

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. V.—No. 49.]

DECEMBER 6, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 143.



BEHIND THE SCENES; OR, MOSES ON SINAI.

“And the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount: and Moses went up. . . And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking.”—EXODUS xix., 20; xx., 18.

OUR POLICY.

THERE is a general impression that we have much to gain by a prosecution. Nothing could be more mistaken. The circulation of the *Freethinker* is only hindered by it. Newsagents are easily alarmed, and many newsvendors either fail to obtain a supply through the ordinary trade channels, or are intimidated themselves. To take one instance out of many, Mr. George Middleton, of Aberdeen, writes that “after what Mr. Bradlaugh says” he must decline to sell the *Freethinker* any longer, as it is too dangerous. And Mr. Middleton is not an ordinary newsvendor. He is, or at any rate was, a Freethinker himself, and he has sold this journal for years. In our opinion he is the victim of a false alarm. After Professor Hunter’s splendid victory at Aberdeen there is little likelihood of any local interference with the freedom of the press.

To meet this and similar cases (of course no others), we offer to send the *Freethinker* post free for one penny to any subscriber who cannot obtain it through the newsagent who has previously supplied him, or through another in the same locality.

We also beg to assure those who sell this journal that the danger they run is infinitesimal. The Glasgow case is a sporadic act of persecution, and is not likely to be repeated. During our prosecution and imprisonment newsagents were never interfered with, except in the solitary instance of Mr. Cattell, who, being within the limits of the City of London, was worried by our own tormentors.

No. 226.]

No doubt the sale of the *Freethinker* will increase, as it has always done, wherever it can be easily procured; but while the present scare is on we must lose by it in some directions; especially when Freethinkers show themselves more weak-kneed than their fellow tradesmen. Fortunately, however, the number of these is not great; and some recent attempts to practice upon the fears of others have not been very successful.

Our policy is to persevere in any case. If our motive in editing this paper were a merely commercial one, we might bend before the storm. We might hide or disguise ourselves until it was safe to reappear in our true form. But that is a course we cannot condescend to. We disdained it when the bigots showed us the open goal-door; we never wavered in our attitude during our long ordeal in a prison cell; and we are not likely to be frightened now. We beg to tell the few critics, who always find our policy indefensible when we happen to be prosecuted, that our mind, which was made up in Holloway Gaol, is very difficult to influence by mere expressions of disfavor. “Our hope is ours and comes not on a tide,” and our resolution is as little subject to ebbs and flows.

Some months before our imprisonment we wrote an article on Superstitious Freethinkers. The number of these has happily diminished since then, but there is an incurable remnant, who talk with bated breath and whispering humbleness when they speak of the ghosts. We heard one of them, quite recently, pronounce the name of the Bible deity with all the solemnity of a parson. We begin to think there is a large mixture of discretion in some people’s valor, and we may be tempted to write another article on Timid Freethinkers.

After nearly five years’ experience, we are perfectly satisfied that the policy of the *Freethinker* is a wise one. Take our illustrations, for instance. What is their special value? It is this. People read the Bible, and do not read it—that is, they see the meaning vaguely through a mist of reverence, and do not realise it in their minds. Our illustrations help them to realise it. Bible wonders take form; they are visualised; and orthodox readers ask themselves whether after all such absurdities could have ever happened. There may be a shock at first. Truth has a habit of disturbing old use and wont, as the ploughshare tears up the hard-bound soil. But fruit follows in good season. Here is an illustration. A gentleman at Gravesend writes up to our publishing office this week for a considerable supply of Freethought literature, and in a postscript he says: “Allow me to sincerely thank you for opening my eyes to the truth. It was accidentally reading your last Summer Number that first set me thinking; and I can truly say I am now a Freethinker without a thought of heaven or a fear of hell. I think you are the best parson in England.” This case is only one of many. We know, as a fact, that the *Freethinker* has made scores, and perhaps hundreds, of converts, who swell the ranks of the National Secular Society.

We have the satisfaction of knowing that the great majority of the Freethought party approve our policy and admire our journal. What Freethought paper ever had so many readers as we can boast? Yet we have done no advertising worth speaking of. Those who read the *Freethinker* recommend it to their friends, and so the circle of its influence is ever widening in the most legitimate fashion. True, the bigots have advertised it rather foolishly, but that also is a natural result of our policy. Their praise would be damnation, their goodwill dishonor. When they revile us we feel that we are striking with energy and success at their accursed creed.

G. W. FOOTE.

F E T I S H I S M .

