

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

OUR next number will contain an article by Mr. Foote on the Rev.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES'S
CONVERTED COBBLER.

LORD ROSEBERY ON RELIGION.

LORD ROSEBERY is bright, clever and accomplished. He is also a humorist. His speeches always contain some salt. Among statesmen he is a figure of distinction, and even Mr. Gladstone has pointed him out as "the coming man." He may succeed the Grand Old Man as the Liberal prime minister, leading the Government, as Lord Salisbury does, from the House of Lords; although we dare say he would rather sit in the House of Commons, a wish that may have something to do with his desire to see the upper Chamber either mended or ended.

Breaking away from his useful but dreary labor on the London County Council, Lord Rosebery went down to Glasgow to make a political speech. He spoke as a Scotchman to Scotchmen, and naturally touched on the question of Disestablishment. In doing so, he showed that his point of view was strictly that of the politician. He declined to get into a passion, one way or the other. The Established Church, he said, was neither a necessity nor an outrage. The nation was the sole judge whether it should continue to exist, and apparently his lordship is willing to go as the cat jumps.

Lord Rosebery told his audience that "a Church of some description was a necessity for statesmen," and instanced Napoleon, who when he came to power found it necessary to re-establish the Church of France. His lordship could not have selected a more unfortunate illustration. Napoleon was an absolutist, and he felt that the Church was the best ally of his tyranny. His negotiations with the Pope were worthy of the greatest disciple of Machiavelli. He desired to become Emperor, against the wishes of his Republican generals who were mostly Free-thinkers, and knowing that thrones are based upon superstition he entered into a treaty with the Pope, who came to Paris and publicly consecrated the great adventurer in the name of God. It was a simple bargain between two rulers. "Help me to rule the French," Napoleon said to the Pope. "Agreed," said His Holiness, "my price is the Concordat." Napoleon got his crown consecrated, and the Pope got some millions a year for his Church in France.

Napoleon played the "statesman"—that is, the hypocrite—from the beginning to the end of this "holy" alliance. When the negotiations opened, he sneered at the Pope for talking about the salvation of his soul. "With me," he said, "immortality is the recollection left in the memory of man." Bourrienne tells us that when the Consul consented to

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hear mass at St. Cloud, he sat himself in a private apartment and transacted business there. The door communicating with the chapel was left open, so that the newspapers might say he had heard mass. What he thought of religion is beyond dispute. "In every country," he said to Bourrienne, "religion is useful to government, and those who govern ought to avail themselves of it to influence mankind. I was Mohammedan in Egypt; I am Catholic in France. With regard to the police of the religion of a state, it should be entirely in the hands of the sovereign."

Lord Rosebery knows these facts very well; indeed he hinted that Napoleon was "not a particularly religious man." Apparently, therefore, it is a good and proper thing for "statesmen" to patronise a system of imposture in order to "govern" the people more easily; which, not to put too fine a point upon it, means but this, that the people must be cheated before they are fleeced.

His lordship won the applause of the Glaswegian Liberals by remarking that "the world without a Church—he did not mean an Established Church—would be a chaos of blank selfishness, and statesmen would have to seek and establish a religion among the people simply as a curb to vice, an incentive to virtue, and a great civilising agency." We have said that Lord Rosebery is a humorist, but this humor was really too subtle for his audience. What a picture! that of the statesmen, without a religion, *seeking* one and setting it up to keep the mob in order! As for "blank selfishness," it would be well for "statesmen" to mind their own business, which does not include the supervision of our morals. There is as much selfishness among politicians as among any other class of men, and their assumption of superior virtue is unspeakably grotesque.

The long and the short of Lord Rosebery's view is that religion is a first-rate police agency, and an indispensable instrument in the art of governing. But these very reasons should make it odious to honest and intelligent men. Morality will always be able to take care of itself if priests do not mystify it, and statesmen do not cultivate it. It is founded on human nature, it displays itself in society, and it needs not the patronage of religions or governments. It has flourished in the cottage when priesthoods were full of corruption, and statecraft was little else than pillage and chicane. And it will flourish all the better when statesmen confine their ambition to practical business, and churches cease preaching lies in the name of truth.

G. W. FOOTE.

ANIMAL PIETY.

AMONG the beautiful lessons imparted for our instruction in holy Scripture there are several drawn from the exemplary conduct of the brute creation. We need not dwell upon the piety of Balaam's ass, who burst into speech in order to save her master from the angel, since it may be observed that asses who meet with angels never do keep silence. Nor need we remark

upon the familiar instance of Jonah's whale, who, taking in the prophet off the coast of Tarshish, sailed immediately through the Mediterranean Sea and then all round the coast of Africa in order to land the prophet up the Persian Gulf as near as possible to Nineveh. It should be noticed, however, that after this little adventure, Jonah preached destruction to the city of Nineveh, and the king was so convinced that much depended on the piety of animals that in the blessed words of Scripture "he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God" (Jonah iii., 7-8).

Then there were the pious ravens, who, when the prophet Elijah was in the desert, brought him regularly two square meals of bread and flesh every day. Some commentators, with that fine capacity for twisting which commentators always exhibit, would have us believe that the word translated ravens should be rendered "Arabs" or merchants. These wriggling Christians show an utter want of the historic sense and seem quite ignorant of the fact that marvellous tales of animals form a large part of the legendary folk-lore of all early nations.

Equally pious and indeed God inspired were the two she bears, who, when Elisha was going up to Bethel and the little children mocked him, saying "go up bald head," came out from the wood immediately the prophet cursed them, and summarily executed divine vengeance upon forty and two of them. Similar ministers of God's vengeance were the fiery serpents, or, as it should be more properly rendered, the seraphim, who, when the Jews got disgusted at the light bread with which Jehovah supplied them, the Lord sent as a warning that they should not speak "against God and against Moses."

Equally divinely inspired were the "two milch kine," spoken of in 1 Sam. vi., who, when they had the ark of the Lord in the cart, took the straight way to Bethshemesh, "lowing as they went and turning not aside to the right hand or to the left." A story even more marvellous in its character is told in 1 Kings xiii., of a lion who slew the disobedient prophet, but who could not think of eating his sacred flesh. Instead of doing so he mounted guard over the body and an ass did the like on the other side, and according to the voracious record when another prophet heard thereof, "he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass."

This lion appears to have been imbued with a divine principle which overcame the carnal promptings of appetite. The lions into whose den the prophet Daniel was cast by order of King Darius, however, had to have their mouths shut by an angel, and they were rewarded for their tantalising fast by devouring not only the men who had accused Daniel, but also "their children and wives"; this ancient method of vengeance being in accordance with the practice of the Lord God himself, who when Achan was stoned (Josh. vii., 24), not only his sons and his daughters, but also his oxen and his asses and his sheep were also immolated with him, we presume as participators in his guilt.

The New Testament affords at least one instance of animal piety in the story of the fish which had in its mouth the exact amount of money wherewith to pay the tribute for Jesus Christ and Peter, thus getting rid of the difficulty of either defying the Roman Government or shelling out personally, and thereby acknowledging its claims. But the story, like so many others in the Gospels, is somewhat fishy, and certainly not better authenticated than the

legend of St. Kentigern, at whose prayer a salmon restored a lady's wedding ring which her husband supposed she had given to some lover; a miracle with its monument in the Glasgow coat of arms.

The dove which appeared at the baptism of Jesus Christ might be classed among pious animals but that we are told it was the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and the Holy Pigeon belongs to a different order of birds to any known on earth.

Then there is the entire menagerie of the Apocalypse, some holy like the Lamb of God himself, and some unholy like the dragon and beast of the sea. The beasts and the elders and the elderly beasts all joined in worship before the Great White Throne. The beasts with eyes both before and behind (Rev. iv., 6) we are told rest not day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Barnum has many curiosities in his "greatest show on earth," but none like unto these.

