

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

MR. GLADSTONE ON SCEPTICISM.

MR. GLADSTONE'S last *Good Words* article is chiefly concerned with Scepticism and its causes. After quoting a jubilant sentence from Mr. Karl Pearson as to the decadence of Christianity, he remarks that we have heard this kind of thing often enough before, and immediately plunges into an historical disquisition on Freethought. Bishop Butler's preface to the *Analogy* is cited to show that "a wave of infidelity was passing over the land" in his day; but, according to Mr. Gladstone, it "dwindled and almost disappeared," and at the time of Johnson's social predominance it had "hardly left a trace behind." Now this is a most amazing blunder. The *Analogy* was first published in 1736. Nearly twenty years later were published the philosophical works of Bolingbroke, which were extensively read and very influential. The works of Chubb and other Deists were widely read in more popular circles. Presently the sceptical writings of Voltaire were translated into English; and it was in the very days of Johnson that Hume's masterly essays on Miracles and Religion saw the light. Surely this is a remarkable "disappearance" of scepticism, and the "hardly a trace behind" is positively ludicrous. As a matter of fact, it was just at this very time that Freethought penetrated to the multitude. Henceforth, instead of merely affecting fashionable and literary coteries, it was destined to influence the working classes, and the movement thus begun never abated to the day when John Bright told the House of Commons that the lower classes cared as much about the dogmas of Christianity as the upper classes cared about its practice.

Mr. Gladstone is similarly mistaken about the results of the French Revolution in England. He says it "generated a distinctly religious reaction," which is quite true, though only half of the truth. The Revolution stimulated advanced thought with the same intensity as it stimulated conservatism in Church and State. Wordsworth and Coleridge went one way, but Byron and Shelley went the other way. Paine's *Age of Reason* was devoured by myriads of readers, and a host of Freethought works swarmed from the press of Richard Carlile and his brave colleagues who, amidst calumny and imprisonment, made such a gallant stand for the freedom of the press. From that time to this there has been no real break in the progress of Freethought.

Were Mr. Gladstone's history as correct as it is false, there would still be no force in his contention that scepticism is subject to mutation or hazard, for no great movement of the human mind ever goes forward with an equable pace. The French Revolution was followed by reaction in France, but its ideas did not cease to operate. Restorations took place, and Napoleon the Little's empire succeeded in less than half a century the empire of Napoleon the Great. But after each disaster the Revolutionary idea gathered fresh strength, and the present Republic has been able to maintain itself against all its

enemies. Similarly, if English Freethought has had its moments of rebuff and delay, it has nevertheless advanced in the main, as a stream flows onward with varying, but on the whole ever-increasing, volume and power.

We must also smile at Mr. Gladstone's view of the function of scepticism. He imagines it is designed in "the counsels of God" in the interest of faith. Its purpose is "to dispel the lethargy and stimulate the zeal of believers," and to "admonish their faith to keep terms with reason, by testing it at all points." But as scepticism is impossible without sceptics, and sceptics are liable to damnation, it would seem that Mr. Gladstone's deity moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. One might imagine that faith could be stimulated and enlightened by a less cruel or perilous method. The poor sceptics are like the fire-flies of Sumatra, which are stuck on spits to illuminate the ways at night. "Persons of condition," says Carlyle, "can thus travel with a pleasant radiance," but—it is very awkward for the fire-flies!

Anyhow, we find Mr. Gladstone admitting, what no man in his senses can dispute, a "strong and widespread negative movement among our countrymen during the latter portion of this century." And how does he account for it? Why, in the old-fashioned way, though in a less offensive manner. The main cause of "the growth of negation" is "not intellectual, but moral." Are sceptics, then, less moral than believers? No, says Mr. Gladstone; to say that would be "untrue, offensive, and absurd." "Had I ever been inclined to such a conception," he adds, "the experience of my life would long ago have undeceived me." What, then, does Mr. Gladstone mean? We gather the following points from his rather diffuse explanation.

Unbelievers do not become immoral because they inherit the advantages of the Christian tradition. "Many who have abjured Christianity," he says, "know not that in the best of their thought, their nature, and their practice they are appropriating its fruits." But this argument may be retorted on the Christian. The sceptic might tell him that his practice is determined, not by the doctrines and maxims of his creed, but by the mental and moral atmosphere which is generated by a thousand secular influences of science, art, literature, politics and sociology. The Christian tradition was the same three centuries ago as at present, but what a difference in our ethical ideals as well as in the constitution of society!

Mr. Gladstone would parry this by comparing our condition with that of "the Greeks of the fifth century before Christ, or the Romans at the period of the Advent." But this is a most fallacious test. Had the comparison been challenged a century or two ago—still the best part of two thousand years after Christ—it is very doubtful if an unprejudiced arbiter would have given the palm to Christendom. Europe, as a whole, was far less civilised than Greece or Rome; negro slavery existed in English and French colonies, political freedom was almost unknown, the

masses were ignorant and degraded, and the brutality of the poor and the profligacy of the rich were almost incredible. Vast progress has been made in the last hundred and fifty years, but to claim this as in any sense a product of Christianity is to fly in the face of history and common sense.

There is more force in Mr. Gladstone's next suggestion, that scepticism has increased because the world has grown more absorbing. The root of "the mischief" he finds in the increase of wealth and enjoyment. "It is the increased force within us of all that is sensuous and worldly," he says, "that furnishes every sceptical argument, good, bad, or indifferent, with an unseen ally, and that recruits many a disciple of the negative creed." This language is invidious, but it expresses a certain truth. This life and the next have always been in conflict. As the one grows the other dwindles. And as science makes this life better worth living, and humanitarianism ennoble it with an ideal glow, the "world to come" fades from our mental vision. In this sense it is perfectly true that secular progress is in itself an enemy to religion.

Mr. Gladstone would have us rectify "this-worldism" by cultivating the "organ of belief," which is probably our old friend "faith" under an *alias*; and he justly regards himself as possessing a higher development of this organ than was found in the late Mr. Darwin. But when Mr. Gladstone goes on to read the public its duties in regard to belief he runs counter to all the principles which guide him in politics. He declares the presumption to be in favor of what is received, and that "it is doubt and not belief of the things received which ought in all cases to be put upon its defence." What a rubbing of hands there would be in Tory circles if Mr. Gladstone talked in this fashion from political platforms! Then again, he tells us that inquiry is an excellent thing, but it should only be undertaken "when it can be made the subject of effective prosecution." What is this, however, but an ill-disguised plea for handing over religion to professional experts? But this is not Mr. Gladstone's policy in other matters. When he stumps the country he appeals to "the masses," and tells them they are the very persons to form a sound judgment. "Multitudes of men," he complains, "call into question the foundations of our religion and the prerogatives of our sacred books, without any reference to either their capacities or their opportunities for so grave an undertaking." But were a Tory orator to speak thus—as many Tory orators have spoken—of some effete institution, Mr. Gladstone would reply that the people are quite competent to form a judgment on broad issues. And it is just on those broad issues that the "multitudes of men" who think at all do form a judgment. They get hold of certain great ideas in politics, ethics, or religion, and by those ideas they judge institutions, customs and creeds. Such is the inevitable law of the popular mind, and if Mr. Gladstone's religious hopes are based on the expectation that this law is to be reversed, or set aside, in the interest of Christianity, we venture to say he is building on a foundation of sand.

G. W. FOOTE.

SCAPEGOATS.

