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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

PRAYING FOR MR. BRADLAUGH.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S illness has shown how wide is the circle of his friends and well-wishers. Who would have thought, at one time, that the redoubted Iconoclast would ever excite such general interest, or be the object of such deep sympathy? Yet although Mr. Bradlaugh was laid low soon after his public debate with the Rev. Marsden Gibson, in which he made the most severe attack on Christianity and the most uncompromising defence of Free-thought, the fact was not allowed to abate the grief or regret with which the public watched his sick-chamber. What a change has taken place in a few years! And what is the explanation? Simply this. The public has learnt what manner of man Mr. Bradlaugh is. His political work has proved his possession of courage, honesty, tact, and signal ability. Religious prejudice has sunk more or less abashed before his acknowledged worth. It reminds us of the sagacious observation of Landor, in concluding that admirable imaginary conversation between David Hume and John Home. "If men," says Hume, "would permit their minds like their children to associate freely together, if they would agree to meet one another with smiles and frankness, instead of suspicion and defiance, the common stock of intelligence and of happiness would be centupled. Probably those two men who hate each other most, and whose best husbandry is to sow burs and thistles in each other's path, would, if they had ever met and conversed familiarly, have been ardent and inseparable friends. The minister who may order my book to be burned by the hangman, if I, by any accident, had been seated yesterday by his side at dinner, might perhaps in another fortnight recommend me to his master, for a man of such gravity and understanding as to be worthy of being a privy councillor, and might conduct me to the treasury bench."

The most curious fact in connection with Mr. Bradlaugh's illness is that prayers were actually offered for his recovery. At Northampton the Rev. R. B. Hull prayed for the sick Atheist in the parish church, and the same proceeding occurred in several of the Nonconformist chapels. Father Ignatius, with whom Mr. Bradlaugh once debated in the Hall of Science, closed an eight days' mission in the Kensington Town Hall by entreating Jehovah to restore the health of his notorious adversary. It certainly speaks well for the hearts of these gentlemen, but they were putting a severe strain on the patience of their deity. They were also guilty of very questionable logic, and a stern critic might remark that they were paying Mr. Bradlaugh an equivocal compliment. The member for Northampton, however, is not the man to despise their prayers if they were well meant; although it is probable that he is thankful he had something better to trust to, such as a strong constitution, friendly and zealous doctors, skilful nursing, and the solicitous care of a devoted daughter. Still, we dare say it will always be an open question with

many pious people, how far Mr. Bradlaugh's recovery is to be attributed to the efficacy of prayer.

Mr. Bradlaugh has warmly espoused the cause of India, and his illness was heard of with profound sorrow by the educated natives. A telegram from Simla stated that "universal prayer" was being offered on his behalf. According to the *Pall Mall Gazette* an Indian gentleman, writing from the Middle Temple, said to a friend—"Some of us have prayed in private for Mr. Bradlaugh's recovery—in the interests of India—and, God willing, he will be restored to health." It is very pathetic, and we dare say Mr. Bradlaugh's eyes will moisten as he reads it. The Indians speak out of grateful hearts, and the language of sincere affection is always touching. But we feel equally sure that Mr. Bradlaugh smiles at the logic of his dusky admirers. "God willing" is a saving clause to prevent accidents. If Mr. Bradlaugh died God would have been "not willing," but since he has recovered God "was willing." Thus the event was left doubtful, in deference to human ignorance; while the saving clause was inserted, in deference to the divine omniscience; for the reputation of the Deity must be saved at any price.

Supposing the existence of a Deity, and his attention to the prayers of his worshippers, what must have been his reflections on hearing these petitions for Mr. Bradlaugh? We can imagine him saying—of course to himself—"Well, now, this is *too* rich! Asking me, forsooth, to do a good turn for a man they used to damn, and who still goes about England proving that I do not exist. Devilish good-natured, no doubt; but a queer compliment to Bradlaugh's intelligence or mine. If they go on in this way, I shall have to drop the faithful and give the Atheists my undivided attention. Perhaps, though, the affair is not so real as it seems. I have answered so few petitions of late years—let me see, when was the last?—and perhaps they begin to look on praying as a poor investment. They may therefore be giving Bradlaugh what is of little use to themselves, and he may exclaim, Thank you for nothing. Else I am puzzled to understand it. They usually think so much of their blessed selves, and have little charity to spare for others; and as for heaping coals upon the infidel's head, I can hardly believe they would do it if they thought the fuel of any use in their own grates. Alas, the times are getting mixed, and I shall soon be unable to discern friends from foes. Confound it! I have half a mind to work a miracle and convert Bradlaugh. I really believe he would be a better missionary than the whole bench of bishops, or Spurgeon, Parker, and Price Hughes rolled into one. Ah! I must think it over. The dynasty is failing, and I must do something to prop my tottering throne."

Let us return to our muttens. Mr. Bradlaugh's illness has not been without its less attractive incidents. Some good Christians thought he was surely dying, and were anxious about his recantation. One of them remarked to a gentleman of our

acquaintance, "Ah, we shall never know what happened. He's sure to recant, but his friends won't let it be known. There ought to be a Christian in the room to see fair play. Poor Bradlaugh! Poor Bradlaugh!" And the pious "wait till you come to die" gentleman was nearly suffocated with emotion. Happily "Poor Bradlaugh" is himself again, or nearly so, and his recantation is indefinitely postponed. May the day be distant when we, or some other Editor of the *Freethinker*, will have to write "Finis" to his life's work. There is plenty of time we hope, to prepare his *Hic Jacet*; and many a brave word and doughty deed to be registered in the roll of his fame.

G. W. FOOTE.

CONVERTING THE CHRISTIANS.

THE world has heard a great deal of converting the heathen, converting the Jews, and converting the infidels. Large organisations, immense enthusiasm, and enormous wealth are devoted to these enterprises. The cry is always for more missions and more money to save the unredeemed from plunging headlong into hell. Yet after being established a good fifteen hundred years, having the sword of the law at its control and not hesitating to use it against its enemies, Christianity cannot even count as its nominal adherents one-third of the population of the globe. What a pitiable position for a religion claiming to be the one exclusively true and only divinely revealed faith! Despised by the very people to whom it was sent—the Jews—whose very existence are a constant testimony to its falsity; rejected by Mahomedans, Brahmins, and Buddhists, and unheeded or unknown by the many, variously classed as Pagans or heathen; the faith which Paul said had been preached to every creature under heaven, is rather receding than making progress.

That the world is ceasing to be Christian, that Christianity is giving way before the agencies which encompass it, will, we think, be evident to anyone who makes an impartial survey. In heathen countries every man is a heathen; but in Christian countries where are the Christians? We boldly assert that Christians are being converted to some of the various forms of Rationalism far more rapidly than the heathen are becoming Christian. Atheists, Agnostics, Pantheists, Deists, Utilitarians, are all engaged in the task of converting the Christians, and though they make no such parade as the missionary societies, they are doing their work a great deal more effectively. There have been no stakes, no fagots, no thumbscrews, no social pressure employed in the service of Freethought. Its conquests have been won against custom, prejudice, law, and social ostracism, by the sole force of reason, education, and science.

Year by year what numbers of Christians are being converted to the views of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Haeckel. In the churches themselves many are giving up the old belief in special creation, and after studying science are forced to exclaim "Thou hast conquered, O Evolution!" It is the same in the domain of criticism. The views of Spinoza, Voltaire, Paine and Colenso now find utterance in the pulpits where many are engaged in sapping the very foundations of the creeds they are paid to support.

Our open Freethought movement, which stands in the van and bears the brunt of the battle, finds everywhere the enemy's flag lowered upon prospect of a pitched battle. Our worst trouble is with the indifferent; our difficulty is finding earnest Christians prepared to defend their creeds. And our movement is extending. There is not a colony now where there are not Secular advocates engaged in converting the Christians. There is hardly a Christian country, with the exception of Russia, where there are not avowed Freethought journals actively engaged in the combat;

and even in Russia the propaganda goes on unceasingly in spite of the censorship. Our movement is a genuine international one, and as it grows its cosmopolitan character will become yet more marked.