The Bible stories of pious animals were plentifully copied in the Church legends of its saints. Thus St. Paul the hermit was fed by a crow, and a lion dug the grave of St. Anthony. But it is needless to go through all these silly legends which nowadays few have heard of and fewer still credit.

J. M. WHEELER.

"THE CHRISTIAN HERALD."

THE Rev. W. G. Pascoe, Wesleyan minister of Camborne in Cornwall, has warned people against the *Christian Herald*, which he compares to a "penny dreadful." Challenged by the local press, he replies that he is prepared to stand by what he said. He declares that the Rev. M. Baxter, who makes a large profit out of the paper, is the means of sending more people to a suicide's grave than any other man he knows. He characterises the prophecies which Mr. Baxter prints in his journal as nonsense. He asks people not to buy the paper, and he has prohibited the Wesleyan colporteurs from selling it.

The objection to the *Christian Herald* is by no means confined to this provincial clergyman. I notice, for instance, that the journal is excluded from the reading-room of the People's Palace, although religious papers of far less circulation are freely admitted, Jewish journals and even a journal of "reverent free thought" being regularly provided. Why do educated and intelligent Christians object so strongly to so popular a paper? An examination of its columns will show. The *Christian Herald* still upholds the wretched superstitions which are taught in the Bible. It tells its 250,000 readers "What the Devil said to Jack," just as Matthew, Mark and Luke tell us what the Devil said to Jesus. It shows how devils are cast out of demoniacs in Africa by Christian missionaries at the present day, just as the Gospels show us how they were cast out of possessed people by Christian disciples nearly two thousand years ago. It gives cases of prayers for money being miraculously answered, just as Matthew tells us how Peter miraculously obtained money from a fish. It makes dreams prophetic and divine, and deals in special providences and miracles, just as the Bibles does. It treats absurd prophecies as important truths. It gives a weekly list of cases of faith-healing like those in the Gospels, only more numerous and with fuller details. All this is quite respectable and credible if put back two thousand years. It can then be revered as divinely grand and beautiful. Bible ideas in the past tense are sublime, but in the present tense, when distance no longer lends enchantment to the view, they are felt to be contemptible and fit only for fools and fanatics. The fact is that Christians are gradually giving up the Bible and dropping its worst superstitions bit by

bit. They have already so modified their view of its events and teachings that respectable Christians regard a modern repetition of them as a travesty—as if such ridiculous miracles as casting out devils into pigs or blasting a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season could possibly be travestied. The change is not in the *Christian Herald* and the many poor believers who delight in its thoroughly biblical teachings, but in the minds of the more intelligent Christians who are slowly but surely being carried onwards towards Secularism by the general progress of the age. Christians who despise the degrading and mischievous superstitions of the *Christian Herald* should remember that they are despising the superstitions of the Bible, and should ask themselves what is the meaning of this growing revolt against the ideas and teachings embodied in the supposed Word of God. If devils do not enter into pigs or people nowadays, why are Christians willing to believe that they did so a long while ago? If such a belief is childish now, why was it a solemn truth then? If modern miracles are rightly condemned as preposterous delusions or deliberate frauds, why are ancient miracles, or a special selection of them, still acceptable as the unproven proofs of great moral missions? If the unspeakable terrorism of eternal torment and the judgment day is hideously offensive in Talmage and Spurgeon, whose sermons are reported weekly in the *Christian Herald*, why is it beautifully attractive in Jesus and Peter and John the Divine? From the moral point of view and in the interests of humanity and common sense, Christians do well to condemn and counteract the pernicious and often atrocious teaching with which “penny dreadfuls” like the *Christian Herald* delude and terrify their weak-minded readers, but in doing so they must not be allowed to forget that they are also condemning and counteracting the pernicious and often atrocious teachings of Jesus and of the Bible.

W. P. BALL.

BIBLE SCIENCE.

And God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament (Gen. 1, 7).

Below an ocean in the sky
Behold the firmament on high,
Wherein the sun and moon are whirled
Above a flat, four-cornered world;
That firmament the stars, too, sprinkle,
For man on purpose made to twinkle.
That ocean from, the rain is sent
Through windows in the firmament,
And once through them a flood God hurled
To drown the people of the world;
He made his pretty rainbow then
As sign he'd not drown them again.

Although that theory is wild
As the ideas of any child
Upon it founded is the church,
We find when we “the scriptures search,”
Which are as true as truth can be,
Declares the sapient D.D.

None could attribute a book worse
To one who made the universe;
It must have been some bungling clerk
Or journeyman helped plan the work,
Or Moses, God's amanuensis,
And other scribes who'd lost their senses,
For priests are nearly every age
Compelled to tinker up its page,
To twist, explain, or retranslate
Much of it that gets “out of date,”
As truthful science it o'erthrows
Or common sense its nonsense shows.

It is a pitiful thing to see
Some new work on geology,
From Dawson, say, or Duke of Argyle,
Within which either halts oftwhile

To rescue from its slimy pit
That Jewish fossil, holy writ,
And with hard fact try to square it,
For in the muck 'tis held so fast,
By irreverent science overcast,
In their attempts to lift it higher
Ah, how they flounder in the mire!

These men profound in Bible science,
On whom the church does place reliance,
Had best essay an explanation
Of that queer nautical narration
Concerning Jonah and the fish,
And other tales Munchausenish,
Say God's creating his *fac-simile*,
The first one of the human family,
All perfect, yet far less to know
The serpent than his deadly foe.

The feats of Samson, whose great strength
Lay in his hair, when of great length—
He gave his foes a deadly tussle
With small expenditure of muscle—
Once killed a thousand men alone
His weapon just an ass's jaw-bone!
But oh, the blandishments of women
Have caused men tears enough to swim in!
Even Samson loved not wise, though well,
And, worse for him than Adam, fell;
For, after false Delilah's fleecing him
The gentiles swallowed without greasing him

Then there's the holy episode
Of “Balaam and the ass” he rode;
A miracle! exclaims the priest,
Man's language spoken by a beast!
Pshaw! 'tis not strange these days at all
That talk should such an animal,
For many a speaking ass I've seen
The desk o'er of a pulpit lean;
Yea, on it with his forefeet drum,
His hearers' slumbers to o'ercome.

SABUKA.

JUSTICE AT LAST.

A JUDGE WHO MAY BE A SINNER BUT WHO HAS
TAUGHT A LESSON.

A NORTHERN and southern Methodist became involved in a quarrel. The southern Methodist exclaimed:

“You are a nigger lover. You'd rather associate with niggers than with white people, and your church is founded on this principle.”

“If I wanted to hear a common liar” replied the northern Methodist, “I wouldn't want anything better than to sit around and listen to you. Your church split off from ours because you had no religion, because you thought that it was right to whip people to death.”

“You are a liar and a coward. I've more religion in one minute than you have in ten years.”

“You are a cowardly liar yourself,” indignantly exclaimed the northern Methodist, “and if the devil don't get his hooks into you, why then he'll neglect his duty, that's all.”

“I wouldn't go to heaven with such a vile thing as you.”

“Don't be alarmed. You won't go there.”

“Got a devilish sight better chance than you have,” and after again calling each other liars, they struck each other, grappled and rolled on the sinful and earthly side-walk. They were arrested and taken before court. The judge, after hearing the northern and southern statement, said:

“Gentlemen—may the forgiver of all sins pardon me for thus addressing you—it is bad enough for politicians to engage in the broil of division, but when the churches, claiming to be our basis of all that is good, fall out and fight, why I think the devil pops his hoofs together three times, and winks with a gleeful eye at his associates. Do you pretend to be a Christian, Mr. Sunny South?”

“Yes, your honor.”

“Mr. Enterprising North, are you a Christian?”

“I try to be, yer honor.”

