

# PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Vol. III.—No. 2.]

JANUARY 14, 1883.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—LIII.



MAKING MAN.

And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness.—GENESIS i., 26.

## CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

We have no fault to find with Saint Paul's splendid panegyric on Charity in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians. It is nobly conceived and nobly expressed. If Christianity had never taught anything less beautiful and true, it would have had no enemies. Unfortunately it has paid nothing but lip-homage to what Saint Paul described as the "greatest" of virtues; the homage of its heart has been given to other things. Judging from its history and present behavior, Saint Paul's eloquent praise of Charity might as well have remained unwritten.

We will not dwell on the bloodshed and misery it wrought in bygone times, but simply deal with its action to-day. Take the word *infidel*, for instance, which Christians delight to apply to all who differ from them. It originally meant an unbeliever, like the word *miscreant*. But Christian charity has brought both words to imply rascality. The process by which the change has been effected is very obvious. Christians vainly supposed all goodness, as well as all truth, to be on their side. Everybody who differed from them was therefore wicked as well as wrong; and the name with which they were branded was economically made to express both qualities. The result is that thousands, perhaps millions, of orthodox people, regard a sceptic as

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worse than a murderer. Tell them a man is a liar, a thief, a profligate, a false friend, a bad husband, a corrupt citizen, and they will say "Poor fellow! What a pity! Let us get up a philanthropic society to reform him." But say a man is an infidel, and they are sure he is a wretch who deserves no pity; one who holds secret interviews with the Devil, and has a vested interest in iniquity. They are afraid to live in the same house with him, or even in the same street. They dread meeting him, and will often cross the road to avoid coming too close. They fancy he breathes contagion, and they would not be at all surprised to hear that he had suddenly vanished with a strong smell. Yet, if they only knew him intimately, they would probably like him, and think him a capital fellow. They do not mean any harm, but the wretched prejudice of their creed makes them uncharitable and unjust. The priest has gone before experience, and planted weeds of bigotry in the garden of their minds, so that the sweet flowers of charity cannot spring up and flourish in fragrance and bloom.

Christians are not even charitable to each other when they differ on some incomprehensible point. Some day or other we will publish a choice selection of foul names they have given one another in their controversies. A full list would include all the dirt in the dictionary. For the present we simply refer to opposition religious journals. Read what Catholics and Orangemen write of each other. Turn to the Christmas number of the *Rock*, and see what a Protestant like Mr. Froude can say of the Irish priesthood. He describes them, under a thin veil of allegory, as pious conjurers from Timbuctoo. Catholic and High Church writers return the compliment in a similar strain of charitable eloquence. They are a happy family.

Boycotting has been stigmatised as a crime. Why? It is nothing new. What was excommunication but a severe form of boycotting? No one could help the excommunicate person under penalty of the same fate; no one could give him shelter, bread to eat, or water to drink; no one could buy or sell with him; no one could bury him if he died. He was an outcast, not only from society, but from human sympathy; he was treated sometimes like a leper, and sometimes like a mad dog. Killing him was no crime. Here is charity with a vengeance! Christ and Paul ought to be proud of their disciples.

Let not Protestants reply that this sort of thing was done by wicked Catholics. They did it as long as they could. Excommunication was a weapon of the Protestant Church of England, and there are laws still unrepealed by which the clergy could excommunicate and imprison heretics if they only dared.

Christians, Protestants and Catholics alike, boycott Freethinkers whenever they can do so without loss, for Mammon must be served as well as God, and it will not do to lose a good customer even if he is a sceptic. We remember the case of a Christian tailor, who when he heard that a certain hall had been refused for an "infidel" lecture, said "Quite right too. The fellow shouldn't be allowed to spout in our town." A Freethinker standing by said "Well now, let us alter the circumstances. Suppose the 'fellow' came into your shop and ordered a good suit of clothes, wouldn't you serve him?" "Oh, of course," replied the pious snip, "that's different." Yes, we repeat, Christians boycott Freethinkers when it is safe. They slander their characters, destroy their reputations, injure their prospects, take the very bread out of

their mouths, and out of the mouths of their wives and children. We do not intend to publish names, but our position has made us acquainted with many such cases. These charitable Christians say, "We will not kill you, for the law does not allow of that; but we will do our best to ruin and starve you, we will hunt you out of this world, and our God will do the rest."

Our readers will remember how, a few months ago, a pious proprietor at Southampton broke her contract with the Secular Society, and refused to pay a halfpenny of the expenses incurred on the strength of it, under cover of a brutal law. Not a Christian in all Southampton, so far as we know, raised his voice against this robbery. It was done to infidels; it was safe; and of course it was all right.

Christian charity has kept Mr. Bradlaugh for two years out of his seat, although he has been thrice elected by the same constituency. Christian charity prosecutes us for blasphemy, and tries to push us through the doors of a Christian gaol. Christian charity keeps the Christian press silent on the wrong, when not loudly approving it. Oh yes, Christian charity is a noble thing!

Christians sometimes say to Freethinkers, "What is your charity like? Where are your soup-kitchens, and blanket and coal tickets?" We have no desire to perpetuate these things. We subscribe quietly to deserving charities, and we maintain a separate Benevolent Fund for unfortunate Freethinkers. But we do not believe in that charity which pauperise the poor, by treating them as a whetstone provided by God for the rich to sharpen their benevolence on. No, we believe in that large charity which is called justice. That is what we strive for, and that is what we hope to gain.

Meanwhile we are happily growing stronger. Freethinkers are learning that Christian charity and Christian justice are myths. We shall get no more consideration than we can command. This is a bitter truth; and while it explains our fighting attitude, it blows to the winds all the mild counsels of Freethinkers who do not perceive the true battle-ground nor understand the issues to be decided.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.

