

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 140.



THREE IN ONE.

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."—1 JOHN V., 7.

GLADSTONE ON GENESIS.

(Concluded from p. 354).

DR. RÉVILLE says that the Bible speaks of the heaven as a solid vault. Not so, says Mr. Gladstone; the Hebrew "firmament" means "an expanse." But the two meanings are not contradictory. The question is, What were the Hebrew notions of astronomy? The Jews undoubtedly conceived the sky as a solid dome, in which the heavenly bodies were fixed, and worked to and fro like sliding panels. There were windows communicating with the theological heaven beyond, and these were opened at the Flood to let the divine vengeance pour down on the sons of Adam. According to another story, Joshua kept the sun and moon standing still, the one from setting and the other from rising, until the Jews had ended the pursuit and slaughter of their enemies. Mr. Gladstone's etymology is no reply to Dr. Réville. It is merely an evasion of the difficulty.

Mr. Gladstone denies Dr. Réville's statement that, according to the Bible, the stars were created after the earth; and he supports the denial in a long passage, which reminds us of one of those speeches he has been known to make in the House of Commons, so utterly clear and convincing that neither friend nor foe could understand what he was driving at. So far as we can fathom Mr. Gladstone's meaning, he seems to contend that the stars were included in the original "heaven," only they were not

mentioned then, because they come in so very much better where they are. The sun and moon were also included in the creation, but omitted in the report for the same reason. On the fourth day, says Mr. Gladstone, they were "located in the firmament," and set shining. Here is astronomy for you! What would Norman Lockyer think of it? Probably very much what, in a good story, the British nation thought of Tupper. "Sir," said a softish Yankee to Thackeray when he was lecturing in the States, "what do the English think of Tupper?" "Sir," replied Thackeray, "they do not think of Tupper." Mr. Gladstone does not appear to know that our earth is a child of the sun, and cannot be coeval with its parent. Nor does he notice that the "morning and evening," which thrice preceded the "location" of the sun, are scientific absurdities. Morning and evening are simply the gradations between day and night, and depend on the earth's revolving on its axis in its orbit round the sun. To say, therefore, as Genesis does, that there was evening and morning three days before the sun was "located," is to say that the effect existed three days before the cause commenced to operate.

Genesis also says that vegetation flourished before the making, or at least the shining, of the sun. Dr. Réville rightly refers to this as one of the "Mistakes of Moses." Oh no, says Mr. Gladstone. Light first existed in a state of diffusion, before it was "accumulated upon or in the sun." God brought the light together, and focussed it, on the fourth day; but prior to that it was quite "sufficient for the purposes of vegetation." It is difficult to keep one's countenance before such grotesque ignorance. Mr. Gladstone is not bound to argue on matters of science, but if he will do so, he should really consult an elementary treatise on physics.

Mr. Gladstone explains the phrase "Let us make man in our own image." It has nothing to do with Elohim, or early Jewish polytheism, as those German, Dutch and French critics allege; nor is it a kind of royal plural such as sovereigns are wont to use. It is "an indication of a plurality in the Divine Unity"; in other words, the first enunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Mr. Gladstone even surmises that it "conveyed a like signification to the earliest hearers or readers of the Book of Genesis." Poor Jews! They fought like tigers for their monotheism; they have worshipped their one and indivisible Jehovah through centuries of Christian persecution; and now the ex-premier of "the most Christian nation in the world" tells them that they have been Trinitarians all the while without knowing it.

With respect to the six "days," Mr. Gladstone opines that they were periods. Of what length he does not say. Nor does he explain why "evening and morning" are used to specify and emphasise the duration of "day," if its meaning was figurative. He neglects also to notice the fourth commandment, which declares that the Jews are to work six days and to rest on the seventh because God did so at the creation. On the whole Mr. Gladstone is particularly careful not to let the Bible explain itself. This is certainly prudent, but not altogether honest.

Dr. Réville complains that the first pair—Mr. Adam and Mrs. Eve—whom the Lord took so much trouble to create "good," were "strangers to the most elementary notions of morality," being without any sense of shame. Mr. Gladstone admits the fact, but urges that "in their loving obedience to their Father and Creator they would certainly have had a germ, let me say an opening bud, of morality." A little later his caution deserts him, and he bursts out into a eulogy of the silly tenants of Eden, whom he describes as being "morally and physically balanced, and nobly pure in every faculty." Old Bishop South's panegyric on Adam

is no more excessive, and much more eloquent. Aristotle, says the vehement and witty preacher, was only a rudiment of Adam, and Athens but the rubbish of Paradise. In fact, he does not scruple to say that Adam was perfect. So he was—a perfect fool.

The story of the Fall is probably borrowed from the Persic religion. But Mr. Gladstone does not trouble himself about that. He proves history by his own feelings, and is sure that the Fall happened because "the commission of sin, that is the act of deliberately breaking a known law of duty, injures the nature and composition of the being who commits it." This, however, is only a pompous way of saying that habit is second nature, that what we do once becomes easier the second time, and more so the third. Even the dwelling on vice injures the character; for as Marcus Aurelius says "the mind is dyed by the thoughts." What a true and beautiful sentence! It was written by a profound *thinker*, and not by a *rhetorician*. There is more in it than in all Mr. Gladstone's windy pages. But what on earth has this to do with the Fall?

We come now to Mr. Gladstone's final proof of the inspiration of Moses. Genesis represents fish as coming first, fowl next, beasts next, and man last. This, says Mr. Gladstone, is the very order which Evolution establishes; and therefore "it is surely impossible to avoid the conclusion, first, that either this writer was gifted with faculties passing all human experience, or else his knowledge was divine." Mr. Gladstone's logic is as hasty as his grammar. There is no connection between his premises and his conclusion; or rather, his minor premise can only be connected with his conclusion by means of a major premise of the most astounding absurdity; namely, that without the aid of exact science a sensible man could not guess that a human being was higher than a jackass, or a dog than a rooster, or a pigeon than a mackerel. Mr. Gladstone is mistaken. Evolution explains and connects the gradations, but does not disclose the scale, which has always been obvious. If Moses was inspired because he began with the "water population" (to use Mr. Gladstone's grandiloquent phrase) and ended with man; then we must allow that Hesiod, Lucretius, and Ovid were inspired, for they tell us the very same thing.

With an air of venerable superiority to "modern thought," Mr. Gladstone holds to "the old-fashioned belief that there is a Revelation in the Book of Genesis." But he gives up "verbal inspiration," and does not defend "the absolute integrity of the text." In other words, the Bible is part God's word and part man's word, and which is which depends on taste; and the Bible is all wrong if you fancy it means what it says, although it is all right if you understand it to mean something else.