Freemasonry is known in England mainly as a compound of guzzle and charity. On the continent, however, it is an active flourishing anti-clerical brotherhood. The Pope, who knows pretty well the condition of affairs, sets it down as distinctly an anti-Christian organisation.

Look at the position of the great head of Christendom. The man to whom the great bulk of Christians look up as to their supreme guide, is daily lamenting that he is a prisoner. The Pope threatens to leave the eternal city, yet does not dare to do so, since he knows that the halo of its past glory is still his strongest weapon. How are the mighty fallen! Here, where kings grovelled in the dust suing to kiss the feet of God's vice-gerent, they have erected the statue of Bruno, the heretic who perished rejecting the cross and Christianity. Who has done this? The Freethinkers of Italy, they foremost, but may we not say the Freethinkers of the world?

We have by no means mentioned the whole of the agencies engaged in the work of converting the Christians. There are, for instance, the Spiritists, who in America number a very considerable following. Although we hold that in some respects their superstition is worse than that of the churches, there can be no doubt that they have contributed largely to destroy the orthodox notions of atonement and of eternal heaven and everlasting hell. Then there are the Theosophists who display great activity, and whose programme is even more distinctly anti-Christian than that of the Spiritists. There is also actually in existence in London a Buddhist Propagandist Society employing a lecturer, himself an English convert, to convert the Christian world to Buddhism. In New York a Buddhist Temple has been erected and numbers many adherents of American birth. The recent visit of the Shah of Persia to Liverpool revealed the fact that there were English Mohammedans in that city, and there are indeed many among the Unitarians quite prepared to admit that, in some respects, the faith of Mohammed is superior to that of orthodox Christianity.

It has been often said that Christians would do well to look at home before sending men and money abroad to convert the heathen. If we are not much mistaken, they will find there is sufficient scope for all their energies if they only set themselves to the task of meeting and grappling with the agencies engaged in the task of converting the Christians.

J. M. WHEELER.

NON-BELIEF IN GOD.

I actually do not know anything of God. But what of it? Is that any reason why I should defraud my neighbour or beat my wife or live only for the gratification of my present desires? What has a belief in God to do with these things? Do you say that I should not do these things because God will punish me if I do? I answer that that is no reason at all why I should not do evil. In the first place, only a bad man fears punishment, and in the second place, to punish anybody is precisely what this hypothetical person that you call God, never does. There are plenty of frauds abroad—political frauds, commercial frauds and religious frauds—men who lie and steal by every known legal method. But God does not punish them. On the contrary, they are the very people who run God's Church and God's State, and who teach people to believe that Infidels are wicked. If you think that God punishes people, why do you use whipping posts and prisons and gibbets to punish them yourselves? Ah, but you say, God punishes mostly in the next world. I answer: that is something you know nothing about, and I, at least, care nothing about. It is enough for me to know that if I do anything that injures myself or my neighbour I make myself unhappy by bringing upon myself perfectly natural evil consequences.—*Ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost.*

LETTERS TO THE CLERGY.—VII.
ON "MIRACLES."

To the Rev. Brownlow Maitland, M.A.

SIR,—I have purchased and very carefully read your little volume on "Miracles" in the "Helps to Belief" series. I cannot say that you have in any way helped my belief; though, perhaps, you may reply that I have no belief to be assisted. On the contrary, I feel more deeply than ever the hopelessness of a cause which has to be defended by subtle shifts and elaborate special pleading. What a difference between your plea for Miracles and the simple, manly, straightforward argument of Paley! I am well aware that the great Archdeacon showed a little of the wisdom of the serpent in his skilful illustrations, and that he sometimes pressed his evidence unduly. But his argument is on the whole an honest one. He appealed to reason and experience, and admitted that, in the last resort, miracles, like everything else, must rest upon adequate evidence. Your treatise, however, is essentially an appeal against reason to faith. Your argument is almost entirely *à priori*, and can therefore have no weight except with those who are already convinced. You devote nearly ninety-three pages to your point of view, to the antecedent objections to miracles, and to the presumption in their favor—all of which Paley dismisses with admirable brevity; and you devote only twenty pages to the direct evidence for the Christian miracles. You give us a large and imposing portico to a small and beggarly house. Three-fourths of your time is employed in drugging the reader's intelligence, so that when he approaches the real question at issue he may be easily deceived. With what contemptuous laughter would a legal advocate be treated, who should spend a whole day in opening his case, and devote an hour or two to the examination of his witnesses! Yet this is precisely the offence of which you are guilty. I am confident that if you conducted your case in this way before any tribunal, however loosely constituted, you would be severely reprimanded for wasting the time of the court, and peremptorily summoned to come to the point.

As though anticipating such a criticism, you assert in your Preface that "the case on behalf of the Christian miracles is considerably simplified by declining to defend them on the ground chosen by the sceptic." No doubt, sir; and the case would be still more simplified by declining to defend them at all. It would be simple and easy to assume the good old orthodox attitude of the days when sceptics were not to be reasoned with, but silenced by the resources of Christian charity. Why not declare at once that Christianity is a divine religion, from battlement to basement; that whosoever believes it will be saved, and whosoever disbelieves it will be damned; that to defend it is absurd, seeing that God will take care of his own; and that the cavils of the sceptic only proceed from his corrupt and sinful heart? But if you cannot take up this attitude, you are bound to meet the sceptic, ay, and on the very ground he chooses; for if you are defending the holy garrison, instead of leaving the task to its divine master, you have no choice but to repel attacks at the very points where they are made. Nothing could be more ludicrous than rushing off to the opposite side, brandishing your weapons with immortal courage, and declaring that, whatever may be going on elsewhere, the citadel is at this point absolutely invulnerable. If I cared for the honor of your Church I might also remind you that it is better to face the enemy than to show him your rear. He will not spare you on account of your cowardice, and if you must fall you should at least fall with dignity.

By declining to meet the sceptic on his own ground you affirm that the miracles of Christianity are "lifted

out of the mechanical into the moral sphere." What is this but saying that they are lifted out of the sphere of reason into the sphere of faith? Your object seems to be to reverse the natural order of things. Instead of proving the foundations to be solid, and afterwards examining the superstructure, you expatiate on the wonderful character of the edifice and argue that it largely guarantees the solidity of the basis. Permit me to say it does nothing of the sort, and to add that no amount of declamation from the windows will prevent the building from tumbling down.

How important is the question of Miracles, and how absurd to treat it with subterfuge, like the ostrich who buries his head to save his body from the hunters! Your own words may be cited against yourself. After pointing out that Christianity is "from beginning to end supernatural," you declare that "the only possible alternatives are—a miraculous Christianity, or no Christianity at all." Reject the miraculous, you say, and "the entire Christian revelation would disappear with it. No Christ would, in that case be left to us. The man Jesus might remain; but the Son of the Father would have vanished, and the Gospel would have shrunk into a fable. Christianity, thus deprived of its cohesion, would fall to pieces, and become numbered with the wrecks of worn-out beliefs." True and forcible words! I heartily agree with you, and I am surprised at your making so feeble a defence for the very life of your faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

HAGGLING WITH AN AUTOMATIC MACHINE.

At Moorgate Street station the other day (says the *Jewish Standard*) a Polish Jew, after a lengthy survey of a penny cigar-selling automatic machine, at last resolved to do business in the new establishment. He accordingly produced a penny from his waistcoat pocket, and was proceeding to put it into the till when a sudden reflection struck him—he had never in his life made a purchase without haggling, and should he commence now? Perhaps the machine would take a halfpenny. Thereupon he took out a halfpenny, dropped it down the slit, and tugged at the drawer in vain. "Vell, vell, if he von't," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Dere, dere's your money!" and he dropped in the other halfpenny. But when the machine still refused to give up its cigar, he stood dumbfounded. While he was in this prostrate condition, blocking up the front of the automatic shop, a swellishly dressed Christian counter-jumper pushed him out of the way, dropped in his penny, and drew out his cigar. "*Shemah Yisroile*" exclaimed the aggrieved customer, "A brand-new invention, and already full of *Rishus* (anti-Semitism)!"

WANTED TO CUT THE DEVIL'S THROAT.

