

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—V.



ENOCH MOUNTING.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."
—Genesis v., 24.

BIBLICAL UNGALLANTRY.

NEXT to the brutality of God, and the barbarity of his chosen people, the most shocking circumstance in connexion with the Bible is the degradation and depravity of its women. Scarcely any of the gentler sex, whose shadows flit through the Biblical panorama, possess the virtues that should adorn them. They are either concubines, like Hagar, artful dodgers like Rebecca, harlots and traitors like Rahab, incestuous like Lot's daughters, or infamously immoral like Jezebel. Like Potipher's wife, they are more solicitous of entrapping the unwary virtue of man than of guarding pure and chaste their own. But their conduct is scarcely reprehensible if the profligacy of God is to be piously winked at. For Jehovah, like all the gods of old, was an unmitigated rake. In one case, thirty-two Midianitish maidens were delivered over to his unbridled lust. In another, he scurvily debauched the fair betrothed of a Jewish carpenter. From the gusto with which the Holy Ghost has diversified the dull narratives and insipid twaddling of the Bible with spicily-told indecencies, one may well imagine in how edifying a manner God and his pious saints must spend their time in the heavenly regions, and picture the unctuous debaucheries that while away the tedium of their eternal *Te Deums*. No decent woman, unless possessing the accommodating virtue of a Sarah, or a Jezebel, would care to spend eternity in a heaven presided over by a lecherous-minded God, and inhabited by pious rakes.

Strange it is, despite the infamy with which the Bible brands womankind, that the fair sex should be so fondly

devoted to the very emblem and instrument of their shame and dishonor.

Their attachment to Christianity is an edifying example of self-mortification, prompted, we presume, by Christ's sublimely absurd maxim: "Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you" (Luke vi., 28). That the ladies have set their affections on an unworthy God, and hallow an unholy book, the following facts, in addition to the foregoing, will abundantly prove:—1. In punishment of Eve's disobedience God inflicts upon her, and all her future daughters, the sorrow,—above all physical sorrows—of the pains of parturition. Retribution more fiendish for crime so insignificant could not be imagined. God, further, ordains man as the ruler, not the equal of woman, and thus sows the seeds of the most widespread of all tyrannies,—the tyranny of the home, besides laying the foundation of the social and legal inferiority which, in all Christian lands, man has adjudged to woman.

2. The Mosaic injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," has lent divine sanction to the infliction of cruelties most fiendish upon tens of thousands of unhappy women; nor has the virus of hate and persecution against suspected witches yet died out in this and other Christian lands. This alone should suffice to breed in woman's mind disgust of the Bible.

3. Most of God's friends and favorites were either great profligates or great poltroons. A few instances will suffice.

(1) The same Abraham who cast his concubine out of doors, permits, out of sheer cowardice, two kings to take away his wife, who, though *very old* at the time, was very pretty. Instead of reprehending Abraham for his loose conceptions of conjugal duty and responsibility, the Jew God actually plagues the unfortunate kings whom Sarah's lovely face and Abraham's lying tongue had entrapped. (2) Isaac behaved in just the same manner with regard to *his* wife. (3) Over the gallantries of drunken Lot and his wanton daughters we draw the veil of silence. Perhaps after all the tale is told for a wise purpose. God alone knows. It may possibly signify, like the suggestive Song of Solomon, "the mutual love of Christ and his Church." (4) Samson, one of the pious ruffians "of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. xi., 38) was equally devoted to Cupid as to Mars. (5) The amatory prowess of king David, the man after God's own heart, is notorious. It would require the poetic fervor of an Ovid to adequately recount the famous exploit which gained for him the hand of Micah, the daughter of king Saul. For our part, we will simply relate the pathetic story in the plain prose of holy writ. The tale runs that Saul, whose lofty mind abhorred "filthy lucre," desired no dowry for the young damsel (1 Sam. xviii., 25), but simply "an hundred foreskins of the Philistines." Whereupon David, who was mighty both in love and war, "arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Micah his daughter to wife" (v. 27). Will some German princelet take the hint, and bid in like manner for the hand of Princess Beatrice?

Then, again, the infamous treachery of David in respect to Uriah, and his adultery with Bathsheba, was punished by the righteous judge of heaven—not by the death of the base culprit, but by the death of the child of his sin. But it was at the dread hour of death that the piety of king David reasserted itself. For is it not written that he surrendered his soul to God, and his body to the embraces of a fair damsel, and thus died "safe in the arms of Jesus" and Venus (1 Kings i.) (6) After his death Solomon, his son, "reigned in his stead," and fairly eclipsed his father's fame in things amatory. He was at once the



wisest and most married man of his time—a sort of Jewish Charles II. or George IV. “He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines” (1 Kings xi., 3), a total that might have terrified Brigham Young himself. No wonder we read that this goodly array “turned away his heart.” The concentration of 1,000 eyes on the sapient king might well have melted him away, heart and soul, and all. The marvel is that with so many ladies to please he could find time to write his gushing and occasionally disgusting Song. A greater marvel is that the Christian Church—that great pillar of purity—should howl down “The Fruits of Philosophy,” and in the same breath, laud as divine the prurient “Song of Solomon,” which surely no dainty curate with any decency, would care to read and expound to a bevy of virgins. (7) The god, who fulminated from Sinai the seventh commandment, specially charged Hosea on two occasions to commit the act which that commandment prohibits. But hypocrisy of this sort is not a whit too bad to expect from a god who would accept from the murdering Moses thirty-two pure damsels, and authorise, by the mouth of “the meekest of men,” the distribution of nearly 32,000 innocent girls amongst 12,000 warriors for the basest of uses.