The little sermon with which Mr. Gladstone concludes, explains his divagations from the path of reason. He expresses "surprise not only at the fact, but at the manner in which in this day, writers whose name is Legion, unimpeached in character and abounding in talent, not only put away from them, [but] cast into shadow or the very gulf of negation itself, the conception of a Deity, an acting and a ruling Deity." Instead of regarding it as a loss, these infatuated persons regard it, "with a joy and exultation that might almost recall the frantic orgies of the Commune." This consolatory belief in Deity has satisfied doubts and wiped away tears, says Mr. Gladstone; although we should say it has stifled more doubts than it has satisfied, and caused more tears than it has wiped away. Surely then, he urges, these disbelievers must be under "some deep judicial darkness." But they may as easily retort, as probably they will, that the darkness is all on the other side. Mr. Gladstone, like so many Christians, wishes to preserve faith as a "consolation;" and knowing that Christian faith is based on the Bible, he will turn and twist awkward texts into any meaning rather than allow that they are hopelessly at variance with science, morality and common sense. Mr. Gladstone dislikes Darwin and modern scientific garments, and prefers, because he is used to them, Moses and Hebrew old-clothes. He even fancies us of a newer school judicially blind because we will not patronise his tailor. But we remember the pregnant warning of a much greater man. "The Jew old-clothes," said Carlyle, "having now grown fairly pestilential, a poisonous encumbrance in the path of men, burn them up with revolutionary fire." G. W. FOOTE.

CONVICTED SAINTS.

THE Eliza Armstrong case is ended, but as the result reaches us only just before we go to press we are unable to deal fully with the matter this week. Next week we shall treat it at length, not because the case in itself could be particularly interesting to our readers, but because the prisoners Stead, Jacques, and Jarrett have been the pet darlings of the screaming religionists of all classes and degrees, from Cardinal Manning and the Archbishop of Canterbury to Mrs. Butler and the Salvation Army, and, in the final descent, to Henry Varley. We said at the very outset that if the *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations had appeared in a Freethought journal, its editor, printer and publisher would, in less than a week, be practising on a Christian treadmill. Mr. Stead was not prosecuted for obscenity, but he has fallen into his own trap. He now finds that administering chloroform to another man's daughter, and subjecting her to an indecent examination, is regarded in its proper light by a judge and jury. Such things have been condoned, and almost defended, at scores of pious meetings because of Mr. Stead's Christian motives, which he has never ceased to parade as a justification for all his proceedings. But whatever Mr. Stead's motives may have been, the trial (and it is well to emphasise this) has completely disproved his contention that a regular business is made of the abduction and outrage of young girls. It has also discredited the whole of the revelations. Mr. Stead and his confederates will now have leisure to reflect on the truth that the end does not justify the means; and probably they will in future avoid dabbling in the mud which seems so delightful to a certain order of religious minds. When we remember that Mr. Stead was sub-editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* at the time of our imprisonment, and was therefore responsible for the malicious paragraphs on our case which appeared in its columns before Mr. John Morley had the grace to intervene, we are inclined to feel scant sympathy with him in his present trouble. He thought a taste of prison good for us then; we hope it will be good for him now. G. W. FOOTE.

MR. SPURGEON ON HELL.

THE following strictly accurate description of the infernal regions is given in the current number of the *Baptist Messenger*, being part of its usual report of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons:—"But consider, lastly, *where the soul must go to that is lost*. There is a place, as much beneath imagination as heaven is above it; a place of murky darkness, where only lurid flames make darkness visible; a place where beds of flame are the fearful couches upon which spirits groan; a place where God Almighty from his mouth pours a stream of brimstone, kindling that 'pile of fire and of much wood' which God has prepared of old as a Tophet for the lost and ruined. There is a spot, whose only sights are scenes of fearful woe; there is a place—I do not know where it is; it is somewhere, not in the bowels of this earth, I trust, for that were a sad thing for this world to have hell within its bowels—but somewhere in a far-off world there is a place where the only music is the mournful symphony of damned spirits; where howling, groaning, moaning, wailing and gnashing of teeth make up the horrid concert. There is a place where demons fly, swift as air, with whips of knotted burning wire, torturing poor souls; where tongues, on fire with agony, burn the roofs of mouths that shriek for drops of water—that water all denied." The *Christian World* pretends that this sermon is an old one and hopes Mr. Spurgeon will repudiate it.

EIGHT men, after the wreck of the *Lady Frances*, found themselves in an open boat without food or water. They suffered from terrible thirst and one by one went raving mad and leaped into the sea, till only two survivors were left. The *Christian Herald*, which tells the mournful story, of course says nothing of the callous inhumanity of the God who could see his children perishing with thirst and still maintain a heartless policy of non-interference, or rather of direct infliction of the anguish and insanity. The Christian God is worse than the worst man who ever lived. The sufferings in this world and in hell that he will cause his "children" to endure mark him as a monster of iniquity. Yet Christian fathers and mothers are proud to worship so fiendish a parent.

WE regret to learn that the Secular Hall at Tunbridge Wells, which had been handsomely painted and decorated in high art style with busts, etc., has been burnt and the library destroyed. We hope the Secularists of Tunbridge Wells will take steps at once to repair the mischief, and re-establish themselves in that stronghold of bigotry.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Christian Herald* reckons that one-tenth of the human race are Mohammedans, another tenth Brahmans, and more than four-tenths Buddhists. This leaves less than four-tenths for idolaters, Protestants, Catholics, the Greek Church, miscellaneous religions, and Freethinkers. What becomes of the numerical argument for Christianity? Mohammedanism, too, it owns, only started twelve centuries ago, and "coming into the world at a time when Christianity had been seated for some centuries on the imperial throne, in an incredibly short space of time it overthrew both the Christian empire and its rival, the Persian, and established a sway greater than the Cæsars had ever wielded." If striking success is the test of truth, as Christians often claim, then Mohammedanism, and even Mormonism, are deserving of more confidence than Christianity.

THE Howard Association, it appears, has addressed a memorial to the Home Secretary asking for an alteration of prison rules on behalf of members of the Salvation Army, who happen to be sent to gaol for breaking the law. These impudent religious philanthropists hold that the present treatment of prisoners is "calculated to seriously endanger health and life" in Salvationist fanatics, but for the remaining criminals they think that "our prisons are, in some respects, not even penal enough." If their request were granted we should think that every intelligent burglar and pickpocket would join the "Army" forthwith.