### [SECOND SERIES.]

#### VI.

#### MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH.

IN the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we have presented to us a list of the principal saints of the most high God who had lived prior to the time when the chapter was written. It is instructive to read this list, especially when the characters of the individuals can be so easily studied in the Old Testament. Here we can see the fruits of religion as they existed before civilisation interfered with their growth. The New Testament says a tree is known by its fruits; and as the saints in this list were, no doubt, the brightest and best the writer could find, we may form our own judgment as to the nature of a tree that could produce such choice and savory fruit.

The chapter opens with a definition of faith which nobody ever yet could understand. The Authorised Version renders it, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The New Version gives it, "The assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." In the margin it prints, "the giving substance to things hoped for, the test of things not seen." I do not blame the translators, however, for the text is hopelessly senseless, as I found out many years ago, when I spent some weeks of hard labor in trying to translate it out of the Greek. Indeed, like hundreds of other Bible passages, this one may be made to signify anything you wish. If you are a Catholic or a Jew, a Mohammedan or Thug, the Bible will support you; and I should not despair of gaining full support for Atheism from it, if that were at all required, without using any other principles of exposition and translation than those in vogue amongst divines. But I must proceed.

1. *By faith the elders obtained a good report*; or as the New Version says, "For therein the elders had witness borne to them."—I will give the meaning when Christians have found it and agree upon it,

2. *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which were seen were not made of things which do appear.*—The chief divergence seen in the New Version is the substitution of ages for worlds. Let it pass. The sense is absent in either version. Who is God? What is his Word? What ages or worlds have been "framed"? Some toys or models, no doubt. The real world was not made, not framed.

3. *By faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.*—Well, Abel offered a lamb, it is said in Genesis. How he killed it we are not told. If he offered it *by faith only*, the Lord had to wait some time for his dinner. More excellent than Cain's! Well, it was a good fat lamb, and Cain offered nothing better than roots or corn. The Lord, who knew what was what, preferred Abel's lamb to Cain's agricultural produce. Faith had nothing to do with it.

By the way, as Cain was not quite so orthodox as Abel, we cannot believe the story as it stands. It must have been the *more* pious man that murdered the less pious. You can find no instance in the world's history where a man of little faith has persecuted one of much. The persecution *has always flowed* the other way. If Cain was the sceptic usually supposed, he never killed his brother over a stupid religious dispute. It must have been the saint who murdered the sinner; for history furnishes no case to the contrary.

4. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death.*—The story in Genesis merely says the old gentleman "was not, for God took him." The truth seems to be that he kept bad company—walked with the *Elohim*, and they took him. The *Elohim* or gods were fairies perhaps; and they flew away with Enoch. Or they were wild beasts; and one day when hungry they ate him. This is the most probable explanation ever yet offered. Moral! Beware of gods, as the Apostle Paul, when rightly interpreted, says. Our English New Testaments make him say, "Beware of dogs!" Transpose the letters, and you soon see that d—o—g—s will become g—o—d—s. What can be plainer? Have nothing to do with gods. As for dogs they are useful beings, and never mistake their friends, and rarely forsake them. Dogs are good; gods full of mischief.

5. *By faith Noah* planted a vine, and got drunk, and made a beast of himself, and cursed his grandson for what his son had done. Evidently Ark-life and "godly fear," and divine grace did not improve the man. Instead of sowing his wild-oats in youth, he set about it when over 600 years old. All that long training in the divine school was thrown away upon him. Just so; favorites of gods and kings usually turn out worse than any others—except gods and kings themselves.

6. *By faith Abraham*—did what? Well, married his own half sister; told lies about her to save his own skin; had a son by Hagar, and turned mother and child out of doors; had slaves born in his house and bought with his money; gave a tithe of what he took in war to a priest, not of his own religion either; almost murdered his son Isaac in sacrifice to his god. The good man is now in the kingdom of heaven—in other words, he has been dust for some thousands of years. The world does not miss him.

7. *By faith Sarah*—became a mother just about the time other old ladies become great-great-grandmothers. *By faith!* Why, when the old woman heard god, or angel, or whoever it was, tell Abe that his wife should have a son when she was about ninety, it so tickled the old crone that she laughed right out; though, saint-like, she denied it after (see Gen. xviii., 9–15).

8. *By faith Jacob*—deceived his blind dad, robbed his easy-going brother, married two sisters (though their father, another man of faith, cheated him in the bargain); then he took to himself two other women, deceived his master and ran away, having made himself rich at his employer's expense. Last of all he went up the ladder (not the spout) to the kingdom of heaven.

9. *By faith Joseph*—had a motley coat, and dreamed conceited dreams, and carried tales to his father about his brothers. *By faith* he refused the caresses of Mrs. Potiphar, whose looks did not suit him. *By faith* he became Pharaoh's Grand Vizier, and robbed all the people of Egypt of their money, then of their cattle, then of lands, and then made slaves of them all!

Verily, the saints are the salt of the earth. Sow the earth with salt, and it becomes barren; sow it with saints, and the results are even worse.

JOS. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

## A FAMILY CONCLAVE.

THE Sabbath bells brayed dolefully through the sleet as Mr. Fitzman drew his easy-chair to the fire.

"After all, my dear," he observed to his wife, "we can worship just as sincerely by our own fireside as in church. Perhaps more so. When the feet are cold and the garments damp, we perhaps do not praise God with the same warmth that we feel when in full enjoyment of the comforts he has bestowed on us. Besides, that pew never does my rheumatism any good."

Mrs. Fitzman had still more conclusive reasons, which she did not think it necessary to state in full. She certainly would not go out in that sleet with her new fur pelisse; and she would not go without it. As she summed the matter up acquiescingly "We worship with our minds, not with our bodies." She felt that settled the matter. And, indeed, clothes was a subject on which Mrs. Fitzman bestowed more of her mind than she gave to anything else.

