

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



## “SHELL OUT.”

(1) FIRST SALVATION ARMY.

(2) LAST SALVATION ARMY.

“Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.”—LUKE VIII., 2, 3.

“As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles’ feet.”—ACTS IV., 34, 35.

### THE BRUNO CELEBRATION.

SUNDAY was a great date in the history of freedom. Rome was filled with demonstrators in honor of a poor scholar who was burnt to ashes two hundred and eighty-nine years ago, with all his worldly possessions, the threadbare clothes in which he stood. His enemies thought he was satisfactorily disposed of; they snuffed out his life, and thought they had snuffed out his name. For a whole generation they had cause to congratulate themselves. Giordano Bruno seemed utterly forgotten. But his name gradually emerged from this obscurity. Men began to speak of him as a meteor of philosophy, whose wild flight through Europe was stopped by a Romish *auto-da-fé*. There was a nameless attraction in his growing fame. Something heroic, supernal, shone amidst the

flames of his pyre. Thinker after thinker, historian after historian, felt its irresistible fascination; and now, that poor murdered scholar is one of the loftiest figures in the Pantheon of Humanity.

There is no need for an account of Bruno’s life at present. We gave a summary on publishing a photograph of the statue which was unveiled at Rome on Sunday. Our object is rather to note the colossal nature and the immense enthusiasm of the celebration. No such sight has been witnessed in Rome since Vittor Emmanuel, the first King of united Italy, was carried to his tomb. The procession was headed by Garibaldians in their red shirts, which appeal to all that is noblest in Italian hearts. Then came the students of all universities, shouting vivas for Giordano Bruno and Liberty of Thought. Five hundred banners were carried, and the deputations were too numerous

to count. Arrived at the Campo dei Fiori, the Field of Flowers, where the illustrious martyr perished, the procession halted. The white cover of Ferrari's noble work was removed amid the wildest enthusiasm, and Signor Bovio delivered a brief address, summing up Bruno's work and character and his position in the European movement towards liberty and progress. The vast crowd cheered the orator lustily, and finally dispersed without the slightest disorder. In the evening a banquet was held in the Palace of Fine Arts. Eminent men were the speakers, and the bust of Bruno upon the table was the object of an ovation.

During the ceremony the poor old Pope was greatly distressed, spending most of the time in prayer. The Church has discovered that one text at least in the Bible is being verified—"Be sure your sin will find you out." The murderer of so many of the best men and women the world has produced is as hypocritical as wicked, and the beldame's airs of injured innocence are excruciatingly ludicrous. She is incapable of remorse. Her only feeling is one of savage hatred—first, because her sins are cast in her teeth, and second, because she is unable to repeat them.

Papa Pecci declares that this Bruno business is worse than the calamity of 1870. That bereaved the Papacy of its temporal power, but this is a blow at its spiritual power. He himself was too much cut up to do more than pray, but the clerical party issued a screaming circular, from which we make the following extract:—

"The scandal about to be perpetrated in Rome wounds and vexes every Christian soul. Bands of miscreants, bearing the black livery of Satan, are assembling in this sacred city—the centre and heart of Christianity. With impious eagerness they applaud the erection of a monument which, in this city of Rome, will be a permanent insult to God, to Christ, and to his Vicar on earth. The mind shudders at the horrible idea; but if the hearts of the faithful are pierced with grief, how much more profound and dolorous must be the grief of the common father of the faithful—the Sovereign Pontiff Leo XIII."

Even the Ultramontanes of Austria were set foaming with rage. The Bishop of Linz ordered prayers to be said "in expiation of the outrage," and the clerical *Vaterland* denounced the inauguration as scandalous and as a *fête* worthy of the Devil.

Let them rave. They cannot turn back the tide of time. Their malice is powerless. Bruno's statue stands sublime on the spot where he was murdered. He who was "butchered to make a Roman holiday" now has his memorial erected on another Roman holiday. There may it remain until the Papacy is dead and the Vatican has crumbled to dust. Nay, long after the "accursed creed" has perished, may it remain as an ever-sacred object, where the fading heroism of humanity may kindle itself anew. May Bruno's statue illustrate to generation after generation the truth of his own great words—He who dies for one age lives for all ages. G. W. FOOTE.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our permanent placards, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

#### A TERRIBLE DISEASE.

THE malady to which we wish to call attention is none the less virulent because it finds no place in the usual works on pathology. Its symptoms, however, when described under such names as superstition, fanaticism, bigotry, and credulity, have been recognised as among the worst calamities that afflict the human race.

*Causes.*—The chief cause of this dreadful scourge is undoubtedly inheritance. Man having come from savage ancestors inherits barbarous superstitions in his very blood. Sometimes, indeed, those who have shown but little sign of the taint during their healthy manhood, in age and sickness develop the hereditary disorder and fly to nostrums which in their days of sanity they knew to be untrustworthy. All that tends to make life miserable has contributed to the spread of the disease with its vain expectations of amelioration in some other world, and it is accordingly rampant among celibates, women, slaves, and all deprived of freedom and healthy human enjoyment. It feeds on misery and thrives in a soil of despair. The disease is carefully inoculated and nursed in childhood, and is fostered by a large class of scoundrelly quacks who live by ministering to it, and who prey upon the inherited tendency to disease, which they enhance by pictures of an offended God, who demands sacrifices and offerings. They exasperate the disease with pernicious nostrums, prayer poultices, salvation pills, and other follies.

*Diagnosis.*—The Disease takes Protean forms, of which it will only be necessary to describe some of the most striking. Even in childhood, its victims not only waste much time in vain prayers, but are often afflicted with life long melancholia through its ravages. Thoughts of death and of terrors after death continually distress the patient, who, if of a sensitive disposition is often driven to the verge of insanity. Sometimes, excited by religious terrors, the patient is roused to a pitch of delirious frenzy, which finds vent in shouts, shrieks, or in sighs, groans and tears. A morbid appetite for indigestible dogmas, a craving for pious stimulants and a positive delight in imposture are frequent accompaniments of the disorder. Many exhibit a tendency to fall on their knees, and turn up their eyes. Sometimes the poor victims are torn by fear that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that their loved ones are doomed to eternal torment. More frequently they identify themselves with God and consider opposition as the work of the devil. In this state of mind they follow their own desires under the plea that it is God's will, and take what they want saying the Lord has need of it. They fancy themselves exalted above the things of the world, while in reality they grovel in the mire of superstition and other-worldliness. In its milder forms the patient usually exhibits a loathsome hypocrisy and pretends to be guided by totally different considerations from those which actually influence his conduct.

*Treatment.*—It is impossible to lay down any uniform mode of treatment adapted to all cases. The aim of the physician must be to get the patient into a healthy state of mind, so that he may be induced to try the great specific, reason. Unfortunately many constitutions are so impaired by the ravages of theology that they are unable to bear this specific unless administered in a very diluted form. For this reason some consider it best to begin with mild doses of Unitarianism and biblical criticism. This is sometimes found to mitigate the disease, which nevertheless can never be considered thoroughly eradicated until attacked at its root in supernaturalism. The more violent cases are only aggravated by mild treatment, and the most acute forms are amenable to nothing short of a strait jacket. Fortunately sanitary secular influences have considerably modified the disease of late years and these cases are getting

rarer. Some hold that there is no necessity for directly attacking the disease, but that it may be removed by attention to the general secular health, and change of mental air. Others attempt to replace it by inoculation with a milder disorder of a somewhat similiar character. In view of the serious nature of the complaint these methods cannot be generally recommended.

The free administration of wholesome discussion is necessary to dislodge the disease, and it is in consequence decidedly objected to by the before mentioned quacks. A few grains of ridicule may also often be applied with excellent effect. Like other powerful drugs, however, this should be used with skill and caution. In the hands of the eminent French physician, Dr. F. M. de Voltaire, it produced astonishing results, and it has been resorted to by all the most celebrated men who have attempted to grapple with this malady. An eminent American practitioner, Dr. Ingersoll, always mixes his argument and ridicule in a strong infusion of geniality, and this practice may be safely recommended. Dr. Gibbon was famous for his application of irony, which he applied so skilfully that many of his patients did not know what they were taking. This, however, is not a drug that can be successfully used by everybody.

The patient should, if possible, be withdrawn from the exciting causes of the disease. He should be warned of the character of the quacks who propagate it and the shady nature of the documents by which it is supported. Sensible literature is of great service in this direction, and even a casual glance at a comic Bible picture has been known to lead to a radical cure. Sometimes the mere thought of opposition sets up a violent rage, and the patient thinks nothing too bad for those seeking to cure him. Let the philanthropic physician, however, persevere, and the disease of religion will finally succumb to the medicine of reason.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE BELL NUISANCE.