“Yes, and I suppose that you men think that heaven has a north and south pole. Think there is a northern and a southern God, don't you? Suppose that there is a northern and southern exposure to Abraham's bosom, no doubt. Think that the recording angel is elected by ballot, I presume. Take Gabriel's trumpet for a campaign bugle, eh? Understood the Savior to say, ‘Suffer little northern Methodist children,’ or ‘southern Methodist children to come unto me,’ didn't you?”

“Judge,” protested the northern Methodist, “I mean no

insult to this court, but I must say that your language is blasphemous."

"I hope you will not take offence," said the southern Methodist, "but you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Oh, certainly," snarled the sinful judge. "Call me sinful and blasphemous for attempting to classify your respective and disrespectful beliefs. It's all very well to fight for the northern or southern territory of paradise, but it is sinful and blasphemous to speak of the performance. However it is unnecessary to engage in a discussion here, for it appears to me that I've got the bulge on you, and if you don't think I'm going to use it, why you are of a decidedly off color. I have been waiting a long time for this opportunity, for I now have in my clutches the class of offenders who drenched our land with the blood of internecine war. The law assemblies have made no provisions for your especial class, desiring, presumably, to allow an upright and sin-punishing judge the right of enjoying himself. Mr. North, I'll send you to the north pole of the rock-pile for one hundred days, and Mr. South, you go to the south pole for a corresponding length of time."—*Arkansas Traveller.*

AN ALPHABET OF PIOUS "WHOPPERS."

A was an Atheist, morality spurning.
 B is the Brimstone for evermore burning.
 C is the Church he so long persecuted.
 D the Damnation on sin executed.
 E was the End of the wretch, unelected;
 F is the Fear of his soul, God-rejected.
 G is the Gospel—belief would have saved him;
 H is God's Hell, where the fool writhe who braved him.
 I the Infinite that the finite defied,
 J the Lord Jesus he again crucified.
 K is the Kindness that softened him never,
 L is the Love that has damned him for ever.
 M is the Misery of his condition,
 N is the Night of eternal perdition.
 O was the Odiousness of his behavior,
 P is the Peace he forsook with his Savior.
 Q was his Quackery—nothing but lying,
 R the Repentance he faltered when dying.
 S is the Science he boasted, that failed him;
 T is the Truth of the Word that assailed him.
 U was the Uselessness of his life's preaching,
 V is the Vanity of his vile teaching.
 W is the Way that his pride made him wander,
 X Xanthic flames that torment him now yonder.
 Y for the Years that he squandered in riot,
 Z zealous friends who would keep these facts quiet.

ALFRED LOVETT.

THE PREACHER'S CURSES AGAINST SCIENCE.

There are two great departments of knowledge which preachers are constantly tempted to invade, with no better equipment than that of a traditional and uninstructed opinion, which has remained unchanged in the midst of progress, and which is often rendered still more offensive by being ornamented with a smattering of impossible apologetics. They are the domains of science and of Biblical criticism. No one who is acquainted with the history of science, and has sufficient honesty to accept facts, can possibly deny that scarcely a single truth of capital importance in science has ever been enunciated without having to struggle against the fury of theological dogmatists. In every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated. The world moved, as Galileo said it did, in spite of the Inquisition. A great Puritan divine thought he had checked the progress of astronomical inquiry when he said that he preferred to believe the Holy Ghost rather than Newton; yet Newton was absolutely right and the Puritan divine was hopelessly wrong. Thousands of pulpits fulminated anathemas against the early geologists; and one religious controversialist—with the exquisite culture and suavity which marks the ordinary language of self-sufficient bigots—satisfied himself that during the ages which preceded the creation "God had been preparing a hell for the geologists." Yet, before thirty years had elapsed, the rejection of the truths which palæontology had revealed would have been regarded as the mark of an idiot. Let the modern preacher learn a little wisdom, a little suspension of judgment from the disastrous annals of the past. His curses, like chickens, will only come home to roost.—*Archdeacon Farrar.*

ACID DROPS.

The Rev. Dr. Pierson is over from the United States on missionary business. He says it is a burning shame that there should be five thousand millions in the coffers of Christian people and only two millions shelled out to bring a thousand million heathen to Christ. Now if Dr. Pierson looked at it in the proper way he would see that, instead of being too little, the amount is just two millions too much. Christ is supposed to be God, and God is supposed to be Almighty. He could therefore bring all the heathen over in five minutes, or five seconds, if he chose to; and if he doesn't do it, what is the use of wasting cash on the job?

Dr. Pierson calculates that out of the 1,500 millions who people the world only thirty millions can be considered as evangelised. And this after eighteen hundred years of steady, well-paid preaching! At such a rate the whole world will be evangelised, if the population doesn't increase, about A.D. 100,000. Yes, there is a good long future for the missionary business.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Birmingham, a few weeks ago, on "Is there a God?" drew a crowded house. Since then the ministers of Islington Chapel have arranged a series of sermons on theological questions, and the Rev. D. T. Young has led off with a discourse on the very subject which filled Baskerville Hall. Evidently the Secular propaganda does one good thing, if no more; it forces Christians to think, and they take a good deal of forcing.

Parson Hoskyns's clerical cronies are passing round the hat for the purpose of paying his expenses in the libel suit instituted by Mrs. Besant, and the *Times* inserts their appeal. No Christian minister need be guarded in his attacks on the characters of Freethinkers. He can always find some of the cloth to raise his expenses with the chance of a judge who will instruct the jury that having the care of souls he is a privileged person.

Parson Hoskyns's defence against Mrs. Besant's attack cost him £300. The appeal for funds is made by Mr. Carr-Glyn, the vicar of Kensington, who supposes that "many will be ready to sympathise" with Mr. Hoskyns's "strong sense of duty." What an euphemism for an anonymous slander!

The Rev. John Hunter, of Hull, has been carrying! religion to Glasgow, which is like taking coals to Newcastle. Speaking of forgiveness—a virtue which Christians talk so much about and practise so little—he denied that Nature was pitiless, and said that those who asserted the absence of anything like pity or sympathy in Nature were simply undermining the foundations of religion. He declared that the cry of the young ravens was heard, and though the sparrow fell to the ground it was not unnoticed by the Heavenly Father.

All this is very pretty. For our part, we don't know whether God *hears* the young ravens, but we are sure he doesn't *feel* them. And what is the use of his *noticing* the fallen sparrows? The cats notice them too. Does he ever lift them up?

Joseph Parker describes the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes as "a man who lies in wait for the Devil at the corner of every street." Only he much prefers the streets of Belgrave to those of Whitechapel, possibly thinking he is likelier there to find the object of his quest. Mr. Hughes intends to visit all the West-end mansions, including in the list Marlborough House, the residence of the Prince of Wales, and to invite the occupants to his meetings at St. James's Hall. Mr. Hughes is going the right way to meet the Devil.

We fancy the Devil must have lain in wait for Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, or he would not put out such a queer and unauthenticated story as that of the converted Atheist shoemaker.

A correspondent writes to the *Echo*:—"I frequently receive appeals on behalf of religious and philanthropic objects which I regard with ridicule, not unmixed with contempt; but, of all appeals to the liberality of the Christian public,

that for the rebuilding of Dr. Talmage's church at Brooklyn is decidedly the most impudent. The church was lately burnt down, and the Insurance Companies are going to pay £26,000; but that is not enough, for the church is to be erected in a more fashionable neighborhood. Under the circumstances Dr. Talmage's congregation of 4,000 people might well subscribe the balance, but for the unfortunate fact that they are the meanest congregation on the face of the earth. They gave last year rather less than £60 for the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad. I should like to see half a dozen such preaching shops destroyed by fire and never rebuilt."

Mr. Samuel Montague, otherwise Moses Samuel, M.P., is convinced that Atheism and Socialism are at the bottom of the East End strikes and has offered to endow a Rabbi with £300 to lecture against Atheism in the East End of London. No doubt there will be plenty of candidates for the post.