Their son Harry, aged twelve, came into the room, and made for a corner. He had a book in his hand.

"Is that book for Sunday, Harry?" asked his vigilant mamma.

"I think not. You know you have plenty of stories in *Chatterbox* and *Sunday at Home*. Mrs. Fitzman kept *The Quiver* and *Good Words* for her own Sunday reading. In the latter periodical she felt she could read a novel of Mr. Black's on the sacred day and be righteous in the sight of God.

"There's lots of religion in this story, mamma. It's called 'Alton Locke.'"

"Doesn't sound quite religious," said his father benignly.

"Come over to the fire my boy. Your mamma and I were just talking on a subject you are old enough to think about; and you musn't suppose that when we stay away from church we mean to behave just as on week days. We were saying, Harry, that after all, true worship in the eyes of the Almighty is not so much a matter of church-going—though that is right and obligatory—you know what that word means, Harry? Yes. I thought so—it is not merely a matter of church-going but of intelligent feeling."

"I'm sure 'Alton Locke' would have said that, papa"—regretfully moving his finger where he was keeping the book open.

"One thing at a time, Harry; one thing at a time. I say true worship is a matter of sincere feeling, and at any time when we feel truly thankful to God for his mercies, and desirous of deserving them more, then we are truly worshipping. Now," continued Mr. Fitzman, taking up the poker to stir the fire, "we ought all to be thankful to God if it were only because we are sitting before a good fire."

"There are many, Harry, who have no fire to sit at," added Mrs. Fitzman, "and perhaps they are more mindful of their Maker than you are, wanting to read novels on Sunday."

"Then why are they pious?" asked Harry.

"Because they have true religion, and love God."

"One thing at a time, my dear; one thing at a time," said Mr. Fitzman. "Now Harry, consider how God's mercies surround us on every side. Here are we in a comfortable room, after having had a good breakfast. Outside the air is bitter cold; here it is warm. Think what would we do in winter if we had no fires."

"Our teacher says that Eskimos take blubber to keep out the cold," remarked Harry. "It must be sickening. It's just fat."

"Then just consider the very air we breathe," Mr. Fitzman went on. "It's composed—they teach you at school what it's composed of, don't they?"

"Oxygen hydrogen, and carbonic acid gas."

"Quite so, and if there were ever so little more carbonic acid gas, or nitrogen—I suppose it's all the same—the air wouldn't be fit to breathe."

"Teacher says there's more carbonic acid gas in a room with all the windows shut. Shall I open ours a bit, papa?"

"Oh, no need just now. Now just think where we should have been if God had put more carbonic acid gas than oxygen in the air when he made things."

"Would there ever have been any people at all, papa?"

"Then consider how thankful we should be," said Mrs. Fitzman.

"Do you think, papa," asked Harry thoughtfully, "the ones that aren't born want to be? S'pose we hadn't been born, wouldn't we have liked it?"

"Suppose what? Eh-ah-um. Ha-ha-ha!" "I don't think, Alexander, this is a matter for joking and laughing about," said Mrs. Fitzman, severely. "It's not the way to teach the child religion."

"As your mother says, Henry, this is not a matter for joking about, though your ridiculous question upset my gravity."

"Oh, papa, Ned Trimmis has a lot of old *Punches*, and I saw one thing yesterday that I wanted to tell you. It's one man saying to another 'A Happy New Year'; and the other says 'Happy Noo Year? wish I'd died last year, I'd been a much richer man.'"

"Henry!" exclaimed his mother.

"And there was another one, papa. It was a lady in a carriage giving a beggar-woman some money, and the woman said, 'may we meet in Heaven'; and the lady said 'good Heavens! Thomas, drive on!'"

"Alexander," observed Mrs. Fitzman; "if this is the way you're going to let that boy spend the Sunday, I think he had better be at his book. Henry, I shall take you to church myself in the evening. You ought to be walking there in the sleet just now. Do you ever think, I wonder, that there are poor people in the sleet just now who haven't a home to go to, and who have no things to go to church in?"

"I sh'dn't like to be them. Don't you think they might be better off if they prayed, mamma?"

"Very likely God has reduced them to beggary because they didn't pray."

"But then you said there were poor people who loved God, mamma."

"Just take care, sir, that you don't come to misery yourself by neglecting to say your prayers. Did you say them last night, I wonder, or was your head too full of some of your penny numbers? And did you say them this morning?"

"I don't say them on Sunday mornings, mamma, 'cause there's plenty of praying in church to make up."

"Never neglect your prayers, Henry," said his father, seriously.

"Papa, Ned Trimmis has made up a prayer for himself. Do you think it is a good one? He says: 'O Lord, grant unto me everything that mamma said when she said prayers with me last week. Thou dost remember all things, but remember not my transgressions, Amen.' There's another one he told me, it begins: 'Born in sin and brought up in iniquity; line upon line and precept upon precept; here a little and there a little——'"

"Henry, you wicked creature, how dare you!"

"'World without end, Amen.' That's the whole of it."

"Henry, go to your book. If you open your mouth again, you shall have no pudding to dinner."

And peace in his eyes sat gleaming. For within five minutes, as he had expected, his father went to sleep over an awakening work, and his mother went to inspect her gloves.

J. R.

## ACID DROPS.

THE reappearance of Bible characters is going on rapidly. A colored gentleman calling himself John the Baptist has turned up in a London police court, where he was charged with assaulting a constable. He offered to baptise the magistrate or drink his health in champagne, but his obliging offers were rewarded with six weeks' hard labor.

WE should like to know why the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals does not take up the pigeon-shooting question. It sickens one to read of the cold-blooded "sport" at the Gun Club and similar places. Fancy a great beast of a man blazing away with a gun at one after another of these beautiful birds, in order to decide who shall have a few pounds of other people's money! Such abominable brutality would be impossible under Buddhism, but Christianity lets it pass unrebuked. Not a sparrow comes to grief without God's consent, but his protection does not appear to extend to pigeons.