THE word fetishism is derived from the Portuguese *feitico*, magic, by which the Portuguese, who were the first Europeans who traded on the West Coast of Africa, expressed their idea of the religion of the natives. Purchas, in his "Pilgrimage" (1612), says: "When the king will sacrifice to a *fetisso*, he commands the *fetissero* to inquire of a tree, whereto he ascribeth divinity, what he will demand." The name passed into French, whence, largely through the medium of Comte, it has received European recognition as expressing one of the earliest phases of religion. Sir John Lubbock defines fetishism as "the stage of religious thought in which man supposes he can force the deities to comply with his desires." A form of fetishism may, however, be traced in savages who seem to have no conception of a deity at all. They will, nevertheless, regard particular objects as lucky or unlucky, and will carry about with them a stone, a claw, a twig, a shell, or other object as a charm for bringing luck or averting disaster. If its presence brings good fortune it is preserved and revered, if not it is cast away. Dr. Tylor's definition of fetishism as "the doctrine of spirits embodied in, or attached to, or conveying influence through certain material objects" is more exact. The belief in ghosts is prior to that in gods. The earliest gods indeed are simply ghosts, and even the latest ones come under that category. But in the most primitive phase of fetishism the material objects themselves are supposed to be of potency. On beginning an expedition the negro of Guinea chooses the first striking object that presents itself, and vows to worship it if the event succeeds. What is the connection between the object and the result is a mystery proper for the exercise of faith, like the efficacy of the blood of Jesus in saving sinners. If the result does not turn out as desired the fetish is beaten, dragged through the mud, or thrown away. The Portuguese and Spanish sailors do not scruple to act similarly to their saints, whose images they pitch into the sea if they do not avert the storm. During the recent cholera epidemics in Naples and Spain one saint was often rejected for another deemed to be of more efficacy against the dreaded disease. Remains of fetishism may also be found in the crooked sixpences, hard potatoes, curious stones, and other charms, which even civilised people are known to carry in order to bring them luck, as the rosaries and scapulars of the Catholics are supposed to endow their wearers with mystic virtue. Detectives have given their testimony that this superstition is particularly rife among criminals, some of whom have indeed been "spotted" by their carrying such articles with the hope of warding off detection, as sailors wear a child's caul to save them from drowning.

The fetish state of mind is equally shown in the belief in particular lucky or holy days. Many country people still refuse to commence any important undertaking on a Friday, and the special sanctity of the Sabbath forms part of the same general superstition.

There are many traces of fetish worship in the Bible. Sacred trees and stones are frequently referred to in Genesis and the historical books. Most of the articles mentioned as magical in the paper on "Bible Magic" were originally fetishes. The most sacred fetish was the ark which probably contained the original rude stone of the fetish Jahveh, as we know that the holy of holies of the most splendid temples of Greece contained rude stones called by the names of Hera or Zeus. The ark was, like the images of the Philistines, carried into battle, and supposed to presage victory. The coronation stone, now in the House of Lords, was probably one of the fetishes once worshipped in these islands.

In anointing the stone with oil (Gen. xxviii., 18) Jacob performed one of the most common acts of fetish worship, and Kalish, in his note on this passage, admits that the word Bethel is probably taken from Betyll, signifying a fetish stone.

Whether derived from the ancestral antipathy of apes to serpents or not, certainly ophiolatry or serpent worship has been one of the widest spread of superstitions. The brazen serpent said to have been made by Moses was an evident fetish. Merely looking at it was a potent charm, as was touching the ark. According to 2 Kings xviii., 4, the children of Israel burnt incense to it down to the days

of Hezekiah, seven hundred years after Moses. I know no more striking case of the survival of fetishism, unless it be the reverence paid by those stout opponents of idolatry, the Mohammedans, to the Kaaba, the black stone at Mecca, which is supposed to be of meteoric origin, and so literally to have fallen from heaven.

Even in the New Testament there are remnants of fetishism. People are cured by touching the hem of Christ's garment (Matt. xiv., 36), and the handkerchiefs and aprons of Paul prove of efficacy in exorcising evil spirits (Acts xix., 12).

Relic worship is itself a relic of the fetishism from which all forms of image worship and idolatry have grown by the ascription of powers to the effigy similar to those of the person it is supposed to represent. When we read how "the Samoyedes feed the wooden images of the dead," we are reminded that even in the dolls of our children we may find some trace of early fetishism.

The great modern fetish is the Bible itself. A mysterious virtue is supposed to reside in its every word, and even the work of the printer and the bookbinder is esteemed as particularly sacred. I have known soldiers carry Bibles in their bosoms as a protection against bullets when going into battle, and I remember how, when a boy, it was the common belief at school that dreadful penalties would fall upon any lad who should use the leaves of the holy book for an unworthy purpose. Keeping the family Bible as a household god, kissing its greasy covers in a law court, and reading it with the idea of special holiness being imparted by the undateable documents of semi-savages, are evident relics of decaying fetishism.

J. M. WHEELER.

G O D I M P E A C H E D .

I ARRAIGN the Christian God, the God of the Bible, on many charges. Day by day the growing conscience of the human race is joining in the indictment. Day by day his defenders are less sure of their position, and the time will come when none will dare support the crimes and follies of deity as heretofore.

God is a liar—an inexcusable liar. He deceives and misleads mankind and all living things in innumerable ways. He is the true Father of Lies—for he told the first lie recorded in the Bible. He tried to keep mankind in ignorance by the lie that instant death would follow knowledge. He failed, and, like a genuine liar of the first water, he affixed the title of Father of Lies upon his enemy, who spoke the truth. He sends forth a "lying spirit." He deceives even his own prophets. He utters contradictory statements, teaches contradictory doctrines, and sets his adherents by the ears through the impossibility of reconciling his conflicting falsehoods. As Jesus Christ he said and acted many lies. He endorsed the false belief in demonology, he confirmed ridiculous tales like that of Jonah and the whale, and he supported the whole host of the "mistakes of Moses." All the falsehoods of the Pentateuch he made his own by treating the writings attributed to Moses and the prophets as the veritable and authoritative word of God. He promised to return to earth and to wind up all sublunary affairs with a grand universal judgment within the lifetime of some of his apostles, and he has not come yet. Spoken by the mouth of omniscient omnipotence that promise was a deliberate piece of deceit, a wilful lie. These and innumerable other instances of general untruthfulness make it probable that his astounding statements about his supernatural mission, his godhead, and his annihilation of sin with blood, are also mere lies. Furthermore as the omniscient Holy Ghost prompted the many "unhistorical" assertions, that is falsehoods, of the Bible, it stands demonstrated that all three persons of the Trinity have lied, and the concentrated or unified Christian God thus stands convicted as a trebly-distilled liar.

