives of God on earth proclaim at every available opportunity—in the streets, on the sands, in the Salvation Army barracks, the churches, chapels, and mission halls, and even in the picture palaces on Sundays. So that no man, woman, or child who desires to hear these "glorious tidings" can fail to hear them unless they deliberately decline to give heed to the warnings and exhortations of these long-faced preachers and parsons. It is, however, extremely gratifying to me to find that the vast masses of the pleasure-seeking public quietly ignore these gentry, and that, for the most part, only the usual pious spinsters and the unctuous Pecksniffian kind of men who hang on to every form of organisation connected with religious superstition, take part in the open-air services at the seaside.

When people are in the holiday mood, and have to choose where they will go to seek a few weeks' rest and recreation, either by "the deep blue sea," where they may spend some of their leisure playing on the sands with their children, or walking over the cliffs, where they may have, if they are fortunate, a beautiful stretch of country on the one hand, with wavy corn and trees weighed down with glorious fruit, and a vast expanse of sea on the other; or whether they will go right away into the heart of the country, "far from the madding crowd," and, seated beneath stately trees, while away the hours reading their favorite novel—of this they may be sure, whether they choose the country or the seaside, that the representatives of God, somewhere in the neighborhood, are awaiting their arrival.

Personally, I like to visit such seaside resorts as are in close proximity to a large stretch of beautiful country. Consequently, I often find myself in the holiday month of August somewhere in the Isle of Thanet, wandering about between Ramsgate, Broadstairs, St. Peter's, and Margate, and on my journeys I make a note of the habits of the people, and of the state of their minds in reference to religious belief. The indigenous population of a seaside resort, being made up for the most part of fisherfolk and small shopkeepers, are as a general rule in a primitive state of ignorance in regard to the question of the evolution of religious belief. The fisherfolk accept the belief of their parents without question; but the shopkeeping class accommodate their belief to all classes of customers. On the other hand, visitors belong to all classes—from the wealthy aristocrats of the West to the ordinary artisan and laborer of the East, with a good big sprinkling of the middle classes in between. Well, when they come down to the seaside for a few weeks, of course they must go "somewhere" on Sunday. The vast majority are content to spend their time in the open air on the cliffs, on the sands, or on the numerous conveyances that take them from one popular place of resort to another.

Many of the middle-class folk pay a visit to the principal churches or chapels as a matter of curiosity, or to hear a popular preacher, or make a visit of inspection of these places from an archaeological or historical point of view. And then, of course, the ladies have brought with them all their smartest dresses, and if they cannot get a satisfactory "show" on the front, what more natural than that some of the "smart set" should arrange to arrive a little late, and make a good display of their finery as they walk up the aisle of the church to be shown into their pews? And as ladies are not requested to remove their hats, all the fine feathers may wave, to the admiration of the young swells who still think that it is only a duty they owe to the State and society that they should go to church occasionally, and call themselves "miserable sinners," and watch the dear girls smile as though they did not believe it, and hear them sing as though they were qualifying for the "celestial choir" where winged angels chant Hosannas for ever. Of course, the vicar has prepared a special sermon for the visitors. He is glad to see them once again—glad they have come to the silvery sea to listen to the sad sea waves; but he hopes that, amid all their enjoyment, they will not forget God—that they will remember that they have a duty towards him—which, being interpreted, means that they will come to church as often as they can, and give generously to the offertory.

The Dissenting parson has also his "special word" for the "dear visitors" who are once again spared to come amongst them. He has also a "special prayer" to offer up on their behalf; that they may be preserved from all the dangers and misfortunes to which all mankind are subject in this wicked world; that the "all-seeing eye of the Lord" may be upon them, and that his almighty arm may be outstretched (like the long arm of coincidence) to save them from all trouble.

But if a wicked infidel waits outside a church or chapel on these occasions, he will soon discover that these good people soon forget about the all-seeing eye of the Lord, and commence to criticise the appearance or dress of their neighbors, and to say unpleasant things about them, just like Sir Benjamin Backbite or Lady Sneerwell in Sheridan's masterpiece, *The School for Scandal*.

At Ramsgate the Salvation Army had their services on the sands on Sunday, but they only attracted the usual crowd of curiosity-mongers who join any crowd, especially when a good brass band is one of the attractions. There was also a mission service of some sort held in the open air, overlooking the Harbor. The discourses at each of these places were of the usual order. The speakers appeared to have no idea of argument, and it never seemed to enter the mind of any of them that the whole question of the truth of Christianity was a matter of dispute. They simply went on telling the same old story of Jesus and his love, until many of the audience got weary of their constant iteration. At one of the open-air meetings held in the street near the Town Station, a parson with a stentorian voice was holding forth one Sunday evening as I passed by, and I stayed a few minutes to listen to him. He was a fluent speaker, but he dealt only in illustrations and not in argument. Jesus, he said, invited men to come to him and receive salvation. Many heard the invitation and disregarded it; others refused to listen to it altogether. The invitation, however, was still open. It reminded him of a man who was paid to go through a street and call out "Fish for nothing!" but when the people heard the cry they thought the man was mad, or the fish was not good; and so they let the man go by. But a little boy stood and listened; and he asked the man for some fish and got it, and took it home to his mother. And when the others saw that, they wanted some; but the man said: "No; you had the offer, and you would not accept it. Now you cannot have it; it is too late." And that would be the condition of many who disregarded the invitation of Jesus today. I suspect, however, that if a man went about offering fish for nothing, most people would be afraid to take it for fear they would be like the man who bought four mackerel for a shilling, and when he got them home he found he had five—four mackerel and one smelt.

But the most advertised meetings at Ramsgate this year were the "Special Seaside Services" of the Church Army. This body took the Marina Hall, where cinematograph shows are given all the week, and gave special services, with pictures illustrating Bible texts; and they actually got a bishop—Bishop Thornton, a Canadian bishop, I presume—to address the meeting. A friend of mine who attended one Sunday afternoon found a very sparse attendance, consisting mainly of women and children, notwithstanding the attractions. The service and the pictures were of such a primitive character that he was glad to beat a hasty retreat. I should have gone myself if the pictures had been animated—pictures illustrating the performance of such miracles as Jesus walking on the sea without Boyton boots, feeding five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two fishes, opening the eyes of the blind by sticking clay on them, making the lame to walk, and raising Lazarus from the dead by crying with "a loud voice"; I should have gone to see animated pictures on such subjects because I still retain a very good sense of humor. But animated pictures illustrating Bible miracles have yet to come.

On the following Monday morning I was on the sea front again. The Salvation Army people were there with their band, and Salvation lasses with their tamborines; they sang their old-fashioned melodies and the males told their usual yarns, but they were no match for Punch and Judy and the other entertainers for attracting and holding the attention of an audience.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Fighting the London County Council.

WE introduced this matter in our front-page article—"The Plot Thickens"—a fortnight ago. It will be remembered that the London County Council, acting ostensibly under one of its bye-laws, is pursuing its policy of "permits" in a way to harass, hinder, and if possible break up all the "advanced" propaganda hitherto carried on in the parks and open spaces under its control. The system of "permits" to take up collections, for instance, within the limits of the various meetings, was started on the ground that a check should be put upon adventurers who took up collections for no public objects, but really for themselves. "Permits" were to be necessary for all collections, and would only be issued to *bona-fide* societies. That provision being well established by three years' practice, the Council made a further move forward on the line of its reactionary policy. Without a word of complaint of any improper procedure on the part of societies that were allowed to take up collections, their "permits" were refused when they applied for renewals. The ground alleged was that the Council was not satisfied that the money collected was wholly applied to "a public object." Being asked for the ground of its dissatisfaction, the Council refused to reply. "Dressed in a little brief authority" it was going to give orders but not reasons. Hence these "fantastic tricks before high heaven." "Do what we tell you, and ask no questions" expresses the Council's attitude. But the National Secular Society, though wishing to act within the law, is not prepared to take the "lie down" order which is addressed to a dog. Some self-vindication seemed necessary in the face of such arbitrary action. Accordingly the N. S. S. Branches in London were advised to go on collecting. Something had to be done. Was the Council bluffing or did it mean business? The Council's reply was fifteen summonses. Two of these, against Miss Vance, were heard at the Marylebone Police Court (see our previous article). Miss Vance was fined, and the magistrate refused to state a case for appeal to a higher court. This left us to find a remedy for ourselves, and it was not difficult to find.