THE *Christian World* should really avoid gross stupidities. Referring to the falling of a chimney-stack at Bradford, which killed over fifty people, it says "Providentially the crash came during the breakfast half-hour, when the majority of the hands were at their homes, or the sacrifice of human life, appalling as it proved, would have been much greater." If it means anything at all, the word *providentially* implies that God Almighty regulated the time of the "crash." What a pity he hadn't the goodness or the sense to let it take place in the night time!

JOSEPH COOK thinks Herbert Spencer a "charlatan." Herbert Spencer doesn't think Joseph Cook anything.

M. DE PRESSENSE writes from Paris to a religious journal in London, that the Salvation Army over there shows the utmost bigotry. "To such a length," he says, "is the sectarian spirit carried by these soldiers of salvation, that they will not accept the co-operation of any who wish to remain in connexion with the religious societies from which they have received the greatest good." We see nothing strange in this. All Christian sects are narrow, exclusive, and persecuting, when they are successful. If Booth's idiotic army got the upper-hand they would make a speedy end of science, art, literature, and Freethought.

THERE never was a more brutal, disgusting spirit than that of Christians when they cannot get their own way. Look, for instance, at some of the comments in the religious papers on Gambetta's death. The Duc de Broglie's journal says that "he died suddenly after nurling defiance at God." The *Pays*, which is edited by that pious bully, Paul de Cassagnac, writes thus:—"He dies, poisoned by his own blood. He set himself up against God. He has fallen. It is fearful. But it is just." A German Catholic paper says "It is a marvellously providential coincidence that the man 'whose God was his

belly' died through a mortal disease in that part of his body." These are the organs of the religion of charity.

THE inmates of the "Insane Asylum" on Ward's Island are going to publish a weekly paper called the *Moon*. If it is ever short of contributors, any quantity can be procured from the religious press.

SOME very curious scenes were witnessed at the great fire in Kingston. The negroes, in particular, showed strong symptoms of religious excitement. One black woman began to call on "Mass-a God." Another dropped on her knees and howled "O blessed Lord, have mercy! I know'd all de time dat de sinner would burn if de day of 'pentance was put off too long. Bless de Lord, de dah of wrath an heah." It is not surprising to learn that the darkies turned one eye towards heaven and kept the other fixed on "unconsidered trifles" lying about.

ACCORDING to *Truth*, there was a very large congregation at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, a week or two ago, numbering nearly twelve hundred, and consisting of the *élite* of the district; yet the offertory, for a most deserving charity, did not amount to more than £14. Whoso giveth unto the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; but a great many rich Christians mistrust the security.

WHAT is truth? asked Pilate, and posed everybody. Now-a-days the answer is easy enough—Henry Labouchere's paper.

THE *Daily News* publishes a long summary of an article by Maurice Busch, Bismarck's quondam friend and secretary, in a Vienna paper. It discloses some very interesting facts as to the religion of the great Chancellor and his wife. Princess Bismarck is "a very pious lady." Her piety, like most people's, is quite consistent with a murderous hatred of certain sections of the human race. During the Franco-German war she wrote to her husband, vowing the French to destruction, in language of Biblical simplicity. Bismarck told Prince Albrecht that "she would like to see the Gauls all shot and murdered, even the little children, who, she admits, cannot help descending from such horrid parents." Here's sweet piety for you! Love of God and hatred of men often go together, so we must not be surprised.

BISMARCK himself is very pious now, although he began as a disciple of Hegel. He reads a good deal in the Prayer Book, and does not understand how any one without belief in God and immortality could bear the burden of life. Well, Gambetta had no such belief, and he managed to live happily. Bismarck is superstitious too. He will not sit down to dinner if there are thirteen, nor start on a Friday or sign any important document on that day of the week. He has also a mystical assurance of the day of the month and the year when he is to die. The great Chancellor has evidently room for a good deal of nonsense in his capacious brain, but fortunately it is not quite so cruel as his wife's.

THE Church of England has fully resolved to compete with General Booth for the mob of fools at large, drunkards, thieves, burglars, and amateur murderers in our great towns; and it must be admitted that these interesting people are worth a strong effort. Jesus Christ was crucified between two thieves, and we see no reason why the Church should not be lifted up in similar company. Well, the "Church Army" is now formed; its methods and its dress bearing a close resemblance to those of the Boothites. One day last week a contingent, under the command of "Captain" the Rev. Wilson Carlyle (no relation we suspect to grim old Thomas), marched through the slums of Westminster, and called on the inhabitants to yield themselves up to Jesus Christ. The inhabitants replied with stones, broken bottles, mud, and anything else ready to hand. There was a general scrimmage—one man had his head cut open, and several more were knocked down and kicked. This is a very cheap form of martyrdom. You make yourself a nuisance, get well thrashed, and go about covered with sticking-plaster as so many marks of God's favor, with a dead certainty of a good front seat in glory at last.

WE are half inclined to exclaim "Serve them right" when these fussy soldiers of salvation get beaten. If a lot of men and women posted themselves outside our door, howled a few hymns, bawled a few sermons, and then asked us to confess our iniquities and join them, we should request the police to move them on; and if Mr. Robert refused to do so, we should certainly take the law into our own hands, and do our best to drive them off. How is it these busybodies don't try their game on with the rich? As Byron wrote in "Don Juan"—

"O Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why  
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin  
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try  
Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.  
To mend the people's an absurdity,  
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,

Unless you make your betters better:—Fie!

I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry."

Let these pious soldiers attack lords and ladies instead of laborers, and they would soon find themselves put down.

IT is rather a joke making the publishing office of the *Freethinker* pay for the support of the Church. We find ourselves, however, assessed for the tithe rate of St. Bride's parish. The penny in the pound is but a trifle, but it is one of those trifles which speak volumes.

