

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. IX.—No. 47.]

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1889.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## OUR LOST LEADER.

MR. BRADLAUGH sails next week for India, and immediately on his return he will publicly give his reasons for resigning the leadership of the Free-thought party. It has been arranged that the meeting he is to address shall take place on Sunday morning, February 16, at the Hall of Science, London. Only members of the National Secular Society will have a right to attend, and outsiders who desire to be present had better qualify themselves by becoming members in the interval.

Practically Mr. Bradlaugh has left us already. His leadership is virtually laid down. He will be absent till February, and when he returns he will only meet us to deliver his valedictory address.

This is the fact we desire to be recognised. It is deplorable, but it cannot be altered. What will be will be. The Free-thought party must face the situation. There is no need for hurry or perturbation. All we have to do is to recognise what lies before us. When the time for action comes the party will be prepared. Hardly any difficulty is insuperable. When the heart is sound it finds a way or makes one. And the heart of the Free-thought party is sound. We are sure of it, and we have no fear for the future. Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation is a terrible loss, but it will put all the rest of us on our metal, and the prospect will brighten if we face it with cheerfulness and courage.

The Executive of the National Secular Society has met the sudden crisis with admirable dignity. It has resolved that nothing shall be done in haste. If the Society can do without a president till February it can do without one till May. The annual Conference will be held as usual on Whit-Sunday, and Mr. Bradlaugh's successor will then be appointed in a constitutional manner. According to the rules, there is absolutely no other method of electing a president.

Meanwhile the Executive will fulfil its duty and transact the Society's business. The special duties that might devolve on the president are remitted to the Organisation Committee, which has for several months dealt with the most important interests of the Society; and the Chairman of that Committee will sign all documents on behalf of the Executive.

Thus the situation will remain until the Whit-Sunday Conference, and we hope the party will possess its soul in patience. Mr. Bradlaugh will address a meeting of as many members as can be present in February, and decency forbids us to anticipate his statement. Our duty is to wait, and, when the time comes for him to speak, to listen with respect. But one thing is already certain. He leaves us—that is, our party; not as a member, it is to be hoped, but as a leader. No doubt he has very good reasons for doing so. He will pursue the career he chooses, and he will be attended by the best wishes of the party he has led so gallantly through such times of difficulty and danger.

G. W. FOOTE.

## MRS. BESANT AND PARSON HOSKYN'S.

MRS. BESANT has decided to drag Parson Hoskyns into Court again. There is to be a new trial before a fresh jury, and let us hope before another judge. Baron Huddleston may mean to be impartial, but he has a singular way of realising his intentions. We had the misfortune to meet him in February, 1883, when arguing for a writ of *certiorari* to remove the *Freethinker* indictment from the Old Bailey to the Court of Queen's Bench, our antagonist on that occasion being the wily old lawyer who now sits on the woolsack in the House of Lords. Judge North occupied the bench that morning with Baron Huddleston, and if what they dealt out was *justice* the dictionary should be re-written. Without deigning to notice the arguments on either side, Baron Huddleston held up our prosecuted Christmas Number and declared that no person could doubt it was a blasphemous libel against "our Lord Jesus Christ." He had no business to say anything of the kind as the "libel" itself was not before the court. He went out of his way to prejudge the case and anticipate the verdict of the jury; and in this he was followed by his brother in legality and bigotry, Mr. Justice North, although that pious gentleman was actually going to preside at our trial only two days afterwards! It does not surprise us, therefore, that Baron Huddleston summed up as he did in Mrs. Besant's case. Nor are we in the least astonished at his abuse of the ladies who listened to the evidence. His lordship said that no "respectable" woman would remain in court. But after all it was only his opinion, and we hope it is not high treason to differ from him. There are some persons, and we are of the number, who hold that this hot-house view of the fair sex is essentially foul and degrading. Its chivalry is that of the Turk, its purity of the harem. What is not fit for "respectable" women to hear is not fit for "respectable" men to hear. His lordship appears to think the male mind has some peculiar power of deodorising filth. We are sorry we cannot agree with him. Nor indeed can we understand why plain speech on sexual physiology, in books devoted to the subject, should be regarded as filthy. It is not modesty, but something very different, which enjoins silence on such matters; and it should always be remembered that innocence and ignorance are very far from being the same thing.

Twelve months ago Mrs. Besant was a candidate for the London School Board in the Tower Hamlets division. Her incursion into the East End stirred up the bilious bigotry of the Rev. E. Hoskyns, the vicar of Stepney. Accordingly, with the time-honored policy of his profession, he issued a scurrilous circular against her, charging her with having "witten books which tend to the grossest forms of immorality." Mrs. Besant admits that this was an opinion which he had a right to express. But he did not stop there. He said a good deal more, and wound up with the following words:—"A Freethinker thus

describes the practical outcome of her teaching: 'Chastity is a crime; unbridled sensuality is virtue.' Such teaching is earthly, sensual, devilish. Christian voters do your duty." Apparently they did so; anyhow Mrs. Besant was returned at the head of the poll.

Parson Hoskyns circulated thirty thousand of these handbills, but the brave champion of religion and morality forgot to put his name to the document. Perhaps, like Uriah Heep, he was 'umble, and chose to do his charity in secret. But he was disappointed. He did good by stealth, and blushed to find it fame. The murder—we beg pardon, the slander—is out, and Parson Hoskyns stands confest before heaven and earth—and, for all we know, hell too—as the lurking assassin of Mrs. Besant's character. Baron Huddleston holds that the occasion was privileged. If this is sound law every parson is a licensed libeller; a clerical watch-dog, whose mistakes are to be forgiven in consideration of his zeal, especially if it takes the form of biting Freethinkers. This is an eminently Christian view of the matter, not likely to be shared by unbelievers, who naturally object to assist in keeping dogs to snap at their heels and bite their legs.

Had the rector of Stepney a grain of common sense to leaven his malice, he would see that the charge he brought against Mrs. Besant is obviously absurd. Nothing but the blindest bigotry could lead a man to suppose any person outside a lunatic asylum capable of teaching that "unbridled sensuality is virtue." The accusation is so idiotic that the libeller's sanity seems to require an investigation. It is always difficult to discriminate nicely in such cases, but it seems to us that Parson Hoskyns is more of a fool than a rogue. Perhaps he should be defined, in Coleridge's immortal phrase, as a fool with a circum-bendibus.

Mrs. Besant argued her case with signal ability. She is a fine advocate and her brief could not have been in better hands. On one point, however, we think she made a mistake, although it may have served her immediate purpose. She described some of the teachings of the *Elements of Social Science* as "morally detestable." This appears to savor of Parson Hoskyn's offence. "Detestable" is a very strong epithet, and Mrs. Besant might have made a better selection. We dissent very strongly from some of that author's teachings, but—although he is absolutely unknown to us—we believe he is animated by the loftiest motives. Some of his views may be extremely unsound, but mistakes are not crimes, and epithets are not arguments. Mrs. Besant should remember that her own teaching is "detestable" enough to myriads of her fellow citizens.

Sir Edward Clarke made much of Mrs. Besant's Atheism as an excuse for the parson's scurrility, and this argument was possibly enforced by the fact that she had herself discarded Atheism since the commencement of the action. Baron Huddleston went farther, and severely denounced her "perverse industry" in the pamphlet intended to show the Bible to be more "obscene" than any work on the population question. As "an English judge" he eased his mind on the subject, and made himself the laughing-stock of sensible men. His lordship was indignant at ladies remaining in court while certain passages were read, yet he would place the filth of the Bible in the hands of young girls as the perfection of purity. He is appalled at grown-up women reading about the functions of their own organisms, yet he would allow little girls to read—nay, *make* them read—how a drunken old fellow lay with his own daughters, how a "young virgin" acted as a warming-bottle to a shivering old king, and a hundred other elegant and edifying stories. *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and if Baron Huddleston likes the nastiness of the Bible, and even considers it divine, we have no right to quarrel with him; but

we may venture to laugh at his rousing diatribes against the taste of his neighbors.