Great excitement was created here (Goochland) to-night during a church meeting by the appearance of Amy Boggs, a small colored girl, in the congregation flourishing a razor. Men, women, and children ran in all directions; some women fainted, others tumbled in the mud, and the girl was soon in possession of the church, her eyes glaring and her slight figure trembling with frenzy. When she had driven the last person from the church she cried out, "Now I want to see the debbil." She was finally overpowered by two constables, and an examination showed that she was in a religious ecstasy and was looking for the devil, whose throat she had undertaken to cut. It was fortunate that the congregation fled before her, as she had been told that the devil was in some people, and she designed cutting them open to get at him.

Mr. John Eddy, president of the Glasgow Trades Council, has been exposing what he calls a most scandalous affair. He went down to Dalry, where 700 work-girls were out on strike. They had been for years "subjected to extraordinary tyranny on the part of their employers, Messrs. Baggart and Co., worsted spinning manufacturers." Some girls who had worked for the firm for years were only receiving 4s. 2½d. per fortnight, and they were fined right and left. The head of the establishment was a clergyman, and two of the four directors were elders of the church,

ACID DROPS.

Mr. Conybeare, instead of libelling Atheists, who cannot be very plentiful in Cornwall, would be more usefully occupied in restraining the exuberance of his own constituents. We read that Mr. Conybeare's friends in the Camborne division showed their appreciation of his "Christian principles" by flinging big stones at Mr. Arthur Strauss, the opposition candidate, and this at an open meeting when he was replying to their questions. One stone, weighing nearly two pounds, struck Mr. Strauss on the head. Atheism may be a gospel of "butchery," but it doesn't approve of throwing stones at your political opponents. Perhaps Mr. Conybeare's supporters had been reading the Bible, and took to *stoning* as a good old practice heartily recommended by Jehovah.

It is being found out, even by the faithful, that the Bible is not fit reading in schools without a good deal of discretion. The Croydon School Board, on the motion of the Rev. C. J. Street, has sent the following letter to the head teachers:—"Dear Sir or Madam,—You are aware that there are passages in most of the historical books of Holy Scripture which it is expedient to quietly omit when giving biblical instruction. The School Management Committee have every reason to believe that you have exercised wise discretion in dealing with such passages in the past, and they confidently rely on your continuing to do so in the future."

The row between the Mohammedans and Brahmins at Madras is followed by a different kind of squabble. Some native Christians have laid a charge against a number of Hindoos of performing a drama in which Christianity was obscenely ridiculed. Thus in Madras, as elsewhere, religion is the great principle of discord and division. Most men, as Swift said, have just enough religion to make them hate each other.

God in Business is the title of a volume just published by Nisbet and Co. What business, we wonder, is the old gentleman gone in for now? Is the bread-of-life trade getting played out, and has he found betimes a new investment for his enterprise?

H. Gulliford, a Christian missionary in India, writes in the *British Weekly* that he interviewed Commissioner Tucker at the Salvation Army headquarters in India, and tried hard to get a definite statement from him as to (1) the number of converts, and (2) the number of his European workers who had died or been invalidated. He failed to get any plain answer, and draws unsatisfactory conclusions as to the work of the S. A. in India.

Mr. Gulliford says: "My conviction is (1) that the Salvation Army has not succeeded in rescuing 100 converts from heathenism proper in India; (2) there has been a very large amount of illness and death among the European workers." He asks "General" Booth to get the necessary information and publish it to the world. Mr. Gulliford must be a very sanguine man.

Dissatisfaction is being expressed at the words of the Rev. Mr. Hunter, who, in addressing the Congregational Union at Hull, condemned "That lazy, stupid trust in something done in Palestine 1850 years ago." What a flattering reference to the Atonement! We think of asking Mr. Hunter to do something for our Christmas number.

"Good bye, and may God bless you," said James Hay, a shipbroker's clerk at Newport, in a letter to a friend before committing suicide. Evidently *not* an Atheist, Mr. Talmage!

An Edinburgh gentleman writes to the press against the church-bell nuisance. "My child," he says, "lay still and asleep in its little bed, and for the first time for many days I fondly hoped that he was on the safe road to recovery. One thing he needed, and that was quiet. Shortly before 11 a.m. a hideous crash made my heart leap with anxiety, and my poor boy awoke, wailing with fear and pain." This gentleman asks why the clergy are allowed to monopolise the privilege of advertising themselves on Sunday

by discordant bell-ringing, and whether any man in his senses thinks that such banging pleases God?

There is more Bible and more Beer to the square yard in Liverpool than in any other city in England. Yet the Christian Evidence Society selects this very city to send an agent to for the defence of the faith. As Byron says, truth is strange, stranger than fiction.

The Rev. C. Garrett, a well-known Wesleyan minister at Liverpool has been preaching at Bath. He described the Bible as "a letter sent from a loving Father to his children," telling them that most of them will be roasted for ever. Of course the Rev. C. Garrett did not mention this little item. Oh dear no. He said, the Bible showed three things, viz., that the Creator was an infinitely loving Father, that Christ was our God and Savior, and that it was sent to make people glad. In short he gave them a good dose of the gospel of treacle without even a smell of the brimstone behind.

Talmage's Tabernacle was insured for 120,000 dollars. He, however, puts the damage by the fire at 150,000. The first sum he takes from the insurance companies. For 100,000 more he trusts to the Lord—that is, he expects his wealthy friends to make him a better place than ever. This is the second time the Brooklyn Tabernacle has been burnt, its predecessor having been destroyed in 1872. Evidently the Lord has an objection to the place. Yet Talmage says: "I ask all readers of my sermons the world over to contribute as far as their means will allow." If Talmage raises the 220,000 dollars, he will probably see the hand of the Lord in the destruction of his Tabernacle, though at the same time some dwelling houses were destroyed, where the poor people, for whom he makes no appeal, were uninsured.

Jehovah seems to have squared his mistake in burning Talmage's tabernacle by consuming the hall in which Mr. J. D. Shaw, the brave and talented editor of the *Independent Pulpit* had been delivering his weekly lectures. Mr. Shaw has done good work in Texas, and we regret to hear that the place was only partially insured.

At the Chichester Diocesan Conference the Bishop of the Diocese railed against the Liberals who desire to see the influence of the Clergy diminished in the matter of education. He said "there were none so fanatical as the thorough unbeliever, and none so intolerant as the thorough Liberal." As the statement, according to the report was greeted with "Oh, oh, laughter and applause," it seems that the bishop's bigotry does not commend itself entirely to the whole of his own flock.

Messrs. Hogben and Middleton have been conducting a twelve-days' mission in Little Wild Street, Drury Lane. Mr. Middleton seems to be the Sankey of this holy couple, being down on the bills for "beautiful solo singing and cornet playing." Hogben, we suppose, does the beautiful preaching. On the back of their bills is an ingenious colored picture of the Middleton-Hogben plan of salvation. Some excellent forked lightning plays round the top of Mount Sinai, at the foot of which stand in natural contiguity some drinking shops and a barn-shaped Bethel, from the last of which a special train runs to the New Jerusalem. Many other trains are running, but all their routes lead to Hell, which is situated in the left corner, and well supplied with fire. One of these routes is marked "Morality," and leads to the very bottom of Hell, where the red-hot coals are thickest. According to the Middleton-Hogben plan you must go to Heaven by one route. The starting-station is a gospel-shop, of course; and all the passengers are soused in a blood-bath before taking their seats. Anybody who thinks of getting to heaven by being as good as he can, without making a fuss about it, is very much mistaken. Morality leads to Hell. Well, then, there is some capital company in Hell; and it is a comforting reflection that the Middleton-Hogben set will be in the other place.

Miss Eliza Grove, the writer of a pamphlet entitled *A Beam for Mental Darkness*, and printed by the inmates of the Earlwood Asylum, makes the following statement:—"It is a beautiful truth, and one that cannot be too widely known, that the mind of the idiot is more susceptible of

religious impressions than any other." Miss Grove speaks from experience, and we believe she is quite right. Whether the "truth" is "beautiful" or not, we are sure it "cannot be too widely known."

There is to be a new bishopric (Brecon and Swansea) in Wales, with an endowment of £2,000 a year. What a fortunate thing that Cashier Judas didn't have such a revenue as that to deal with; otherwise he would never have ratted for "thirty bob," and Jesus Christ would have been obliged to go about asking somebody to have the goodness to murder him in order that five per cent of the human race might be saved.