(After Poe)

HEAR the clanging of the bells,  
Church bells, awful bells;  
What a world of painfulness their ringing out foretells.  
How they clang, clang, clang,  
In the morning and the night,  
While the fever patients scream  
And the convalescent dream  
Till startled with affright  
As the fiendish chime,  
Beating time, time, time,  
From out a hundred steeples discordantly yells;  
The bells, bells, bells, bells;  
The jangling, wrangling, clanging, banging bells, bells,  
bells, bells.

Hear the thousand bells,  
Church bells, beastly bells;  
What shoals of profanity their turbulence compels.  
How we wait in nervous fear,  
Trembling till we hear  
The clang and clash and clatter without tune,  
Of the bells, bells, Christian bells.  
The ringers they are ghouls  
Who heap misery on our souls.  
If there's wisdom in the world  
Let the cursed bells be hurled  
To torture fiends.

Oh, stop that ringing of the bells,  
Brutal bells, bells, bells, bells, bells;  
The jangling and the wrangling of the bells.

Hear the tinkling bells,  
Church bells, silly bells;  
Giving us a foretaste of superstition's hells,  
Bidding 'gainst each other for souls,  
Afar the jarring cadence rolls  
In sombre tones.  
Their brazen tongues proclaim  
In their Master's name,

"Buy your way to heaven 'neath the bells;  
If you don't a thousand hells,"  
So each tells,

"Wait all that bid defiance to the bells."  
But Freedom's voice dispels  
Superstition's spells,

With its jangling, wrangling, banging Christian bells,  
bells, bells, bells.

#### ANECDOTES OF FREETHINKERS OF ANTIQUITY

DIAGORAS of Melos, surnamed the Atheist, once threw a wooden statue of Hercules into the fire in order to cook a dish of lentils with the remark that the god might perform a thirteenth labor. Being in a storm at sea, and hearing his fellow passengers say it was a punishment for having an Atheist on board, he pointed out other vessels at some distance struggling with the same storm without being loaded with a Diagoras.

Of Bion the Borysthenite many sayings are preserved in Diogenes Laertius. It being fabled that a punishment in Hades was to carry water in buckets which ran out, Bion said he should have thought it harder to carry water in buckets that were whole than in such as were bored. Of a rich man who was niggardly he said, "That man does not possess his estate, but his estate possesses him." To him as well as to Diagoras and others is ascribed the saying that the temples showed the votive offerings of those who were saved, but there was no record of those who were lost.

Xenophanes, seeing the Egyptians strike their breasts, even as the Jews do to this day, and lamenting for the lost Osiris, said, "If he is a god do not lament him. If he is a man do not sacrifice to him." The saying is as applicable to the Christian idol. This philosopher, who was universally regarded by antiquity as the originator of Monism or the doctrine of the oneness of the universe, made the shrewd remark that the gods of animals would be fashioned after their own likenesses.

"Come to the temple," said a friend to Demonax, the Cynic philosopher admired by Lucian. "I wish to pray to Æsculapius for my son." "You must fancy then," said the philosopher "that the god is very deaf if he cannot hear us from this place." Accused of neglecting sacrifice and the Eleusinian mysteries, he answered the gods could not want his offerings, and that "if the mysteries were bad, no one ought to be initiated; if good, they should be divulged to everybody."

Plutarch, in his Apophthegms of the Lacedemonians, relates how a priest, who initiated neophytes into the Orphic mysteries, being reduced to the greatest poverty, pretended that those whom he consecrated would enjoy eternal happiness after death. "Imbecile," said Leotyichides, son of Ariston, "Why do you not quickly die, in order that you may no longer have to complain of your poverty and unhappy lot."

This anecdote reminds us of another which is mentioned by Montaigne. A malefactor being condemned to the gallows was told by his confessor: "Courage, my son, you have repented, and will go to sup with God and be served by the angels." "Really, father," he replied, "it will be very nice, but as I have no appetite, would you kindly take my place." "Alas!" said the priest, "I would go very willingly, but this happens to be my day of fasting."

A somewhat similar story is that of the poor devil who was exhorted on the scaffold to bear his execution bravely, remembering how Jesus had calmly resigned himself to his executioners. "Ah, my Father," he replied, "our Savior knew well that he was going to rise again on the third day."

Of Leotyichides, Plutarch also relates that a serpent being found twisted round a key, the priests all hailed it as a wondrous prodigy. "Such is not my opinion," said Leotyichides; "but if the key had been found twisted round the serpent it might have been taken for a marvel."

A similar tale is told of Cato, the censor. Some one deplored to him that he had been troubled with a bad sign. A mouse had gnawed his sandal. "Ah," said Cato, "that is nothing, "but if your sandal had gnawed a mouse it would have been a terrible sign."

J. M. W.

"What is confirmation?" asked the vicar at a Sunday school a little before the bishop came round for the laying on of hands. "I know, sir," said a little girl. "Well, what is it dear?" "Its chemise and drawers all in one, sir," she replied. She was thinking of "combination."

## PROFESSOR SEYMOUR WITH THE GHOSTS.

From *Freethought* (San Francisco).

LAST Sunday evening I was one of the twenty-eight to sit in Mrs. Reynolds' seance for spirit materialization, and having paid my dollar, the same as the others, I am free to write what I please, and speculate on what I saw. I found Mrs. Reynolds a fine, tall, well proportioned woman, of rather prepossessing appearance, but with a very weary and worn look, as if her burdens were greater than she could bear. The little room was packed full of intelligent men and women, all eager to see and hear the voyagers from the land "beyond the river." The cabinet was a very simple affair, being a mere curtain of black in one corner of the room, with solid plastered walls and floor well carpeted and nailed down. This cabinet was not over three feet square and eight feet high, and open at the top. At the hour of eight the door was locked and the light turned low, yet leaving light enough for one to see all around the room. Mrs. Reynolds was seated outside the cabinet, dressed in an ordinary brown alpaca dress. After a few minutes of song the medium went into the cabinet and in about a minute a form, dressed in white and surrounded by several yards of lace or mosquito netting, came out and called up several of the circle, whom she embraced and kissed as if glad indeed to meet them once more. I noticed several of those so called up were very much affected at seeing what they believed were their loved dead, back again apparently alive and well. Tears and endearing expressions were plentiful and excitement seemed at a high point with all. After several apparitions had thus come and gone, all females, and about the same height and size as the medium, one emerged several feet from the curtain, calling for her baby, holding out both hands; then, stooping down, she seemed to pick up a baby from the floor beside one of the sitters and returned to the cabinet hugging and kissing, as only a mother can, her baby child. It was not a living child, I am sure, but I could not tell whether it was a doll or rag baby made up for the occasion. After this what appeared to be a child partly came out and talked to some other children in the circle, calling them up to be kissed—the medium could have deceived us in this by being on her knees, but I do not know. I was not over four to six feet away, but would not hazard an opinion. Then a form came out away from the cabinet, dressed in white, and sang, in a loud clear voice, several verses of a spiritual song, showing that spirits must have good vocal organs at least.

I noticed that when the sitters were called up and embraced the spirit forms, and patted them on the back, the concussion sounded like patting flesh and bones, instead of a spiritual nothing. Your humble correspondent here asked why no male denizens from lands ethereal put in an appearance, when a large-sized, full-formed man, dressed in black or very dark clothes and having black whiskers and very full face, opened the curtains. He did not come outside, but stood and sang in a loud, clear masculine voice, "Scattering Seeds of Kindness." He sang the piece through, stopping only once to go back into the cabinet to "get more strength." This male spirit is said to be Mr. Groff, the medium's control, but I noticed the voice seemed to be very much like the medium's, both in singing and answering questions. There seemed to be another control also, called Effie, that claimed to have been born in Washington, D. C., but died at birth some 29 years ago. Effie was a very jolly spirit, and sang very finely for us several times, and gave us an original conundrum: "Why cannot a fly see in the night time?" We all gave it up as too scientific for mortals still on this mundane sphere, when Effie came to our relief by giving us the solution: "Because they have left their specs on the wall in the day time;" which brought the house down. Then the dear angel asked us to spell needle. We asked her to spell it, when she spelled it "Neidle." Being told that needle had no *i* in it, she laughed, and asked what use a needle would be with no eye in it. Thus we were outwitted by the spirit from angel shores.

I was very much in hopes to be called up by some of the forms, as it does not often happen that a Melican man has a chance to be hugged and kissed by females from "the summer land," but my most ardent wishes were not to be gratified. I got nothing better than the cold shoulder, while many had the unspeakable felicity of holding to their breast lovely beings, draped in snowy white, claiming to be "loved ones gone before," just back from the shadowy land. I thought over all the acts of my life to see why I should thus be left in sheol, though others, apparently no worse looking, should be thus crowned with heaven's choicest blessings. I think I

shall try, from this on, to be a better man, at least to improve my looks, for it is hard, it is terrible, to be thus slighted.

