

The Freethinker

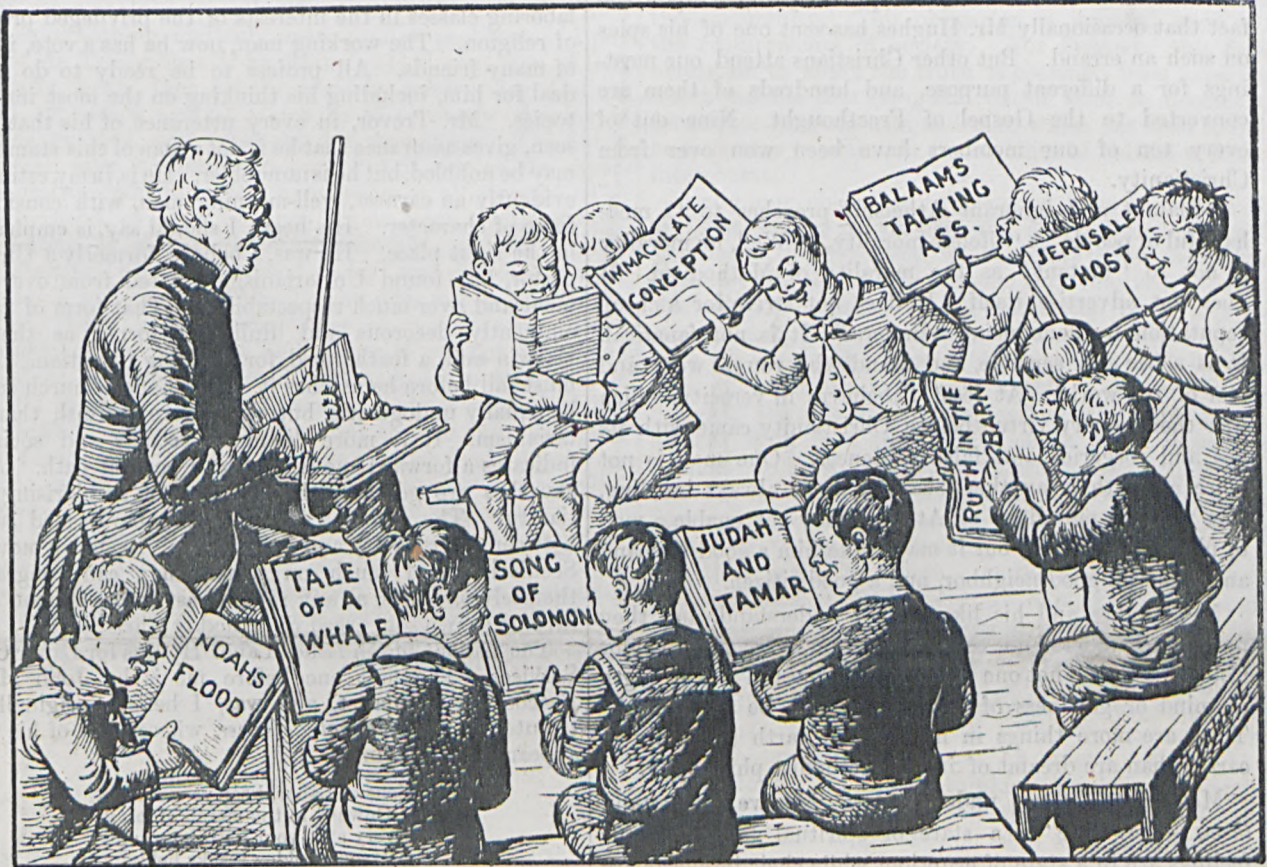
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THE OPEN BIBLE.

(DEDICATED TO THE "PROGRESSIVES" ON THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.)

DISMAL ATHEISM.

It was natural that the *Methodist Times* should sound the trumpet over the success of the Chapelites in the recent London School Board elections. It rejoices that "Jews, Roman Catholics, and Atheists have been overwhelmed in one common destruction"—which is a fair specimen of the religious liberty we should enjoy if the Chapelites were able to rule the roost. It would be an awful thing if the Chapelites were shut out from the School Board, but it is eminently just—nay, a matter for exultation—that all the Roman Catholics in London are left without a single representative.

"The Atheist party," says the *Methodist* organ, "ran one candidate, and only one, in the whole of London, and he met with signal disaster in the division where London Secularism is most rampant." Our readers know the amount of truth there is in this statement. Mr. Watts met with no "signal disaster." He had to face a fatal conspiracy of the Liberal and Radical press against him. Thousands of electors were not even aware that he was in

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the field. Nevertheless, the Finsbury vote in favor of Secular Education was considerably increased, and the vote all over London more than trebled.

"We have always contended," says Mr. Hughes's organ, "that Atheism was a negligible quantity in London." Mr. Hughes certainly acted on that assumption when he wrote and published the infamous lie called "The Atheist Shoemaker." But he found himself mistaken. The Atheists pursued and exposed him. True, it was a long while before they were able to do this effectually, but they succeeded at last. It may also be a long while before they rally the London forces in favor of Secular Education. But they will succeed some day, and teach the Chapelites a stern and much-needed lesson.

Mr. Hughes and his school are very fond of the word "blatant." We doubt if they attach to it any definite meaning. It is a good mouthful. It sounds well—something like swearing. Of course Atheism is "blatant." The *Methodist Times* calls it "blatant and ignorant Atheism." Surely it forgets that Mr. Holyoake is an Atheist. Is *he* blatant? Is *he* ignorant? Let the *Methodist* scribes answer his *Trial of Theism*. They will find it much harder than calling names at large.

"Blatant and ignorant Atheism" is said to preach its gospel in "tiny rooms." Perhaps the *Methodist Times* will inform us how many large rooms the Christians had until they were protected, and even favored, by the Emperor Constantine, three hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ. The Hall of Science, at any rate, is far larger than any building that Jesus Christ, the twelve Apostles, or the early Christians had the fortune to preach in. Mr. Hughes knows very well, but he hates the truth too much to say so, that Atheism is under the ban of the law in England. It cannot receive bequests or hold property. Its disabilities are upheld by Christians, who, after robbing Atheism, twit it with its poverty.

Tiny as the halls of Atheism are, in the Methodist surveys, the audiences which assemble in them include "many Christians" who come "to spy out the nakedness of the land." This statement is probably based upon the fact that occasionally Mr. Hughes has sent one of his spies on such an errand. But other Christians attend our meetings for a different purpose, and hundreds of them are converted to the Gospel of Freethought. Nine out of every ten of our members have been won over from Christianity.

"Blatant and ignorant Atheism" preaches to "a mere handful of people" a "lifeless morality." Well, its morality is not so "blatant" as the morality of Methodism. It does not advertise itself. It does not strive for a cheap reputation by denouncing "sinners." It is not fanatical. It is sober and sensible, and stands the rough wear and tear of the world. At least it believes in veracity, which was the primary virtue before Christianity came with its lies and forgeries and false pretences. One man is not more alive than another because he is always bustling. The "lifeless morality" of Atheism may not enable a man to play the Pharisee, but it may make him a good husband and father, a good neighbor, and a good citizen.

Mr. Hughes and his like do not understand, and they never will understand, the exclamation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge that "not one man in ten thousand has strength of mind or goodness of heart enough to be an Atheist." There are more things in heaven and earth (certainly in earth) than are dreamt of in the Methodist philosophy.

Methodists do not understand *us*, but we understand *them*. They live in a state of spiritual fever. Their feelings are in a state of eruption, while their intellects are unexercised. They are inheritors of that spirit of enthusiasm which was so mercilessly dissected by Bishop Lavington in the days of Whitfield and Wesley. They have a rooted distaste for everything that is natural. In their heart of hearts they feel that "the world" is the happy hunting-ground of "the devil." Such people cannot but regard Atheism as *dismal*. They are unable to understand how a man can be cheerful without their "consolations," just as the confirmed dram-drinker is unable to understand how a man can be cheerful on cold water.

Nothing could be farther from the truth than the belief that Atheism is "dismal." Fancy applying this epithet to Colonel Ingersoll! Why, he has more human nature in his little finger than Mr. Hughes has in the whole of his body. He bubbles over with geniality. His smile is medicinal. It might recover a thousand hypochondriac Methodists—if they would only give it a trial. Nor was "dismal" a characteristic of Charles Bradlaugh. He was full of hope and exuberance. Neither is Mr. Holyoake "dismal." He writes you facetious letters from a sick bed. And who would apply "dismal" to the jolly face of Mr. Charles Watts? The present writer does not know dejection. In his worst troubles he feels the uplifting power of devotion to a great cause. "Dismal" forsooth! The wish was father to the thought, which is belied by the facts.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE LABOR CHURCH.

OF the many attempts to accommodate Christianity to modern requirements, the Labor Church started by Mr. John Trevor at Manchester must be pronounced one of the most promising. Christianity at the outset made some pretence of appealing to the poor, and in these days even the Churches, that have been the strongest buttresses of privilege, feel that, to hold their own, they must now appeal to the masses. The distinction of the Labor Church is, that it appeals on lines likely to be popular and successful. It claims to be at once religious and social. It is, in the words of the founder, "an organised effort to develop the religious life inherent in the Labor movement, and to give to that movement a higher inspiration and a sturdier independence in the great work of personal and social regeneration that lies before it."

There have been several efforts of late to "noble" the laboring classes in the interests of the privileged professors of religion. The working man, now he has a vote, is a man of many friends. All profess to be ready to do a great deal for him, including his thinking on the most important topics. Mr. Trevor, in every utterance of his that I have seen, gives assurance that he is not a man of this stamp. He may be nobbled, but he is no nobbler. He is, in my estimation, evidently an earnest, well-meaning man, with considerable force of character. His heart, I should say, is emphatically in the right place. He was, I believe, formerly a Unitarian pastor, but found Unitarianism suffered from over-refinement and over-much respectability. That form of faith is eminently decorous and dull. It forms, as the elder Darwin said, a feather-bed for a falling Christian. But he must fall before he reaches it. The Labor Church seeks to be equally undogmatic, but with more warmth than Unitarianism. It is more distinctly secular and social. It indicates a forward movement on a popular path. All the churches are going in the direction of secularising Christianity. The Labor Church might be termed a cross between Christianity and Secularism. In such a movement Secularists find much on which they can congratulate themselves. It is, at any rate, a vast improvement on the save-your-own-soul creed of orthodox Christianity.

The Labor Church issues Labor Hymns for Labor Church Services. The first one before me is by John Macleay Peacock, a Secularist, and was, I believe, originally contributed to the *National Reformer*, where most of his poems appeared. It begins:—

Sons of Labor, keep ye moving
Onward in the march of mind,
Every step your path improving,
Leaving olden tracks behind.
Every soul-enslaving fetter
Burst and break and cast away,
That the world may be the better
For your needs some other day.

The other verses, and, indeed, the other hymns, are of a similar secular character, save one, which declares:—

The grandest words that men have heard
Since ere the world began,
They are the Fatherhood of God,
The Brotherhood of Man.

Upon which I have a word to say further on.