We pause at this point to explain that the renewal of the collection "permit" was not refused to the N. S. S. only; it was refused to all applicants, including the Christian Evidence Society and the Salvation Army. This gave the Council's action an air of impartiality. But it was none the less mischievous on that account. By turning out all collectors at once, the Council could readmit its favorites afterwards, without incurring the shame of persecution. During the interval it is granting "permits" to the Christian Evidence Society and the Salvation Army for collections on behalf of some "charitable" object. This is purely arbitrary on the Council's part. The bye-law says "public object," not "charitable object." Besides, the word "charitable" is far more debateable than the word "public." And a good many social reformers object to "charity" altogether, except as between man and man in the ordinary intercourse of life.

It will be convenient at this point to let our readers know precisely what the County Council bye-law is, under which this arbitrary action has been taken. It runs as follows:—

"28.—(a) Soliciting or gathering money or other thing except within the limits of the site or sites upon which public meetings are allowed to be held.

"(b) Soliciting or gathering money on any such site or sites without first obtaining or otherwise than in accordance with the terms of a permit from the Council, for which application shall be made in writing at least seven clear days in advance stating the place in which the collection is proposed to be made, the date proposed for the collection, and the object for which the collection is made.

"Provided that a permit shall not be refused if the person applying for the same show to the satisfaction of the Council that the money collected will be entirely

devoted to the furtherance of some public object, and not to the personal benefit of any individual or individuals."

Now it is obvious that the Council has power to issue or refuse "permits." It is also obvious that it is not to issue or refuse them out of mere whim or caprice, or out of any fantastical or partisan prejudice. If it can do that absolutely, and without appeal, the citizens have no rights whatever, but simply pass into slavery to the agents they have appointed to do their business. It must act reasonably and be able to state its reason. If it is not "satisfied" it must be able to state the ground of its dissatisfaction. Just as licensing magistrates, while they and they alone have power to grant or withhold licenses, must exercise their power in a reasonable manner—as they have been plainly told by the judges in cases of appeal. The bye-law says that "a permit shall not be refused," etc., etc. Citizens have rights as well as County Councils—and the courts of justice are their protection.

We propose, then, that an application shall be made for a Mandamus calling upon the County Council to show cause why it should not be compelled to issue the permit applied for by the National Secular Society—the permit that was enjoyed for three years and then withdrawn for no malfeasance on the part of the applicant.

This plan is, on the whole, preferable to getting the magistrate to state a case for the higher court on the point of law. It has the advantage of putting the Council on the defensive and making it open its mouth in public, instead of shirking behind a formal silence.

The N. S. S. is trying to organise a protest meeting, with a view to co-operation amongst all parties affected by the County Council's action. The British Socialist Party has already signified its adhesion to this line of policy, and we hope to report more adhesions next week.

In any case the N. S. S. must fight. We are not to take such blows lying down. They will be followed by other blows of a still more crippling character. The County Council wants to put an end to free speech in London. We say it shall not if we can help it. Those who allow their old rights to be destroyed without a determined resistance are unworthy to possess them. The N. S. S. *must* fight.

The Courts cannot be moved till October. Meanwhile all the summonses, except Miss Vance's which were heard, are adjourned indefinitely, and we on our side refrain from making further collections.

This is not a case in which anything can be won merely by defying the Council week after week, and either paying ruinous fines or going to prison in default. If we succeed in proving the Council does not possess the arbitrary power it is attempting to assert, we shall have forced a happy issue in a matter which Mr. Paul Taylor, the magistrate, agreed was of grave importance to all the progressive citizens of London. If we fall in this, we shall have simplified the situation, and shown where the next battle must be fought—namely, in the next County Council elections.

We shall not argue our case in these columns. The place for that is the court of justice. The enemy may infer our plans if they can; it is not our business to show them.

Everybody knows that litigation is expensive. In this case we have grounds for confidence that the cost will not be prohibitive. The N. S. S. Executive has asked us to open a subscription list for this battle in the *Freethinker*. We do so cheerfully, ardently, and head the list with our own guinea, just to encourage others—though it will not be the limit of our *indirect* contribution to this particular cause.

Contributions should be sent direct to us personally—Mr. G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. This simplifies the acknowledgments and the responsibility. Our cheque will pay the amount over to the N. S. S. in due course.

We take this opportunity of reminding Freethinkers that they have not been ruining themselves with

over-subscribing lately. We wish they would remember that a movement like ours cannot be carried on without a good deal of financial support. It is not fair to trust so much to dead men's money in charge of the Secular Society, Ltd. The living should do their share. They are not doing it at present. We whisper the news to them. If they don't hear it we shall have to speak louder.

G. W. FOOTE.

Doubting Thomas A.

"HAVE a cigar?"

We shuddered and refused. Mr. Edison's cigars have as wide a reputation as his abilities. And, by the way, we commend to Dr. Pease, and to other nicotine denouncers, the interesting fact that Mark Twain and Thomas Edison—two of America's greatest creative geniuses—have smoked their way through life regardless of cranks or consequences.

Mr. Edison's New Jersey home is littered up with ancient trolley cars, defunct storage batteries, and various kinds of electric debris.

We sat on an ancient steering gear and chatted with the inventor.

"How did you like your trip to Europe?"

"It was interesting because of the things I didn't learn. I have been staying at home learning things all my life, and it was a relief to get out into the world where there wasn't anything doing."

Well, Mr. Edison, we don't care much about what you have been learning or your trivial inventions, such as the electric light, the phonograph, and a few other trifles like that. What we really want to know is, How do you stand on the question of Immortality?"

Mr. Edison smiled.

"Every once in a while," he said, "somebody asks me about Immortality and whether I believe in it or not. As a matter of fact, it is the only subject on earth in which I'm not interested."

"Do you mean to say that you don't sit up nights worrying about the future? Do you mean to say that the destiny of man and the thoughts of where you are going doesn't make you nervous and excited and rob you of your sleep?"

"I never think about it."

"Then your belief is anything you please."

"I'm ready to believe almost anything if it will help any of the newspaper boys to write an article about me. If by having a new belief, or by twisting around some of the old beliefs, I can make any hack writer like yourself pay his rent—what's the harm?"

"That's your reputation among us, Mr. Edison, but think of the awful responsibility. Why, people will get so that, after a while, they won't believe anything you say."

Mr. Edison smiled.

"They don't now," he replied, "until I prove it to them."—*Life* (New York).

BUT STILL IN THE MONEY.

A couple of tourists at a village which is in close proximity to a well-known Scottish loch, had a fancy one fine Sunday to go for a row on the loch. They accordingly sallied forth in search of the boatman, whom they met just leaving his house dressed in his Sunday best and carrying a Bible under his arm.

"We want to go for a row," said one of the tourists.

"Dae ye no ken it's the Sawbath?" answered Sandy; "ye'll no get a boat frae me the day, forbye I'll hae ye me ken that I am an elder o' the kirk."

"Yes, yes," expostulated the tourists, "that's all very well for you, and we don't require you with us. You can go to church; we can row ourselves."

"Ay, ay," said the elder, "but just think whit the meenister'll say."

"Never mind the minister," was the reply; "he will know nothing about it. We will pay you well."

"Ah, weel," said Sandy. "I'll no let ye the boat, bit I'll tell ye whit I'll dac. Dae ye see yon wee boatie doon among the rushes? Weel, she's ready wi' the oars inside. Jist ye gang down there an' row out tae the middle o' the loch, and I'll come doon tae the bank an' swear at ye; bit never ye mind, ye just row on an' I'll call for the money Monday."

Acid Drops.

The newspapers kept their weeping machines going over the late "General" Booth to the last. Their accounts of the funeral were worthy of them—and of him. That a good many persons in a mob of mourners should cry now and then was treated as quite wonderful. No tears, of course, are ever shed at other funerals. And then the word-pictures of what occurred at the graveside! The Booth family everywhere, as usual; as though, not only the old man, but his children and his grandchildren ("unto the third and fourth generation") had been called of the Lord to boss the Salvation Army. One of the old man's daughters, and her children, sat in a sort of isolation. She and her husband had dared to differ from the old man on some matters—and he was unforgiving, and the alienation continued beyond the grave. Such is too often the "love" of some people who have that sacred word constantly upon their lips. There is an unforgiveness about the pious folk which is rarely equalled by the profane. If you offend them you offend God, who is a God of justice first, and of mercy only afterwards. Their egotism thus distils in rancor.

Even the enthusiastic *Daily News* reporter couldn't help noticing the ostracism of the Booth-Clibborns and of Ballington Booth at William Booth's funeral. With regard to the latter he wrote:—

"There was one son of the General's far away—Mr. Ballington Booth, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, yet unmentioned by syllable or hint. A good man he, though he did not remain in the Army—a man who will sorrow as sincerely as any honest man sorrows for him who gave him life—yet not a reference. A word of genuine sympathy for that distant son, that distant brother, would have been a word in season. I did not hear it."

These people carry their petty quarrels, to use their own language, up to the very face of God.