At the close of this very interesting (to some) seance, two full female forms came from the cabinet for a minute, bade us all a kind good-bye, kissed their angel hands to us, and disappeared. But almost immediately out came the medium dressed as she had gone in. I went directly into the cabinet, but there was absolutely nothing there but the chair which the lady had occupied.

If there is any such thing as genuine spirit materialisation, this may be one, but as Mrs. Reynolds is said to have been exposed many times in this city and other places, it becomes necessary to watch with both eyes open. The medium said before she began, that she did not tell them it was spirits, they were at liberty to think of it what they pleased. This of course released her from any chance of prosecution if a cry of fraud was raised, or of obtaining money under false pretences; which is, of course, only good business tact. I have never been much of a believer in materialisations, and I will not attempt to pass an opinion on this. I would merely advise everybody to investigate for themselves.

D. C. SEYMOUR.

## ACID DROPS.

Rabbi S. Singer, of the new West End Synagogue, writes a stinging letter on the Emperor of Germany's five years' subscription to the Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. He suggests that the money should be spent in Berlin, where religion is at a very low ebb; and recommends the Emperor to "found a society for promoting Christianity among professors in his universities, officers in his army, members of the Civil Service, and Court chaplains."

"Is it not a fact," asks Rabbi Singer, "that these societies are as prolific parents of hypocrisy as are to be found within the limits of these islands? An empty stomach, a shivering body, the difficulty in an overstocked labor market of earning a living for wife and children, are powerful, and at times irresistible, logicians. . . . The class from whom the professional conversionist draws his candidates for salvation is composed of persons who can be attracted to the mission-room where the gospel is served up with a substantial supper, or to the dispensary where medicines are administered with the Word. I have been told by sturdy beggars of my own race who had exhausted every form of Jewish benevolence that if no more was done for them they would go to the conversionists and get their price."

Rabbi Singer proposes a Royal Commission to investigate the expenditure of these conversion societies. He thinks it would lead to some interesting revelations. So do we.

According to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, one of the Wesleyan evangelists at Epsom during the Derby week, was tackled by a "young ruffian," who asked him "Do you practise what you preach?" "Yes," was the cheerful reply. "I do." "Then lend us a shilling." "I don't preach lending shillings on racecourses."

This is paraded as a triumphant answer. But after all the "young ruffian" was in the right. Does not the New Testament say (Matt. v, 42) "give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away?" And if the evangelist did not go to preach the New Testament, what the d— (dickens, of course) did he go for?

The Free Church of Scotland is very much exercised over the election of the heretical Dr. Marcus Dods to the chair of New Testament Exegesis at the Free Church Congress, as this is taken as an endorsement of his admission that the Old Testament contains mistakes and immoralities. The papers take their fun off the crestfallen orthodox party, and the *Edinburgh Dispatch* has an amusing account of a supposed interview by telephone between the discomfited party and Principal Rainy who is now in Melbourne.

The Scottish Free Church is "progressive ye ken" because of its election of Dr. Marcus Dods. Well, the very next day, the Rev. James Stuart was brought to the bar of the Assembly, where he solemnly recanted his heresy,

and promised to withdraw his volume of sermons from publication. This he did, says the *Dundee Advertiser*, "with a zeal which, if not edifying, is creditable to the terrors inspired by the Presbyterial Inquisition."

It is reported in the religious press that Spurgeon has been holding forth on "old times." We never knew he did anything else.

The Lord made a bad mistake in that terrific thunder-storm last week. He flung a lot of his lightning at one of his own houses, namely, St. Mark's Church, Coburg Street, Old Kent Road, London, setting fire to the roof, and giving the firemen three-quarters of an hour's work to extinguish the flames. Old Jah seems less discriminating than he was of yore, when he slaughtered the first-born Egyptians and spared his own people. Perhaps he requires blood on the doorposts, or somewhere, to recognise them by! In that case, churches will have to use lamb's blood outside as well as inside.

"The Archbishop of Canterbury," the papers announced, "is spending Whitsuntide at the Palace in Hereford." What a contrast to eighteen hundred and fifty odd years ago, when the Apostles had only one room between them. The Holy Ghost found them easily; but if he, she, or it wanted to find the Archbishop of Canterbury, he, she, or it would have to inquire of the flunkeys in what room of the Palace his Grace could be discovered.

Query. Which would be most astonished—the Ghost to meet the Archbishop, or the Archbishop to meet the Ghost?

Rev. Dr. Gloag, of the Established Church of Scotland, says the want of the century is a great theologian. Indeed! Any Scotch divinity professor will take his solemn affidavit that the article is in stock. Other people, however, will be apt to say that the race of great theologians expired with Bishop Butler.

George Kennan, the adventurous American traveller describes in the *Century* the position of Russian, political prisoners at the mines of Kara, where the conditions are so filthy that most of them die from loathsome diseases. The Czar, however, provides them with Scripture texts and promises of Christ nailed on the walls of their gloomy dungeons.

"Is it true?" asks a correspondent in reference to the following paragraph in *The City of London Association News*, an organ of the Y.M.C.A.:—"A secretary of a Secularist Society went into the Finsbury Park Y.M.C.A. a short time ago with the avowed intention of fighting the speaker. By his side was a youth of sixteen years of age. The speaker told of the love of Jesus Christ, and invited them to accept it. After a while the lad fell into tears and cried for mercy. The Secularist was so much impressed by the incident that, instead of arguing with the speaker as he had intended, he went home and wrote out his resignation of the office which he held in the society." We have not heard of the resignation of any secretary lately, and, until we get particulars of name and date, must remain sceptical on the subject.

One of the Fox sisters still abides by the Spiritist cause. The other two denounce her as a self-conscious fraud and impostor.

The Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association (ye gods, what a name!) congratulates the godly people of London on the steps being taken to light up and open the British Museum on week-day evenings. This is to do instead of opening the place on Sundays. Perhaps the W.M.L.D.R.A. (we can't print it all over again) will kindly explain how an East-end shop assistant who leaves off work at eight, often in a state of exhaustion, is to get up to Bloomsbury and spend a few hours in studying its treasures. We don't say it couldn't be done. We only ask how?

At a written examination in religious knowledge held the other Saturday in connection with the Glasgow Sabbath School Union, the following question received some most ludicrous answers:—"What led to the expulsion of our

first parents from the Garden of Eden, and what punishment was then inflicted on them?" One lad—he was over fourteen years of age—evidently anxious to answer as concisely as possible (according to the instructions given on the paper) wrote in a bold school hand—"Because they dident no good nor evil and they were to crawl on their bellies all the days of their lives."

The Rev. E. White has been supporting in his "Merchant's Lecture" the heretical notion that the heathen may be saved. Of what use is it then sending out to them the costly Christian doctrine of damnation?

The Brighton Tory *Guardian* has an article on Mr. Moss's recent lecture in that town. It finds the very title of the lecture, "Is Christianity a Failure?" open to objection, and very much more so the address itself. The good old *Guardian* thinks it trenching far on the bounds of toleration that public buildings can be utilised for the advocacy of views opposed to all religion, and says the subject comes specifically within the scope of the operations of the Primrose League as well as of the Christian Churches generally. Evidently the *Guardian* hopes there will be a united effort on the part of these bodies to suppress further Freethought meetings. We would draw their attention to the invasion of their town next month by the excursionists of the London Secular Federation.

The cholera is raging in Madras, 1,452 deaths being registered in one week from that cause alone. Another instance of the Lord's care for his children.

At Japan they have been favored with a volcanic eruption, killing one hundred and seventy persons, and destroying upwards of three hundred houses. Yet all is arranged for the best in this best of all possible worlds.

A number of Islington traders, headed by Mr. John Phillips, of Holloway Road, complained to Mr. Gilbert Kennedy, magistrate at the Dalston police court, of the annoyance caused by the noise of the Salvation Army. They also handed in a memorial asking the magistrate to put a stop to the beating of drums and blowing of horns, "robbing us at our homes of our day of rest, and disturbing us at our places of worship." Mr. Kennedy asked if the Salvationists had been remonstrated with? Mr. Phillips: Yes; and they said when the spirit of the Lord seized the big drummer he was bound to beat. Mr. Kennedy: You can ask them to move on, and if they refuse summon them. Mr. Phillips: We have been to the police, and they have not interfered. Mr. Kennedy: They can only deal with obstructions, and if we bring the inspectors into collision with these people, they may, perhaps, bring a hornet's nest about their heads. One of the deputation said he had remonstrated with the "Army," and the captain said he was "a child of the devil." This captain used very similar language to that of Jesus, and was evidently imbued with the spirit of the gospel. Were the public disturbed by Freethinkers on the Sunday, we doubt not that both magistrates and police would be expeditious in finding a remedy.