God is a swindler.—The many divine lies already alluded to, and the systematic method of gaining power for his priests by false pretences and unfulfilled promises and threats, show that Jehovah is a cheat on the grandest scale. Sensible men, judging Jehovah by his past career, will see that his heaven and hell are but two more pious frauds added to the long list of delusions palmed off on mankind by him and his ministers. His obscure and often criminal miracles were in all probability shams, as false and deceptive physically as, from the moral point of view, were his inculcation of holy

murder and pious massacre as virtue, and his express sanction of slavery, polygamy, concubinage, human sacrifice, religious persecution, witch-hanging, and many other reputed religious virtues, which he fostered and pandered to for his own ends.

God is a bigot, a bully, a tyrant and a coward.—He threatens men with frightful deaths and with hell-fire for honest unbelief. He is afraid of truth, of freedom, of mental integrity, of fair play. "He that believeth not shall be damned."

God is an adulterer.—His son was born of the betrothed wife of an aged carpenter, who was henceforward reputed to be the father of the infant. Was this the proper kind of example to set an "evil and adulterous generation," as Jesus called them?

God is a thief and a friend of thieves.—He ordered his chosen people to spoil the Egyptians and to rob the Canaanites of their land. He helped Moses and Joshua and Saul and David, and many others of his favorites, in innumerable plundering expeditions, and he had his share of the booty and of the captured maidens.

God is a murderer.—Year by year he murders millions of men and women and children by famine and pestilence and flood and storm. He murdered all mankind but Noah and his family. He murdered the firstborn throughout Egypt. A list of the murders and massacres ordered or sanctioned or furthered by him, according to the Bible alone, would occupy too much space to be given here. It is he who kills all living creatures, he who tears the life out of the hearts of dying men, who throttles them, chokes them, torments them by his almighty power and resistless will.

God is a fiend.—He will mercilessly inflict the most intolerable agonies on the majority of his children for all eternity. One can hardly conceive even the worst fiend theology ever invented being guilty of such atrocious conduct.

God is a hardened and hopeless criminal.—He shows no signs of penitence for his innumerable misdeeds in the past, but on the contrary glories in them and hopes to surpass them in the future. As a cruel and wanton incendiary, he will finally burn the whole world and torture its inhabitants in hell.

God is guilty of high treason to humanity, to justice, to virtue, and must be executed as a traitor, whose treacheries, murders, cruelties and outrages exceed those of all human monsters put together.

His counsel, the priests, will plead his alleged good actions. But is saving one life any justification for taking another? Are lifeboat men, for instance, free to murder as many people on shore as they have saved at sea? Would any judge on earth accept pleas of this kind?

God's motives too are urged; but this pretence equally breaks down on examination. Only malevolence can willfully cause the enormous amount of suffering and eternal torture inflicted by the Almighty Fiend of orthodox Christianity.

After such an impeachment of the Christian God it will be a relief to turn to two other charges of a lighter and more satisfactory nature.

God is a fool.—Being almighty he might make all men good and happy, and might rejoice in a universal paradise of virtue and love, instead of enjoying or suffering the horrors and miseries and crimes and vices of his ill-taught children on earth. Even as a fiend whose happiness depends on blood and torture, he is a fool, for he permits the most wholesale rebellion against his sway without the slightest interference, and launches the lightnings of his wrath so blindly and stupidly that his plagues and punishments fall on the heads of his friends and servants more often and more heavily than on those who abandon his service for the pursuit of truth and practical virtue. Why did his cholera and his earthquakes devastate pious Spain and leave the Atheist city of Liberal untouched except by Christian slander?

God is a myth, non-entity, a merely imaginary being.—This is the most satisfactory charge of all. Mankind awakes from its nightmare: it supped on horrors and dreamt a God. With coming dawn the incubus is fled, and man is free; free to think, to reason, and to act in the light of day and the might of manhood; free to love Truth and follow her; free to strew his path and the path of untold generations yet to come with the flowers of knowledge and thought and art and joy, unterrified by godly curse and priestly rack; free

to rise to the true brotherhood of the future when the fratricidal strife over the unknown ceases and peace and harmony and the "federation of the world" inaugurate the reign of liberty and love and progress.

W. P. BALL.

THE SYMES PERSECUTION.

THE bigots are determined if possible to destroy our friend Joseph Symes. He has offended beyond forgiveness. He has told the truth and shown up the hypocrites, and they are as implacable at the Antipodes as here. In the number of the *Liberator* before us he writes:—

"I am confident that the prison gates will close upon me before many weeks have passed. The temper of the courts shows me that to a demonstration. We must urge on our preparations for that event. It will not do to let the Secular work cease or even flag because I go to prison; nor will it. I am sorry I cannot carry in with me the whole responsibility, so as to prevent others following. I do not doubt for one moment that other men will step, one after another, into my place; and the fools and rogues of Victoria will discover that it is easier to persecute Secularists than to crush them. I am grieved to think that others may have to suffer; but nothing is won without suffering, and it is only by suffering that the infamous men who now tyrannise over Victoria by means of the old rusty weapons of the most disreputable of English tyrants can be exposed and put to flight."