I do not doubt that there is ample room for the Labor Church, as there is for Sunday Societies, Ethical Culture Societies, and other associations endeavoring to improve the quality of the human life around us. Its chief drawback is likely to be that its members have mostly been educated in sectarianism, and, despite the founder, will tend themselves to become sectarian. Miss March Phillips gives us a hint in this direction. She informs us that the names of Robert Blatchford and Katharine Conway are in great request at the Labor Church; "but several centres have lately decided to decline visits from avowed Freethinkers, whose addresses would, of course, be purely secular." Apparently they look back with regret to the land of bondage they are supposed to have quitted.

I have said, despite the founder, for Mr. Trevor, in the November number of the *Labor Prophet*, makes it clear he has no hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt. He says:—

"Jesus accused the Scribes and Pharisees of consulting a book instead of going direct to life itself, and to the God of all Life. Dr. Barrett repeats the same fault. He wishes to bind the Churches hard and fast by words said to have been

uttered eighteen hundred years ago, but of which we have no contemporary record. Life is bigger than that. God is nearer to us than that. It is this bondage to tradition which makes of the Churches vessels which merely drag their anchors before the breath of God's spirit, and which blinds the sons of men to the glory of the new day."

This quotation, admirable as it is in spirit, indicates, I think, another flaw in the Labor Church—its pretence to explain all things by God, and to supply an up-to-date theory of the universe. "God is our King," "God and Liberty," "Thy Kingdom Come on Earth," are the mottoes emblazoned on the banners of the Labor Church. One of Mr. Trevor's popular tracts is entitled "Man's Cry for God," and capital G's are sprinkled all over his writings as plentifully as in those of the traditionalist ministers, who know that the name of God is a fine one to conjure with, and accordingly play it for all it is worth. But surely a Labor Church should be prepared to front the facts, and not attempt to solve all difficulties with a word which explains nothing, and only opens up new problems. I put it to Mr. Trevor that, if he means by God what men of God usually mean, then all the poverty, misery, degradation, and oppression against which he is earnestly striving is made by God, and exists by his permission. The Labor Church says it discards dogma, but it retains the supernaturalism which is the foundation of all dogma. The Fatherhood of God is much dwelt upon, without any definition of that very anthropomorphic phrase, or any explanation why Motherhood should not do equally well. If, as is just possible, Mr. Trevor does not mean by the word "God" any personal ruler of the universe, living outside of the universe and seeing it go, but only some ideal of character, I would still suggest to him that it would be better to drop the word "God," a word which has so many meanings, this to thee and that to me. He need not resign any ideal, any aspiration which lends dignity or value to life. The brotherhood of man is just as vital whether we believe in the Fatherhood of God or not.

If the Labor Church uses the old theological phrases, it must expect them to take the old meanings. If Mr. Trevor desires that his church should not become just another of the two hundred odd sects that divide Christian England, he should take care to store his new wine in new bottles.

J. M. WHEELER.

WHY SHOULD WE BE GOOD?

WE purpose answering the above question from a Secular standpoint. Our theological opponents would have us believe that the only satisfactory reply to such a query must come from Christianity. But, as we have shown in a previous article, the Christian's reasons for being good are both selfish and ineffectual. We hope to show that there are better reasons for goodness than the desire to please God and to secure everlasting happiness in "realms beyond." The theological delusion, that religion alone supplies the motive for personal excellence, has arisen through people entertaining the erroneous idea that natural means are impotent to cure the evils that dominate society. It has, however, been discovered that vice must be dealt with like all else that is human. A supernatural remedy for moral disease appears to the student of nature no more reasonable than a supernatural cure for any of the physical diseases which "flesh is heir to." When a man feels the pangs of some physical malady, he knows that there is some derangement in the organ in which it occurs; in addition to applying a remedy, if he be wise, he will endeavor to discover the cause, so as to avoid the malady in future. Now, Secularists consider that the same course should be taken with moral diseases, which often arise from a morbid condition of the brain, produced sometimes by the bad arrangements of society, or through not acting up to the proper duties of life. Virtue and vice are not mere accidents of the time, but are as much the consequence of the operation of natural laws as the falling of a stone or the growth of a flower. The causes of crime should be investigated as carefully as the causes of cholera and other epidemics have been. The physical and the moral are more closely connected than is generally supposed, and the influence of the one upon the other is beyond all doubt very great. Man's mental and moral

natures both depend upon material organs, and are therefore influenced by physical forces; and it is not unusual for the same causes that generate disease to produce crime. So little, however, do people study the relation of mind to brain that vice prevails where, with a little judicious thought and action, virtue might be found. The Secularist acknowledges these important facts, and, expecting no supernatural help, he goes earnestly to work himself. Holding that whatever happens occurs in accordance with some law, he deems it his business to endeavor to ascertain what that law is, that he may turn it to some practical account.

We think that with the extensive knowledge which now exists, allied with intellectual culture, it is not difficult to demonstrate that man ought to do his duty for reasons which belong alone to this life. By the word "duty" we here mean an obligation to perform actions that have a tendency to promote the personal and general welfare of the community. This obligation is imposed upon us by the requirements of society. For instance, the Secular obligation to speak the truth is obtained from experience, which teaches that lying and deceit tend to destroy that confidence between man and man which has been found to be necessary to maintain the stability of mutual societarian intercourse.

Again, our obligation to live good lives is derived from the fact that, as we are here and are recipients of certain advantages from society, we therefore deem it a duty to repay, by life service, the benefits thus received. To avoid this obligation, either by self-destruction or by any other means, except we are driven to such a course by what have been termed "irresistible forces," would be, in our opinion, cowardly and unjustifiable. As to the word "ought," the only explanation orthodox Christianity gives to this term is a thoroughly selfish one. It says you "ought" to do so and so for "Christ's sake," that through him you may avoid eternal perdition. On the other hand, Secularism finds the meaning of "ought" in the very nature of things, as involving duty, and implying that something is due to others. As the Rev. Minot J. Savage, in his *Morals of Evolution*, aptly puts it: "Man ought—what?—ought to fulfil the highest possibility of his being; ought to be a man; ought to be all and the highest that being a man implies. Why? That is his nature. He ought to fulfil the highest possibilities of his being; ought not simply to be an animal. Why? Because there is something in him more than an animal. He ought not simply to be a brain, a thinking machine, although he ought to be that. Why? Because that does not exhaust the possibilities of his nature: he is capable of being something more, something higher than a brain. We say he ought to be a moral being. Why? Because it is living out his nature to be a moral being. He ought to live as high, grand, and complete a life as it is possible for him to live, and he ought to stand in such relation to his fellow men that he shall aid them in doing the same. Why? Just the same as in all these other cases: because this, and this only, is developing the full and complete stature of a man, and he is not a man in the highest, truest, deepest sense of the word until he is that and does that; he is only a fragment of a man so long as he is less and lower."

The careful and impartial student of nature will discover that therein continuous law is to be found, but no accidents or contingencies. And what we call the moral state is one wherein man is enabled to recognise the wisdom of compliance with this law. It is quite true that men may refuse to obey the moral law, but, if they do, they must suffer in consequence. This is one reason why men should be good, inasmuch as the fact of being so brings its own reward. It not only secures immunity from suffering, and adds to the healthfulness of society, but it exalts those who obey the moral law in the estimation of the real noblemen of nature. A man of honor—one whose word is his bond, who practises virtue in his daily life—wins the respect and confidence of all who know him, and he thereby sets an example that will be useful to emulate; and he at the same time acquires for himself a tranquility of mind known only to the consistent devotee of human goodness. What is called Christian morality has no sanction in merely natural sentiments and associations. Nobility of action is supposed by orthodox believers to be the result of a "fire kindled in the soul by the Holy Ghost." St. Paul is reported to have entertained the grovelling notion that, if this life is "the be-all and end-all," then "we are of all men the most miserable";

"therefore," says he, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Here the problematical happiness in a problematical future is put forth as a higher incentive to goodness than the wish to so regulate our conduct that it will produce certain beneficial results in our present existence. Persons who share the views of St. Paul, as set forth in 1 Cor. xv., will derive but little pleasure from the virtue of this world. The satisfaction which should be felt in benefiting mankind independently of theology falls unheeded on orthodox believers. They fail to experience happiness simply by the performance of good works. Virtue, to them, has no charms if not prompted by the "love of God." Nobility, heroism, generosity, devotion, are all ignored unless stimulated by the hope of future bliss. Christians deny the possibility of virtue receiving its full reward on earth. If they think their faith will conduct them safely to the "next world," they appear to have no trouble about its effects in this. A man who is good only because he is commanded to be so, or through fear of punishment after death, is not in touch with the philosophy of modern ethics. The true moral person is one who does his duty, regardless of personal reward or punishment in any other world. The Secular motive for being good is that this world shall be the better for the lives we have led, and for the deeds we have performed.

The Secular regard for the moral law is not based upon a negation, neither is it a mere question of expediency, but rather a positive acting principle, working for practical goodness. A really moral man is one who is interested in the well-being of others—one who has discovered that he belongs to the family of men, the social advancement of which is dependent, more or less, upon each other. Unsocial beings are those who care for nobody but themselves, and whose sense of right-doing consists in studying their own interests without concerning themselves about the welfare of others. Emerson said: "I once knew a philosopher of this kidney. His theory was, 'Mankind is a damned rascal. All the world lives by humbug; so will I.'" Fortunately, individuals of this type are becoming fewer and fewer, and are being replaced by men and women in whom are to be found aspirations for the true, the useful, and the elevating functions of life. To such members of the human family as these it can be made evident that truth and honor are essential to their well-being, and that doing good is an absolute necessity to the formation and the perpetuation of a society based on confidence and trust. The virtue of veracity is the foundation of the true social fabric. Law, commerce, friendship, and all the embellishments of life rest upon the great principle of veracity. It is this which gives the surest stability to all moral obligation. While being faithful to ourselves, we should never fail to manifest fidelity in our associations with all members of the community. Our aim ought always to be to so serve others that we may help ourselves, and to so serve ourselves as to be helpful to others. As Pope puts it:—

"Self-love and social is the same."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

A FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

(An Address delivered before the American Secular Congress, at Madison Hall, Chicago, on Oct. 26, 1894.)

BY PROFESSOR LEON LEWIS, M.D.