The writer of "The General's Last Hours" in the *War Cry* indulged in the following bit of personal superstition:—

"While the sad and silent company watched the noble sufferer, the grandeur and solemnity of the scene was emphasised by a terrific thunderstorm which, in the middle of Tuesday afternoon, broke over the district; and the circumstance was recalled that at the time our dearly-beloved Army Mother crossed the river at Clacton-on-Sea twenty-two years ago almost exactly the same thing happened. We are told in the record of her last grand battle that while Mrs. Booth was struggling with her fierce and subtle enemy a tempest of great severity raged without, and the loud signals of distress that were being sent up from a shipwrecked vessel could be distinctly heard above the roaring of the sea and the howling of the wind."

Such is the result of "faith" instead of reason being applied to the common occurrences of life. These people evidently think, though they are afraid to say so plainly, that God Almighty got up that "terrific thunderstorm" to emphasise the death of William Booth; forgetting that many other people must have been dying at the same time, and that the same thunderstorm served for every one of them. And what an idea is suggested in regard to the storm that marked Mrs. Booth's exit from Clacton-on-Sea! A vessel (and perhaps others) shipwrecked to give *éclat* to the lady's decease. What egotists these pious people are! And how maudlin they are about death! One would fancy that they were the only people that death visits, or that a special form of death was served up to them. But death visits everybody, and in the same way at bottom, and that "last grand battle" has to be fought by every human being in the world. Millions of them—hundreds of millions of them—thousands of millions of them. What is one male Booth or one female Booth amongst so many?

Mr. Begbie has his lucid intervals. Here is the upshot of one of them:—

"Everywhere one notices this change in the religious world. The old revivalist has passed away; the old missionary is ceasing to exist; in their places we have the reformer, the organiser, the statesman. I find among Roman Catholics a decided movement towards the ethical and philanthropic standpoint; Anglicans and Nonconformists perceive that insistence upon the importance of dogma does not interest the world; a blind faith in the constant intervention of the Deity is no longer the main faith of the Churches. There is a movement away from the heart, upward to the head. The forces of Christianity are learning to organise themselves, and rationally."

This is a long-winded way of saying that natural reason is triumphing over supernatural faith.

Half-baked clergymen demanded that William Booth's burial should be in St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. Showing the Grand Old Showman in between Nelson and Wellington doesn't seem promising; neither does it seem the thing to place him between Grote and Darwin. But both St. Paul's and the Abbey are *show* places, and perhaps, after all, there was something in the suggestion that one or the other should offer the "General" its hospitality.

The ridiculous pretence of a "Trust" in connection with the Salvation Army properties is finally proved by William Booth's will. With a stroke of the pen he vests all those properties in his son Bramwell Booth, who succeeds him as General of the Salvation Army. Legally these properties were William Booth's; no one else had the slightest right to interfere with him in any way whatever. Legally they now belong in the same absolute way to Bramwell Booth. He could sell them all if he pleased and put the money in his own pocket. The "Trust" is a mere blind. Bramwell Booth is the sole executor of his father's will.

A codicil to the "General's" will deals with a small private property valued at £487 19s. Another deals with a property valued at £5,295, which was settled upon him, long ago, for his private use, by the late Henry Reed. This property is to be divided amongst his children; omitting Ballington Booth, who is an outcast from the family.

General Botha's telegram on the death of General Booth was not too happily worded: "Accept deepest sympathy. Great good man gone. May you follow his footsteps." There is a "Go thou and do likewise" suggestion about it.

Journalists like Harold Begbie are sure to perpetuate "howlers." His latest one is the statement that Mrs. Bramwell Booth's rescue home in London is "the most Christlike building" in Christendom. What on earth is a Christlike building?

Salvationism has lived on lies, and Bramwell Booth is nearly as good as his father at the business. He has been telling an interviewer that "the Army's" social work is a great success, but he takes care not to particularise. We invite him to show the "great success" of Hadleigh Colony. Of course he will never attempt it. He prefers tickling the imaginations of religious fools by promising an "invasion of China." Evidently he shares the old man's megalomania.

Another statement of Bramwell Booth's to the same interviewer is that his father cut his way into the jungle of irreligion and unbelief. The humbug of this statement is colossal. Bramwell Booth knows very well that the Salvation Army has never favored discussion, that it has let "unbelief" severely alone, and that General Booth himself frequently bewailed the growth of what he called "godlessness and infidelity"—just as the leaders of all Christian denominations are doing.

A special correspondent of the *Church Family Newspaper* has a special article in one of its recent issues on open-air speaking in Hyde Park. We cannot say from personal experience what the Christian Evidence platform there is now like, but we fancy it must be unique of its kind. The crowd round it was very large, and for an hour and a half listened with rapt attention to a serious, academic, and well-thought-out address. That is why we say the Hyde Park Christian Evidence platform must be unique. And we certainly advise those who have time, and who only know the Christian Evidence speakers in other parts, to hasten and listen to these serious, academic, and well-thought-out addresses. The impartiality of the reporter is evidenced by the discovery that there were "a few paid secularists" round the platform who put questions to the speaker, and who were duly silenced. We really should like to know who paid these people. We do not question that they were soon silenced; but we are curious as to who paid them, and how the C. F. N. knows they were paid.

"The Blasphemy Laws in England" is the title of a long editorial article in the *Japan Weekly Chronicle* of August 8. It is an honest and well-written article, and the writer is dead against the continuance of the infamous Blasphemy Laws. But his information is curiously limited in one respect. He knows Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's admirable book, but he has never heard of the *Freethinker* except as a paper that existed in 1883, nor of the National Secular Society and its moral, legal, and financial support of all Freethinkers prosecuted for "blasphemy." He actually appears to think that all the work done in England against the Blasphemy

Laws has been done by the Rationalist Press Association. That is the limit—as the man in the street says.

The Rev. Dr. S. G. Smith came all the way from Minnesota to tell Londoners and British people generally that Christians have always been the salt of the earth and the light of the world. They are the only people who have ever done the world any real good. They found it "corrupt, debased beyond speech, and almost beyond the lowest imagination," and they converted it into a beautiful garden of the Lord. It was Jesus who "furnished the ideals of democracy," and the world is so full of peace and power to-day because those ideals "have been incarnated in the Christian Church." The only fault we can find with Dr. Smith's charming picture is that it is wholly false to life. As every historian knows, the Roman world, for six or seven centuries, kept sinking deeper and deeper into degradation under Christianity, until it reached a depth of depravity it had never touched under Paganism. This is now a historical truism, or commonplace; but the Pulpit deliberately and wilfully ignores it. Dr. Smith pretends to have never heard of it.

Dr. Smith's seems incapable of telling the truth about anything. He appears to have a perfect genius for misrepresentation. He misrepresents, not Christianity only, but Materialism as well. Here is a fine sample in his own words:—

"It [Christianity] says that the world can be made consciously better by better men and women. Materialism says just the opposite. It says: 'Let things alone, and they will roll on'; and that is the reason why Materialism always has shown no capacity for reforming."

Materialism has never said such a silly thing. The reverend gentleman lies about Materialism quite as callously as he does about Christianity. It is impossible to conceive of a man with the least sense for truth giving expression to the following falsehood:—

"A reformer is stupid, and a martyr is a fool, if Materialism be true."

We challenge Dr. Smith to substantiate that statement by a single quotation from an accredited Materialist. No wonder George Meredith characterised the Parsonry, particularly the non-celibate clergy, who are "interwound with the whole of the middle class like the poisonous ivy," as "these sappers of our strength."

What a lot of frothy nonsense fell from reverend and lay lips on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the "Great Ejectionment." One gentleman was convinced that the two thousand men who came out of the Established Church then were the only ones in all England who wore loyal to their consciences. As reported in the *Burton Evening Gazette* for August 26, he said:—

"If any man wanted to know whether there was any manhood left in England over which Charles II. ruled he must turn away from both Court and Cathedral."

The ejected were no doubt deserving objects of pity; but to imagine that they were the only good men and true in England two hundred and fifty years ago is to be completely blinded by prejudice.

Principal Selbie, lecturing on the ejectionment of 1662, says that the men ejected stood for liberty. "It was a very limited kind of liberty. It did not amount to tolerance. They were not prepared to give to others what they asked for themselves." We have heard, and often encountered, that kind of liberty, and think very little of it. In fact, very few are found who are not its advocates. But the true test of a man's love of liberty is not found in his own demand to differ from others, but in his championship of the right of others to differ from him. Principal Selbie is, however, quite right in his characterisation. The only liberty that Puritanism and organised Nonconformity ever cared about was the liberty to differ from others, and both have always been ready to entirely suppress, or connive at the suppression of, the liberty of those they disagreed with.