The Rev. Fred. Bell, who was once a popular preacher in Nottingham but who had to leave that town in consequence of having to account for cash and babies, has turned up at Columbus, Ohio. It seems he is still in the service of the Lord, but meeting a Methodist preacher in the street who had criticised his proceedings there was a fight between the brethren, and it ended in Bell being conveyed to prison.

The appeals in the *Catholic Times* are curious reading. One Catholic sky-pilot tries to outdo another in return for the needful shekels. The Rev. H. Bladbee offers mass every Thursday for benefactors. The Rev. G. B. Faza-kerley keeps a long standing advertisement offering special mass every Wednesday for anyone who sends twelve pennies "Enrol living or dead (1s.)." Others appeal for the love of Mary, and the Rev. J. Clement promises that those who send him an offering can have their petitions deposited in the Miraculous Sanctuary of the Holy House of Loretto, Italy, with the notification that "For petitions obtained a further offering will be expected." Others say, "Draw down God's blessing by sending something to" so and so. The touting advertisements of the sporting papers

are less barefaced frauds, and the sporting prophets are quite as firm believers in their own ability and honesty.

Anent the Archbishops' ruling in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rev. J. Allen points out that the decrees and judgments of the Early Church always began with the words "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." No doubt this is the true religious style to identify one's own party with the deity, and to carry out one's own views while ascribing them to the Holy Ghost.

Lord Eldon and other eminent lawyers have laid it down that every citizen of the country is *ipso facto* a member of the Church of England, and in that case all English Freethinkers are members of the Church, though they dissent from every one of its doctrines, and, of course, are as much entitled as anyone else to elect churchwardens and transact such business in connection with parishes as is open to laymen. In Professor Huxley's "Last Words on Agnosticism," in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, there is a personal allusion which not all readers will detect. He hints that he has the highest legal authority for the opinion that every Englishman who has not joined any distinctive sect is a member of the Church of England. The case arose on this wise. Mr. Huxley was appointed a Governor at Eton, but on referring to the new statutes he found that all Governors were required to be members of the Church of England, and he declined the honor on this ground. He was assured that the clause was inserted only as a common form, but his scruples were not removed till the opinion of two eminent counsel had been taken, and both had pronounced that Mr. Huxley, as he belonged to no denomination, was undoubtedly a member of the Church of England. Many Nonconformists, however, contend that they have all the privileges, such as they are, of Church of England membership, although they belong to other denominations. Jews, however, cannot be elected as churchwardens, though we believe Atheists may.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts reports an income of £138,366, and is altogether in a flourishing condition. The propagation of the gospel at home is admittedly in not so satisfactory a state. Can we safely draw the conclusion that the gospel is best fitted for niggers?

A correspondent of the *Concordia Blade* gives us some information about the religious proclivities of the denizens of Arkansas. He has been travelling in the state, and his observations led him to think that if he had to choose between a continuous residence in Arkansas and school he would prefer the latter place, unless it is worse than has been reported. "Religiously," he says, "the people of Arkansas are a success. Their Christian zeal is remarkable. I was informed of two cases while here, which show that in that direction they mean business. A new comer who had not learned the ways of the country, went into the harvest field and labored on the Lord's day; he was prosecuted and fined fifty dollars. The other case was that of a young lady who saw something funny in meeting and *laughed*; it was only a little snicker, but it cost her fifty dollars all the same. I don't know what a good hearty horse laugh would be worth; but probably a couple of thousand. If the church people hear a gun on the Lord's day they will tramp and hunt around, and fool away time enough to raise five hundred bushels of corn to bring the guilty party to justice. Religious meetings are held in the school-houses, which are built of logs, and built by the Christian people for their use, and are called 'Christian houses,' but are used for school purposes also. I have thought that this country is the Canaan of the Bible that God helped his people to drive out and kill the inhabitants, and located his people here; and they are here yet." Arkansas and Alabama are pushing each other hard for the place at the rear end of the procession of civilisation. —*Truthseeker* (New York).

Rev. Dr. Short, of Dundee, has been "improving the occasion" of the Pennsylvania flood. He couldn't say whether a being of infinite power could have prevented it. God upheld law at the sacrifice of any number of lives. Yet the reverend gentleman concluded by hoping that his hearers "would always be able to look to God to help them in times of trouble and danger."

The *Star*, reporting a lecture by Canon Bonny on "The Dark Side of Nature," in which he contended that pain and suffering were essentials in a scheme directed to the attainments of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, remarks that "the appearance of the congregation inevitably suggested the thought that the majority of them had been left outside the scheme."

We do not look to *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday* for anything serious, but it is a widely read journal, and when it goes out of its way to circulate a calumny it is perhaps as well to notice it. In its chronicle of curious events it fills up the date 8th June 1809, with the following:—"To Napoleon has been attributed the saying 'One step from the sublime to the ridiculous.' It is, however, to be found before Napoleon's time in the works of the notorious Tom Paine, who ended his debauched life this day in America. Paine says:—"The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime make the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again." The quotation is correct, and it is also true that many a notable saying is to be found in the works of Paine, but it is not true that he led a "debauched life." The allegation is indeed incompatible with the work which he did and which remains to speak for itself. It is true that Paine was "a good fellow," and drank with his friends but not more so than his contemporaries. No one speaks of Pitt or Burke living a debauched life, because they indulged in the custom of their age.

It may not be generally known, says Ivan Prevoski, a well-known Russian, that the Russian Church here is only a detective agency, but such is the case. While the clergymen pretend to be devoting their time to the saving of souls and doing good work, they are acting as spies for the home government. The Russian Church, as established throughout the world, is a branch of the detective department, and through it many intrigues and plots against the Czar are discovered. The members are obliged to go to the confessional every three months. If they fail to do so they are looked upon as outcasts. If the offender is a nobleman, he is barred from holding office under the government; for refusing to confess is looked upon as a tacit admission that he has been guilty of some overt act that may endanger his liberty, if not his life. The man who fails to avail himself of the rights of the Church is abhorred as one who is plotting against the empire of his fellow-men.

Bill Nye says that Joe Cook, the Boston sky-pilot, would do, if he could just oversee the universe daytimes and let someone else do it at night, but he can't trust the job to anyone else, and so has sleepless nights. He dreads to die, not so much on his own account, but because he wants to be spared to those who are so poorly prepared to get on without him.

#### BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM.

TWELVE hundred years of Christian wickedness have made it for ever impossible that human nature shall be united under the name Christian. It has now strictly a dividing, not a uniting force. On every side Christianity has been known to the heathen as a cruel oppressor, or as an ambitious usurper. Not to say, what was Charlemagne to the Pagan Saxons, we may point, what was Spain to the Moors, and to Mexico, to the West Indies, to Peru; what has Holland been in the far East and at the Cape; what Portugal in Africa and Brazil? What have England and France been to India and China; what have the United States been to Negroes and to Indians; and what the morality of our people in contact with the heathen?—*Prof. F. W. Newman*.

PROTESTANT PERSECUTION.—"The Protestantism which followed was as intolerant as the mother Church; more so, perhaps, for it had the intolerance of youth, and as it broke and scattered into countless creeds, each of the brood, save the Quakers, arrogated to itself the right to persecute and destroy. To Luther, persecution seemed not only lawful but necessary. Calvin, who was as intolerant as the Inquisition and every whit as fanatical, made it a prop of his church. And Knox, to whom one mass was more frightful than ten thousand insurgents, declared that an idolater merited nothing less than death."—EDGAR SALTUS, *Anatomy of Negation*, p. 105.

**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

Sunday, June 16, Beresford Square, Arsenal Gates, Woolwich, 3 p.m., "Bible Blunders" (open air).

June 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

July 28, Camberwell.

Aug. 4 and 11, Camberwell.

Sept. 18 and 25, Hall of Science, London.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

It being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

F. M. MYERS.—Jokes are always acceptable.

J. MORTIMER.—Thanks for the pamphlets and your good wishes.

H. J. ROWDEN.—We don't wonder the Gospel Temperance man couldn't answer Mr. Wheeler's tract on "Teetotalism and the Bible." We challenge any Christian to make a decent reply.

H. POUND.—We regard Matthew xxiii., 35, as an evident anachronism, since Jesus is made to speak of the slaughter in the temple of Zacharias, son of Barachias, which event took place, according to Josephus, fully thirty years after the alleged crucifixion of Jesus.