IN the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is found a description of the rites ordained for the most solemn Day of Atonement. Of these, the principal was the selection of two goats. "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat"—(Heb. *Azazel*). The goat on whom Jahveh's lot fell was sacrificed as a sin offering, but all the iniquities of the children of Israel were put on the head of *Azazel's* goat, and it was sent into the wilderness. The parallelism makes

it clear that *Azazel* was a separate evil spirit or demon, opposed to Jahveh, and supposed to dwell in the wilderness. The purification necessary after touching the goat upon whose head the sins of Israel were put corroborates this.* Yet how often has *Azazel* been instanced as a type of the blessed Savior! And indeed the chief purpose to which Jesus is put by orthodox Christians at the present day is that of being their scapegoat, the substitute for their sins.

The doctrine of the transference of sin was by no means peculiar to the Jews. Both Herodotus and Plutarch tells us how the Egyptians cursed the head of the sacrifice and then threw it into the river. It seems likely that the expression "Your blood be on your own head" refers to this belief. (See Lev. xx., 9-11; Psalms vii., 16; Acts xviii., 6.)

At the cleansing of a leper and of a house suspected of being tainted with leprosy, the Jews had a peculiar ceremony. Two birds were taken, one killed in an earthen vessel over running water, and the living bird after being dipped in the blood of the killed bird let loose into the open air (Lev. xiv., 7 and 53.) The idea evidently was that the bird by sympathy took away the plague. The Battas of Sumatra have a rite they call "making the curse to fly away." When a woman is childless a sacrifice is offered and a swallow set free, with a prayer that the curse may fall on the bird and fly away with it. The doctrine of substitution found among all savages flows from the belief in sympathetic magic.† It arises, as Mr. Frazer says, from an obvious confusion between the physical and the mental. Because a load of stones may be transferred from one back to another, the savage fancies it equally possible to transfer the burden of his pains and sorrows to another who will suffer then in his stead. Many instances could be given from peasant folk-lore. "A cure current in Sunderland for a cough is to shave the patient's head and hang the hair on a bush. When the birds carry the hair to the nests, they will carry the cough with it. A Northamptonshire and Devonshire cure is to put a hair of the patient's head between two slices of buttered bread and give it to a dog. The dog will get the cough and the patient will lose it."

Mr. Frazer, after showing that the custom of killing the god, alluded to in my article on "Dead and Resurrected Gods," had been practised by peoples in the hunting, pastoral, and agricultural stages of society, says (vol. ii., p. 148): "One aspect of the custom still remains to be noticed. The accumulated misfortunes and sins of the whole people are sometimes laid upon the dying god, who is supposed to bear them away for ever, leaving the people innocent and happy." He gives many instances of scapegoats, of sending away diseases in boats, and of the annual expulsion of evils, of which, I conjecture, our ringing-out of the old year may, perhaps, be a survival. Of the divine scapegoat, he says (*Golden Bough*, vol. ii., p. 206):—

"If we ask why a dying god should be selected to take upon himself and carry away the sins and sorrow of the people, it may be suggested that in the practice of using the divinity as a scapegoat, we have a combination of two customs which were at one time distinct and independent. On the one hand we have seen that it has been customary to kill the human or animal god in order to save his divine life from being weakened by the inroads of age. On the other hand we have seen that it has been customary to have a general expulsion of evils and sins once a year. Now, if it occurred to people to combine these two customs, the result would be the employment of the dying god as scapegoat. He was killed not originally to take away sin, but to save the divine life from the degeneracy of old age; but, since he had

* *Azazel* appears to mean the goat god. The goat, like some other animals, seems to have had a sacred character among the Jews. (See Ex. xxiii., 19; Lev. ix., 3-15; x., 16; xvii., 17; Jud. vi., 19; xiii., 15; 1 Sam. xix., 13-16; 2 Ch. xi., 15.)

† See "Salvationly Similars," *Freethinker*, Feb. 9.

to be killed at any rate, people may have thought that they might as well seize the opportunity to lay upon him the burden of their sufferings and sins, in order that he might bear it away with him to the unknown world beyond the grave."

The early Christians believed that diseases were the work of devils, and that cures could be effected by casting out the devils by the spell of a name. (See Mark ix., 25-38, etc.) They believed in the transference of devils to swine. We need not wonder, then, that they explained the death of their hero as the satisfaction for their own sins. The doctrine of the substitutionary atonement like that of the divinity of Christ appears to have been an after-growth of Christianity, the foundations of both being laid in pre-Christian Paganism. Both doctrines are alike remnants of savagery.

J. M. WHEELER.

A DESPERATE POLICY.

THOSE who have carefully studied the tactics of Christian defenders of the Faith during a lengthened period must have noticed a marked change for the worse during the past five years, not only in the character of the defence offered but in that of the defenders themselves.

Twenty years ago it was no uncommon thing to find men of conspicuous ability and talent engaged in disputation with the leaders of Freethought. Sincere and able men like Father Ignatius; learned and clever dialecticians like Rev. Dr. Harrison or Rev. Dr. Baylee; or courteous gentlemen, who were exceedingly able in their own peculiar line, but not very brilliant in debate like the distinguished mathematician Mr. Browne, M.A., and the Unitarian minister the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, B.A. came forth and broke a lance with Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Joseph Symes, or with the Infidel Giant himself the redoubtable "Iconoclast" who since those stirring days of intellectual warfare has developed into the "esteemed member" for Northampton. It is true that there were in those days two or three disreputable individuals of the clerical persuasion who were proficient in the twin arts of lying and abuse, but decent Christians soon became ashamed of such advocates; and better men came forward in due course to supplant them.

The more astute among the clerical party saw from the first that it was a fatal policy to engage in discussion with Rationalists. They knew perfectly well that their creed could only flourish in an atmosphere of Faith; that the wholesome breath of doubt or disputation would cause their hot-house plant to wither away.

And they were right. Even the flabby-minded Secretary of the Christian Evidence seems to have accepted this view at last. At first he was inclined to come to the Hall of Science himself or send a simple-minded parson to beard the Infidel in his den; but now he and his clerical brethren wisely stay away.

But while the Christian Evidence Society has practically retired from platform encounters, the astute gentleman who organises the outdoor advocacy of the doctrines of "the meek and slowly Jesus" enlists in his service each season a number of ignorant and coarse-minded persons who disseminate more lies and slander each week than any other body of men who have the privilege of addressing a public audience. I am now writing of what I have heard myself, and I can confidently affirm that if Freethinkers were disposed to set the law of libel in motion against some of these unscrupulous persons—as Mrs. Besant did against a certain East End parson—several of them would find themselves located in unpleasant quarters for a definite period of their lives. I do not charge all the outdoor speakers with libelling the characters

of dead and living advocates of Freethought. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Dick are two notable exceptions, and both of these gentlemen are listened to by Christians and Freethinkers alike with the respect with which their conduct deserves. But of some of the others it may be said that they pursue tactics which are brutal and repulsive in the extreme; and apparently their addresses, so far from receiving the censure of those in authority, get nothing but hearty approval. Let me give a few illustrations of what I mean.

Several of the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers deliver a sort of stereotyped address on "Secularism." Now although I believe that what I understand as Secularism is a good philosophy I am quite aware that it, like every other system, is open to criticism; and anything in the nature of argument against it or even of ridicule would be welcomed by any honest seeker after truth. But when, instead of argument against the principles of Secularism, we have a few isolated passages torn from their context from *The Elements of Social Science*, with a running commentary thereon; passages from which most Secularists utterly dissent; and when following these quotations it is said that Secularists live immoral lives, "or if they don't they ought to," one begins understanding in a small measure, the desperate straits to which these poor advocates are put in order to stay, as they imagine, the growth of Freethought. With a very ignorant audience this kind of policy goes down for a time; until indeed, the Freethought lecturer is heard in his own defence, and then Freethought grows apace again.

But the brutal policy does not end here. It is sometimes pursued to the extent of declaring that this lecturer or that is guilty of a specific crime, and though a casual audience cannot be acquainted with all the actions of a lecturer's life, such charges as these, made as they are without the slightest evidence of their truth, and for the sole purpose of bespattering the reputation of the lecturer against whom they are directed with the mud of slander—sometimes produce an unpleasant result upon an audience, and are certainly calculated to produce disorder.