4. Few examples of Monogamy occur in the Bible. Polygamy, the symbol of woman's degradation in the East, was the rule amongst the chosen people. The only command to have one wife is made to the bishops (1 Tim. iii., 2). It is noteworthy that Jacob purchased two of his many wives after seven years hard labor and astute cheating for each. How David obtained one of his wives we have already related. Both cases show that women were regarded then, as in some quarters they are now, as goods and chattels to be sold to the highest bidder.

5. The Bible regards woman as the subject, and, therefore, the inferior of man. “He shall rule over thee,” says God to poor Eve; and man has willingly obeyed the divine command. “Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands,” exclaims cursing Peter (1 Peter iii., 1); which likewise is the sentiment of Paul (1 Cor. xiii., 34). Paul even advances a step further. He says: “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection; for I suffer not a woman to teach” (1 Tim. ii., 11—12). “If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. “The weaker vessel” is thus deprived of social equality with man, and, stripped of knowledge, her mind is left bare and ignorant to the glory of God and the aggrandisement of her husband.

6. The New Testament degrades the nature of marriage, and thus vilifies the character both of man and woman. Paul simply permits it as a lesser evil than adultery (1 Cor. vii., 9). “He would that all men were as himself,” viz., crusty old bachelors (verse 7). The whole tenor of this chapter is deprecatory of marriage. Single blessedness, he considers a better state than marriage (verse 38) because “he that is married careth for the things that are of the world how he may please his wife” (verse 32). In this connexion it is interesting to collate the infamous *dictum* of Christ in Matt. xix. In verse to the question, “is it good to marry,” is fairly broached by his disciples. To that question Christ (who, like Paul, was a bachelor) makes us reply beyond giving permission to an act of mutilation whereby the population question might have been settled, and mankind with it, in the course of a few years. Even as the unmarried Paul says, “I would that all men were as myself,” so Christ, in reference to the unnatural act which, after astutely commending, he permits, says “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” It is well for humanity that only the folly of a few noodle-headed fanatics has been able to muster sufficient courage and Christianity to obey such unnatural advice.

The above facts, which by no means exhaust the case against the Bible, on this question will show that “the Holy book” insults the dignity of woman's character, degrades her practically to a condition of serfdom, and offers an immoral view of the relations that ought to exist between man and his helpmate.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

THE GOD CHRISTIANS SWEAR BY.—IV.

(Continued from p. 140.)

JEHOVAH never had the faintest idea of justice until the Jews had sufficiently progressed to give him lessons in that virtue; and he heartily detested every sign of mental freedom. He was so “jealous” that he visited the sins of the

fathers upon the children of those who neglected him for three or four generations. According to the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, he commanded his “holy people” to stone to death any person who broached new ideas on the subject of religion, even though the heretic were bound to them by the dearest ties of friendship or blood. The twenty-eighth chapter of the same book contains a list of the curses he would inflict on them if they “went after other gods.” It is one of the most terrible denunciations in all literature, and any god ought to be ashamed of himself for using such frightful threats. A man who indulged in such language in the streets would be “run in” as a public nuisance, and sent to an asylum or a jail.

Let it not be said that the Lord has improved in this respect. There is just as vicious language to be found in the New Testament. Saint Paul told the new elect to “hold no fellowship with unbelievers;” Saint John consigns all sceptics to the “lake which burneth with brimstone and fire;” and the statement of Jesus, in the last chapter of Mark, that those who believed and were baptised should be saved, while those who believed not should be damned, shows that in the eyes of God heresy is the one sin which can never be forgiven. It is worthy of notice, too, that the deity of the New Testament is really more cruel to sceptics than the deity of the Old Testament. God the Father had them killed in this world, and there was an end to their punishment; but God the Son prolongs their misery after death, and burns them for ever and ever in hell.

In return for the undivided worship of his chosen people, God promised, and in some cases gave them, many advantages at the expense of their neighbors. He told them to “borrow” of the Egyptians without the remotest intention of ever paying them back. He forbade them to practise usury with each other, but permitted them to practise it to any extent with the “stranger,” so that no alien should be able to say to them “I was a stranger and ye took me not in.” He told them that they should lend unto many nations, but never borrow, and that he would “make them the head, and not the tail.” He depopulated whole districts for them to inhabit, and carried out the process in the most hellish manner, sparing age nor sex. And all this was done solely through his good pleasure, and not because the Jews were any better than the populations who were exterminated; for we are expressly told that they did “more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel.” Moral obligations do not concern him. He claims the potter's right over the clay, and smashes one vessel and preserves another, without any respect to their merits. He “hath made all things for himself; yea even the wicked for the day of evil.” The saint who goes to heaven and the sinner who goes to hell are both “elected” by his grace; and the latter has no more right to complain than the dying pauper who, when he resented the statement that he was going to hell, was told that he ought to be thankful there was a hell to go to.

God's savagery is a fruitful theme. Look at the story of the Fall. He places a damnation-trap in Paradise and curses the first couple for falling into it. How could he expect them to refrain from the one thing forbidden? The tabooed fruit hung temptingly before their eyes every minute. Is it any wonder they yielded? The least inquisitive woman in the universe would had her teeth in one of those apples in less than ten minutes. But God was so angered by their offence that he not only cursed them, but all their posterity, and even the ground under their feet. He must have been an awful sight in his passion, and it is surprising that he did not go off in a fit of apoplexy.

God curses the unborn for a paltry “sin” committed long before they were thought of! What would be thought of a legislator who proposed that the relatives of all murderers should be hung, and the relatives of all thieves imprisoned? We should judge him to be bad or mad. Yet this is what God did, does, and will do; God who should be infinitely wiser than the wisest man and infinitely better than the best.