R. BROWN.—The date of Irenæus, the first Father who refers to the four gospels, is usually assigned at between 176 and 192. His very existence, however, has been contested in a tract published by T. Scott in 1876.

J. W. PHILLIPS.—(1) That "Twenty Secularist Leaders" tract is a miserable fraud. It has been exposed again and again, but the Christians prefer to treat the exposure with silence, trusting that their dupes will never hear of it. (2) The Christian era was never thought of till eight centuries after Christ, and did not prevail in Europe for another three hundred years. In Spain, up to the fourteenth century, it was common to date from the Era of Cæsar. The year, dating from January 1, was fixed by Julius Cæsar before the time of Christ.

J. OLIVER.—What is the remittance for? We cannot quite make out from your letter.

H. J.—Newspaper cuttings always welcome.

J. V. BROWN.—Thanks for your deeply interesting letter. We are always glad to hear from converts, especially when our own writings count for something in the process.

C. B. SNESDELL.—We are obliged to you for pointing it out. It was a printer's blunder. Hosea ix, 7, is correct.

J. E. D.—The circular is not a good subject for a paragraph. We don't at all mind the sons of the clergy being educated; indeed, a fund might be started to educate the clergy themselves—first, in modesty and common sense, and second, in recognition of the infamy of producing children for other people to maintain.

DUNDEE.—Thanks for the cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Secular Thought—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—La Raison—Liberator—Edinburgh Evening News—Dispatch—Catholic Times—Radical—Freethought—Truthseeker—Brighton Guardian—Bristol Mercury—City of London Association News—Women's Suffrage Journal—Le Danton.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

WE made a mistake last week. Mr. Foote's lecture at Woolwich to-day (June 16) will be delivered at Beresford Square outside the Arsenal Gates. Time 3 p.m. Subject "Bible Blunders." Mr. Forder takes the chair.

THE London Secular Federation decided, at its last monthly council meeting, to organise an excursion for the Branches and all Freethinkers of the metropolis. Sunday, July 21, is the date fixed upon, and if every Atheist prays hard for wet we shall probably have fine weather. A special train will be run from London Bridge to Brighton

and back. The cost of the tickets will be only 3s. Two hundred have to be guaranteed, but a much larger number is expected.

ARRANGEMENTS will be made for a collective tea at Brighton, and an hour will be devoted to a Freethought demonstration on the Levels. Mr. Foote hopes to join the excursion, and take part in what Booth would call "bombarding Brighton."

JULY 21 was fixed upon to meet the N.W. London Branch, whose annual excursion was to have taken place on that date. We regret to hear that this Branch is nevertheless inclined to "gang its ain gait." We trust that better counsels will prevail. It will be a thousand pities if the London Branches cannot unite for such a simple object.

MR. R. O. SMITH, honorary treasurer of the London Secular Federation, 142 Old Street, E.C., acknowledges the following fresh subscriptions:—G. J. Knowles, 2s. 6d.; Camberwell Branch (collection at Mr. Foote's open-air lecture), £1; J. Robertson, £1 1s.; N. Middlesex Branch, (collection) 7s.

WE rejoice to see a tangible proof of the progress Freethought is making in Sweden, in the establishment of the *Fritänkaren* (the *Freethinker*), as an organ for Swedish Freethinkers, under the conduct of the Swedish martyrs, Viktor E. Lennstrand and Alfred Lindkvist. Our Swedish namesake will be a monthly. The first number, lying before us, is highly creditable. The Freethought is of a pronounced character, and the contents are lively, including a translation of Mr. Wallace Nelson's humorous *Death of Adam*, originally contributed to the *Freethinker* half a dozen years ago. Mr. Lennstrand gives a brief account of his prosecutions, and Mr. Lindkvist, who announces *Letters from Prison*, contributes some poetry. We earnestly hope that Swedish friends will make a determined effort to sustain their organ, even should Mr. Lennstrand be again treated to the tender mercies of a Christian gaol.

WE notice that the *Fritänkaren* advertises the tract by Mr. Symes, "Who is to be damned, if Christianity is true?" for what Mr. Lindkvist was imprisoned. This shows that there is no disposition to lower the Freethought flag in Sweden. They know that courage is the best policy, and we trust that they will convince the bigoted Christians that persecution is a blunder as well as a crime.

UNDER the heading "Pious Brutality," Mr. Joseph Symes refers in the Melbourne *Liberator* to the prosecutions in Sweden. Mr. Symes says "I am sorry other men have to suffer for what I have written. I wish I could defend and save those good men whom the pious hypocrites of Sweden are trying to kill."

ON Sunday afternoon a meeting, mainly of Italians, was held at the International Club, Gerrard Street, Soho, London, in connection with the celebration in Rome in honor of Giordano Bruno. The chair was taken by Signor M. Guestalla, an old surgeon of Garibaldi's army, and an eloquent panegyric on the Freethought martyr was delivered by Signor Ugo Bassi, nephew of one of the martyrs for Italian liberty. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed.

OUR readers are acquainted with the appearance of the statue to Giordano Bruno. That statue surmounts a very handsome monumental pedestal, around which are placed festooned medallions of other heroes and martyrs, Aon Paleario, M. Serveto, T. Campanella, P. Ramus, P. Sarpi, Huss, Wicliffe, and J. C. Vanini. On three sides occupying the same space as the inscription to Bruno are bas-reliefs representing Bruno at the University of Oxford, before the Inquisition and at the stake. The whole monument reflects the utmost credit upon Signor Ferrari the designer and sculptor.

PROF. GIOVANNI BOVIO, who delivered the principal address at Rome, is an ardent Freethinker, just over fifty years of age. Brought up as a barrister, his voice has always been heard on the side of political liberty, and being a Republican he has refused to accept any service under Government. He is at present Professor of Law in the University of Naples, and he presented a copy of his

important work on *The Philosophy of Law* to the last congress of International Freethinkers assembled in London.

A hitherto unpublished letter from Garibaldi was read at the Bruno banquet at Rome. It was dated Caprera, 20 June, 1875, when the project of a monument to Bruno was first mooted, and enclosed a subscription with warm words of approval for the object.

GARIBALDI was a rare hater of priests. He knew them. His *Memoirs*, just translated into English, contain several fierce references to the black tribe. "As for this black brood," he says, "this pestilent scum of humanity, this caryatid of thrones, still reeking with the stench of human burnt offerings, where tyranny still reigns it takes its place among the slaves, and is reckoned among their famished herd." Again, he exclaims, "The priest—ah, he is the veritable scourger of God!"

MISS MATHILDE BLIND, daughter of the German Freethinker and Republican, Karl Blind, and herself the translator of Strauss's *New and Old Faith*, has put forward a volume of poems entitled *The Ascent of Man*, in which she shows that the doctrines of evolution are capable of high poetic treatment.

*The Doll's House*, one of the dramas of the Norwegian Freethinker, Henrik Ibsen, translated by Mr. William Archer, has been produced at the Novelty Theatre, and this novelty of the Scandinavian drama in London is pronounced at least a *succes d'estime*. We intend shortly to give our readers a portrait and biography of Ibsen.

THE *Radical* for June gives a portrait of Mile. Maria Deraismes, the French female Freemason and Freethinker, and continued its sketch of Freethought in England, and Lecture Notes for Young Freethinkers.

A PAMPHLET entitled "What has Christianity done for us?" by "Eikonoklastes" has been published at Bombay. It was evoked by a criticism of the *Bombay Guardian* upon Mr. Bradlaugh.

SOME of our Parisian friends have been celebrating the inauguration of *Le Danton* by an outing in the country.

"We have just received and carefully read Part I. of *A Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations*, by J. M. Wheeler, of London, England. It is thoroughly impossible to adequately describe the value and excellence of this remarkable work. It is a library in itself and should be in the hands of every one who is desirous of knowing how extensively scepticism has prevailed among the leading minds who have adorned the literature of all ages and nations. The able and accomplished author, in his preface, says, 'The work I have undertaken will, I trust, do something to show how many of the world's worthiest men and women have been Freethinkers.' Such a dictionary as Mr. Wheeler is producing was very much needed to refute the orthodox allegations that the most eminent writers have always been "believers." This timely work will amply negative such an absurd statement. Like all the productions from the pen of this gentleman, the Dictionary is marked with strict accuracy and precision. Part I. comprises 32 pages and the names, dates of birth, nationality, literary acquirements, etc., of one hundred and twenty of the heroes of Freethought. We should like to see this book widely circulated on this continent."—*Secular Thought*, Toronto, June 1.

MR. FOOTE'S *Darwin on God* is to be ready for sale on Monday. It is an important little work, and should be in the hands of every Freethinker. Those who want to know, and have by them, what Darwin thought and said on religion, and how it is affected by evolution, will find in this *brochure* exactly what they require.