In fact, in recent years, the Christian Evidence Society's representatives have been reduced to the position of the fishfag. Calling names, however, although it may annoy for a short time, breaks no bones; and most Freethought lecturers of my acquaintance have succeeded in living down most of the prejudices set up against them by the more coarse-minded of the Christians. However, it is to the general enlightenment we have to look for the growth of our principles. Let us by no means follow the example of our Christian brethren. Our policy is to attack what we regard as false beliefs—superstitions. But the characters of the advocates we leave to take care of themselves.

The representatives of the Christian Evidence Society are playing a desperate game; but like the villains of melodrama, they will get their quietus in good time; for the audience—the British public—is watching the play, and truth and justice will triumph in the end.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

One of the most curious stories of children's imagination is that of the youngster who, looking at the stars, said, "If those big bright nails, Papa, were to come out, with what a thump God Almighty would come down!"

In one of the Portsmouth public schools, a boy who was reading the morning lesson from the New Testament, rendered the verse (Matt. xxi., 38) thus: "This is the hair comb; let us kill him."

Conductor (to Mose Einstein, who is standing): "Fare, please." Einstein: "But I vos nod sidding." "That makes no difference." "Don't id? Vy, dot nodis says: 'Shildren ogupying seads will be sharged full fare.'" "But you are not a child." Yes, I vos; I vos one ov der shildren ov Israel."

NEWMAN AND GLADSTONE.

M. D. Conway, in one of his letters to the *Cincinnati Commercial*, says that he has good authority for the following story:—"Soon after John Henry Newman had gone off to the Church of Rome, with some of his followers, and the minds of the young men who are now leaders were profoundly agitated by the contrarious winds of doctrine, two of these, who had long been intimate, were engaged in earnest conversation. One of them said to the other, 'What think you of these men who have gone off to Rome? Is there any mental or moral characteristic common to them, any *ethos*, any uniform trait among them?' 'Yes,' replied the other, 'there is one feature they all have—a lack of moral honesty.' The man who asked the question is now the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone. He who gave the startling reply is now the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. About two years after the conversation, Manning had joined the ranks of the class he had so sweepingly impeached.

REVIEW.

The Dulness of Life. By RALPH LANE, Geneva, 1890.—This little brochure of sixteen pages comes to us from Switzerland. As a few able pleas for cheerfulness, individuality, Freethought, and education, it is worth reading. Mr. Lane holds religion responsible for much of our dulness. "It has deprived us of our capacity for happiness, and has left in its place the capacity for dissipation only." "Christians of all sects have in past ages always taught that the highest state was one of gloom and penance." "The Bible contains no cheerful exhortations to happiness and laughter." Religion moreover, as Mr. Lane shows, tends to crush individuality, and thereby the variety and piquancy of life. His observations are thoughtful and well put.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that 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.

ACID DROPS.

Cardinal Manning's reply to the Jews who thanked him for his efforts on their behalf was enough to disgust every student of history. His Eminence said there were three indestructible things—Judaism, the Catholic Church, and the World which persecuted both. Now the persecution of the Jews has always been carried on by Christians, and the greatest sinner has been the Catholic Church. The evidence on this point may be found in the eighth chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*. It is complete and damning. Cardinal Manning simply presumes on the general ignorance of the past. Still, the Jews must know the history of their own sufferings, and it almost passes our comprehension how they can listen to such lies from the lips of a Cardinal of the Romish Church. The only explanation we can offer is that priests and rabbis feel they must join their forces against the common enemy—Freethought.

Mr. Hogg is said to have been a frequent attendant at the Sunday evening services at Malden Hall, where he was looked upon as a most emotional, pious and devotional man. He was always one of the foremost in the hymns and responses.—*Daily Chronicle*, Nov. 3.

One Mary Weldon, of the Schweinfurth community, near Rockford, Illinois, says that, as with Mary of Bethlehem, her illegitimate child is the offspring of the Holy Ghost, who does not seem to have improved his methods. If he wants to get up a new incarnation, the avatar should dispense with a mother.

Another murderer gone to glory! Thomas Woodfolk, who murdered a whole family of nine persons in 1887, has just been hanged at Perry, Georgia. He had two trials and was convicted both times, his guilt being transparent. Yet he protested his innocence at the scaffold, and expressed his expectation of going straight to heaven. If the murdered persons are also in heaven, there will be a shindy when he arrives.

Dr. Parker says there are only two difficulties in the way of General Booth's scheme—"the first is the Devil, and the second is human nature." He omits adding that God made both.

General Booth declares that he is getting letters of approval from all sorts of people, and even from "Atheists." Probably the "Atheists" would prove on inquiry to belong to the Hugh-Price-Hughes species. Evidently the astute old showman wants everybody's cash. Even the "Atheist" is invited to shell out, although the General's book says that destitution and vice mean "Atheism made easy."

Archdeacon Farrar "hopes to be able" to send General Booth £50 early next year." Meanwhile he has the good advertisement of his half promise being printed in bold type in the newspapers. We say half-promise, for the Archdeacon only "hopes to be able" to send £50, and may only send £25, or nothing at all.

Succi is going in for a forty-five days' fast at New York. Jesus only did forty days. Yes, the moderns beat the ancients in most things.

Speaking "from experience" the Bishop of Manchester says that Materialism makes men mere pleasure-seekers. Now the Bishop's "experience" was gained at Melbourne, where the leading Materialist is a gentleman called Joseph Symes. Joseph works like ten niggers, and does wonders on a modest salary. Like the lady in Hood's song, his burden is "Work, work, work!" His time for recreation comes once in a blue moon. On the other hand, the Bishop of Manchester works perhaps as quarter as hard for a ten times bigger salary. What a cheek of brass he must have to talk about the spiritual life of men of his kidney, and of the low, grovelling, sensual life of his opponents!

Gedge, the pious solicitor, has had £196,531 out of the London School Board. But pious Gedge now looks rueful. The Board has had enough of it, and pious Gedge loses his appointment.

A. K. H. Boyd in the November number of *Blackwood*, defends the new liturgies of the Scottish Kirk by giving examples of the vagaries of extempore prayers. It was at a wedding-service "wholly extemporised" that the words were heard, "We thank Thee that Thou hast given us wumman to make us koamfortable." Another minister said, "We know there are blessings going to-night, and we put in for our share." One minister praying for the Royal Family, added the qualifying clause "all but Edward, Prince of Wales." This was his way of pronouncing Albert.

Now the winter is upon us, the open-air lectures at New Southgate are of course discontinued. The innocent fact has swollen with pride the breast of a certain Christian Evidence lecturer, who had the almost incredible ill taste to read the Secular Burial Service over the "dead Branch," and one of his friends reports the proceedings in the *Barnet Press*. As a matter of fact, although the open-air lectures are necessarily discontinued, the Branch is in a more hopeful position, both as regards members and funds, than it has ever been in before.

In the November number of the *Atlantic Monthly*, W. D. McCrackan writes on the legend of William Tell. This story of the Swiss archer who freed his country was, down to recent times, accepted by the Swiss, and the places were shown where Tell shot at his son, and where he leaped into his boat. Yet modern investigation has shown so clearly that the story is a legend without foundation in history or contemporary evidence that the Swiss authorities have ordered it to be taken out of the school books.

Here is an example for dealing with much earlier legends, those, for instance, concerning Jesus Christ, which, unlike the story of William Tell, have never been accepted by the people among whom the wonderful events are said to have occurred. The story of Tell has been profitable to the Swiss, but the story of Christ, as Cardinal Bembo is said to have remarked, has also been a profitable fable for the priests.