DOWN in Cornwall it appears that tithes are still paid by the fishermen to the clergy. Mr. Wm. Duncalf, of Mevagissey, sends to the *Daily News* a list of the rates levied at the different ports. It is almost impossible to conceive of anything more infamous. These brave honest fellows face all weathers and risk their lives for a precarious subsistence, and then they are robbed by religious cormorants, who lie snugly at home and fatten on the fruits of other people's labor.

THE pious idiots who occasionally send us silly insults in unpaid letters are hereby informed that the game is played out. We decline henceforth to take them in, and have instructed the postman accordingly.

A PARSON rather partial to a round game made a curious little slip last Sunday. The organist at the conclusion of the sermon leant up suddenly and asked, "What shall I play next?" "How can I tell?" absently replied the soul-sneaker; "I haven't seen your hand."

THE paper started to quell "current infidelity" makes the important announcement that "The former owners having got tired of losing money over its publication determined to stop it." Under these circumstances the editor has decided to carry the paper on himself "in the full assurance that the Christian public would not leave us in the lurch." What a blessed thing is faith. This full assurance is supplemented by an appeal for subscriptions and a form to fill up, promising blank pounds and shillings for its support.

THE Spiritist papers report that the Bradford Old Boys Debating Society has passed a resolution "That this House believes in Spirits." The Old Boys omit to state how they prefer their poison.

TALMAGE complains that his sermons are stolen by unscrupulous clergymen. We have heard of washerwomen mean enough to steal the buttons from a poor man's shirt, but consider that the skunks who steal Talmage's sermons have reached the lowest degradation yet known.

THE *New York World*, the most orthodox of the daily papers of that city, says: "All reasonable persons must regret to see that the Rev. Joseph Cook has returned from New Zealand not only unroasted, but quite as raw as when he left his native shore."

## M I D W A Y .

At life's brief summit let us muse on life.

Our pow'r, our pride, our conquests; what are these?

The path was steep, we clim'd to strength's calm ease,

And yet, at worst, it's stern unceasing strife

Was not so fearful, or with pain so rife

As waits us on the way that by degrees

Shall take us hence; whereon poor failing knees

Despite wealth's staff wound worse than want's keen knife.

Beyond, the journey ends as it began—

Weak childishness, and then—we know no more,—

Whereto or whence crawls life; nor ever can

Discover till we pass the grave's dark door.

God play'd a bitter jest in making man;

How Heav'n must laugh when we his name adore.

Dec. 22nd, 1882.

E. V. WARD.

SCIENCE DISPLACES ANIMISM.—No indwelling deity now regulates the life of the burning sun, no guardian angels drive the stars across the arching firmament, the divine Ganges is water flowing down into the sea to evaporate into cloud and descend again in rain. No deity simmers in the boiling pot, no presiding spirits dwell in the volcanos, no howling demon shrieks from the mouth of the lunatic. There was a period of human thought when the whole universe seemed actuated by spiritual life. For our knowledge of our own history, it is deeply interesting that there should remain rude races yet living under the philosophy which we have so far passed from, since Physics, Chemistry, Biology, have seized whole provinces of the ancient Animism, setting force for life, and law for will.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor*, "Primitive Culture," vol. ii, p. 167, 1871.

## SPECIAL NOTICE

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, Jan. 14th) in the Assembly Room, Grosvenor Street, All Saints', Manchester:—Morning, at 11, "Gambetta: Republican and Freethinker;" afternoon, at 3, "Buddha before Christ;" evening, at 6.30, "A Blasphemous Creed."

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS

January 16th, Walworth; 21st, Hall of Science, London; 28th, Claremont Hall, London.

February 4th, Leeds; 11th, York; 18th, Plymouth; 25th, Liverpool.

March 18th and 25th, Hall of Science, London.

April 1st, Milton Hall, London; 3rd, Walworth.

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THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—G. Stevenson, J. L., R. B., Child's Sermon on Hell, Jas. Brunaul.

BRUNO.—We are pleased to receive such a cheery letter from the "Queen City of the West." Far from being surprised that no Secular Society exists in Bath, we are astonished that any Freethinkers are to be found there at all. We visited the city several years ago, and were struck with the large floating population of parsons on the look out for health and rich widows. It is gratifying to know that the *Freethinker* is appreciated even by a few in such a pious place.

W. HARRISON.—It is pleasant to hear that the *Freethinker* Tracts have produced such a good effect.

J. H. WHITHAM.—Thanks for your good wishes for *Progress*. We have no sympathy with Louise Michel's views. To preach assassination in a country where universal suffrage exists is to our mind a crime.

G. WALKER.—We have no space for a title of the letters that have reached us about Mr. Standing's epistle, and as they all corroborate our view we shall omit them all.

R. P.—When we say that a Christian's feelings are not sacred to us, we do not mean that they are not honest. Millions of people honestly believe in witchcraft, but their feelings on that subject are not sacred to us. You don't seem to understand the word sacred. Consult the dictionary before you write again.

E. C. HISCO.—We do allow for the force of early training, and we shall try our utmost to keep the priest out of schools. Certainly we think with you that Shakespeare is a better Bible than the Jew book.

A. E. ELLIS, Liverpool.—Mr. Stocker, Vauxhall Road, and Mrs. Dodds, 22 Duke Street, sell the *Freethinker*. If you live too far from these you should inquire at any newsagents and get them to procure it for you. They will soon find that if they expose the paper they can sell it readily.

ACHATES and AQUILA.—Your suggestions shall receive attention.

W. H. SPIVEY.—We are very glad to learn that our Huddersfield friends endorse your opinion that *Progress* is "most excellent and a cheap sixpenny worth." Thanks.