With respect to the jury—the twelve gentlemen who say nothing, and perhaps think the more—we knew it included a Freethinker, and this was a safeguard against a bigoted verdict. We understand that two jurors were strongly in favor of giving a verdict for the plaintiff, with damages; four held that Mrs. Besant should not be burdened with the costs; two thought the action should not have been taken at all; and four were for the defendant. This is very good—in the circumstances. It shows that consideration for Freethinkers is creeping into the jury box; it diminishes our chances of martyrdom. We are not sanguine enough to expect a jury will be found to give a unanimous verdict against a clergyman for libelling a Freethinker. But Mrs. Besant forms her own judgment and takes her own course. If she succeeds, and obtains a verdict and damages with costs, we shall be delighted. It will teach the parsons a lesson, and touch the bigots in their most sensitive part—their pockets. Who will burn heretics when he has to use his parlor furniture for fuel?

G. W. FOOTE.

#### DYING TESTIMONY.

Two pamphlets, which lie before us, suffice to show that the oft refuted death-bed argument flourishes in some minds as vigorously as ever.\* "What about the End of these Men?" the title of one of them, is a favorite question with a certain class of Christians, who consider any argument advanced against their religion is sufficiently answered by the assertion "you will think differently when you come to be upon your dying bed."

One would think the important questions in regard to a man's opinions are: What did he think when in a sound state of bodily and mental health and what were his reasons for so thinking? But in the opinion of these Christians the all important question is what does a man think upon his death-bed, when the mind is often enfeebled by sickness and distracted by anxiety.

From the standpoint of a religion which teaches that the whole purpose of life is to prepare for death this view is natural. But in the eyes of common sense, which holds with Spinoza that the proper study of a wise man is not how to die but how to live, nothing could be more absurd than to attribute this exaggerated importance to dying testimony.

But the complaint we have to make against the pamphlets before us is not simply that they are absurd. They are, wittingly or unwittingly, positively fraudulent. Both give stories of the death of Voltaire on no better authority than that of the Abbé Barruel, stories which are discredited by every competent biographer, and which have been again and again refuted.

A curious thing about these two pamphlets are that both are "new editions," with evidently very old matter; ancient lies, in fact, which, though oft exposed, turn up again as hardy as ever. The pamphlet by Dr. Doudney must have been written many years ago, for after relating the well-known but altogether unverified yarn of Volney having called on God in a storm, it exclaims:

"Ah! had that modern traducer of God's most holy book, the unenviable Colenso, in his so recent voyaging o'er the mighty waters, been overtaken as the passengers on board the "London" were; had he 'who holds the winds in his fists, and measureth the water in the hollow of his hand,"

\* *What about the End of these Men?* or the power of the Gospel as witnessed beside the Dying Beds of Christians in contrast with the last hours of Romanists and Rationalists by David A. Doudney, D.D., Vicar of St. Luke's, Westminster, Bristol. London, 4, Paternoster Row.

*The Dying Pillow: The Last Days of Infidels and Christians Contrasted*, London, 34, Bouverie Street.

have commissioned storm and tempest to have arrested that poor hapless, apostate Bishop in his course, what would his *creed* and his *calculations* have done for him?"

So various have been the dying testimonies of different people that it would be possible to prove anything by the method to which these authors resort. The Mohammedan dies in the belief that he will enter into paradise and be ministered to by beautiful houris, therefore Mohammed was a true prophet. Hindus, even those who have been converted to Christianity, usually turn in their last moments to the gods of their childhood, therefore Brahmanism is true. It would not be difficult for any one who turned to the *Newgate Calendar* and similar records to make out a list of criminals who died "game" who might be contrasted with the many pious saints who have died in apprehension as to their future destiny, much to the disparagement of the latter.

This is the method of Dr. Doudney and the anonymous author of *The Dying Pillow*. The latter, contrasting the last days of Infidels and Christians, not only makes the "infidels" a present of the names of Thomas Carlyle and his friend John Sterling, but classes among them George IV., of England, and Charles IX., of France, who authorised the Bartholomew massacre out of zeal for religion, and Louis XI., whose devotion was only equalled by his cruelty. Cardinal Beaufort, "who procured the death of the Duke of Gloucester in the reign of Henry VI.," it is said was soon after struck with an incurable disease, and his exclamation, "Must I die, who have such great riches," is given as proof that "the principles of infidelity fail just at the hour when support is most needed."

The anonymous writer of *The Dying Pillow* is guilty of a gross perversion in regard to Mirabeau, who, although really an Atheist, is said to have "died the death of a deist." And the death of a deist it appears is to cry out "Give me opium, so that I may not think of eternity and of what is to come." Now a full and circumstantial account of the last moments of Mirabeau was written and published by his physician Cabanis. The main particulars may be found in Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds* and in Carlyle's *French Revolution*, vol. ii., bk. iii., § vii. It is true he asked for opium, but it was to end his agonies and sleep "in that slumber from which there is no awakening," to use his own expression.

An instance of how dying testimony may be perverted, by a suppression of the truth and a suggestion of the false, is supplied by this writer's account of the death of Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith was asked, "Is your mind at ease?" "No, it is not," was his answer; and, says John Forser, "They are the last words we are to hear him utter in this world." The author heads this as "a sad picture of what it is to

#### DIE WITHOUT HOPE,"

and adds, "His description of a country pastor, in his *Deserted Village*, is exceedingly beautiful; yet the writer presents no evidence that he knew anything of the power of God's grace." And so the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* is classed among infidels, and his death-bed contrasted with those of Francis Covell, John Macgowan, and other famous Christians who died in the sure and steadfast belief that God had prepared a comfortable mansion for them in the sky. Not a word is said as to poor Goldsmith having died in involved circumstances, of his having a stranguary, and a violent pain extending over all the forepart of his head, and under the belief that a wrong powder had been administered to him. The writer leads the reader to suppose that Goldsmith's mind was not at ease because he did not feel the power of God's grace. The implication is false, and that the actual recorded words are correct only reminds us of Tennyson's line,

"A lie that is half a truth is ever the worst of lies."

I confess it seems almost a waste of time to follow such writers as these in their repetitions of stale stories. Schiller said "The gods themselves fight in vain against stupidity," and when to stupidity is added the perversity of interested priests seeking to support their cause by appeals to terror, the case does not look promising. But there is some ground for hope after all. Neither of the pamphlets have a word to say on the death bed of Thomas Paine. Is it that they think the stock Christian lie of the recantation of the author of the *Age of Reason* has served its turn, or have they come to know that the matter is dealt with in *Infidel Death Beds*? A sufficient answer to all such stories is to be found in that volume, but as it cannot be presented to every person who sees the pamphlets in question, it is just as well when one comes across a spurious death bed story to nail it down.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### HOW DID IT HAPPEN? (A Church Episode.)

Once a chappie Went to church; Saw a maiden On her perch.	Maid looked up, and— Shocking sight— At the chappie Smiled outright.
Looked upon her With delight; Maid bent o'er her Prayer-book bright.	Chap and maid then, Hand in hand, Stood and sang the "Better land."
Loud the parson Prayed for grace; Chappie gazed in Maiden's face.	Cried the parson: "Save from sin;" Congregation Said: "Ah, men."
Whistled softly "Ain't she nice; Think I'll kiss her In a trice."	Now, dear brethren, Bide a wee, Ere you blame my Rhyme and me;
Parson shouted "Now's the time," Chappie stooped, and Did the crime.	While I tell you— Oh, yes, ha— Chappie was her Fond grandpa.

ALFRED LOVETT.

#### ANOTHER PIOUS SWINDLER.

"Thus saith the lord, I will give the parson favor in the sight of his dupes: and it shall come to pass, that, when he goes out he shall not go empty; but he shall borrow of the women and the noodles jewels of silver and jewels of gold; and he shall spoil them that trust in him, for cursed is he that trusteth in an arm of flesh" (Exodus iii., 21, 22, considerably improved).