A little fat parson was conducting a religious service at the seaside. His audience consisted of young people, mostly bare-legged girls, with a slight sprinkling of boys amongst them, and a contingent of pious grown-ups on the outer circle. His forte was fat-headed familiarity. He started the hymns and beat time with a penny wooden sand shovel. They had been singing, "What, never part again?" and he tried a little exhorting. "We have to part here, dear children," he said, "but there will be no parting up there. We shall always be together, and always happy. It will be a big bank-holiday through all eternity." What a heaven! It was sickening to any decent person to see children stuffed with such rubbish.

Amazing beyond speech are the contradictions for which the men of God are responsible. They proclaim at once the absolute sovereignty of God and the freedom of the human will, the infallibility of the Bible and the truth of evolution, the omnipotence of goodness and the triumph of evil. Such contradictions as are found in the Word of God no divine hesitates to repeat. A recent example of this is supplied by the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall in the *British Weekly* for August 29. His subject is Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. In that sermon the apostle declares that the death of Jesus had been decreed, or foreordained, from all eternity, or, to adopt his own words, that it had taken place "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Consequently, they by whose hand he was killed were but God's agents, or instruments, for the fulfilment of his eternal purpose. Yet Peter held them guilty of the murder of the Son of God; and this is how he addressed them in Dr. Marshall's paraphrase:—

"You must not look upon your killing of him as a satisfactory and laudable piece of work, but as the very acme of horrifying wickedness. You must regard yourselves, not as superior persons whom God honors, but as criminals deserving instant punishment."

And because the Jews were the instruments through whose deed Christ became the Savior of the world, they have been treated by Christians in all ages as an accursed race, and persecuted with the utmost cruelty.

Christianity has been in the world nearly two thousand years, and the Holy Ghost has resided in the Church for the same length of time; and yet the President of the Wesleyan Conference sends an Address to the Methodist Societies, in which he makes the sad confession that, in spite of all that has been done, Jesus Christ is not King yet. "You and we alike are his servants," he says, "and the very purpose of our lives is that we should help to make him King." If that be the "very purpose" for which Wesleyans live, we humbly advise them to throw it overboard at once and choose another, for otherwise they will live utterly in vain. The task is an absolutely impossible one, as the history of nineteen hundred years fully testifies. Christ's day has never come, we are told; and we unhesitatingly add that it never will come. It is simply the Dream-day of the superstitious.

One of the *Methodist Times* contributors says he has just been looking over his first contribution to the press, written many years ago. It was a reply to the letter of a Freethinker on "Why don't people go to church?" He says that studying his reply now, he sees that he did not answer the question. We are not surprised at the discovery. The Freethinker probably told him as much at the time. The only answer to such a question is "Because they don't believe in Christianity." But it would never do for Christians to admit that. And so they write explanations, the stupidity of which they discover many years later.

An example of this lies at hand in a recent complaint of "J. B." in the *Christian World* to the effect that English children receive very little religious training in their homes. To this profound thinker the explanation is that parents trust to the Churches, and so are careless about the subject. But this is really only saying the same thing over again. Children don't get religious instruction at home, because in the home religious explanation is not given. When that analysis is concluded, the philosophic yearnings of "J. B." are satisfied. May we humbly suggest that if religion possessed a spontaneous life, instead of being an artificial culture, it couldn't be kept out of the home. A belief that is the product of current life forces itself upon us whether we will or not. It cannot be denied. It is only when a belief is artificial and external that it needs constant care and supervision to keep it alive. Hence the need for the army of preachers, whose work it is to persuade people that they cannot dispense with something they do very well without. Left alone, healthy human nature in a civilised society would run no more chance of becoming religious than would a perfectly healthy organism of spontaneously developing disease.

The Rev. Dr. Weekes is astonished at the extent to which "the borrowing element" entered into the life of Jesus. He was born in a borrowed cradle, he preached his first sermon in a borrowed boat, he rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed colt, he ate the last supper in a borrowed room, he was crucified on a borrowed cross, and was buried in a borrowed tomb. All we have to add is that he borrowed himself. The whole story is borrowed; and if Dr. Weekes adds that to his collection it will be fairly complete. The other borrowings are not of very great importance.

Paper after paper interviews Mr. R. W. Morrell, who is now in his ninetieth year, and who was, for twenty-five years, the first secretary of the National Sunday League. They praise him for his successful efforts to "destroy the English Sabbath" (*Daily Chronicle*, Aug. 28). Then they go on defending all that is left of the English Sabbath. Of course they all forget to mention the fact that Mr. Morrell is an old Secularist. Most of his early colleagues on the League Committee were ditto.

Eight hundred Portuguese priests have been censured by the Pope for accepting the Republic and the pensions proffered by the Government under the Act disestablishing the Roman Catholic Church in Portugal. These priests are willing to submit to Papa Sarto's spiritual orders, but they cannot obey him in political matters, especially where their bread (with cheese and onions) is concerned. "Their conduct," the note of censure says, "is scandalous, and their position impossible, inasmuch as it implies recognition of the iniquitous law of separation of the Church from the State, which was solemnly condemned by the Holy See." Very likely. But the Pope's income is certain; theirs isn't.

The haunted house mystery at Hull is solved. It was something like the old Cock Lane affair. The "ghost" was a mischief-loving girl. Next, please.

The "vulgar illiterate" *Freethinker* has often had to give lessons in English to high-and-mighty orthodox journals. Even the supercilious *Westminster Gazette* has had its share in the schooling. It hasn't returned thanks for what it has received, neither do we expect any for this fresh favor. In its issue dated August 27 our green contemporary printed the following piece of news:—

"The *Olympic* left Belfast to-day for Southampton, the missing propeller blade having been replaced."

But the missing propeller blade was *not* replaced. It is at the bottom of the Atlantic, and is likely to remain there. The *Olympic* was provided with a new propeller blade in place of the one she lost. We presume this is what our contemporary meant. For our own part, we have no reverence for a good many things that fill our contemporary with religious awe, but we have some reverence for the grand old English language.

We reproduce the following from a Wolverhampton newspaper:—

"The Chief Constable has addressed the following questions to the Chief Constables of every police force in England: (1) Are the provisions of the Sunday Observance Act, 1877, enforced in your jurisdiction? (2) If so, what do you consider the effect of the same to be? (3) What method of procedure is followed in bringing the cases before the Court? (4) Have you any local Act or bye-laws dealing with Sunday trading; if so, can you furnish me with a copy of same? In ninety-eight towns the Act is not in force; in six of these towns there are bye-laws relating to the sale of newspapers and hawking on Sundays; and in fifteen towns the Act is in force more or less. The fifteen towns are:—Shrewsbury ('But not strictly'), Gravesend, Maidstone ('Occasionally'), Bedford, Dudley ('Not satisfactory, and looked on as a great hardship'), Hull ('Makes no appreciable difference in number of cases'), King's Lynn, Burnley ('Occasionally in special cases, looked on as rather a cheap advertisement'), Middlesbrough ('Sometimes very difficult to express an opinion'), Accrington ('Yes, so far as shops where there is a nuisance caused by people congregating and causing annoyance to residents and passengers'), Beverley ('Yes, one man, an Italian, is prosecuted weekly'), Liverpool ('Not been enforced here, but on 8th ult. Watch Committee resolved that the Head Constable be instructed to enforce the Act'), Hereford, Congleton, Great Grimsby."

These facts will interest many of our readers.

The President of the Wesleyan Methodists says that part of their losses during recent years is accounted for by the steady drain of emigration. Perhaps. But it is to be remembered that from Australia and Canada came complaints that when emigrants reach these places they do not readily attach themselves to the Churches there. They have broken the old associations, and in a new country they remain aloof from the Churches. And the inference is that they would have broken away at home had their fear of social censure been weaker. A new country gives them a chance of asserting their independence, and many of them seize the opportunity.

There is one solution of the problem of this wet summer. The clergy prayed hard for rain last year, but the Lord couldn't oblige them then. He is letting them have it now.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

September 29, Manchester.
 October 6 to December 15, every Sunday evening, Queen's
 (Minor) Hall, London, W.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged,
 £182 9s. 5d. Received since:—C. E. Bouchier, 10s.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for welcome cuttings.

E. BURKE.—The *Freethinker* noted what you say "no paper remarked"—that General Booth's gospel of "love" did not lead him to forgive his own son before dying. Pleased to see your article in the cutting you send us, but you don't give the name of the paper.

E. SCHMEIDER.—We have passed your letter over to the N. S. S. general secretary, with a hint that it should be dealt with promptly. Thanks for your trouble.

A. HARVEY.—Sending as desired. Thanks.

T. A. JACKSON.—There was no mystery. The scaffold did not act simply because it was jammed through the rain. James Lee escaped hanging in consequence. They did not care to put him through the bitterness of death again. There was no doubt of his guilt.

