

ENLARGED TO TWELVE PAGES.

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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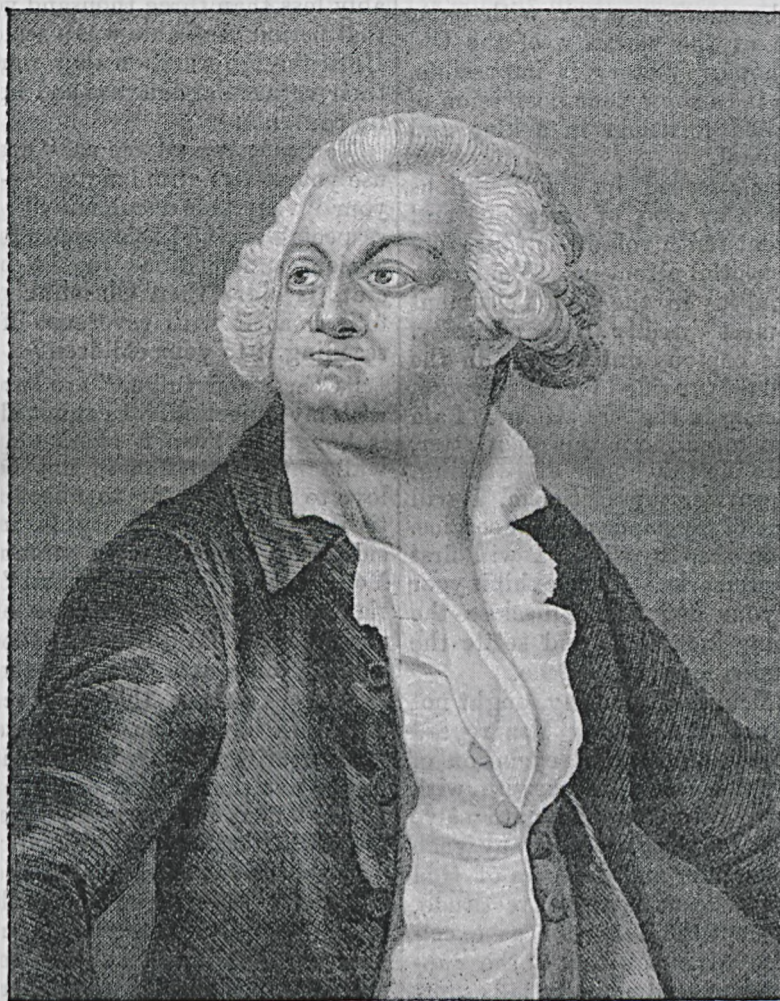
[PRICE ONE PENNY.

MIRABEAU was the incomparable figure of the Revolution, and he was an Atheist. Now that France has celebrated the centenary of the fall of the Bastille, and is preparing to celebrate the opening of the National Assembly, the moment is opportune for our portrait and sketch of this mighty man.

Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, son and heir of the Marquis de Mirabeau, was born on March 9, 1747. He came of a wild strong stock, and was a magnificent "enormous" fellow at his birth, the head being especially great. The turbulent life of the man has been graphically told by Carlyle in his *Essays* and in the *French Revolution*. Faults he had many, but not that of insincerity; with all his failings, he was a gigantic mass of veracious humanity. "Moralities not a few," says Carlyle, "must shriek condemnatory over this Mirabeau; the Morality by which he could be judged has not yet got uttered in the speech of men."

Space does not permit a sketch of Mirabeau's life before the opening of the Revolution. Then he stood forth as the people's champion. Already his popularity was great, and the power of his eloquence unbounded. Starving men listened to him and forgot their hunger. When the States-General met at Versailles, on May 4, 1789, Madame de Staël, looking out of a window, saw him in the procession from Notre-Dame. "You could not but look at this man," she wrote, "when once you had noticed him: his immense black head of hair distinguished him among them all; you would have said his force depended on it, like that of Samson; his face borrowed new expression from its very ugliness; his whole person gave you an idea of irregular power, but a power such as you would figure in a Tribune of the People." He was speedily the vital centre of the Assembly. Once he saved its very existence, in one of those decisive moments when heroes dare and do. It was Mirabeau who, when all else were pale and silent, sent the King's messenger, ordering them to separate, back to his master with the proud answer that nothing but bayonets could drive them out. Mirabeau

MIRABEAU.



fought hard for peaceful reforms. While he lived he succeeded. He held the Revolutionary forces in leash. They obeyed his strong hand. But his days were numbered, and after him came the deluge.

Mirabeau's life burned away during those fateful months, the incessant labor and excitement almost passing credulity. "If I had not lived with him," says Dumont, "I never should have known what a man can make of one day, what things may be placed within the interval of twelve hours. A day for this man was more than a week or a month is for others." One day his secretary said to him "Monsieur le Comte, what you require is impossible." Whereupon Mirabeau started from his chair, with the memorable ejaculation, "Impossible! Never name to me that blockhead of a word."—*Ne me dites jamais ce bête de mot.*

But the Titan of the Revolution was exhausted before his task was done. In January, 1791, he sat as President of the Assembly with his neck bandaged after the application of leeches. At parting he said to Dumont "I am dying, my friend; dying as by slow fire." On the 27th of March he stood in the tribune for the last time. Four days later he was on his death-bed. Crowds beset the street, anxious but silent, and stopping all traffic so that their hero might not be disturbed. A bulletin was issued every three hours. "On Saturday the second day of April," says Carlyle, "Mirabeau feels that the last of the Days has risen for him; that on this day he has to depart and be no more. His death is Titanic, as his life has been. Lit up, for the last time, in the glare of the coming dissolution, the mind of the man is all glowing and burning; utters itself in sayings, such as men long remember. He longs to live, yet acquiesces in death, argues not with the inexorable."

Gazing out on the Spring sun, Mirabeau said, *Si ce n'est pas là Dieu, c'est du moins son cousin germain*—If that is not God, it is at least his cousin germain. It was the great utterance of an eighteenth-century Pagan, looking across the mists of Christian superstition to the saner nature-worship of antiquity.

Mirabeau was an Atheist, and he was buried as became his philosophy and his greatness. The Assembly decreed a Public Funeral; there was a procession a league in length, and the very roofs, trees, and lamp-posts, were covered with people. The Church of Sainte-Genève was turned into a Pantheon for the Great Men of the Fatherland, *Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie Reconnaissante*. It was midnight ere the ceremonies ended, and the mightiest man in France was left in the darkness and silence to his long repose. Of him, more than most men, it might well have been said, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." *Dormir* "To sleep," he wrote in his dying agony, "Death had no terror for him; it was only the ringing down of the curtain at the end of the drama. From the womb of Nature he sprang, and like a tired child he fell asleep at last on her bosom." G. W. F.

#### LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—IV.

ON "OLD TESTAMENT MORALITY."

To the Rev. Eustace R. Conder, D.D.

SIR,—You have undertaken a bold task, but I fear your success will not be commensurate with your courage. The defence of the morality of the Old Testament is a forlorn hope. Victory is impossible. The utmost you can do is to show your possession of that virtue which is called fortitude in a king and obstinacy in another animal.

The *Present Day Tracts* issued by the Religious Tract Society are written by men of eminence and ability. When the recent tenth volume fell into my hands it excited my respectful attention. Your own tract on "Moral Difficulties in the Old Testament Scriptures" appealed most directly to my curiosity. I read it carefully, made copious annotations in the liberal margin which seemed provided for the purpose, and set it aside for criticism in the *Freethinker*. I am now able to carry out my intention in this open letter, which I trust you will do me the honor of perusing. Should you desire to answer my criticism, I will gladly place the columns of my paper at your service.

Wishing to track you step by step, I will first notice your introductory remarks. They exhibit your point of view, contain your definitions, disclose the principles that guide your judgment, and settle the ground on which discussion must take place.

"Mere intellectual difficulties," you say, ought not to surprise us and need not trouble us. You regard them as natural, nay, inevitable, in the revelation of infinite wisdom. But "the case is otherwise with moral difficulties," and we are "constrained to solve them." You define *moral difficulties* as "any such representations of the character and dealings of God as we are at a loss to reconcile with perfect rectitude, wisdom and love." I accept the definition as excellent. Yet I cannot agree with you that "the supposition that the character of God actually falls short of absolute excellence, or that his wisdom is fallible," is to "a sane and virtuous mind inconceivable." John Stuart Mill denied the possibility of demonstrating the existence of a God at once all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good, in face of the tremendous evils that afflict and desolate the world. The only God, in his opinion, consistent with the facts of experience, is one of limited power, and perhaps limited intelligence and benevolence. What you declare inconceivable he regarded as possible, or even probable; and neither you nor your colleagues will find it easy to induce the world to consider you more "sane and virtuous" than this illustrious philosopher.