A clerical swindler has just been exposed in Brisbane. He is a parson and the son of a parson, belonging to Mr. Goe's department of the lord's army. He has swindled a goodly number of his flock out of large sums in the most bare-faced manner; and after gaining all he could, the saint went on a pilgrimage for the good of his health—whether health of soul or body we cannot tell. There is nothing remarkable about this, for the whole trade of a parson is the most bare-faced swindle in existence. He deals in words, wind, for hard cash. God, heaven, hell, purgatory, sin, redemption, immortality, resurrection and the rest are his stock-in-trade; and they are all words without meaning—they stand for nothing but the gross ignorance of the people and the impudence and swindling of the sky pilots.—*Liberator*

TIME TO QUIT.—The Rev. Mr. Perkins, being called upon suddenly to address a Sunday-school, thought he would get a few original ideas from his young hearers. "Children," he said, "I want some of you to tell me what I shall talk to you about to-night. What shall I say?" At first there was no response. "That bright little fellow over there," said he, pointing to a youngster sitting in one of the back seats: "what shall I say to you to-night?" In a little, piping voice came the answer: "Say Amen, and sit down."

## ACID DROPS.

Mr. Crerar, a Yankee millionaire, who recently died at Chicago, has left £446 000 to found a public library in that city, on condition that French novels and works reflecting on the Christian religion shall be excluded for ever. *For ever!* Modest millionaire! Fancy a man who would decide *for ever* what Chicago should read! Even at present the exclusion of works "reflecting" on Christianity would make the library a laughing-stock, and what will it be in a hundred years? Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Clifford, Mill, Rénan, Haeckel and fifty other writers that every thinking man wants to read, will be shut out. Bishop Lightfoot's works would be there, but not *Supernatural Religion*; Gladstone's apology for Christianity, but not Ingersoll's reply. It is really *too* absurd. If Chicago accepts the library on such conditions it will indeed be the *pig city*.

There is a row among the Jews. Lord Mayor Isaacs rode instead of walking in the Ninth of November show, and his co-religionists are down upon him for breaking the Judaic Law. "What," says the *Jewish Standard*, "must be the effect upon our children if called upon to receive prizes from the hands of one who has publicly desecrated the Sabbath?"

"Suffer little children to come unto me," said Jesus. Booth adds, "Let them bring their halfpence." We read that at Nottingham, during the self-denial week, the little ones were induced to give up sweets and playthings, and hand over their bawbees to the General. Fancy them, at such a tender age, renouncing the flesh to save souls! It may be said of Booth, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast gathered thy cash."

Under the head of *Gaietés de la Semaine*.—Amusements of the Week—a Paris papers prints a leading article on the Salvation Army. The writer wields a trenchant pen, and some of his hits are extremely good. He says the singing was full of "go," the chorus reminding him of the Assassouans, only the performers jumped up and gave an "experience" instead of eating glass and chewing scorpions. One of the "supers" said he had lived till the age of thirty-five without thinking of the Lord but he had the luck to meet him one day on the Quai Valmy, and ever since they had been inseparable. An Austrian had sought the Lord in vain in his own country, and the Lord had given him a rendezvous in France. The writer asks "Where does the money go?" and concludes by hinting that Boulanger ought to take command of the Army of the Lord.

"A Young Englishwoman" asks the *Christian World* why the sacrifice of innocent animals played such a large part in the Jewish dispensation. "How," she inquires, could Jehovah be pleased at the sight of thousands of slain bullocks and rams, and how could the minds of the worshippers be elevated, and their hearts be lifted up to him in such a slaughter-house?"

Anything more hypocritical than the *C. W.*'s answer to this question it is impossible to conceive. One feels ready to cry "Faugh" and burn a little perfume to sweeten the place. "We have no reason," says our contemporary, "to regard bloody sacrifices as originating in a positive command of God, but rather in the dimly-lighted though divinely-prompted endeavor of primitive men to be at peace with the Unknown Power." That is, Jehovah prompted them for centuries, and always prompted them to "blood, blood, blood." He didn't order it—oh dear no!—though the Bible says he did; but, all the same, he let it go on, and rather liked it. He was "pleased with the bloody sacrifice" because the worshipper was "engaged in the highest expression of faith known to him." Such is the pious casuistry of the *Christian World*, and we think it several degrees lower than the performances of Jack the Ripper.

It is a sight for Gods and men, too, to see the *C. W.* railing at the Peculiar People and the Faith Healers. "When will these people learn," it says, "that God helps those who help themselves?" We in turn ask—*When*

will the *C. W.* learn that those who help themselves don't want God to help them?

An English nobleman landed at Naples, and the lazzaroni porters collared all his traps. At the hotel they stood in two lines—twenty of them—each extending an open palm. After paying the whole crew, he was accosted by an old fellow, too feeble to carry anything, who laid his hand on his heart and bowed half way to his toes. "Well," said the English lord, "and what did *you* do?" "My lord," he answered, with a graceful wave of his hand, "I also was there." That old fellow is like the *C. W.*'s god, who does nothing, but looks on and comes in for his "bit" at the finish.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes asks "the daily prayers" of the *C. W.* readers for the "spiritual success" of his fourteen days' mission. The *temporal* success is looked after by vigorous begging. The Lord is trusted to for a *blessing*, but for nothing else.

A young girl, accompanied by three Kurds, has ascended to the top of Mount Ararat. At least the newspapers say so. They don't say whether she saw any relics of Noah's Ark lying about. Just as usual, you see; not a word about the only thing you want to know.

It is said that the Arran police buried the boots worn by Mr. Rose at the time of his murder on Goat Fell in accordance with the ancient belief that doing so would "lay" his ghost and prevent it from disturbing the neighborhood.

The Dundee Presbytery has been sitting on Lord Kinaird, though up to the present it has done him no harm. His lordship has been duly catechised, with a view to deciding whether he is a fit and proper person to be president of Young Men's Guilds. Up to the time of our going to press his lordship's fate is undetermined. Let us hope for the best. One Scotch lord at a time is enough to fall under the frown of orthodoxy.

Barnum was told that he had a regular Noah's Ark show at Olympia. "Waal," he replied, "Noah's Ark wasn't a bad show in its way; you see there wasn't any competition in those days."

Mr. Bradlaugh's orthodox friends, says the London *Echo*, may still entertain hopes of his conversion. He hasn't been brought around this time, but better luck the next! Meanwhile the *Echo* congratulates them on the recent change in Mrs. Besant. Well, there is nothing like being thankful for small mercies.

The *Dover Telegraph* has made a discovery, or rather an invention that ought to be patented. It appears that Mr. Bradlaugh is resigning the leadership of the Free-thought party because it has treated him very shabbily. His best friends, we are told, have not been found among those he fought for, but among those he battled against. "It is not always pleasant," says our inventive contemporary, "to turn yourself into a martyr, and then to find that you are not appreciated by those for whom the martyrdom was undertaken."

Mr. Bradlaugh would be the first to deny this with indignation. If "appreciation" means support, the Free-thought party has appreciated his brave efforts, for it stood by him in the darkest hour of adversity, and it has bled itself like veal to furnish him with the sinews of war. The subscription lists in the *National Reformer* give the lie to the Dover babbler.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, though said to be the darling of Methodist old maids, is still not happy. He finds, alas, that the richest portion of the Lord's vineyard is left uncultivated. Methodism has according to the *Methodist Times*, few recruits from the wealthy classes, and no representative in the House of Lords. Mr. Hughes thinks no efforts should be spared to enable him to convert the dwellers in lordly mansions, and, we suppose, to demonstrate to them how easily a camel may pass through the eye of a needle. Mr. Hughes may contrive to convert the rich, and even to secure their riches, but he will never convert the educated.

Miss Emma Hardinge Britten, the editress of the spiritist paper, *The Two Worlds*, states in that journal that the first meetings of the Theosophical Society took place at her house in New York, "nearly all the parties connected with the society, including the lady and gentleman now universally recognised named as founders and chiefs of the Theosophical Society, were reputed to be Spiritualists; acknowledged as such, and supposed by their writings and teachings to be such."

Miss Britten has challenged Col. Olcott to meet her in debate on the inseparable lines of demarcation between Spiritualism and Theosophy. The gallant Colonel has respectfully, and we believe wisely, declined the encounter.

What a cowardly set of slaves are the anonymous editors and scribes of our "free" press! Not one of them, in recording the death of the Rev. W. Sharman, has a word to say about his labors against the Blasphemy Laws. They say he threw up his pulpit to champion the cause of Mr. Bradlaugh, whereas he threw it up to head an agitation against the brutal sentence on Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp. Certainly Mr. Sharman fought hard for Mr. Bradlaugh; we do not wish to deny it, but rather to emphasise the fact; but truth is truth, and Mr. Sharman's leaving the Treville Street Chapel, Plymouth, was in consequence of his intense exasperation at the imprisonment of Freethinkers in the name of Christianity. Mr. Sharman always looked back upon that act with pride and satisfaction, and we are sure he had no wish to be misunderstood.