THREE hundred years ago this very day there was a notable prisoner in one of the dungeons of the Inquisition in Rome. He had been there already twenty months, and was destined to remain there five and a half years longer, and to be then taken out and burned alive at the stake. His dungeon being below the level of the street and without a window, he groped in permanent darkness. Hardly a sound reached him from the great world without. The air in that dreadful place was fetid and stifling. The only persons he saw were the miscreants who were running that fiendish institution, and who came and went with the stealthiness of tigers. He had neither books nor writing paper, neither pen nor pencil. His parents were dead. Brothers and sisters he had none. Friends, if he still had any, held aloof in terror, or were kept away by his jailers. His food was scanty and coarse. Beneath the lead-covered

roof of that prison he had been suffocated by the sweltering heat of two long Italian summers. His garments hung in tatters, barely sufficing to veil his nakedness. His solitude was complete, and his privations and sufferings, both of mind and body, horrible beyond description. In that living grave day added itself unto day without event, and night stole away into night without mention! Who and what was this doomed prisoner of those torturers and assassins of the "Holy Inquisition," and what had he done that he should be thus cruelly and infamously murdered by inches? This man was

GIORDANO BRUNO,

the first great prophet and martyr of the grandest idea ever born into human consciousness—the idea of the universality and eternity of inhabited worlds; the man who first divined and accepted, with all its consequences, the doctrine that the human family of our globe is but one race among infinite millions of similar races; he who first divined and felt that all these infinite millions of worlds and races exist by and through one great natural law and process; he who first perceived that man on our globe is a type of man on every other world; he who first recognised that the manifestations and developments upon the earth are a type of the manifestations and developments which are displayed on all other planets, and that this boundless and glorious edifice of nature which we call the universe always was, and always will be, uncreated and indestructible, existing from all eternity unto all eternity. As to what he had done, his guilt was the same as yours and mine. He had lived to learn, and his thoughts had gone forth to greet the infinite. He had sought for the truth diligently, and had found it. As an incidental outcome of this search, he had learned that the Christian Church is a hideous lie and imposture, a ghastly and withering prostitution of the very noblest gifts of human brotherhood, human reason, and human nature. He had learned that what we see around us is not the "worship of God," but the profanation and defilement of man! Although terribly handicapped by starting in life as a priest, he had entered the broad field of wisdom by the right gate, taking for his guides nature and reason. By this route he had been led up invariably to the recognition of the grandeur and divinity of manhood, as also to a conception of the immensity and eternity of the radiant scene of life and movement of which man is the possessor and interpreter. Rejecting the worm-eaten scraps of superstition which have been handed down as divine inspiration from the savagery and depravity of the early times, he had lifted his eyes and thoughts to the endless and eternal temples of the starry heavens, and attuned his ear to those infallible revelations whose altars are suns and worlds! Rejecting the sore-headed and wild-eyed "God of the Jews"—the imaginary idiot and cutthroat of Mount Sinai—he had lifted his mind to the great soul of nature, to the infinite reason and power of the Cosmos, and given his heart and life to the ineffable harmonies and sublimities which are proclaimed from all everlasting unto all everlasting in the facts of our being and surroundings. And having been thus inspired and elevated by the magnificent oracles of nature, how could he help breaking away from the ghastly frauds and idiotic mummeries of a class of men who have no higher aim in life than to prey upon their fellows? How could he help learning, as you and I have learned—and as all persons of sense are rapidly learning—that, of all the vile and damnable things in this world, the vilest, the most infamous, the most stupid, the most contemptible, is that miserable patchwork of horrors and absurdities which is called Christianity?

I am here to-day, my friends, to briefly outline the career of our mighty and beloved brother of other days. Every word I shall speak to you is the truth. I have drawn these facts from Bruno's own account of himself, as given to his inquisitors, and from the records of the "Holy Office" in Venice and Rome, in the original Latin and Italian. From these and other authentic sources you will learn to-day, for the first time, what manner of man our Bruno was, what were his ideas and aspirations, and why it was that his assassins deemed it necessary to murder him.

OUTLINE OF HIS CAREER.

The birthplace of Bruno is Nola, in the province of Caserta, and he called himself from it the Nolan. It is pleasantly situated in a plain fourteen miles north-north-east of Naples, and is one of the oldest cities in Italy. In

the fourth century B.C. it contained a population of 150,000, but it now contains only a tenth of that number. The climate of Nola is as heavenly as any this world can show. The wine made there is like nectar. The air you breathe there is life-giving and inspiring. The birds which sing there all the year through have the brightest of plumage. One of the views you have there is the column of smoke which rises eternally from Vesuvius, as I have myself often seen it. The memory of these scenes, which our dear Bruno, leaving them as a boy, carried away with him, remained vivid and unchanged to the end of his days. "Italia, Napoli, Nola"—Italy, Naples, and Nola—such was the cry that escaped him long years afterwards, as if those lovely spots stood out in his soul above all other earthly recollections.

In the midst of this scene, in 1548, was born our Bruno. His father was a soldier named Giovanni, or John. This soldier seems to have been a man of character and capacity, for we find that he was one of the intimate friends of a distinguished poet of the time and place, a certain Tansillo, who was reputed a perfect gentleman, and whose influence upon the son appears to have been lasting. There is no telling, in fact, how much the boy may have been indebted to his soldier-father for the courage and endurance which made his life such a success. The mother of Bruno was Fraulissa Savolina. The name of Fraulissa, in connection with the presence of a German colony in Nola, may be taken as a suggestion that there was German blood in his veins. Be that as it may, there is no reason to doubt that the parents of our Nolan, although poor, were worthy of their distinguished son. His nobility of soul is certainly a sufficient voucher for them.

The one striking event of Giordano's childhood was that he narrowly escaped being strangled in his cradle (contrary to Jupiter) by an immense serpent. This serpent came out of the walls of the cottage where the child lay, and darted menacingly at him. The father was asleep at the time in a room adjacent, and Giordano screamed for assistance, pronouncing clearly the name of Giovanni, which he had never been able to do until that moment. The father came promptly, as did several neighbors, and the serpent was duly killed, amid all the horrors and excitement such a scene naturally inspired. This event made such an impression on the boy that he was able to describe it in detail to his astonished parents in later years, repeating every word that was said on that occasion, and narrating every step that was taken.

In his tenth or eleventh year Giordano went to Naples, where he busied himself with studies appertaining to youth, entering later, in his fifteenth year, the convent of St. Dominicus, as a novice. In this convent he remained, with occasional absences, for thirteen years, or from 1563 to 1576. Nothing is more conceivable than that the mental straight-jackets of such a place should have become irksome at an early date to Bruno, nor is it surprising that he was menaced by the "Holy Inquisition" even while he was a novice. On one occasion he gave away certain images of his saint and that, retaining only his crucifix; and this proceeding caused considerable scandal in the convent, suggesting that he was not quite as much in love with the "saints" as his superiors would have been glad to see him. On another occasion, when he found one of his comrades reading the "Seven Joys of Maria," he inquired if it wouldn't be better to employ his time with reading the "Lives of the Fathers." For these and similar incidents, of no earthly account except as indications of Bruno's turn of mind, a list of formal accusations was drawn up against him by his superiors; but they at length decided that it would be good policy to suppress them, and suppressed they were accordingly.

(To be continued.)

Much to Do.

"Not yet has 'the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew' ceased to be 'the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox'; not yet has 'the zeal of the bibliolater' ceased from troubling; not yet are the weaker sort, even of the instructed, at rest from their fruitless toil to 'harmonise impossibilities,' and 'to force the generous new wine of science into the old bottles of Judaism.'"—T. H. Huxley, "Science and Hebrew Tradition," Pref., p. x.; 1894.

CHRISTIANITY AT ANTWERP.

LIKE thousands of others, the writer went this year to Antwerp to see its exhibition and its other noteworthy sights. Not the least remarkable of these was the mediæval tower called the "Steen," which stands on the embankment overlooking the river Scheldt. This tower is all that remains of the Castle of Antwerp, once the seat of the Spanish Inquisition, and now a museum of antiquities. On asking to see the dungeons, the custodian handed each of us a brass candlestick with a long handle, and directed us down a narrow, winding stair. At the bottom were several rooms and passages, pitch dark, and almost without communication with the open air. We first entered a moderate-sized apartment, with vaulted roof, in which were fixed one or two iron rings. On the wall hung a chain. In the wall, by the entrance-door, was a small round hole, communicating with the next apartment. "When a man was arrested for heresy," said the guide, "or for any offence against the Catholic religion, he was brought down here, placed against that hole, and ordered to confess to the priest who sat on the other side of it, and whom he could not see. If he refused to confess, or his confession was not considered satisfactory, he was suspended by the wrists from those iron rings in the ceiling, and weights were tied to his feet, until every joint in his body was racked and dislocated. If this torture was not sufficient, his feet were roasted over a brazier of burning coals until they were nearly burnt away."

The next room was similar in appearance, but at the further end was a small stake, with a manacle and chain still attached to it. Over the stake was a hole in the ceiling. "To this stake," said the guide, "the heretic was chained. His head was fixed in a frame, and water was allowed to fall from that hole, drop by drop, upon the top of his skull. *He died in two days—raving mad!*"

By the side of the staircase he next pointed out a small chamber, just sufficient to hold a man, secured by a strong oaken door. "Into this chamber," said he, "the heretic was placed. A pan of lighted charcoal was put in with him, the door was stopped up, and he was suffocated. This, I think, was the most merciful way they had of murdering their prisoners."

Just in front of the last-named chamber was a huge stone slab in the floor, having an iron ring in its centre. "This," said he, "covers the *oubliette*. The *oubliette* is a deep shaft, communicating by gutters and gratings with the river Scheldt. The victims were thrown down this shaft when the tide was out, and remained there in terror—perhaps with broken limbs—until the tide rose and slowly drowned them."

"In this next large room," said the guide, "you see the iron rings in the ceiling. From those rings the heretics were hung head downwards, tightly bound. They were killed in six hours by the unnatural position, and the rush of blood to the head, which ruptured the brain."

The last room was entered by a hole, which had evidently been broken in the wall, for it had no communication with the other apartments. The original mode of admission was through a round hole in the vaulted roof. In a corner was a round buttress, which really formed part of the wall of the castle well. In the opposite corner was a water-pipe. "There was originally a hand-pump in this cell," said the guide. "The prisoner was thrown through that hole, and then the water was turned on through that pipe, and he was made to pump out the water into the well. So long as he pumped, he kept the water in check; but when he became exhausted, and could pump no longer, the water slowly rose and drowned him." By this fiendish device the inquisitors sported with the human instinct of self-preservation, made their hapless victim struggle for his life, prolonged his agonies as long as possible, and at last made him die a miserable death after wearing out all his energies in frantic efforts to avert his doom.

This was the way that uniformity of religion was established at Antwerp. The teachers of the faith tell us, in this nineteenth century, that Christianity is divinely adapted to the needs of mankind; but it is remarkable what pains the clergy used to take in the old days of their power to bring people under the influence of this divine adaptation. The divinity that adapted could not render it acceptable to mankind without the sword and the faggot.

E. P.

HEAR ALL SIDES.

[CONCLUDED.]

SUPPOSE a serious inquirer, anxious about the welfare of his soul, should go to a priest, or to Talmage, or any other minister, and modestly inquire what he should do to be saved? The priest would say: "Do you believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God?" "Well," says the man, "I must say that I have some doubts about it; I have not yet seen evidence enough to convince me of the fact, and that is the reason I have come to you. No doubt you can furnish the evidence, because it has convinced you. Let me have it, and I, like you, may find peace in believing."

"My friend," says the priest, "you are standing upon dangerous ground. Your very doubt is a mortal sin, and, if persisted in, will certainly send you to hell. You have all the evidence that I or anybody else can have; it is your duty to believe without any regard to the evidence. Come, say you will believe from this time forward, and join my church."

"What," says the honest inquirer, "must I make myself a liar to God, to the Church, and to myself in order to gain the favor of God in the world to come?"

"Do you not know that belief is not a result of will, but of evidence? If you do not, just try the experiment of putting your finger in the fire, trying to make yourself believe that it won't be burned. The gospel tells us that you may drink poison, or handle snakes without injury, but you haven't belief enough in it to try the experiment; and you cannot believe it to save your soul. You may think you can cheat God by saying you believe it, and thus save your soul; or you may think that liars and cheats are the kind of men that God likes, for there is much in the Bible to indicate that, if you believe it; but, as for me, let me be honest and true to my convictions, and if God don't like that, then I have no desire to enter his mansions in the sky, that must be peopled by liars and hypocrites. Let me rather go down to the other old fellow where the honest 'folks go, where I can at least save my self-respect, whatever becomes of my soul."