Grays School Board had a stormy sitting the other day. It was all on account of the Rev. F. Haslock, one of the members, who had a pecuniary dispute with the widow of the caretaker of Arthur Street Schools. The matter in dispute was only thirty pieces of silver, but Mr. Haslock did not consent to squaring the account until the chairman and other members had called him a perverter of the truth.

"Separate schools are provided for by the Constitution, and therefore the Constitution must go; the Federation must go, and the Dominion must go before the Church yields her control of the schools." Thus spake Archbishop Cleary at Kingston, Ontario. He is a worthy member of the lying, swindling and impudent Church of Rome.

The Eden Theatre, Paris, has produced a Biblical opera, by M. Saint Saens, entitled, "Samson et Dalila." The music is grandiose, descriptive of Samson's exploit with the foxes and Philistines. The principal feature is a Bacchanalian scene in the Temple of Dagon, where Samson, of course, brings down the house.

On Sunday morning, October 26, divine service was held as usual in the King's Chapel, Gibraltar; but at the end of the service, instead of the ordinary dismissal being played, the captain who officiated as organist struck up "God Save the Queen." This was done in honor of the Governor, who was present. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost took back seats while the Queen stepped in front. But military men have generally put their leaders before their deities.

What a joke! Thirty-two Spanish bishops have been calling on the infant King to put a stop to what they call the unjust treatment of the Pope by the people of Italy. The Queen-mother has wisely told them she would place the matter in the hands of her responsible ministers, who, we may be sure, will not pick a quarrel with Italy in the vain attempt to restore the Pope's temporal power.

The editor of *Great Thoughts* (what an ambitious title!) has some very little thoughts, and all of them his own, on "unbelief." The first half of the article is devoted to proving the unbeliever a fool, the second to proving him a rogue. We take time to decide into which category the writer himself falls. There is a good deal of the fool in his article, and perhaps a spice of the other character. But the problem can wait.

How the Christians are hedging on the question of Inspiration! Dr. Newton, of New York, says the point at issue among Protestants is whether the Bible is the Word of God or whether it contains the word of God; in other words, whether the clergy may or may not throw overboard as much of the good old freight as will enable them to ride out the storm. It is a neat little trick, but it will not save the ship for ever. Her timbers are worm-eaten, and she must sink eventually.

"Christopher Crayon," of the *Christian World*, is very ignorant of Freethought and Freethinkers. He asserts it is among the destitute and distressed that "secularists and atheists find their converts." But he is greatly mistaken. Freethought is recruited chiefly from the flower of the working classes, and the thoughtful lower middle class. Empty bellies made a poor foundation for thinking, and thinking is necessary to Secularism.

The *Century* for November, in an article by W. W. Rockhill, entitled "An American in Tibet," gives a striking instance of superstition in a Chinese Buddhist priest, whom he met on a pilgrimage to Lh'asa, and who prostrated his body at every two steps. "He carried in his hands a little altar, on which burned some joss-sticks, and this he placed before him in the supposed direction of Lh'asa before

making his prostration. He was very cheerful, and told me that he hoped to be able to reach Lh'asa in about two years, as he had only some 1100 miles more to cover."

A very critical youth of six summers was staying with his father at Dolgelly. One morning, while frolicking about, he ran sharply round a corner and came into collision with two clergymen who were weathering it at the same moment. The clergymen, one of whom is a son of the G.O.M., were nearly bowled over. The next day the father, having heard of the incident, cautioned his young hopeful against knocking down gentlemen; and young hopeful replied, "Father, they were *not* gentlemen, they were men who go to church." That youth seems to agree with Sidney Smith that there are three sexes—men, women and clergymen.

Japan has started business on a new system with a constitution and an elective Parliament, and it is proposed that one of the first duties of this body shall be to "establish a new basis of morality suited to the conditions of the country." There is a certain amount of solid sense in this suggestion (says the *Sydney Bulletin*), for the European code of morals is such a lamentable misfit that it is of very little good to anybody. The parson preaches it and expounds it and lives upon it, ends by eloping with a borrowed female to 'Frisco, where he lectures "to men only." The social Purity Society which enforces it, get a cold in its eye through looking through the keyhole at some respectable lady, and finds itself cast adrift—an atom with an inflamed optic wandering loosely through an unsympathetic world. The politician who makes laws for its encouragement gets impaled on the spikes of a back fence while trying to climb over and interview a cook, and is mysteriously connected with the dead infant which is found in the suburbs. Everybody esteems the Ten Commandments, and skirmishes round after somebody else's wife. Everybody values the moral law, and nobody cares a hang for it. And, therefore, what is the good of a code of ethics which everybody admires, and a good many snuffle about, and nobody attends to? If the Japanese Parliament can find some "basis of morality" which is suited to the conditions of the country, it will have made a good start.

Bishop Barry, having specially received the Holy Ghost, may of course be considered as sharing in the counsels of the Almighty. He told the meeting of the S.P.G. at Portsmouth that it was for the sake of Christianity and the rest of the world that God had made England such a mighty empire. This of course explains why the Queen rules over more Hindus and Mohammedans than Christians, and why English law is losing its Christian character.

The Rev. H. Whitehead, speaking at the same meeting seemed to have a different view of the Lord's purposes through the means of our empire. He said: "That the inevitable result of the flood of English education and ideas in India was that it was beginning already among the educated classes to undermine their old beliefs, to destroy and pull down their old customs and civilisation, and to rob the people of their religion and bring them to the gulf of Infidelity and Agnosticism." Both the men of God are, however, agreed that the one thing needful is for the people of Portsmouth to shell out to the S.P.G.

The Rev. W. F. Pettit, of Crawfordsville, U.S.A., is being tried for poisoning his wife. It appears that, like David of old, he fell in love with another woman. The man of God, when his wife died from strychnine, had her body embalmed and the stomach washed out. But this did not remove all traces of the poison.

Christ has appeared again. There is no telling how many "second comings" we are to have. This time he appears in South Dakota. He is a product of the Christian schools for savages, paid for out of the United States treasury. He comes as an Indian. On the first coming our Savior was a Jew. It is hard to see how he should get back here as an Indian savage. But God's ways are not man's ways. Read:—Pierre, S. D., Oct. 15.—Ten Hands, an Indian at Big Foot's camp, was arrested yesterday by the authorities at the Cheyenne Agency, and thrown into the guard-house for posing as the Indian Messiah. He has been performing weird dances, going into trances and

asking their annuities, rations and even money and ponies from the superstitious Indians.—*Ironclad Age*.

Professor A. B. Bruce declares that the Churches will only maintain their influence by "setting forth Christ's ethical teaching in all its alpine elevation." Perhaps so, but the clergy should begin the climbing. When they have reached the level of perpetual snow, and left wife, children, friends, and mammon behind them, the people may begin following, though we suspect that most of them would prefer the snug valleys of human comfort.

According to the *Scottish Review* a new Dutch handbook of religious instruction thus summarises the facts underlying the Gospels: "All that can be said to be historically certain is that there lived among the Jews of the past days, a commanding religious personality, to the partial narrative of whose life various minds felt themselves drawn to contribute."

Prof. Huxley, in his papers on "The Aryan Question and Pre-historic Man" in the November number of the *Nineteenth Century*, says: "There is not the least doubt that man existed in north-western Europe during the Pleistocene or Quarternary epoch."

In a satirical paper entitled "Wanted, a New Religion," *Blackwood* for this month says: "For the new cult to be a complete success it should contain a strong infusion of the supernatural or spookical element, as that sort of thing always draws. Spiritualism or Occultism, in their original forms, may be defunct or out of favor; but humanity is infected as strongly as ever with the same superstitions and the same cravings after the marvellous which formerly made them so popular."