"There has been a fine old shindy among the converted Jews in Bethnal Green. Some of them were charged with insubordination, and an attempt was made to eject them from the Institute in Palestine Place. But the rest of the inmates made common cause with the obnoxious ones, and although their food supply was cut off they continued to hold the fort. Then the Principal, assisted by the son of the Bishop of Bedford, proceeded to extremities, and a grand free fight ensued. Several young Hebrews were badly cut, and ugly wounds were received by the Principal and the Bishop of Bedford's son. On the police being called in, they declined to interfere, and advised the combatants to have it out in the police-court.

It is natural for a murderer to lean on Jesus. Here we have one Edward Aszman in gaol for murdering a woman. He has become very devout. He leads in the singing and praying practised in the gaol, and is going straight to glory when hanged. Jesus died for him.—*Ironclad Age*.

Cremationists should note the state of our most populous burial places. In Tower Hamlet Cemetery during fifty years a quarter of a million bodies have been buried, mostly in pits which remain in use till filled up. In Brompton Cemetery a hundred and fifty-five thousand bodies have been interred since it was opened forty-nine years ago, and an average of five thousand is being added each year. In Ardwick Cemetery, near Manchester, six acres in extent, seventeen thousand bodies have been buried in ten years, bringing the total number up to seventy thousand. Only eighteen inches of soil are allowed to separate the graves from each another, and in each of them six or more coffins are piled up, the only drainage of the place being natural drainage, which means drainage in its worst and most insanitary form. Such facts as these may open the eyes of many to the advantages of cremation.

The vicar of All Saints, Mile End New Town, sees in Mrs. Besant's proposal to supply hungry school children with dinners a covert attempt to "squelch" the Church schools. As, however, it is not proposed to limit the scheme of beneficence to Board Schools, it would be a wiser objection to urge that the scheme may tend to undermine parental responsibility.

The Governor of Natal, owing to the recent drought, asked the bishops, clergy and ministers of all denominations in the following terms: "If, in the interval between this date and Sunday, the 3rd day of November, it has not pleased Almighty Providence to relieve our present necessities by sending rain upon the land, the Administrator of the Government in Council requests the bishops, clergy, ministers, and members of all denominations to make Sunday, the 3rd day of November, a day of special intercession and prayer to Almighty God that the drought now prevailing in South Africa may be terminated."

There is a caution about this drawing a cheque on Providence at so many days date, which reminds us of the story of a Scotch fisherman who, being unable to find the entrance to his port of refuge, requested his lad Donald to put up a prayer. At that moment, however, the end of the pier loomed in sight. "Hold, Donald," cried the worthy successor of the sons of Zebedee, "there's the pier,

and it's best not to be beholden to anybody!" If, in the meantime, sufficient rain came, we suppose the Natal clergy left their prayers alone, holding that it is best not to be beholden to anybody.

The first Sunday in November was devoted to prayers for rain throughout South Africa, and it is reported that as Johannesburg the service was hardly over when a thunder-storm burst over the place, and rain came down in floods. Very likely this will give a leg-up to the belief in the efficacy of prayer, for in all such superstitions, to use Bacon's language, men count the hits and forget the misses.

Perhaps the story is an invention after all, and may be something like the western yarn of a great drought which a Baptist Convention was called to terminate. After prayer had gone on about an hour a telegram came from a place which had suffered most from the drought—"Stop praying, we are flooded out."

The Archbishop of Brazil, seeing there is nothing else for it, has blessed the new Republican Government—another confirmation of Napoleon's dictum, that the Lord is always on the side of the biggest battalions.

General Booth says the Englishman is the most irreligious animal on the face of the earth. As for London, it is getting more and more irreligious every day. By and bye the theatres will be open on Sunday night. Altogether the prospect is a sad one—for the sky-pilots. But there will, we fear, be a big intellectual residuum to keep Booth going. So the "General" may feel easy, and say *Après moi le deluge*.

The Rev. Sam Jones, the Yankee revivalist, has a style of his own. Here is a sample. "John the Baptist was the bravest type of Christian that I know of. He just jumped on Herod and pawed his feathers out."

Ill-feeling runs high between Hindus and Mohammedans in various parts of India. At Rohtak a Moslem magistrate assaulted a Hindu magistrate, and now each party is petitioning for the removal of the other from office. Religion is always a cause of strife and contention. People quarrel the most on subjects they know least about.

Stanley is a brave and skilful traveller. Nobody can deny that. His last march across Africa is like some mythical romance. But he has very hazy views on religion. "Was it Providence or luck?" he asks, after recounting his hairbreath escapes, and he seems to think it wasn't luck. "If not luck then," he says, "it is surely Providence in answer to good men's prayers far away." But there is a third alternative. Maybe it was neither luck nor Providence, but Stanley's own stout heart and crafty head that brought him through his troubles.

"Each time," says Stanley, "I read the story of Captain Nelson's and Surgeon Parke's sufferings, I feel vexed at my forbearance, and yet again I feel thankful, for a higher Power than man's severely afflicted the cold-blooded murderers, by causing them to feed upon one another a few weeks after." Well now, this is rich! Stanley spares the wretches, and then congratulates himself on getting a richer vengeance on them through the agency of Providence, which gets up a cannibal feast to justify Stanley's theology.

Stanley doesn't explain how it was that "good men's prayers far away" didn't pull Emin through without Stanley's assistance. Nor does he explain how it was that "good men's prayers far away" did not prevent Gordon from being slain at Khartoum. There seems to us a good deal of no doubt unconscious hypocrisy in all this. Stanley knows very well that he was selected to relieve Emin, not because he was a good prayer, but because he was a good traveller, and, if need were, a good fighter.

Common sense is the first great need in the study of the Bible. So says Sir William Dawson, and we agree with him. We felt it very acutely when we were reviewing Sir William's lucubrations on Genesis. Some day or other we hope he will get a little common sense and make a beginning.

According to the Newcastle *Leader*, the magnificent sum of 4s. 6d. was collected at a tea-fight in connection with the local place of worship. The same journal states that the Rev. John McNeill has trouble with his collections, and threatens to leave the Regent Square Church unless his congregation is more liberal.

The Congregationalists have had a field-day at Newcastle. The occasion was the ordination of Mr. J. H. Jowett. Sermons were preached by the leading lights of Congregationalism, such as Principal Fairbairn and the Rev. C. A. Berry. The committee of St. James's Church read a document, pledging themselves to do several things by "divine help" for their new minister. The first was "to provide for his temporal support and comfort in a spirit of liberality." Afterwards, we suppose in due order of importance, came such items as prayer and spreading the kingdom of Christ.

Another sudden death in a chapel. Last Sunday a painful sensation was caused in the Halliwell Road Wesleyan Chapel, Bolton, by one of the congregation falling down dead during the service.

The editors of *Lucifer* think it worthy of record that a horse named "Theosophist" won in the Lancashire Handicap. They even append a note to the great event saying that "good luck follows the name." Is the belief in luck grafted on the belief in Karma?

Fresh complaints are made both from Protestants and Catholics of "spiritual destitution" in Berlin and Vienna. Neither city can raise money for fresh churches for the ever-increasing population. Berlin is now a city of a million and a half inhabitants, and has only two or three more churches than with half that number. The city is divided into 37 parishes, and two only out of the 37 possess more than a single church, and this usually is a small one.

Mr. Gordon-Gorman, the author of *Converts to Rome*, boasts of having 1,500 more names, 500 of them belonging to the aristocracy of Germany, who are drifting more to Rome as the great bulwark of Conservatism.

Talmage seems to be a thorough humbug, tricky even in begging for cash to rebuild his tabernacle. He wrote to wealthy men in Omaha, St. Louis, and Kansas City, offering to each to name the new building after some dead relative, providing he would give a hundred thousand dollars. Fortunately none responded, so the preacher has not the embarrassment of selecting which name he would prefer, or giving all of them.