There are two qualities you claim as indispensable to a proper consideration of the subject—*reverence* and *honesty*. You complain that "reverence is reckoned superfluous by some who pride themselves on their honesty." Sir, the complaint is unjust and illogical. Honesty is all you have a right to require or reason to expect. Reverence is not a preliminary; it should be a result. I decline to reverence your

book, your doctrines, or your deity, without examination. I must discuss them openly, fearlessly, and completely. This is the only honest plan. If at the end I find what *deserves* my reverence, I shall yield it without solicitation. But were I to *approach* your views with a feeling of reverence, the discussion would be decided before it commenced. I cannot swathe the sword of criticism at your bidding. Let it flash and cut; only falsehood will suffer; truth is invulnerable.

It is idle to tell me that the Bible is "the most venerable, wonderful, and indestructible monument of human thought." If by *venerable* you mean *ancient*, the statement is untrue; in any other sense you are begging the question. Nor am I to be imposed upon by your lavish chronology. The Bible has not been a power and a consolation "through thousands of years." Even its oldest fragments are not to be carried beyond the ninth century before Christ. The greater part of the Old Testament is later than the Captivity. You have thus a chronology of considerably less than three thousand years; and during half that period the Bible was a sealed book to the people. Until the Reformation they were unable to read it in their vernacular tongues and become acquainted with its contents.

You may regard me as "coarse and vulgar"—to use your own polite language—but I *cannot* reverence your "venerable documents." Age is not necessarily respectable. Old thieves are found in the dock, and ancient superstitions in the human mind. Witchcraft is older than Christianity; would you therefore treat it with reverence if you heard the nurse teaching it to your children?

"Coarse and vulgar" are hard words, but I persist with my objection. I cannot allow that "the sceptic is bound to keep a check on his hostile feeling" while "the Christian is not bound to suppress his love to the Bible, or to affect an impossible impartiality." If impartiality is impossible on the one side, why demand it so strenuously on the other? You speak of "professional" assailants of Christianity. Are you not one of its "professional" champions? You frown at those who are "bent on making out a case." Is not that the object of your Tract? You say that the sceptical objections to Scripture have been "discussed, and more or less satisfactorily disposed of, times without number." Might not the sceptic say the same of your "evidences"? You assert that the moral difficulties of the Bible "occupy but a small place in it," and that "anywhere out of the Bible they would give us no trouble." Is this true? Are there not bestial stories in the Bible, voluptuous descriptions, and obscene phrases, that would subject an ordinary volume to prosecution, and its publisher to heavy fine and severe imprisonment?

Another remark in your introduction remains to be noticed. You declare that "a real Christian" is "not less, but more sensitive than a sceptic to moral difficulties in the Bible." Then, sir, the real Christian has a miraculous power of concealing his perturbation. Honest sceptics—even such eminent men as Voltaire and Paine—have been insulted and persecuted. Their criticisms met with no other answer until such replies had ceased to be effective. According to my information, the moral, as well as the "merely intellectual" difficulties of the Bible, have been exposed by sceptics, and seldom, if ever, by Christians. The orthodox plan has been to commence with persecution of the critics of Scripture; then to pass on through successive stages of insult, denunciation, deprecation, and silence; finally, to resort to labored and disingenuous apologies, with the pretence that the world is really indebted to Christians for its knowledge of the "apparent" defects and deficiencies of Holy Writ.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

## THE HALLOWING OF HUMBUG.

PROF. SANDAY has been defending, in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, the English school of Theology, against the comparison with the Germans made by the authoress of *Robert Elsmere*. Mrs. Humphrey Ward holds that the Germans are more thorough because more free. Prof. Sanday makes as good a case as he can for the English theological learning of which he is a distinguished representative, but both he and Mrs. Ward seem to forget that the German professors are by no means entirely free. Under a pious emperor no chair is safe, and learning there, as in England, has to be largely wrapped up, so as not to conflict too manifestly with religious prejudices. The truth is, of course, that we cannot fully obtain the results of critical learning from any men who are pledged to the maintenance of orthodox theories, or whose material interests are bound up with them. Hence we have the spectacle of sound Biblical criticism in an expensive work like the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, written sometimes by the very men who in cheaper publications and in sermons appear to uphold the traditional views. Hence, moreover, we find that the most thorough criticism is still left to those outside the Church, or to anonymous writers like the authors of *Supernatural Religion*, *Antiqua Mater* and *Bible Folk Lore*.

Dr. Cheyne is one of those few theologians for whose learning we have a sincere respect. We are not of those who think with Leslie Stephen that the only alternative with a parson pledged to the Thirty-nine Articles is either "dull or dishonest." Dr. Cheyne is not dull, and we think he would fain be honest. But he is in an unfortunate position. He is pledged to theories with which his learning is incompatible. He knows that the Bible is no more verbally inspired than the sacred books ascribed to Zoroaster, but he wishes to break it gently to those who have been brought up to believe otherwise. Last October he read a paper to the Church Congress on the question "To what extent should Results of Historical and Scientific Criticism be recognised in Sermons and Teaching?" This paper and nine sermons on Elijah, given as practical example of the methods he advocates, are now printed and entitled *The Hallowing of Criticism*.\*

Dr. Cheyne well knows that durable results have been established by historical and scientific criticism, and that "the certainties are neither few nor unimportant." He said, for instance, in the paper referred to, "How far the idea of natural science had dawned upon the Babylonians may be left an open question, there is no evidence that it had dawned upon the Israelites in Old Testament times. A pious Hebrew takes a semi-mythical narrative current either in his own or in some neighboring nation, and moulds it into a vehicle of spiritual truth." So that it appears we are to look for spiritual truth to writers admittedly unscientific and barbarous.

But let us see how Dr. Cheyne deals with the history of Elijah. He contends that "we are enveloped in a golden atmosphere of mingled fact and poetry"—not fiction, mind you, but poetry. The miracles he treats as "poetical." That the widow's barrel of meal should not waste nor her cruse of oil fail till the rain came, merely meant that the drought would soon be over. The bringing of bread and flesh by the ravens is poetry. The still small voice heard in the cave is supposed to have been some natural sound like the rustling of a tree on the mountain side. The "angel" who ministered to the prophet at Horeb is suggested to have been a friend. "If winds and storms may be called 'angels' by a psalmist, I see

not why some fellow mortal whom God has enabled by some winged word of counsel or comfort to lead us into the right path, may not be gratefully accounted by us God's angel." Now we say that to illustrate the historical books by psalms admittedly poetical is not criticism. It is playing fast and loose with the Bible. Either the writer meant what he says, that an angel ministered to Elijah, or he uses terms in an unmeaning fashion. If the angel is poetical why is not God poetical also? If Elijah's ascension is poetry, may not the ascension of Jesus Christ likewise be simply poetry? Dr. Cheyne says, indeed, of the first, "A student of St. John may question it on the ground of our Lord's words, 'No man hath ascended in heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.'" Surely if the circumstantial narrative of the second Book of Kings can be put aside on the ground of such a jumbled quotation as this, the quotation itself may be taken as simply poetical, and the alleged fact of the ascension of Jesus be also dismissed as a poetical figment.

Dr. Cheyne's view of the ethical position of Elijah is equally unsatisfactory. He seeks to make out that he was a great teacher, and in some sort under the guidance of God, who heard and answered his prayers. At the same time he is careful to guard his readers from supposing that Elijah believed Jehovah to be the only living God in opposition to Baal and Ashera. He appears to justify his slaughter of the priests of Baal, saying, indeed, without the slightest warrant, "probably the priest-prophets of Baal were judicially slain."

The slaughter of the soldiers sent by Ahaziah Dr. Cheyne feels is not so easily condoned. He says:—

"That a spiritual hero like Elijah should end his active career thus is startling in the extreme. At an earlier point one might perhaps admit the relative justification, and therefore the possibility of such a deed; but that, from the God who had so patiently educated him to better things, he should crave as his last boon the destruction of his fellow-creatures, is contrary to psychological probability, and an insult to that higher reason which is the voice of God. . . . Let us, then, take this strange narrative, quite apart from the story of Horeb (itself the grandest of parables), as a symbolic representation of the spirit of the earlier dispensation"

The story tells how Elijah destroyed two troops sent out for him by the king with fire drawn down from heaven. Either this happened or it did not. To tell us that this strange narrative is the symbolic representation of the spirit of the earlier dispensation is to say that all the myriads who have believed that God really thus interfered on behalf of the prophet, were deluded. It is neither more nor less than the shifty statement of a theologian who seeks to explain away statements which he cannot believe in their literal and evident sense. The method employed by Dr. Cheyne is, indeed, not so much the hallowing of criticism as the glorification of humbug.