THE clericals in Belgium are using their present parliamentary power in overthrowing the system of secularised national education organised by their opponents. Fifty-three more communal primary schools have just been suppressed, and the pupils of 220 public primary schools have been transferred to the convent schools. We venture to prophesy that a powerful popular reaction will hurl the priestly party from power as soon as their term of office expires. They will then cant and whine about the oppression and tyranny and spoliation involved in the reversal of their own despotic policy.

ACCORDING to our usually solemn and irredeemably dreary contemporary the *Rock*, the question which was in the minds and on the tongues of a certain congregation in Bristol on All Saints' Day, after leaving church, where they heard a "singularly appropriate sermon," was—"Who won the donkey?" The animal had just been raffled at a church bazaar. Whether he had been exhibited in the pulpit, and whether his brayings had constituted the "singularly appropriate sermon," we are not informed.]

THE *Church Times* is offended with the Archbishop of Canterbury for his recent references to the Reformation. It says: "he speaks of Wiclif and Luther as if they were authorities; whereas we would as lief he talked to us of Mr. George and Tom Paine. . . . As to Luther, it is impossible to think without horror of what cannot be described as less than the apostasy of all the States which followed him." Only those who have looked a little behind the scenes know the extent to which these anti-Protestant sentiments exist among the wire-pullers of the Church of England.

THE Rev. W. J. Hocking tells us the following story:—"A gentleman travelling in Texas observed a man driving a waggon drawn by four bullocks. As he followed the waggon, and drew near to it, he heard the driver accosting his cattle in the following terms: 'Gee whoa, Baptist! Hey-up, Presbyterian! Get on, Episcopalian! Now then Methodist!' Overtaking the man, he said, 'Friend, these are strange names to give horned cattle. Tell me your reason for so naming them?' 'Well,' said the driver, 'I calls that one Baptist because he's always making for the water. I calls that one Presbyterian because he will do nothing except by rule. I calls that one Episcopalian because he carries his head mighty high, and I calls that one Methodist because he is always kicking out over the traces.'"

THE Rev. W. Stewart Ross, formerly rector of Christ Church, Belfast, was charged before the Plymouth magistrates with wounding John Tozer and William Way. The reverend delinquent had eloped last March with the wife of Mr. Charles Fox, a teacher in the Christ Church Sunday School. After a long interval it was discovered that the man of God was preaching the gospel at Plymouth, and Mr. Fox determined to follow him there and expose him. Mr. Fox found him conducting a religious service in the Young Men's Christian Association, and rushing at him struck him with his walking stick and denounced him as having run away with his wife. The reverend gentleman escaped into the street and was pursued by a rapidly increasing crowd. Presently he pulled out a penknife and stabbing at his pursuers wounded Mr. Tozer in the hand severely and Mr. Way slightly. Mr. Ross indignantly denies the charge of stabbing, but admits having eloped with Mrs. Fox, alleging moreover, that he did this with the full knowledge of her husband. What should we do without these holy ministers to teach us morals and show us the ways of piety and peace!

FLAGELLATION as a method of Christian discipline is being advocated in the columns of the *Catholic Tablet*. Father Gurdon says, "What we are suffering from in these evil days is general unwhippedness." As applying to the Catholic priests, we dare say he is correct. The pious father gives his own recollections of the discipline. "The lifting of raiment is almost a sacrament in itself. The knowledge of self, the knowledge of a superior, the humiliation which does not degrade, all are engendered by this preliminary process. Cut No. 1: this, curiously enough, I generally felt among my teeth, as well as elsewhere. Cuts Nos. 2 and 3: these as a rule, placed my soul amongst the archangels: I ceased to belong to earth." This is surely an easy method of placing one's soul amongst the archangels, and if Father Gurdon will call round at our office we shall be happy to assist him in the process.

LOUD complaints have recently been expressed in the columns of the *Tablet* of the cruel punishments inflicted on boys in the upper Roman Catholic schools. The complaints were so numerous that the editor has thought it wise to stop the correspondence. The cruelty of monks and celibates has frequently been noticed. The Christians claim divine authority for the use of the rod. It is strongly recommended by Solomon, whose own children, by the way, did not illustrate its beneficial effects.

OUR enemies are not altogether a happy family among themselves. Varley and Harcourt for instance, the cowardly liars who revile us for alleged obscenity, now agree like fire and water. Varley is now reviling his Christian ally for much more than mere obscenity. But the other night, having given himself a "day off" from his pleasant task of collecting subscriptions for our prosecution, he ventured to address a meeting at Derby for the purpose of influencing Harcourt's election there by his brotherly charges in reference to the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the *Pall Mall Gazette* "revelations." The entire audience, however, was hostile to the Evangelist, and he and his friends were pelted off the platform within a few minutes of their putting in an appearance. They had to scale a wall to escape the violence of the crowd inside and outside the building.

MR. VARLEY presented rather an amusing spectacle on the platform. After the strict precautions taken to obtain a packed ticket meeting he was surprised to find himself greeted with storms of groans and hisses, varied with cheers for Liberal leaders and popular songs. He essayed in vain to gain a hearing. He had foolishly chosen the 5th of November for the meeting, and lighted crackers thrown on the platform soon mightily discommoded the pious ones. Some marksman in the gallery discharged a large paper bag of red ochre which burst on Varley's head and showered its contents on his face, neck and dress. He was completely transformed into a red man, and the audience burst into uncontrollable laughter, some of the occupants of the balcony seeming likely to fall over from excessive mirth. Varley's chief supporter soon appeared in still more varied tints, and others were pelted with black powder suspiciously like soot. Then these ornamented fifth-of-November saints stamped, routed by the Devil in the shape of a Derby audience.

THE Portsmouth Church Congress was anything but a financial success, and the guarantors have been called upon to pay 7s. in the pound.

THE Vicar of St. Luke's, Bedminster, Bristol, has for some time been advertising in the *Rock* for a curate, whose "doctrinal views must accord with those of Toplady, Romaine, Newton and Hawker." Although he offers £150 per annum, he does not seem easily suited. Can it be that the world has forgotten all about the doctrinal views of Toplady and Co.? It is curious when we reflect on the enormous amount of money taken by the Church, that most of its leading men of the past two centuries are now but names. We must go back to the days of Hooker, South, Barrow and Taylor to find Churchmen of real eminence in their profession.

DURING service at Benhall Church, Saxmundham, on Sunday morning, a young woman named Sawyer suddenly expired whilst in the act of prayer. What moral will the Christian journals draw from this? Had she died while listening to a Freethought lecture the moral would have been obvious.