Archdeacon Farrar has placed a hall at the service of the Natural Living Society. What a joke! Why, the Archdeacon himself belongs to the Unnatural Living Society, only he hasn't the honesty to practise its precepts.

If the Bible is inspired the Peculiar People are the chief members of the Natural Living Society. Two of these people, Mr. and Mrs. South, of 35 Orient Street, West Square, Southwark, were sternly denounced at the Coroner's Court on Thursday, October 24, for letting their baby boy die of convulsions without calling in a doctor. They followed Jesus and St. James, and went in for prayer and anointing, although they had lost three children before under the same regimen. The coroner said it was "tempting Providence," and the jury actually returned a verdict of manslaughter. Had the case ended there it would have been a splendid farce. But the coroner interposed, and told the jury that such a verdict would be quashed in a higher court, where the Bible would of course be upheld at the expense of common sense and humanity. Thereupon the jury brought in a verdict of natural death, adding a rider which strongly censured the parents and stated that the matter "should be brought under the notice of the Public Prosecutor." The couple of true Christians then left the court amid the hisses of the professed Christians on the jury, all of whom would probably have found us guilty of "blasphemy" for attacking the book whose injunctions these persons had honestly carried out, and for doing which they were soundly hissed.

An *Academy* reviewer, Mr. Frederick Hawkins, indulges in a great license of defamation with respect to Thomas Paine, whom he describes as "that dissolute but clever demagogue." We defy Mr. Hawkins to give the slightest original authority for this outrageous statement. If "dissolute" means lewd or licentious, there never was a more ridiculous slander. The word "demagogue" is also absurd when applied to Paine. He never wrote for money, every one of his writings being issued at a price calculated to cover the bare cost of publication; and what power or position could he hope to gain by pleading for the Rights of Man in England? As a matter of fact he risked his neck, which certainly would have been stretched by the hangman if he had not fled to France.

Mr. Hawkins is so prejudiced against Paine that he actually sneers at "his self-imposed task of answering" Burke. Carlyle would have called this "clotted hosh." Did not Burke himself fulfil a self-imposed task in writing against the Revolution? What on earth does Mr. Hawkins mean? Are we to understand that Burke was elected to write the *Reflections*, and that whoever answered him should have been elected too? If this is what he means he is guilty of downright folly; and if this is not what he means he is guilty of downright nonsense.

What ineffable silliness is evinced in Mr. Hawkins' remark that Paine was a "a bitter enemy of existing institutions!" The phrase is absolutely meaningless. As for Paine's "coarse ridicule," we can only suggest that Mr. Hawkins should try his hand at answering the *Age of Reason*. He might also, before doing that, make himself acquainted with the virulent abuse which Christian controversialists have heaped upon every leading Freethinker.

Mr. Hawkins is good enough to allow that Paine had "intermittent flashes of literary power." Surely it would be impossible to choose a more inappropriate word than "intermittent." The distinctive quality of Paine's writing is its vivid and sleepless intelligence. This power is manifest

less in special passages than in the volume of his argument although we are far from denying his occasional happy images and illustrations. William Hazlitt's opinion of Paine's style is preferable to Mr. Hawkins's even without the corroboration of John Morley. We have heard, too, from an old Freethinker who knew Landor at Florence, that this mighty master of style had the highest admiration for Paine's simple, lucid and forcible English.

The Rev. John McNeill has been preaching on Preaching, and according to the report "he created much laughter by telling his hearers that he would sell them his fifty-two volumes of Calvin very cheap, while they might have his John Owen almost for the carrying away." Poor Calvin! Poor Owen! Oh what a fall was there! The seraphic doctors of logical stupidity are falling into such disrepute that only a preacher here and there, like Spurgeon, has a good word to say for them. We begin to pity the poor unlucky creatures, though we would rather have the toothache for fifty-two days than read Calvin's fifty-two volumes, unless we could do them in very leisurely instalments—say a page in a century.

Even the great Dr. McCosh—sometimes profanely called M'Bosh—is all for a revision of the Confession of Faith. He finds that some of the best and soundest young men are deterred from entering the ministry by the good old doctrine of everlasting damnation, or as he politely calls it "the absence of the complete recognition of the infinite love and mercy of God." Yes, damnation is dying hard, but it is dying. The brimstone is going, and nothing but the treacle will soon be left.

The Rev. John Robertson, of Edinburgh, whose religious antics afford spiritual consolation and comfort to many of the "unco guid" north of the Tweed, is occasionally very candid and outspoken in reference to himself. In addressing a Church soiree lately, he said that his importunity in asking the time shamed his congregation into presenting him with a gold watch. He had also thought that a house would be an advantage to him, and imagined that it would likewise come in the shape of a present, but it didn't.

In evident explanation of his own performances, he told his audience that he had once asked a friend, "How do you address a church soiree, man?" "Well," was the reply, "just go and make a fool of yourself and you'll get on fine." The Rev. John has faithfully carried out the advice here given, and the success which has followed shows the gullibility of the canny Scots.

When this religious clown is in want of anything he takes it to the Lord, and he says that it is invariably sent. Even clothes are procured by him in this way. It is to be hoped that when he next petitions for a suit the Lord will not omit to send him a straight jacket.

"Ministers," says John, "spend eight or nine years just going round the backs of the Bible, finding what kind of leather the boards were made of, and how flexible they were." Perfectly true, John. You occasionally deviate into common sense.

The Bishop of St. Asaph appeals to the English people for subscriptions for the Welsh clergy, who, it is alleged, are in great distress from want of tithes. The fact in itself is sufficient condemnation of the Church in Wales. If the Welsh Churchmen are as numerous as represented, they are surely wealthy enough to support their own clergy without appealing for English assistance.

That dapper young humbug, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, speaking at the second anniversary of the West London Mission, said: "They thought if Christianity could not prevent war, it was an organised hypocrisy." Well, Christianity has had a fair run of at least fifteen hundred years, and, so far from preventing war, has given rise to more wars than any other religion whatever. Yes, Mr. Hughes, it is an organised hypocrisy, and you are one of its most prominent supporters.

The Rev. Percy George Benson, vicar of Hoo, has been suspended from his clerical functions for a year for refusing to administer the sacrament to a parishioner on the ground

that she was guilty of "the sin of schism" in attending a Wesleyan chapel.

The Rev. G. Garrett has been preaching a great deal of nonsense at Farnworth. He actually cited Carlyle as an authority against man's relationship to the ape, as though a literary man, however great his genius, were any authority on what is purely a question of science. The reverend gentleman went on to remark that a number of "infidels," including Colonel Ingersoll, met the other day round the grave of a Freethinker in New York and the great orator could give them "no hope." Perhaps Mr. Garrett will tell us how he learned that they expected any, or wanted any. Finally, the reverend gentleman dragged in Professor Huxley, whom he represented as looking to death with grave misgiving. It is evident that Mr. Garrett possesses some imagination, but little logic, and less accuracy.

Godliness is profitable for the life that now is as well as for the life that is to come, as is proved by the case of John Macdonald, of Glasgow. Having received a large quantity of stolen platinum of the value of £350, he was detected and prosecuted; but the judges gave him a lenient sentence of less than twelve months in consequence of his being "well thought of by his clergyman." It is evident, therefore, that any young man who is bent on being dishonest should go to church and cultivate the friendship of a sky-pilot, in order that when the pinch comes he may prove the truth of the adage that a friend in need is a friend indeed.

Mrs. Besant's conversion from Atheism to Theosophy is a source of jubilation to the Rev. A. Farquharson, Unitarian minister, of Oldham. This gentleman has preached a sermon on the subject, in which he says little or nothing about the distinctive features of Theosophy—its Mahatmas, astral appearances, reincarnations, and so forth. He chooses to dwell on the fact that Mrs. Besant now believes in God, and as that is about the full extent of the advanced Unitarian creed, Mr. Farquharson hails the lady as a sister in the faith. Well, we have no right to grumble, and we don't. But we have a right to remind Mr. Farquharson that he is not the judge of how Secularists should regard Mrs. Besant's movements. A very little reflection ought to show him that what pleases *him* can hardly be a source of satisfaction to *them*. For the rest, we have simply to observe that Mr. Farquharson talks unmitigated nonsense in saying that Mrs. Besant is insulted and persecuted by Freethinkers. The reverse of this statement is much nearer the truth.