"Blasphemy" is an awful word, and the newspapers dread it as the Devil is said to dread holy water. They even pretend to look down upon the "blasphemers" of this journal. Poor creatures! We look down upon them. They write to order, this way to-day and that to-morrow. They never fought for a principle that didn't pay. They are always on the side of Bumble or Mrs. Grundy. And they naturally hate men who fight for their convictions like true soldiers, without looking into the pay-chest on the eve of every battle.

It seems, according to a circular, that "the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior" has positively taken place. The event has happened quite recently, but has failed to receive the attention it merits, for he came in quite unexpected fashion as a woman. He is the Mother, the Woman Clothed with the Sun, a daft lady about whom Mr. Wheeler wrote an article a year or two back.

The *Tablet* wants the American Government to put pressure on Italy on behalf of the Temporal Power of the Pope. The purport of its last week's article on the Transatlantic Church and European Politics, is that the Church in America is strong enough to effect this. If so it is a greater danger even than we thought.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has issued a pastoral address on non-churchgoing and its causes, which it asks to be read over the pulpits in all the churches on a convenient Sabbath. It points out that in Glasgow, the most populous city of Scotland, there are not fewer than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who are alienated from public worship. It is further remarked that there is a similar and alarming proportion of people in other towns, and even in rural parishes, who habitually absent themselves from kirk. Several reasons are hinted at but the explanation that what is taught in the kirk is no longer credible, is carefully concealed.

The Rev. Dr. Oliver gave the Liverpool clergy a new "wrinkle" as to filling their churches. He recommended that employers should ask their workmen if they went to church; in other words, if we cannot preach them in, let us "screw" them in. Dr. Oliver should go the whole hog, and advocate the revival of the old law of Elizabeth.

The *Methodist Times*, has been getting uneasy about Mr. Stead, lest his late hobnobbing with Cardinals at Rome might have led him towards the embraces of the Scarlet Women. An interviewer was sent to Wimbledon, who found the editor of the *P.M.G.* in convict costume, which he says is the way in which he keeps up his remembrance of Holloway, though he only had to wear the prison garb

there three days. Mr. Stead having assured the interviewer that "He regarded the doctrine of the temporal power as a snare of the devil," he seems, after having peeped curiously about to see there was no sign of a crucifix, to have retired with reassuring news for the Methodists. Mr. Hugh Price Hughes ought to know that Cardinal Manning isn't such a fool as to bag his own decoy duck. Stead serves him a great deal better as a Methodist than he ever could as a Roman Catholic.

Don't mix up religion and amusement, says the Rev. Dr. Thomas, of Liverpool. He would rather see young men seeking amusement "in places beset with the most dreadful temptations" than "provide games and amusements for them in connection with the house of God." Good old Thomas! He is on the right lines. Religion is solemn or nothing, and Sir Reverence will keep it glum.

The Rev. Dr. Archibald Scott has been chosen to deliver the Croall lectures on Christianity and other faiths at St. George's Church, Edinburgh. Of his capacity for his task the title of one of his lectures gives sufficient insight. Its subject is announced as "The Buddha of Veda and the Christ of the New Testament." Evidently Dr. Scott thinks the sacred books of Buddhism are called Veda, whereas the Vedas are the sacred books of the Brahmins, and contain no allusion to Buddha.

We were not sorry, however, to read Dr. Scott's diatribe against the evidences of Buddhism, for it can scarcely fail to make the reflecting reader ask if those of Christianity are any better. The manuscripts of the Buddhist books, he said, are comparatively of recent date, copies indeed of old manuscripts, the literary honesty of whose translators and transcribers was very questionable. For our knowledge of Buddhism we had for centuries only oral tradition to depend upon, and for historical accuracy these traditions were worthless. In all of which for Buddhism we may safely read Christianity.

Dr. Scott made a subtle distinction between the alleged inspired writings of Christianity and those of any other religion. It lay in this, that "while in the literature of India they saw represented the struggles of man to reach the Deity, that of Palestine chronicled the endeavors of Deity to reach and communicate with man." If so, the one has been about as successful, or rather unsuccessful, as the other.

Edwards, the black preacher, is announced to lecture on "Atheism a Failure" in the Shoreditch Town Hall on Thursday, Nov. 28, at 8.30, and discussion is invited. It is strange that the East End clergy should put forward as the champion of their faith a colored gentleman who ought to be converting the Central Africans. It speaks ill for their abilities or their courage, and throws a strong suspicion on the value of their costly education.

The "Scottish Spurgeon" is following in the footsteps of the English original. His sermons are to be printed weekly, price one penny. We shall invest in the first six penny-worth, and give Mr. McNeill one of our Letters to the Clergy.

Mr. John Page Hopps, in his *Sermons for Our Day*, describes three stages in the God idea—Agnosticism, Theism and Faith, which he represents by Herbert Spencer, Matthew Arnold and Jesus. The classification shows the metaphysical character of Mr. Hopps' mind. If he followed the historic method he would find that the age of Faith, like that of Jesus, came first, and that it was followed by the age of Theism, which in turn is superseded by Agnosticism.

The Stirling Tract Enterprise has issued 288,000,000 of tracts. We believe they have been all distributed, and put to God knows what uses, in Great Britain. Who would have thought that, eighteen hundred years after God Almighty took the trouble to start a new religion, so many Tracts would be required in one country to remind the people of the faith they were brought up in?

The High Church Clergy are busy signing petitions to the Bishop of London, against the Archbishop of Canter-

bury's ruling as to his own jurisdiction to try the Bishop of Lincoln. The *Church Times* supports the petition with an article entitled "An Illegal Tribunal." One would think if the decision was illegal the proper way would be to challenge its legality instead of sending petitions to another church dignitary. But the truth is the Ritualists want an opportunity of protesting against the tribunal in case the Archbishop's decision upon the case involves giving up some points of Ritualism.

The *Church Times* repeats an old story of a Presbyterian ordination. When the ordainer could not get near enough to the candidate to place his hands on his head he placed his umbrella, which elicited the remark, "Timber to timber." Presbyterian ordination is a fit subject for joking; but it must seriously be believed that a bishop has the power to confer the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

Talmage is going to have a shy at it. A shy at what? Why, sir, a Life of Christ. What else could you imagine. A Life of Christ is the ambition of every "great" preacher. The poor old Gospel story is so plain, so suited for the Sunday School or the nursery, so out of date in this age of the sensational novel, that the inspired narrative has to be dished up in a lively, long winded manner. Besides, ministers want to show their learning, and show the world they know a great deal more about Jesus Christ than the Holy Ghost ever revealed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Talmage has just been in London *en route* to Palestine. Perhaps this explains our dreadful fogs.

The author of *Reminiscences of a Literary and Clerical Life* tells how at his father's school, which was kept by a clergyman of some celebrity, one of the pupils said, "Pray, Mr. Simon, what became of Socrates and Plato and all the virtuous heathen?" "All gone to hell for the glory of God," was the strictly orthodox reply. This was Christianity in the days when men really believed in the words of Christ, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and in the eighteenth article of the Church of England, which curses those who presume to say that a man may be saved "by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

At Petrosenz, in Hungary, a Greek priest called a meeting of his congregation, and turned up with a drawn dagger in his hand. Flourishing this elegant symbol of Christian charity, he exhorted them to surprise and exterminate the Jews. The population was so excited that military assistance was telegraphed for.

What memories the Christians have—for other people's sins! For the single "murder" of Jesus, they have—first and last—slain several millions of Jews, without washing out a ha'p'orth of the debt. All their own crimes and cruelties are clean forgotten, yet they have shed more blood, drawn forth more tears, and ruined the peace and happiness of more homes, than all other religionists of the world together.