M. H. B.—We cannot pronounce on anything until we see it complete.

L. BURGWITH.—Thanks for the correction as well as for the portrait.

E. D. J.—The verses have already appeared.

JAS. MCCREOIL.—Try E. Truelove, 256 High Holborn.

HENRY HOPKINS.—We have decided to insert no letters on our side of the controversy in regard to "Superstitious Freethinkers." Thanks for your good wishes and work.

J. PAYNE.—Of course Atheism is not opposed to total abstinence from alcoholic drinks. The propriety of such a course must be decided by each man for himself. If the Blue Ribbon Army has any Christian principles in its programme a consistent Atheist could not join it. Personally we are averse to badges, they strike us as being silly and Pharisaic. Theism and Deism are virtually the same thing, only the former is derived from the Greek, and the latter from the Latin; but during the last century, and a great part of this, the term Deist was specially applied to those who believed in God but rejected Revelation.

J. ROBINSON, Manchester, writes that *Progress* is "quite an agreeable surprise to my freethinking townsmen," and points out an inaccuracy in the Spinoza article. The actual date of Spinoza's excommunication was not 1636, but 1656.

PONTIUS PILATE.—Jokes are always welcome.

AN ATHEIST BLACKSMITH expresses sympathy with Mr. Edwards of Tubridge Wells and suggests that all the branches of Secular Societies should subscribe 1d. per member to pay his fines.

MR. KEMP will be glad of a copy of the *Freethinker* for Jan. 29th; he will give sixpence for it.

CONSTANT READER.—Thanks for the extract from the *War Cry*. There never was such a cadger as Booth, but if people like to give him their cash what can we do? We must say, however, that this document suggests the thought that the pious showman is getting played out.

J. RAWLINSON.—You cannot do better than keep us well supplied with jokes.

THE *Freethinker* blasphemy case is down for trial on Monday, Jan. 22. We shall write at length on the subject next week. Meanwhile we ask all our readers to push the paper as far as they possibly can. A special effort will be needed to counteract the intimidation of newsagents. Every friend of Freethought should make it a personal question. We shall also be glad to send Defence Fund sheets to anyone who can collect subscriptions.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

*Progress*, we are happy to say, is a great success. Only a few copies of Number 1 are left in stock. The second number is well forward. It will contain a fine Portrait of Léon Gambetta with a critical Biography; solid articles by Dr. Aveling and Mr. Symes; a strong paper on English misrule in India by a Hindu; a very interesting article, by one of the few men in England competent to write on the subject, on some great Norwegian writers who are also Freethinkers; a good proportion of lighter matter, and several pages of gossip on politics, religion, literature, science and art.

MR. G. STANDRING begins the new year with a good number of his little paper, the *Republican*. It includes a portrait and biography of Mr. Henry George, articles by Mr. William Maccall, Mr. Arthur Moss and other writers, and a further instalment of Mr. Standring's History of the Aristocracy. We wish our plucky contemporary a prosperous New Year.

DURING the month of November last, says the *Echo*, out of 4,400 burials in France, 1,207 were unattended with any religious ceremony. At this rate Christianity will soon expire in the great Republic.

It is worthy of notice that many of the women in the great crowd who filed past Gambetta's dead body as it lay in state at the Palais Bourbon, made the sign of the cross on approaching the coffin, but very few of the men did so. The next generation of women will be nearly, if not quite, as sceptical as the men—thanks to the compulsory education which Gambetta did so much to promote.

A STURDY Scot writes to thank us for our recent "opportune and too truthful article on Superstitious Freethinkers." He says that Freethinkers who cavil at our style "never try to conceive from the past what orthodoxy would be capable of if only it could blow out every light but that which it desires." He cites his own story as an illustration of the Christian curse. His father turned him out of doors when he was nineteen because he had read Combe's "Constitution of Man" and begun to doubt Calvinism. His father's words, which still ring in his ears, were "I cannot be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ and permit you to remain under my roof," and Bible texts were quoted in justification. He set out with a small bundle of clothes, half-a-crown, and a broken heart. Years afterwards, when he was about to be married to the woman who is now his wife, a Free Church elder stepped in between them, and tried to prevent their union. This pious worthy plainly said that he would not have interfered if her lover had been a licentious debaucher, or anything but an infidel. Religious people have quite lately refused to cooperate with him in charitable objects; and he says that he recently heard a Young Men's Christian Association conclude a debate by resolving, without a single protest, that parents who did not give their children religious instructions were unfit to have them, and should be legally deprived of them. Further, as the Evidence Amendment Act does not extend to Scotland, he cannot give evidence in any court of law without going through the repulsive formality of an oath. Our Scotch friend alleges that he is a type of many, and asks whether he is not justified in hating Christianity with a perfect hatred. We certainly think he is, and we mean to continue fighting the accursed thing for the sake of him and his fellows.

"Brown's Story," in our Christmas Number, is clearly no exaggeration. We have serious thoughts of reprinting it in a cheap form for general distribution.

A LARGE meeting presided over by Mr. J. Hanson has been held at Bradford in favor of the opening of the Free Libraries and Art Museum on Sundays. A resolution to this effect was ably moved by the Rev. J. Cuckson (Unitarian), and although opposed by two clergymen and a local preacher was carried with but a very few dissentients.

MR. THOS. SHORE, 33 Newington Green Road, N., wishes us to inform the shareholders in the Balls Pond Secular Hall

Society that they will be duly informed of the next business meeting. All the details are arranged, and possession of the premises will be taken in due course. Intending shareholders should apply to Mr. Shore at once.

A VERY able reply to the recent plea for the truth of the miracles at Lourdes is given by Mr. E. S. Shuckburgh in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*. He shows that the evidence is not devoid of an element of uncertainty fatal to such extraordinary claims. This tells with tenfold force against the Christian miracles, the only record of which is found in documents of uncertain authorship, which were credulously accepted and carelessly transmitted in a most superstitious age.