Colonel Ingersoll says: "An honest God is the noblest work of man." But, so far as I have been able to discover, man has never made any of that sort. If he ever does succeed in making an honest God, he ought to be awarded an international patent for his invention, or the manufacture should be promoted by a high protective tariff, coupled with free trade in the raw materials.

But why is it that the clergy insist so strongly upon faith, which is but another name for credulity? Why do they try so hard to prevent us from examining the question of religion, but that they know that any such examination will show the folly, weakness, and falsity of all religion? They lament the alarming spread of infidelity, but they do nothing to prevent the spread except to warn their hearers against listening to anything that the infidels say. If they had any confidence in the religion they profess, would they not eagerly accept every chance to show its truth and confound the infidels?

Our lecturers go about the country, and everywhere they invite the clergy to answer their arguments. Do they do it? No. They wait until the lecturer has gone, and then answer him with personal abuse and misrepresentation; or the better class of them more discreetly ignore the whole matter and say nothing.

We are told that God has chosen the foolish and simple people of this world to confound the wise, but if he did he acted foolishly himself, for such choice is sure to fail of accomplishing the purpose. No one but a fool would ever be confounded by such agencies. God knew—if he knew anything—that the wise would never adopt any different rule of evidence for religion than they would for any other matter in which it was important for them to find out the truth. He knew, therefore, that as he could not or would not furnish the proof of his existence so as to convince the wise, the only way was to take up with the fools. The fools were ready to believe anything they were told to believe, if they were only promised sugar crowns and gingerbread harps for doing it; and so that they should not discover the imposition that had been practised upon them, the little toys were not to be given them till after they were dead. These fools go about the world appealing to the wise to believe in their foolish

notions by faith. They don't know how foolish it sounds to the wise, but they think they are doing something meritorious, and so they reiterate, "Why won't you believe?" "You'll find out when you come to die," and many other phrases equally silly.

The wise man answers: "I am willing and ready to believe if you can give me any reason why I should. Show me any evidence that your religion is true; but exhortations to believe without evidence don't go with wise people. As to finding out when I come to die, don't you think it would better accord with God's boasted justice if he should furnish me the evidence before it gets too late? It can't do him any good, or me either, to convince me then."

The question that we all have to settle, each for himself, is the truth or falsehood of religion; we are in the position of jurors, bound to render a verdict to ourselves as well as to the world, honestly, according to the evidence, without fear, favor, affection, or hope of reward. Let all the parties interested come and present their evidence, and let a fair and impartial jury, in full possession of all their faculties—not while their senses were swimming in the death trance—make up their judgment. This is what we propose to our Christian friends, and if they have any confidence in the truth of their religion, they ought to be eager to accept the terms, and attempt the greatest missionary work that the world has ever seen.

—Independent Pulpit.

J. P. RICHARDSON.

ACID DROPS.

By way of counterblast to Zola, the Catholics of Paris have held an exhibition of a dozen persons who profess to have been cured at Lourdes. They included a man who said he had been blind and had had his eyesight restored, and a girl who declared she had had a withered leg which had suddenly grown into a leg of normal length. Such an exhibition as this might have saved Jesus Christ from crucifixion.

Christians are never tired of asserting that their religion is an evangel of peace to the world, while facts continually give flat denial to the boast. A letter from Japan, received by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York, says that "the country is full of the spirit of war, and the Christians are especially eager for the fray, to prove that they are patriots."

According to the *Detroit Evening News*, the comparative merits of rain machines, Christian prayers, and Indian rain dances, with beating of tom-toms, were tried during the recent drought in South Dakota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Judged by results, the Indian rain dance and tom-toms proved from twelve to sixteen times more effective than the other two. Perhaps the Indian medicine-men are the cutest in discerning when is the best time to beat their tom-toms.

If our villagers had not been rendered so dependent by parson and squire, there should now be a rare awakening over the new Parish Councils. As it is, those in towns who know villagers should stir them up—first, to decide to have a Parish Council, if the parish is between 100 and 300 in population; next, to see that the Council is made representative of the interests of the people. Women, if on the Local Government Register, may vote.

Speaking of Captain Bowen's journey across Tibet, Mr. Symes says in the *Liberator*: "If Captain Bowen had caught a Mahatma and transmitted him to Europe, it would have proved disastrous to Theosophy, as the finding and the exhibition of Christ would ruin Christianity. To see either Christ or Koot Hoomi in public would effectually destroy the holy flavor, and no one would care for either after a few days. No, no! keep your gods out of sight if you would preserve their god-head."

It is notable that, in the romantic story of the escape of Father Rossignoli from Omdurman, the Christian priest owed his safety entirely to the courage and devotion of a Mussulman guide.

Mrs. Besant has been attending spiritist *séances* at Sydney. At one of them the medium, Mrs. Mellon, was caught on her knees impersonating a spirit, Cissy, with a mask of black material over her face, the skirt of her dress turned up, and her feet bare. Mr. Mellon rushed to his wife's protection, and Mr. Henry, who seized her, was violently assaulted. He has, however, made oath as to the facts, and as to having seen a false beard in the spiritist cabinet, with a black bag, tapes, and other paraphernalia. Mrs. Mellon, we believe,

went to Sydney from Newcastle. The *Medium and Daybreak* has more than once celebrated her mediumistic powers. What does it say to the recent exposure?

The *Westminster Gazette* says that Mr. Judge's secret circular deposing Mrs. Besant fell like a bomb upon the Theosophical Society. He says that if his Mahatma is a fraud now, he must have been all along, and then Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Besant herself, and the whole Theosophical Society must fall together, which, indeed, is an exceedingly strong position, and one with which we are in entire accord.

There is a good story in the "Theatres" column of Monday's *Daily News*. We give it *verbatim*, so as not to spoil it: "In a certain provincial city there was a theatre whose manager, though he had realised a fortune, would never, if he could help it, spend a sixpence in providing for the health or comfort of his company. The narrator had a miserable little stuffy room, with no furniture but a lame chair, a broken wash-stand, and a common earthenware ewer and basin; but the greatest eyesore was an ugly iron bar which crossed the room overhead from side to side of the partition, where it had been placed to be out of the way. My friend had complained in vain; for he was not then the admired and respected actor he has since become. One day, however, on coming down to the theatre, he found the manager looking really pained and anxious. 'Glad you've come,' he said; 'we have had a nasty thing happen; that iron bar fell and struck your dresser on the head.' The poor fellow has been taken to the hospital.' My friend expressed great sorrow at 'the sad news.' 'Yes,' said the manager, 'it is sad, and it's only God's mercy that that jug and basin were not dashed to atoms.'

Providence does not protect churches more than other buildings. On Sunday morning a fire broke out in Holy Trinity Church, Woolwich. The congregation, of course, were very much alarmed, and showed no disposition to trust to Providence for their safety. Serenity was restored by the arrival of the firemen, who got the flames under, and averted a sad destruction of God's property.

The Rev. C. D. Stooks, vicar of St. Peter's, Yateley, Basingstoke, has been preaching on the forthcoming elections of Parish Councils. He appropriately took his text from one of the "cursing Psalms"—"Set thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him" (Psalm cix. 5). He proceeded to let them know that God's curses would be poured down thick and hot upon them if they elected other than godly men to do the secular work of the parish. The village parson is seeing his old power and privileges departing. He will do his best to delay the evil day, and when the worst comes to the worst can fall back upon more of the imprecatory psalms.

The Rev. G. M. Lawson, of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, has been giving an account of his work in Zanzibar. He is reported as saying: "The work among the Mohammedans was discouraging. Not one had been baptised, though the mission had been at Zanzibar some thirty years." This is a poor show for a divinely-revealed faith. The only success of which Mr. Lawson had to boast was among the children of slaves captured by the English men-of-war. He says: "The adults were handed over to the French missionaries, the children to the English." Rather a curious arrangement if the children were the offspring of the adults.

While Cardinal Vaughan was urging his docile flock to support Messrs. Diggle and Riley at the School Board elections, he was corresponding with the Archbishop of Toledo on the subject of the conversion of England, with particular reference to Lord Halifax and the English Church Union, of which he is president. The Spanish prelate says the Catholics have intercessors in heaven. The English prelate is more practical, and sees the first thing is to nobble the schools.

In his letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, Cardinal Vaughan points to the English Church Union as so close to the doctrine and ritual of Rome that they "only want the key, the office, and authority of St. Peter to close the arch"; and he reminds them that "all their virtues and good works are, as St. Augustine says, null without the unity of the faith." That's the good old doctrine, "You must come into our Church because there's no salvation outside."

Vaughan reminds the Spanish Cardinal that the conversion of England was foretold in Spain by the Venerable Mariana de Escobar in 1618, we suppose by way of consolation for the destruction of the Spanish Armada. Prophecy always was a risky business, or we would venture the prediction that Freethought will triumph in Spain before England is brought under the spiritual rule of Rome.

The *Catholic Standard and Ransomer* says: "We have heard that there are now eight hundred clergymen of the Church of England who have been validly ordained by Dr. Lee and his co-bishop of the Order of Corporate Reunion." Perhaps it is this noble eight hundred who are sending to Rome for the Pope's terms as to admission to the Church. They cannot, however, be depended upon to go over to Rome while the loaves and fishes remain in the English Church.

A discourse on Atheism was delivered by the Rev. Page Roberts, last week, to the fashionable West-end congregation which gathers at St. Peter's, Vere-street. According to the report in the *Marylebone Mercury*, Mr. Roberts said: "The growing Atheism of the day was a sign that a new departure was necessary." We do not see that Mr. Roberts takes any such departure. There is nothing new in the statements that Atheism has been christened Agnosticism or that religion saves from "the hardening influence spoken of by Gibbon as arising from the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence." There is nothing new in the assertion, "All the greatest men have been believers in God"—barring, we suppose, Hume, Bentham, Shelley, Humboldt, Feuerbach, Strauss, Darwin, Comte, Clifford, Lewes, Huxley, and Ingersoll. The only new departure taken by Mr. Roberts is in mentioning Spinoza among the Theists. As Spinoza's God was not a personal being, nor distinct from the universe itself, he should more properly be classed with Pantheists; and Pantheism, as Lord Beaconsfield said, is only "Atheism in domino."

Does the Rev. Page Roberts really believe that God has made nature so that its study should have a hardening influence? His acquaintance with scientists, or with Atheists, must be very limited, if he thinks anything of the kind. Atheists are terribly callous creatures in the eyes of men of God, but, when you happen to know them, you find they are just as warm-blooded and soft-hearted as Theists.

The Rev. Dr. Burrow, vicar of St. Andrew's, Bordesley, is in hot water with some of his congregation, and also with his bishop, Dr. Perowne, of Worcester. In his last sermon he closed a very bitter attack with the observation that the Bishop had had his reward on earth, and he could not, therefore, expect to wear a crown in the next world. Dr. Burrow also denounced one of his congregation as "an ex-convict, who interferes with the minister's arrangements for the welfare of his parishioners," and said: "He is guilty of presumption and sin which God will never forgive."

Money appears to be the ground of the quarrel, and when the offertory was taken up a scramble took place in the vestry. According to the report in the *Birmingham Argus*, Mr. Vivian, deputy people's warden, got about half. This he counted, and found to amount to 4½d. If the takings of the other warden were no larger, one would hardly think it worth while scrambling over. But perhaps some pious principle is involved.