According to the *Boston Investigator*, a sermon which Talmage preached on the text, 1 Kings xvii., 16, "And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah," was word for word as delivered by Lawrence Sterne over 100 years ago. We should like to know if this sermon by Talmage has been published in England.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Raunds stirred up some of the bilious bigotry of the little place. One person writes to the local paper protesting against the Temperance Hall being let for the advocacy of doctrine that "may be the eternal ruin of some who attend." On the other hand, Mr. J. R. Wilkinson, J.P., to whom Mr. Foote's lecture was a reply, writes like a gentleman. He urges that Secularists have the same right to be heard as other people, and advises his fellow Christians to show more "fairness and charity." Mr. E. G. Billington also contributes a good letter as a Secularist.

A nephew of the last Pope, Pio Nino—there are some who say the Pope's nephew has a nearer title—is said to have brought an action against the present Pope Leo XIII. for some heavy sums of money invested by Pius IX. in English securities, which the nephew alleges were private property, though they have fallen into the hands of the present wearer of the tiara.

The ex-Empress of Brazil and the Crown Princess both seem to have been eminently pious people, believing in the Lourdes miracles, making pilgrimages, etc. As the

Emperor was broken down in health, the prospect was only agreeable to the clerical party, who are in a state of consternation at the sudden advent of the Republic.

There is much need of the efforts of Mr. Symes and the secular party in Australia. In Melbourne the law decrees that no newspaper shall be published on the Sabbath, and no vehicle must drive past a place of worship during the hours of Divine service at a faster pace than a walk. Numerous attempts have been made to start Sunday newspapers in Melbourne, but the law has invariably extinguished them at the second or third number.

The clergy of all denominations like to concern themselves with the salvation of the wealthy and are usually quite ready to relieve them of those vain riches which are such an impediment in the heavenward part. The Roman Catholics of Pittsburg have got hold of Miss Drexel, an heiress of that city with property valued at £1,200,000, and have enticed her to enter a nunnery, and of course devote her wealth to the Church. The Protestants now call for fervent prayer to God that the poor girl may regain her liberty and devote her money to the true Church of Christ, instead of to the Scarlet Lady.

A severe epidemic of fever and influenza is raging in St Petersburg, and is said to affect over one hundred and fifty thousand of its inhabitants. But all plagues are merciful provisions of our heavenly father to clear out of the road those of his children who cannot stand them.

Alice Stuart, a servant girl who has taken out a bastardy order against Robert William Banner of Earl's Court, had a strange story to tell at the Westminster Police Court, the other day. She testified that her seducer, who is a married man with two children, arranged that she should take the Holy Communion at the same time as his wife, at St. Andrew's, Well Street, Oxford Street. All three of them went to the Lord's Table together, Mrs. Banner being of course unaware of the girl's relationship with her husband. After Communion, defendant put his wife in her carriage, joined witness, and took her to lunch at the Grand Hotel, Northumberland Avenue. Mr. Banner would appear, if the girl's story is true to have resembled God's favorites of old, who combined much piety with their licentiousness.

All the prayers of the Salvation Army seem inefficacious in the case of Mrs. Booth, who is suffering from cancer in the breast. Her agony is constant and acute, and is intensified by sleeplessness, which necessitates the use of narcotics.

Christians go to church and call themselves miserable sinners, and we won't dispute the description. But how fierce they would look if anybody ventured to call them so outside the gospel-shop! We guess, therefore, it was a pretty farce when the Rev. John McNeill told a Wesleyan congregation at East Dulwich that "there was not a farthingworth of good about the bankrupt audience before him." It was fortunate, however, that there was more than a farthingworth of cash, for John was brought down to beg a big collection.

Four thousand churches are now using unfermented wine for sacramental purposes. Ichabod! The glory is departed! It was not such weak stuff as this which was referred to by the man who wrote Judges. He speaks of "wine which cheereth God," and wine of that sort would need some body.

Friend: "Are you happy?" Spirit (through medium): "Perfectly so." Friend: "What has pleased you most since you left us?" Spirit: "The epitaph on my tombstone. It both amazes and delights me."

One day when Lord Thurlow was very busy a poor curate called upon him and applied for a living then vacant. "Don't trouble me," said the Chancellor, turning upon him with a frowning brow, "Don't you see I am busy and cannot listen to you? What duke or lord recommended you?" The poor curate lifted up his eyes and with dejection said, "he had no lord to recommend him" but "The Lord of Hosts!" "The Lord of Hosts? The Lord of Hosts?" said the swearing Chancellor, "Damn it, who is the Lord of Hosts? I have had recommendations from most lords, but do not recollect one from him before; and so, do you hear, young man, you shall have the living."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, December 1, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell, at 7.30, "Saint David: a Study in Bible Ethics."

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

Jan. 5 and 12, Hall of Science, London; 19, Liverpool; 26, Camberwell.

Feb. 2, Hall of Science, London; 9, Blackburn; 16, Milton Hall, London; 23, Hall of Science, London.

March 2, Manchester; 9, Camberwell; 23 and 30, 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.

J. W. MEIN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. M.—The verse shows some power, but is too rough.

H. M. RIDGWAY sends 10s. for the London Secular Federation.

H. J. STACE.—It is a very old joke. We printed it years ago. Thanks all the same.

W. W. CHILT.—Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*, Paine's *Age of Reason*, and Foote's *Bible Heroes*.

J. BROWN.—We hope your social party at Newcastle on Jan. 6 will be a great success.

SAM STANDRING writes:—"On the two last Sundays I have found immense advantage for speedy reference in having a *Bible Handbook* on the lecture desk, thanks to the foresight of the chairman."

E. ANDERSON.—Good! Mr. Foote hopes to visit West Ham some day.

CONSTANT READER.—Thanks for the cutting. We shall give the Rev. J. McNeill a letter, but it must wait for a few weeks.

"Letters to the Clergy"—at least the first series, including all up to date—are being reprinted in good bold type. They will make a little volume of over a hundred pages.

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—Menschenthum—Twentieth Century—Liberator—Echo—Ironclad Age—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Lucifer—Freidenker—Newcastle Daily Leader—Western American—Western Figaro—Evening Standard—Natal Advertiser—Hampshire Independent—Portsmouth Evening News.

MR. BRADLAUGH.

By the time this number of the *Freethinker* is in the readers' hands Mr. Bradlaugh will have set sail for India. The terrible ordeal he has passed through has left him weak and tremulous, but we hope the fresh sea air will fortify his blood and invigorate the springs of his life. Few men have ever worked so hard for great principles, fewer have taxed such great strength in fighting for truth and justice, none has better earned a rest from the strife. May it swiftly recruit his energies. May he return with the old fire of battle in every nerve and vein.

We regret to find that some of our words have been misunderstood. We beg to say, therefore—and the sentences will be in his hands before he leaves England—that no one deplors Mr. Bradlaugh's enforced resignation more than we do, or more earnestly wishes he felt equal to the task of leading the Freethought party in the immediate future. The void caused by his absence—which we could fain hope to be but temporary—will be felt most of all by those of us who know what he has been to the Freethought movement, who have felt a just confidence in his clear judgment, and a firm reliance on his masculine character.

One Christian paper has actually twisted our words into the statement that Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions had undergone a change. Preposterous notion! The convictions of such a man are as deep as life itself, and could only expire with it. We cannot conceive of their failing under the blackest shadow of the wings of Death.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR Christmas Number follows this week's *Freethinker* on the machines, and we hope to have it ready by Monday or Tuesday. Orders should be placed with the newsagents at once.

THE *Freethinker* ran out of print again last week, although we issued a larger supply. If our friends will push it among their acquaintances, and get it displayed by newsagents, we believe the circulation will increase still more rapidly.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND, to promote the circulation of this journal and ease the burden on its editor:—S. J., 2s. 6d.; W. Trench, 10s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.