J. M. WHEELER.

I have endeavored to establish four leading propositions, which, according to my view, are to be deemed the basis of the history of civilisation. They are—1. That the progress of mankind depends on the success with which the laws of phenomena are investigated, and on the extent to which a knowledge of those laws is diffused. 2. That before such investigation can begin, a spirit of scepticism must arise, which, at first aiding the investigation, is afterward aided by it. 3. That the discoveries thus made increase the influence of intellectual truths, and diminish relatively, not absolutely, the influence of moral truths; moral truths being more stationary than intellectual truths, and receiving fewer additions. 4. That the great enemy of this movement, and therefore the great enemy of civilisation, is the protective spirit; by which I mean the notion that society cannot prosper unless the affairs of life are watched over and protected at nearly every turn by the State and the Church; the State teaching men what they are to do, and the Church teaching them what they are to believe.—*Buckle's History of Civilisation*

\* *The Hallowing of Criticism*. Nine Sermons on Elijah, preached in Rochester Cathedral, with an essay read at the Church Congress, Manchester, Oct. 2, 1888, by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

## A FREETHOUGHT SONG.

AIR:—"Pull for the Shore."

There's a light in the distance, sailor! day is at hand,  
When truth and reason will prevail o'er this land,  
Theology is sinking, friends! so trust to that no more,  
But get into the lifeboat "Science" and pull for the shore!

CHORUS:—

Pull for the shore, sailor! pull for the shore,  
Heed not the priestly prate, but bend to the oar;  
Safe in the lifeboat Science, cling to church no more;  
Leave that wreck, theology, and pull for the shore!

Trust in the lifeboat Science, this will never fail,  
Though stronger the surges dash, and fiercer the gale,  
Heed not the priestly winds though loudly they roar—  
Watch the morning star of truth and pull for the shore!

CHORUS:—Pull for the shore, &amp;c.

Bright gleams the morning, sailor! up lift the eye—  
Hell is gone! so Beecher says, and Freedom is nigh!  
Get into the life-boat Science, sing evermore,  
Shout for truth and freedom, friends, and pull for the shore!

CHORUS:—Pull for the shore, &amp;c.

(Boston Investigator.)

## ACID DROPS.

More floods in China. The Kwangtung river has overflowed its banks. Six thousand persons have been drowned, and ten thousand are rendered homeless. Who can doubt, after this, that the Lord is good, and that his tender mercies are over all his works? We commend the subject of these desolating floods to the acute theologians of our universities. Instead of writing learned volumes on what Carlyle called Hebrew Old Clothes, they might try, in a popular way, for the benefit of plain men and women, to reconcile God's infinite power and benevolence with the wholesale massacre of his children.

A New York correspondent sends particulars of another, but happily minor, Johnstown disaster, which has occurred at a town of that name in Fulton County, New York. Heavy rains had swollen the creek, and a crowd numbering about fifty persons was watching the torrent from a substantial stone bridge, when a dam gave way, adding to the rush of water, and the bridge collapsed, carrying men, women and children with it, of whom half are supposed to have been drowned. Two other bridges and several factories were also destroyed.

It is rumored that Mr. Conybeare, M.P., who is gallantly doing three months under the Crimes Act, has been registered in the prison books as a Roman Catholic. Under the circumstances he is more likely to find sympathy in a Catholic priest than in the Protestant chaplain. For the rest, we believe the registration is a fib. Mr. Conybeare is reputed to be a Theist.

Bishop Moorhouse has been holding forth on the Sunday. Some of his talk was downright nonsense. For instance, his carriage-and-pair lordship said the working man might take a walk on Sunday, but he should not rob his neighbor of his rest by employing him to transport him from place to place. How plausible! But just let the bishop live, as thousands do, in the centre of a great city like London, and try to walk out of it into the country. Why, he would be fagged to death before he got quit of the bricks and mortar. The fact is, the workman doesn't want a walk to the country, but a walk in the country, which is a very different thing.

Then the Bishop said that those who made the Lord's Day (that means the parson's day) an occasion for merriment, sports, gay parties, and loud mirth were guilty of a wanton and insolent contempt of the feelings of pious neighbors. According to the pious logic of this episcopal argument, the Sabbatarians have two rights and other folk none. Sabbatarians may wear long faces, and also prevent their neighbors from laughing. This is liberty with a vengeance! But it is just like the Church. Every parson allows you the fullest liberty to do as he does.

We hear that the workmen were kept slaving on Sunday to get ready for the laying of the foundation stone of the new hospital at the Royal Albert Dock by Prince George of Wales. Will Bishop Moorhouse, or any other gaitered and shovel-hatted clerical, venture to denounce this desecration of the Lord's Day?

The *Christian Commonwealth* is horrified at the desecration of "the Lord's Day" by the upper ten thousand. It mentions how the Sunday garden party, given at Holland Park by the Persian Ambassador in honor of the visit of the Shah, was visited by the Prince and Princess of Wales with Prince Albert Victor and Prince George, the Princesses Louise, Victoria, and Maud, and a numerous party of nobles; and how on the same evening they took their departure by train for Hatfield, where they were entertained by the Marquis of Salisbury. The *C. C.* looks on this as practically the introduction of the Continental Sunday by both the royal family and the Premier of England.

The *C. C.* goes on to moralise—"Had our royal family shown a proper respect for the Lord's Day by refusing to attend a garden party, given in honor of the Shah on that day, some impression might have been made upon him as to the reality of our religion. The Shah is not a fool, whatever else he may be, and he will doubtless draw conclusions from the willingness of our distinguished leaders to violate the sacredness of the Lord's Day, which will be anything but favorable to the Christian religion." Yes, and the more he knows of it the less favorable will be his conclusions.

The Secretary of the Lord's Day Rest Association says that 14,457 ministers of religion have signed petitions in favor of Sunday closing. Our only wonder is that they are not perfectly unanimous in seeking to obtain a monopoly of the day for their own business.

The motion of inquiry into the theological tests at training colleges, made by the Rev. Copeland Bowie, Unitarian, and supported by Mrs. Ashton Dilke, is one which, although shelved for the present, must not be lost sight of. As long as teachers are drawn from colleges where they are obliged to subscribe to definite religious dogmas, so long the orthodox party will have the game pretty well in their own hands. To free the children the teachers must first be emancipated.

It is reported that a Canon of Worcester Cathedral has eloped with a school girl. At any rate, both have mysteriously disappeared at the same time, and their friends are anxiously seeking particulars of their whereabouts.

According to Canon Taylor, the pillar of cloud which guided the Jews in their wanderings in the desert was a sandstorm. He tells in *Good Words* how he recently saw one in Egypt. As it approached one black column blotted out the sun like a pillar of darkness, and then, as it passed behind, it was like a column of fire, illuminated with the lurid light shining through the haze. Moonlight would produce a similar illumination at night, and thus the pillar of fire of the Exodus may be accounted for. Moses, then, must have been much sillier than Canon Taylor, since he didn't know cloud and fire from sand and moonshine.

Mr. Spurgeon has no faith in the Christian love of his fellow sky-pilots in the Established Church. Speaking as President of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Poor Ministers' Clothing Society on Monday, he said the village Baptist churches were in a bad way in consequence of the reduced circumstances of the farmers who formerly supported them. "The clergyman and his friend would like to see the Baptist pastor gone, and they did their best together to make his lot as hard as they could." This, he declared, was the general rule.

The Rev. J. Wilson, of Woolwich, is really more stupid than we thought him. Referring to our recent paragraphs in reply to his strictures in his *Weekly Messenger*, he laughs at the new Secular Branch which has "only twenty members." Of course, this is only a beginning, the result of one open-air lecture by Mr. Foote. But, in any case, Mr. Wilson as a Christian is not entitled to laugh. How

many members were there in the Jerusalem Branch of Christianity at the time of the Crucifixion? Even the twelve apostles had all "missled." Judas had ratted, and the eleven others ran away. Even later, before the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost, "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." This was all that J. C. and the apostles could do after three years' agitation and the splendid advertisement of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. How silly, then, of Mr. Wilson to laugh at Mr. Foote for making "only twenty members" by a single lecture.

Mr. Wilson alludes to this journal as "a paper." He is too high and mighty to print its name. Yet his *Messenger* is only a poor little parish circular, while the *Freethinker* goes to every part of the globe.