There has been a squabble between the Rev. H. W. Crozier, of St. Matthew's, Stockport, and the teachers in his Sunday school, some of whom will not communicate in his church. The matter is fully ventilated in the local press, much to the edification of the non-eclect.

Jordan water has long been used in christening the bantlings of royalty. It seems to be descending now to a lower circle of patrons. We read that a firm exists in Palestine for bottling Jordan water and supplying it to various churches in all parts of the world. The price list is not given, but we suppose there is an extra charge for supplies bottled at the very spot where J. C. was splashed by the Baptist.

The experience of Christianity in Africa is everywhere the same. The Christian brings with him gunpowder and gin, and these prove more potent than all the gods of the natives. The Christianised African is a demoralised being who lays his sins on Jesus. The Mohammedan comes with a gospel of temperance, far more suited to the dusky races; and the result is that the African follower of Islam is an improved creature, while the African Christian is a deteriorated one.

Some people believe in the gospel of clothes, and hold that the one thing needful is to supply the heathen with cotton cloths, and, perhaps, knickerbockers. The Rev. James Macdonald, who has been an African missionary, gives rather a set-back to this sanguine theory. He says: "The Waganda clothe from head to foot, and put a man to death if he walks about naked in a public place; but their morality is very low, and offences against the seventh commandment are common everywhere. The Beris go almost naked, and they are in no way noted for immodesty, but rather the reverse."

Other good people think that what the heathen require is the Bible in their own tongue. With plenty of Bibles,

savages, they fancy, must soon become civilised. Well, the art of reading is an important one, and may serve to stimulate thought. But have these good people reflected on the results of putting before one who believes in witchcraft such a text as "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," before warriors "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood," or before a cannibal the text, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you"?

The jury were unable to agree in the Worrall divorce suit as to whether or not the Rev. W. H. Jones, curate at St. Mary's, Hulme, had committed adultery with Mrs. Worrall; but Sir Francis Jeune, in directing them, adverted to his holding clandestine meetings with her after he had been forbidden the house by her husband.

James Bishop, of Trowbridge, senior deacon at Bethesda Baptist Chapel, senior superintendent in the Sunday school, leader of the Band of Hope, etc., has been committed for trial on a charge of embezzlement from the local Co-operative Sick Society. He admits his guilt, and says he is sorry. Why, of course. What do you think?

Talmage is right. Those Atheists are always committing suicide. Here is the Rev. J. M. Harries, curate of St. John's Church, Accrington, who goes and fires a couple of bullets into his brain. It is a capital text for next Sunday's sermons.

Charles Field, of the Bible Defence League, took out a summons for assault against Job Williams, of the Protestant Brigade, for an assault in Finsbury Park. The rival lecturers are both eminent opponents of Secularism.

There has been what the *Lancashire Daily Post* calls a "Disgraceful Scene at St. Jude's Sunday School, Preston." As far as we can make out, it arose from the vicar separating the boys' from the girls' school, and giving to himself and the superintendent the sole right of being with the girls. The other male teachers did not appear to see the fun of this arrangement, and stayed with the girls, singing "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The result was no Sunday school was held, but Christian threats of calling in the police and trying the power of the law.

Under the "Deaths" heading of the *Jersey Times* there is an announcement of the decease of the Rev. R. Bellis, vicar of All Saints, Jersey. Below is a quotation from the New Testament about J. C. being the resurrection and the life; and below that again is the query, "Dost thou believe this?" If the query is addressed to the Rev. R. Bellis, it is difficult to see how he can reply.

Mr. Ward McAllister, who is considered a leader of "society" in New York, has been giving his impressions of the English clergy in the *New York World*. He says the impression made on him by these clergymen was, that they viewed the Church as a professional business, not as a calling, "as is generally the case with us." He explains this further by saying: "I found that, with the English clergy, this world predominated, whereas our own clergy were looking to the next." The American ministers also have a keen eye for dollars and position, or they are much belied.

Charles G. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, says that at Thanksgiving Day the Americans must show their gratitude to God for all the lives of women and children he destroyed by forest fires in Minnesota, and by floods in Texas. This the rich do by stuffing with turkey and oysters, and celery and champagne, while the poor are suffering for want of bread.

"This gorge," continues Mr. Moore, "will help along until Christmas, when we will again celebrate, in the middle of the winter, the birthday of Jesus Christ, who was born in the middle of the summer, by all hands getting on a big jag for a week, with the usual trimmings of murders that always accompany that religious festival."

Booth knows the value of advertising and of keeping in with the press. Asked by a newspaper interviewer, "Do you think the millennium will come if the whole world is converted to the Salvation Army?" he replied: "It would be very near at hand. If the newspaper men were converted, it would be a very long step in that direction." If Jesus Christ waits until newspaper men are converted, his long-delayed second coming may be fixed for the Greek calends.

The Pope has issued another letter. This time it is addressed to the American bishops, urging them to recommend the faithful to contribute to Peter's Pence. His Holiness has already more than a princely income, but he knows that Pat in America can be squeezed a little more, so he puts on the pressure through the bishops.

Poor old Lord's Day Observance Society! It has met with

another rebuff. The Court of Appeal has given final judgment in favor of Messrs. Wilson, Ward, and King, who were sued for penalties in respect of an "entertainment" given by the Leeds Sunday Lecture Society. The Master of the Rolls described the appeal as "contemptible and preposterous." His description would apply most admirably to the Lord's Day Observance Society itself.

Twenty-two lives have been lost by the floods in Cyprus, and a hundred and fifty houses destroyed. Among the buildings a church and a mosque have been totally destroyed.

The late James Anthony Froude's will contains the following passage: "I desire that my executors shall destroy all private letters, literary papers, and unpublished manuscripts belonging to me, and I desire them also to destroy all such letters, papers, and memorials of or relating to the late Mrs. Jane Welsh Carlyle as came to me for my absolute property under the will of Mr. Thomas Carlyle, and which I may not have published in my lifetime, together with any unpublished manuscripts relating to Thomas Carlyle or Jane Welsh Carlyle."

What a display of irresolution! Carlyle said that a lot of his documents ought to be destroyed, but he could not make up his mind to do the job, and left the whole matter to Mr. Froude. The disciple followed the master in this as in other things. Froude published what he chose to from the Carlyle documents, but he destroyed none, and the responsibility is now left with his executors; for the testator does not order them to destroy anything, but merely expresses a "desire," which, of course, they are free to disregard. On the whole, these apostles of "resolute" government do not seem to have been over-gifted in that line themselves.

"MATRIMONY.—Widower (Young), £200; Christian; travelled; good manager. Proverbs xix. 14; John iii. 7; Psalm xvii. 1," is what appears in a morning paper. It is concise, but after all the "good manager" seems superfluous.

Dr. Clifford is chortling over the "Progressive" victory in London. He says the attack on the Compromise has been repulsed, and all the Free Churches were united under the banner of the open Bible. Ah, but that "open Bible" will have to be opened a little more, and the Secularists will do it. So, look out, Dr. Clifford and Company, for hotter water than you expected.

Pious Emperor William is always bursting out in a fresh place. On Monday last he bestowed some of his divine eloquence on the naval recruits who were sworn in at Kiel. "We Germans," he said, "are Christian." Not all of them, emperor. A good many are Atheists. "Think of your oath, think of your emperor," he exclaimed. Well, perhaps they do. But what they think he will only learn at the ballot boxes. As for the "prayer" which enabled "our early ancestors" to beat the Romans, it is enough to say that the Romans were not beaten by the northern barbarians until they were emasculated by Christianity.

Princess Bismarck was no doubt an excellent wife, and we sympathise with the Grand Old Man of Germany in his bereavement. But the deceased lady was very bigoted against the French, whom she looked upon as "godless," and marked out for destruction. During the Franco-German war she thought the whole French nation ought to be exterminated, apparently because they did not read the Bible so much as her own countrymen. Yes, there is nothing like religion as a rennet for the milk of human kindness.

Fall River, Massachusetts, has a population of 90,000. One half are Roman Catholics, and the other half Protestants, who are divided into fifteen denominations. But, in spite of all this religion, the town is described in the November number of the *Forum* as in "a state of filth and squalor such as is probably unparalleled in any civilised land, and which most assuredly has no parallel outside the pale of civilisation." Fall River should export a few Christians and import a few "infidels."

Churches and chapels have been warned by the Grand Jury of Union County, New Jersey, against bazaars, which are a violation of the law, being nothing but lotteries. According to the Grand Jury's presentment, this way of raising money for religious purposes "has become a prevalent evil."

Thomas Mooney, a New York waiter, according to the local *World*, took to walking up and down his room with a Bible in one hand and a lighted lamp in the other. He said he was fighting the Devil. It took nine men to remove him to the asylum. What a lucky job he did not meet Old Nick! A desperate lunatic, a Bible, and a paraffin lamp might have fitted his Satanic Majesty for the hospital.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :-
11.30, "The New London School Board—What Will It Do?" 7,
"The Curse of Christianity."

December 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 9, Manchester; 10, Derby; 16, Plymouth; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

ADMIRER (South Shields).—What was the amount of your subscription to the Watts Election Fund? Kindly inform us. We have mislaid the memorandum.

J. CAMPBELL.—We believe that a profession of Theism is exacted in all the Freemasons' lodges in England. We do not know of any case of expulsion by the Freemasons on account of Atheism. But we are not an authority on the subject. We regard all secret societies as nonsensical in a free country.

E. WRIGHT, 19 Litchurch-street, Derby, supplies the *Freethinker* and exhibits a contents-sheet.

E. D. H. DALY.—Pleased to hear from you again. Thanks for the cuttings. The Isle of Wight is a delightful place, but you could hardly expect to find much Freethought there.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) We do not know of any "leading Atheists" who have advocated polygamy. We know of a good many Christians who have practised it—under the rose. (2) The Conscience Clause you refer to is a fraud. It exposes the children of dissentients to insult and ill-usage. (3) The Jews were a race and a religion in one, owing to circumcision and intermarriage.

J. TOMKINS.—Pleased to hear that you find our last week's article "inspiring" and "just the thing that is needed to keep Secularists from desponding." As you say, the more Church and Chapel quarrel the better for Secular Education.

NEMO.—The story of the emperor Julian's being prevented by miraculous fire from rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem is one of the many fictions that disgrace the early literature of Christianity.

C. W. SMITH, in reference to one of our last week's "Acid Drops," points out that Tello is in the Euphrates valley, not in Asia Minor. This correspondent is thanked for his cuttings.

WESLEYAN.—They are only seeking an advertisement, which we shall not give them.

J. UMPLEBY.—We are obliged. See our notice.

C. E. SMITH.—We can only insert official notices from the Branch.

T. E. GREEN.—It was overlooked, but is now acknowledged.

E. H. B. S.—Hope to insert soon.

MR. WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.—We have received: J. Hume, 1s.; W. Longstaff, 1s.; J. Close, 2s.

R. MELLOR.—You will find what you seek in the second half of the last chapter of Mark.

H. B.—The books have been received. Thanks.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Mr. Heaford should be able to settle that man of God, and we dare say he would do so in a full and fair discussion. Mr. Foote is writing you privately as to a debate.

THORNTON.—It is rather books and pamphlets than back numbers of Freethought journals that Mr. George Anderson was referring to. Thanks all the same.