"Letters to the Clergy" will be resumed next week, when we shall publish Mr. Foote's letter to the Bishop of Peterborough on the Atonement.

AN excellent letter on "Sunday Observance," by Mr. T. A. Williams, appeared in last week's *Bristol Mercury*

#### NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

THE meeting of this year's Annual Conference of the National Secular Society, at London, seemed to give general satisfaction. Although the distance is great for our northern friends, London is virtually the centre where all lines converge, and most of our provincial friends are glad of an occasional visit to the metropolis. The Hall of Science was decorated with a fine array of flowers on the platform for the occasion. Representatives attended from Battersea, Birmingham, Bristol, Bolton, Ball's Pond, Belfast, Brighton, Bethnal Green, Blackburn, Bradford, Camberwell, Cardiff, Chester-le-Street, Central London, Derby, Deptford, Edinburgh, East London, Finsbury, Grimsby, Halifax, Hackmondwike, Hythe, Hyde Park, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, North London, North Middlesex, Nottingham, Newcastle, Oldham, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Sheffield, Stalybridge, South Shields, Southampton, Westminster, West Ham, and Wellingboro. Individual Freethinkers were also present, some having come long distances.

Before the proceedings began Mr. Bradlaugh alluded to the invitation from the Bruno Celebration Committee at Rome, and moved that the following telegram be sent to Prof. Bovio, "English Freethinkers in Congress send greeting." The motion was carried with acclamation, and the telegram dispatched.

The minutes of the preceding conference having been taken as read, Mr. Bradlaugh read the report.

The Executive's Report dealt with many matters of interest. Mrs. Besant's election on the London School Board was mentioned amid cheers, and still louder cheers were evoked by the reference to her successful efforts to free Mr. Moss from his oppressors. Mr. Foote's organising tours had a paragraph, and cheers and laughter greeted the remark that it was to be hoped the funds of the Christian Evidence Society would allow of its sending an agent to follow him in future. Then came a good account of the work of the London Secular Federation, the sentence as to its big dinner in April being heartily cheered. Cheers also greeted the mention of our new lecturer Mr. Clark. The success of the Oaths Bill was lustily applauded. This was followed by a somewhat sombre paragraph on the Blasphemy Bill, which did not visibly depress the editor and sub-editor of the *Freethinker*, who were sitting together, and the reference to the illustrations sent a ripple of laughter over the meeting. Mr. Verinder and the Guild of St. Matthew were handsomely thanked for sending in so many petitions for the Bill. Then came a sound paragraph on the Bruno celebration, rousing the meeting into enthusiasm. The Swedish martyrs were loudly cheered, and everybody was touched by their brave and beautiful letter of thanks to the English Freethinkers who had so gallantly aided them in their struggle. Joseph Symes's name was the signal for a fresh outburst of applause, showing that, though far away, he is far from being forgotten.

Mr. W. H. REYNOLDS then read the Treasurer's report, which showed a balance of over £50.

Mr. Bradlaugh, upon the motion of Mr. Moon of Southampton, seconded by Mr. Porter of Nottingham and supported by Mr. Brumage of Portsmouth, was unanimously re-elected President.

MR. BRADLAUGH said he was almost resolved not to stand for re-election, partly because not quite sure that he had the full confidence of the Freethought party. In no movement can any one man please everybody, and he was sure he had never tried. He knew he was a wilful man, but he also knew that during the last thirty years no Freethinker came to him in trouble and was turned away. He first doubted his position last autumn, when many spoke as though he could have done better in regard to the Oaths Bill. He had once made up his mind to retain the presidency until he had repealed the Blasphemy Laws. He was bound to say the prospect was not a near one. The party had not seemed to care much about it. The number of signatures to the petitions were insufficient. He did not think them a creditable show, and that made him think the disposition to work with him had slackened. It would rest with them to show whether he was wanted or not. He had only been a fighting president and could not fight by himself. While he held the greatest gratitude to the party, he was bound to say he was dissatisfied with the recent sluggishness. Thirty years ago, when their views were very unpopular, there was an activity that made one proud to belong to the party. He thanked them for their re-election, but would ask them to try and choose another general when another year has come. His



work was very hard. He would be sorry to leave it undone, but it was no good trying it and not doing it. There was some who thought he made too much of his authority. He had none without them, and unless their love was given he would rather have none.

The following were then re-elected as Vice-Presidents: G. Anderson, Annie Besant, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, Prof. L. Büchner, W. W. Collins, G. W. Foote, John Lees, P. A. V. Le Lubez, W. Pratt, W. H. Reynolds, Dr. E. Schlaeger, Thos. Slater, R. O. Smith, G. Standing, J. Swaagman, J. Symes, E. Truelove.

Mr. ANGUS THOMAS moved the addition of the name of Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, and this was supported by numerous delegates, who spoke in high terms of his long services to the cause, but Mr. Bradlaugh ruled that this was out of order, as the notice of motion, though declared to have been sent in, had not been received by the Secretary and put on the agenda paper.

Mr. FOOTE moved that the rule be suspended, and this being carried unanimously, Mr. Baker was equally unanimously elected Vice-President, and responded in a brief but happy speech.

Mr. Reynolds was also re-elected Treasurer, being personally thanked by Mr. Bradlaugh for his valuable business services. Mr. Forder was re-elected Secretary, and Messrs. Herbert and Early as Auditors.

An interesting ceremony then took place, Mr. Bradlaugh presenting an illuminated address from the N. S. S. to a young man, Mr. John Bridgeford Coppock, of Nottingham, congratulating him upon winning a National Scholarship.

Mr. COPPOCK, in a few graceful words in reply, remarked that he had been first attracted to science by his Freethought, and that he intended to devote himself to it in future, and to apply his knowledge in warring against the common foe of superstition.

It was then moved by Mr. CUEREL, of Plymouth, and seconded by Mr. MORGAN, of Cardiff, that the Society send a delegate to the Conference of the International Federation of Freethinkers at Paris in September. The question as to whether two or three should be sent was brought to a division, with the result "Two has it." The names of Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mr. G. W. Foote, and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner being proposed and seconded, Mr. Bradlaugh put them separately in the order named, and declared the first two carried without putting the name of Mrs. Bonner, to the evident dissatisfaction of many who had intended to vote for that lady. Mr. Foote, who had mentioned that he might be unable to attend, and who wished to withdraw, then proposed that, in the event of either of the two elected delegates being unable to go, Mrs. Bonner should go instead. This was carried unanimously.

Mr. BROWN, on behalf of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch, proposed—"That at all future Conferences none but duly elected representatives of Branches be allowed to speak or vote." He contended that this was the proper course as pursued in conferences of trades unions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Peacock, of South Shields, and supported by Mr. Soddy, Oldham, and Mr. Smith, Westminster.

Mr. FOOTE opposed. He was not yet disfranchised and would speak while there was time. He contended that no serious grievance had been adduced to warrant so complete an alteration in the constitution. The rights of individual members, many of whom resided at long distances from societies, should be respected. Why should delegates complain of being outvoted by their friends? They could always demand to vote by proxy, and count for as many as they really represented. If London outvoted the country delegates on this occasion, the country delegates could outvote the London members on some other.

The Conference having adjourned to luncheon, Mr. Bradlaugh, upon resuming at 2.30, pointed out that more than one-third of the members of the N. S. S. were not connected with local branches. There was consequently no comparison with trades unions. The grievance had been so little felt that there had only been a resort to proxy voting twice in twelve years.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON pointed out that some points might arise at any Conference upon which delegates were not fully instructed, and in that case delegates might vote for measures opposed to the wishes of the majority, who, even though present, could not speak or vote. Why should they discourage members from coming, for to say they must be silent would discourage them. The constitution at present adopted

the fair principle of the representation of minorities, a principle which was a growing one.

Mr. T. SLATER said he felt warmly upon the subject. He had travelled many miles and attended many Conferences at his own expense in order, if possible, to contribute to the progress of the movement, and he objected to the disfranchisement of any member. Delegates must not think all wisdom was concentrated in them. Some wise suggestion or useful hint might come from an outsider.

Messrs. Holmes, Thurlow, Ridges, and others spoke against the motion, and Mr. Soddy withdrew his support to it. Mr. A. Thomas said he had come with a free hand, and should also vote against. It having been moved that the question be now put, the motion was declared to be lost.