FOR some reason or other Huddersfield is not a place where Mr. Foote gets first-rate audiences, but last Sunday's meetings were the largest he has had there of late, and as nearly a hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold the general public must have been fairly well represented. We are glad to hear that the Branch meetings have been better attended this season, and that the spirit of the members is rising. The committee spoke highly of a young lecturer, Mr. Grange, of Dewsbury, who they hope will do good work for the movement.

It is a pity that some newsagent in the centre of Huddersfield cannot be induced to sell and display the *Freethinker*. This would increase the circulation without interfering with brave old David Woffenden, who lives away at Lockwood. It would secure fresh subscribers from the public, and, after all, the Freethought movement depends chiefly on the circulation of its papers.

THERE is one rather funny thing about the Huddersfield meetings. Special lecturers are lucky enough to get the use of the Trade Societies' Hall, but by way of honoring the Sabbath the audience have to go in by the back door. Formerly they had to go out by the same way, but now they are allowed to go out by the front door. By and bye, we suppose, they will go in that way.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S recovery from his terrible illness is noted with intense satisfaction by our American exchanges. The *Truthseeker* says, "It is needless to add here that Mr. Bradlaugh continues to have the sympathy and love of all Americans who admire integrity of character and reverence justice between and for all races, creeds, and conditions of men."

PROFESSOR Huxley, Professor Tyndal, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Alma Tadema, and Dr. W. B. Richardson, have signed the memorial for the Sunday opening of the People's Palace. They express surprise at the Lord's Day Rest people objecting to Sunday organ recitals in the East of London, and not to the instrumental concerts of the Wesleyan Mission in the West.

It is reported that the Pope, or Leo XIII., has a lawsuit in the New York courts, and, like a shrewd business man who means to win, has retained Robert G. Ingersoll as his attorney. "His Holiness" "knows a hawk from a handsaw" when it comes to hiring a lawyer.—*Western American*.

UNDER the head of "Science and the Supernatural" our lively contemporary, the *Western Figaro*, quotes the concluding paragraph of Mr. Foote's seventh Letter to the Clergy. Plucky, anyhow.

THE Camberwell "tea and soiree" comes off next Sunday (Dec. 8). The eating and drinking commences at 6. Ample time is to be allowed for robust appetites, as the

entertainment—which includes a performance by the Milton Hall Dramatic Company—opens at 7.30. The Milton Hall folk start at five in a brake for New Church Road. Tickets 1s. each. Profits to go to the London Secular Federation.

THE latest recruit to our little band of lecturers is Mr. J. Clarke, formerly a Unitarian minister. He lectures at Newcastle to-day (Dec. 1), and we hope the Freethinkers of the district will give him a hearty greeting.

THE North-Eastern Secular Federation has arranged to have a tea, concert and ball at the Arcade Assembly Rooms on January 6. The tickets are 1s. 6d., and can be had of Mr. Joseph Brown, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle; Mr. Peter Weston, newsagent, 77 Newgate Street; or Mr. Tullen, 137 Burt Terrace, Gateshead.

“LETTERS TO THE CLERGY” will be resumed next week. The subject will be Prayer.

MR. WHEELER'S *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* is now completed. The sheets are at the binder's and we hope to have the work on sale in a handsome volume in about a fortnight.

THE hall at Edmonton, in which Mr S. Standing is lecturing for the local Branch, was filled on Sunday night. A noisy Christian Evidence man turned up and carried on a loud conversation with his neighbors. The landlord says he means to have order kept in his place, and if the Christian Evidence man repeats the offence he will be ejected with just as much force as he renders necessary.

ONE for the West Ham Branch! It had a good meeting last Sunday night, and collected £3 4s 1½d for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

“A BROAD CHURCHMAN” wrote in the *Portsmouth Evening News* criticising the views of the Rev. Mr. Shute on the subject of Inspiration. A controversy ensued which showed the interest taken in the subject, but which the editor deemed it best to close peremptorily lest heterodoxy should appear too outspoken.

THE Brazilian Revolution has made a great impression in Spain and Portugal, where for some time past the anti-clerical and Republican movement has been growing. In the Senate, a bishop and a Carlist peer both complained of Madrid juries that had recently acquitted journalists prosecuted for articles attacking the Catholic religion. They also expressed the fear that the Brazilian Revolution would soon find imitators in Spain unless the Government or the Regency made a severer penal code to protect the State Church. This appeal to force is likely to recoil on themselves long before the boy king comes of age.

NEXT Sunday afternoon (Dec. 1) at 4 p.m., Mr. H. L. Braekstad discourses at South Place Chapel on “Life and Thought in Norway.” Those who attend can safely be promised an interesting account of an interesting people from a competent authority.

THE Edinburgh Branch of the Scottish Secular Union now meet in the Trades Hall, 142 High Street, on Sunday evenings at 6.30. A good syllabus of lectures for the winter season is put forward.

A NEW German Freethought Union has been started at Leipsic. It is named after “Humboldt.”

In his last lecture on Semitic Religions, Mr. W. St. Chad Boscawen proceeded to describe the nature of the Semitic Babylonian religious literature and its remarkable resemblance to the Hebrew. Hymns and poems, stories and legends, such as those of Cain and Abel, the curse on the earth after the Fall, strange legends such as the talking of animals as in the legends of the fox and the Sun-god, and the dialogues of the ox and the horse, reminding us of the stories of Balaam's ass and Samson with the foxes, while the earlier parable in Hebrew, that of Jotham in Judges ix. 7-16 had a close parallel in the trees which talked with Gizdimbar. Mr. Boscawen believes that in the Babylonian legend of Gizdimbar there is preserved another portion of

the Song of the Bow cited in 2 Sam. 18, 27, as written in the book of Jasher.

ARE Sunday-schools a failure? In an address delivered to the members of the Young Christians' Union, in connection with the Moseley Road Congregational Church, Mr. Edward Hurley says they are, and thousands of thoughtful and clear-sighted people agree with him. He obtained at the offices of the Sunday School Union a pamphlet which contains the startling statement that six out of every seven of the convicts in our penal establishments, and those confined in our prisons and reformatories, have been Sunday-school scholars.—*Christian World*.

IN his last instalment of his articles entitled “Was Abraham Lincoln a Christian?” Mr. J. E. Remsburg quotes the following interesting passage from the *Life of Lincoln*, by Col. Ward H. Lamon:—“When he came to New Salem, he consorted with Freethinkers, joined with them in deriding the Gospel history of Jesus, read Volney and Paine, and then wrote a deliberate and labored essay, wherein he reached conclusions similar to theirs. The essay was burnt, but he never denied or regretted its composition. On the contrary, he made it the subject of free and frequent conversations with his friends at Springfield, and stated, with much particularity and precision, the origin, arguments, and objects of the work” (p. 487).

DR. JULIET H. SEVERANCE protests vigorously in the *Truthseeker* against any softening of the Freethought backbone in America. She points out that it is hopeless to expect Christians will join the Secular Union, because its principles are made less definite. The more Freethinkers bend the heavier burdens are laid on their backs.

MR. ROBERT FORDER refuses to pay church rates on principle. He has been frequently dunned for them by the vicar of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, but has never paid. At last he is in the receipt of a summons to appear at the Mansion House Justice Room at twelve o'clock next Monday, Dec. 2. Perhaps some friends may like to be present. It is to be hoped the case will be heard by the Jewish Lord Mayor.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES says the Devil invented pews. Who the Devil then invented pulpits?

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.

A member of the Primitive Methodist Church came to work somewhat hurriedly in Northwich from Crewe, leaving his family behind till he could find a suitable house. In his peregrinations on this errand one evening in the neighborhood of Castle, he met a gentleman (?) wearing the garb of a clergyman. In the simplicity of his heart, our friend thought to himself, ‘Here is a Good Samaritan, who, knowing the neighborhood, will be likely to guide me to a successful issue.’ This worthy successor of the Apostles he saluted, and blandly stated his case to him, and asked him kindly to direct him. “Are you a Churchman or a Dissenter?” “Oh, I am a Dissenter,” was the unsuspecting reply, wondering what that query had to do with the business in hand. “Ah! then I hope you may succeed, but I cannot help you; I wish you good evening.” Our friend was left to stumble his way as best he could, which this priest, as one of old, passed by on the other side.—*Christian World*

A TROUBLESOME GOD.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

Delivered at New York, Sunday, Nov. 3, 1889.