Mr. Symes's offence is our own. He is seeking to emancipate the human mind from the thralldom of superstition and credulity, and his opponents are the interested vermin who batten on the corruption he is seeking to remove. Would we could help him in his struggle! We are too distant to render any personal aid, but we have the consolation of knowing that he will not go like a lamb to the slaughter, but will, like us, do something to make his persecution another nail in the coffin of the accursed creed.

ACID DROPS.

THE Stoke Newington Corps of the Salvation Army advertises many special attractions. There is the Terrible Cat-eater, Garibaldi raised from the dead, who relates his "struggle in the grave with the chucker-out," the Lad who swallowed a ton of coals, the Western Star, the Converted Baker and Mrs. Bramwell Booth. A recent Sunday's programme included Purity at 11 and Mixed Pickles at 3. We suppose the latter was meant to take off the taste of the former. Mr. Stead is to be congratulated on his allies.

THE belief in witchcraft is not yet extinct. In America at the town of St. Peter, Minnesota, a Mrs. Johnson has just been tried and found guilty by the Swedish Church of having caused sickness to a neighbor and fellow church member. In England outrages against supposed witches have lasted till our own time. In 1858 a woman was murdered in Shropshire for alleged witchcraft, and in September 1863 upwards of fifty persons were concerned in a Christian outrage in Essex.

GENERAL FRASER, the Conservative member for North Lambeth, asks whether the English or the Arab soldiers would have fought so bravely in the Soudan had they been Atheists. Certainly not. They would have had too much sense to fight there at all. They would have been in their own homes minding their own business. We are glad to see General Fraser claiming all the bloodshed and misery of the Soudan war for Christianity, and we make it all over to him without the least reservation.

THE Queen commences the fiftieth year of her reign on the 20th of June, 1886. What occasion is there for the *English Churchman* asking that that day be observed as a day of national humiliation? Is the *English Churchman* secretly republican?

THE religious party at Bath issued a circular called "Friendly Advice to a Voter," containing a prayer that Almighty God would direct the electors in their choice. The result of the poll is—one Liberal and one Conservative; so the Lord kept out of the struggle or his mind was as mixed as the electors.

BOSTON has just been settling the divorce case of Deacon Braden *versus* Parson Downes. It transpired in evidence that sixteen other young ladies beside Mrs. Barden had keys to the parson's private rooms in the church. How hard that moral guides cannot enjoy their blessed privileges without suspicion! Deacon Braden got his divorce!

MRS. JOSEPHINE BUTLER calls newspapers the "accursed press" because in the Stead case they have taken up the side of justice and common sense in opposition to religious child-stealing and

the circulation of sensational filth. One of the girls rescued by Mrs. Butler is quoted by her as saying: "I don't believe God cares a bit for girls. He lets these rich bad men off so easily, and just when you good men and women try to help us you are silenced immediately. No, God don't care for us girls." Mrs. Butler told her to be patient and wait a bit, but she replied, in despair, "Oh no, we have waited so long." This theological difficulty ought to make Christians think. Why does their God cruelly permit vice and misery, afflicting the most helpless sex? Why has he been idle through the long centuries—nay he must have been busy in causing the evils. He is a King Stork rather than a King Log.

THE REV. REES JONES, of Port Dinorwic, a Calvinistic Methodist, dropped dead the other day whilst addressing a meeting of the chapel members, held near Bangor. What is the moral of this, good Christians? If an Atheist dies suddenly you perceive the moral immediately. What is sauce for the goose is surely sauce for the gander also. The moral must evidently point out the wickedness of being a minister, and the striking judgments that fall on people who attend chapel meetings.

GOD, in his childish tantrums, or in his majestic wrath the Christians would prefer to call it, has destroyed 8,000 houses and several of his own churches—the idiot—in the Philippine Islands. The cyclone was only commissioned to kill twenty-two people, so we must thank the Lord for his great mercy and loving kindness. He might murder us all if he chose, and there is no one to hang him for it.

THE following touching advertisement appears in *Church Bells* for Nov. 27: "Marriage.—A poor clergyman, who has been 'engaged' for years, and is very anxious to marry almost immediately—chiefly for the sake of the lady, who is in unhappy surroundings at present—but lacks sufficient pecuniary means to enable him to do so. He urgently needs £50 at least, and having no other resources, reluctantly makes this appeal to public sympathy. He feels sure there are many who would be glad, as a thankoffering for their own happy married life, to send such small or large sums as they can afford. Highest references if required. Address CLERICUS, *Church Bells* Office." Surely the episcopal bench might pass round the mitre, and by each putting a trifle enable this poor clergyman to marry—chiefly for the sake of the lady.

A SOMERSETSHIRE correspondent in the *Bristol Mercury* tells of the incumbent of Chew Magna going round North Wick and North Malward intimidating the voters by telling them that they would not get anything from the clothing clubs and other charities if they did not vote for Mr. Llewellyn. Similar cases are reported from other districts. The sky-pilots, who stick at nothing in order that the endowments they hold may be preserved, should be taught that they render themselves liable to a fine of £200 or twelve months' imprisonment for intimidating voters.

THE Rev. Mr. Hopkins refused the use of his school-room to Mr. Frith because "our Lord, speaking of the enemies of the Church, declared that the door should be shut against them." Such facts as these furnish conclusive proof of the pernicious influence of Christian teaching.