THE Rev. Dr. Donald Fraser, one of the most interesting types of the old Scottish Puritan, has been preaching on "The Representations of the Divine Character in the Old Testament: whether it offends the Moral Sense." Perhaps it depends upon whose moral sense is in question. A person in whom the savage is not eradicated is not likely to be offended with a God who delights in slaughter and requires bloody sacrifices.

ANOTHER Salvationist, one Walter Novell, has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment for robbing the person with whom he lodged.

THE School Board elections have unfortunately resulted in the return of a majority nominally opposed to what is called the School Board policy. We are especially sorry to see that Mr. Lobb, the editor of the *Christian Age*, heads the poll in Hackney

in conjunction with his colleague Mr. Deacon, the public-house man. Lobb is a conceited fop and a thorough humbug. Those who are misled by the wild accusations and silly falsehoods in his extravagant pamphlet on the extravagance of the School Board, should also read "Lobb's Exposure Exposed," by Mr. Bevan, a retiring member of the late School Board. Lobb is one of the most extravagant men on the Board. To win the teachers' support he proposed to raise their salaries over £17,000 a year, which capitalised would represent a lump sum of more than £400,000. Failing to win the support of his fellow-members for his reckless propositions, he turns around and catches popular support by abusing them for wasting as he alleges a million pounds during their fifteen years' work.

THOSE who cry out against the extravagance of the School Board should notice that from one-tenth to one-fifth of the time is wasted on religious teaching and observances, which cannot justifiably be paid for out of rates compulsorily exacted from people of all religions and of none. The London School Board has thus wasted one-and-a-half to three millions over a new Establishment of a joint-stock Church-and-Chapel in public schools. The clerical cheese-paring party never complain of this theft of public funds nor of the imposition of religious duties on teachers who have no conscience clause to protect them.

ARCHDEACON DENISON says that Mr. Gladstone is no better than the Devil, and that every Whig wishes for his death. Very charitable and kindly certainly, but who expects anything better from a Christian dignity like Archdeacon Denison?

THE Rev. J. W. Hooper has seized a bed, five chairs and two tables from the house of a poor working man named Worley who lives at Low Fell near Gateshead. He calls this tithes. Men of common sense can only call it sanctified robbery. The reverend robber evidently approves of Christ's saying, "Give to him that asketh," and he thinks it highly unchristian that any of his flock should refuse the tithes he asks of them, so as pastor and master he compels his lambs to carry out Christ's injunction. When he takes their chairs they ought to give him their tables also, and he as a good Christian sees that they do it.

THE Rev. A. N. Lefroy, of Brentwood, refused the use of a National school-room for a Liberal meeting on account of "the scurrilous, lying, deceitful and revolutionary teaching contained in most of the speeches of the Radical and Liberal party—from Messrs. Gladstone, Chamberlain and Bright downwards." In the same district nine applications were made for school-rooms on behalf of the Liberals, and in only two was consent given.

THE Church Association have decided to prosecute the Bishop of Chichester, for ordaining to the living of St. Paul's, Brighton, the Rev. J. Baghot de la Bere, formerly vicar of Prestbury, in order to test whether a clergyman deprived of his living can officiate elsewhere.

A GOOD illustration of the power of the State over property of the Church has just occurred. Owing to the death of Prebendary Sir W. Palmer, the most valuable living in the gift of the Bishop of Salisbury falls to the disposal of the Prime Minister because her Majesty has not yet received the homage of Bishop Wordsworth, when she will bestow upon him the temporalities enjoyed by his predecessor.

THE clergymen who are promoting Church Reform have announced as the first plank of their platform, "The institution of a Church board in every parish, where desired, in which the ecclesiastical property should be invested." Fairly carried out with boards which represented the whole of the parishoners, this might prove an equivalent to Disestablishment. But we may be sure no scheme patronised by the clergy would be fairly carried out.

THE Duke of Somerset, an open opponent of Christianity, has signed an electioneering protest against Disestablishment. This aristocratic Freethinker thinks that Freethought is good for the upper classes, but would ruin the morals of the Christian and criminal lower classes; so he supports the Church as "the greatest bulwark against infidelity." A man who writes a book accusing the Bible of bearing "false witness," and exposing the inconsistencies and impossibilities of the Christian scheme, is a rather curious ally for churchmen.

THOSE who put out their hand to support the tottering Establishment should remember the story of Uzzah, who put forth his hand to support the ark of God when the oxen stumbled. John Bull will presently stumble into the right path and will shake off the burden of the State Church. The fate of the Tories in rashly propping it up will resemble that of Uzzah.

THE *Birmingham Mail* in an article on "The Liberals and Religion," contends that, although the Liberal party includes "pitiful men who have drifted away from the moorings of all faith," the bulk are orthodox Nonconformists, and it declares that if it ever comes to a deadly intellectual struggle between the forces of faith and unbelief, the Liberal

Nonconformists will be the worst foes of the latter. No doubt there is some truth in this, but our Nonconforming friends may remember they have another foe to fight, and to meet the advancing pretensions of Rome and sacerdotalism they will be glad of the help of "infidelity," and possibly may learn somewhat from it.

A NICE squabble between a vicar and his curate is reported as having taken place at a parish church in the diocese of Salisbury, the vicar not only ordering the curate out of church, but tearing the surplice from his back and throwing it out into the church-yard.

THE Reformed Presbyterians must have very sensitive consciences. According to their minister, the Rev. James Kerr of Glasgow, they cannot exercise the franchise with a good conscience "because members of Parliament were required to take an oath of allegiance which commits them to the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown." If the Crown claimed supremacy over the Reformed Presbyterians we could sympathise with the objection. As it is it only shows how every puny church would exalt itself above the State if it could.

THE *Christian Age* gives a portrait and biography of the Rev. H. Bradford, who was dismissed by his congregation at Northampton for having too much Bradlaugh on the brain. Samuel Morley and other professional bigots—we beg pardon, philanthropists, that's the word—came to his rescue and found the poor man a new chapel, where he goes on testifying for God against Bradlaugh. The *Christian Age* indulges in some loose slander about the junior member for Northampton, with which we need not trouble our readers, as they have all heard the same sort of thing some millions of times before.

THE Rev. Philip Hains, of Wigan, fights shy of Mr. Foote's challenge to a public debate, although he affects to believe that the editor of the *Freethinker* is afraid of him. Instead of meeting Mr. Foote on equal terms, the reverend and slightly grotesque sky-pilot replies to him in the Public Hall with the Mayor in the chair; no discussion being allowed, although Secularists were informed that the lecturer would consider any questions submitted to him in writing. Mr. Hains's professions of fair-play are a screaming farce. He loves debate as the Devil does holy water; and we tell him candidly that he is too sensible of the rottenness of his creed to venture to discuss it in public with a practised debater.