Look at the story of the Flood. God drowned all the people in the world, except eight, for being what he made them; and in his wrath he spared not the lower animals who had no share in man's transgression. He looked down on the mountains filled with his fugitive children. He saw them climb the rocky heights to escape from the devouring waves. He heard their cries of agony as they were overtaken. He beheld the mother and babe drop together in

the raging flood. He witnessed the death-struggle of the last strong man who scaled the highest peak and was washed off into the universal grave. And when the waters subsided, he saw the earth a wide charnel-house, and the herbless fields covered with the bones of a slaughtered world.

If it be a virtue to emulate God, the greatest villains in history deserve the most reverence, and instead of hanging murderers we should maintain them in luxury during their lives, and erect monuments to their memory when they are dead.

Look at the Jewish wars. Read the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy, and ask whether any devil could have given viler advice. Let God's words stand in all their hideous nakedness:—

"When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth."

What awful maxims of desolation, straight from the heart of cruelty and lust! The loving mother holds aloft her babe, shrieking for mercy, and the flashing sword of Jehovah's bandits cleaves them dead together. The men fight, and can die exclaiming that all is lost save honor. But the flying maidens cannot even say that. They are handed over by God's command as victims to lust. One-half go to the soldiers and the other to the congregation, after a few have been reserved for Jehovah himself. Thirty-two thousand Midianitish virgins were treated in this way, of whom "the Lord's tribute was thirty and two."

O English maidens, with heaven's own azure in your sweet eyes, and hearts as soft as its fleecy clouds, look out from the shelter of your homes on this ghastly scene! Imagine the brave men who have perished in defending hearth and home your own fathers and brothers; imagine the bloody corpses slain amid cries for mercy those of your mothers and your baby brothers and sisters, whose prattling presence was as dancing sunshine in the house; imagine yourselves those sweet girls fleeing from worse than death; and then think whether this Bible God deserves your worship and your love.

We need not wonder, after reading these maxims of inspired war, why David showed his repentance for the adultery with Bathsheba by fighting the Ammonites, and putting his prisoners "under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron," and making them "pass through the brick-kiln;" or why God took the kingdom from Saul for sparing Agag after utterly destroying his subjects.

Look at God's favorites. We judge men by the company they keep, and the same rule should apply to gods.

Abraham—the father of the faithful—who was selected from all the world's inhabitants to be the founder of God's chosen nation, did only one good deed in his whole life. He rescued his nephew Lot from captivity, and we will give him the credit of it, although his defeat of five mighty kings with a mere handful of servants is an achievement which can hardly be credited without a great deal of faith. Abraham was an incorrigible liar. He twice passed his wife off as his sister, not to save her honor, but to save his own skin; and on each occasion God punished not the liar, but the persons who were simple enough to believe him. He turned his own son and the lad's mother out into the wide world to live or die, with no sustenance except a little dry bread and cold water. He consented to offer up another son as a burnt offering to God. True, he was arrested at the critical moment. But in estimating character, intention is everything. These two occasions show that he was a murderer at heart. Abraham was therefore a liar, a coward, and a murderer.

Isaac was a true chip of the old block. He also was a constitutional liar; like his father he passed his wife off as his sister, and for the same paltry reason. Besides this he had only one peculiarity. He was very fond of venison, and liked it so well that, objecting to die on an

empty stomach, he laid in a good supply before giving up the ghost.

Jacob was one of the meanest blackguards that ever lived. He is the father of the great race of Jeremy Diddlers. He diddled everybody he met—including God himself—with the single exception of his uncle Laban, who diddled *him*. He took advantage of his brother's hunger to bargain away his birthright. He cozened his blind father, and cheated his brother out of the old man's blessing. He ran away like a coward to avoid Esau's vengeance. He wrestled with an angel all night for his blessing, and probably wouldn't have let him go then if he wore clothes and had any small change in his pockets. He bargained with God for unlimited capital, without any security, on condition of paying ten per cent. of the profits. He married both his uncle's daughters, got possession of all his sheep and cattle worth having, and finally left the old man without even a god to worship. On his way home he sent forward a large present to mollify Esau, who was coming out to meet him. But this noble fellow put it by, said he had enough, fell on his brother's neck, wept, and forgave him all. Yet God says, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

David, the man "after God's own heart," lied, deceived, robbed, murdered, committed adultery, and died with counsels of blood on his lips. This savage warrior was "after God's own heart." What a remarkably black heart it must be!

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

EARLY OPPONENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

No. II.—CELSUS (continued).

ORIGEN, in his labored defence of Christianity against Celsus, gives us sufficient evidence of the light in which the new religion was regarded by Pagan philosophers. Their attitude might fitly be compared to the attitude of a modern man of the world towards such fanatics as the Peculiar People or the Salvation Army. They were mainly contemptible, but in addition they were odious and dangerous. At the time when Celsus wrote, towards the end of the second century, the Christians were already numerous enough, if not to menace the institutions of the great Roman Empire, at least to become a constant source of irritation; and Celsus evidently wrote his "True Discourse" from the conviction that Christianity was a danger to culture and civilisation. When we remember the dark ages which followed the triumph of the Church, we may think Celsus was not far out in his reckoning.

His first objections against the Christians was their meeting in private in opposition to the law. He disclaimed persecution, and says: "I would, not persuade anyone to renounce his religion, or even to appear to renounce it on account of the dangers to which it may expose him." But he would have none embrace opinions save under the conduct of impartial reason. "Now the Christians," says he, "neither examine nor care to examine what they believe. They preach salvation by faith, and declare that the wisdom of the world is dangerous, and foolishness a good thing." They gain only the scum of society and had their rise among a most ignorant and superstitious people, the Jews, who are also an exclusive and disaffected, as well as an unscientific people. Celsus then proceeds, in the character of a Jew, to give the Jewish version of the origin of Christianity. He alleges that Mary was divorced by her husband, a carpenter, for committing adultery with one Panthera, a soldier, to whom she bore Jesus.