Mr. SMITH (Westminster) then demanded the vote by proxy, and was appointed scrutineer together with Mr. Brown, who, however, declined to act. Mr. Bradlaugh asked for the vote of members who were not delegates. Of these 1 was for the motion and 49 against. The roll of delegates was then called, with the constant reply "Against," with one for, and another refusing to vote. The numbers were 59 for the motion and 1,034 against. The vote of Westminster was disallowed on account of the delegates being divided in opinion. The motion "That the proxy vote be abolished" was put forward by the Newcastle Branch, but Mr. Brown failed to find a seconder; while a motion by the Camberwell Branch, which appeared to be in opposition to the expressed will of the Conference, that individual members should speak and vote, was gracefully withdrawn by Mr. Thomas. In view of the substantial declaration of opinion on this point, we presume this question will now be allowed to drop.

The next business was the Report of the Committee on Organisation, which was read *in extenso* by Mr. Foote, and obviously came as a surprise to many delegates as well as individual members. It was a long and carefully-prepared document, covering a great deal of ground, and abounding in fresh proposals, some of which were of a drastic character. We have not space to print the document this week, but as it is highly important we shall find room for it in our next.

Mr. FOOTE pointed to three principal features which were vital in the recommendations of the Committee: 1st, that the Central Executive should take the initiative more freely; 2nd, the suggestion that the Propagandist Fund Committee be merged in an Organisation Committee; and 3rd in regard to funds and the advisability of making collections.

Mr. BRADLAUGH remarked that it was a matter of gravity. The suggestions of the report would revolutionise their methods of action. With regard to the Executive taking the initiative, whether good or not, was it possible in such a society as theirs? Can the Executive enforce its initiative upon the society? While he agreed there had been slackness, he thought it arose from the fact that there was no longer as much persecution. Persons do not recognise the necessity of striking unless they are first struck against. Take the case of petitioning on the blasphemy laws. The Executive sent out numerous petitions which they did not get back signed. The initiative of the Executive did not appear of much use here. Initiative is often translated dictation. In any society the initiative is apt to come from some one man, and if they had clashing initiatives they were not much better off. With regard to making the Propagandist Fund an organising fund, he did not think even doubling its present amount would suffice, while making collections, if adopted as a system, might bring on them the law against beggars. The movement had changed in character from the days when they stood alone. They now had competition in every branch. If we had money it would be well to try and enlist the services of lecturers going round and working up the societies, but where are you going to get your lecturers and where are you going to get your money? Many had tried and dropped out, finding a better living elsewhere. Every word he had said had been said for the movement. He thought the report should be received and entered on the archives of the Society, with directions to the Executive to see how far it is possible to adopt, but not to be wholly endorsed as an instruction to the Executive.

Mr. A. B. MOSS said he took it the report was in the nature of a series of recommendations, which the Executive would consider and adopt if found wise and practicable. He thought they were wise and valuable. His experience led him to think that there were many places where much work might be done by the Executive sending a lecturer to stimulate and help the few who were ready and willing to work. Asked by Mr. Bradlaugh for an example he referred to Brighton, where

there were many scattered Freethinkers and a large field for a society, but only a few who banded themselves together, and those without a leader. There were many other places similarly situated, and he felt that the report of the Committee was worthy their best attention.

Mr. SNELL, Nottingham, thought it would be a pity if such a report should be in any way shelved. He thought that a special fund might be got up for the purpose of sending a man round the country to do the needed work. When Freethinkers understood the specific object for which the money was wanted he believed they would subscribe most liberally. The Nottingham friends felt that a man was wanted to go round as Mr. Bradlaugh used to do, and do the work which he did.

Mr. FORDER contended that the fault did not lie with the Executive, and gave instances of the difficulties encountered when either halls could not be procured or societies could not pay even the travelling expenses of a lecturer. He was always ready and willing to go anywhere where he was wanted, and even preferred to lecture in the open air. Mr. Bradlaugh here declared that for Mr. Forder to so lecture was suicidal on his part and wicked on the part of those who asked him.

Mrs. BESANT thought that to adopt the whole report would not be wise, but that it should be sent to the Executive to carry out such parts as may be practicable. She thought it would be wise to form an Organisation Committee to take propositions on their own merits. With regard to collections where you have paid lectures it might be somewhat awkward to have collections also. But there might be a box not forced on attention but simply attached to the hall. At open-air meetings she thought collections should always be made. We may bring ourselves within the reach of the law, but if attempts at suppression were made, the leaders should go and carry the hats around themselves.

Mr. FOOTE then moved the following resolution as a compromise:—"That the Conference provisionally adopt the Report, and authorise the Executive, in connection with the Branches, to carry out as much as possible of it during the ensuing year; and that the Organisation Committee make a further Report to the next Conference."

Mr. SEAGO (Camberwell), as one of the Committee, approved of this, and referred to the matter of the issue of new tracts.

Mr. THOMAS thought that the recommendation in regard to tracts should be taken in hand at once. They found at Camberwell that they could have both paid lecturers and also at the same meeting take a collection for their out-door work. To take collections was not begging, appeals for a definite object being entirely different from appeals for one's own self. He thought the recommendation to work up the societies most necessary. While he had not a word to say against Mr. Forder, he thought that if he could not do all that was needed, he should have an assistant secretary. Because efforts in the past had been a failure was no reason they should always be so.

Mr. W. WHEELER (Westminster) approved of an Organising Committee. The societies needed greater encouragement. He believed in the policy of regular collections.

Mr. THURLOW pointed out that there were occasions and places where collections were not advisable. He himself had often felt glad if he was able to get away with a skinful of sound bones.

Mr. BAKER, of Birmingham, considered that so much labor and so many valuable suggestions should not be shelved. He approved of merging the Propagandist Committee in an Organisation Committee, and would be glad to give a five pound note, on condition that a gentleman was sent to his native town once a year. Two other gentlemen offered each a like amount, the announcement of which was received with applause.

Mr. CUEREL called attention to the extent to which Secularists had left their societies to take part in the club movement, which was everywhere providing Sunday lectures and doing good secular work. Of his own knowledge 50 per cent. of the officials of working men's clubs were Freethinkers.

Mr. SODDY supported collections as a legitimate means of obtaining money from sympathisers, and thought they should be systematic. The Christian Evidence Society took collections. He thought it was the outdoor lectures which did most good.

On the question being put, Mr. Foote's resolution was carried unanimously.

Miss HAWKSLEY, of Nottingham, who by the charm of her delivery and manner won the admiration of the whole

Conference, moved the resolution of her Branch, that the Executive should map out districts and appoint a local secretary to keep the Executive conversant with the workings of Branches, and administer to their wants as far as circumstances permit. She said they felt at Nottingham that the Executive did not help them as they would like to be helped. The President had spoken of the Society as the mother society. Mothers don't send their children out to fight the world for themselves almost as soon as born. They guide them and train them for the battle of life. They felt that they should get on better if they had more help, and that they should return the help to the parent society in larger contributions to the Propagandist Fund and subscriptions. The appointment of a local secretary would help to bring societies more in touch with each other. In Nottingham they were fought against very severely; and members, some of whom were in danger of losing their situations through their opinions, wanted to feel that they were vitally related to a national organisation always ready to support them.

Mr. ATKEY seconded the motion, and said that the idea of mapping out districts with a local secretary had been carried into practice by cycling clubs.

Mr. BRADLAUGH, while complimenting the movers of the resolution, appealed to them to simply leave it to the Executive; and this being assented to, the motion was allowed to drop.

A motion by the Derby Branch in regard to the formation of a Building Society fell through for want of a representative.

Upon the question of any other business, Mr. Seago gave in a motion as to the method of carrying on the voting at the Conference. This Mr. Bradlaugh ruled as unintelligible, and upon Mr. Seago sending up an amended resolution it was again peremptorily ruled as out of order and the business declared at an end.

In the evening a crowded public meeting was held, Mr. Bradlaugh presiding.

Mr. Moss said he had found that Christianity was still alive, but though not dead it was dying. Christians are changing their creed, and the clericals practically said, like the American politician, "Them's my principles, and if you don't like them they can be altered." Mr. Bradlaugh had shown that Freethinkers did not display as much enthusiasm as they might. In the hour of persecution enthusiasm was evoked. We should not abate enthusiasm, but plod on. He who has enthusiasm may make mistakes, but he who has none makes a life-long mistake. All cannot be heroes like Giordano Bruno, but each can play his part in earnest, and do his best. He hoped they would each work with this spirit, and at the next meeting record the good work they had achieved.