T. J.—You probably refer to the discussion in the *North American Review* between Ingersoll and Judge Black. It was not Ingersoll who retired from the debate. We do not issue an Index to the *Freethinker* volumes. We cannot afford the time or the money it would involve. Sorry—but it cannot be helped.

L. K. (S. Africa).—We had not noticed that our advertisement was dropped out of the *Truthseeker*. We will see to the matter. Perhaps the omission was only temporary. Thanks to you, however, for calling our attention to it.

A. D.—Glad you appreciated the answer.

SEVERAL correspondents have asked us for information as to the £5,295 dealt with in a codicil to General Booth's will. We regret that we are unable to oblige them. The amount is referred to as "the remainder" of a settlement made on him by a Mr. Reed. It may therefore have been larger at one time. But we suppose the full facts will never be known except to the lawyers and the inner circle of the Salvation Army. Questions have also been asked us concerning the statement that General Booth never took any money from "the Army." All his expenses were charged against the Army, including as much (we have heard) as £100 for cabin accommodation in crossing the Atlantic. And as he was *always* on the Army's business he must have had very little expense to meet *personally*. Moreover, his family had the best places in the Salvation Army found for them; and it is not pretended that they were not paid.

"CALHUS," who has passed through a time of great trouble, but is better situated now, says: "I never missed a single number of the *Freethinker*; I felt I could not live without it." "I think it amazing," he adds, "the amount of brains you cram into that journal. I have read it regularly for about 24 years, and I never liked it better than I do now."

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.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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 Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are especially 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.

London "saints" will bear in mind that Mr. Foote occupies the Queen's (Minor) Hall platform every Sunday evening from October 6 to December 15 inclusive. It is expected that this policy of concentration will both increase the size of the audiences and diminish the cost of advertising. Another advantage is that if any urgent question arises, which people might like to see treated from the

Freethought point of view, the regular program could be departed from, in spite even of the *Freethinker* announcement, by final advertisement in the weekly newspapers that insert the N. S. S. lecture notices. Mr. Foote's program for October will appear in our next issue.

Greater London contains some seven millions of people. What a vast human area! And the Board of the Secular Society, Ltd., means to make a great effort to cover it more adequately. The Queen's Hall enterprise is not to be the only one. Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd's services will be utilised as far as possible at the Hall of the West Ham Branch on Sunday evenings. It is hoped also that a good hall will be available at Croydon. The Freethought party will see that the work is being pushed forward. We trust they will also feel it incumbent upon them to provide "the sinews of war."

The annual Bradlaugh Dinner takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday evening, September 25. Last year's chairman, Mr. G. W. Foote, has promised to preside again on this occasion. The tickets are 3s. each—for a 4s. dinner; the difference being paid out of a fund left for the purpose by the late James Dowling. Application for tickets should be made not later than Saturday, September 21, to the honorary secretary, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, London, N.E.

Mr. Robert Blatchford returned to the subject of Shelley as a Poet, with a further reference to Mr. Foote, in last week's *Clarion*. Mr. Foote prefers, therefore, to postpone his promised reply for another week. He wishes to avoid a scrappy treatment of Shelley's genius and character,—which also comes in for some remarkable criticism.

Messrs. Jackson and Gott both send us rosy accounts of the Northern Tour. Audiences are larger than ever, and "the sale of literature grows easier every day." Mr. Gott adds that "the way in which the *Freethinker* is snapped up is a clear proof that, if the newsagents would only stock it and show it, its sale would be vastly increased." There has been a run this last week or so on Mr. Foote's *Salvation Syrup*—in which he criticised General Booth's "Darkest England" scheme when it was first propounded. Mr. Foote's criticisms then read like prophecies now. Mr. Jackson's lectures appear to give general satisfaction. According to all accounts he makes an excellent missionary. Mr. Gott as a salesman couldn't be beaten.

We hope the Northern Tour has some dry weather before it. It can't very well rain for ever. A slight improvement in that respect led to magnificent meetings at Blackburn on Sunday. The I. L. P. meetings (though Mr. Philip Snowden is the local M.P.) were poor in comparison; which shows how the wind is blowing. In spite of Labor members, as well as Nonconformist Liberals (Tories being taken for granted), the people are developing a strong taste for Freethought and are quite anxious to listen to its gospel—the indispensable gospel, for nothing else is much use without it. We are pleased to hear that the Blackburn N. S. S. Branch is being reorganised. Miss Whalley, 351 Bolton-road, Ewood, has kindly undertaken to canvas the old-time members with a view to adding them to the new ones.

The new Leeds Branch is carrying on regular propagandist meetings—one every week-night and three on Sundays. When the rain is too bad there is a hiatus, not otherwise. These meetings are so successful that "the enemy" are writing to the press asking "if the Secularists have bought Victoria Square." They have *not* purchased it; they exercise the common right of citizenship in it; and incidentally they show how much wisdom there is in persecuting Freethinkers.

A very important article on the position and liberties of Woman in Ancient Rome, by M. René Pichon, appears in the August (15) number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. We shall introduce it to our readers' fuller attention next week.

Scribner's Magazine for September contains a further deeply interesting selection from the collected Letters of George Meredith. It appears that a final selection will be included in the October number. We have already announced our intention of bringing the whole collection to our readers' attention when it is published in book form. It was promised "in the autumn," which will probably mean in October.

Evidences of Natural Selection.

THAT all plants and animals vary within given limits in shape, size, and general appearance, will be denied by no one who possesses the slightest acquaintance with living nature. Although, at a first glance, all the sheep of a flock seem alike, closer inspection reveals differences in size, form, and color which enable the shepherd or even the shepherd's dog to distinguish one from another. No two geranium blossoms on the same plant are alike; the same plant, grown in different soils, will present marked dissimilarities in general growth, color, venation, and size of leaf, and in abundance or scarcity of flowers. In a litter of kittens, the most pronounced contrasts are displayed; and even in a brood of newly hatched chickens, almost identical in appearance as they seem, the trained eye will detect differences at the earliest age which, in their adult stage, are sufficient to render their separate individuality conspicuous to the most careless onlooker.

"The foundation of the Darwinian theory," says Alfred Russel Wallace, "is the variability of species." That is to say, unless living organisms vary, there is nothing upon which Natural Selection can operate in bringing about those gradual changes which constitute the evolution of animal and vegetable life.

We are all evolutionists now. Every scientist who counts accepts the doctrine of descent. But wide differences of opinion exist as to the part played in the process by this factor or by that. The eminent German biologist, Weismann, with others of the neo-Darwinian school, contends for the all-sufficiency of Natural Selection. A few pronounced evolutionists, such as Eimer and Hans Driesch, attach little or no importance to this particular agency as a factor in organic evolution. The neo-Lamarckian evolutionary school of America, with Herbert Spencer, Cunningham, Henslow, and others in England, have long regarded Natural Selection as a greatly overrated agency in the transformations of life. That Natural Selection is the sole factor in evolutionary development is certainly not the view of the writer of this article. It appears more reasonable to assume that various agencies have co-operated in the evolution of the animal and plant worlds.

Throughout organic nature a tendency towards multiplication at a more rapid rate than the prevailing conditions will sustain is everywhere apparent. In many instances, the powers of propagation are stupendous. If each egg were to produce an adult fish, in twenty-five years the descendants of a single pair of cod fish would form a mass larger than the earth. Again, Maupas tells us that if the infusorian that he studied—an organism invisible to the naked eye—were to continue at its most rapid rate of reproductive division for thirty-eight days, the result would be a mass of protoplasm as large as the sun.

It is largely through this over-production of life that the struggle for existence is necessitated. But, as already intimated, all plants and animals ushered into the world vary in some way or other from their parents and neighbors: and most of these individual variations, and possibly all of them, are capable of transmission to their descendants. It thus by logical necessity follows that those particular organisms which happen to display variations which favor their easier adaptation to surrounding circumstances will survive in larger numbers than those that have failed to produce the "survival value" variations in question. And not only will these varying organisms survive in larger numbers, but they will also leave a larger number of descendants to fight on advantageous terms with other organisms of the same or similar species which have failed to produce the useful variations under consideration. To state the case in another way, the particular species possessing the favorable variation will oust its competitors

and occupy their place. The triumphant species will be that which has most completely lent itself to the modifying activities of Natural Selection.

Until quite recently, most naturalists despaired of the possibility of ever obtaining numerical proof of the theory of Natural Selection. But detailed evidence is now forthcoming as a result of careful and critical observation and measurement of living forms. The late Professor Weldon's experimental inquiries have furnished evidence in favor of Darwin's Law, which, to say the least of it, "has a very high degree of probability of truth."