It is possible that this tale, which is repeated in the Jewish *Toldoth Jeschu* may have been invented by the malice of early Jewish opponents of Christianity; but we can little wonder at a Pagan preferring the story of Panthera's paternity to that of the Holy Ghost. We fancy Celsus would have retained his opinion could he have read the answers which Origen makes to him on this point. The Christian Father simply contends that God would never permit a great teacher to be a bastard; and, moreover, "some animals, for instance, the Vultures, bring forth their young without any previous copulation with the males." Readers of Joseph Cook will remember how he improves on this by reference to Abiogenesis. Celsus's Jew ridicules this birth from a virgin, and compares it with the fables of the Greek mythology. He alleges that the story of the worship of the Magi, and the order by Herod to slay the children,

were inventions without a shadow of historical foundation. Jesus was brought up in obscurity, worked as a carpenter, and went early to Egypt, where he learnt those arts of working cures, for which he became afterwards so famous. It is worthy of remark that Origen ventures the assertion that Jesus himself is nowhere called a carpenter in any of the gospels received in the Church; upon which the judicious Lardner observes: "Whence it came to pass that Origen said this is not certain, whether it be a slip of memory, or whether the copies used by him had carpenter's son, for in all the Greek MS. in general, Jesus is called a carpenter in Mark vi., 3, as in our version." (Credibility of the Gospel History, chap. xviii., div. 3, sec. 22). The "pretended Jew," as Origen calls him, proceeds to challenge the account of the baptism by John, and the descent of the dove. He alleges that Jesus gathered ten or eleven low publicans and fishermen, and with these skulked about the country from place to place, till at length, being betrayed and denied by his own followers, he was put to death for his offences. He ridicules the story of the resurrection and notices the discrepancies of the accounts. Why did not Jesus appear after his resurrection to his judge and the whole body of the people who condemned him, instead of only to a half-mad woman and a few others of the cabal? The Jews expected a different Messiah from this, and all those prophecies which Christians pretend apply to Jesus, might as readily refer to any other. The "pretended Jew" then finally asks, "Did this pretender come down from Heaven on purpose that we Jews might reject him?" He concludes from his examination of the Christian narrative that "Jesus was a man like one of us, as we might expect both from reason and experience."

J. M. W.

(To be concluded.)

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Bishop of Derry threw himself into the recent election on the side of Sir Samuel Wilson, the Tory candidate. He declared that every vote given for the Liberal candidate was practically a vote for Mr. Bradlaugh. The electors answered him by returning the Solicitor-General to support Mr. Gladstone.

M. PRESSENSE, the French Protestant, writing to the *Christian World*, says that:—"By appointing such a man (M. Paul Bert, the Atheist) as Minister of Public Worship, Gambetta clearly shows how he intends to apply the Concordat. His idea is to use it as a means of oppressing the Church, and of curtailing, as far as possible, its opportunities of development."

IN the *Congregationalist* Mr. Rogers writes: "We must, once for all, give up the idea that the masses will be attracted in any large bodies to our chapels. They are not unwilling to give for the support of institutions they have learned to love, but at present they do not love Christian ministers and churches."

MR. ROGERS proposes that separate "halls" should be built for the working classes, and a religious journal thinks this a good idea. May we suggest a better? Let there be three kinds of sacred buildings—one for the upper classes, one for the middle, and one for the lower. In the first the sermons should be all about heaven, in the second a mixture of heaven and hell, and in the third all hell hot without sugar.

WE rejoice to see the *Christian World* making a stand against the vagaries of Salvatium. This new religious craze will flood our asylums if something is not done to check it.

THE *Church Times* complains of "the singular bias which statesmen have lately shown for every form of unbelief." We are very pleased to publish such a statement from so reluctant a witness.

THE BRADLAUGH-McCANN DEBATE.

THE first encounter took place on Wednesday in last week at the Hall of Science. There was a densely-crowded audience, and many people were only preserved from suffocation by the admirable way in which the hall was ventilated. Mr. Bradlaugh

was accompanied to the platform by Mrs. Besant, Dr. Aveling, and Mr. Foote; and among the Rev. Dr. McCann's retinue of friends were the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, Mr. Turpin, and Mr. Barnard. The last-named gentleman presided. Beyond introducing the disputants his duties were *nil*, as the people were singularly decorous and good-humored.

Dr. McCann had to maintain that "Secularism is Unphilosophical, Immoral, and Anti-Social." He spent the whole of his time in trying to prove the first charge. His opening speech was very rapidly read, and in a somewhat dolorous tone. Towards the end he spoke so fast that his words, especially the long ones, got mixed. It reminded one of water poured from a bottle. Dr. McCann is extremely fond of the *u* vowel. He pronounces unfairly as unfurly, do it as do ut, and so on, either through haste or some defect of the vocal organs. His witticisms were occasionally good, but his pulpit delivery spoiled them. Mostly they were bad. Once, after a very rickety illustration as to Free Will, he exclaimed, "But it is useless to argue this point any further." Whereupon a gentleman in the crowd very emphatically cried "hear, hear," and there was a general roar of laughter, not *wid* Dr. McCann, but *at* him. His joke about the drunken man, who couldn't *help* getting drunk, and so forth, in a well-known strain, fell exceedingly flat. It was couched, too, in anything but refined language, and made one wonder why the reverend gentleman was so shocked by the coarseness of the *Freethinker*. Another joke was a still worse failure. Dr. McCann contended that, the present being absolutely determined by the past, we cannot be agents at all, our actions being really done for us by our ancestors; and he added "Surely it cannot be pleasant even for Mr. Bradlaugh to reflect that he never *does* but is always *done*." The equivoque in these words, of course, told in Mr. Bradlaugh's favor, the audience immensely enjoying the idea of his being *done* by his enemies and never doing *them*.