ACCORDING to the *Chatham and Rochester Observer*, the new sect of Jezreelites established in that district have many peculiar ceremonies, among others one particularly insisted upon by Jesus, that of washing the feet of the brethren, which office is performed by the sisters. It also states that "hymns are sung of a lewd character," but might not an unenlightened heathen who heard the song of Solomon read from the ordinary Christian pulpit say, "They preach from texts of an indecent character?"

It appears that prayer is good for solving mathematical problems. The *Christian Herald* tells us how a certain converted student, afterwards Bishop Polk, had neglected his mathematics, and when the examination came he was called out to demonstrate a particular problem on the blackboard. He had never studied it, and was in a blue funk at the thought of the disgrace which his failure would bring on himself and on the Christianity of which he had newly become a shining light. So he "lifted up his heart" in prayer to "his new-found Friend in heaven." Then he picked up the chalk, and began to work upon the problem, but he was all in the dark about it. Presently he saw his way clear to make a beginning, and went slowly on till he got through. The Professor exclaimed, "It is the most beautiful demonstration of that problem ever given. It is new, sir. It does not appear in any of the books." Evidently prayer is better than study. And yet saints do not make a good fist at inventions. Euclid, too, doesn't prefix prayers to his demonstrations as he ought to. Something must be wrong. Can it be that Christians tell fibs? The broad explanation is that they habitually connect fortunate events with the nearest act of piety, and unfortunate events with the nearest act of impiety and sin. Hence the frequent answers to prayer and the equally frequent punishments of insufficient faith.

THE *Homiletic Review* for November gives rather a gloomy picture of sectarianism in America. It declares that in the small towns each of the rival sects will be represented. In villages of considerably less than a thousand inhabitants there are four or five different churches and chapels, while in large cities the accommodation is insufficient. Even in Brooklyn, which is called the "city of churches," and which is increasing in population at the rate of twenty-five thousand a year, no new church has been erected for five years.

YORKSHIRE fishermen are still very superstitious. If they catch nothing for several nights in succession they will burn the first fish they catch as a sacrifice. Their faith resembles that of the Bible, which always makes sacrifice the central feature. Until quite recently unlucky fishwives would kill a pigeon at midnight and burn its heart stuck full of pins. The *Christian Herald*, whose editor blindly supports a book that inculcates belief in witchcraft and enchantment, nevertheless, with the inconsistency so common in Christian authorities, says that "it is almost past belief that Yorkshire fishermen should not have done by this time with witchery and witchcraft." The *Christian Herald* is thus surprised that these uneducated fishermen have not outgrown their Bible.

A WEeping PHILOSOPHASTER.

INTRODUCTORY to some scientific teachings of King David, I should like to make a few observations on great Bible scientists. Solomon was, is now and ever shall be the wisest man this world will see. Being acquainted with all the sciences—in fact, knowing everything, we perceive the hand of God in that Caxton was not contemporary with Solomon to print a record of the discoveries made by the Jewish cardinal wise man. If what was valuable in Solomon's wisdom had been stereotyped, poor Darwin might have gathered slugs at so much per bushel for want of something more original to do. And Campbell's last man would thus early be perishing of *ennui*.

Solomon spake three thousand Tupperisms, and his songs were a thousand and five, only one of the latter, the Song of Songs (*i.e.*, the best one), being preserved to teach men like Shakespeare humility. Forestry was a speciality with him. "He spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto—moss, mushrooms, seaweed and—*coke*—deposits! What has this to do with David? In reply, according to the "Scripture of Truth," knowledge is withheld from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. I understand then that the infant Solomon instructed his papa in sorrow, science, and psalmody. I have heard it stated by some that a man who thinks or considers cannot be a happy person! Such utter nonsense requires no further comment. I will quote from David specimens of religious drivel, which by the grace of God he drivelled, such as "When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained!" . . . "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears."

How touching the reflection that sorrow and misery attended these faithful old star-gazers! Wicked secularists no doubt recur with pride to the ingenuity of the shepherd-boy Ferguson who made astronomical instruments of some bones, but they ought to give God the glory, for this boy merely took a hint from the Lord's servant Samson, who with the aid of an ass's jaw-bone made a thousand Philistines "see stars." Other interesting lessons in optics are taught in the Bible. To return to David for an illustration, he says, "He," (God) "hath put a new song in my mouth . . . many shall see it." In the foregoing we have a warranty for the belief still current in some parts of England, that a pig sees the wind. Some people sing of the Lamb of God as the Lion of Judah, but that is deadly heresy. I claim that title for "the man after God's own heart," "the man of blood." He sings, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? . . . Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord" (mouse P), "for he shall pluck my feet out of the net." All this by the way, but it is not scientific. With many apologies to the C. E. S., I turn now to David on thunderstorms. He that ass ears to hear, let him hear. "The God of glory thundereth"—"The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars"—"The voice of the Lord (thunder) divideth the flames of fire" (lightning). This exhibits the folly of the lightning-rod; it is the thunder which splits the oak and plays practical jokes with the church spire. Besides, we know it is not the flame (lightning) of the cannon which does the mischief; every savage knows it is the report which shakes the little Jericho's down.