Mr. FOOTE remarked that he trusted the Conference would pave the way for a new era of action, wise effort, and what must follow it, success. The number of Freethinkers in this country is far larger than our opponents are apt to imagine, and it only requires a real organisation to bring within the fold the tens of thousands who remain outside, although their sympathies were strong enough to make them possible recruits to the army of progress. It is easy to do nothing. The only way to success in anything was to try. We cannot all play the same part, but the man who plays the smallest part well is as truly a hero as the men before the foot-lights. George Eliot had well said that the growing good of the world depends on non-historic acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me is owing to the many who lived unknown lives and rest in unvisited tombs. The grand beacon lights like Bruno were at once a warning and an invitation; a warning for the evil creed that persecuted him is not dead, and an invitation because it has life enough to retard the progress it cannot hinder. Mr. Foote then gave an eloquent and moving picture of the position of Bruno at the stake, and of the poor old Pope's distress at finding the whirligig of time had brought its revenges. He then alluded to the Bill for the Blasphemy Laws. It was true it was rejected. You had to knock very long upon thick heads before they opened. We had the consolation that while the laws remained there was something to push us into activity. In Sweden two brave young Freethinkers had fought the same battle for freedom. One was still in danger of renewed imprisonment, but he was not frightened, being made of the right stuff. The society had done something to help them, and though the money was but little, its moral influence was great by letting it be seen that Freethinkers would help one another wherever attacked. They had decided to send two delegates to Paris, now the centre of the civilised world. The French have been the martyrs of

democracy. They have had to pay the penalty of being seized by a noble idea. We should not forget that the fore-runners of the Revolution, Voltaire and Diderot, and its Titans, Mirabeau and Danton, were Freethinkers. They had seen that political serfs must first be spiritual slaves. Free-thought is the true Radicalism. He who emancipates the mind is the true reformer. We are fighting the historic battle of progress, and if we keep to the front our achievements will be the fresh starting-point of new progress, and their victory would be all the easier for our courage and our loyalty. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. PEACOCK, speaking as one of the North of England, said that Freethought is certainly progressing. He thought the prospect more cheering every year. He urged the duty and necessity of Freethinkers taking a prominent part in all local contests and organisations.

Mrs. BESANT said, however dark the environment, there had always been some few Freethinkers who appealed to reason. The fundamental evil of present religion was the tendency to imagine that we can throw away the reign of law, that some savior can wipe away our sins and remove the stern teaching of cause and effect. The moment you think you can escape the result of your actions and rely on some god or savior, you take away the strongest stimulus to right conduct. Almost every evil in the world is preventible. Knowledge and love were the two factors needed to grapple with evil. Whether great or small, each one had some share in building the temple. We only are great when we join ourselves to the greatness of the cause. (Great applause.)

Mr. J. ROBERTSON said he supposed some of them had been thinking over what had been said in the morning on the greater ardor of the fight some thirty years ago. He thought there was bigger fighting done because there was bigger fighting to be done. They were pressed with enemies on every side. They were stung to resist, and fought with strength, go and zest. He did not look for such fighting nowadays. He believed they would look back on the past and say "there were giants in those days." They had giants' work to do. We have to fight with more discretion and in cooler blood. We want this movement to depend less and less on individual strength, and to depend more and more on organisation. He attended the debate in Parliament on the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, and he saw clearly enough that, though the House had not the courage to take these laws away, it also had not the courage to enforce them. What we want their removal for is to enable the movement to endow itself. The forces of religion were not strong by themselves. Their principles could never sustain an intellectual attack, but its force lay in its endowment, the many who live by it and are paid to uphold it. We must fight them with scientific weapons. Remembering our debt to those who in the past had borne our burdens, we must make the contest a scientific one. Courage was the best policy. Heresy already paid, and if it pays in nothing else, it pays in self-respect. The man who fought bravely knew how he had acted, and that was sufficient reward. (Cheers.)

Mr. STANDING, who spoke but briefly, alluded to the necessity and importance of out-door work. Jocular as ever, he made way for the President amid laughter and applause.

Mr. BRADLAUGH said he believed Christianity was dying if measured by thousands of years, but not if measured by weeks and months. He was not sure that the great fight between the Papacy and the forces of freedom had not yet to come. The orthodox Church is nearer the Papacy than it was, and Disestablishment, when it came, would make the Papacy stronger. The rights we had to-day had been won by the exertions of others. I, to whom you give the duty of being your standard-bearer another year, I hold it a little higher than ever held before. I can only do this because Carlile, with nine years of gaol, broke the ground. We were only breakers for others to build. Men like Huxley and Darwin will build where we broke. We have, in our roughness, made a standing place for them, whence they challenge, not one religion only, but the whole of the religions of the world.

Mr. Bradlaugh, immediately on concluding his speech, left the hall amid loud cheering, and the meeting broke up after Mr. Foote had announced the banquet on the following day.

J. M. W.

#### CONFERENCE FESTIVITIES.

At one o'clock a goodly company sat down to an excellent repast at the Manchester Hotel, Mr. Bradlaugh being supported by his daughter Mrs. Bonner, Mrs. Besant, Mr.

Robertson, Mr. Foote, Mr. Cooper of Norwich, and a considerable number of the delegates.

On Monday evening after the delegates had made such use of the day as the miserable weather permitted, they assembled to meet some London friends at the Bridge House Hotel, where a banquet was provided which the guests united in pronouncing "sumptuous." Mr. G. W. Foote presided. After justice had been done to the provisions and Mrs. J. M. Wheeler had given a selection on the pianoforte, the Chairman gave an address, in which he dwelt upon the necessity of organisation and of making the party united to fight the battle of progress. He hoped such banquets would be repeated when the London friends visited the provinces.

In the absence of singers who were expected, volunteers of whom we mention Mrs. Wheeler, and Messrs. Atkey, Davidson, Mercer, Le Lubez, and Cliffe Deane provided the company with entertainment. The toast of "Our Guests" proposed in a humorous speech by Mr. George Standing, was ably responded to by Mr. S. M. Peacock of the South Shields School Board, Mr. Daniel Baker of Birmingham, and Mr. J. Brumage of the Portsmouth School Board, each of whom hoped that the gathering might be the forerunner of others. Mr. Brumage gave for the encouragement of younger members an account of how he had won his seat on the Board, and how he had never through his life flinched from avowing his opinions.

The toast of the National Secular Society was proposed in a very felicitous speech by Mr. Atkey, and responded to by Mr. Forder, who went into some detail concerning his work in connection with the Society. The toast of "Our Lecturers," proposed by Mr. J. Robertson, was replied to by Mr. Moss; and an enjoyable evening was concluded with the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and drinking to the health of the Chairman.

#### FREETHOUGHT WINNING.

WE receive daily notes concerning the departure from the truth of preachers in England and Scotland; and though the subject is wearisome to our heart, we cannot forbear entreating the Lord's people to pray night and day for the afflicted Church of God. He alone can stay the ever-growing evil, but he would have his people to cry to him concerning it. The evil is by no means imaginary, but all too real. Our protest came not too soon, nor could it be too forcible. At this moment, those who have quitted the old faith may do what they please to silence papers and periodicals, but the evil reeks before high heaven. We trust it will not be long before the lovers of the Gospel will awake to the danger, and speak out so as to be heard.—Spurgeon, in *Sword and Trowel*.

#### PROFANE JOKES.

Sure way to turn people's heads—Go late into church.

A literal translation.—French-American (translating his Bible for an American friend)—The ghost is willing but the meat is weak.

It was a quiet Sunday afternoon and she was reading to him the Proverbs of Solomon. He was rapidly getting an attack of temporary oblivion. "Aren't they wonderful, George?" she said. "Yes, indeed," he replied; "if he had only mis-spelled his words, what a Josh Billings he would have made!"

Mamma was explaining to the children the creation of the first man, and told them that God made Adam out of the dust of the earth. All during the story four-year-old Maud was attending with deep concern, and when mamma had finished she said, with an air of profound conviction: "Now, that won't do, mamma, 'cause if God had made him out of mud, when he got dry he would all peel off."

WHY THERE CAN BE NO DEVIL.—After Noah had received all the animals into the ark, two and two of every kind, the devil presented himself at the door. Dialogue as follows:—Noah: "What do you want?" Devil: "I want to come in." Noah: "Where's your missus?" Devil: "Haven't got one." Noah: "Well, you know, it's against the rules, and you can't come in by yourself." So the devil had to stop out, and was drowned, and that is the reason why there can be no devil.

Banker's Wife: "My dear, you must give little Dick a spanking, and a hard one, too." Great banker: "I havn't time. I must—" Wife: "But it won't do to overlook this fault. He stole all the money you brought home from the Sunday-school collection, and then went out and pitched pennies with it." Banker: "Great Caesar! Lost every cent. of it, I suppose?" Wife: "No; he won a lot more than some other boy had taken from his father." Banker: "Oh! Tell him to put my money back where he got it, like an honest boy."

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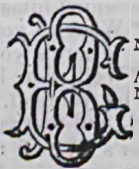
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