The Pope, so Signor da Voterra writes from Rome, has ordered that the records of the law-suits of the most celebrated condemned heretics are to be transported from the Holy Office of the Inquisition. He feels that they will be safer under his own special care, and it is doubtful indeed if any heretic will ever be permitted to see them. It is also stated that a new "Life" of Bruno is to be prepared at the Vatican to confute the Liberals' condemnation of the Inquisition and of his sentence, which the Life will seek to show was fully justified. Any life of Bruno issued by his murderers must be looked upon with the utmost suspicion, unless the Church is prepared to submit the whole of the documents to public criticism.

After Secular reformers have denounced war until they were nearly sick, the clergy have begun to feel that "there is something in it." During the past week the Archbishop of Canterbury has been suggesting that fighting is a questionable business. The Church, he said, could speak quietly and temperately, and the time had come for the Church to speak. One part of the statement may be true. If the Church does speak on this subject, we have no doubt it will do so "quietly and temperately." It cannot afford to get into a passion with big sinners.

Dr. G. W. Leitner, writing on Muhammedanism in *Time*, says, "I have seen young Muhammedan fellows at school and college and their conduct and talk are far better than is the case among English young men." Is this another case of the one divine religion turning out a failure, and being surpassed by those without the blessed light of the gospel?

John James Norman was to have been tried at the Greenwich Police-court for assaulting a little girl. But he did not appear. He went off "to God" instead. Hanging was the method he chose. In a letter to his solicitor he protested his innocence, and denounced the police for getting up a bogus case against him. Let us charitably hope he was guiltless. But on the other hand, we may point out his bad logic. If God allowed him to be treated with such ghastly injustice on earth, how could he know that his future treatment might not be still worse? He may only have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. Talmage says the suicides are recruited from the ranks of Atheists. Our reading makes it appear they are almost without exception believers.

"The Almighty told me to do it," says that poor insane fellow Currah, who is now on trial for the murder of Letine. This is exactly what Guiteau said when he shot Garfield. Of course, the Lord's devotees will declare that he never told either of them to do anything of the kind. Well, how do they know? It is just as likely that he told Currah and Guiteau to murder their victims as that he told the Jews to murder the Canaanites.

Dr. Barnardo will find that the Lord's favorites are no longer able to do as they please with impunity. The Court of Appeal has confirmed the decision of the Divisional Court. The attachment is to be issued, and he will have to produce the child. Evidently the judges think that Dr. Barnardo is prevaricating.

The Rev. J. Carvell Williams complains that the Vicar of Seaford relegates the Nonconformist dead into the un-

popular part of the churchyard. Surely it is time parochial burial places were under the control of the parishioners themselves.

There is one point about the clerical protest against gambling which really requires a little more attention than it has received. After all, is it possible to regard it with gravity when we remember that practically nearly every church in the kingdom is more or less sustained by gambling. Even if we leave out of account the large sums of money which the churches receive from gamblers on the Stock Exchange, and from racing men, who drop into the collecting-plate the sovereigns they have taken out of the pockets of 'bus men and others, there remains the fact that new churches are practically built out of gambling schemes. What is the chief attraction at bazaars? What but the lotteries and raffles, which give social interest to these shows? When the Church has purged itself of association with Society's favorite vice, it can afford to rail at Monte Carlo and Epsom.—*Star*.

Those who may think Mr. Foote's pamphlet on Mrs. Besant's Theosophy uncalled for should hear the remarks of Christian Evidence Lecturers, or read the reflections of the *Christian Commonwealth*. Never, says that pious journal "was there a more singular confession offered to a bewildered public than Mrs. Besant's account of her conversion to that astounding imposture called Theosophy. . . . A woman who has believed nothing is now ready to believe anything, only it must be infinitely silly and absurd. This seems to be the only condition" After a good deal more of this sort of stuff the *C.C.* winds up by finding "it is hopeful to see that she is after all not utterly opposed to supernaturalism."

A missionary at Sierra Leone, writing to the *Christian Recorder*, finds it no easy task to get the idea of God into the heads of the natives. "I spoke to them about sin; tried to show them what it is in God's sight, and the remedy provided for its removal, the atoning work of Christ. These people—and I think natives in general—look upon sin as between man and man, and not between man and God. The idea of praying to God is simply to make some gesture and intonation as they see the Mohammedans do." It seems to us that in looking upon sin as between man and man only, these natives are considerably in advance of many Christians.

The Bishop of Lincoln has issued a number of interrogatories to his clergy which some of them will find a difficulty in answering, *e.g.*, state the number of persons in your parish (a) who attend church, (b) who attend a dissenting chapel, (c) who neglect all public worship. A clerically-prepared religious census will not be of much statistical value, judging by the famous communicants' roll in Scotland, which showed that in not a few parishes the communicants outnumbered the inhabitants.—*Echo*.

Blessed be ye poor. Last week's *Illustrated London News* records the passing over to the great majority of seven persons, six men and one lady, whose united wealth amounts to £642,000, out of which sum £133,000 belonged to three ministers of the gospel, respectively owning £54,000, £51,000, and £28,000. This is a sample of what may be seen week by week. Immense wealth gathered by the preachers of the gospel of poverty, who pretend to believe that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The vicar of Great Barlow, Derbyshire, and the Bishop of Southwell have been defied. The man who married and buried his deceased wife's sister has the word "wife" cut upon the stone, which the vicar will now have to remove, or else to efface the inscription, unless he is prepared to succumb to the defiance.

The Rev. T. R. Smithson Thorne, otherwise the Rev. T. R. Smithson, described as a clergyman of the Church of England, was to have surrendered to bail at the Hampstead Police court to answer a charge of assaulting Mr. Thomas Stringer, a plumber and house decorator, under extraordinary circumstances. As he did not appear a warrant was issued for his arrest and the bail estreated.

A clever ninny is not a common creature, but we have one in the Duke of Argyll. His lordship knows a good deal of one thing and another, and is far from being an absolute fool. But his self-conceit is appalling. The Eiffel Tower is nothing to it. For many years he felt himself called upon to correct the excesses of the great Darwin, and set him right on his own subject. Since then the Duke has left religion for politics. The other evening he delivered a sermon in the House of Lords on the Irish Question. It was what a duke's sermon should be. Property was sacred, landlords were angels—very much in disguise—and the Irish tenants were rebels against God's law, and, still worse, against the Duke of Argyll's superior wisdom. It was really touching. All that was lacking was the presence of Darwin as a listener. How he would have laughed in his quiet genial way.

The *Saturday Review* says, the Salvation Army panders to the worst vice of the English character—its tendency to sheer vulgarity. Of the Salvationist meeting at the Alexandra Palace it remarks "Nothing indeed seems to have been wanting but an epileptic or two to revive the full glories of the great revival camp period," or we would add of the days when the apostles were full of the Holy Ghost.

The Rev. George Eddy, who conducted a little while ago a revival mission in South Wales, states that in a village where seventy persons professed conversion, the whole of these candidates for membership have been served with notices to quit their cottages unless they discontinue their attendance at the Wesleyan chapel. In one household four servants lost their situations; in another a coachman and his wife; and the local wheelwright, having lost his custom, has had to remove to another village. At Port Dinorwic, in Carnarvonshire, it was stated at a recent meeting of the Calvinistic Methodist Association that there was no hope of a largely increased attendance at their church, owing to the fact that when houses are to let, applicants, however eligible, are refused if they are Nonconformists. Truly the love of Christians surpasses everything.

In the case of Gertrude Georgina Paul, indicted for the murder of her mother at Bath, a physician deposed that she was under his care in an asylum four years ago, and suffered from the delusion that she had committed the unpardonable sin and was eternally damned. Who knows but that the whole girl's mind was warped and led up to the dreadful matricide by her religious delusion. There are many such cases. Could there be a list of all the maniacs who have been rendered so by the nonsense about the unpardonable sin, it would appal Jesus himself.

The Portsea Parish Church Building Fund, we read in the *Portsmouth Evening News*, has reached a total of £36,676 odd. Yet the vicar, Canon Jacob, wants more. Some persons have offered to pay for part of the decorations as memorials of dead persons, so Canon Jacob asks: "Why should not the fine stone pulpit, the estimate of which is £365, be raised to God's glory and in memory of some loved relation? Why should not the bells be given in like manner? We want £153 for a new tenor, £52 for a new treble, and about £402 for all the work that is required to complete the peal. We still need between £600 and £700 for the organ. The chapel fund, too, is not complete. We want £375 to provide chairs and kneelers for the new church," etc. We should think the Portsea people would, like the priests of old, hear but one tune in the church bells, namely, Give, give, give, give, give.

In consequence of threatened outrages to the Bruno statue, Adriano Lemmi, Grand Master of the Italian Freemasons, has ordered private detectives to watch in the Campo dei Fiori both day and night. This will be an occasion of crowing to the rival city of Naples, where there has been a statue of Bruno since 1865.