MR. T. ROBINSON, Treasurer of the Wigan Branch N. S. S., writes a long and crushing letter to the *Examiner*, exposing Mr. Hains's contemptible tricks, and showing how he will do anything rather than debate.

THE Pope has issued another Encyclical against Liberalism. He condemns both the liberty of the press and universal suffrage. Nevertheless, Christianity is in favor of progress, of course—of progress towards Christ, that is, who represents the ideas of two thousand years ago.

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH, at Bristol, shirked replying to the question, would he vote for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, by the pretence that he did not know what Laws were referred to. He ought to know that we were imprisoned under the common-judge-made law, which is supported by the statute 9 and 10 William III., cap. 35, which punishes with imprisonment any one "who shall deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority." Hicks-Beach is evidently afraid either to uphold or to remove the persecuting laws, and so pretends ignorance.

THE life-size figure of a female slack-wire dancer has for some weeks past graced the hoardings of London. There is nothing indecent in the figure, though it would certainly be accounted indecent if it appeared in the *Freethinker*. But it happened to meet the eye of Bishop Alford, who writes a letter to the *Times* regarding it as a sign of a wave of wickedness spreading over the land. The wickedness evidently lies in Bishop Alford's imagination. An ounce of civet, good apothecary!

THE *Christian Commonwealth* says that "one of the greatest difficulties a chaplain has to deal with is that on board ship he has to deal with several churches." In an adjacent column we read how Dr. Parker in his sermon says that "the Church is much more united than it seems to be. The union is not in words, but in the all-amalgamating influence of love. Yet how we rage and battle." Because the sects agree in common hatred of the "infidel," and seek mutual aid against a common danger, the Church of Christ is supposed to be tolerably "united," but its contending sections hate each other almost as much as they hate the Atheist. How much has the "all-amalgamating influence of love" reconciled Protestant and Romanist? Was it "love" that caused the Inquisition, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the whole series of "Crimes of Christianity?"

"THE GRAND OLD MAN" Cigars are so named because, like the Grand Old Man himself, they have never been equalled.—Thornes, Maker, Bradford, Yorks. All Liberal and Radical Clubs should try them.—ADVT.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 15, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent Kentish Town, N.W.; at 7.30, "An Hour in Heaven."

NOVEMBER 22, Halifax; 29, Manchester; 30, Leicester.

DECEMBER 6, Plymouth; 13, Milton Hall, London; 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Milton Hall, London.

JANUARY 3, Milton Hall, London; 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Huddersfield; 24, Liverpool; 31, Hall of Science, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7^d.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—A Constant Reader, N. Strzelecki.

J. P. CHACE.—Of course *ate* is the conventional form of the past tense. If it was otherwise printed in the *Freethinker* it was not strictly incorrect.

W. G. C.—When you find the Tories systematically denying to Freethinkers the rights of citizenship it is high time to leave their camp. Thanks for the cutting from the first number of the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, which will, we hope, do something to break down the Joe-Cowenism of the city.

M. BLACKWELL.—You won't make much impression on Judge North. If he had been Pharaoh, the Lord wouldn't have wasted any time in hardening his heart.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—It has been out of print for years.

F. ASHE.—Thanks for the cutting. We dealt with the matter last week. Yes, our "good work," as you call it, is flourishing. Our circulation increases, our books and pamphlets are in greater demand than ever, and our audiences grow larger every season. Our great difficulty is getting a little rest and recreation.

SECLARISTS in Wood Green and neighborhood desirous of organisation are requested to communicate with W. Stewart, 48 Moselle Avenue, Noel Park.

H. SMITHERS tells us he has visited two "Paradises" in Australia, one of which he prefers to the heavenly one. Mr. Foote lectured on Hell not long ago. If you watch the Special Notices you will doubtless see the lecture announced again. Thanks for the cutting about Mr. Symes. It shall appear next week.

W. NELSON points out that the Liberals of Birmingham are allowing the ministerial wire-pullers to betray the cause of non-sectarian teaching in Board schools.

H. T. BAILEY.—"Bible Contradictions" is only the first part of a Bible Handbook. There will be an Index to the whole work. "Mistakes of Moses" is bound in cloth at eightpence. Many thanks for your suggestions, but at present we do not see our way to enlarging the *Freethinker*. Although small everything in it is readable. We don't shovel in columns of rubbish or sawdust.

H. ROWDEN.—So far the judges hold that disbelief in future rewards and punishments incapacitates a man from swearing. Glad to hear you find "Bible Contradictions" so useful.

W. JOYCE.—Of course "Crimes of Christianity" will have an Index—and a good one too—when it is completed; but no man in his right senses would expect one in the middle.

W. C. SCRIVENER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. CHENU.—It means that the drawing should be a third wider than the breadth of one or two columns.

LONG SUFFERER.—Not a bad notion. But we are fighting for a grand idea, and cannot descend to such tricks to increase our circulation. It would be another matter if the *Freethinker* were a purely commercial venture.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Pray press Dr. Blake Odgers again on the question of the Blasphemy Laws until he gives a definite answer. He will, we fear, shirk and equivocate as long as he can. It was he who drew up that Memorandum for the Unitarians, coolly telling them that as the law left them in safety they need not trouble about other people's danger.

W. PHILLIPS, a Northumberland man, writes: "The railway men here are always in a great hurry to get a look at the *Freethinker*. As soon as they see me on Friday their first question is 'Have you got your Bible? Let's see it!'"

INFIDEL.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. T. BARRETT.—Jokes are always welcome.

P. N.—Papers received. We have dealt with the matter.

CONSISTENCY, in thanking us for our criticism of Mr. Gladstone, mentions, as a proof that people worship big reputations, the fact that so many Liberals who were hot on Disestablishment are now as cold as ice because Mr. Gladstone discounts it.

A. H. HUNTER asks us to announce that the Nottingham Branch N. S. S. resume their meetings at the "Durham Ox" this evening, Nov. 15. Christian charity debars them from other meeting-places.

A. NOYES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Our friends should heckle every candidate—Tory, Liberal or Radical—on the Blasphemy Laws during the next week or two.