The ground selected for this test trial was a particular patch of beach at Plymouth Sound. In 1893, Mr. H. Thompson carefully determined the mean frontal breadth, in comparison with the length, of the carapace in male crabs collected at this spot.

"The mean breadth was found to vary very rapidly with the length of the crab, hence its value was determined separately in small groups of crabs, differing from each other by not more than .2 mm."*

The individuals of twenty-five such groups were carefully measured in respect to frontal breadth. Two years later, Thompson conducted a similar inquiry at the same station, and Professor Weldon carried out a further series of measurements on crabs gathered from the same spot in 1898. When the three collections were compared, it was at once apparent that the average breadth of the crabs with a carapace of a given length had progressively decreased. With this evidence before him, and as a consequence of further investigation, Professor Weldon came to the conclusion that the fast changing conditions of the water in Plymouth Sound were largely responsible for the modifications these crustaceans had undergone.

"Owing to the building of a huge breakwater, the scour of the tide has been diminished, and the large quantities of china clay carried down by the rivers from Dartmoor into the Sound therefore settle in increasing quantities in the Sound itself. Also the quantity of sewage and refuse finding its way into the Sound is steadily increasing, owing to the increase in size of the contiguous towns and dockyards."

"It is well known," writes Professor Weldon, "that these changes in the physical conditions of the Sound have been accompanied by the disappearance of animals which used to live in it, but which are now found only outside the area affected by the breakwater." In order to submit his supposition to a more exacting test, Weldon placed a quantity of crabs in a capacious vessel of sea-water, in which a considerable amount of very fine china clay was suspended. A slowly moving automatic agitator was then inserted in the aquarium, which prevented the clay fragments from settling at the bottom. After some time had elapsed, the crabs which had succumbed were separated from those that were living, and the carapaces of both were measured.

Out of the 248 crabs which were the subjects of the experiment, ninety-four only survived. This test trial completely corroborated the results furnished by the earlier investigations. Measurement demonstrated that the crabs which survived the experiment were smaller in frontal breadth than those that perished. And this was precisely the result that the previous inquiries of 1893, 1895, and 1898 had led Weldon to expect. Now there is every reason for believing that the action of the beach mud is in no way different from that of the same mud in Weldon's aquarium. The Professor, therefore, is fully entitled to his opinion that there is "no escape from the conclusion that we have here a case of Natural Selection acting with great rapidity, because of the rapidity with which the conditions of life are changing." The selective death-rate thus indicated appears to depend upon the filtration of the water into the gill chambers of the crab. As Weldon says:—

"The gills of the crab which has died during an experiment with china clay are covered with fine white mud, which is not found in the gills of the survivors."

* Vernon, *Variation in Animals and Plants*, p. 337.

In at least 90 per cent. of the cases this difference is very striking."

Further inquiry pointed to the fact that a narrower frontal carapace breadth conduces to greater filtration efficiency than in crabs of a broader frontal breadth.

Although this very interesting and instructive series of experiments has not escaped criticism, it appears to prove all it is supposed to prove. The action of Natural Selection is plainly manifested in the selective mortality rate which the inquiries disclose.

It is generally an extremely difficult task to obtain for purposes of comparison the eliminated individuals in the conflict of life. This obstacle has, however, been overcome by an ingenious American scientist. After an exceptionally heavy storm of rain and sleet, Mr. Bumpus collected a number of sparrows—the English sparrow, which the Americans were unwise enough to introduce into their country—that had been overtaken by the tempest. Seventy-two of these sparrows revived, the remaining sixty-four succumbed to their injuries. When the survivors were compared with their dead companions, marked differences were disclosed. The birds were carefully weighed and measured, and it was ascertained that the dead sparrows consisted largely of the longer and heavier birds. The two shortest birds of the collection were also eliminated. The conclusions arrived at by Bumpus he thus sums up: "Natural Selection is the most destructive of those birds which have departed most from the ideal type, and its activity raises the general standard of excellence by favoring those birds which approach the structural ideal." Be this as it may, an impartial consideration of this ingenious experiment certainly supports the view that the selective process is progressive in its nature.

A remarkable instance of the evolution of a local race of rodents has been brought forward by Mr. H. L. Jameson. A tract of sandhills, running along the coast for a distance of some three miles, lies on the northern shore of Dublin Bay. These sand dunes are the dwelling places of an extensive population of mice, the color of whose fur strikingly resembles the color of the sand. Traps were laid, and thirty-six of these animals were caught. When these mice were examined, their fur was seen to vary considerably in shade. The captured rodents displayed every color gradation from the typical house-mouse of England and Ireland to individuals with extremely pale dorsal fur. Of the thirty-six mice, five only approximated to the normal shade of the species; four were somewhat paler, while the remaining twenty-seven were markedly pale. Other character changes were also apparent. The tails of the palest specimens were appreciably longer than those of average mice. The head, body, and the hind foot, on the other hand, appear to be slightly shorter. And unlike the stock from which they are descended, they have evolved the habit of burrowing their own holes.

The evolution of this protective adaptation to the color of their sandy home appears to have arisen—in any case, to some extent—through the presence of hawks and owls. These birds of prey haunt the sandhills, and quite naturally the more conspicuous darker mice are more frequently captured than their better-protected companions. The darker mice appear to be undergoing a process of steady elimination, while the lighter-furred rodents survive in larger numbers and transmit their more favorable coloration to their offspring. Dr. Vernon remarks:—

"Perhaps the most interesting point of all about these observations is that it has been found possible to fix a time limit for the duration of the evolutionary process. The sand-banks are known to be gradually increasing in area, and, by a careful study of old maps, Jameson found that previous to 1780 they did not exist at all. In 1810 the island was only a quarter of a mile long, so we may conclude that the pale race of mice has had not more than about a hundred years for its evolution."

The foregoing illustrations of the cumulative effects of the agency of selection adequately meet the commonly urged objection that no numerical or statistical evidence exists of the operation of any such process. As previously intimated, Natural Selection is one only of the multitudinous incident forces which mould and fashion living things. But that it is a factor—and a very important factor in organic evolution—must be conceded by every student of the biological sciences who is not irrevocably committed to the extreme neo-Lamarckian wing of the army of evolution.

T. F. PALMER.

The Bane of Monotheism.

It is generally considered that the abolition of Polytheism and the establishment of the cult of one God was a notable stride in the progress of social well-being. That assumption lies at the bottom of the aggressive spirit and policy of every Monotheism, and is equally true of Judaism, Mohammedanism, and of Christianity. It is its tacit defence for seeking to supplant all other cults, and pose as the one religion for all mankind. The ready assent, however, which is usually given to this claim without reserve or qualification is very remarkable, especially in view of the fact that it is not borne out by the annals of those people and countries where Monotheisms have taken root and flourished. On the contrary, the religious history of different countries shows in the most unambiguous manner that the cult of one God has proved much more baneful than has the worship of many gods.

As an awakening to the unreality and mythical nature of tribal and local gods, which found escape in metaphysical speculation, it was probably an intellectual advance.

But our present study is not concerned with the comparative degrees of absurdity in metaphysical speculation, but with the weal and woe of humanity—with the problem whether Monotheism has diminished or increased human suffering, has sweetened or embittered human relations, has made life more or less worth living, has brought sunshine or cloud to this vale of tears?—that is our question; and history answers in woeful tones that the second alternative is invariably true.

The social effects which followed the establishment of Monotheism are strangely like those which have come in the train of the wine-vat. Man is deprived of his reason as effectually by being filled with the "spirit" imparted by one-godism as with that distilled from the vine.

Polytheism was a practical expression of the principle that people have the same perfect right to choose the name of their gods and fix their ritual as they have in choosing and fixing their own costumes, customs, and laws; in other words, a recognition of the same right in deciding upon fashions of worship as upon fashions of dress. The motto of Polytheism was "Forbearance, toleration, and religious freedom." That of Monotheism, on the other hand, is the direct opposite of this attitude. Its spiritual essence is intolerance and religious subjugation. Polytheism hoisted many and different standards; they were, however, not flags of war, but of peace. The pennants of Monotheism, on the contrary, wherever they fluttered, were the signals of battle; they always accompanied the beat of the drum and heralded the clash of arms.

Its intolerance, however, is of a two-fold order—external and internal.