After his first speech Dr. McCann seemed played out. He introduced no fresh argument, nor even a fresh illustration, and he was so eager to finish his remarks that he never occupied his full time. He left nearly five minutes of his second quarter of an hour unused.

The reverend gentleman's contention was that Secularism is Atheistic and Necessitarian. Mr. Bradlaugh said he thought so too, and asked, "What then?" His opponent did not indicate any particularly dreadful result of these doctrines. Perhaps he reserves that task for the next night's debate.

Mr. Bradlaugh pointed out that Dr. McCann had not referred to a single principle of the National Secular Society, although he had written to inform him that those principles were what he should defend. This was a judicious move, and it shows how much better Mr. Bradlaugh appreciates the responsibilities of leadership than he did many years ago. Now he wisely says, "My view of what Secularism ultimately implies is only my view, and others must not be made responsible for it; I shall defend in debate the general consensus of the party's opinions, which is formulated in the programme of the Society over which I am not a legislative Pope but an executive President." Secularists are greatly indebted to Mr. Bradlaugh for putting the case so clearly.

Dr. McCann's statement that Secularism is Necessitarian was cordially admitted, "but," said Mr. Bradlaugh, "what he means by Necessitarianism, I don't: with that slight difference we quite agree." And then he proceeded to show that fatalism follows from the doctrine of an omnipotent deity, but not from Necessitarianism, which does not say that conditions cannot be altered, but only that the present effects will result until they are altered.

A good deal of Dr. McCann's two minor speeches was devoted to the "veracity of consciousness." On this subject he was utterly confused. He appeared to have read a little of Sir William Hamilton, and to have made a hodge-podge of it. He confounded consciousness, perception, and knowledge together, and treated them as interchangeable terms. Mr. Bradlaugh's exposure was effective, but it would have been more so if he had dragged his opponent down to a practical illustration of his meaning. Dr. McCann's real blunder was well anticipated by Spinoza who said, in his grand "Ethics," "man knows that he wills, but not why he wills." There is the kernel of the question. *Why* does man will this way or that? The answer cannot be gained by interrogating "consciousness." It can only be obtained, like every other explanation of natural facts, by examination and inference. Once brought to this point, the whole question is speedily settled.

One remark of Dr. McCann's is worth especial notice. He stated that he was as favorable to civil and religious liberty as Mr. Bradlaugh was, and would work "heart and hand" with him to promote it. Rather a queer statement for a priest of a privileged State Church! It also suggested the question of how many words the reverend gentleman has spoken on behalf of religious liberty during Mr. Bradlaugh's recent trouble? Has he once opened his lips on the subject?

On the whole, the debate was disappointing. We thought Dr. McCann a more formidable antagonist. Mr. Bradlaugh was not at his best. A stronger and keener opponent would have drawn him out, and made the debate more interesting as well as more instructive. But there is still time for Dr. McCann to show his prowess, and perhaps we shall see some good sport after all.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Mr. FOOTE will deliver a Course of Four Lectures, on "Some Modern British Poets," in the Hall of Science, London, during the month of January, 1882. Thursday, 5th, "Robert Burns;" Thursday, 12th, "Wordsworth and Coleridge;" Thursday, 19th, "Shelley;" Thursday, 26th, "Byron." For details of the lectures see Syllabus. Tickets can be obtained of Mr. Foote; of Mr. Anderson, at the Hall of Science; or of Mr. Ramsey, 28, Stonecutter Street. Front Seats, 1s.; Body of the Hall, 6d.; Gallery and Sides, 3d. Mr. Foote will be glad to meet as many of his friends as can make it convenient to attend.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

December 20th, Walworth.

January 1st, Kilburn; 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th, and 29th Hall of Science, London; 8th, Bradford; 15th, Rochdale; 22nd, Halifax.

February 12th, Grimsby; 19th, Manchester; 26th, Liverpool.

March 5th, Claremont Hall, London; 12th, Edinburgh; 19th, Glasgow.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ALL business communications to be addressed to Mr. W. J. RAMSEY, 28, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

A YOUNG ATHEIST.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

MR. JOSEPH SYMES will commence next week a Series of Sermons on "The Great and Precious Promises of the New Testament."

C. R. B. particularly desires a copy of our first number to complete his set. Have any of our readers an extra copy to dispose of?

J. PARKS.—Thanks for your good wishes. Our circulation increases every week. We have no doubt that the Christmas Number will fulfil your expectations.

M. H. BUNTON.—The idea is a good one and we will try to carry it out. If our readers will take the pains to send us all cases of persecution that come under their notice, we will publish them once a month under the heading of "Christian Persecution."

A. FRAME.—Received with thanks.

L. METCALF.—Our promised article on "Was Carlyle a Christian?" cannot possibly appear until the new year.

S. WALKER.—See our sketch of the Bradlaugh-McCann Debate.

R. KILLICK.—There is no authentic portrait or bust of Christ. The Jews never chiselled a statue nor painted a picture. They couldn't do either the one or the other, and they pretended that God forbade them to try. Some day we shall dispatch a special artist to heaven for the purpose of obliging you and other curious readers. He'll do it or die in the attempt.

LOUIS BERG.—We admit that the modern Jews are quite as good as their Christian neighbors, and we should be the last to insult them because of their blood or their creed. But we cannot extend our consideration so far as to refrain from holding and expressing opinions about their ancestors of three thousand years ago. While their Scriptures remain a part of the Christian Bible we must attack their superstitions, their primitive barbarism, and the character of their despotic God. Surely criticism of ancient peoples and their ideas is not to be silenced out of mere regard to the feelings of their descendants.