A. SCIT.—Read "Pious Frauds" in "Crimes of Christianity."

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

The Catalogue of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The People—Dublin Evening Mail—Scripture Readers' Journal—Wigan Examiner—Globe—Sunday Chronicle—Derby Telegraph—Wigan Observer—Leeds Mercury—Kent and Sussex Courier—Newcastle Chronicle—Brighton Guardian—Bristol Times—Liberty—Republican—Boston Investigator—Liverpool Mercury—Essex Weekly News—West Sussex Gazette.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We offer another PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Religious Topical Sketch suitable for reproduction; the competition to close on December 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a capital audience at the Hall of Science last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's new lecture on "An Hour in Heaven," although some were doubtless deterred from coming by the wet. These, however, if the clerk of the weather is in a better temper, will have an opportunity of hearing the lecture at Milton Hall, where Mr. Foote will re-deliver it this evening (November 15).

ONE of our occasional contributors, Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, had a very useful letter in the last number of the *Weekly Dispatch* on Mr. Gladstone's article in the *Nineteenth Century*. Such letters, in papers of very wide circulation, do our cause a great deal of good.

MR. GEORGE PAYNE failed to get returned to the Manchester School Board. Yet he polled 11,690 votes, which, even if most of them were plumpers, is a promising sign. Mr. Payne's candidature was an eleventh-hour one; he had only a few days to organise and fight his campaign; and on the whole the wonder is that he polled so well. He received more support than Dr. Pankhurst did a few years ago, and as he went on the Secular Education ticket it is obvious that the Freethought strength has very much increased in Cottonopolis.

MR. PAYNE fought very pluckily, and we hope he will join in the fray at the next School Board elections. With longer and better preparations he should win.

ALDERMAN ACKERLEY, of Wigan, has given *Progress* a good advertisement in objecting to its appearance in the public library. He saw it was edited by G. W. Foote, the gentleman who had recently been lecturing in Wigan, and whose purpose was to "attack religion." A lively discussion ensued, the mayor remarking that they were only spending their time in advertising the magazine. No resolution was moved, but the library committee are to "take the matter into consideration." We hope the whole town council will take the magazine into consideration.

MR. C. FENWICK, Liberal candidate for the Wansbeck division of Northumberland, is in favor of abolishing the Blasphemy Laws and of the Affirmation Bill.

MR. CROWHURST, "a Member of the Church of England," writing in the November number of the *Contemporary Review* on "The Established Church in the Village," looks forward to the speedy approach of Disestablishment. A Legislature elected by the mass of the people is unlikely to maintain an institution from which the benefit derived is shadowy and whose endowments go to profit a privileged class.

MR. CROWHURST points out that the idyllic pictures of rural Church life are entirely misleading. This Church member declares that the "narrowness and spiritual poverty of the pulpit utterances, the formality, the class divisions, the listlessness, the unreality, together constitute a spiritual atmosphere whose closeness and impurity would often be enough to stifle the faith of a St. Francis." He moreover expressed his belief that what religious conviction exists in a village is found in the chapel.

IN the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, Dr. Walter Moxon discusses the accounts of alleged Faith-healing, and shows reasons for discrediting, or at any rate seriously discounting, them. In particular the Rev. J. A. Dowie (of Bethshan) is proved to describe not merely miraculous cures but miraculous—that is to say impossible—diseases also. Even the *Christian World* says "the faith-healing movement approaches criminality and is a persuasion to suicide."

How much the people of Berlin care about Christianity may be inferred from the fact that to accommodate the million and a quarter inhabitants of the empire city there are only thirty-eight churches and eighteen chapels, with about fifty thousand sittings, and many of those are half empty. The rest of the population go to the country, the museums, the theatres and the concert gardens, on the "Lord's day." No wonder our sky-pilots object to the "continental Sunday."

THE *Republican* for November contains the portraits with brief mention of six American Freethinkers: T. C. Leland, T. B. Wakeman, Elizur Wright, James Parton, Parker Pillsbury and Stephen Pearl Andrews. It does not mention Elizur Wright's services in the anti-slavery cause, and omits from the account of Mr. Parton's work his important "Life of Voltaire."

WICKED VOLTAIRE!

† "A WICKED TEACHER.—A certain French boy once had the misfortune to possess a very bad uncle. He taught him to deny the existence of God. He learnt the dreadful lesson so well, and would say such things of Jesus and the Bible, that his school-mates were wonder-stricken and his teachers horrified. 'That young rascal,' cried one of the latter, 'will become the pillar of infidelity in France.' And he was right. The bad boy grew to be a worse man. He hated the name of Jesus with a bitter hatred. He wrote books denying everything pure, and good, and holy. He became the curse of his day; bad men were multiplied and made viler by his evil example. Good men dreaded him as they would a pestilence. This bad fellow lived to the age of eighty-four. What a monument of God's long-suffering mercy! And he died a very awful death, using dreadful language in one breath and imploring mercy in the next. People ran away from his death-bed terrified, and the nurse who remained with him could never afterwards speak of his death without a shudder. This man's name was Voltaire. He lived a hundred and fifty years ago. I have mentioned him to show you the consequence of throwing aside the fear of God in youth."

This pretty little story, which I quote from No. 41 of *Sunday*, a magazine of pious reading for the young, is a nice sample of the simple, guileless, moral anecdotes by which children are cheated into a belief that the opponents of Christianity are among the vilest of the vile. It opens with a lie. Voltaire had no bad uncle who taught him Atheism. Nor did he ever deny the existence of God. On the contrary, he anticipated Paley with the argument that as a watch proves a watchmaker, so the contrivances of Nature prove a designer. His first instructors were priests. To them, if to anyone, is to be traced his early scepticism in revealed religion. It has indeed been ascribed to his godfather, the Abbé Châteauneuf. He was taught "Latin and nonsense" in a Jesuits' college, and it was there Father Le Jay is said to have predicted that he would become the *coryphée* of Deism in France. He was neither a bad boy nor "a worse man." His life was not spotless, but his faults were those of his age and education. For his time and his temptations, his personal offences were neither many nor great. Some small alloy of copper does not render gold inferior to silver, and Voltaire will favorably compare with the best of the religious men of his own day. Judged by his work, he was one of the best of men, because he did most good to his fellows and because in his heart was the most burning love of truth, justice and toleration. In the words of the historian Lecky, he did "more to destroy the greatest of human curses than any other of the sons of men."