Bismarck has been made a Donkey of Divinity. At least they've made him a D.D., and that's how we read it. If we are wrong—as is just possible, for we are not infallible yet, although, like some other folk, we have been thinking of issuing a sort of proclamation to that effect—if we are wrong, we say, we shall be happy if some learned Christian will set us right. Meanwhile we beg every reader to notice that Bismarck describes himself as a tolerant Christian. On reading this we rubbed our eyes and looked at it again. Yes, there was no mistake—"a tolerant Christian," those were the very words. Bismarck *tolerant!* the man of blood and iron, the Pope of Germany! We puzzled and puzzled over this conundrum, and at last we saw daylight. Bismarck is not a tolerant *man*, but a tolerant *Christian*. There you are, don't you know. He is very tolerant—for a Christian.

"F. Nicholson" calls attention in the *Christian Commonwealth* to the disgraceful disturbances at the Free-thought open-air lectures in Finsbury Park. "It is supposed," he says, "that some of the roughs are in league with the Christian Evidence Society." He adds, and perhaps truly, that Christian bigotry is doing a great service to Freethought.

According to the *Star*, the Bishop of London, during a dedication service at Kentish Town, kept the congregation waiting some minutes before he could find his text, and finally gave out the wrong chapter and verse. Bad, my lord, very bad! especially on £10,000 a year. You should have a boy with a good memory to carry the "blessed book" in his hand, and your text in his head. He might sit on the pulpit stairs and prompt you in case of necessity.

The *Christian Herald* boasts that the Young Men's Christian Association at Melbourne have secured the Secularists' "Hall of Science" as their headquarters at a cost of £30,500. We suspect the figure is very much exaggerated, and our pious contemporary forgets to add that the "Hall of Science" thus acquired is the building vacated by the Secularists, not the new premises they have erected for themselves, where Mr. Joseph Symes carries on a vigorous and successful propaganda of Freethought.

The Bishop of Chester confesses his inability to write a first-rate novel. That was his first ambition. His second was to manage a public-house. This is not difficult if you get a license, and we dare say the Bishop is fit for the job.

Spurgeon preached his farewell sermon last Sunday to a crowded congregation, before taking his gout off to Mentone and giving the Lord a chance of setting him on his legs again. We wish we could follow suit, for we are overworked, and this detestable November climate is enough to make one in love with Hades. But Freethought doesn't pay like Christianity. It is godliness which is great gain.

Let religion enter into a quarrel, and it acts like salt and vinegar on an open wound. Look, for instance, at the doings of the Turkish soldiers in Crete. To show their hatred and contempt of the Christians—who, to do them justice, are ready enough, if they only had the power, to return the compliment—they have desecrated and damaged the Cretan churches. Christian and Mohammedan are "dog of an infidel" to each other; but we believe the Christians began the wretched business with their wanton cruelty and disgusting perfidy during the Crusades.

Dr. Phillips Brooks wants a more flexible Prayer Book for the Episcopal Church. He couldn't very well have a more flexible Bible, for it means anything in controversy, and Luther aptly called it a Wax Nose, which every man pulls at his pleasure.

The Rev. E. F. G. Tyndale is a nice man for the Shoreham School Board. He visits the Board schools, pats on the head the children who attend church, and says to others "I didn't see you at church yesterday." None the less he has been elected by the Board in the room of another member.

A. W. Rawlinson, Esq., the coroner at Worthing, thinks that trust in the Lord is all very well, but it becomes reprehensible when carried too far. He said indeed that though it was quite proper to trust in a Supreme Power, "those who pinned their faith to that alone were mistaken." We agree with the last part of his observation, but not with the first.

The observation was made at an inquest upon Lucy Bentall, a girl of twenty, who, like her friends, believed in faith-healing. She had been at Bethshan, Prophet Baxter's faith-healing home at Highbury, but not getting cured, was taken to Worthing. There, according to the evidence, eight of her friends "met in prayer, and when they saw there was no answer to prayer, they sought a doctor, and when he arrived she was dead." The jury, though probably all believers in providence and the efficacy of prayer, in their verdict censured the relatives and friends for not having called in medical advice at an earlier stage.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 24, Trade Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Huddersfield, at 11, "Is the Bible inspired?" at 3, "An Hour with the Devil"; at 6.30, "Is there a God?"

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.

W. NICHOLLS.—Thanks. Contents-sheet forwarded.

H. W. BOLTON.—It shall have our attention.

J. VAUGHAN.—We have requested Mr. Forder to see to it.

G. H. (Kennington).—Your signature is not very clear. Thanks for the cuttings from the *New York Herald*. Mr. Coleman, of San Francisco, has kindly sent us his articles on the *Secret Doctrine*.

W. HUNTER.—Thanks for the cutting. Glad to hear you do what you can to promote our circulation. It is indeed a sad thought that the avowal of unpopular opinions, especially on religion, often leads to financial ruin. Such a fact shows the mean spirit in which Christians are trained.

GREY-HEADED ATHEIST.—You forgot to enclose the "grand cure for Atheism." But as you could make "neither head nor tail of it," perhaps it doesn't matter.

G. A. CHAMBERS.—Not up to the mark for publication. But you may do better with practice.

ONE OF THE FLOCK.—Cuttings are always welcome. Thanks for your efforts to circulate this journal.

W. NICHOLLS.—Mr. Foote will be happy to see you and your friends at Huddersfield if you introduce yourself.

J. BRUMAGE.—Sorry to hear of your continued ill health. Your being obliged to seek rest will be a loss to the Freethought cause.

A. HEMINGWAY.—You will see that the date is changed.

MUSICIAN.—Probably you refer to Isaiah xlv., 7—"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." Thanks for the cutting. Our reply to the Rev. Prof. Agar Beet will shortly be republished with the other Letters to the Clergy, in a volume which is now in the press.

JOSEPH BROWN, secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—Newcastle Branch, 9s; Mr. Keighley (Sunderland), 5s.; Mr. Birtley (Newcastle), 2s. 6d.; Stockton and Middlesboro Branch, 13s. 6d.; Mr. Beane, 6d.; G. Thwaites, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Thompson, 1s.

VITA.—The book you refer to is pure fiction. A Christian who fancies it is history ought to be exhibited.

J. COLE.—The black preacher you refer to told his audience, on one occasion, that Thomas Paine voted for the death of Louis the Fourteenth—an anachronism which a schoolboy would be ashamed of; besides, every well-informed man knows that Paine spoke and voted *against* the execution of Louis the Sixteenth. How can you expect us to go out of our way to oppose such an ignoramus? Surely it would be paying him too much honor for the editor of the *Freethinker* to sit and listen to him for an hour for the sake of a ten minutes' reply. If the East End Branches desire Mr. Foote to engage in a set debate with any Christian put forward as a representative, he is always at their service.

DOVER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

B. SIMMONS.—Yes, we are issuing a Christmas Number, and a first-rate one too, though "we say it that shouldn't." Glad to hear you mean to take several copies.

F. MARGATSON.—See paragraph. We wish your Branch all success and will do what we can to assist.

F. GOODWIN.—Pleased to have your opinion that the *Freethinker* "improves week by week." It should do so, for there is a lot of downright hard work put into it.

REPUBLICAN.—The *British Weekly* drew on its imagination. Mr. Bradlaugh contradicted last week the nonsense about his being "almost persuaded" by a sermon of the Rev. Arthur Mursell.

It is pitiful to see a paper like the *Inquirer* reproducing such rubbish.

C. TOMLINSON.—Mind the hecklers don't kill that poor parson.

H. GRANFIELD.—It is a queer thing to give children. See paragraph.

J. A.—We must have more information to found a paragraph on. Can you send us a report? The fellow must be an ignoramus to class Paine and Voltaire as Atheists.

H. CORYN.—Your letter is dated Nov. 18, very much behind the fair. You should strike while the iron is hot. Hammering afterwards is noise for nothing.

H. A. ROGERS.—Bishop Ryle's wail has been noticed already.

R. BROWN.—The Rev. A. R. Fausset, M.A., has written a work, *Spiritualism Tested by Scripture*, in which he accepts the tricks of the medium as the work of Satan.