BOTH SIDES.—Thanks for the cuttings. You will see we have used them.

G. MILLS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

G. H. HOBSON.—The book was sold before your letter came. Hare's book is not in stock.

T. W. H.—It is always best to order through a newsagent. Our Christmas Number is quite separate from the ordinary weekly number.

EDITORIAL.

OUR *Christmas Number* is now ready. We have spared neither pains nor expense to make it worth reading and keeping. The illustrations alone will repay purchasers for their outlay.

We expect a very large sale and have provided for it. Orders have already been received from every part of the civilised world, and from some parts of the uncivilised world too. From China to Peru, and from Patagonia to the land of the Esquimaux, our *Christmas Number* will travel, with its message of jollity and good-will. And if laughter, as the doctors admit, is good for digestion, and digestion is the basis of health, we may boast of having helped to increase the well-being of mankind in no slight degree. No doubt a considerable diminution of the death-rate will be perceptible during the next twelve months; and by the time our present *Christmas Number* has expended its beneficent force, we shall have a better one ready to continue its good

work. Thus, year after year, we shall extend the longevity of the human race, until at last we shall doubtless succeed in making men truly immortal.

Many of our readers have ordered several copies for distribution among their friends, and we hope their generous example will be extensively imitated.

No pauper has yet applied for a free copy, but the parsons are waking up. Among other applicants is the Rev. George Bishop. He also would like a copy of "Bible Romances" on the same terms, but we must draw the line at the *Christmas Number*. If we supply all the Clergy List with "Bible Romances" "free gratis for nothing" we shall soon be bankrupt and beggared, and our respect for the cloth doesn't go to that length. But so far as our Christmas Exhibition goes, we still say to all Parsons and Paupers, "Walk up, walk up, and see the show for nothing."

ACID DROPS.

MR. JAMES THOMSON, the author of "The City of Dreadful Night," has a namesake who combines the occupation of a burglar with that of a poet. Besides expressing his penitence (after being caught) to the ladies whose house he tried to rob, as well as to others who take a great interest in criminals, he has scrawled the following pious lines on the wall of the Ecclesfield lock-up:—

"My tempter on the downward road, farewell!
Thy snares have brought me to a prison cell;
Through Jesus' blood this lonely cell shall be
The entrance gate of heaven's high road to me.
May God, in his abounding love, prepare
A smoother road for thee to meet me there."

The imagery is rather confused; it implies that there are at least two roads to heaven, the high road and a smoother one. The only smooth road the true Christian knows is downhill and leads straight to—*Hades* (new version).

THE *Christian Herald* has a portrait and biography of the Rev. H. Grattan Guinness, whom some of our East London readers will remember as an opponent of Mr. Foote one Sunday afternoon last summer in Victoria Park. He is a cousin of Sir Arthur Guinness the Dublin brewer. There is a fitness in this. One member of the family goes in for Beer and another for the Bible. Mr. Guinness equips young men for missionary work, but if none of these proves himself abler than his master, they must be a very poor lot. We wonder whether the vacuous young man, with the gilt letters on his coat, was one of Mr. Guinness's pupils?

MR. GUINNESS "teaches his students to understand the Bible as a whole." No doubt "Bible Romances" is one of the commentaries in use.

MR. GUINNESS's work lies among "beggars, tramps, outcasts, Infidels, Romanists, and Jews." Note the fine Christian charity in this classification. We come after the "outcasts," and the poor Romanists and Jews come after us. Whatever will become of them? We shudder to think of their fate. Their place in hell will be two circles below ours. How near is that to the bottomless bottom?

MOODY says "I believe in Noah's Ark and the Flood just as much as I do in the Cross and in Jesus Christ." And this antiquated rubbish, which every scholar and man of science laughs at, is dispensed to the people every Sunday by a couple of Yankee revivalists who are patronised by three-fourths of the parsons and preachers in England. We believe in Noah's Ark too—in the good shop in Holborn where they sell jolly toys for jolly little boys.

THE enterprising Yankee also says that "it is a fearful thing when God leaves a man alone." But that is not what the farmer thought, who said "O, Lord, I've digged and drained and manured, and looked well to everything on the farm, and if you only keep out of it, I shall have the most splendid crop this year I ever had."

MR. SPURGEON has been preaching on Samson, and celebrating that wonderful jawbone. May we remind Mr. Spurgeon that the jawbone of an ass has often, in the history of the Christian religion, slain more than a thousand

men? Peter, the hermit, who preached the first Crusade, had a jawbone which slew myriads. The asinine jawbones are active even now, but they cannot kill.

A correspondent sends us an amusing story. He says that at a Wesleyan Chapel in South Shields, the Minister recently asked all who were saved to stand up. All rose but one young man. A friend trod on his toes and whispered, "Stand up, d— ye, the folks are all looking at ye."

Two Manchester parsons who say they are "also almost paupers," write for free copies of our Christmas Number. They add that our "weekly number has given them so much amusement and instruction (?)." This query after a word, as much as to say "over the left," is a very stale piece of wit. We are afraid that few parsons need the instruction we give. Most of them are quite aware of the rubbish there is in the Bible, and the absurdity of Christian dogmas. We cannot instruct these, but we may shame them. As these two parsons make such a plain confession of poverty they may be honest men, and lest we should do them an injury we refrain from publishing their names.

THE *Rock* says that Samuel Morley is to be congratulated. So is the weathercock.