The American soil seems productive of new sects. The latest to our knowledge professes "Koreshanity." What Koreshanity is we do not profess to know, though we have looked over its organ, *The Flaming Sword* of Chicago, dated in the "Year of Koresh 52." So Koresh, or Koreshanity, started in '48 the year of revolutions. It seems like Swedenborgianism in calling Jesus Jehovah, and like Shakerism in calling him "our Mother." It is curious that nearly all the new sects show the influence of woman by making God a female. Possibly they are atavistic recrudescences of the worship of goddesses.

Mr. Bosworth Smith long ago pointed out that the Christians stood no chance with the Mohammedans in converting the Africans. The missionaries of Islam are more earnest, more simple, and more self-denying than their Christian rivals. An instance of their courage is given by Mr. Jephson in his recent book. Three dervishes came to Emin with a message from the Mahdi, calling on the Pasha to embrace the true faith. They were fine-looking Arabs with an exceedingly dignified bearing. They walked into the camp without the least sign of fear, and on being asked what they came for, they replied, "We have come to conduct you by the true path to heaven." Emin's Egyptians threw the brave fellows into prison, inflicted on them horrible tortures, which they bore heroically, and finally beat them to death with clubs.

To say a man is a Mohammedan is to say he is a teetotaler. To say a man is a Christian is to say nothing about his character. Why is this? Because Christianity is such a fantastic creed, and may mean anything or nothing. Christian preachers aim at the stars and hit nothing but space. When they get hold of a reform they spoil it by overdoing. They are now hot against gambling, which, of course, is a practice for which we make no apology. But instead of tackling the vice where it is clearly mischievous, a lot of them are wasting their time in denouncing half-penny whist. By trying to make men perfect saints they leave them sinners. A little common sense on this matter, as on every other, is better than any quantity of religion.

The voyage of Jonah in a whale being attested by J. C. (Matt. xii., 40), believers will be delighted to hear from Prof. Flower that there is a species of whale, *Balæna Mysticetus*, whose jaws, if fully extended, would provide ample accommodation. After this no one need trouble themselves

how it came to be in the Mediterranean or how it got round to Nineveh.

A Mrs. Vince, of Thorington, has published a farrago of hysterical nonsense about Clacton-on-Sea. This lady is so superior in piety and goodness to the rest of the world that she "dare not leave" the village of Thorington for fear of the pomps and vanities of other places. "I never met with so much infidelity," she says, "as I did at Clacton." She also states that she had to change her lodgings three times, and got into three different houses where there was no copy of the Bible, while she found novels sown broadcast, and was scandalised at the sight of ladies reading this baneful literature.

There was a lively discussion at the Ruridecanal Conference at Maldon, Essex, on the question of Church Reform. Evangelicals and Ritualists went at it hammer and tongs, while the Broad Church minister of Maldon struck in with a proposition that the Church should be made wide enough to embrace all Christian sects, a suggestion which was greeted with a suggestive whistle.

A Vienna telegram says:—"Exhorted by thousands of excited country people, the girl who claims to have witnessed a manifestation of the Virgin Mary in a tree at Luttenberg, has with her foster mother gone to Marburg to demand permission of the Archbishop for the devout to witness the miracle under the tree. At present seven gendarmes are posted around, and do not allow it to be approached." Apparently the authorities are of the opinion which actuated those at the time of the alleged miracles of the Abbé Paris to affix the notice

De par le roi, defense a Dieu!
De faire miracles dans ce lieu.

By order of the King, God is forbidden to do miracles at this spot.

Japan has been suffering from a terrible fire which has rendered from 13,000 to 18,000 people homeless. In their attempt to extinguish the flames no fewer than 157 were injured. Immediately after this the Lord sent floods, but not on the fire. Bridges were swept away, extensive landslips have taken place, and railway lines destroyed. Is the Lord waxing wroth because the Japanese will not have his religion?

Hugh Price Hughes is still silent as to the identity of his Atheist Shoemaker. A young man at Nelson wrote to him on the subject, and Mr. Hughes replied that an explanation might be expected in the *Methodist Times*. Weeks rolled by and no explanation appeared. Whereupon the young man at Nelson wrote to refresh Mr. Hughes's memory, and added that as he spent most of his spare cash on Free-thought literature he couldn't afford to take the *Methodist Times* every week on the off chance of finding that long-delayed explanation. Mr. Hughes didn't answer that.

According to Mr. Hughes's last article "a healthy Christian is a Christ-like man." Well, in that case Mr. Hughes isn't a healthy Christian. Jesus often charged his converts to tell no man. Mr. Hughes tells everybody beforehand. He publishes in haste, and makes the convert at leisure.

Renan, says the *Christian Commonwealth*, has fascinated and allured where Ingersoll and Bradlaugh have disgusted. Perhaps so, but are the people who could be disgusted by the earnestness of Bradlaugh, and the wit and geniality of Ingersoll, worth fascinating? And is there not a deal of humbug about our contemporary's criticism? We are not aware that Bradlaugh or Ingersoll ever suggested that Jesus and Lazarus got up that resurrection trick between them. Renan did so, however, in the *Vie de Jesus*, and we should like to know if this is the part our contemporary thinks fascinating.

"Yes," sighed the disappointed mother, "I brought up my son very carefully and piously. As soon as he was old enough I got him to join the church, and made him give me his solemn promise that when he married he would marry a Christian woman." "And didn't he?" "No; he married one of the girls of the choir."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 9, Hall of Science, Freemason Street, Grimsby; at 11, "Is the Bible Inspired?" at 3, "Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "A World Without God."

November 16, Birmingham; 20, St. Pancras Reform Club; 23, Liverpool; 30, Leicester.

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

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

W. JOHNSON.—The reverend gentleman draws on his imagination for facts. Mr. Foote was not in when the reverend gentleman's "convert" called at our office.

N. B. BILLANY.—The date is booked.

R. W. HOLLOWAY.—Yes, this journal will be sent post-free for one year to any address in the United States if you pay Mr. Forder 6s. 6d. We cannot advise you how to evade the vaccination at New York.

TOLEMAN GARNER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. ELDER.—Our readers would hardly be interested in the nebulous utterances of an obscure American. Always glad to hear from you.

S. STANDRING.—You are doing a good work. Go on.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—J. Crabtree, 10s.; R. Roberts, 5s.; Three G's, 10s.

F. G.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

T. BIRTLEY.—Jokes are always welcome. The portraits are now sent. Glad to hear the circulation of the *Freethinker* is so rapidly improving in the Chester-le-Street district.

A. H. HUNTER.—We did not keep the letter and cannot furnish the address.

R. ATKINSON.—Sorry to hear the Yorkshire Federation cannot do any indoor work during the winter. We are pleased to learn that the outdoor propaganda during the summer has been successful. The fact is, we take it, there must be several good, strong Branches already existing before a Federation can be much of a reality. During the winter Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Sheffield, and other towns, should be well worked and organised by the local Freethinkers.

W. J. FORD.—Under consideration.

VIGILANCE.—See "Acid Drops."

T. PHILLIPS.—No doubt our propaganda would be very successful among the Durham miners. We hope the Spenny-moor Branch will help in this direction.

E. SMEDLEY.—Poor old Robert Owen became a Spiritist in his dotage. Dr. Sexton tried many things. George Chainey is an amiable lunatic. We regard Spiritism as a relic of savage superstition. It is common enough among barbarians today. We never "heard" any "spirits" and don't expect to until our brain addles.

W. WHEELER.—It seems to be a proper work for the political associations.

MARQUIS DE PRESLES.—Mirabaud's *Système de la Nature*, and some of the essays and dialogues of Diderot.