The first kind is seen in its proselytising and missionary spirit; in its eager efforts to destroy and supplant all others; in its arrogant contention to be the only true religion for all mankind. It is obvious that to tolerate others is inconsistent with such professions and claims. To live at peace with the rest would be equivalent to repudiating its own proud boast; to declare war upon all other faiths

was to Monotheism a logical necessity; it must needs despise and spurn all other cults; it would be a self-contradiction for it to act otherwise. Hence the contempt of Jew for Gentile. It was not the contempt of Greek for barbarian. The latter was in respect to culture. That of the Jew sprang from his Monotheism, and was purely a religious contempt. Hence, as a motive, it urged people to destroy other religions, as has been amply and sadly exemplified in the history of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Its sole aim was to propagate the faith and not to spread culture. It filled the followers of the Prophet with such deadly zeal as to make their arms victorious wherever they went. In Palestine it enabled a handful of men—the brave Maccabees—to keep at bay huge armies for months together. Moreover, this spirit of intolerance is the reason of the extraordinary ferocity excited wherever Monotheistic people came into collision; for each made the same claim and sought the same end.

Though the consequences of this external intolerance were baneful enough in all conscience, yet they are tame in comparison with the effect of that which, for distinction, may be termed internal.

The first arose because Monotheism could admit no rival; the second, because each section, after it began splitting up, claimed to be the whole.

This second variety has its roots deeply fixed in human nature. Monotheism was absolutely impotent to check divergence of opinion and the exercise of the mythopoeic and god-making faculty. A tendency to variation is as inevitable a law of mind as of body, which now found expression in "dissent" and "protest." Hence, despite its boast of oneness, it soon split up by schisms into a multitude of sects, factions, and creeds—each claiming to be the orthodox Monotheism. The process is very analogous to that known in botany as free-cell formation—when the mother-cell breaks up into a great number of daughter-cells. Such has been the fate of Monotheism wherever absence of external checks has allowed it free scope. When this process of internal fission is in active progress, another characteristic of human nature comes into play. People of the most divergent habits, character, ideas, whims, and aims will live in perfect peace, and often on the most friendly terms as neighbors or inhabitants of the same village or town, who would rend each other like Kilkenny cats if placed under the same roof. That is just the predicament of sectaries under the one dome of Monotheism. If the new ideas had sprung up externally, they would simply have given rise to new cults which would in no way disturb the general equilibrium of society's peace. But when differences arise *internally* the process is not unlike the internal chemical changes to which an explosive owes its destructive violence.

Judaism was just such an unstable and explosive compound. It showed decided signs of disintegration before the advent of Christianity, as the names of Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene bear witness. But when Jahveh broke up into Father, Son, Holy Ghost, Virgin, Apostles, and Saints, the shell burst in the midst of Western civilisation with such destructive violence that the most alarming and lasting consequences followed. It inaugurated the era of religious disputes, dissensions, and implacable feuds; of merciless persecutions, of fiendish villainies, of bloody massacres, and of devastating wars—all marked with an intensity of religious malignity quite alien to the world of many-gods. The whole mass became impregnated with a fratricidal religious hate never known in Polytheistic Greece and Rome.

The Monotheistic "sphere" was slowly transformed into a multi-faced polyhedron, and the group of votaries representing any one side was seized with a madness for slaying all those who similarly stood for the remaining facets. And the recrudescence of persecution for blasphemy sadly shows how impossible it is for "the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots"—Christianity must persecute.

KERIDON.

Tales of Our Times.

By A CYNIC.

A Tale of the Mission Field.

Canto I.

TIMOTHEUS EBENEZER was a zealous Catechist* whose spirit-stirring eloquence few heathen could resist. 'Mong Catechists in general you'd scarcely, I expect, pick out a nobler pillar of a Nonconformist sect.

Perceiving well this Catechist's inestimable worth, The Managing Committee in their wisdom sent him forth To conquer and evangelise a stronghold of Old Nick— A certain godless village where the Sivites mustered thick.

He went—within a week a school was fairly on its way, A temporary chapel, too, was built without delay; He preached with zeal—within a month the Chairman was appraised Of thirty-seven proselytes successfully baptised.

In course of time the school increased, the work progressed with ease,

The Sivite temple soon began to lose its devotees; A brick-and-mortar chapel rose, the mission teemed with life,

A school for girls was started under Ebenezer's wife.

At length, before his pastorate was fully two years old, That total population—barring one—had joined the fold; While he who yet resisted was the Sivite Priest alone— A bigoted old Pagan, with opinions of his own.

Canto II.

Each morn as Ebenezer, on his daily walk to school, Went past the Sivite temple and its holy bathing pool, He saw the Priest performing his ablutions on the stones, And often thus addressed him in conciliatory tones:

"Old man, in these idolatries how long will you persist? How long do you intend the light of wisdom to resist? This obstinate adherence to your superstitious creed, Allow me to observe, my friend, is very wrong indeed.

"I really wish to chapel you would come on Sunday next, And listen to my homily, and think about the text; I fancy I should manage then your heathen heart to touch— My preaching influences all our people very much."

"Preach not to me," the Priest would say, "attempt not what is vain;

As soon arrest the Ganges' flood or stay the falling rain. Until my God himself shall deign to join your Christian sect,

O Catechist, your teachings I'll continue to reject."

Canto III.

One morning Ebenezer failed his usual walk to tread, 'Twas given out the Catechist was ill at home, in bed; The Priest, as usual, sought his pool, but not alone was he; Another stood and washed him there, a fellow devotee.

A meanly clad and aged man, a stranger to the place, With very great luxuriance of hair upon his face, Who presently addressed the Priest in thin and feeble whine, "A Pilgrim from afar I come to worship at your shrine."

They enter now the temple courts, they tread with feet unshod,

They penetrate the inmost shrine where sits the graven God, Thick incense fumes weigh down the air, 'tis sombre as the tomb,

Until the eye begins to grow accustomed to the gloom.

Inspired with awe, the Pilgrim sinks full prostrate on the ground,

The Priest performs the mystic rites the holy place around, His back is turned, he does not see the Pilgrim sudden stand And place a small black object in great Siva's outstretched hand.

The rites are done, the offerings made, the ceremonies o'er. They leave the sanctuary's shade, the Priest relocks the door;

With solemn steps they both emerge and gain the light of day,

The Pilgrim makes a low salaam and goes upon his way.

Canto IV.

Next week, as Ebenezer's class stood round the board, and he

Was laying down the principles of double rule of three, There burst into the schoolroom, in a quite excited state, The bigoted Priest of Sivism—the unregenerate.

* Term used in India and Ceylon for a native lay preacher.

He darted at the Catechist and seized him by the arm,
Whereat good Ebenezer manifested some alarm;
He tried to extricate himself from out the other's clutch—
He thought the Unregenerate had had a drop too much.

"I've told you oft," the Priest exclaimed, "your doctrines
I'd refuse
Until my God himself should be converted to your views;
O Catechist, the time has come, great Siva's joined your
band,
I went just now to worship him—and this was in his
hand!"

The Catechist received a book, fun twinkled in his eyes,
A feint of coughing barely served his laughter to disguise,
He slowly turned the pages o'er, full well he knew them all,
The Tamil hymns in daily use by converts big and small.

At last he said, "the circumstance is really very strange,
I wonder what has caused your God his tenets thus to
change;
Now, how do you intend to act? come, be at length
advised;"

"Of course I will," the Priest replied, "I want to be
baptised."

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 29.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Davies, Davey, Davidson, Lloyd, Leat, Lazarnick, Quinton, Rosetti, Silverstein, Samuels, Thurlow, Wood, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly balance-sheet was submitted and adopted.

Thirty-nine new members were received into the Society, and permission was granted for the formation of new Branches at Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton, and Southport.

The President reported the result of the L. C. C. fight, and gave some details of the case against Miss Vance not reported in the public press. He had, on behalf of the Society, instructed counsel to apply for a mandamus. In the meantime the other summonses, fifteen in all, had been adjourned.

It was then formally resolved that all other Societies whose permits had been withdrawn in like manner should be invited to co-operate with the N. S. S. in carrying the matter to the High Courts, and that a conference of representatives be called to discuss the matter. It was further resolved that the Editor of the *Freethinker* be asked to open a Defence Fund.

The following Report of the Sub-Committee on the Scholarship Scheme, adjourned from last meeting, was then discussed. The Committee recommend:—

"That, in order to secure a Diploma as an accredited lecturer of the N. S. S., a candidate must gain two-thirds marks in an examination in Biblical knowledge, Theology, General Science, and Evolution, as illustrated in Astronomy, Geology, Biology, and Sociology, the examination papers to be prepared by a committee specially appointed for that purpose.

"That a Committee of Management shall be appointed, consisting of the President of the N. S. S., the Secretary, two members of the N. S. S. Executive, and two volunteer members of the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., to whom names of intending candidates must be submitted for approval, and who shall also select the examiners.

"That, in the event of any candidate obtaining 90 per cent. of marks, he shall receive a prize of £10 and a Diploma; 80 per cent., £5 and a Diploma; two-thirds marks, a Diploma only. In the event of a number of candidates obtaining a high percentage of marks, the amount to be distributed in prizes in any one year should not exceed £50.