IN answer to the question how he accounts for the Catholic miracles being endorsed by so many bishops and respectable people, Mr. Shuckburgh refers to the certificates of cures, almost as miraculous, to be found in any paper that admits quack advertisements. He says he does not pretend to account for it. "The prevalence and vitality of a lie is the most astonishing and distracting thing in the world's history."

### CONVERTING THE HEATHEN.

SCENE 1.—A Country Scene in India. A number of Indian men and women are discovered seated on the grass, talking, laughing, singing, etc.

*Enter a MISSIONARY.*

*Missionary* (to Indians): This is the Sabbath of the blessed Lord; wherefore do you laugh. This is a day to be solemn—to pray and worship our Lord and Master.

*1st Indian* (in broken English): We not worship your master; we one ob our own. We lub to be happy; to enjoy de beauties ob nature; we lub to be merry, to larf, to sing, and show our joy ob life. We want not your religion. Let your master look after you—ours will take care ob us.

*Missionary*: My dear friends, I have left my native country to come over here to convert you to the one true faith; I have come to tell you that Jesus died to save you! And will you not give heed to my sayings?

*2nd Indian*: Did Jesus die to save eberybody?

*Missionary*: Certainly.

*3rd Indian*: Then eberybody is sabel—eh?

*Missionary*: No; only those who believe can be saved. Unbelievers will be damned. And so I have left my native country; forsaken my wife and family (which was a fact), given up everything (except the Holy Spirit—rum) to come to convert you heathens.

*3rd Indian*: Ah! I am afraid you hab come too late; We hab a faith of our own, and we don't want any ob yours.

*Missionary*: This book contains all that is necessary for your salvation.

*4th Indian*: What hab you got in dat bottle?

*Missionary* (conceiving a grand idea): This is the Holy Spirit—(aside, Rum). Whoever drinks the most of this will live for ever. Will you drink?

[*4th Indian* drinks; he slaps his lips; he drinks again; he begins to sing. *3rd Indian* drinks. The spirit courses through his veins; it puts new life into him, and drives out a good deal of the old. They all drink, and sing, and caress one another. They are converted, and with one accord declare their belief in the Holy Spirit.]

SCENE 2.—Egypt. A National Fête. The natives enjoying themselves in the fields; the summer sun shining upon them.

*Enter the Khedive*: Citizens, this is a day of national thanksgiving. It is a day upon which all should be joy and peace, and I have thought that nothing would be more fitting than for me to introduce a Christian missionary gentleman to you, who has come over here for the express purpose of converting you all to the Christian faith.

*1st Egyptian*: Praise be to Allah!

*Egyptian Peasants*: Long live the Khedive!

*Missionary*: Yes, my dear friends, Sir Garnet Wolsley and a noble army of Christian warriors are coming over here to teach you the blessed truths of the Gospel, and make you feel that "peace which passeth all understanding."

[*Sound of drums in the distance.*]

*Missionary*: A drum; a drum! the Christians come.

SCENE 3.—Alexandria. Bombardment. Houses in ruins; the streets covered with bodies of the dead and the dying.

*Wounded Egyptian*: Oh this is how the Christians convert us, is it? (*he groans*). I am wounded unto death. D—mn Christianity (*he turns over and quietly dies*).

*Enter ARABI PASHA heading an army of peasants.*

*Arabi*: Men, let us fight for life and liberty!

(*They die fighting.*)

SCENE 4.—A Grand Review of English troops in Egypt

*Sir Garnet Wolsley* (addressing the soldiers): Men, you have achieved a glorious victory. For my part I think that a Christian mission should be established here.

*Soldiers*: Hear, hear. God save the Queen!

*Missionary*: And convert the Egyptians.

CURTAIN.

A. B. M.

### THE DEATH OF ADAM.

A NEW TALE, AS TRUE AS GOSPEL.

ADAM had finished a hard day's work, and sat half asleep in his arm-chair. He was 975 years of age, and consequently was beginning to fail a bit. He had nearly "dozed off" when Mrs. Adam entered and handed him a letter. He at once opened it and read aloud as follows:—

"Land of Nod, March, 975.

"DEAR FATHER,—I take this opportunity of penning you a few lines. I wrote 400 years ago, but perhaps the letter got miscarried.

"I often think of you and mother, and would be delighted to receive a letter from you now and then—say once a century.

"I have not forgotten that unfortunate affair with brother Abel. I know it was wrong of me to kill him. But it was provoking to an enthusiastic agriculturist like me to see the Lord accepting his half-starved sheep and rejecting my champion turnips.

"I have got married since coming here, and am now the father of a family of three. My eldest will be 400 years old next September; he is beginning to think about the ladies. My next—a daughter—was 150 last birthday. She goes the messages and rocks baby. Baby, dear thing, is 50 years old this very day, and is getting over its teething beautifully.

"My lad—who you must know is a bit of a wag—bids me send his best wishes 'to grandfather and his rib.'

"I remain your loving son,

"CAIN."

Upon reading this epistle Adam began to sob bitterly, exclaiming every now and then, "My poor lad; my poor lad; my poor, poor Cain."

"Come don't be a softy," said Eve, reproachfully; "you've got nothing to make you cry like a big baby."

"You shut up," said Adam; "that's no way to talk to an orphan like me."

"Well, what makes you get on that way about Cain? I think we've reason to be thankful that he has got married and settled down comfortably."

"Why, lass," said Adam, the tears streaming from his eyes, "it's the thought o' his being married that cuts me so."

"In other words," retorts Eve, sarcastically, "you have experienced matrimony to be a curse. Thank you, sir."

"You don't understand me, lass."

"That I don't."

"Well, I'll make thee," said Adam, taking Eve's hands in his own. "Am I not the first man?"

Eve assented.

"And you the first woman?"

Eve smiled affirmatively.