W. J. K.—Papers and cuttings are always welcome.

T. A. HELLSTERN.—We don't understand. What is the ground of objection?

C. Q.—Colenso, of course, was not infallible. We cannot hunt through all his volumes, at the moment, for the point in question, which does not seem of much importance.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the batch of jokes.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Courier—Western Figaro—Portsmouth Evening News—Freidenker—Freethought—Der Arno Teufel—Church Reformer—St. Pancras Guardian—Bombay Guardian—Two Worlds—Manx Sun—Yorkshire Evening Post—The Flaming Sword—Menschentum—The Progressive Thinker—Maldon Express—Barnet Press—Der Lichtfreund—Protestant Standard—Rochdale Observer—Echo—Portsmouth News.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

"Booth's Book," a series of articles by Mr. Foote, will be commenced in our next issue.

Last week's *Freethinker* ran out of print on Saturday, although we had an extra supply. If our friends will continue to assist us by pushing the paper among their friends and acquaintances, our circulation will soon relieve us from the strain of unpaid labor. We don't want a fortune, but even a Freethought editor must eat to live.

The *Freethinker* goes all over the world, even into Russia, but the censorship of that anything but God-forsaken country seems to be alive now to our wickedness. Still there are ways of circumventing it, and we hope our Russian subscribers will continue to receive their favorite paper.

Mr. Foote visited Nelson, in Lancashire, for the first time on Sunday. His lectures were delivered in the Queen's Hall, a large building, the proprietor of which does not yield to the pressure of local bigotry. Unfortunately the weather was unpropitious. The morning audience was a fair one; the sky clearing a bit, there was a fine audience in the afternoon; but the rain poured down again before the evening lecture and thinned the attendance. Another misfortune was the non-arrival of the parcel of literature, and the loss of the introduction of the *Freethinker* to scores of fresh readers. Still, the day may be regarded as a success. The audiences were most respectable, in the best, not in the cant sense of the word, and every decisive Freethought sentiment was cheered to the echo. Mr. James Crabtree, of Colne, presided at all three lectures and made an efficient chairman.

Nelson is now to have an N. S. S. Branch. The younger Freethinkers mean business, and we must look forward to an active propaganda in the district. The local circulation of the *Freethinker* is rapidly increasing. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Nelson again in the spring, and to have the pleasure of congratulating the new Branch on its prosperity.

The National Secular Society's Almanack could not be got ready by Wednesday. Some delay was occasioned by late corrections. By Monday at the latest, however, or perhaps earlier, copies will be on sale. As the Almanack is now the property of the N. S. S. every member should feel it incumbent on him to purchase a copy. The list of contents will be found in our advertisement columns.

On Wednesday, November 12, at 8 p.m., Mr. W. E. A. Axon will read a paper before the Shelley Society, University College, Gower Street, on "Shelley's Vegetarianism." The meeting will be open to visitors and discussion is invited.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at the Tower Hamlets Radical Club to a large audience. This was the third of the London Secular Federation's free course. Mr. J. M. Robertson winds up on Thursday, November 6.

Mr. Laurence Stevens, of the London County Council, will preside at Mr. Moss's lecture at the Peckham Radical Club on November 13. The subject is, "The Bible and Evolution."

Mr. C. J. Hunt discusses "The Existence of God" with Mr. R. Dunn of the Christian Evidence Society in the Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, Edmonton, this evening (Nov. 9) at 7. Admission 3d. and 6d. The surplus will be handed over to the London School Board for the poor children's free breakfasts.

The Battersea Branch intends giving a Children's Party in December. Donations, sweets, and toys should be sent to Mrs. Dipper, 28 Stanley Street, Queen's Road, Battersea.

Dr. Stanton Coit, addressing his South Place congregation on the Holy Ghost last Sunday morning, said, "I would sooner give up the sunlight and go and live in a cave for the rest of my life than enter into any Christian or theological organisation."

The third volume of Renan's *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel* is now out. It extends from the period of Hezekiah to the

return from the captivity. He deals with the alleged discovery of the law in the time of Josiah, and the work of Jeremiah, whom he characterises as a grand reactionary.

Renan, the great French Froethinker, was brought up for the Church, which he never entered. "I should," he says, "have made a very good priest indulgent, paternal, charitable, blameless in my life and conversation." Commenting on this, the *Speaker* says that the Church lost at least as much in Renan as she gained in Newman, and adds: "Renan is an old man now. Was the life of Newman himself more blameless than Renan's has been? It is well to note this of a man whom all the forces of orthodoxy have failed to crush during seven-and-twenty years."

An enterprising French journalist has inquired of various leading writers whether they would prefer burial or cremation. Father Hyacinthe cares little, but for others prefers incineration to prevent people being buried alive, which he thinks happens more frequently than people imagine. Alphonse Daudet finds both methods disagreeable. Zola will leave the matter to his relations. Lecomte de Lisle has not made up his mind, and hopes his indecision will last a long time. M. Henri de Bornier would prefer levitation à la Elijah. M. Sarcey prefers cremation if he dies at Paris, and burial if at Nanterre, while Sardou cries, "Burned, burned!"

Secularists of the district are desired to meet in the Victoria Hall, adjoining the Central Hall, Dundas Street, Spennymoor to-day (November 9) at 6 p.m. for the purpose of forming a Branch of the N. S. S.

Captain Pfoundes lectured at Woolwich last Sunday on *The Ethics of Buddhism*. Buddhism was not to be judged by the representatives of theosophic charlatans. It was a moral system of self-knowledge and self-salvation strongly contrasted with sacerdotal dogmas and the doctrine of atonement by blood. Buddhism, he held, would give a higher sense of duty, and of service to humanity.

From an official statement recently made, it appears that the total sales of Mr. Herbert Spencer's works in Great Britain up to April 18, 1890, amounted to 104,000 copies, exclusive of the *Descriptive Sociology*. This number includes 33,750 copies of the various volumes of *The Synthetic Philosophy*, 39,500 copies of *Education*, and 20,000 copies of *Man versus the State*. The total sales of the authorised American editions of Mr. Spencer's works to date amounted to 164,000 copies. To these must be added the cheap pirated editions.

Thaddeus B. Wakeman in the *Arena* advocates the adoption of the New Era of Science dating from A.D. 1600, "the date of the martyrdom of Bruno, of the publication and public recognition of the Copernican Astronomy, the founding of the East India Company, the first step towards the settlement of America, and of the founding of International Law by Grotius—an era which actually gave to mankind a new heaven, a new earth, and a new brotherhood of the race, entirely independent of the old supernaturalism."

Our friends of the *Freidenker*, Milwaukee, are issuing a new edition of the writings of Carl Heinzen.

Mr. S. P. Putnam has had a seven nights' debate with Elder Evans at Summerville, U.S.A. on the subject of the Bible.

The supreme court of Massachusetts will not permit a man's business to be injured from the pulpit. A physician who is Catholic was divorced and then married. He was consequently excommunicated. His former priest took occasion to inform his flock that he would not administer to any one in sickness who was attended by an excommunicated physician. The effect was to deter many Catholics from employing the physician. He brought an action against the priest for defamation of character and professional injury. The jury found for the physician, the case was carried to the full bench and the verdict was sustained.

A handsome monument, costing over 1,250 dollars, has been erected at Forest Hills Cemetery, near Boston, to the memory of Horace Seaver, who for half a century was editor of the *Boston Investigator*. It is fifteen feet high and constructed of granite. The inscription on the face reads:

"Horace Seaver, born Aug. 26, 1810; died Aug. 21, 1889. Editor of the *Boston Investigator* for 50 years, 1839-1889." On the right side are the following quotations from the eulogy delivered by Col. Robert G. Ingersoll at the funeral of the deceased: "Horace Seaver lived for others." "He always sought for light." "He was a friend of all the world and sought to civilise the human race." "There was no taint or touch of malice in his blood." "He had the brain of a philosopher and the heart of a child." "He did not ask God to forgive his enemies, but he forgave them himself." "Sacred are the lips from which have issued only truth." On the left side the following quotations from the works of the deceased appear: "One world at a time." "The right to think freely on all subjects belongs to us naturally, and no government can deprive us of it." On the reverse side of the monument appears the following: "This monument is erected to the memory of Horace Seaver by his friends, in recognition of his great services in the cause of universal mental liberty."