J. P. Y.—The poem "Pray for the Devil" is by W. M. M. Call. St. Aquinas would have been shocked by such heresy.

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.—Freedom—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Truthseeker—Independent Pulpit—Der Lichtfreund—Twentieth Century—Oban Telegraph—Echo—Ironclad Age—Liberator—Freethought—Nottingham Guardian—Fair Play—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Secular Thought—West Sussex Gazette.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening. Before the lecture he said a few words on Mrs. Besant's action against the Stepney parson, congratulating her on coming so well out of such adverse circumstances. He also referred to Mr. Bradlaugh's intended resignation. The audience seemed to agree with him that the loss of Mr. Bradlaugh should incite those who remain in the Secular party to redoubled efforts for the success of the cause. There were hearty cheers when the lecturer hoped Mr. Bradlaugh would return from India fully restored to health, and wished him a long life, private and public success, and a career of useful service to the people.

THE *Freethinker* ran out of print last week and scores of customers were disappointed. This week we print a larger supply. Our circulation is slowly increasing, and we appeal to all our friends to accelerate the process in the various ways open to them. It costs us a great deal of labor to provide our readers with the biggest penny Freethought paper on record, and for a considerable time we have not received a farthing of remuneration, and sometimes we are actually out of pocket. We intend to fight on anyhow, but a soldier's heart is lighter when he is able to send home his half-pay.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND—for promoting its circulation and making it cease to be a burden to its editor:—W. Robinson £5.

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year, and when it comes it brings our Christmas Number. Look out for it, reader; it will be ready next week. Our artist has designed a splendid new cover, and the illustrations are plentiful and exhilarating, nor is the letterpress a thing to be sneezed at—no, it is a thing to be laughed at. Like another Moses, we hold up our Christmas Number to the sufferers from melancholia, and cry "Look and live!" If Beecham's pills are worth a guinea a box, our Christmas Number is worth two guineas a copy, yet we sell it for threepence. Who says the age of miracles is past? Perish the thought, while our Christmas Number is to be purchased with the smallest silver coin of the realm, one of those dainty, delicate little discs that the millionaire drops into the church collection plate! How is it done? Why, as the elderly female egg-seller said, we lose on every one we sell, but we make it up on the quantity. Yes, dear reader, the quantity's the thing, and we are printing a big supply on that principle.

WE said before that Judge North must have a copy to help him digest his Christmas dinner. We must now put Baron Huddleston on the free list.

ACCORDING to the *Daily News* the revolution in Brazil has been caused by the encroachments of the clerical party.

The Crown Princess, in league with the priests, has for some time been playing into the hands of the Church, with the determination of making the Empire a mere tributary of the Pope. This design, however, has been defeated by the promptitude of the Liberals, who have by a revolutionary act abolished the monarchy and proclaimed a Republic. Up to the present not a single life has been sacrificed, and it is to be hoped that the friends of freedom and progress in Brazil will see that their cause is not stained with bloodshed. Let them keep the clericals out of secular affairs, and, having freed their country from the most intolerable of yokes, let them show a noble example of justice and humanity.

FREETHOUGHT has made considerable headway in Brazil. One of the Republican leaders, Benjamin Constant, is a professor and a disciple of Auguste Comte. In 1871 he founded the Brazilian Positivist Club. All the young officers of the army have been his pupils and are entirely devoted to him. He is now fifty-three, is cool and prudent, and has a reputation for stainless integrity.

M. FLOQUET has been elected President of the French Chamber of Deputies, receiving 383 out of the 400 votes recorded. M. Floquet is an ardent Republican and Freethinker. Like other Frenchmen, he has fought his duels, and the wound he gave General Boulanger did a good deal towards bursting that bladdery reputation.

WE see that Mr. Wallace Nelson, formerly of Sheffield, has been debating for two nights in Brisbane, Australia, with a local reverend, on "Does God Exist?" and "Do we Live after Death?" A debate has been arranged at Sydney between W. W. Collins and Mr. F. Floyd on the respective merits of Secularism and Christianity.

*Freedom*, of Sydney, copies from our pages Mr. Foote's open letter to the Rev. R. F. Horton on the subject of "Inspiration."

A NEW Freethought lecturer of some pretensions has appeared in the Western States. He is a convert from the Baptist Church of San José, California, and named N. F. Ravlin. Dr. J. L. York, himself a popular lecturer, recommends him as "an able and eloquent champion of Freethought."

*Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, of Madrid, inserts a letter written from the Eiffel Tower by A. de Maglia, who, as our readers are aware, was sentenced to six years imprisonment for an article attacking the Pope and bishops at the time of the Bruno festival. *Las Dominicales* laments that a gentleman of Signor Maglia's ability should be in exile simply for expressing his opinions.

AS long as it was possible the Church endeavored to throw doubt upon Bruno's martyrdom, and books and articles were written to that end. Since the announcement that Signor Mariotti would publish official documents proving that Giordano Bruno was stripped naked and burnt, the *Observatore Romano*, the principal Catholic journal of Rome, fairly owns up, and endeavors to take the wind out of Signor Mariotti's sails by publishing an account of Bruno's death on documents published by the Rev. Padre de Martinis of the Sacred Congregation of the Index.

ACCORDING to the Vatican documents it appears that Bruno was granted eight days in which to make his peace with the church, but he remained an *eretico impenitente*, and so was taken to the Campo dei Fiori and burnt alive. The Rev. Padre de Martinis also relates that at the stake a crucifix was presented him to kiss, but Bruno with a disdainful look turned his head away. He also mentions that he was gagged in order to prevent him uttering his fearful blasphemies.

THE Newcastle Branch has initiated a Sunday Music League in the city for the purpose of maintaining the right of the people to have music in the public parks and recreation grounds on Sundays. The City Council put a stop to such "desecration" last summer, and the League is striving to undo the mischief.

THE Edmonton Branch is doing very well in its nice hall. Mr. Sam Standing has been lecturing every Sunday evening, but he cannot "go on for ever," and the Branch will be glad to hear from other lecturers who are willing to lend a helping hand. The audiences are large and attentive, and by and by the enterprise will be self-supporting. The secretary's address is—F. Margetson, 4 Stanley Road, Upper Edmonton, N.

THE Edmonton Christians are being stung into action by the "cheek of those Secularists," whom they propose to silence by overbidding them for the hire of the hall. Every Freethinker in the district should feel it his duty to defeat this cowardly attempt.

A LETTER from Stockholm prison from Mr. Victor E. Lennstrand assures us that however long he may be incarcerated he will, upon liberation, take up his work of propagating and organising Freethought where he left it off. He is convinced that the Freethought organisation in Sweden will, in a few years, be strong enough to render any further prosecutions impossible. We need scarcely say that our warmest sympathy and heartiest good wishes are with Mr. Lennstrand in his confinement. We trust that no effort will be spared to sustain his paper until his liberation.

MR. WHEELER'S articles on "Rome in America" and "Celibate Christian Brothers" both find a place in Dr. Monroe's *Ironclad Age*. The good old Doctor is always ready to give a dig to the priests.

THE Annual Congress of the American Secular Union at Philadelphia, seems to have been rather tame, and to have resulted in a shortening if not moderating of the platform. Mr. T. B. Wakeman spoke well against limiting the scope of the organisation, but the counsels of Dr. R. B. Westbrook, who was re-elected president, prevailed. A lady secretary, Miss Ira Craddock, was elected in the place of Mr. E. A. Stevens, resigned, and the head-quarters of the Union for the ensuing year will be at Philadelphia. In the evenings after the Conference large audiences were addressed by Dr. McGlynn, the Rev. Minot Judson Savage, and Mr. T. B. Wakeman. The presence of the two first-named may have added to the popularity of the meeting, but it probably weakened its tone. Professed Christians are dangerous allies for Freethinkers.

A SUCCESSFUL Freethought Convention has also been held at Portland, Oregon Territory. This seems to us to have been the more successful meeting of the two.

WE are pleased to see from the *Independent Pulpit*, for November, that Mr. J. D. Shaw is by no means overwhelmed by the burning of Liberal Hall, although his loss amounts to 1,600 dollars. He proposes to rebuild, and go on with his Freethought work as usual, and we trust that his courageous efforts will be well sustained.

MR. ST. CHAD BOSCOWAN, in his present course of British Museum lectures on "Ancient Monuments and the Bible," said "We can no longer claim for the Hebrew literature that isolated position, or inscribe on it, as some had, the motto *Noli me tangere*." He pointed to the explanation of some Bible passages by ancient Oriental customs, and among other things mentioned a remnant of Totemism in the names of Rachel, a ewe; Leah, an antelope; Deborah, a bee, etc. This, he said, threw light on the remarkable blessing by Jacob of his sons. In Babylonia the family seal always bore the family totem, which was that of the family god.