It is possible that some persons within the small circle of those who know anything of me think that I take a kind of delight in saying things against religion in general, and the Christian religion in particular; that it is a pleasure to me to do what I can to break down the faith of people who believe in the orthodox God and heaven and hell; that I like to shock the religious sensibilities of my hearers or readers as much as I can. But any such supposition is a great mistake. If I followed my inclinations I would never say one word upon the subject of religion that would be calculated to hurt anybody's feelings. I would enjoy conversation upon that subject with persons who agree with me, or who could talk about it philosophically, and avoid the subject when I found myself with those who were of the old faith and were sensitive to differences of opinion upon the subject.

All the members of my immediate family and of my wife's family are either Christians in a strict sense of the word or else decidedly religious persons in their beliefs, and of these my only brother is a very orthodox minister of the gospel. He and I have spent many hours together in the study of the Bible, and have often prayed together, and I know just how firm his belief is by knowing how firm my own once was. I remember my mother's unfaltering faith in one who was to her a living Heavenly Father. I know what is the genuineness of the religious beliefs of my sisters and of my wife's parents, and all these are persons whom I love, and who I know mourn because I no longer believe as I once did. If there were no other reasons except those that grow out of my relations to these persons who are so near to me in affectional life, they would be sufficient to keep my mouth closed in public against their religion if I had any option in the matter.

But aside from the reasons connected with the members of my own family there is another which makes it very difficult for me to speak against the popular religion of the day. I particularly dislike to hurt anyone's feelings, even though he be a perfect stranger to me, and I know that every time I discuss a religious question I do hurt the feelings of many persons. I know that some religious persons hear me and many read my addresses, because there is something about what a heretic says that is very fascinating to an orthodox person, and I have not the slightest doubt that many religious persons read the reports of my addresses who would not like to have it generally known that they do, and whose feelings are hurt by what they read. It is on the same principle that we all stand and watch some scene of pain or trouble, although it makes us sick and faint to look at it. It is a real grief to me to know that I do hurt so many persons' feelings, so that if there were any way for me to get out of it I would stop talking upon the religious question altogether, except to speak of those things in the doctrines of the Church and in the Church itself that I could really commend.

But, you see, I have no option in the matter. I feel, every time I open my mouth upon the subject, as Martin Luther must have felt when he stood before the Diet of Worms and said, in the face of all his old friends and associations: "Here I stand. God help me. I can do no other." Or as the apostle Paul must have felt when he said: "For necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." I love the members of my family and I am more loath to wound them than I could express, and I dislike exceedingly to offend the religious sensibilities of persons of whom I know nothing. I frequently realize how cruel it is of me to do as I do. But I cannot help myself. If I did not do as I do I would have to stand always before the bar of my own conscience a convicted criminal; I would lose my self-respect, and a man must retain his self-respect even though he lose the respect of everybody else in the whole world.

It is sometimes brought against Jesus as a charge that he said no man could be his disciple who was not willing to leave his father and mother and wife and children to follow him. But if Jesus regarded himself as the embodiment of the truth, if he really looked upon himself as the Messiah, that saying was perfectly right and good. A man must follow what he believes to be the truth at any and every cost; he must speak and do the truth as he understands it even if his wife and children will not go with him in his speaking and doing. Any good wife would so decide. Any good wife would say to her husband: "Yes; obedience to the truth is before everything, because a man who is not

faithful to himself will not in the long run be faithful to his wife."

This, then, is the position in which I find myself, I am obliged to fight the Church. I am obliged to say everything I can to make people see the untruth of Christianity in its supernatural part. I am obliged to use all my little power to destroy the idea of God that is so common. If I did not do so I could not look myself in the face, because I do not think the Church is a good institution. I think it is a bad institution, organized and maintained for the purpose of keeping people in ignorance, that they may all the better be kept in poverty. I think the Church is a part of the general scheme of plunder that keeps poverty in this world as the dreadful curse it now is. I know that most of the persons who belong to the Church do not know this, and many of them would shrink from the Church with the same horror that I feel if they did know it, but certain things are true whether some persons know them to be true or not.

I do not think it is a good thing for people to believe in God. I think it is a bad thing for them to do so. I think the belief in God is one of the things that is helping very strongly to keep knaves in power and honest people in weakness; it is one of the things that is preventing the people from thinking for themselves and helping themselves. But I discover from a careful reading of my correspondence that I do not succeed in making people understand this. My correspondents and those who talk to me are constantly trying to make me see that it is not the Church that is wrong; it is only the wrong things about the Church that are wrong. They say that it is all right for people to believe in God; all that is necessary is that they should believe in the right kind of a God.

But the position I have taken is that it is the Church that is wrong and that the human mind will never be perfectly free, and peasants and mechanics and day laborers will never be perfectly fairly treated in this world, until the Church is utterly destroyed. I do not want to see the Church reformed. I want to see her utterly destroyed, because as long as she exists the ruling classes in society will always have a faithful ally to help them carry on their infernal schemes of pillage. I do not want people to have a better idea of God, or an idea of a better God. I want the idea of God entirely rooted out of the mind, because I know that as long as any idea of God remains in the mind the priest and the politician will have something to work upon, and this world will never be free and happy until the priest and the politician are gone.

You must not think my conclusions are hasty; they are not. I read all the letters that come to me upon these subjects very carefully, because I have learned that valuable ideas sometimes come from very obscure persons, who cannot spell well or put their sentences together grammatically. I read all these letters very carefully, and try to weigh all the arguments that are presented. You see some of them in the *Twentieth Century*, and some of them you do not see there. But all the time I am more sure that I am right about it, that the human race will not be free and happy until the Church is dead and the human mind is free from the idea of God. I am free and happy because the Church is dead to me, and the last vestige of an idea of God is gone from my mind. My life in the Church, although it came to an end so recently, is like a forgotten dream. I remember it only as one remembers a nightmare that he had years ago; and if you ask me what is my idea of God I can say truthfully, "I have no idea of God whatever." The Church no longer has any influence over my thinking, and I am never confused when I try to decide what is right or wrong by thinking of what is said to be God's will in the matter. When the whole human family are as free from the dominion of the Church and the idea of God as I am, and as many thousands of others are, then they will be free and happy and good.

(To be concluded.)

It is a mistake to suppose that subtle speculations touching the Divine attributes, the origin of evil, the necessity of human actions, the foundation of moral obligation imply any high degree of intellectual culture. Such speculations are, on the contrary, in a peculiar manner the delight of intelligent children and of half-civilized men.—*T. B. Macaulay.*

We have to explain the apparent anomaly of two epochs of comparative sanity and civilization separated by the disease and delirium of the Catholic episode.—*Professor Clifford.*

THE MUSÉE GUIMET.

THE *Musée Guimet*, which was formally opened last week, in the Avenue d'Iéna, Paris, by President Carnot, deserves more notice than we were able to give it at the time of our visit to Paris. It is the first attempt, at any rate on a large scale, to illustrate the science of comparative religions by gathering together the actual documents and objects of worship. M. Emile Guimet, the son of the Lyons inventor of ultramarine, is a gentleman of wealth and wide culture, who has personally travelled in most of the countries of the world in order to form his vast collection of deities and objects illustrating their worship. The collection has cost him upwards of five millions of francs, and he has presented it to his country simply on the condition that he shall be its honorary curator during life.