THE Church of England majority of the Norwich School Board played a neat little game to keep "the Atheist" out—and failed. They included Dr. Duckett, a Roman Catholic, on their list, which they opposed to that of "the Dissenters and Atheistic parties." The Atheist was returned by means of the cumulative vote, and so was the Catholic; and by way of thanking his Church of England patrons Dr. Duckett proposes a Dissenter as Chairman of the Board, which is carried, and gets himself elected vice-chairman. We suppose the well-known "Atheist" member will continue his old policy of playing the rival religionists against each other in order to secularise the public education of the city.

UNDER the patronage of the Bishop of Exeter there has just been established in that city a "Society for the promotion of good manners." No doubt it is much needed. Every cathedral city requires such a society if we may judge by the language employed against Mr. Bradlaugh.

EXTREMES meet. The *Rock* is actually delighted at Gambetta's appointment of an Atheist as Minister of Public Worship. It hates Atheists much but Catholics more.

JULES SIMON wants to outrival Gambetta, and as a first step to success he has taken the political editorship of the *Gaulois*, a paper which, like the *Figaro*, lives on high-life scandal and spicy stories. It is astonishing how these Conservative organs wade in the gutter. Take up the *République Française* and you will find it lively enough, but always decent and instructive. In Paris, if you want to read anything *risqué* or even worse, you have simply to buy a newspaper which stands up for the Church.

"PLEASE don't blame God" is the title of an article in the *Baptist*. The Almighty must be in sad straits if he needs a pious journal to whine for him in this way.

GUITEAU still asserts that God told him to shoot President Garfield. Why don't they send him to glory and let him settle the inspiration question with the Lord? When they hang him they might pin on his breast, "With the compliments of the United States to the principal in this business."

THE Nottingham Town Council has this year rejected the resolution in favor of opening the Castle Museum on Sundays by thirty-eight votes to eight. We regret this but do not wonder at it. It is something, as the world goes, to find eight sensible men in forty-six. The Nottingham lambs will, by-and-by, get more goats among them.

AN Essex parson has just fixed the following nice scale of charges for his parish churchyard:—

1. Ordinary fee for a parishioner's grave ...	0	10	6
2. Fee for a non-resident, whether belonging to the parish or not	3	18	0
3. Brick grave for a parishioner	6	6	0
4. Brick grave for a non-parishioner	12	12	0

5. For permission to erect a common wood rail, and two posts, over grave of a parishioner	1	11	6
6. For permission to erect a common wood rail, and two posts, over grave of a non-parishioner	3	3	0
7. Head and foot stone—parishioner's	5	5	0
8. Head and foot stone—non-parishioner's...	10	10	0

We suggest that this parson is animated by a sincere love for his parishioners. He has fixed these burial charges so high in order to frighten them from dying, and thus to lengthen their lives.

IN the new "Life, Letters, and Journals of Sir Charles Lyell," there are some very interesting references to old controversies with orthodoxy. Writing to his sister, the great geologist alludes to the popular work of Ure's written to order for Longman, and says that it was meant to "prove the Hebrew cosmogony, and that we all ought to be burnt at Smithfield." In another letter Lyell describes England as more priest-ridden than any country in Europe except Spain.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON XVI.

(Continued from p. 147.)

Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (Matt. vii., 1.)

HARSH judgments and censorious comments ought to be avoided; but honest judgment is one of the best means of moral education, and moral education cannot be obtained without it. Besides, no one ever violated this rule more than Jesus himself. He judged and condemned in many cases; nor did he ever make it appear that he understood the importance or the justice of a fair and open trial. Had he been wise and good, he would have given some hint, at least, respecting the forms and administration of justice. The codes of civilised nations owe nothing to Jesus or to his religion. His conceptions of justice and law were those of any petty Oriental despot.

The mote and the shaft—spear-shaft—in the eyes constitute a figure of speech grotesquely overdone, and ridiculous into the bargain. Who with a mote in his eye would wait for some one to ask to extract or remove it?—while a spear-shaft in the eye means the destruction of the organ and the death of the owner.

It was not charity, but bitter and coarse satire, which inspired what he says about giving holy things to dogs and casting pearls before swine (v. 6—7). If men are dogs and swine, it must be because God made them so, that is Jesus, if he was God. Why sneer at his own handiwork? Why not make them better?

Ask, and it shall be given you (v. 7—8). If this were true, how rich and prosperous and powerful the Church would be! How soon the world would be converted! How quickly they would hear and see the last of the *Freethinker* and its wicked crew. All the prayers in the world, I mean the Church, cannot stop these Atheistic sermons, nor confound the preacher. Let them try. *Ask and receive!* The parson prays to God, and receives from men. Their prayers, indeed, are mostly intended for human ears; and those that do not reach human ears are never answered. The Church has never been ashamed to beg, and it has got a million-fold more than it has deserved. When the orthodox confess themselves unworthy, we agree with them, and when most of them confess themselves "miserable offenders," we cannot but admit the justice of the plea.

The contrast (v. 9—12), between earthly fathers and the heavenly one is all in favor of the former. Most earthly parents do something for their children; the heavenly father does nothing. By the way, how can a man have two fathers, unless one is merely grandfather or father in a merely legal or social sense? If, then, we have earthly fathers, we have no heavenly one.

Beware of false prophets (v. 15). Amen. Amen. All prophets are false prophets. Truth is found only by experience, not revelation. All pretenders to revelation are false prophets; beware of them and their sermons and gospels and predictions. All those who follow them only repeat the original lies. And revelation-lies have filled the world with confusion, bitterness, and blood.

They come in sheep's clothing—good broad-cloth made

of wool; but they dress in many ways. *Ye shall know them by their fruits* (v. 16). Yes, yes! What has revelation, what have its prophets, done for man? All the world's science, government, philosophy, sanitation, medicine, are due to the prophet's enemies. No prophet ever revealed a pregnant truth that enriched or enlightened the world. To prophets we owe persecution and darkness; to secular workers and thinkers we owe all the knowledge and all the wealth of the world. By their fruits ye shall know them—if they bear any. The bishops are barren, the Church is a desert, and the parsons ever cry, "Give, give!" We hope Jesus' prophecy is correct, that the useless trees shall be hewn down and cast into the fire. Then the churches are doomed. They bear no good fruit; they cumber the ground and produce poison.