That he hated the name of Jesus with a bitter hatred is a lie. While ridiculing miracles and deriding the blasphemy that a man was God, he extolled the life and ethics of Jesus. I have heard a minister from his coward's castle declare that Voltaire said, "Crush the wretch," in allusion to Christ. That oft-repeated phrase *Ecrasez l'Infâme* was directed at no person. Nor was it, as some Protestants have asserted, directed against Roman Catholicism. As Voltaire saw and said, "fanatic Papists and fanatic Calvinists are tarred with the same brush." *L'Infâme* was religion claiming supernatural authority and enforcing its claim, as it ever seeks to do, by pains and penalties. Intolerance, bigotry and Pharisaism he hated; not persons. He was no mere mocker. His expressed admiration of the Quakers is enough to prove this. His manner was that of a *persifleur*, but his matter was earnest as that of any theologian.

That he wrote books denying everything pure good and holy, is a lie. His works remain, the glory of France and the most stupendous literary achievement ever made by one man on behalf of his species. In history he opened up a new avenue to truth. He dissipated the dull dreams and deceptions of the monks and fixed attention on what had really taken place in the past. He introduced to his countrymen the science of Newton and the philosophy of Locke. His instinct of truth was as vivid, his humanity as ardent, as his eye for shams was keen. If he smote the priests hip and thigh with raillery allied to reason, it was because he found their craft the enemy of progress.

This "curse of his day" wrote against torture when its employment was an established principle of law. He denounced duelling when that form of murder was the chief feature of the code of honor. He waged warfare upon war when it was considered man's highest glory. In the noble words of a fellow infidel:—

"Voltaire waged the splendid kind of warfare, the war of one alone against all—that is to say, the grand warfare; the war of thought against matter; the war of reason against prejudice, the war of the just against the unjust; the war for the oppressed against the oppressor; the war of goodness; the war of kindness. He had the tenderness of a woman, and the wrath of a hero. He was a great mind, and an immense heart. He conquered the old code and the old dogma. He conquered the feudal lord, the Gothic judge, the Roman priest. He raised the populace to the dignity of people. He taught, pacified and civilised. He fought for Sirven and Montbailly, as for Calas and La Barre. He accepted all the menaces, all the persecutions, calumny and exile. He was indefatigable and immovable. He conquered violence by a smile, despotism by sarcasm, infallibility by irony, obstinacy by perseverance, ignorance by truth."*

The Protestant scribes who glibly repeat the calumnies of Catholic priests are probably unaware that but for Voltaire Protestants would have found no toleration in France. Of his efforts on their behalf I could give numerous instances. When Calas, a Protestant, was broken on the wheel on a false charge of having killed his son to keep him from turning Catholic, it was the pillar of infidelity in France who for three years made it the chief business of his life to procure the rehabilitation of the poor man's name and the payment of a recompense to his family. In 1766 a crucifix was injured—perhaps wantonly, perhaps by accident. The Bishop of Amiens called for vengeance. Two young officers were accused. One escaped; the other, La Barre, was tortured to confess, and then condemned to have his tongue cut out, his hand cut off, and to be burned alive. Voltaire, seventy years old, devoted himself with untiring energy to save him. Failing in that, this bad fellow immediately wrote one of his little pamphlets, a simple, graphic "Narrative of the Death of the Chevalier de la Barre," which stirred every humane heart in France. For twelve years this detestable infidel vindicated the memory of the murdered man and exposed his oppressors, and it was to his influence that torture was abolished in France by Turgot his friend, as it had been in Prussia by Frederic, and in Russia by Catherine, his disciples. His estate was the asylum of all the oppressed. "His charities," says his biographer, General Hamley, "were munificent." There were forty-six miserable peasants at Ferney when he bought the place. When he died there were twelve hundred well-to-do inhabitants engaged in watch-making, silk-weaving, etc. It was to the infidel "Patriarch of Ferney," as he was lovingly called, that they owed their prosperity. It was he who built their houses, bought their tools, and in every way improved their lot.

So far from good men dreading him as they would a pestilence, his society was courted by the best of his age. Montesquieu, Diderot, D'Alembert, Buffon, Turgot, were his friends and co-workers. When he went to Paris in 1778 he was received with such enthusiasm and such ovations as the world had hardly ever seen before. Instead of dying a very awful death, this monument of God's long-suffering mercy (as we are assured in a narrative of his last moments, drawn up by D'Alembert from the statements of eye-witnesses for the information of the king of Prussia) passed away peacefully and without pain. The curé of St. Sulpice urged him to confess belief in Jesus Christ. "At these words Voltaire opened his eyes and made a gesture with his hand as if he wished the curé away, and said, 'Let me die in peace.'" He lingered till evening. A little before he breathed his last he rose, took the hand of his faithful valet, pressed it, and said, "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am dying." These were his last words.† Rites of Christian burial were interdicted by the bishop, and every Christian skunk who dreaded him in life could void his venom upon his grave. No wonder they continue to malign him. His influence remains and his work is not yet completed. J. M. WHEELER.

The Malthusian. November, 1885. 63 Fleet Street.—This little paper deals with such important topics that it deserves the thoughtful attention of all interested in the crusade against poverty.

* I quote from the translation of Hugo's magnificent Oration on Voltaire, published by the Progressive Publishing Company.
† Life by James Parton, Vol. II, p. 610.

A CANON ON "INFIDELITY."

CANON WILBERFORCE has been discoursing at length upon "The Duties of Heavenly Citizenship towards Infidelity." His text is: "Philip saith unto him, Come and see" (John i., 46); and the moral he draws from the text is, that as Philip answered Nathaniel's "justifiable scepticism" with "the courageous sentence, Come and see," so ought heavenly citizens to extend the same "Royal invitation full of force and power" to citizens who are not heavenly. The Canon holds that this "bold invitation" to sceptics to come and see means "bestir thyself, experimentalise, investigate, analyse, and thou shalt know." But he and his Church have never bestirred themselves to encourage, or even to allow, this investigation. They have crushed it by tremendous penalties and they still retain and defend the remains of the old wicked laws on our statute books and in the hearts of those who hate us for the love of God while cantingly professing to invite us and all men to free and open inquiry.

Notwithstanding the hollowness of the "Royal invitation" to come and see, I accept it; that is, I read the reverend Canon's address. I "come and see" therein what his Christianity amounts to; and I soon find that slander, ignorance, bigotry and falsehood are component parts of it. The heavenly citizen induces me to "come and see," and then commences insulting me by associating my unbelief of his opinions with "moral putrescence" and by telling me that

"Amongst the prominent cancers of modern society there stand out three taller than their fellows, closely interdependent in their nature, yet each so independently defiling that they constitute a trinity of destructive influence. They are Infidelity, Impurity and Intemperance."

The bold invitation to come and see strikingly resembles an invitation from a street blackguard to come down his alley and be pelted with filth.