A cute Yankee has lately added a thunder-rod branch to his lightning-rod business, and charges a higher price for the former. *Sell*, ah! He has been accused of pandering to unscientific superstition, whereas King David himself set the precedent; not that he ever fixed a rod to protect buildings—he simply propounded an "inspired" theory concerning thunderstorms. I cannot write more, for "Mine eye is consumed because of grief it waxeth old," despite of spectacles; so I herewith leave David in the grave, where the dead praise not God, as does not, W. C. SAVILLE.

"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, Dec. 6, St. James's Hall, Plymouth; at 11, "An Hour in Heaven"; at 3, "An Hour in Hell"; at 7, "God's Mother."

DECEMBER 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. 7½d.

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.

HARRY JONES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

T. J. CLEAL.—See "Acid Drops."

J. TURNER.—We can only repeat that this journal is strictly devoted to Freethought. We cannot enter into controversies on other subjects, however important they may be.

EYE-WITNESS.—We gave an "Acid Drop" to the Salvation squabble at Denby, and cannot give it another. If the Lord moved them to fight each other, it is of a piece with his movings from the beginning. AUSTRAL.—We are much obliged.

H. E. SMITH says that our article on the Ferguson case ought to make the Christians blush. He doesn't know how much it takes to make the Christians do that.

L. COLEMAN.—A seat in the House of Commons is no doubt a desirable thing, but nearly 700 enjoy that luxury, while there is only one editor of the *Freethinker*.

R. W. heckled Mr. S. Storey on the Blasphemy Laws and received a promise of support to Mr. Justice Stephen's Bill. Mr. Storey is elected for Sunderland at the head of the poll.

T. MOORE.—We cannot gather from your letter whether the candidate promised to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws or not.

T. O'CONNOR.—One may become a priest in the Catholic Church at the age of twenty-five, or even earlier by special dispensation. We cannot say what proportion remain celibate after that age.

A. T. RAE.—We are engaged on the evenings of the debate, and we cannot spare room to report a theological discussion between two Christians.

C. BRASSEUR.—Sorry to hear you are in such straits. Any application to the Committee of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund should be made to Mr. Forder, the Secretary.

T. MAY defines an Atheist as one who is "dogmatically ignorant of the groundwork of his belief." As the phrase stands it is meaningless, but we can guess what the writer intends.

O. D.—Thanks for the extracts. Mr. E. Jewel reviews Herbert Spencer's new volume in the December number of *Progress*.

A. SERCOMBE asks our opinion of Lieutenant Greely's idea that the Garden of Eden was situated at the North Pole. For our part we have no opinion on the subject except that Greely's brains seem a little injured by his polar experiences. If our correspondent is anxious about the site of the Garden of Eden he should apply to Mr. Gladstone, who evidently knows more about theological geography than we do.

JAMES RAWLINSON.—We will look into the matter.

W. MUMBY writes that Mr. T. Earp, Liberal candidate for the Newark Division of Nottinghamshire, promised to support Mr. Justice Stephen's Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

J. PARTRIDGE, Secretary, Birmingham Branch N. S. S., sends subscriptions for the Ferguson Defence, and says that great indignation prevails among the members at this fresh outrage of the bigots.

P. C.—Your letter is full of interest and encouragement. We are delighted to hear that Freethought is spreading so in the police force. "VICTORY" is another sceptical policeman who sends his contribution to resist the Glasgow Police Act.

J. L. SCHOEFER.—We thank you.

SYMPATHISER.—Sorry to hear you live amidst so much bigotry. An open avowal of opinion is not always necessary, and if it means starvation, you do well to be discreet.

JAMES FIRTH, Rochdale Branch N. S. S., writes, "It is our battle you are fighting, and the least we can do is to subscribe our mite."

J. MOSENTHAL (Breslau).—Received with many thanks.

THOMAS SMITH.—It may be worked up. Your order shall be seen to.

A RECRUIT.—We shall be glad to hear from you at any time.

F. MULVEY.—Thanks for the extract and reference.

J. CROWTHER (Halifax), W. BROOKSBANK (Bradford), W. MORRISH (Bristol), AND OTHERS.—If the London house from whom you get your parcel will not supply you with the *Freethinker*, you can obtain it direct from Mr. Ramsey, who will also supply you with all other literature you require.

HESTER STANHOPE.—We do intend to keep the old flag flying.

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.—South Wales Daily News—Aberdeen Journal—Liberty—Boston Investigator—Ironclad Age—North Wilts Herald—Hamilton Advertiser—Aberdeen Express—Hampshire Independent—Liberator—Church Bells—The Future (Richland, Kansas)—Bath Chronicle.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

The result of the Prize Competition will be announced next week. 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 January 1, 1886.

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.

OUR Christmas Number is now ready after many delays. Thousands of people will read it, enjoy it, and laugh over it. A hundred years hence a copy will fetch a high price as a rarity. The illustrations are certainly superior to any collection we have hitherto published. If every Englishman, including bigoted Christians and timid Freethinkers would go through the number page by page, we venture to think it would lead to a temporary if not a permanent reduction in the death-rate.

THE December number of *Progress* is now on sale. Mr. Jewel opens with a review of Herbert Spencer's important new volume on Ecclesiastical Institutions. Mr. George Payne concludes his Forgotten Reformer, the present instalment dealing with Eaton's prosecution for blasphemy. There is an acute article on the "Origin of Mind," by a new writer. James Thomson's (B.V.) biography of Schopenhauer is concluded, and Mr. Foote winds up the story of his Imprisonment for Blasphemy. Dr. Aveling writes on "Browning as a Dramatist." The number contains other interesting articles.