The *Irish Express* finds that things are improving, "thanks to Providence and Mr. Balfour." We thought that the latter individual was chiefly in business with his uncle, but we now presume the battering ram must be considered the property of Balfour, Providence and Co., the author of the *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* being the most active member of the firm.

Millet's "Angelus" having been bought by the French government for the big sum of £22,000, the *Pull Mall Gazette* feels surprised that "the anti-clerical Republic" should have paid all this money for "one of the most religious pictures of the century." Nonsense, Mr. Stead, nonsense! Life is life, and art is art. Freethinkers are broader than you suspect. They don't ask artists to be missionaries. Music is music, whether Wagner's or Handel's; and painting is painting, whether Titian's or Fra Angelico's.

Dr. Drysdale and other friends of the Malthusian League really ought to devote some of their benevolent exertions towards the enlightenment of the poorer parsons. Among a large number of similar cases of distress to whom the Clergy Corporation have recently afforded assistance, the following are given as samples:—Curate with eight children under eight years of age, and a stipend of £126 a year; a vicar with five young children, and an annual income of £100; a vicar with six children under 15 years of age, and an annual income of £134 and a house; a vicar with eight children under 18 years of age, and £117 annual income; a curate with six young children, and a stipend of £120; a vicar with eleven children under 15 years age, and an annual income of £180, etc. Of course the hat is sent round to the laity, not to the parsons with livings from £1,000 to £2,000, or the church dignitaries with incomes varying from £2,000 to £15,000.

Miss Weston, known as the Sailor's Friend, is always running amuck at infidelity. To the July number of the *General Post Office Total Abstinence Society Brigade News* she contributes an article on "The Freethinking King." Whom, think you, does she mean? Akbar, Joseph II. or Frederick the Great. Not at all. Herod—who believed that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead—is taken as the type of a Freethinker, struck with the terrors of a guilty conscience.

Then Miss Weston has some delightful anecdotes, of which the following is a sample: "Voltaire, the French infidel, was on one occasion in great danger, and forgetting his infidelity fell on his knees and prayed earnestly to God to save him. The danger passed away, and he immediately rose from his knees and began to swear. Poor Voltaire; death mowed him down further with its sharp scythe, and he passed into eternity with awful imprecations on his lips." No doubt Miss Weston believes these stories, but where does she get her information from? Certainly from no reputable life of Voltaire.

Another story upon which these Voltaire legends cast doubt is that of one "Infidel Jack," who lay dying in a garret in Drury Lane. A little girl took him up a branch of May, and when he asked who sent this, answered "God." Next day Jack said: "Wife, I want to see my old mates that I went to the Hall of Science with, bring them every one." Silently they stole in, looking at the dying man. "Mates," he said, "I wish to tell you I die a Christian. As I lay here, I thought, if there is a God he'll answer prayer, and I considered what unlikely thing could I ask for, and I said 'Flowers.' I prayed for them, and I thought, 'I'll see now whether he'll send them.' I have been expecting them down the chimney, or through the ceiling, and was dozing, when a beautiful scent of fields and meadows came over me, and there was not a flower, but hundreds of flowers." And so, we are told, this curious "infidel," who not only prayed but expected an answer to prayer, died a Christian, and more than one of his mates from the Hall of Science "promised to meet him in heaven." Very edifying no doubt, but is it true?

The new pastor of Regent Square Church is not a Scotchman for nothing. He has revolutionised the collection system. Formerly the boxes were held at the doors, but now they are taken round the pews. The result is that the deacons are singing "I'm all right, I've got the L.S.D." Under the old system £211 was collected in the first six months of last year. This year the sum of £374 has been realised.

Salvation Army Captain—"Now, my dear friends, if Adam had not sinned you would have had no sickness, no pain, and no doctors." Small Boy—"Nor any Salvation Army either." Curtain.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 28, Camberwell.  
 Aug. 4 and 11, Camberwell; 18 and 25, London Hall of Science.  
 Sept. 1, Manchester; 15 and 22, London Hall of Science;  
 29, Newcastle.  
 Oct. 6, South Shields; 12 and 20, London Hall of Science.

## 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.

ISCA.—Ingersoll was right. Paley's *Moral Philosophy* is distinctly Epicurean.

H. ROTHERA.—Jokes received with thanks.

F. W. HORNER.—Glad to hear you found *Infidel Death Beds* so useful. Don't waste your time on the pious cranks who uphold the earth's flatness. Some things must be taken for granted, and the elementary truths of physical science are of the number. The *flatness* isn't in the earth, but in the cranks.

FEMININE FREETHINKER.—Thanks for the enclosure, which we made use of.

W. SELLS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drop."

C. E. FUGLER.—We do not see how you can know "the bare facts of the case" better than the officers of the Ball's Pond Branch, who have the books in their possession, and are ready to show them. Our columns are not open for gratuitous slander or vague scandal. A definite charge of peculation, which the accuser is prepared to maintain, and for which he is prepared to suffer if it cannot be maintained—is one thing. Loose insinuation is quite another.

J. KEAST.—Pleased to hear you have distributed 300 *Freethinkers* in Bristol. We should like to see more Freethought activity in your city.

W. BRYAN.—Questions are not quite the same thing as discussion. The directors of the St James's Hall, Bristol, are the most timid men in England, and ought to be kept in glass cases. Scores of halls are used for Freethought lectures on Sunday, and there is no dread of a silly old obsolete law except in the breasts of these gentlemen. For the sake of those of them who believe in a deity we say "God amend them." They have done their best to kill Secularism in Bristol.

J. BROWN.—Please send us a copy of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* if our letter appears. Don't put notes inside papers. It is against the regulations.

J. R. MURRAY.—Dr. Wallace's new book on *Darwinism* is a capital statement of Evolution. You have only to skip the final chapter on spiritualism. Read Tylor's *Anthropology* for the evolution of humanity. We will give you other references, if required, later on.

A FREETHINKER.—Perfect nonsense. You are entitled to receive Freethought papers if they are sent to you. If there is any interference let us know. Soldiers have to put up with a good deal, but they have some rights nevertheless.

ATHEISTA.—Received with thanks. We hope you were gratified.

A.P.—It would be a big undertaking; too big for our present resources.

J. ROWNEY.—Received. No thanks necessary. We are always ready to help "the saints" against "the heathen."

W. LITTLETON, 61 Regency Street, London, S.W., has a quantity of old *Freethinkers* and *National Reformers*, which will be given to anyone who undertakes to distribute them.

L. BEAUMONT.—They won't let you cut an epitaph like that in any cemetery.

CORIOLANUS.—We really cannot undertake to define or describe the God of Thomas Carlyle. From Mr. Froude's biography it appears that Carlyle was not a Christian. He did not believe in miracles or the divinity of Jesus Christ. He spoke disparagingly of men like Voltaire and Bentham because he hated their philosophy, and was too much of a Scotch Puritan (by nature) to understand Frenchmen and Utilitarians. You will find, however, that he shows more admiration for Voltaire in the *Life of Frederick* than in the famous Essay.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—We hear that you are not working with the Branch. As to whether back numbers of the *Freethinker* should be given to young people, you must exercise your own discretion. If their parents object you should certainly refrain.

D. BATER.—You say the Clerkenwell contingent starts at 9.30. W. G. Renn says 9.15. We have put *your* time in our paragraph, but you had better take precautions if there has been a mistake.

A. RENNOLS.—The passage is not marked by Professor Huxley's usual accuracy and lucidity. You must understand that by "religion" he does not mean "theology." It is a pity he uses a word that ninety-nine people in a hundred will misunderstand. By "true science" he of course means "real science."

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberty—Le Danton—Freedom—Bulletin des Sommaires—Liberator—Leeds Mercury—Western Figaro—Brigade News—Menschenthum—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Watts' Literary Guide—Ironclad Age—Manchester Evening News—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Lucifer.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MAY the Lord, Jupiter Pluvius, the Clerk of the Weather, or whoever is responsible, look favorably upon London to-day (July 21), and let the sun shine with golden lustre from a sapphire sky. The Secular Federation excursion to Epping Forest is the event of the day. Contingents will start from various parts of the metropolis in brakes for the King's Oak, High Beech. The common meeting place will be "The Greyhound," Lea Bridge Road, at 10.30. The Central contingent starts from the Hall of Science at 9.30; the Milton Hall contingent at 9.30; Clerkenwell Green contingent at 9.30; Westminster, Old Pimlico Pier at 9; the Camberwell contingent, 61 New Church Road, at 9.15; the Balls' Pond contingent from the Secular Hall, Newington Green Road, at 10 sharp.