"Well, then," continues Adam, "can't you see that when my poor lad went to that damned land of Nod he must have married an animal o' some sort. Just fancy your own flesh and blood settling down in life with a baboon!"

Here Adam went into fits. Eve saw that his condition was serious. She did not get medical aid, because there wasn't any. She would have unfastened his shirt-collar, only he hadn't one. The good woman did what she could, but it was of no avail. In a few moments Adam, to use the pathetic words of the poet—

"Slept the endless sleep that knows no snore."

The sad event filled every heart with sorrow except the undertaker's. The unseemly callousness of that gentleman may be excused when it is remembered that Adam's death furnished him with the second order since he set up in business. It is calculated that had Adam lived a day longer this worthy would have been a bankrupt.

WALLACE A. R. NELSON.

## THE GRAVE OF ADAM.

It is a singular circumstance that right under the roof of this same great church, and not far away from that illustrious column, Adam himself, the father of the human race, lies buried. There is no question that he is actually buried in the grave which is pointed out as his—there can be none—because it has never yet been proven that that grave is not the grave in which he is buried.

The tomb of Adam! How touching it was, here in a land of strangers, far away from home, and friends, and all who cared for me, thus to discover the grave of a blood relation. True, a distant one, but still a relation. The unerring instinct of nature thrilled its recognition. The fountain of my filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths, and I gave way to tumultuous emotion. I leaned upon a pillar and burst into tears. I deem it no shame to have wept over the grave of my poor dear relative. Let him who would sneer at my emotion close this volume here, for he will find little to his taste in my journeyings through Holy Land. Noble old man—he did not live to see his child. And I—alas, I did not live to see him. Weighed down by sorrow and disappointment, he died before I was born—six thousand brief summers before I was born. But let us try to bear it with fortitude. Let us trust that he is better off where he is. Let us take comfort in the thought that his loss is our eternal gain.—*Mark Twain's "New Pilgrim's Progress."*

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

AN INTERPOLATED REVELATION.—It is well known by those who have of late years frequented the literary circles of Rome, that the learned Cardinal Mai was prevented, in 1838, from publishing his edition of the *Codex Vaticanus*, because he could not obtain leave from the late Pope (Gregory XVI.) to omit the interpolated passages, and had satisfied himself that they were wanting in all the most ancient MSS. at Rome and Paris. The Pontiff refused because he was bound by the decrees of the Council of Trent and of a Church pretending to infallibility, which had solemnly sanctioned the Vulgate; and the Cardinal had too much good faith to give the authority of his name to what he regarded as a forgery.—*Sir. C. Lyell, "A Second Visit to the U. S. of N. America,"* vol. i.; p. 223.

A SCIENTIFIC OPINION.—In spite of its being so barren in metaphysical qualities, Christianity a hybrid religion, a confused mixture of Vedism of Mazdeism, of Brahmanism, of Buddhism, of Judaism, nevertheless deserves some of the praises which we have given to the great Asiatic religions. Like them, it has deeply concerned itself with moral duties, though it has borrowed from them the greater part of its lessons. But the Christian metaphysics, poor and without logical sequence of thought, distinguishes itself from the others only by the adoption of an insane idea, borrowed from Philo and the Alexandrine dreamers, the idea of creation *ex nihilo*. Christianity has also lowered itself by taking note of all the coarse manifestations of the primitive religions: fetiches, idols, the worship of one's ancestors, the adoration of geni, etc. Its rites for the most part servilely imitated from the Buddhist rites, are wholly devoid of originality. Finally, and this is a much more serious matter, Brahmanism and Buddhism are not incompatible with science; Christianity is diametrically opposed to it. Scientific thought has grown and made its way in spite of Christianity, and by means of scientific thought Christianity is one day destined to perish.—*Dr. Charles Letourneau, "Sociology Based upon Ethnography,"* pp. 316, 317. Library of Contemporary Science, 1881.

EFFECT OF MOHAMMEDANISM IN EUROPE.—The Koran of the Arabians failed to make its way through Europe, but it was very different with the physical science of the Arabians. Its spread was the true foundation of modern national power, for it at once occupied itself with the development of material resources and the introduction of useful inventions. The manner of thought it engendered lies at the basis of the great intellectual controversy of our times. The translation of the centre of intellect from Italy to the West is the legitimate issue of the Moorish invasion of Spain.—*Prof. J. W. Draper, "Human Physiology,"* p. 635, 1861.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"THISSY," said a curly-headed hopeful to his elder sister the other evening as they sat in the moonlight, and were fanned with cooling breezes from off the bay of Hull; "Thissy, if thou didn't go to church any more at all, at all, and changed your religion, thou wouldn't be a girl any more." "Why wouldn't I, my lub?" "Cause you wudth be a he then, of thourse."

"WHAT would you do if you were I and I were you?" tenderly inquired a young swell of his lady friend as he escorted her home from church. "Well," said she, "if I were you I would throw

away that vile cigarette, cut up my cane for firewood, wear my watch chain underneath my coat, and stay at home at nights and pray for brains."

A MINISTER in the Holy Land went for a row upon the sea of Galilee, and arranged with the boatman that for half a crown he should take him to the spot where Jesus is supposed to have walked; which he did. "Is this the place?" said the holy father. "The exact spot," said the man. After the man of God had well looked around him he intimated that he should like to return. "I charge 50s. to take you back," said the boatman. "Ah," said the parson, "no wonder that Jesus got out and walked then. That is one of my doubts solved."

THE following goes to show that the Irish do not make all the bulls. "What would you Jews have done for a religion if Moses father had never existed?" asked Mr. Bennett of Mose Schaimberg. "Mishter Bennett, de Chews vash dot chosen peeples, and if Moses' fodder had never been born, den some udder man would have founded de Mosaic religion, brobably Aaron the brudder of Moses."

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