MR. MACGEAGH, the Tory candidate for Aberdeen, did his utmost to raise the *odium theologicum* against the Radical candidate, Professor Hunter, whom he charged with associating with Atheists, and taking the chair "at a meeting in favor of one of the most notorious blasphemers in the United Kingdom." The *Aberdeen Journal* also tried the same manoeuvre, and hinted that the electors were "warranted in regarding his association with Bradlaugh and Foote as evidence that he shares the doctrines of the one and condones the horrible blasphemies of the other." The result of the poll was, Professor Hunter, 4,794; Mr. MacGeagh, 894. The pious Conservative's defeat is crushing, and we suppose he is now crying "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

A CARTOON from a Florentine paper has been sent us which illustrates the freedom with which theological matters are now being dealt with in Italy. It is entitled "Il Padre Eterno Nel l'Imbrazza"—the eternal Father in embarrassment, and represents Jehovah on his throne looking much perplexed, while at his feet on the one hand is Prince Alexander praying to Omnipotence to protect Bulgaria, while on the other is King Milan urging the claims of Servia.

MESSRS. MACMILLAN and Co. announce a new book by Professor Fiske entitled "The Idea of God as affected by Modern Knowledge."

THE American Secular Union are energetically pushing a petition for the opening of the New York museums on Sunday. As this item of their programme is endorsed by the *New York Herald*, we hope it will be speedily carried and be followed by the equally important item of the taxation of Church property.

MR. SYMES's *Liberator* gives a portrait of Richard Carlile and the life of that Freethought hero by Mr. Wheeler, reprinted from the pages of *Progress*.

THE combined Political Committee of the Radical Clubs of Western London (including the Eleusis Club, Hammersmith Club, Progressive Club, St. George's Liberal Club, and Westminster Democratic Club) have sent the Home Secretary a copy of their Resolution protesting against the action of the Glasgow police in the Ferguson case, and requesting him to use his power to stay the injustice of the magistrate's sentence.

THE BIBLE DEITY.

PART II.—CONCLUDED.

FROM this time despondency succeeded excitement. He chiefly spoke of evils to come, of his own death, and of the destruction of Jerusalem, which he foresaw. He distrusted those whom he had himself selected to be about his person. He suspected betrayal in one and denial in another, and desertion even in his heavenly father. And so he died, a political criminal in the eye of the law, a poor fanatic in the sight of his thinking fellow men.

And with him there might have died, and with him been

buried, the memory of all that he had ever said or done, but for another of a very different calibre who came after him. He left behind him it is true, a few poor fishermen who had been his companions. They strove to keep the remembrance of him in existence, and even said that he had risen from the dead, and would yet appear to claim his kingdom. But none, save themselves, and one or two women of the lowest class had seen him, and their words would have little effect upon the people at large. Doubtless all would soon have been forgotten, had not the authorities attempted to suppress it by force. Foremost among them was a man named Saul, a man of learning, as learning was considered among the orthodox Jews of the day, and a bitter enemy to the new teaching. Full of desire to trample out the followers of Jesus he was on a journey to Damascus, when he received a sunstroke. It deprived him of his eyesight for a time, and disordered his intellect for life. He thought he heard a voice crying "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" (Acts ix., 5). Predisposed as he was by his Pharisaical education to believe in miraculous signs and wonders, he became a convert to the idea that Jesus was the Messiah, and began to preach in favor of his claim. But his distempered brain rapidly evolved a new idea. The Christ, from the king of the Jews, grew in his imagination to be the Savior of the world, and Saul, the most rigorous of Jews, was transformed into Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles. At first his fellow apostles who had received their instructions personally from their master, and had heard from him concerning the Gentiles little but expressions of contempt and ignominy, vigorously opposed him, but his superior learning and higher tone of intellect overcame them, and they whose first idea was to obtain posts of honor in the re-established kingdom of Israel became preachers of a new religion in various parts of the world, and little by little utterly deserted the old Jewish faith. It was now to the doctrines of Christianity that all must subscribe who would become recipients of divine favor. The love of God had been hidden (very much) under the old dispensation, but it was to blaze forth and make itself manifest under the new. Now we might expect to gaze upon it, as upon a boundless ocean and not see its limits. But we are still doomed to disappointment. A promise of salvation is made, but it is to those only who believe and are baptised. All those millions who have no chance of baptism, as well as those other millions who are unable to believe are excluded. If you would escape the torments of hell you must be the disciples of Christ, and a mark is given by which you may be recognised as such: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii., 35). And pray who are those that show this mark of affection? Those who for eighteen centuries have persecuted, imprisoned, and put to death all who differed from them in opinion? Those who have carried war and slaughter over the globe to spread the knowledge of Christianity? Those who maintain that the glory of God is exalted by the torture of an erring brother or sister in eternal flames? Those who say, whether from high places or from low, whether from the cathedral pulpit, the papal chair, or from within the walls of some miserable little Bethel, or over the teapot and the gin-bottle in some little back parlor, "If any man think not as I think, believe not as I believe, do not as I do, let him be anathema maranatha"? Surely of none of these can we say that they bear the mark of fraternal charity. On the contrary we are compelled to admit that Christianity has only proved another and the worst element of discord in human life. And so if "God is love," he even yet remains hidden from us, and the world knows him.