MR. FOOTE had a splendid audience in Regent's Park on Sunday afternoon. The lecture was on "The Devil." Mr. A. B. Moss took the chair, or rather acted as chairman. Some six hundred people must have been gathered round the stand at one time. The rain drove a few home, and the Christian critics sent off more; but a great number stood it all out to the bitter end, patiently listening for nearly two hours. A collection was made for the London Secular Federation, and realised £1 5s.

THE first Christian critic was named Stiggles. His reception showed he was unfavorably known. He began in an eccentric manner, flourishing a Bible, "Stick to the subject," someone cried. "I am sticking to the subject," he said, "the subject is the Devil, and the Bible is the Devil." Roars of laughter. Then he pulled out a copy of the Foote—McCann debate. "Here you are," he shouted, "a debate between a rogue and a fool." "Come down," said the chairman. Stiggles wouldn't, so he was fetched down; and as he wouldn't keep quiet, he was passed outside with as little damage as possible.

THE second Christian critic was a Mr. Scott, who is said to be a first-rate slanderer. But on this occasion he was mild and apologetic. Great Scott! what nonsense he did talk! Jesus Christ, for instance, didn't cast out real devils; he cast out madness. "Into the pigs," said Mr. Foote. "Yes, into the pigs." It was *too* preposterous.

A MODEST Blue Ribbonite wanted to know what the lecturer could offer his wife who was dying of diabetes, and what it was that prompted a man to do right or wrong. He was suitably answered, though he didn't seem to see it, and no doubt is still shaking his head at the notion that Freethought is good for diabetes. Then the meeting broke up with cheers.

MR. J. CRABTREE (Hanover) subscribes £2 to the Fund for sending Mr. Foote to the International Freethought Congress at Paris in September. We shall be glad if the friends who mean to subscribe to the Fund will intimate their intention at once. Mr. Foote has necessarily to make engagements a good deal in advance, and the matter cannot be kept open much longer.

MR. S. STANDRING has succeeded in forming a North Middlesex Secular Federation, including all the Branches of the N. S. S. lying north of the metropolitan parliamentary divisions. The next point is to raise funds for the work.

A few pounds would enable the Federation to revolutionise the district, which teems with people who are dissatisfied with orthodoxy. Mr. Standring's address (for letters and subscriptions) is 7 Finsbury Street, E. C.

MR. STANDRING is going to turn his attention to Tottenham and Edmonton, where he hopes to start open-air stations and form Branches. We wish him all success. This is the kind of activity we want. Scores of men like Mr. Standring might easily push on the work of Freethought, if they only ceased looking to one or two leaders to do everything.

ON Sunday morning, at the Midland Arches, Mr. A. B. Moss nearly succeeded in drawing the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale. Nearly—not quite; for this boastful champion of Christianity has rather a platonic than a manly love of debate. He came up to Mr. Moss's stand to say a few words. Finally he was asked to have a set debate. He wouldn't absolutely commit himself, but said that, if he did debate, he would like fourteen consecutive Sunday mornings; a preposterous arrangement so far as Mr. Moss is concerned. Mr. Woffendale also showed a very marked disinclination to discuss Christianity. He especially fought shy of "Hell," on which Mr. Moss had been lecturing.

SINCE then Mr. Woffendale has been interviewed by Mr. Carter. He declines a week-night discussion indoors on the ground of being too busy. But he is willing to come to the Midland Arches four Sundays in September after the morning service at his church, the speeches to be ten minutes each. Preposterous again. The time is most inconvenient, seeing that the proceedings could hardly open before half-past twelve, when people are beginning to make their way home to dinner. Next, is it likely that Mr. Moss is going to devote four Sunday mornings to this encounter, coming all the way from Bermondsey to meet his opponent, who has only to walk down the road? Finally, it is obvious that Mr. Woffendale wants to be backed up by his entire congregation.

THE only fair plan is a debate indoors in the time-honored way. There would then be no necessity for bawling, both sides could be done justice to, and both disputants could be heard carefully. Besides, it is so much easier to keep order indoors, and that is a most important point in a public discussion.

SINCE writing these paragraphs we have received the following letter from Mr. Woffendale:—"Permit me to say, through your representative paper, that I have publicly accepted the challenge of Mr. Moss to debate with him for eight Sunday mornings, or more, if he desires, at the Midland Arches, beginning September 1 at 12.30: subject—Is the belief in Atheism, or the belief in God the most reasonable, and the most beneficial to mankind?—Z. B. Woffendale."

THIS letter is misleading. Mr. Moss did not challenge Mr. Woffendale to debate "for eight Sunday mornings," or even to debate Atheism, though we daresay he is ready to defend it. For the rest, it bears out all we have written. Mr. Woffendale doesn't want to discuss Christianity—especially Hell. He simply wants to discuss a doctrine he holds in common with Brahmins, Mohammedans and other "heathen." "Secularism or Christianity" is the question at issue between Mr. Moss and Mr. Woffendale.

THE *Star* says "The Lecture Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell, has been kindly put at the disposal of the tram men for midnight meetings." Good. But why not say the "Secular Hall" honestly?

A GIORDANO BRUNO museum, the *Athenæum* says, is to be opened in the University of Rome. The Rector Cerrati has consented that all the garlands laid upon the Bruno monument in the Campo de Fiori, nearly two hundred in number, shall be preserved in the Sapienza. The academical senate will set apart a room for the exhibition of these garlands, and for documents, books, medals, and other articles connected with Giordano Bruno or with the festival of June 9th.

WE have sent to Signor Cerrati a copy of our own issue

containing the picture of Bruno's statue, together with that we printed for *De Dageraad*, and Mr. Foote's articles in *Progress* and in our number for June 16th. Other Freethought journals in all parts of the world should do likewise.

"GIORDANO BRUNO," says the *Christian World*, "was a great and brilliant thinker." The admission is late, but better late than never. Bruno's apotheosis has at length made him quite respectable. By-and-bye we shall have pious prize essays to show he was a sound Christian.

EVEN the Tory *Standard* is scandalised by the Pope's tantrums, and the protest of the English Catholics, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, against the "outrage" at Rome. "The legitimate inference," it says, "is that, if they had the power, they would again pile up the faggots, and thrust in the torch as a punishment for the holding of opinion on abstruse points in which they themselves do not happen to participate."

DR. MONROE'S *Ironclad Age* is a live journal, and shows itself so by occasional extracts from the *Freethinker*. The numbers before us contain reprints of Mr. Foote's article on the Bruno celebration and that of Mr. Wheeler on "Christianity an Immoral Religion." It is a little aggravating, however, to find that in the former article, where Mr. Foote wrote "Something heroic, supernal, shone amidst the flames of his pyre," the *Ironclad Age* for "supernal" reads "supernatural." We may console ourselves with the remembrance that a religious paper instead of saying that many of the prophetic utterances were obscure, read that they were obscene.

THE crematorium at Pere la Chaise, Paris, which was first proposed by our departed friend A. S. Morin, has cost a trifle over £25,000. Bodies are now cremated there at the stated charge of 100 francs or £4.

THE *Tocsin*, a monthly journal of general and of medical Philosophy, edited by F. A. Floyer, is a really thoughtful publication opposed to vaccination. An article on "Morality in Literature" contrasts the work of a French novelist with one penned by a divine well known in connection with the purity movement, with the conclusion that any one would be more tempted to break their self-respect from the perusal of the latter than of the former. Dr. Floyer says that if the pseudo-reformers of the Vigilance Society have the courage of their opinions, they should prosecute the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses as the most glaring offenders in issuing divers portions of Holy Writ and of literature called classical, put into the hands of every school-boy.

THE *Western Figaro*, which is usually up to the time of day, says: "*Bon Accord*, our comic contemporary of Aberdeen, is trying to cut out the *Freethinker* by publishing pictorial parodies on sacred subjects. I wonder what the unco' guid up North think of it." We have not seen *Bon Accord*. Will some of the Aberdonian elect send us a copy?

*Freedom*, of Sydney, publishes a report of a debate between the Rev. Geo. Sutherland and Mr. W. W. Collins, on the question, "Is it rational to believe in a Personal God." Our old friend Mr. W. Willis presided.

THE Sydney Freethought Hall Company is well under weigh, and hopes to commence building shortly.