If none but those who do the will of the father (v. 21—24) enter into the kingdom of heaven, there are few destined to enter. There is no parson or priest now existing that conforms his life to the Bible, and that is generally called the will or word of God. Who, then, will people the kingdom of heaven? I fancy the standard will have to be altered or the kingdom never be anything but a kingdom on paper. And those who don't go to that kingdom must, if popular theology is correct, people the Devil's kingdom. I have no respect for the Devil, or his empire; but he is going to beat the other gentleman. Not only most people belong to him, but all the best are his. The parsons cannot question this, for *they* belong to the Devil as much as I do, and they serve him as heartily too. In face of existing facts, the kingdom of heaven must be pronounced a complete failure, and its effects are not worthy of a sale by auction. You, Jesus, need not make the gate so narrow. Nobody will enter even if you make a large gap in the fence.

The peroration (v. 24—29) of the Sermon on the Mount is a splendid one. It fairly rises to the height of true oratory. But it is awfully selfish and egoistic, besides being maliciously unjust and severe. Who can do those sayings of thine, Jesus? Who can love his enemies? Who can follow the example of fowls and lillies? Who can turn the other cheek, or give his cloak to the thief who steals his coat? If thy own rule is to be the law, thou thyself art hopelessly condemned. There is nought but destruction and ruin in store for thyself and thy hearers and readers, if thy sermon is the standard of judgment. That sermon would damn all men, women, and children; all angels, archangels, seraphs, and cherubs; and God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will be damned with the rest; for there is not a being in the world who does or ever did obey what it enjoins. And yet the orthodox belaud what must damn them and all. I wonder if they'll boast of that sermon when it has damned them?

JOS. SYMES.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

HOW TO CURE RELIGIOUS FOLLY.—When men will not be reasoned out of a vanity, they must be ridiculed out of it.—*Sir Roger L'Estrange.*

HUMANITY AND THE CREEDS.—Man is greater than these phantoms. Humanity is grander than all the creeds, than all the books. Humanity is the great sea, and these creeds, and books, and religions, are but the waves of a day. Humanity is the sky, and these religions, and dogmas, and theories are but the mists and clouds changing continually, destined finally to melt away. Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever from the imaginations of men.—*Ingersoll, "The Ghosts."*

IF HELL BE TRUE.—If the common doctrine of eternal damnation be true, then surely no more children should be brought into the world; it is a duty to let the race die out and cease. He who begets a child, forcing him to run the fearful risk of human existence, with every probability of being doomed to hell at the close of earth, commits a crime before whose endless consequences of horror the guilt of fifty thousand deliberate murders would be as nothing. For, be it remembered, *an eternity in hell, is an infinite evil*; and, therefore, the crime of thrusting such a fate on a single child, with the unasked gift of being, is a crime admitting of no comparison. Rather than populate an everlasting hell with human vipers and worms, a hell whose fires, alive and

wriggling with ghastly shapes of iniquity and anguish, shall swell with a vast accession of recruits from every generation,—rather than this, let the lights on the marriage altar go out, no more bounding forms of childhood be seen in cottage or hall, the race grow old, thin out, and utterly perish, all happy villages be overgrown, all regal cities crumble down, and this world roll among the silent stars, henceforth a globe of blasted deserts and rank wildernesses, resonant only with the shrieks of the wind, the yells of wild beasts, and the thunder's crash.—*William Rounesville Alger, "A critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life,"* p. 545. New York, 1878.

PROFANE JOKES.

AFTER the officials of a Kansas town had vainly endeavored to disperse a mob a minister mounted a box and made the simple announcement—"A collection will now be taken up." The result can be easily guessed.

IF Noah had forseen the future and killed the two fleas which took refuge in the ark, he would have rendered some of the strongest words in the English language unnecessary.

AT a catechising by a Scottish minister before the administration of the communion, the party was asked, "What kind of a man was Adam?" "Ou, just like ither folk." The minister insisted on having a more special description of the first man, and pressed for explanation. "Weel," said the catechumen, "he was just like Joe Simson, the horse-couper." "How so?" asked the minister. "Weel, naebody got onything by him, and mony lost."

"BABOO" ENGLISH HISTORY.—That native Hindoo students are acquiring a mastery not only of correct expression, but of accurate English historical knowledge, is shown by the following extract from an essay on Cromwell by a Baboo, which appears in the *Allahabad Pioneer*:—"Oliver Cromwell was a very stern man. He destroyed Charles I. by repeated beheadals. After this he was never seen to smile, but was frequently heard pensively to murmur, 'If I had only served my God as I have served my king, He would not have deserted me in my old age.'"

REVEREND Doctor X. goes in for elegance of paraphrase. In ringing the changes upon "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," he said last Sunday—"He that is accessible to auricular vibration, let him not close the gates of his tympani."

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"A Light to Lighten the Gentiles."—The author shows much acquaintance with contemporary literature, and he uses his authorities in such a manner that we do not wonder that a certain Christian Evidence lecturer, who first challenged Mr. Rose to a public debate, succeeded by a series of evasions in shuffling out of a trial which he foresaw would end in his total discomfiture. This work is quite a storehouse of arguments, and it can be recommended to all who wish to be prepared with an answer to argumentatively-belligerent apologists of Christian theology."—*Secular Review*, Dec. 3, 1881.

See also a notice of the above works in the *Freethinker*, Nov. 27, 1881.

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