Sunday concerts are spreading in godly Scotland. In Aberdeen the band of the Cameron Highlanders are giving Sabbath afternoon and evening concerts, the prices of admission ranging from 6d. to 2s.

A PULPIT MOUNTBANK.

DR. TALMAGE is the champion clerical clown of the United States. He has been ridiculed fiercely and scornfully by the American press, but he possesses an abiding faith in the boundless stupidity of his fellow-countrymen, and has continued to feather his own nest by pandering to the ignorant superstition which is not less widely diffused in America than in England. He has recently "boomed" a trumpery "Life of Christ" which he is alleged to have written, and has "nobbled" the press of the United States in a masterly fashion which would turn a company-promoter green with envy. Four thousand papers have published stereotyped "reviews" of his work, illustrated by furnished engravings. The artful dodge has been exposed (see *Freethinker*, page 521), but Talmage doubtless smiloth and rubbeth his hands softly together; for how can exposure hurt him among his chosen lambs, the fools?

Talmage speaks to a select circle of fools in this country also, for the *Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* (Phœbus! what a name!) prints every one of his sermons. Noticing that the issue for Oct. 15 contained a discourse by him on "crooked things," I purchased a copy, for Talmage is surely an authority upon anything crooked. As I read the sermon, paragraph by paragraph, a mighty wonder fell upon me. Can it be possible—not that a man can preach such stuff, for there are men who will preach anything if they find their reward for so doing—but that reproduction of the rubbish should be profitable in another land? From his pulpit in Brooklyn Tabernacle, Talmage speaks not only to the congregation in front of him, but to many thousands of the English speaking race far away across the Atlantic ocean. Rightly used, such a power would be of enormous value to humanity. But let us see to what purpose the pulpit mountebank of Brooklyn employs his opportunities.

"The crooked shall be made straight"—thus quotes Talmage his text from Isaiah. Then, as his congregation hoist their long ears to catch every precious word, he goes on to show how the Lord will make, and even now doth make, certain crooked things straight. He suggests that God helps many commercial men out of their financial difficulties—providing, of course, they are church-goers and weigh in heavily when the plate is passed round. "When commercial houses fail, the suspension is advertised," he says, "but of the tens of thousands of men who are every day extricated no public mention is made. Yesterday was Saturday, and I warrant that at the windows of banks, and in counting-rooms of stores, and on every street of every city, God appeared for the deliverance of good men, as certainly as when with his right foot he trod Lake Gallilee into placidity

and made Daniel as safe among the lions as though they had been house-dogs asleep on a rug before a winter's fire." This is put with some measure of caution; but a little picture which accompanies this section places Talmage's "idea" in a much more vivid light. There is a business man sitting at the desk in his office. He is evidently in great distress of mind, and his clasped hands are raised in prayer. He is in queer Street, from a financial point of view, and doesn't know his way out. But at the open door a telegraph boy is rushing into the room—telegraph boys are in the habit of rushing into the private rooms of merchants—and no doubt the Lord has "wired" a cheque for twenty-five millions of dollars to the embarrassed capitalist.

But the rescue of foundering merchants is nothing compared with what the Lord *can* do, according to Talmage. If our prayers were only fixed up in the right way, the weather would be as much under our control as the fashion of our garments. Here is a paragraph in which Talmage shows how it has been done:—

"It has been my good fortune to know many ship captains. They are in all our services. They leave their vessels on Sunday mornings and join us in worship. I warrant there are enough of them present this morning to take a whole fleet in safety across the Atlantic. Whenever I have heard them testify it has mightily confirmed me in what I knew before, that God answers prayer concerning the weather. And there have been cyclones that started up from the Caribbean sea, sweeping down every sail and every smoke-stack and every mast in their course, which, in answer to specific petition, have been diverted and made to curve around some particular ship, leaving that in calm waters, and then resuming their original path of destruction. The weather probabilities again and again have announced a tempest, and we were all ready for it; but, to the surprise of most people, the next day we saw the announcement that the atmospheric fury had changed its course. The probability is, it struck a prayer and glanced off."

Now is this man, this Talmage of Brooklyn Tabernacle, a fool or a knave? Is he a liar, or is he the victim of almost incredible delusion? Frankly, it is impossible for me to accept the latter alternative, and I am forced to the conclusion that he is a wilful liar, who deliberately sells his falsehoods in the most profitable market.

But this pitiful Talmage himself is the least pitiable element in this matter. What shall we say of the "faithful" who crowd to Brooklyn Tabernacle to have their empty heads stuffed with childish nonsense by this pulpit mountebank? And what shall we say of a section of our own countrymen, who buy the *Christian Herald* in order to get the Talmage lies when they are three weeks old? Free-thought has evidently yet much work to do before its task is accomplished. GEORGE STANDRING.

MAN—FALLEN OR RISEN?

BY ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, LL.D., L.H.D.,
Ex-President of Cornell University.

EVER since the beginning of man's effective thinking upon the great problems around him, two views have existed regarding the life of the human race upon earth, each utterly opposed to the other. The first of these is the belief that man was created "in the beginning," a perfect being, endowed with the highest moral and intellectual powers, but that there came a "fall," as the result of which came into the world evil, toil, sorrow, and death.

Nothing could be more natural than such an explanation of the existence of evil, in times when men saw everywhere miracle and nowhere law. It is, under such circumstances, by far the more easy explanation, for it is in accordance with the appearances of things; men adopted it just as naturally as they adopted the theory that the Almighty hangs up the stars as lights in the solid firmament above the earth, or trundles the sun behind a high mountain at night, or wheels the planets around the earth, or flings comets as "signs and wonders" to scare a wicked world, or allows evil spirits to control thunder, lightning, and storm, and to cause diseases

of body and mind, or that he opens the "windows of heaven" to let down "the waters that be above the heavens," and thus to give rain upon the earth.

A belief, then, in a primeval period of innocence, physical perfection, and intellectual strength, from which men for some fault fell, is perfectly in accordance with what we should expect.

Among the earliest known records of our race we find this view taking shape in the Chaldean legends of war between the gods, and a fall of man; both of which seemed necessary to explain the existence of evil.

In Greek mythology perhaps the best-known statement was made by Hesiod: to him it was revealed, regarding the men of the most ancient times, that they were, at first "a golden race," that "as gods they were wont to live, with a life void of care, without labor and trouble; nor was wretched old age at all impending, but ever did they delight themselves out of the reach of ills, and they died as if overcome by sleep; all blessings were theirs; of its own will the fruitful field would bear them fruit, much and ample, and they gladly used to reap the labors of their hands in quietness along with many good things, being rich in flocks and true to the blessed Gods." But there came a "fall" caused by human curiosity. Pandora, the first woman created, received a vase which by divine command, was to remain closed; but she was tempted to open it, and troubles, sorrow, and sickness in every form escaped into the world, hope alone remaining.

So, too, in Roman mythological poetry, the well-known picture by Ovid is but one among the many exhibitions of this same belief in a primeval golden age—a Saturnian cycle—one of the constantly recurring attempts, so universal and so natural in the early history of man, to account for the existence of evil, care, and toil on earth by explanatory myths and legends.

This view we also find embodied in the sacred tradition of the Jews, and especially in one of the documents which form the impressive poem beginning the books attributed to Moses. . . .