IN relation to a paragraph which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, a correspondent, who has close personal acquaintance with the rev. gentleman writes: "The defecation of the Rev. Arnold Jerome Matthews, priest of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Bath, is a staggering blow to the Romanists in the diocese of Clifton, and indeed to members of the Romanist body throughout the country. The position of Mr. Matthews was in some respects almost unique. While priest at Trowbridge, his polemic onslaughts on Anglicans and Protestants of every grade, combined with his eloquent and closely-reasoned sermons, marked him as a champion of 'The Faith,' and rendered any attempt to controvert him a very hazardous experiment indeed. His fame as a controversialist brought him to the notice of Bishop Clifford, who promoted him by giving him



the rectorship of the handsome church in Julian Road, Bath. His presentation to that cure was thought at the time to be a diplomatic act of the Bishop of Clifton, for the mission had just previously lost its first rector under circumstances which need not be dwelt on, and the 'cause' needed a Matthews to give it a leg up. He brought to St. Mary's all the advantages which a cultured mind and an eloquent tongue could give. Some of the conversions he effected were in their way triumphs. I would give something to know what is now the prevailing feeling of the West of England priests towards him—hatred or fear? I suppose both. Matthews was always too big a man for a Romish priest, and now that he has doffed the chasuble and cope he will be heard of, and to some purpose."

ACCORDING to *Der Flamme*, the German advocate of cremation, there are now 39 crematories in use. 23 in Italy, 10 in America, and one each in Germany, England, France, Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden. The number of cremations increase every year.

THIS Sunday (July 21) the statue of Camille Desmoulins will be inaugurated at Guise.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us two cuttings from the *Family Herald*. One is dated May 25, 1867—the other July 5, 1889. In the first Thomas Paine is described as "a drunken staymaker." In the second he is spoken of as "that most pure-living religious man." The world moves after all.

DR. K. LIPPE, a Jew, has published at Jassy a work in German on "The Gospel of Matthew brought before the Forum of the Bible and the Talmud." There can be little doubt of the verdict. No Jew could credit that the Sanhedrim spit upon a prisoner and behaved in the illegal fashion described in this veracious gospel.

FREDERIC HARRISON is going to "personally conduct" a party of Positivist excursionists to the shrine of Comte and the scenes of the Revolution in Paris during the last week in August.

THE North Eastern Secular Federation has arranged a lecturing tour for Mr. Moss, who will spend a week of his annual holiday in preaching Freethought. His appointments are—July 27, Bedlington; 28, South Shields; 29, West Auckland; 31, Chester-le-Street; August 1, Newcastle; 2, South Shields; 3, Ox Hill; 4, Federation trip to Durham (open-air lecture).

#### MODERN PERSECUTION OF FREETHINKERS.

MANY good people placidly assume that the age of persecution has fled, that Freethinkers are no longer called upon to suffer for 'conscience sake.' It is true that the heroic, the picturesque aspect of persecution has in all probability passed away: and we are not likely in the future to see a Secularist editor carted off in a Black Maria to Holloway Gaol, there to possess his soul in patience what time the bigotry of his foes may decree. But it is by no means true that persecution of the smaller, meaner sort is extinct. Last Sunday I was told, at Woolwich, that men have been discharged from their employment in the Arsenal for the heinous offence of carrying copies of the *Freethinker* in their pockets. Who shall say that persecution such as this is petty or trifling? To the workman, discharge almost certainly means the difference between comfort and want; in a few weeks his children may be crying for bread, and his little household gods gradually disappearing as the grip of poverty becomes closer. Could the martyr perishing at the stake feel any keener pang of anguish than that which must pierce the heart of the man who hears his young ones crying in vain for food?

Men engaged in business know full well the disadvantages under which they labor if they dare to associate themselves publicly with the propaganda of Freethought. I will give two illustrations, for the

accuracy of which I can vouch. I have the honor to be acquainted with a printer, whom for the nonce we will baptise Smith. Now Smith has for several years taken a very active part in Secularist work, and has never sought shelter behind the coward's rampart of a *nom de guerre*. Not long ago one of his friends, a member of a society in St. Luke's, recommended that some printing work should be given to the Freethinking disciple of Caxton. But the pious element on the committee scouted the idea with scorn. "What! give our printing to Smith! No—he's an *Atheist!*" And so poor Smith was left out in the cold, and deprived of work which would in all probability have been given to him—simply because he dared to live an honest life.

Once more I will cull a leaf from the dolorous experiences of Smith. A City customer had recommended him to the minister of a dissenting chapel in South London. The parson—whom we will style the Rev. Aminadab Jones—in the course of business had two or three interviews with the fearsome Smith, but on no occasion did anything crop up about Freethought. Papers concerning pew-rents were satisfactorily printed and duly paid for; the chapel's annual report passed through the Freethinker's hands, with advantage to all concerned. But one ill-omened day the Rev. Jones penetrated into the *sanctum* of his printer, and there he saw sundry posters with the name of Mr. Bradlaugh conspicuously displayed thereon. "Do you know Mr. Bradlaugh?" blandly inquired the parson. Smith candidly admitted that he *did* know him, and had for years worked with him. "Hum!" ejaculated the man of God, as who should say, This is worth remembering. He took away with him two or three copies of Freethought tracts which were lying about, and bade Smith farewell in most friendly humor. But, in the beautiful words of the song:

"He never came back no more,"

and Smith forever lost the benefit of the holy man's custom, simply because he (Smith—not the h. m.) dared to avow his principles.

These two illustrations will suffice, although twenty might be given from the experience of one man. It all tends to show that the old spirit of persecution is still rife amongst us, and that the dread of penal consequences suffices to keep many men in bondage. Doctors and other professional men have often expressed to me in confidence views which they dare not publicly avow, for fear of Mrs. Grundy. No longer is the modern Bruno chained to the stake; but he may be deprived of his employment, or ruined in his business, as the penalty of his heresy. And if one is to be killed, it does not appear to me to be a detail of much importance whether he shall be burnt, hanged, or starved to death. Perhaps, after all, the latter is the most cruel and most Christian method.

GEORGE STANDRING.

THE Hall of Science Children's Annual Summer Excursion will be held on Sunday, August 25, at Ye Robin Hood, Loughton. Brakes for parents and friends will accompany the children. Tickets, 2s. 6d. each. Further subscriptions:—William Jones (J. W.), £1 1s.; Collection at the Hall of Science, £1 10s. 1½d.; Mrs. B. C. Marks, 5s.; Per Oldfield: Barker, 3d.; Pigott, 2d.; Burden, 1s.; Antralus, 3d.; Partridge, 2d.; H. Pigott, 1d.; Hardwick, 3d.; Pullan, 2d.; Burn, 2d.; Dean, 2d.; Griffin, 2d.; Miss Helley, 2d.; Hanscomb, 6d.; per Santen: T. Moses, 1s.; H. Moses, 3d.; J. De Young, 3d.; Mullen, 3d.; Mrs. Tinger, 6d.; Miss do Young, 3d.; F. B., 6d.; B. Santen, 3d.; W. G. Venger, 1s.; Theyers, 6d.; Oscar Rost, 2d.; A. B., 2d.; Per Miss Reynolds: Backfoot, 6d.; Jack, 1s.; Louisa, 1s.; Per Mrs. Stevens: Allen, 3d.; N. B., 3d.; Bruge, 6d.; Judge, 6d.; C. W., 1s.; Per Mrs. Cookney: Cheesewright, 5s.; A Friend, 2s.; ditto, 6d.; ditto, 3d. Subscriptions will be thankfully received by W. Cookney, hon. sec., 1a Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

A PROFESSOR TEARS HIS BIBLE.  
NOT AN INFIDEL THIS TIME.

THE pretty little village of South Amboy is up in arms. Professor James Corkley has broken out again, this time in a particularly novel way.

Friday was his last day as principal of the Park Public School, over which he has presided for eighteen years, and to celebrate the event he performed in a manner that has shocked the more conservative portion of the community.

As is the custom in all institutions of learning at this season, the Park Public School held its closing exercises on Friday. Little misses recited, small boys gave interpretations of the "Charge of the Light Brigade," and similar pieces, while their parents looked on approvingly.

Nothing occurred during the first part of the afternoon to cause annoyance to anyone.

The gathering was respectable in the highest degree. In fact, the *élite* of the surrounding borough was present to do honor to Professor Corkley and his intelligent pupils.

It was pretty generally known that the principal was to sever his connection with the school on that day, and naturally expectation was on tiptoe as to what he might say in a valedictory way. Everyone was, in fact, prepared to hear something a little out of the ordinary.

If a dynamite bomb, to which is attached a well developed and healthily lighted fuse, had been discovered under the professor's chair it could not have caused more consternation than that gentleman's remarks following the reading of a chapter from the Bible.

Professor Corkley is nothing if not dignified. Of medium height, with a dark moustache, the corners of which often get into his mouth and partly impede his speech, his is a figure that commands attention.