A DAY OF REST.—Sunday-school Superintendent: Can any of you tell me why Sunday is called the day of rest?—Little Dick (holding up his hand): I kin. It's 'cause we get up early and hurry through breakfas' so's to dress in time for Sunday-school, and then hurry to Sunday-school, so we won't be late, and then skip inter church 'fore the bell stops ringin', and then go home to dinner and get fixt up for afternoon service, and then get supper an' go to bed, so pa and ma can get ready for evening service. That's all we do.—*New York Weekly*.



## A DEAD SOLDIER OF PROGRESS.

WHEN I was imprisoned for "blasphemy" there were two Radicals in Plymouth who fought ardently for me. Dr. Jones died soon after my release, and now the Rev. W. Sharman is gone. He threw up his pulpit, carried on an agitation for my release, and founded the Society for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Subsequently he took another Unitarian pulpit at Preston, where he has just died. Mr. Sharman was a conscientious man, a very advanced thinker, and a social and political reformer with the courage of his convictions. He fought hard for Mr. Bradlaugh's right to sit in the House of Commons. He fought hard for my right to express my views. I lay this poor tribute reverently on his grave.

G. W. FOOTE.

GIORDANO BRUNO.  
BY COLONEL INGERSOLL.

*Those who object to the monument justify the murder.*

THE night of the middle ages lasted for a thousand years. The first star that enriched the horizon of this universal gloom was Giordano Bruno. He was the herald of the dawn.

He was born in 1548, was educated for a priest, became a Dominican friar. At last his reason revolted against the doctrine of transubstantiation. He could not believe that the entire Trinity was in a wafer, or in a swallow of wine. He could not believe that a man could devour the creator of the universe by eating a piece of bread. This led him to investigate other dogmas of the catholic church, and, in every direction, he found the same contradictions and impossibilities supported, not by reason, but by faith.

Those who love their enemies threatened his life. He was obliged to flee from his native land, and he became a vagabond in nearly every nation of Europe. He declared that he fought not what priests believed, but what they pretended to believe. He was driven from his native country because of his astronomical opinions. He had lost confidence in the Bible as a scientific work. He was in danger because he had discovered a truth.

He fled to England. He gave some lectures at Oxford. He found that institution controlled by the priests. He found that they were teaching nothing of importance—only the impossible and hurtful. He called Oxford "The Widow of true learning." There were in England, at that time, two men who knew more than the rest of the world. Shakespeare was then alive.

Bruno was driven from England. He was regarded as a dangerous man,—he had opinions, he inquired after reasons, he expressed confidence in facts. He fled to France. He was not allowed to remain in that country. He discussed things—that was enough. The church said "Move on." He went to Germany. He was not a believer—he was an investigator. The Germans wanted believers; they regarded the whole Christian system as settled; they wanted witnesses, they wanted men who would assert. So he was driven from Germany.

He returned at last to his native land. He found himself without friends, because he had been true, not only to himself, but to the human race. But the world was false to him, because he refused to crucify the Christ of his own soul between the two thieves of hypocrisy and bigotry. He was arrested for teaching that there are other worlds than this; that many of the stars are suns around which other worlds revolve; that Nature did not exhaust all her energies on this grain of sand called the earth. He believed in a plurality of worlds, in the rotation of this, in the heliocentric theory. For these crimes, and for these alone, he was imprisoned for six years. He was kept in solitary confinement. He was allowed no books, no friends, no visitors. He was denied pen and paper. In the darkness, in the loneliness, he had time to examine the great questions of origin, of existence, of destiny. He put to the test what is called the goodness of God. He found that he could neither depend upon man nor upon any deity. At last the Inquisition demanded him. He was tried, condemned, excommunicated, and sentenced to be burned.

According to Professor Draper, he believed that this world is animated by an intelligent soul—the cause of forms, but not of matter; that it lives in all things, even in such as

seem not to live; that everything is ready to become organised; that matter is the mother of forms, and then their grave; that matter and the soul of things, together, constitute God. He was a Pantheist—that is to say, an Atheist. He was a lover of nature—a reaction from the asceticism of the Church. He loved the fields, the woods, the streams. He said to his brother-priests: Come out of your cells, out of your dungeons; come into the air and light. Throw away your beads and your crosses. Gather flowers; mingle with your fellow-men; have wives and children; scatter the seeds of joy; throw away the thorns and nettles of your creeds; enjoy the perpetual miracle of Life.

On the seventeenth of February, in the year of grace 1600, by the triumphant beast, the church of Rome, this philosopher, this great and splendid man was burned. He was offered his liberty if he would recant. There was no God to be offended by his recantation, and yet as an apostle of what he believed to be the truth, he refused this offer. To those who passed this sentence upon him he said: "it is with greater fear that ye pass this sentence upon me than I receive it." This man, greater than any supernaturalist of his day, grander than the martyr of any religion, died willingly in defence of what he believed to be the sacred truth. He was great enough to know that real religion will not destroy the joy of life on earth; great enough to know that investigation is not a crime—that the really useful is not hidden in the mysteries of faith. He knew that the Jewish records were below the level of the Greek and Roman myths; that there is no such thing as special providence; that prayer is useless; that liberty and necessity are the same, and that good and evil are but relative.

He was the first real martyr—neither frightened by perdition, nor bribed by heaven. He was the first of all the world who died for truth without expectation of reward. He did not anticipate a crown of glory. His imagination had not peopled the heavens with angels waiting for his soul. He had not been promised an eternity of joy if he stood firm, nor had he been threatened with the fires of hell if he recanted. He expected as his reward an eternal nothing. Death was to him an everlasting end—nothing beyond but a sleep without a dream, a night without a star, without a dawn—nothing but extinction, blank, utter and eternal. No crown, no palm, no "Well done, good and faithful servant," no shout of welcome, no song of praise, no smile of God, no kiss of Christ, no mansion in the fair skies—not even a grave within the earth—nothing but ashes, wind-blown and priest-scattered, mixed with the earth and trampled beneath the feet of men and beasts.

The murder of this man will never be completely and perfectly avenged until from Rome shall be swept every vestige of priest and pope, until over the shapeless ruins of St. Peter's, the crumbled Vatican and the fallen cross, shall rise another monument to Bruno—the thinker, philosopher, philanthropist, pantheist, and martyr. — *Freethinkers' Magazine.*

## P. T. BARNUM ON GOD.

At Stamford, Connecticut, a few weeks before he left for Europe, Phineas T. Barnum made an address on religion before the State Convention of the Universalist Church. Mr. Barnum said that Christians had a different way of thinking about God now from that of fifty years ago. "When I first heard of the doctrine of the Universalists," said he, "I felt so utterly astonished that I thought I'd drop dead in my boots. The orthodox faith painted God as so revengeful a being that you could hardly distinguish the difference between God and the Devil. If I had almighty power and could take a pebble and give it life, knowing beforehand that fifty-nine seconds out of every sixty would be extreme misery, I would be a monster. Yet this is how God was described, and people talk about loving such a being." If Barnum had said this sort of thing fifty years ago, he would have been classed with Paine, Voltaire, and the rest of the "wicked infidels." Such heresy would have busted up "the biggest show on earth."

Monsieur de Boulay attended the French Ambassador to Spain while Cervantes was yet alive. He said that the Ambassador one day complimented Cervantes on the reputation he had acquired by his *Don Quixote*, and that Cervantes whispered to him, "Had it not been for the Inquisition I should have made my book much more entertaining." The same may be said of Quevedo and many other Spanish authors.

## A RISKY BUSINESS.

TAKING up the cross and laboring to bring souls to Jesus is a risky as well as a thankless business. In many parts of the country no allowance is made for the sacred character of the minister, and he is grudgingly, if at all, allowed the privileges that attach to his holy calling. Here is one of the latest cases of cruel and barbarous treatment of a holy man:—

“Carthage, Mo., Oct. 24.—An itinerant Baptist preacher by the name of John W. Taylor, whose home is at Carterville, in this country was convicted of bigamy in the circuit court here to-day, and sentenced to two years in the penitentiary. He was arrested in the early part of last summer, and in default of bond committed to the county jail, where he has since remained. His arrest and conviction were brought about by correspondence between his wife, whom he deserted several years ago in Indiana, and wife No. 2. The first named by mere accident located her faithless husband at Centerville.”