But the Canon, having temporarily exhausted this kind of ammunition, begins to be alarmed at the growing power of "Infidelity." He says:

"At a recent census in France, out of a population of twenty-nine millions, seven and a-half millions openly declared themselves to be of no religious belief; and in England, though I am not aware of any census having been attempted, there is not a town of any size without its organised society of unbelievers. A considerable proportion of the unbelief of the day is doubtless confined to frivolous sceptical chatter spreading its propaganda in fashionable magazines. Another moiety is undoubtedly of moral origin, in accordance with the saying of Augustine, that 'a man who allowed his senses to rule him carried about with him five cogent arguments against the faith.' . . . But there is a sufficiently formidable residuum which is not immoral—serious, determined and aggressive."

Canon Wilberforce then has to account for this formidable unbelief, and he attributes it largely to causes which "bring shame to many" Christians. Among them are "the utterly unspiritual lives of professed believers," the indolent orthodoxy of rigid dogmatists who will not stretch out a finger to assist in removing great practical evils, the "healthy revolt of a developing humanity against cramping sacerdotalisms" and "theological caricatures of the Divine Being," and the persecution of science by religion in the past. There is considerable truth in these remarks, and they are addressed to the people who need the lesson, namely the Christians. The Canon further shows some promising signs of a temporary emergency from the darkness of theological hatred and prejudice by reminding his fellow-worshippers that

"When tempted to be harsh, dogmatic and contemptuous towards those who are unwisely under the name of Agnosticism, imagining that they can bow Almighty God out of his own universe, they should remember that science has had her martyrs, and at the hand of theologians, and that it was Augustine, the beloved of the Catholic Church, the theologian of the giant intellect, who by pronouncing an anathema upon all who affirmed the existence of antipodes, threw the arm of ecclesiastical sanction around error, and strengthened the hands of the thrice-accursed inquisition in burning and torturing those who were the pioneers of the world's light, liberty and knowledge."

But this attitude of fair play cannot long be maintained. Atheism is soon described as "a determined foe to liberty," as "nationally destructive" and as an "unmixed evil." The last two phrases may be excused perhaps as mere oratorical flourishes, but the definite charge that Atheism is "a determined foe to liberty" is the sheer falsehood of unscrupulous piety or the raving of rabid bigotry. Why does the Canon so readily adopt this malignant rubbish? The only attempt at evidence he produces for his assertion

is (1) a denunciation of Atheism by Voltaire, who is strongly, not to say bigotedly, on his own side in this matter, but whom he nevertheless describes as "the very patron saint of Atheists," and (2) his own dislike of "the ribald blasphemy for which the editor of an infidel newspaper was (unwisely as we think) imprisoned, together with the soul-destroying immoralities inculcated in 'The Fruits of Philosophy.'" A theist's rabidly hostile description of his persecuted enemy the Atheist as "crafty, ungrateful, calumnious, plundering, bloody," and as a "monster" who "immolates to himself whatever he desires or whatever is in his way," proves nothing but the blind and almost ineradicable violence and virulence of the theological prejudice. If Christians desired to treat Atheism fairly they might also quote from a calm philosopher like Bacon, who points out that Atheists, being undisturbed by the hopes and fears pertaining to another life, are wise and impartial in worldly matters, and that hence times inclined to Atheism have been times of peace, culture and progress. Christians ought also to remember that "Infidel France" freed her slaves in 1792, and that it was not till 1820 that Christian England was shamed into imitating her "Infidel" example. The Christian United States retained slavery till 1863; and Spain, Brazil, and other Christian nations, still disgrace themselves by allowing this systematic outrage on human liberty. So that if broad historical facts may be allowed to intrude into a religious discussion, it will be evident that Christianity rather than Atheism is the foe of liberty. The Canon's second illustration is an excellent one. Mr. Foote "unwisely" imprisoned is the "foe of liberty." Christians who put him there are the friends of freedom! This is exactly what Christians really mean by liberty—Christian liberty to commit social and personal crimes against Freethinkers with impunity. Atheism I grant, is and always will be the "determined foe" of such "liberty."

The immediate duty of the heavenly citizen towards "infidelity" is, according to our Canon, three-fold. First, in contending for the faith, he must try to persuade men rather than to defend God, and in doing this he must be deeply convinced that truth will prevail, for science replies Amen to David's insult: "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." Secondly, the heavenly citizen must circulate tracts and leaflets like those of the Christian Evidence Society, and the "Anti-Infidel Library." Apparently he must not resort to open argument where both sides are heard, for he is warned that "the method of counteracting unbelief by public debate between selected champions is eminently unsatisfactory," because "the sharp intellectual fencing necessary savors too much of the 'kingdom of this world.'" Thirdly, he must "lead the anxious doubter away from systems, controversies and debates into the presence of the Lord himself."

There is nothing formidable in this programme, and a circulation of the Anti-Infidel productions of Brewin Grant, C. J. Whitmore, and other "Christian Evidence" worthies as recommended by Canon Wilberforce, will ultimately only benefit the Secular cause; for Christians will be reminded of the existence and claims of Atheism, and will thus be led to think, which is of all dangers the most serious, and the more just and thoughtful will be struck by the insufficiency and weakness of the arguments and methods employed.

W. P. BALL.

PROFANE JOKES.

"MOTHER, the other day you said God made everything for a purpose. I'd like to know what good purpose there is in these dog-gone flies." "Why, son, to keep you from being lazy." "Whoa, Emmy! I got you now. I wasn't borned when the flies were first made."

A CELEBRATED punster, whilst strolling with a friend through a churchyard, called attention to a grave, the stone on which had no inscription on it. "This," said he, "is the grave of a notorious gambler and cardsharp; you observe that there is no name recorded on the tombstone, but I think I could suggest an appropriate epitaph." "What would you suggest?" inquired his friend. "Waiting for the last trump," was the reply.

AARON: "Are you going to Solomon's funeral, Jacob?" Jacob: "Vy I didn't know Solomon was dead. Vat did he die of?" Aaron: "Vell ve vas all in der synagogue praying to der Lord to forgive us our sins, ven dat dirty leetle Isaacs poked his head in at der door and yelled out, 'Dere's a sale on over der vay, and dey're giving ter tings away.' Ve all started to our feet and made a rush for der door, and poor Solomon got killed in der crush."

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Heredity and Progress. By J. M. Wheeler. A Mummer's Wife. By Edward Aveling. Two Leaves of a Fadeless Rose of Love. (A Poem.) By James Thomson (B.V.)

Agnosticism. (A Review of a Recent Criticism.) By Robert Batho.

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