Colonel Olcott is not an exhilarating speaker. He is less "inspired" than any other "oracle" we ever heard of. Still, he keeps pegging away, with a devotion worthy of a better cause. Not satisfied with spreading the light of Theosophy in London, he has gone over to Dublin, and given the Irish a taste of his parish-pump oratory. After the lecture he was severely heckled. One auditor asked him, "What are the opinions of the Society as a body?" and the Colonel replied "It has no opinions whatever, sir (fierce applause from the faithful), except that there are certain things worth disseminating, for instance, the brotherhood of man." Bye-and-bye the questions came too hot and thick, so the Colonel siezed his hat and umbrella and intimated that he had had enough of it. But before he left the hall, and the audience of a hundred and fifty people, he was roundly denounced by an old lady who brandished a well-worn gingham. This was the comic part of the entertainment; and, after all, Colonel Olcott's dull oratory requires a little relief.

Colonel Olcott told the Irishmen that they could become Theosophists and retain their old religious beliefs. You could be a Theosophist and a Catholic, a Theosophist and a Protestant, a Theosophist and a Jew, a Theosophist and a Buddhist, a Theosophist and a Brahmin, a Theosophist and anything. It appears that Theosophy is not intended to interfere with the regular practitioners in religion or their pharmacopœia. It is a kind of patent medicine to be taken over and above the ordinary drugs, and warranted to co-operate with them, or at least not to quarrel.

Oh ye gods and little fishes! Did ever such contemptible humbug as this parade itself in a scientific suit of clothes,

backed up by an umbrella? Colonel Olcott is a well-meaning man, but his swallow is as wide as the whale's that took in Jonah. Down at Hatcham, the other day, the poor man remarked that he had seen his own spirit some distance in front of him. And this is the stuff with which Mrs. Besant is going to regenerate the world, and, above all, to illuminate the benighted materialists of the National Secular Society.

By the way, it did not occur to any of Colonel Olcott's auditors to ask him how he felt when he saw himself out of himself. There were two Richmonds in the field, and we should like to know how the Colonel decided which was which. Did the body go away from the spirit, or the spirit away from the body? Did the body recognise the spirit, or the spirit recognise the body? Did—did—. But why go on? All these *dids* will only end in *diddling*.

We gather from the *West Sussex Gazette* that Jesus Christ has just married a pretty, innocent-looking English girl of some seventeen or eighteen summers. The ceremony came off with the utmost *éclat* at the Roman Catholic convent near Arundel. The bride and bridesmaids were dressed in white satin, but no description is given of the bridegroom, who seems indeed to have been represented by a crucifix, which was kissed and embraced by the bride. As the bride shortly after had her hair cut short, and was put in a grated cell in the coarse brown dress of the order of St. Clare, we trust there will be few girls so foolish as to follow her example, and quit good friends to be immured with a wooden husband.

The Edinburgh Art Congress opened on Sunday with prayer in St. Giles's Cathedral and a special sermon by the Rev. Professor Flint. There is something very amusing in this clerical patronage of art, and something very mean in the servility of the artists who permit it. The clergy are not able to do anything themselves, but they insist on getting credit out of other people's labors. The artist works hard at his picture, and when it is finished the parson steps in "to bless it and approve it with a text."

Professor Flint went in for a North British parody of Archdeacon Farrar's sentimental oratory. He said, for instance, that God was the greatest artist, whose palette was the sun, and brush the sunbeam—a confusion of imagery which is worthy of a thorough-bred Hibernian. Surely the artists of Scotland must have fidgetted on their seats while listening to such stuff. They, at any rate, ought to know that the most beautiful landscape depends on the human eye and the brain behind it, which makes the picture. And how they must have guffawed internally when the reverend professor expatiated on the sublime truth that the man who would be a great artist must be virtuous and religious. Some of them, at least, must have thought of Raphael and his mistresses, including La Fornarina, whose beauty he immortalised. We are far from saying anything against virtue, but it is ludicrous to imagine Art being cultivated under the auspices of Scotch Presbyterianism, and stimulated by the sermons of Professor Flint.

The Rev. Benjamin Waugh, Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, read a paper before the Baptist Union at Birmingham on "Child Life in England." He drew a terrible picture of many cases of fiendish cruelty to children, and urged the necessity of more stringent law. He observed that to hear cases for children he would always rather a lawyer on the bench than a Sunday-school teacher. Indeed, as a correspondent remarks, his paper was a public confession of the signal failure of the theologic religion to "secure" parental humanity and an equally candid advocacy of *secular* force as a substitute. Yet the Churches uncompromisingly insist upon theologic belief as the necessary basis of morals. Is such inconsistency delusion or hypocrisy, or both?

The Church will not tolerate a man with a gospel that is against the interests of the rich. I have absolutely no respect for the Church. She is a shameless hypocrite. She is neither ashamed to stone her prophets nor to glorify them after she has washed their blood from her hands.—*Ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost.*

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 3, Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham, at 11, "Let Us Pray"; at 3, "Follies of Theosophy"; at 6.30, "Is there a God?"

Monday, November 4, Temperance Hall, Raunds, at 7.45, "Why I Reject Miracles."

Nov. 10, Camberwell; 17, Hall of Science, London; 24, Huddersfield.

Dec. 1, Camberwell; 8, Nottingham; 15, Portsmouth; 22, Milton Hall, London; 29, Hall of Science, London.

Jan. 5 and 12, 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.

H. B. PRICE.—We have sent Mr. Conybeare a copy of our open letter, and we shall be happy to publish any reply he may send us. Pleased to have your good opinion.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, and if possible *Supernatural Religion*. There are many works on special branches of the subject.

L. KEEN.—We cannot deal with such unpleasant matters in these columns, which have not been used to give currency to the report you complain of.

EDWARD COX.—Probably they think silence the best policy. We cannot make them reply.

E. ANDERSON.—We regret to hear that the West Ham Branch is not supported as you think it might be. We commend it to the attention of all Freethinkers in the district.

JAS. NEATE, secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, 385 Bethnal Green Road, will be glad to enrol any member of the defunct Central London Branch residing in that part of the East-end.

W. C. SAVILLE.—We should have been glad of it earlier. It is rather behind date now.

A LOST ONE gives us an account of how the *Freethinker* is devoured by some and scorned by others at the dining-rooms of Mr. W. H. Taylor in Whitecross Street. Mr. Taylor, who is a Freethinker, places it on the tables himself. Our correspondent says the most intelligent-looking workmen pick it up and stick to it till they have no more time to read. He thinks a good deal could be done in this way to spread our literature amongst the people.

FREETHINKER.—Thanks for cutting.

J. P.—We have noticed the report of Col. Olcott's Irish expedition.

H. J. BAILEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. J. M.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

P. M. (Woolwich).—We dealt with the beer-selling Bishops last week.

R. WHITTLE.—The reverend gentleman, we are quite sure, entirely misrepresents Professor Huxley. Why not write and ask him what book or article of Huxley's he quotes from? It is all-important to have the exact words, and also the context.

H. CALASCA.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

W. R.—Glad to hear our letters to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Mr. Conybeare were so relished. The Liverpool Freethinkers ought to congratulate themselves on Mr. Wise's activity.

J. A. STANHOPE.—Who will trouble about the "conversion" of such small fry?

SECLARIST.—Of course the nebular theory is quite incompatible with the Creation story in Genesis.

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.—Northampton Nonconformist—La Raison—Secular Thought—El Herald (Valparaiso)—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—New York Press—Liberator—Oldham Evening Chronicle—Chat—Boston Investigator—Referec—Western American—Star—Der Arme Teufel—Freethought—Farnworth Weekly Journal—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Indian Methodist Times—The American—Barnet Press—West Sussex Gazette—Nottingham Evening News—Bath Argus—Freidenker—Twentieth Century—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Shields Gazette—Shields Daily News—Secular Thought.

THE SWEDISH PROSECUTIONS.