"That payment of fees for classes and the providing of books shall be left to the discretion of the Committee of Management.

"That the first examination should be held not later than the beginning of May, 1913."

After some discussion it was unanimously adopted, and members were asked to be prepared at the next meeting with suggestions as to who should compose the Committee of Management.

The Secretary received instructions to arrange for the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant in January, a Social Evening in October, and, if practicable, a series of Demonstrations.

E. M. VANCK, General Secretary.

For the Woman's Sake.

A DROLL situation arose a few days since when a minister whose name is enrolled in *Crimes of Preachers* came into the *Truthseeker* office and asked to be "eliminated" from the next edition of the book. The caller was a pleasant-spoken person, and having inquired if we were responsible for the volume above mentioned, put to us a hypothetical question, thus: "If you were a minister, and a woman member of the family, also a minister, stirred up trouble and carried tales to your wife, so that she got distracted and applied for a divorce; and if on the strength of this proceeding you had your parchments taken away from you and your name put in the papers; and if on second thought your wife withdrew her complaint, so that the divorce suit never came to trial; and if an ecclesiastical court gave you back your papers and the conference struck out the complaint and you got another church and went on preaching, with everybody reconciled and satisfied; and if after all this some member of your congregation should discover a paragraph in a book showing that you had eloped with a married woman, that your wife had charged you with cruelty, and that you had been expelled from the ministry—wouldn't you think it pretty tough?" When we said yes, indeed, he stated that he was the man, and asked if we could not omit the passage in the next revision of *Crimes of Preachers*. It occurred to us to inquire whether the record there set down was false or true. He said, "Well, it is incorrect; there was no elopement." True, he temporarily left his home and parish, and at the same time a lady member of his congregation took a few days off; but weren't there such things as coincidences? We admitted having remarked the coincidence in cases too numerous to mention. It was curious, we thought, that ministers should be the victims of so many of them; and we named a few. He evinced not the slightest scepticism about the others, but drew forth the documents in his own affair to show that the ecclesiastical court had dismissed the complaint, along with letters to prove that he stood high in the esteem of his clerical brethren. He also handed us a newspaper report of his vindication, which he withdrew just as we were reading the insinuation of the reporter that the vindication was a "whitewash." After repocketing the evidence our clerical visitor solicited from us a written agreement to drop his name from the book, adding that for himself he could stand it, but the thing was killing his wife, who perhaps felt that her action in making their troubles public was precipitate, and regretted it.

The woman's side determined us, and he went away with our signed statement, for the satisfaction of his Church, that he should not appear in any copies of the book hereafter printed. Our act was an atonement to the woman who had shown by her course that the fact of her husband being a man of God did not prevent her from suspecting him, but who, though innocent, is obliged, "in the providence of God," to share the consequences. We assured him his offence was not recorded in *Crimes of Preachers* out of malice, but as a part of the argument to prove that the ordination of men to the ministry gives no ground for supposing that they will be any more moral than the rest of the population. He said he felt sure that with his name omitted there would still be enough left to support the argument. The *Crimes of Preachers* has been in circulation for more than a quarter of a century. This minister is the first who has asked the publishers to revise him out of it, and we have not before been solicited for a "character" by one of the cloth!

We can afford to be lenient to ministers who show by documentary evidence that they are unjustly included in *Crimes of Preachers*, since fresh recruits for its pages are plenty. One of the Hamburg-American line of steamers recently arriving had as passenger a priest and also an officer with a warrant for the priest's arrest for assault on a girl. The priest had a female companion on the ship. A clipping from the McKeesport, Pa., *Daily News* of late date tells of the arraignment of a Pittsburg priest on the same kind of a complaint. "Her allegations against the priest," says the McKeesport paper, "were quite sensational." The confession of the priest was also "sensational" if the word may be applied to the admission of a man of God that he was in the girl's room and drank so much beer, whiskey, and wine that he "couldn't remember much about what had taken place." In a Cincinnati paper is the story how the wife of a preacher hid herself under a bed to which her husband conducted a lady evangelist, "said to be a woman of unusual beauty." One day's mail brings these "cases." There are many others on file awaiting the day of the "Clerical Round Up." For present purposes we do not need to resort to them. It is now aimed only to show that one parson slipping his head out of the noose never will be missed.

Truthseeker (New York).

GEORGE MACDONALD.

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.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Schindle's, 91 Church-street, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business Meeting—Election of Auditors, etc.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, A. B. Moss, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Christianity Unsound."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. J. Darby, "The Bible and Evolution."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, Mr. Allison, "Dreams."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—*Bury* (front of Circus): September 8, at 3, "When I Was in Prison": at 6.30, "Who Made God?" *Bradford* (Morley Square): 9, at 7.30, "When I Was in Prison"; 10, at 7.30, "Was Jesus a Failure?" 11, at 7.30, "The Latest Thing in Gods." *Leeds* (Town Hall Square): 12, at 7.30, "The Faith of an Infidel"; 13, at 7.30, "Who Made God?" 15, at 7.30, "When the Sleeper Awakes."

ACCRINGTON (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sunday, September 8, at 7, "Omar Khayyam: Poet and Philosopher": 9, at 7.45, "Origin and Nature of the Christ Myth"; 10, at 7.45, "Evolution and Special Creation."

PRESTON (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Wednesday, September 11, at 8, "Flagellated by the Past"; 12, at 8, "Comique-Opera Christians."

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 VESSEY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

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.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 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.

THE BOOK THAT WAS WANTED. Determinism or Free Will?

BY

C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution

CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Mr. Cohen has written just the book that Rationalists have long been inquiring for."—*Literary Guide*.
"A very able and clear discussion of a problem which calls for, but seldom gets, the most severely lucid handling. Mr. Cohen is careful to argue his definitions down to bed-rock."—*Morning Leader*.
"Written with ability."—*Times*.

"The author states his case well."—*Athenæum*.
"The first seven chapters state the case for Determinism with clearness and fullness.....There is probably no better popular summary than this of Mr. Cohen's.....Mr. Cohen has some excellent passages on the nature and extent of the psychic whole, which is constructed out of the accumulated experiences of the race."—*Ethical World*.

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.
(POSTAGE 2d.)

PUBLISHED BY THE WALTER SCOTT COMPANY.

Also on Sale by

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

A LIBERAL OFFER—NOTHING LIKE IT.

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

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



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

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

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

- THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.
- THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.
- THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.
- THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.
- THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.
- THE CURIOUS—How they "grewed" from germ-cell.
- THE HEALTHY—How to enjoy life and keep well.
- THE INVALID—How to brace up and keep well.

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

Most Grateful Testimonials From Everywhere.

- Gudivoda, India: "It is a store of medical knowledge in plainest language, and every reader of English would be benefited by it."—W. L. N.
- Triplicane, India: "I have gone through the book many times, and not only benefited myself but many friends also."—G. V. A.
- Panderma, Turkey: "I can avow frankly there is rarely to be found such an interesting book as yours."—K. H. (Chemist).
- Calgary, Can.: "The information therein has changed my whole idea of life—to be nobler and happier."—D. N. M.
- Laverton, W. Aust.: "I consider it worth ten times the price. I have benefited much by it."—R. M.

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

Price EIGHT SHILLINGS by Mail to any Address.

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

THE CHURCH CATECHISM EXAMINED.

BY

Jeremy Bentham.

With an Interesting Biographical Introduction by the late
J. M. WHEELER,

Author of the "Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers."

Bentham was the most drastic reformer of his age. He rendered financial assistance to Robert Owen and Richard Carlile behind the scenes. Macaulay said of him that "he found jurisprudence a gibberish and left it a science." Mill and all the most brilliant early Radicals were his followers. He was undoubtedly an Atheist as well as a Republican, although his biographers have sought to hide the fact. His motto was "Maximise morals, minimise religion." His *Church Catechism Examined* is strong, racy, and merciless. It was written and published in 1817. Bentham's great name, and the price of 20s. on the title-page, alone saved it from prosecution. The Church of England still exists, and this little book of Bentham's should also be kept in existence.

EIGHTY PAGES. THREEPENCE.

(POSTAGE 1d.)

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

An Important New Book for Freethinkers.

Penalties Upon Opinion.

Some Records of the Laws of Heresy and Blasphemy.

BROUGHT TOGETHER BY

HYPATIA BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Issued by the Rationalist Press Association.

PRICE SIXPENCE NET.
BOUND IN CLOTH ONE SHILLING NET.
(POSTAGE 2d.)

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

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 is being placed from day to day."

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

SIXPENCE—NET

(POSTAGE 2d.)

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