After reading this what encouragement can any minister have to persevere in the good work of snatching brands from the eternal burning!—*Ironclad Age*.

## THE NICENE CREED.

The Marlboro, Mass., *Times* is a heretical sheet. It pokes fun at the Nicene creed, saying: “At the Episcopal convention in New York, after a long and exciting debate, it was voted by a large majority to require the Nicene Creed to be recited in all the churches in public worship not less than five times in each year. The part of that creed which relates to the late lamented Lord Jesus Christ is as follows hereinafter: ‘I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of his father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.’ If any adherent of that faith, either lay or clerical, thinks he knows what the above extract means, we should like to have him or her furnish us with an understandable exegesis. Of course, if the belief above outlined is founded on fact, it leaves the late Mrs. Joseph, the reputed virgin mother of Christ, in a very unpleasant predicament, because she couldn’t possibly have been alive ‘before all worlds;’ and then, too, it is claimed that her son was the result of an overshadowing by the Holy Ghost. But perhaps the Lord Jesus Christ above referred to is not the Judean gentleman of that name. There have been a great many Christs.”

## PIOUS GALLANTRY.

A young gentleman and lady sitting in the same pew in a church, the youth, in the course of the sermon, read something in the eyes of the lady which made a deeper impression on his mind than the lecture of the preacher. As love, although blind, is never at a loss for an expedient, he presented the maiden, whose charms had attracted his notice, with the fifth verse of the Second Epistle of St. John:

“Now, I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.”

After reading this passage, the lady, in reply, promptly referred her suitor to the sixteenth verse of the first chapter of Ruth:

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

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## SWORN ON A DICTIONARY.

The *Savannah News* is responsible for the following:—

“Does it matter what kind of a book people kiss when magistrates swear them? If it does, then a magistrate in a district in this county has gone beyond the bonds of law. Witnesses in his court have been swearing for a considerable time by a mutilated Latin dictionary.

“‘Some time ago,’ the justice said, ‘I borrowed a Latin dictionary, and it was just about the size of my Bible, and looked for the world like it. The back was torn and mutilated, and the edges were red. The dictionary, as I thought, finally disappeared, and could not be found. I kept swearing witnesses right along with the Bible, I thought, when in fact it was nothing but the dictionary.’

“‘How did I find it out? Why, the other day, just as I wound up a big case and was rendering my decision, the book fell out of my lap, open. There it was as plain as day, the old dictionary.’

“‘Did you suspend the trial?’

“‘Suspend nothing. I just went along as if it were a Bible sure enough. Nobody, you may be sure, in that court knew what I found but myself.’”

## RELIGION IN INDIA.

The new census of India gives the population in March, 1888, as 269,477,728, of which 60,684,378 belonged to the native states. Distributed according to religion, in round numbers, the Hindu population, in millions is about 190; the Mohammedans, 81; “aboriginals,” 6½; Buddhists, 3½; Christians, nearly 2; Sikhs, nearly 2; Jains 1¼; while Parsees, Jews and others are comparatively very few. The Church of England has nearly 360 000 members; other Episcopalian churches, 20,000; the Church of Scotland, the same number; “other Protestants,” 138,000; Roman Catholics, nearly 1,000,000; and Syrians, Armenians and Greeks, over 300,000. The Roman Catholics, who are rather more than half the total Christians in India, make great accommodations to heathen idolatry, and are looked upon by the Protestant sects as almost as heathen are the followers of Hinduism. Among the number of those who are classed as Church of England are a large number of officers and soldiers whose belief is of a very indefinite character indeed.

## PROFANE JOKES.

“And who lived in the Garden of Eden?” enquired the teacher. “Please’m, I know,” said little Gallinule Gubbins. “Well, who was it?” “The Adamses, ma’am. And once again, that coy would sooner sit upon an air-cushion than a heap of stones.

Mrs. Proof-text (who remained at home, sick): “Did you take up a collection this morning my dear?” Rev Mr. Proof-text: “That’s a theological point which puzzles me my love—whether a collection where you don’t get anything can properly be called a collection.

Home Missionary: “Do you believe your prayers are answered, Uncle Rastus?” Uncle Rastus: “Pends altogether on de prayer. When I prays de Lord to send me a turkey, it don’t come, but when I prays de Lord to send me after a turkey, I gen ly gits it before midnight.”

Br’er Tanbark, what am yo’ notioner bout ‘gagin’ dis new parson, de Reberen’ Zebra Clamsopper?” “Ter be squar wid yer, Br’er Rasselrazer, I’s posed ter de genterman on economical groun’s.” “Dasso? Wharfo?” “Case de genterman am six feet seben inches in de cl’ar. De hen roos’s er dis congergation hain’t lifted outer dat range, Br’er Rasselrazer.”

The Rev. Mr. Wilgus: “I hope you and brother Wiggs became full reconciled before he died.” Deacon Podworthy: “Oh, yes. I went around and told him that as he was about to pass in his checks I would fully forgive him for all the dirty tricks he had ever done me, though I didn’t presume to say that the Lord would do so, and (gleefully) you ought to have seen how the old sinner looked.”

“Bro’ Tucker, it grieved yer ole pastor’s heart ter heah dat one ob his flock was cotched stealin’ chickens last night.” “Pahson Butler, dem chickens wuz fer yerself, kase I knowed yer’d bin poo’ly. I ’clar ter goodness, pahson, I couldn’t sleep las’ night fer thinkin’ ob yer bein’ sick an’ habin’ no chickens ter eat. So I lowed I’d run de risk jess fer yer sake.” “Oh, den dat alters de case. It wuz er mission ob mercy, brudder, an’ yer ’serve great credit. I hates dese niggers dat’s alluz thinkin’ ’bout deyself an’ never looks arter other folks. I wuz bery poo’ly, sah, an’ am still poo’ly. Duz yer contemplate gwine out ergin soon, Bro’ Tucker?”

PROGRESSIVE THEOLOGY.

A CERTAIN evangelist in Western Virginia organised a Sunday-school, and by dint of diplomacy obtained a goodly following of youngsters, into whose uncombed heads and pliant hearts he instilled the rudiments of religion. Neither did he spare the corrective rod in case his charges failed to come to taw with the catechism.

One Sunday a new arrival was discovered over in the boys' corner. He was called down before the teacher and cross-examined with a view of learning his religious acquisitions.

"How many gods are there?" asked the teacher.

The boy thought a moment and ventured the assertion that there were two.

"Wrong!" said the teacher.

"Three!"

"Oh! you must know better than that. Try again. How many gods are there?"

"Four!" whimpered the boy.

"Wrong again!" shouted the instructor; "I will give you one more chance. If you don't answer right this time, I'll tan you. Now, for the last time, how many gods are there!"

"Five!" wailed the unhappy tow-head.

Smack! The teacher gave him a thorough dressing down and sent him from the room in disgrace. A belated scholar found him sitting on the roadside howling at the top of his voice.

"What's the matter, Jack?"

"Teacher licked me."

"What for?"

"'Cause I didn't know how many gods there were."

"Huh! that's easy enough."

"D' you know?"

"Course."

"How many are there?"

"One, you stupid."

"One, eh! Well, you just go in there with your little one god and you'll catch it. I 'lowed there was five, and he nigh killed me."—*Washington Post.*

EVIL AND MAN'S REDEMPTION.—Evil is due to man's inability to adjust himself to his conditions and to overcome antagonistic influences. Man is progressive—a rising, not a fallen being—the improved product of Evolution, not the degenerate descendant of an illustrious ancestry, made perfect from the beginning. None are sinners at birth, but the results of the experiences of ancestors are inherited, and exist at birth in the form of constitutional tendencies or aptitudes. Man has inherited the instincts and traits of savage life, and these, not the fall of Adam, are the cause of man's imperfect condition. And man is saved, not through Christ, but through his own efforts and the efforts of his fellow-men, in subduing the natural world to his needs. Self-reliance is better than waiting for providence to interpose. A lightning rod on a steeple is better than the prayer of a saint for the preservation of a church.—*B. F. Underwood.*

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