WE regret to announce that Mr. Lennstrand's appeal to the King of Norway and Sweden has proved fruitless. He is now immured in prison, being committed on two prosecutions for three months each, and he expects sentences on three more accusations, which are only too likely to terminate in an additional three months for each case, making fifteen months in all. Mr. Lennstrand is as undaunted as ever. He lectured on Oct. 27, the day before his imprisonment, and will, we are glad to hear, be able to edit the *Fritänkaren* from his prison. His address is Langholmens, Kronohakte, Stockholm, and he will, we believe, be able to receive letters.

SUGAR PLUMS.

WE are happy to report that Mr. Bradlaugh is recovering from his illness. He is recommended to take a sea voyage to recruit his strength as soon as possible. His friends will all hope to see him back in time for his parliamentary duties. We suppose Australia is too far off, but there are many Freethinkers and Radicals out there who long to see Mr. Bradlaugh.

SINCE the preceding paragraph was written we have learnt that Mr. Bradlaugh has decided to visit India. He hopes to be able to start on November 14, and to attend the National Congress in Bombay.

DESPITE the unfavorable weather there was a very good audience at Milton Hall on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote. We hope the N.W. London Branch will throw as much energy as possible into the winter campaign. At present, we hear, too much of the work is allowed to fall upon two or three of the Committee. If every member of the Branch were to do *something* there would soon be a great change for the better.

MANY friends have congratulated Mr. Foote on his reply to Madame Blavatsky. The *New Cagliostro* contains an account of that lady's doings in India, and of the wonderful Wise Men of the East with whom she pretends to be in mysterious communication.

THE Finsbury Branch holds a meeting in the minor Hall of Science this morning (Nov. 3) at 11.30. The secretary will be glad to enrol any members of the defunct Central London Branch who happen to reside in the district.

MR. SAM STANDRING is lecturing at Edmonton every Sunday evening in November. The Branch has secured a hall that will hold about 500 people. It has been newly decorated, and we hope it will be well patronised.

MR. R. FORDER visits Bristol to-day (Nov. 3) for the purpose of re-forming the Branch. He will meet the members and all Freethinkers who care to attend in the side room of St. James's Hall, Cumberland Street, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Forder is acting under the instructions of the Organisation Committee, and we hope the Freethinkers of Bristol will rally round him.

WE see from *Secular Thought* that Mr. Charles Watts has been lecturing to a crowded house in Toronto on "Theosophy—with special reference to Mrs. Besant's conversion." It is pleasant to observe that he spoke in the highest terms of Mrs. Besant's character and abilities. According to the report he "paid a glowing tribute to Messrs. Bradlaugh and Foote." It is evident that Mrs. Besant's conversion has caused a good deal of excitement in Canada. *Secular Thought* promises to deal at length with Mr. Foote's "very ably written" pamphlets on the subject.

MR. SAMUEL LAING'S new volume, *Problems of the Future*, is now out, and like *Modern Science and Modern Thought* is largely occupied with summarising scientific progress and scientific conclusions.

A LONG review of the answer of the author of *Supernatural Religion* to Bishop Lightfoot occupies the columns

of the *Jewish World* (Oct. 25), and is evidently written by a competent critic and scholar. His conclusion is that "it must be confessed that Dr. Lightfoot cuts a sorry figure in the controversy with his antagonist, who is easily victorious all along the line."

DURING the past week the capital library of the late James Cotter Morison has been sold by Messrs. Hodgson and Sons, Chancery Lane. The library was specially rich in works on French history and literature, and from its dispersal we presume the work of Mr. Morison on that subject will never be completed. There was a good sprinkling of Freethought works, from those of Toland to Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*, and choice editions of Voltaire, Hume, Grote, etc. Altogether it was a splendid collection, which we hope has found its way into the hands of those who know how to use it.

WE are glad to see that the Freethinkers at the military station in Dum-Dum, India, are keeping the ball rolling. One of them has a bit of his letter inserted, with long editorial comments, in the *Indian Methodist*; and this is followed by an open letter to Colonel Ingersoll from the pen of the Rev. J. A. Macdonald, the Wesleyan chaplain.

THE *Freidenker* of Milwaukee is giving a list of Bible contradictions, compiled by Carl Derossi the German translator of Douwes Dekker.

Notes and Queries for October 26 inserts a long letter from the indefatigable pen of W. J. Birch on the old Christian story of the Mahomedans having destroyed the Alexandrian library. As Mr. Birch points out, there is no authority for this calumny within 600 years of the alleged event, and indeed no proof that any library existed at Alexandria after it was destroyed by the Christians in 389, as related in *Crimes of Christianity*.

THE *New Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt* begins a series of papers on the Testament of Curé Meslier, the priest who renounced Christianity last century. It also give Dr. Rüd't's discourse on Bruno's Philosophy, and an account of Etienne Dolet, another hero and martyr of Freethought.

IN his new work, *The Future of Science*, M. Renan is said to prophesy a speedy exit to faiths which do not conform to the reign of reason.

MR. L. K. WASHBURN, in assuming the editorial conduct of the *Boston Investigator*, says "Holding that pure mental freedom is impossible while Christianity, as an ecclesiastical power, remains in the world, I shall fight this enemy of mankind, at all times, as a duty which I owe to my race." This pledge should rally all earnest American Freethinkers round the good old paper.

THE following *bon mot* has been attributed to the late Horace Seaver. Asked the difference between Universalists and Unitarians he said, "Universalists think there is a God too good to damn them. Unitarians think they are too good to be damned."

EQUADOR is the last American Republic to throw off the clerical control of its politics, and we rejoice to see that its new president has taken steps to notify that the subordination of the State to the Church is to cease in the country he governs. Like all countries where the priests have had sway, Equador is in a backward state in regard to education. But, as we recently announced, Freethought has at last made its appearance, and the clericals will gradually be driven to a back seat.

THE following advertisement appears in a Christian paper: "ANXIETY OF SOUL.—Any to whom the way of salvation is not clear, are invited to communicate, either personally or by letter, to W. S., care of Evangelistic Secretary, Exeter Hall, Strand, W.C." Some of our 'anxious' readers may communicate with "W. S.," with a view to seeing if there is any balm in Gilead—or Exeter Hall.

AN IMPOSSIBLE CREED.

FREETHINKERS have always contended that Christianity is an impossible religion. Society would speedily dissolve if the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount were reduced to practice. This is a truth which has enlisted the support of the Bishop of Peterborough. Summing up a discussion on Socialism at the Leicester Diocesan Conference, he declared his "firm belief that any Christian State carrying out in all its relations the Sermon on the Mount could not exist for a week." He said it was "perfectly clear that a State could not continue to exist upon what were commonly called Christian principles." We thank the Bishop for this candid admission. What we have been saying week after week is now repeated from the episcopal bench. It is true his lordship still holds that Christianity is a very excellent system, although it cannot be carried out in actual life; nor is it at all likely that he will resign his handsome salary for a mere difference between theory and practice. But the world will notice that, in the Bishop of Peterborough's view, Christianity is simply a set of pious opinions, which may be preached from the pulpit and professed with the lips, but which would wreck society if brought down to the level of experiment. No wonder the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is up in arms against this terrific admission. He expresses his "astonishment" at the Bishop's rather cynical candor, and declares, in the sight of gods and men, as well as Wesleyan sisters, that "if this episcopal utterance be true Mr. Herbert Spencer's dictum that Christianity is played out is correct." He admits that the majority of Christians act on the principle enunciated by Bishop Magee, but he did not expect to see the day when an English Bishop would boldly confess the impossibility of obeying Jesus Christ. He considers that it is because Christians do not obey Christ that Gambetta, Garibaldi, and Bradlaugh took the position which Christians ought to have occupied in those three nations. Mr. Hughes went on to attack the plain-spoken Bishop on account of his taking £5,000 a year for preaching impossible principles, and the Wesleyan audience cheered their champion lustily. For our part, however, we incline to side with the Bishop. He makes his confession, and sticks to his salary until it is taken from him. Mr. Hughes, on the other hand, sticks to his salary without making his confession. He pretends to believe in the practicability of the Sermon on the Mount, but he makes no real attempt to carry it out. We defy him to do so for a single day. Both the Bishop and Mr. Hughes are humbugs, but the Bishop is the less distasteful of the two, for he makes a clean breast of the business, and is entitled to say "Ladies and gentlemen, you see there is no deception." G. W. F.