A. A. WATTS.—Mr. Foote will deal with the subject on a future occasion. We note the contents of your letter.

S. SODDY.—Will find room for them.

T. HOPKINS.—Thanks. May fill a corner.

H. W. JONES.—See the Obituary.

W. H. SRIVEY.—Thanks for the cuttings. We also thank you for your letter in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. For our part, we do not intend to discuss Secular organisation in outside journals. Grumbling is always easy. It is generally done by those who are good at nothing else. Anyone who has a practical proposal to make can be heard at our annual Conference. It is amusing to find Mr. Foote made responsible, in some mysterious way, for the termination of the Secular Sunday-schools at Halifax and Huddersfield. They came to an end while Mr. Braddaugh was President—although, of course, he was in no way responsible for the fate of a local effort. It is really difficult to see how complainants would be able to enjoy themselves if the N.S.S. had no President. "Who is he?" they ask, when it suits them; and when it suits them the other way, they say, "He's responsible for everything." They initiate nothing themselves, and rail at him for doing his best. Did you ever hear that story of the man who was rowing a boat against a strong stream? He put a lot of energy and some skill into the work, but the boat made only slow progress. "You're no good at that job," cried a man on the bank. "Well," said the rower, "take a turn yourself." He did so. After pulling three strokes he caught a crab, tipped the boat over, and was drowned.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Huddersfield Examiner—Two Worlds—Der Arno Teufel—Islamic World—Crescent—Vorwarts—Cheshire County News—Blue Grass Blade—Post—Lancashire Evening Express—Suffolk Chronicle—Marylebone Mercury—Birmingham Argus—Christian Evidence Gazette—Chatham and Rochester

News—Liberator—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Echo—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Open Court—Church Reformer—Lancashire Daily Post—Liberty—Reynolds's Newspaper—Jersey Times—New York World—Cape Argus—Freidenker.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*.—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a crowded audience on Sunday evening at Camberwell. Mr. A. B. Moss occupied the chair. The lecture was on the question, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" It was followed for an hour and a half with the keenest attention, which was frequently relieved by laughter or applause. Several questions were asked, and some rather foolish opposition was offered by Dr. Bates. A collection was taken at the doors for the Benevolent Fund.

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (Dec. 9) at the London Hall of Science. His morning lecture, to which the admission is entirely free, is on "The New London School Board—What Will It Do?" His evening subject is "The Curse of Christianity."

Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle, on Sunday evening, under the auspices of the Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society. The large audience of nearly 3,000 persons gave him an enthusiastic reception. Manchester friends will note that Mr. Watts delivers three lectures to-day (December 9) in their city. On Monday he lectures at Derby.

Colonel Ingersoll is conducting a notable campaign against the Bible this winter. We notice that between November 22 and December 20 he gives no fewer than twenty-four lectures. That his lectures are calculated to stir up the preachers may be judged from this extract on the Bible: "This book persecuted even unto death the wisest and the best. This book stayed and stopped the onward movement of the human race. This book poisoned the fountains of learning, and misdirected the energies of man. It was the enemy of freedom, the support of slavery. It was the enslaver of women and children. It founded the Inquisition. It piled faggots about the feet of the just. It drove reason from the minds of millions, and filled the asylums with the insane. I attack this book because it is the enemy of human liberty—the greatest obstruction across the highway of human progress. Let me ask the ministers one question: 'How can you be wicked enough to defend this book?'"

A new edition of Mr. Foote's exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's "Atheist Shoemaker" has for several months been in type, except for a few pages at the end, which were reserved for any fresh developments. Now that the old edition is practically exhausted, the new edition will be printed and put into circulation immediately. It will be sold at one penny, which is less than the cost price of a restricted issue, and kept in stock for as many years as the public are likely to be interested in Mr. Hughes or "converted infidels." Wherever copies can be usefully distributed by persons who cannot afford to purchase them, Mr. Foote will do his best (if application be made to him) to provide such copies gratuitously.

The *Secular Almanack for 1895*, issued by the National Secular Society, and edited by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, will be ready for sale a few days after this copy of the *Freethinker* is in the reader's hands. The size and shape of the publication has been entirely altered, and novelty infused into the contents. Our artist has produced a fine design for the cover, which is printed in colors, and should

be an attraction on bookstalls and shop windows. Altogether we confidently recommend this Almanack to Freethinkers, all the more so as the profits derived from the sale will go into the National Secular Society's exchequer. A large edition has been ordered to meet an increased demand.

Colonel Ingersoll's grand new lecture, "About the Holy Bible," will also be on sale in a few days by Mr. Forder. We have reprinted it in a handsome form, such as it deserves. Type, printing, and paper are all that could be desired by the most fastidious. The price is sixpence.

Another brochure we are issuing is *The Birth of Christ*—a chapter from Strauss's original *Life of Jesus*, with an Introduction by Mr. Foote. It will be seasonable for the Christmastide. Strauss's analysis and exposure of the story of Christ's miraculous birth is a masterly performance, and should be widely circulated.

The *Saturday Review* is now in fresh hands, and promises to resume some of its old brightness. The last number contained a fine memorial ode on the death of Leconte de Lisle, by his fellow Freethinking poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne.

The *Suffolk Chronicle* gives a fair report of Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Ipswich. "In the evening," it says, "there was a large audience, and on each occasion much was said that provoked both the laughter and the applause of many present." The same journal reports some observations on Mr. Foote's evening lecture by the Rev. T. A. Carritt. The reverend gentleman called him "a poor idiot." Perhaps he did not think his words would be reported; or, as they were uttered at a tea-fight, he may have been under the influence of green tea. However, if Mr. Carritt sticks to the description, Mr. Foote will be happy to meet him in public debate at Ipswich, and let the townsfolk decide which is the "poor idiot."

In the appeal case brought by the Lord's Day Observance Society against Messrs. Wilson, Ward, and King, for having Sunday lectures in the Coliseum at Leeds, money being taken at the doors for admission, the Court affirmed the decision in favor of the defendants, and dismissed the appeal of the Lord's Day Observance Society with costs. This may make that officious body more careful in the future; but it is high time that the old law was repealed, as recommended by the jury who tried the case in the first instance.

Mr. Joseph Symes, some time ago, announced that he might visit the land of his birth again. We shall all be delighted to see him in England, but it is to be hoped he will first be able to tide over his difficulties at Melbourne. In the last number of the *Liberator* to hand, dated October 27, we regret to see it announced that Mr. Symes's journal will cease to appear after November 24. The announcement, however, is inconsistent with other sentences in the paper. We trust, therefore, that Mr. Symes will meet with the help he needs, and keep the *Liberator* going. He has conducted it for ten years and a half.

In reply to the clerical allegation that they are dissatisfied with secular education in the colonies, Mr. Arthur Clayden writes to the *Times* declaring emphatically that the only persons at all dissatisfied are the Roman Catholics. In reply to its alleged vicious tendencies, he declares: "I have never met purer or more charming young people than those of New Zealand." The fact is, Secular Education is the natural State program where there are no vested established religious interests. Our colonies, unburdened with this Old Man of the Sea, can, and do, give their children a far more efficient education than the mother country.

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, commenting on the new London School Board, says that, if Mr. Diggle and his daring lieutenant should endeavor to force their ideas upon the new Board, we may take it that a struggle will be initiated which can only end in one form—united secular and separate religious teaching. The shrewdest educationists foresee that this would be a wise and profitable ending. It would certainly give the churches the opportunity of showing their peculiar genius as religious teachers of children.

The *Weekly Times and Echo* says the *Life of Voltaire* "is a lucid and interesting sketch of the great French philosopher," and adds: "We strongly recommend it to all who want to know what the influence was which Voltaire exercised." *Reynolds's Newspaper* reproduces the portrait of Voltaire, and also commends the work.

Our contemporary, *Der Arme Teufel*, of Detroit, is publishing an able sketch of recent German philosophy by Adolf Geretke, under the title of "Der 'naïve' Materialismus."

Probably owing to the excessive polling of the church and

chapel ratepayers of Bradford, the voters comprising more than a half of the electorate, Mr. John Grange did not succeed in securing a seat on the Bradford School Board. He, however, polled 6,244 votes, and we thank him for upholding the cause of Secular Education.

Mr. A. B. Moss is standing for the Camberwell Vestry under the new Act. He is a candidate in No. 1 Ward. We hope he will come out A1 on the poll. His share of the expenses will amount to a few pounds, which, as a poor man, he can ill afford out of his own pocket. Perhaps it will be made up by his friends in South London—or elsewhere.

London Freethinkers should remember that the Secular Federation's annual dinner will take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 7. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other leading Secularists. There is sure to be a good "spread," and we hope there will be good speeches, good songs, and a good company. Let us also include good weather. The tickets, as before, are four shillings each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, at the Hall of Science, or from any London Branch secretary.

THE CLERICS AND THE BOARD.

IN view of the repeated talk in some "Progressive" quarters about the Secular-Socialist candidates in many divisions splitting the Progressive vote, it cannot but be insisted on how anti-Secularist is the Progressive party as it now stands. Some, of course, of the Diggleite organs did try to spread the idea that the Progressives were "infidels" and Secularists, and were in favor of "godless education." But that was mere election clap-trap. The only persons whom it seems to have imposed upon were those who knew nothing of the controversy at first hand—viz., some politicians in Ireland. And, strange to say, a neat and instructive little complication ensued in Ireland over the London School Board elections. It happened in this wise, and it is worth telling. The *Freeman's Journal*, whose capital, since the Parnell split, is largely in the hands of clerical shareholders, naively followed the Nationalist-Radical lead, and supported the Progressives. It published Mr. T. P. O'Connor's tirades against the Diggleites, with endorsements of its own, and urged Irish electors in London to throw in their lot with the men who, in politics, were in favor of Home Rule. Poor artless *Freeman*, it had counted without its host. The Catholics in London apparently had entered into a compact with the Diggleites. And so the *Freeman* brought down on itself the godly wrath of Bishop O'Dwyer, of Limerick, who denounced it for supporting, forsooth, "English Secularists." The *Freeman* was in a fix; like the Nationalist party in general, whose organ it is, it found itself between the devil of Irish priestcraft and the deep-sea of English Radicalism. It adopted the prudent, if not the heroic, course; after Bishop O'Dwyer's denunciation, it did not write any more on the School Board elections. This, it may be remarked, is the helpless plight to which Nationalist Ireland has been brought by the abandonment of Parnell. And the lesson is instructive. The Nationalists betrayed their leader, ostensibly to please two parties—the English Nonconformists and the Irish priests; they have ended, as was to have been expected, by pleasing neither. And the more thoughtful Nationalists are beginning to relearn the lesson which Parnell learnt and profited by long ago—that if Ireland is to win her rights and advance along the path of nationhood, the Irish priests must be subdued and "got under."

To return, however, to the School Board, let us see how far the Progressive party is Secular. There are 55 members of the School Board. Of these the Progressives have 26 members. And of these 26 no less than 8 are clerics. They are:—

Rev. J. Wilson	Greenwich.
Rev. S. Headlam	Hackney.
Rev. A. W. Jephson	East Lambeth.
Rev. W. Hamilton	West Lambeth.
Rev. W. C. Bowie	Southwark.
Rev. J. C. Carlile	Southwark.
Rev. E. Schnadhorst	Tower Hamlets.
Rev. A. W. Oxford	Westminster.