One could have heard a pin drop when he rose to speak. Instead of addressing the gathering, included in which were the three School Commissioners, William Birmingham, John P. Roberts and Stephen Martin, he carelessly turned the pages of the big Bible on the desk before him, and then in a clear voice announced that he would read from the Book of Genesis, chapter 38, detailing an account of Judah's flight with Tamar.

This chapter, like many others in the Bible, is very much to the point, and during its reading many of the mothers present looked at the faces of their daughters in an apprehensive way. When he had finished the professor cleared his throat and spoke as follows:

"Teachers and scholars, you don't think that what has just been read in your hearing is very nice or very proper. I can trace disapprobation in your faces. You appear as if your modesty had been choked, as if your sensibilities had been wantonly outraged and you have a right to feel offended. All Scripture, they tell us, is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, and so forth: but the selection just read, breathing as it does the spirit of bestiality, is as vicious in its origin as it is demoralizing in its tendencies.

"You wrong me very much my friends if you think because I have read this unsavory extract for you that I am a black-guard, exulting in debauchery and luxuriating in obscenity and filth. This putrid and venomous decoction I detest as much as you do, and as action speaks louder than words, I'll show you by my conduct what I think of it."

Deliberately taking the Bible and holding it up so that all present could see, with one vicious rip he tore out the page and threw it into the waste basket.

A murmur that soon developed into a defined expression of dissent followed the professor's action.

There were cries of "Shame," "The Holy Bible, too," "What a wicked man," and persons left the room and did not wait for the professor's subsequent remarks. When the hubbub had sufficiently subsided Professor Corkley continued in the same strain as before, as follows:

"That gilt-edged volume, now torn and dismembered and labelled Holy Bible upon the back, may be accepted as an authoritative standard of purity and piety in our churches, where hypocrites and thieves abound; but as a text-book of devotion and of godliness it is altogether out of place in the public school, the immaculate cradle of holy innocents.

"A lie cannot endure for ever, and though my remarks will no doubt be severely animadverted upon, yet I defy all hostile criticisms. I have within my reach, as a student of dead languages, proofs the most irrefragable and convincing, both historical and documentary, to show that the entire ill-

assorted compound is a barefaced forgery and a fraud, a cunningly devised fable, having for its object the bloody sacrifice of the mass or masses, and the extermination or crucifixion of the just, leading them as unsuspecting sheep unto the slaughter."

With increasing voice and many gestures the professor continued:

"These are serious charges to formulate, but I am ready and able to substantiate them, and to this end, resigning my present position and putting my trust in God, I go forth to battle with the giant Superstition, hurling defiance at the powers of darkness.

"To the orthodox believer, then, of every creed whether lay or clerical, who may be offended at what I have said or done, and who burns in consequence to brand me as a boaster and a liar, I extend a challenge of deciding the matter in dispute between us by fair and open discussion before any intelligent audience in the land. Let the deluded champions of the plenary inspiration of the Bible accept this challenge, or for ever after hide their diminished heads in shame."

The exercises being over the gathering dispersed, but not before many members of it expressed themselves in unmeasured terms of Professor Corkley and his tirade.—*New Jersey Morning Journal*, June 30.

INTERVIEW WITH THE JEZREELITES.

Behind Mr. Foote in Regent's Park last Sunday, was a congregation of Jezreelites seeking to gather in the 144,000 for the New Jerusalem. They bore with them a banner with twelve squares surmounted by the Prince of Wales' Feathers and with the motto "I serve," and the names of the twelve tribes as given in the Apocalypse. The men had their hair long but carefully curled up under their hats which added to their strange appearance.

Our interviewer, premising that he was only actuated by curiosity, quietly asked permission of one of the leaders to put a question or two. This being graciously acceded to, he wished first to know why the tribe of Dan was omitted on the banner. The answer was ready. That was because Jacob prophesied that Dan would be an adder in the path (Gen. xlix. 17.) He then put a more ticklish question. Did they teach that God was Feminine and as much a woman as a man? Certainly, said the Jezreelite. "In the image of God created he him; male and female, created he them." (Gen. i. 27.) Did they believe woman was made from man's rib? Certainly; but she was in the image of God. Jerusalem, which is above, is the Mother of us all. What did that mean but that the divine being was feminine?

But, our interviewer asked, did they not use the masculine pronoun *he* to God? Yes, but only as they did to the first Adam, who was originally both male and female. The second man Adam, viz., Jesus Christ, was a man, but the woman, his bride, the Church of God, was being gathered in to unite the feminine to the masculine.

Were they progressing? Yes, they knew that by the sale of the *Flying Roll*. It was not they who did the work, but the *Flying Roll* which here and there found its people. Did they regard the *Flying Roll* as a revelation? Certainly. It was the interpretation of the Scripture. Was it not written by Mr. White, who called himself Jezreel? It did not matter who wrote it. It was the key that fitted the lock of Scripture. If a man gave you the key of your door that you could not get opened without it, you would not care how he came by it so that you had the key. Apologising for the personal nature of the question our interviewer asked why they wore their hair in so strange a fashion. The young man replied that he considered it a very proper question. They believed in both the Law and the Gospel, and the Law said (Lev. xix, 27.) "Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." As they were preparing to sing a hymn, our interviewer, after thanking the Jezreelite for his courtesy, strolled towards the vast crowd that surrounded Mr. Foote.

The Siege of the Bastille, weighed with which, in the Historical balance, most other sieges, including that of Troy Town, are gossamer, cost, as we find, in killed and mortally wounded, on the part of the Besiegers, some Eighty-three persons: on the part of the Besieged, after all that straw-burning, fire-pumping, and deluge of musketry, One poor solitary Invalid, shot stone-dead (*roide mort*) on the battlements! The Bastille Fortress, like the City of Jericho, was overturned by miraculous sound.—*T. Carlyle*

ADAM AND EVE.

ADAM—Well, here we are both out in the wilderness. Those cherubs say they will never let us back again into the garden.

EVE—I don't see how we could have acted so if we had not been possessed by Satan.

ADAM—Oh, why didn't you think of that before? What a splendid excuse it would have been! Plea of sudden insanity and spectral hallucination! Defendants acquitted! Why, we might have been feasting on apples and cocoa-nuts at this moment, instead of having to hunt for acorns among these accursed thistles.

EVE—Do you know, Adam, I am not sure that we are really so much worse off than we were. We were getting lazy, and sickly, and almost stupid in the sleepy garden. It won't hurt us to have to run about, and use our wits a little. Besides, there are our new clothes.

ADAM—Oh, yes, a new dress is worth more than Eden to you. It isn't to me.

EVE—But really now, haven't we gained something? Better have knowledge in the wilderness than ignorance in paradise, say I.

ADAM—Well, at all events, I know enough to rule you. You had your own way in the garden, but now you are put in subjection to me. That's some comfort.

EVE (aside)—We shall see about that. I ate the wonderful fruit before you did. I know how to take care of my rights, and so will my daughters. F.M.H.

“Christianity blinds reason, enfeebles and breaks energy Glorifying contemplation rather than action, and placing the sovereign good in the contempt of oneself and terrestrial things, it enervates society, and tends to make the government of the world pass into the hands of rascals.”—*Niccolo Machiavelli.*

WANTED TO KNOW.

Three years ago Mind Reader J. Randall Brown, who was a witness in the late Bishop case, was giving a series of entertainments at the Grand opera house in San Francisco. On one occasion he gave a seance, and announced that he would produce the spirit of anyone called for.

“Diogenes,” shouted a man from the back of the house. A few moments later raps were heard, and Professor Brown announced that the philosopher's spirit was rapping and would answer any questions asked. An old gentleman in the front row rose very slowly and said:

“You say you have the spirit of Diogenes there?”

“Yes, sir. Do you wish to ask him any questions sir?” replied Mr. Brown.

“Only one; ask him if he has found that honest man yet.”

The laughter which greeted the question broke up the seance for that night.

PROFANE JOKES.

An American preacher, whose congregation had begun to fall off somewhat, had it intimated that he would discuss a family scandal the following Sunday morning. As a consequence, the church was crowded. The minister's subject was Adam and Eve.

Mr. Pewrent: “Your sermon on ‘Economy’ this morning, Doctor, was a very sensible discourse.” Dr. Churchmus: “Thank you; it seems to have been appreciated, from the appearance of the contribution bag.”

Jack accidentally broke a pane of glass in the schoolroom. No one had noticed it, but the poor fellow trembled every time he was spoken to. One Sunday the minister came to examine the boys in the catechism. When the little culprit's turn came, the question was put to him—“Jack who made heaven and earth?” At the sound of his name the boy started, his mind still running on the broken pane, and he replied, “It wasn't me sir.” “It wasn't you?” “Please sir, it *was* me, but I won't do it again.”

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