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 contents-sheets, 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.

EVE AND THE APPLE.

Eve, one morning fine and bright,
Was watering her flowers by the light
Of "Old Sol" as he rose from his ocean bed;
When what should she see, with fear and dread,
But the Devil, under a serpent's form,
Crawling about in the sunlight warm,
In her favorite cabbage bed.

"Get out! you varmint," quick she cried,
And fell at him her trowel shied.
But Lucifer laughed and said, "Good morrow,
Dear Madam Eve; I'm full of sorrow
To think I should never have told you that
These apples up here as big as a hat
Are regular 'Newtown Pippins.'"

"But," Eve replied, in tones of dread,
"God said if we ate 'em he'd strike us dead."
"Ha! ha!" laughed Satan, "all nonsense! Here
Is one I've peeled, just try it, my dear."
So Eve took a bite, and finding it nice,
Surrounded the apple in a trice—

Then asked his snakeship to peel some more.

Having eaten her fill, she thought, kind madam,
She would take a dozen or so to Adam;
So she filled a basket with some of the best,
And of her "worst half" was going in quest,
When whom should she meet, driving four-in-hand,
But Adam cutting a swell in the land,

And she jumped in the dog-cart beside him,

"Oh! Adam, my love," soon remarked his mate,
"A more delicious fruit I never ate
Than these apples from the forbidden tree,
And I want you to eat some—just to please me."
So Adam, though he valued his life,
Was unable to cross his darling wife
And got outside of a dozen.

They then left the carriage and, under the trees,
Sat down to enjoy themselves at ease.
They finished the apples down to the core,
When Beelzebub wanted to peel some more;
But Adam thought they had had enough,
So you see the old boy was "up to snuff"

And didn't want to get cholera morbus.

"Au revoir," said Old Nick and took himself off,
When Adam remarked with a gentle cough,
"My life, my soul, perhaps you're aware,
If invited out, we've nothing 'to wear.'"
At the truth, conveyed by such subtle hint,
Eve's fair face rivaled the sunset's tint,
And she wished for a tailor-made suit.

"There no crying for spilt milk;"
So as they'd neither cotton nor silk,
From the leaves of the fig-tree, clean and bright,
They soon constructed some garments slight,
Which they donned with all conceivable haste,
And voted the Devil a man of taste,
As the author of dress reform.

About this time—'twas the afternoon—
The Lord was expected very soon,
To make his customary rounds,
And see that all was O. K. in the grounds;
Our great progenitor, under a tree,
Was musing on mutability
When he saw his creator enter.

"Adam, where art thou?" remarked the Lord
In a voice that cut like a two-edged sword.
"I hain't ate no apples," Adam replied,
For his conscience smote him, and, so, he lied;
"Then," said the Lord, in tones of wrath,
"What means those peelings out in the path?"
Eve sighed and adjusted her bustle.

Then Adam pleaded the baby act,
Jim-Jams, accessory after the fact;
Turned State's evidence, tried to lie,
Wanted to prove an alibi;
Told how he was tempted, told it well;
But the Lord only tolled his chestnut bell,
And found for the plaintiff—with costs.

W. E. P. FRENCH.

NEW RELIGION IN RUSSIA.

You are already aware, says the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Daily News*, that the Archbishop of Odessa and Kherson, a few days ago, when Odessa celebrated its centenary, delivered a speech in which he spoke somewhat severely of the Russian peasants. Archbishop Nikanor declared openly that "the Orthodox Russian peasants are in almost everything inferior not only to the Lutherans, but also to the Jews and Tartars living amongst them," and he thinks that this regrettable state of affairs is due to the fact that so many hundred thousand peasants in Southern Russia are converts from the orthodox Church, and he concluded his long and interesting speech by warning everyone against the *Stundists*. This speech has again directed general attention to the powerful religious movement known as *Stunda*, whose adherents already number at least five millions. It is difficult or impossible to tell where this movement originated, and who was its founder. It is more than thirty years old, and probably the first impulse was given to it by the German colonists in Southern Russia, not directly by propaganda, but indirectly. The orthodox Church, which has always been strongly supported by the police, has from the first paid great attention to the movement, but has never succeeded in discovering its prophets. At first the police was simple enough to think it possible to stop the movement by a generous use of prisons and the knout, but it soon learned that these measures had quite the opposite effect; and since then the *Stunda* has spread irresistibly even beyond the southern provinces. Nor is this to be wondered at, for a remarkable change takes place with the orthodox peasant, who adheres to "the new doctrine." He gives up drinking, he is better dressed, his manners are better, he becomes a better workman, and he soon gathers a little fortune. The new doctrine is really nothing but a somewhat modified Lutheranism, and it has happened very often that the *Stundists* call themselves Lutherans. They will not have anything to do with the orthodox Church, but yet they are generous enough to give the *popes* what they want for their existence, although only on condition that they do not preach against the new believers, Archbishop Nikanor stated in his speech that many of the orthodox churches of his diocese have for several years been completely empty. Many of the more intelligent orthodox priests think that the time is not far off when the Russian Church will be overthrown by the *Stunda*. The Government is not able to combat the steadily increasing movement. Only one measure might, perhaps, prove effective—religious liberty, but the government has not the courage to grant it.

FASTIDIOUS PARSONS.

A thousand members of the Church Congress were entertained by residents in and near Cardiff during the recent meeting, which is the largest number of guests ever known, so that Cardiff has beaten every other place at which the Congress has met in the matter of hospitality. Some of the members appear to be most exacting, not to say remarkably impudent, people. Residents who had invited perfect strangers to their houses, through the intervention of the Reception Committee, received most extraordinary letters from their unknown guests. One member, in accepting the invitation, requested his host and hostess to make it their business to see that his bed was perfectly aired, and a good fire lighted in his room every day, and announced that he would bring a servant who perfectly understood all his other requirements. Another wrote that he could sleep only on a feather bed, and stipulated that the piano should not be played during his stay. Another demanded a spring mattress, and intimated that it was his custom invariably to sit up smoking till two in the morning. Another required chops and kidneys for breakfast every morning, and objected to any one in the house smoking. I should have put these last two together and have let them fought the matter out.—*Truth*.

A clergyman, being busy, said to his little son: "Freddie, you trouble me this afternoon; you seem like nothing but a collection of perversities." "Well, papa," replied Fred, who had been trying to climb up on the paternal kee, "well, papa, don't you always take up a collection? Take me up?"

Modern minister's wife: "You look worried, dear. Can't you find subjects that will interest the congregation?" Modern minister (gloomily): "It's easy enough to find subjects that will interest the congregation. The trouble is to find subjects that will interest the newspapers."

OUR EXCHANGES.

We always find pleasure in looking over the Freethought journals which reach us from all parts of the world, and some of our readers may also be glad to learn a few particulars of what they are like and what they are doing.

First must be mentioned our veteran contemporary, the *Boston Investigator*, now in its fifty-eighth year. Established by Abner Kneeland in April 1831, it was in its earliest days assisted by Frances Wright, and upon the retirement of Mr. Kneeland it was sustained and conducted by its present proprietor, Mr. Josiah P. Mendum, and his friend the late editor, Mr. Horace Seaver. It was from the first a full sized newspaper sheet and under the conduct of Mr. Seaver assumed the aspect of a family paper full of readable matter suitable to all. In its columns may be traced the records of Freethought progress in America from the days of Frances Wright, and Benjamin Offen and Ernestine Rose to those of Col. Ingersoll. Of late a prominent and capital feature has been the report of lectures by Mr. L. K. Washburn, the present editor, and others, those of the gentleman named being solid, sensible, yet eloquent discourses which make excellent reading. It has long had a children's corner, conducted by Aunt Elmira (Mrs. E. D. Slenker.)

There are also weekly "Liberal Gems" and "Things in General," some amusing items of which occasionally find their way into our own Profane Joke column. In taking up the good old *Investigator* we confess we sometimes resent the long letters from friends who seem to think that, because they subscribe to a paper, the editor must insert, without curtailment, whatever they choose to send him. But this seems to be a general American privilege; and, remembering the splendid services of Messrs. Mendum and Seaver to the cause of Freethought, even before we were born, we always take up the veteran paper with interest and glance carefully over its columns, though we skip the letters from Spiritists and other faddists which occasionally appear.