Verily well, indeed, might the Progressives indignantly repudiate the charge of Atheism or Secularism. In

addition to these 8, there are 6 Diggleite Reverends. So that on a Board of 55 members no less than 14 are priests, or 25 per cent. of the whole. Not much fear of "godless education" here.

In thus taking stock of the constitution of the Board, it is not out of place to glance at the "honor" of the religious parties. The Nonconformists, in this election, as has been pointed out, threw their "principles" to the winds—for the sake of party gain. The Nonconformists are commonly supposed to have a monopoly of "conscience"; yet it is interesting to note that the chief way in which this abnormal "conscience" manifests itself is in discovering flaws in the moral constitution of *other people*. Certainly it was to have been expected that the "conscience" which was capable of declaring, in the Parnell case, that the Irish were unfit for self-government if they kept Parnell, was also capable of stultifying itself provided that it could score a point in its own interest by so doing.

Thus the *Westminster Gazette*, the other day, in an article headed "Is it Peace?" remarked that the result of the elections showed there was no serious demand for secular education. That is to say, having carefully avoided dealing with the "demand" all through the elections, and done everything to hamper those who were working for the "demand," it now excuses itself and its party from dealing with the question on the ground that the electorate have decided. For, be it remembered, the *Westminster* says nothing as to the justice, or otherwise, of the claim for secular education; it bases its action solely on the fact that the majority have voted in a certain way. One can only say that such conduct is hardly what one would have expected from the *Westminster Gazette*, and the thing seems to reveal perfectly how thoroughly the Nonconformists were able to chain even the most critical and honest of the Liberal organs. So much for the scrupulousness of one side in this religious wrangle.

As for the other side, as little can be said. For it must be admitted that, as between the two parties, the Progressives did score. They had an undoubted majority of votes, yet many of the Diggleite organs claim a victory. And the *Tablet*, which out-Diggles Diggle in the fierceness of its "Moderation," cheers itself hoarse—figuratively—because "denominational education" is saved. In other words, the Diggleites are quite prepared to use, if they can, their "fluke" majority, knowing well that it does not represent a majority of votes, even as the Progressives are prepared to swallow their principles to force on their policy. And yet, with this example of sterling religious honesty, together with the past examples of religious meekness and religious goodwill, some people are foolish enough to think that religion might profitably be removed from the schools, and some even are so positively stupid as to suggest that the further removal of the religious controversy, which would follow on the removal of religions from the schools, would conduce to harmony and decorum on the Board.

FREDERICK RYAN.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.

Further Subscriptions Received.

Marquis of Queensberry, £20; S. Hartmann, £2 (per Mr. Foote); Mr. Collins, £1 (per Mr. Foote); E. P. (42), £1; N. Livestone, 10s.; J. Samson, 10s.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; Mrs. Hancock, 5s.; E. Self, 1s.; E. Calvert, 1s.

GEO. WARD, *Treasurer*, 91, Mildmay-park, N.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.

Subscriptions Received—Seventh List.

Thomas Holstead, 2s. 6d.; J. Payne, 2s. 6d.; J. M. Primrose, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Lightowler, 3s. 6d.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; T. E. Green, 10s. 6d.; R. Mellor, 1s.

The last found Syriac gospels are stirring up the critics a good deal, and Mr. G. A. Simcox, in the *Academy*, says the passage, "Joseph begat Jesus," confirms the theory that "those who drew up the genealogies incorporated in the First and Third Gospels still believed what almost everybody believed at Nazareth." Matthew and Luke, of course, ought to have given the genealogy of the Holy Ghost.

HEALTH AND REASON; OR, DISEASE AND FAITH.

AH, sceptic! though you now refuse
To credit pious Christian views,
You'll change and "shiver in your shoes,"
When lying on your death-bed.

You've health and strength, and life seems fair;
On things of earth you fix your care;
They'll seem but "trifles light as air,"
When lying on your death-bed.

Your mind, in health, to logic flies;
You ponder, sift, and syllogise;
But Reason's canons you'll despise,
When lying on your death-bed.

You doubt because your mind is bright,
And "laws of thought" are all your light;
But wait! these laws will take their flight,
When lying on your death-bed.

Your clear and healthy brain has raised
These wicked doubts; but, God be praised!
Your mind will be obscured and dazed,
When lying on your death-bed.

In *business*, trust your healthy head;
In *sacred matters*, trust, instead,
Your brain impaired and nearly dead,
When lying on your death-bed.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Obituary.

MR. JOHN NOWELL, an old Freethinker, and a member of the Liverpool Branch, died suddenly on November 24. Mr. Nowell, who was eighty-six years of age, had hurried to the station at Formby, and taken his ticket for Southport. He then sat down to await the train, and some time after it was discovered that he had expired.

It is with sincere regret that I hear of the death of an old and worthy worker in our movement, Mr. I. J. Hollovine, who died on Sunday last in his ninetieth year. He had taken part in all public work for the amelioration of his fellows for seventy years past, and was a member of the North-west London Branch to the last. His funeral will take place on Saturday, December 8, at Highgate Cemetery, at 3 p.m., and the writer, at Mr. Hollovine's last request, will read the service.—R. FÖRDER.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr. John Cronkshaw, of Blackburn, which occurred on Thursday, November 29. He was one of the Old Guard of the Secular movement. Ever so many years ago he stood by Charles Bradlaugh in his north-country battles. For some time he had taken no active part in our movement, but he was a ready subscriber, and a generous host when Freethought lecturers visited the town. He was universally respected, and will be greatly missed, especially by his old friend John Umpleby.

A VALIANT Freethinker and philosophical Radical has passed away in the person of Dr. John Chapman, M.R.C.S., who died last week at the age of seventy-three. Eminent in his profession, Dr. Chapman was yet more devoted to the propagation of his ideas. He published the works of Francis William Newman, Theodore Parker, Comte, Martineau, and others. It was at his house in Somerset-street that "George Eliot" met George Henry Lewes, and there gatherings of the contributors to the *Westminster Review* took place. The *Review* was edited and sustained by Dr. Chapman for many years, and to it he contributed many important articles on medical subjects, and such allied topics as Revivals, Witchcraft, Prostitution, etc. Dr. Chapman was of fine presence, and one of the handsomest men of his time. The *Daily Chronicle* says: "His noble head, his fine speaking eyes, his great height, and his unsurpassed dignity of bearing gave him a romantic air, which seemed to belong to the notable times in which he lived, and in which he bore no insignificant part. His latter days were less fortunate and less famous than his middle life, which was spent with great men and women, and was devoted to great ends." Dr. Chapman was buried at Highgate, beside "George Eliot," on Saturday, December 1. Dr. Drysdale, Mr. J. H. Levy, and other friends, were present.

It really is my strong conviction that a man has no more right to say he believes this world is haunted by swarms of evil spirits, without being able to produce satisfactory evidence of the fact, than he has a right to say, without adding adequate proof, that the circum-polar antarctic ice swarms with sea serpents.—T. H. Huxley, "*Science and Christian Tradition*," Preface, p. 13; 1894.

JONAH AND THE WHALE OUTDONE.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Freethinkers' Magazine* writes to it from Southern California that a new species of whale has been discovered in the Pacific, off Coronado Beach. It is said to be nearly a hundred feet long and well proportioned. A ministerial expedition has been sent out to determine the merits of the Jonah and whale story, as some say that it could not swallow a man. This pious committee has established the truth of the story beyond a peradventure, as everybody might know they would, for "it is so written."

It seems to be true that the gullet of the whale in ordinary use is not large enough to admit an unmasticated man. But there is located on each side what are known as prechioral glands. A pressure on these opens the throat after the manner of sliding doors, readily admitting one or more preachers, standing erect, even with their plug hats on. More than two seldom enter at a time. The capacious interior is illuminated with whale oil chandeliers, gotten up without regard to expense. Hammocks are strung longitudinally, attached to the spinal cord or to the adjacent ribs. In these, preachers can repose at will. Air and food are swallowed by the accommodating animal in quantities ample for itself and guests. Suspended in these hammocks, the occupants, when desiring food, reach down to the gastric department of the stomach proper beneath, and select from the large supply such dainty portions as their appetites crave. Being already peptonised, these are most agreeable to the digestion, and extremely fattening to preachers on vacation.

When they want to leave they touch a certain funny bone and press the prechioral gland, and the whale lands them on *terra firma* without even getting their feet wet.

But, as usual with ecclesiastical committees of different denominations, a serious difficulty has arisen. The Baptists insist that Jonah was immersed in the sea before he passed into the whale, and, had this not been the case, he would have been digested and passed out in the ordinary way, and been seen no more forever. The Presbyterians deny this, and claim that he was merely spattered a little as he passed in, and this accounts for his salvation.

So, the old controversy between immersion and sprinkling is revived, and the committee waxes hot over it. The whales, retaining the secret in their inner consciousness, enjoy the dispute, while disinterested parties incline to the spatteracious theory, as there is no record that Jonah complained of being strangled as he went in, or that he had to dry his clothes before the stove after he got out.

R. N.

OBSERVATIONS.

FAITH enables us to have more confidence in what we guess at than in what we know.

When you see a new bank started with a Sunday-school superintendent as cashier, look out for a run. The direction will be towards Canada.

When Christ said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," he was interrupted by Alkali Ike, who advised him to marry and let nature do the rest.

If the Bible speaks otherwise than highly of Hell, we must remember that it is written by the promoters of the New Jerusalem, and that the boomers of the rival place are trying to get the court-house removed to Hades.

The clergy know what they are about when they maintain that, although God is all-powerful, his will may be, and is, daily thwarted by the creature man; and he who thinks otherwise is betting on the wrong candidate. Were it once admitted that the omnipotence of the deity is sufficient for the carrying out of his purposes, the services of the ministers as his agents might be deemed superfluous. Then there would be the Devil to pay instead of the preachers, who are not so unwise as to saw off the branch of human idiocy by which they are supported.

The prophets of the old and the prophets of the new are all at sea when they enter the domain of behavior. (1) The servants of Christ hold that immortality is the foundation of morality; but upon this it ensues that, immortality not being of this world, there is no earthly basis for morality. (2) The enlightened ones instruct us to do right because it is right to do right; in saying which they are as lucid as the philosophers who explained that cold was cold because it was cold. They might avoid tautology without sacrifice of clearness by contenting themselves with saying we should do right because. Proceed, O Ananda, to follow the line of conduct which experience has proved to be conducive to human well-being, but fortify yourself for intelligent defence, whether accused of doing wrong or right.

—*Trullseecker.*

GEO. E. MACDONALD.

THE PEOPLE.

BRING me to life, necessitous and hard;
To manhood, pressed by squalor and disease,
At odds with fortune; let me be the bard
Of struggling beggars—I would sing to these;
For if such brave hearts held me in regard,
How should I love the drowsy halls of ease?

Oh! not for me the smooth, melodious strain,
The polished phrase, the sweet and fainting close,
Luxurious chimes, nor dreamy, idle pain,
Nor thought that from a super-culture flows.
Ah! well I know such song would be in vain;
The wild heart feels but as the wild heart knows.

Bring me to life; mock me no more with shams—
The empty show of things, sans blood and motion;
And let me shun the sin that lurks in calms,
Content in mine own goods; that poisoned potion
Leave to aspirants for the heavenly palms
To stimulate their selfish, sleek devotion!