On the other hand, appeared at an early period the opposite view—that mankind, instead of having fallen from a high intellectual, moral and religious condition, has slowly risen from low and brutal beginnings. Among all the statements of this theory one is especially noteworthy; that given by Lucretius in his great poem on *The Nature of Things*. Despite its errors, it remains among the most remarkable examples of prophetic insight in the history of our race. The inspiration of Lucretius gave him almost miraculous glimpses of truth; his view of the development of civilisation from the rudest beginning to the height of its achievements is a wonderful growth, rooted in observation and thought, branching forth into a multitude of striking facts and fancies; and among these is the statement regarding the sequence of inventions:—

"Man's earliest arms were fingers, teeth and nails,
And stones and fragments from the branching woods:
The copper next; and last, as latest traced,
The tyrant, iron."

Thus did the poet prophesy one of the most fruitful achievements of modern science, the discovery of that series of epochs which has been so carefully studied in our century.

Very striking, also, is the statement of Horace, though his idea is evidently derived from Lucretius. He dwells upon man's first condition on earth as low and bestial, and pictures him lurking in caves, progressing from the use of his fists and nails, first to clubs, then to arms which he had learned to forge, and finally, to the invention of the names of things, to literature, and to laws.

During the mediæval ages of faith this view was almost entirely obscured, but at the revival of learning in the fifteenth century it reappeared; and in the first part of the seventeenth century we find that among the crimes for which Vanini was sentenced at Toulouse to have his tongue torn out and to be burned alive, was his belief that there is a gradation extending upward from the lowest to the highest form of created beings.

In the eighteenth century we find this same idea of an outward progress, especially through the three ages of stone, bronze and iron, cropping out in scientific form still more definitely from beneath the vast mass of theological reasoning in Germany, France and England.

The investigations of the last forty years have shown that Lucretius and Horace were inspired prophets: what they saw by the exercise of reason illumined by poetic genius has been now thoroughly based upon facts carefully ascertained and arranged; until Thomsen and Nilsson, the northern archæo-

logists, have brought these prophecies to evident fulfilment, by presenting a scientific classification dividing the age of prehistoric man in various parts of the world between an old stone period, a new stone period, a period of beaten copper, a period of bronze, and a period of iron; and arraying vast masses of facts from all parts of the world, fitting thoroughly into each other, strengthening each other, and showing beyond a doubt that, instead of a *fall*, there has been a *rise* of man from the earliest indications in the Quaternary, or even, possibly, in the Tertiary period.

—From the "Popular Science Monthly."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, Oct. 29. Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mr. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Bater, Courtney, Gordon, Heaford, Killick, Larkin, Reynolds, Standing, Smith, Warren, Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. The Organisation Committee's report, which among other matters, recommended a grant to the West Ham Branch, and the formation of a new branch at Tottenham, was unanimously agreed to. The finance account for the month showed an increase of twelve shillings. The Hyde Park Branch having reported that they had changed their name to the West London Branch, a discussion took place as to the advisability of consulting the Executive beforehand. Mr. Standing moved and Mr. Wheeler seconded "that the change of name of the Hyde Park Branch to the West London Branch be accepted; but that in future Branches be requested to inform the Executive before changing their name." Carried. Mr. Smith moved and Mr. Larkin seconded "that the Secretary communicate with the London Secular Federation, with a view to holding a children's party in January." Carried.

N. S. S. SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Mrs. Holloway, 3s. 6d.; Corporal McKay, 5s.; Barbados Branch, 5s.; B. Dawson, 2s. 6d.; Finsbury Branch, 3s. 8d.; G. Hodge, 5s.; H. Good, 4s.; H. L. Jacob, 5s.; T. Campbell, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.

J. Huband, 9d.; Dr. Duncan £1 1s.; J. Tapp, Junr., 5s.; H. L. Jacob, 10s.; W. J. Birch (per J. M. Wheeler), £5; Mrs. Harrison, 1s. 8d.; W. R., 6d.—R. FORDER, *Secretary*.

A POPE ON THE DEVIL.

Yielding to a report from his inquisitors in Germany, Gregory IX., describes in a bull of the year 1233 the ceremony of initiation practised by certain heretics on whose speedy punishments he insists. With evident good faith he relates how the novice pays the homage of a kiss on the hind-quarter to the devil in the shape of a toad as large as a goose, a duck or an oven, or of a black cat lifting his tail for salutation."—Rev. James Martineau, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 147, 1890.

THE GOLDEN BOUGH.

In regard to what Mr. Wheeler says about the mistletoe being held sacred, I think its etymology is more convincing. The last syllable *toe* meant in old times an end, or branch; in the Greek, *tao* meant to stretch out. Therefore the plant mistletoe symbolised the end, or branch, of the year. Kissing under this old shrub represented the coming together of the old year and the new. The old year was represented as female and the young new year as male by the ancients.

R. SHAW.

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W. H. Reynolds (*Treasurer*), New Cross, S. E.

OBITUARY.—Died on Tuesday, Oct. 28, Antony Hellstern, aged 75. Brought up as a Catholic, he became a hater of the priests and their religion. He died as he had lived, a sturdy Freethinker. Many members of the Dulwich Radical Club followed him to his last resting place, Honor Oak cemetery.

AN EXCELLENT MINISTER.

"How do you like your new minister, Cora?" asked her father.

"Oh, he's just splendid. He draws twice as large congregations as Rev. Oldwun, whom he succeeds."

"I suppose he is much more eloquent and impressive than Mr. Oldwun?"

"N-no. He is rather an ordinary and tiresome speaker, but he's young, handsome and unmarried."

"Oh, yes, I understand," said her father. "The increase in the congregation is made up entirely of young women."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "The Science of Health."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "Man's Soul." Monday, at 8, dancing class (3d. per lesson). Tuesday, at 8, social evening. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. Simkins (Christian) has been invited to lecture. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Agnosticism."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Animals and Plants"

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, debate between C. J. Hunt and R. Dunn on "The Existence of God."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "Labor Questions in Parliament"; 7, "Polytheism, Trinitarianism, Monotheism, Atheism."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. G. Standing, "Christian Evidences."

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 6.30, Mr. Jesse Cocks, "Inspiration."

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road N.W., 7, Orchestral Band: 7.30, Mr. B. Hyatt, "The Most Comfortable Sacrament."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 11, Mr. R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods"; 7, Mr. R. Forder, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments." Collection in aid of Propagandist Fund. Nov. 11, at 8, Mr. J. Long, "God, Hell, and Heaven."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "Liberty and Socialism."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Christianity and Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, debate between Mr. A. T. Dipper and Mr. Simkins on "Is the Bible Inspired by God?"

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3, debate between Messrs. Clarendon and Keen on "Creation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standing, "Sermons from Shakespeare, IV.—The cry is still, 'They Come.'"

COUNTRY.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, meeting to form Debating Class; 6.30, Mr. Cairns, "Rights, Justice, Liberty."

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, a meeting

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "The Great Antiquity of Man"; 6.30, "My Adventures in the Wild West of America."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—3, Discussion Class, "How far have the Arts and Sciences Promoted Civilisation?"; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Peres, Daniel v., 28."

Manchester N. S. S.—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Life of Jesus Christ"; 3, "Is Mind the Product of Matter?"; 6.30, "Do Christians Believe in Christ?"

Wednesday, at 8, dancing (admission 6d.).

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, meeting of members.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. R. J. Murray, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, W. M., "Christ's Life and Teachings"; 7, Mr. Skipton will lecture; music by Miss Stapely and Mr. Amey.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Mr. Ernest Evans, 3, "Heroes of Science"; 7, "Volcanoes and Earthquakes: their Work in Nature."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, business meeting.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. J. Marr, "Origin of Religions."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 9, Woolwich; 13, Peckham Radical Club; 23, Hull; 30, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Rusden; 28, Camberwell.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—Nov. 9, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Nov. 19 and 26 (Tuesday evenings), Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Nov. 9, Battersea; 23, Woolwich. Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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