The next oldest American Freethought paper is the *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, Indiana. The editor, Dr. John B. Monroe, is an American humorist of the purest water, and a capital fellow to boot. The Wicked Proclamation which he keeps standing is significant of the editor and his policy. It announces that:—"The *Ironclad Age* is offensive to the eye of Sanctity. It is wicked because it is opposed to the trade of minister, and because it has but few principles and scarce a politic. Most journals are overloaded with principles, platforms, and politics; but by discarding most of these the *Ironclad Age* is able to cruise around in the shallow waters of superstition in search of

Goodness without a god,
Happiness without a heaven,
Salvation without a savior,
And redemption without a redeemer.

It is thus the only great paper in the Great West that is able to run without a god or devil or ghost. . . . The irreverent proprietor of the *Ironclad Age* is paying five dollars a head for ghosts, little or big, old or young, male or female, holy or unholy, and he wants all he can get. He is also paying fifteen thousand dollars a head for virgin mothers. He has furthermore a standing offer of fifteen million dollars (to be paid in advertising and job work—terms cash), for one sane man who will swear he believes there once existed a triple-headed god—a father who was his own son, Christ; a son Christ, who was his own father, God; and a ghost that was both father and son, yet distinct from either, and that these three were at once the "heavenly father," the "son of man," and the "holy ghost"—the three being one and the one three. Let one sane man swear he believes this stuff and get the reward."

Although the irreverent proprietor declares himself opposed to the trade of minister, there is no man on the earth with a more tender regard for their little peccadilloes. Under the head of "Religious Intelligence" he records their frequent temptations by designing females, and when—as, alas! is so often the case—they fall into Davidic sin, his righteous wrath is kindled against frail sisters who entrap the men of God. The leaderettes are short and crisp, and none the less full of sound philosophy and shrewd observation. The *Ironclad Age*, in short, is a live paper, but it does not disdain to run through its columns long and important works like Dr. Brown's "Oriental Researches" and a running commentary on the Bible by John L. Moore. It is one of our most welcome exchanges; and when, as is sometimes the

case, it fails to regularly appear, we feel a similar sense of disappointment to that of missing an old and expected genial friend.

(To be continued.)

SECULAR FUNERALS.

For the first time in the history of Beeston, this event took place on the 22nd inst., when we laid to rest our old friend Mr. Robert Porter. The service by Austin Holyoake was read over the grave by Mr. Thomas Slater, of Leicester, when, notwithstanding the most unfavorable weather, there was a large gathering, many friends coming over from Nottingham. Representatives were present from the Local Board, the Liberal Club, and the Nottingham Branch of the N. S. S., in all of which Mr. Porter had played an active part. I take this opportunity—speaking with full knowledge on the matter—of denying the lying stories which the Christians, with characteristic cowardice, are circulating as to his dying hours. His death was worthy of his life.—A. R. ATKY.

Last Sunday it was my sorrowful duty to attend the funeral of the late Henry Urwin, a member of our branch, who died on Oct. 25th, after a short illness, aged 41. Deceased was an overman at Harton Colliery, and is highly spoken of by those under his charge, particularly the boys and old men. He also stood very high in the esteem of his employers, the manager of the colliery, George May, Esq. sending a splendid wreath of flowers as a tribute of regard. He was very well known locally and was highly respected by all who had the pleasure of his genial acquaintance. In order to fulfil his request to be buried as a Secularist, his wife placed the arrangements in the hands of our President, S. M. Peacock, who carried out his duties in a very satisfactory manner. In spite of the inclement weather about 1,500 people, including a contingent from the Order of Foresters, of which he was a member, and his fellow workers and friends, gathered in the street near the house in the small colliery village. Here, Mr. Heccles, one of the Foresters, read part of the funeral service of that society, after which a Secular hymn was sung. The procession then moved away along the country lane leading to the churchyard, Harton Village, almost the whole of those present joining in. At the burial ground the crowd was considerably augmented by those already in waiting. At the grave side, in a perfect storm of wind and rain, Mr. Thomas Thompson, the veteran Radical and Secularist, of North Shields, delivered the Secular Burial Service, in a most impressive style. The *Shields Daily News* and *Shields Gazette*, report the proceedings and give in full the Secular Burial Service.—R. CHAPMAN.

REVIEW.

English Idyls. By P. H. Emerson. London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1889.—The author, who appears to be an artist both with the pen and the etching-needle, has previously published *Pictures of East Anglian Life*, and the present volume might have the same title since it deals mainly with the same district. The following passage, which is a fair specimen of the author's style, seems to indicate that he is a Freethinker:—"Hard, indeed, is the lot of the mariner who goes down to the wild North Sea in the fishing fleets, and quails not before the fierce breath of the storm. But brave hearts quicken before danger, and stout men glory in wrestling with relentless Nature; for if they conquer, forgetful of all care, they grow merry and recount their prowess when the Christmas punch is brewed. And if they perish, still their cares are forgotten, for they fall with a stern smile into an eternal sleep—cold and everlasting as the endless winter that will one day wrap the world in death." We know that among the hardy mariners of the North Sea there are not a few readers of the *Freethinker*, and they and others may care to read "The Yarn of the January Gale," and other stories of this little volume.

But for her utility as a state engine, Christianity would not now rule the land. But that she furnished a tool to the hands of power, she had, ere this, followed the fate of her more classic predecessors, the mythologies of Greece and Rome. But that it was found convenient to rule the ignorant mind through its superstitious fears, those fears had long since been dispelled.—Robert Dale Owen.

HERESY.

When it is no longer practicable to punish heresy as a crime men have practically abandoned the orthodox theory of revelation. Religious persecution belonged to the spirit of past ages, and has been gradually dying out as that spirit has been informed and changed; but it is the proper fruit and action of theology and belief in a fixed, infallible revelation. Believers are now tolerant because the perfect, fervent, compelling faith of the past is no longer possible. They ought, logically, to persecute as fiercely as of yore; but, unconsciously moulded by the spirit of the age, it is no longer in them to do so. The leading races of mankind have now new intuitions and a higher law of life, at whose silent bidding they give up their theology in its spirit long before the fulness of time, when they shall abandon it in the letter also.—*N. R. Waters.*

BARNUM v. NOAH.

Barnum, it is well known, is a bit of a Freethinker. He boasts that if the City of Rome and Furnesia, which have recently arrived from New York with his show, had not quite as many animals as old Noah's menagerie, at least the feeding, ventilating, and sanitary arrangements were more perfect. The following quantities of stuffs for feeding purposes for the animals during the sea voyage were shipped on the Furnesia before leaving New York:—Eighty tons of hay, 2,000 bushels of oats, six tons of straw, six tons of bran, twenty-five bushels of corn, twenty bales of peat moss, thirty barrels of carrots, 6,000lb. of fresh beef, 1,500lb. of fresh fish, fifteen barrels of potatoes, 150 heads of cabbage, 6,000lb. of fresh bread, ten barrels of sweet apples, five barrels of onions, seven barrels of turnips, twenty barrels of sea biscuits, and 400 cans of condensed milk. Noah must take a back seat.

PROFANE JOKES.

Artist: "Here is a very suitable picture, Mr. Gibbs. It represents the Rev. Mr. Goss, the missionary, in the centre of a group of cannibals." Deacon Gibbs: "I see the cannibals, Mr. Turps, but where is the missionary?" Artist: "Didn't I tell you he was in the centre of the cannibals?"

Sunday School Teacher: "We are told here that the prophet rent his clothes. Why did he do that?" Tommy Spaulding: "Perhaps he couldn't afford to buy 'em."

Filial Piety.—Ingenious Youth: "May I have this dance?" The Bishop's Daughter: "Thanks, No! I never dance round dances in my father's diocese!"

Uncle: "And you love your enemies, Ethel?" Ethel (promptly): "Yeth, uncle." Uncle: "And who are your enemies, dear?" Ethel (in an awful whisper): "The Dev—" The old gentleman doesn't see his way further, and drops the subject.

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