Let me be free of fashion's paltry sway
To sing of hunger, nakedness, and storm;
Of toil that wastes the human hopes away,
Hollows the eyes, and bends the sunken form;
But he who batters on it day by day
Shall have my curse where he lies smug and warm.

The people!—life-blood of the nation's heart,
Whom the priest passes with averted eye,
And bids them, standing daintily apart,
To starve contentedly—to starve and die;
For heaven hath so allotted them their part,
And so upon the further side goes by.

The people!—who shall tell them of my love,
Or how my heart beats evermore with theirs,
Unless my feeble song its strength could prove?
But could my heart express the thought it bears,
My magic strain e'en Heaven's self should move
To grant them surer answer to their prayers.

DARIUS HYSTASPES.

INGERSOLL AND F. DOUGLAS.

THE Rev. J. H. Zillman, an Australian clergyman who has been to America, says in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*: "Colonel Ingersoll is another man who impressed me with a sense of his striking personality. I think that Ingersoll is, without exception, the wittiest and the brightest orator on this globe. He is a perfect humorist, and a good deal of what he says is in that spirit of exaggeration and caricature which is so familiar to the readers of his books on religious questions. It depends upon the mood in which you find Ingersoll, however, as to the kind of sentiments he utters. When I heard him he was in one of the moods in which he felt inclined to say severe things about members of the cloth. It was when Frederick Douglas was giving an account of his mission to Hayti, where he had been as an ambassador of the United States Government. Ingersoll entered fully into the question of slavery, and said, in effect, that if it had not been for the attitude of the Church, and especially the fact that the preachers of the southern States had quoted scripture to defend it as a domestic institution, declaring, indeed, that the Lord was on the side of slavery, it would have been abolished long before it was abolished. He said: 'I feel, whenever I stand before an audience of colored people, as though I ought to go down on my knees before them to ask their forgiveness for the many wrongs which my race has inflicted on them.' That evening I heard a story of Ingersoll that I don't think has ever found its way into print. I asked a gentleman why Ingersoll should have been selected to speak at the meeting, and he told me he was a great friend of Frederick Douglas, and that their friendship began in this way: Many years before Douglas and Ingersoll had been invited to speak at a great convention. At the close of the meeting the ministers of religion who had invited Douglas to speak cleared out of the building and made their way to their respective homes, leaving the colored man, who, by reason of his color, was debarred from obtaining accommodation in any of the hotels of the city, to pace up and down the footpath in front of the hall, not knowing what to do or where to go. Ingersoll, hearing that Douglas had been left in this predicament, went up to him, and, linking his arm in that of his eloquent opponent, took him off to his own house, and there extended the utmost kindness to him. To me that was a fine illustration of practical Christianity from an unbeliever."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

I have no sympathy with that class of mind which dogmatizes about the Unknown. If a man tells me there is a Flapdoodle, I never reply, There is no Flapdoodle. How do I know there may not be one? The universe is a big place. Still, I should like to know what a Flapdoodle is.—*Hudor Gerone.*

The highest honor we can pay to truth is to show our confidence in it, and our desire to have it sifted and analysed, by how rough a process soever, as being well assured that it is that alone that can abide all tests, and which, like the genuine gold, will come out all the purer from the fiercer fire.—*Rev. Robert Taylor, "Diegesis."*

The history of science is not a mere record of isolated discoveries; it is a narrative of the conflict of two contending powers, the expansive force of the human intellect on one side, and the compression arising from traditional faith and human interests on the other.—*J. W. Draper, "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science."*

There is no case in which we can say with certainty—even where it is reasonable to suppose that the prediction was uttered before the event—that the narrative has not been tampered with to suit the prediction, or the prediction modified to correspond with the event. De Wette and other eminent theologians consider that in many cases where the prophecy is unusually definite this has certainly been done.—*W. R. Greg, "The Creed of Christendom," vol. i., p. 80; 1874.*

From the orthodox or the semi-orthodox come all the querulous misgivings as to the natural foundations of duty; all the assertions that the reasonableness of selfish license and selfish tyranny begin to appear. Orthodoxy it is which in our time has reason to feel its own moral ground shaking under its feet, and, consequently, orthodoxy it is which, at any critical juncture, loses alike its faith in principle and its hope in patience, and falls into action that is intemperate, national, sectarian, inhumane.—*Louisa Bevington Guggenberger.*

The Bogey Fulcrum.

Archimedes said one day to Heiro that, could he find a spot outside the earth whereon to place a lever, he would move our planet. Well, what the great geometer of antiquity regarded as unrealisable, the Church has done. It has found the point called "God" outside the universe, placed thereon the lever *ignorance*, shook our earth with rightful perturbations, and raised itself on worldly gain.—*Georges Rens.*

The Jew God.

His service was at no time an easy one, and he was liable to outbursts of passion which rendered it peculiarly oppressive. Tolerant as he might be towards some descriptions of immorality, he had no mercy whatever for disloyalty towards himself. On one occasion he characterised himself by the name of "jealous," which was but too appropriate, and implied the possession of one of the least admirable of human weaknesses. Now, the Jews were unfortunately prone to lapses of this kind. Such was the severity with which these offences were treated that it is questionable whether it would not have been a far happier fate to be doomed in the Red Sea with the Egyptians than preserved with the children of Israel.—*Viscount Amberley, "An Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. ii., p. 308; 1876.*

Truth the Only Revelation.

The argument so often employed by theologians, that divine revelation is necessary for man, and that certain views contained in that revelation are required by our moral consciousness, is purely imaginary, and derived from the Revelation which it seeks to maintain. The only thing absolutely necessary for man is Truth; and to that, and that alone, must our moral consciousness adapt itself. Reason and experience forbid the expectation that we can acquire knowledge otherwise than through natural channels. We might as well expect to be supernaturally nourished as supernaturally informed. To complain that we do not know all that we desire to know is foolish and unreasonable. It is tantamount to complaining that the mind of man is not differently constructed. To attain the full altitude of the knowable, whatever that may be, should be our earnest aim, and more than this is not for humanity.—*"Supernatural Religion," vol. iii., p. 585.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister—"Is your father a religious man, my son?"
Small Boy—"Guess so; snarls every time we speak to 'im."

Wife—"Are you going to church so late?" Husband—"Yes. I thought I could have a quiet nap at home, but find I can't."

Elder Doxleigh—"Why do you insist upon the new pastor being a fat man?" Deacon Broadsides—"Because fat men are mostly short-winded." And an excellent reason too.

Dr. Litany, on the way home from Easter service, remarked: "Ah, Miss Van der Mode, Easter-tide is truly a joyous occasion." "Yes, one does feel so happy in new clothes!"

The other night, over a dram, two old cronies were discussing the merits of their pastors, when one remarked: "An' oor minister disna' read his sermons, aither." "If I am credibly informed, Peter," observed the other, "he reads ither fowk's."

"Have you anything to say before we eat you?" said the king of the Cannibal Isles to a Boston missionary. "I have," was the reply. "I want to talk to you awhile on the advantages of a vegetarian diet."

A young country compositor fell in love with a clergyman's daughter, who did not seem to reciprocate his affection. The next time he went to church he was rather taken aback when the minister announced his text: "My daughter is grievously tormented with a devil."

Teacher—"Now, Johnny, what do you remember about the return of the Prodigal Son?" Johnny—"Please, sir, after spending his fortune on purple and riotous linen he returned home a bloated bankrupt; and his father saw him a long way off and ran out to meet him, and he fell right on to his neck and killed the fat-headed calf."

A negro preacher, who secured the eloquent Bishop Simpson to preach to his colored congregation, thus grandiloquently introduced him: "Breddern, you are to hab de privilege dis mornin' of hearin' de great Bishop Simpson, from the Noff—a man whose reputation is all over dis land like a soundin' brass, or like a tinklin' cymbal."

THE CHURCH SOPRANO.

There was a young girl in the choir
Whose voice rose hoir and hoir,
Till it reached such a height
It was clear out of seight,
And they found it next day in the spoir.

By One Man, Adam, Came Death.

From Geology, Ethnology, Zoology, and Archæology we learn that the serpent crawled upon its belly ages before the first man trod upon the earth's surface; that long prior to man's appearance the earth, the air, and the waters teemed with organised beings, in number and variety as vast as at any period since; but that to all these creatures death was the general law and common lot; that when man *did* appear, at a period far anterior to the alleged era of Adam, he was liable by his very nature and organisation to accidents and decay, disease and death; that, in fact, during thousands of years which elapsed prior to the most ancient possible interpretation of Hebrew numerals, human beings have lived, suffered, and died under conditions not in any way distinguishable from those which regulate man's destiny still.—*"Ecce Veritas," p. 95.*

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- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
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- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The New London School Board—What Will It Do?" (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Christianity." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, a lecture.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 11.30, discussion; 7.30, Harry Snell, "Mazzini: Poet and Patriot," and recital. (Free.) Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic club. Thursday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 5.30, tea and soirée. Thursdays, at 7.30, free science classes.

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road): 8, W. Catmar, "The History of Vaccination."

HAMMERSMITH CLUB (1 The Grove, Broadway): Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Book of Revelation."

MILTON HALL (Hawley-crescent, 89 Kentish Town-road): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Christianity, a Modified Paganism." (Free.)

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Knowledge of Evil."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street): Monday, at 8.30, half-yearly general meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 5.30, tea; 7, concert.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Why I am a Secularist."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Mansions in the Sky."

COUNTRY.

ABERDEEN (Crooked-lane Hall): 7, discussion on Temperance, with songs and readings.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 3.30, W. M. Knox, "Francis Adams: Democrat and Poet."

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 3, J. Thatcher, "Religion and Morality."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, musical and dramatic entertainment.

DERBY (Athenaeum Room): Monday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Why Should we Live Moral Lives?—the Christian and Secular Answer."

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, class—D. Black, "Temperance: A Personal Question"; 6.30, J. Cowie, "The Socialism of Merrie England."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Skotchley, "Mazzini: his Life and Work."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 11, A. F. Winks, "20s. Worth of Taxation—Where it Comes from and Where it Goes to"; 6.30, "Britain's Debt to Bradlaugh." (Free.)

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "David Hume"; 7, John Roberts, "Is Man a Free Agent?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "Secularism: Its Relation to Anarchy, Socialism, and Individualism"; 3, "If Christ Came to Manchester—What Then?" 6.30, "Why Should we Live Moral Lives?—the Christian and Secular Answer."

NELSON (Page's Shop, 36 Leeds-road): 6, business meeting.

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 3, C. Cohen, "Christ as a Teacher"; 7, Carl Aarstad, "Capital Punishment a Disgrace to Civilisation." (Free.) 8.15, members' meeting—important.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimble-street): 6.45, Frank Pascoe, "Cremation." (Free.)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 2.30, class on "Origin of Species." Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, Sam Standing, "Slavery Intensified under Christianity—A Reply to the Bishop of Manchester"; 2.30, Sunday-school; 3.15, "Moses Identified with Bacchus"; 6.30, "The English we Speak" (illustrated).

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Amye Reade, "Was Jesus Incarnate on Earth?" 7, "Liberty of the Individual and Intellectual Development." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution"; 7, "Sixty Minutes with the Devil."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "Design and Natural Selection."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, R. Mitchell, "Miracles."

Lecturers' Engagements.

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STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Dec. 16, Chatham.

SAM STANDRING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Dec. 16, Hull.

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