The museum is especially rich in objects illustrating the religions of India, China, and Japan. But it is by no means confined to these. Persia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome are also amply illustrated; and although the current statues and paintings of the Christian Church and its saints are not included, they are really illustrated by the aureoled Buddhist saints. The whole museum is, indeed, an object lesson showing how religions have developed and copied from each other. In this way it is a powerful adjunct to the service of Freethought, and it was so designed by its founder, M. Guimet.

The objects of the museum are by no means the only result of M. Guimet's care for his favorite study. There is attached a capital library containing the various sacred books of the world, and all the most important works dealing with comparative religion. There is also published the *Annales du Musée Guimet*, which gives original texts and studies upon the contexts of the museum, and the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, which forms a sort of annex to the *Annales*, and which is contributed to by the most eminent men in each department. It is one of M. Guimet's objects to lead to the formation of similar museums in other countries, and it is to be hoped England may yet find its Freethought benefactor. We believe the late John Muir, of Edinburgh, had a similar design, and he did indeed leave money for lectures on comparative religion, for which also the Hibbert Trust has rendered distinguished services.

REVIEWS.

In the Queen's Name; a Breach of Faith. London A. Bonner.—No price is printed on this brochure, and we cannot say whether it is for sale or free distribution. There is a preface by the editor, Mr. Wm. Digby, and the whole should be read by Englishmen who are interested in the honorable conduct of affairs in our great Eastern dependency, especially as the breach of faith which is complained of has arisen from an inquiry into corrupt practices among the officials of Bombay.

The Worship of the Unknowable, By R. Bithell, B. Sc. Ph. D. London, Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's Court. Dr. Bithell who has written several volumes on Agnosticism, has here written sixteen pages to show that we cannot only worship the unknown and unknowable, but that it is the only proper object of supreme worship. Dr. Bithell seems but little different from other religionists; one and all worship they know not what.

The Immortal Bible. By F. J. Gould.—This is another of Mr. Gould's "Stepping-stones to Agnosticism"—an Agnosticism, we suspect, much of the same character as that of Dr. Bithell. Mr. Gould holds that Scepticism is necessary in order to gain a rational view of the Bible; and Scepticism, he says, is at bottom a religious revolt—an intellectual and ethical Protestantism. This rational view he endeavours to give chiefly by taking the authority of Dr. S. Davidson for the composition of the books of the Bible. Mr. Gould concludes by observing that to the sceptic the Bible is, when accorded its true historical position, indispensable, immortal, ever fruitful in inspiration to progress. This seems to us to come perniciously close to the old orthodox view in treating a number of documents accidentally bound together, as though they were essentially but one work.

THE DOGMATIST'S CREED.

DEDICATED TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Believe as *I* believe—no more, no less;
That *I* am right, and no one else, confess.
Feel as *I* feel; think only as *I* think,
Eat what *I* eat, and drink but what *I* drink;
Look as *I* look, do always as *I* do;
And then, and only then,
I'll fellowship with you.

That *I* am right, and always right, I know,
Because my own convictions tell me so;
And to be right is simply this: To be
Entirely, in all respects, like *me*.
To deviate a hair's breadth, or begin
To question, and to doubt,
Or hesitate—is sin.

Let sink the drowning, if he will not swim
Upon the plank that *I* throw out to him.
Let starve the hungry, if he will not eat
My kind and quality of bread and meat.
Let freeze the naked, if he will not be
Clothed in such garments
As are cut for *me*.

'Twere better that the sick should die than live,
Unless they take the physic that *I* give.
'Twere better sinners all should go to hell,
Than disbelieve the dogmas that *I* tell.
'Twere best that all the world stand still, than move
In any other way
Than that which *I* approve.

COL. INGERSOLL ON LAWYERS.

"The lawyer is merely a sort of intellectual strumpet. He is prepared to receive his big fees, and makes the best of either side in any case. He is a sort of burglar in the realm of mentality. It is a fortunate thing for the lawyers that whenever a man is created who has the peculiar faculty for legal acquirements and controversy, at the same time enough fools spring into existence to give him a good living. It is illustrated in the story of the man who studied for the ministry and occupied the pulpit for a number of years without success, and then studied medicine and practiced this profession for a number of years without success, and then studied law, and entering upon its practice, made a fortune at it. He declared he had found men more willing to pay for having their own way than to be guaranteed their souls or to keep their bodies whole. My ideal of a lawyer is that great English attorney, who, having accumulated a fortune of £1,000,000, left it all in a will to make a home for idiots, declaring that he wanted to give it back to the people from whom he took it."

"Your opinion seems to be more severe on your clients than on yourself," I said.

The Colonel laughed as he said:—"I never want to know much about my clients. I never want to know whether they are guilty or not. I do not even care to know what they can prove. What I want to know is what the other fellow can prove; when I know that, I am ready for business."—*Boston Herald*.

They have a queer taste at the St. Barnabas Sunday-school, Lower Edmonton. On November 10 one of the teachers gave a colored card to a little girl six years of age. The back contains the creation of Adam and Eve from Genesis, and the front a picture of that interesting couple in the picturesque costume of primitive innocence. Adam is turned sideways, but Eve is rushing to meet him, and the artist has put a few green daubs, intended for branches, below "the narrow isthmus of her waist" [N.B.—This quotation is from a very orthodox poet, Mr. Coventry Patmore]. We have no objection to naked Adam and Eves, but we should hardly select that subject for a little girl. Perhaps the Sunday-school teachers at Edmonton are anxious to "teach the young idea how to shoot."

The new Mayor of Birmingham complains of the number of clergymen who hold shares in the local breweries. But why on earth does he grumble? Is not drink recommended in Scripture, and did not Jesus manufacture seventy-five gallons in a single day?

RELIGION AND INSANITY.

DR. JOSEPH JONES, Professor of Clinical Medicine in the Tulane University, Philadelphia, discusses (*Philadelphia Times and Register*, September 14, 1889) the question of religious excitement as a cause of insanity. He writes:—

The contemplation of certain hypotheses and dogmas, held and vehemently urged from the pulpit, by some religious sects, have, without doubt, produced great excitement and alarm in the minds of persons of excitable and unstable nervous organization. The burning eloquence and moral pictures of the religious enthusiast and fanatic, and the horrible revelations of the melancholy and sinister imagination of Dante, have converted the souls of the unwary and timid into the abodes of terror and alarm.

Certain dogmas, often represented and illustrated by this fiery language, and by the subtle power of the painter's brush, as the fires and tortures of a burning hell, a veritable lake of fire, where fiery billows eternally wrap the bodies and souls of the damned, and whose shores for ever resound with the piercing, truly hopeless shrieks of those inhabitants of this earth who have failed to enter heaven on account of the commission of personal sins; a veritable living devil, ever on the alert to seduce and damn the souls of men, women, and children, and drag the unwary down to everlasting confusion and suffering in the bottomless pit—the *unpardonable sin*—have for centuries terrified the weak and timid devotees of certain phases of religious belief into hopeless insanity. The violent exercises of certain religious sects, during the performance of *so-called* religious exercises, such as shouting, hopping, jumping, dancing, *demoniacal* "holy" laughing, often induce epileptic seizures, and inaugurate such congestion and exhaustion of the nervous structures as induce religious melancholy and end in hopeless insanity. The hallucinations which, in the experience of the author, exercise the greatest influence on the victims of insanity are:

1. The firm belief by the victim that he is the slave and the abject subject of the devil. To all remonstrances the victim replies that he must obey his master, the devil. I have observed and treated cases where the victim of religious melancholy and hallucination has for days and weeks refused all food, because his master the devil, commanded him not to eat. In some cases, every agent and every effort to induce the patient to take food have failed, and death has resulted from starvation.

2. The commission of the unpardonable sin.

3. The eternal damnation of the human soul; lost, lost, lost for ever.

The foundations of our civilization were laid centuries before Christianity was known. The intelligence of courage, of self-government of energy, of industry, that uniting made the civilization of this century, did not come alone from Judea, but from every nation of the ancient world.—*Ingersoll*.

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