Will it be ever so? Will he always be hidden behind the dark cloud that human malice and human prejudice have raised to conceal him from our eyes. Shall we never see him as the loving, gentle, and merciful father, but only as the cruel, bloodthirsty tyrant and oppressor. Who knows! Perhaps when a few more centuries have passed away, when the intellect of man shall have become more developed and his heart better trained, when Moses and Jesus shall have taken their places beside Jupiter and Apollo, when national and religious prejudices shall alike have been swept away, and Christianity be remembered only as a dark blot on the world's history, men may unite in one common religion, the worship of truth wherever

it may be found, may adopt one common code of morality, each to do his best for all. Then may they say "We have found the God unknown to our ancestors, he dwells not in heaven far away, but here in our own hearts and minds. He has no terror for us for he threatens us with no evils, visits us with no wrongs. He teaches the ignorant, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, and heals the sick. We have found him, and we know him for the true God, for the real divinity is humanity and he is love."

E. J. BOWTELL.

THE CHOIR.

"We all like sheep," the tenors shrill
Begin, and then the church is still,
While back and forth across the aisle
Is seen to pass the "catching" smile.

"We all like sheep," the altos moan
In low and rich and mellow tone,
While broader grows the merry grin
And nose gets further off from chin.

"We all like sheep," sopranos sing
Till all the echoes wake and ring;
The young folks titter, and the rest
Suppress the laugh in bursting chest.

"We all like sheep," the bassos growl—
The titter grows into a howl,
And e'en the Deacon's face is graced
With wonder at the singers' taste.

"We all like sheep," runs the refrain,
But why to make the meaning plain,
Don't they all say, if worth a button,
In good straight words, "We all like mutton."

Instead of this they wander on
Until all shred of sense is gone,
Quite lost until at length they say,
"We all, like sheep, have gone astray."

REVIEWS.

Republicanism: Its Aims and Objects. By JOHN KIRKUP, South Shields. R. Simpson and Sons, 4 New Street. One Penny.—A very temperate defence of Republicanism, which can be cordially commended to all interested in the subject.

Our Corner, December. Freethought Publishing Company.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with a very interesting article on the French Elections. Mrs. Besant contributes a paper, full of fine feeling, on the "Edinburgh Slums." Mr. J. H. Levy concludes his extremely clever disquisition on "The Method of Unreason," and Mr. J. Robertson his masterly article on Poe. Jessie Tayler's paper on Garibaldi for the young folk is capitally written.

Husband: "I noticed to-day that the Smiths have had their pew at church upholstered in blue velvet plush." Wife (enviously): "I know it. And just think how shabby and cheap our pew looks! It is positively wicked."

PARADISE LOCATED.—"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."—*Jesus to the thief on the cross.* "Jesus Christ . . . suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell."—*Apostles' Creed.*

THE minister was struggling to put on a new four-ply collar and the perspiration was starting from every pore. "Bless the collar," he ejaculated, "Oh, yes, bless it. Bless the blessed collar!" "My dear," said his wife. "what is your text for this morning's sermon?" "F-fourteenth verse f-fifty-fifth Psalm," he replied in short gasps—"The w-words of his m-mouth were s-smoother than b-butter, but w-war was in his heart."

A GOOD old Methodist lady, very particular and very pious, once kept a boarding-house in New York. Staunch to her principles, she would take no one to board who did not believe in the eternal punishment of a large portion of the race. But the people were more intent on carnal comforts than spiritual health, so that in time her house became empty, much to her grief and alarm. After some time a bluff old sea captain knocked at the door, and the old lady answered the call. "Good morning, ma'am. Can you give me board for two or three days? Got my ship here, and shall be off as soon as I load." "Wa'al, I don't know," said the old lady. "Oh, house full, eh?" "No, but—" "But what, ma'am?" "I don't take any unclean or carnal people in my house. What do you believe?" "About what?" "Why, do you believe that anyone will be condemned?" "Oh, thunder! yes." "Do you?" said the good woman, brightening up; "well, how many souls do you think will be on fire eternally?" "Don't know, ma'am, really—never calculated that." "Can't you guess?" "Can't say—perhaps fifty thousand." "Wa'al, hem!" mused the old woman; "I guess I'll take you. Fifty thousand burning souls is better than nothing."

THE GLASGOW PROSECUTION.

MR. ROBERT WALLACE, the Secretary of the Glasgow Committee, writes that the Ferguson appeal will probably be heard in a few days. When it is decided the situation will be clearer. Meanwhile Mr. Ferguson is "selling the *Free-thinker* in his shop and at the hall pretty much as before." The police have the power to get up another case, but it is very unusual to do so while an appeal is pending.

Mr. John McLean, another member of the Committee, tells us that Glasgow friends are grateful to the Freethinkers in other parts of the kingdom who are so promptly and generously responding to the appeal for funds. It is a great encouragement, and Mr. McLean says, "You may tell your readers that we are determined to fight the question through, come what may." "I see," he adds, "you say that three young men are ready to go on with the sale; you might say ten, and still be under the mark."

It is gratifying to witness this brave spirit. Forty years ago the Blasphemy Laws were defeated in the same manner. There has been a lull for more than a generation. A little pluck now may make the Blasphemy Laws a dead letter for ever.

THE FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

WE have received the following further subscriptions:—Louis Coleman, 1s.; — Mosenthal, 10s. 6d.; J. Clegg, 1s.; H. E. Smith, 5s.; W. H. C., 1s. 6d.; H. S. L., 1s.; J. P. W., 1s.; Anti-Fanatic, 3s. From Cardiff: N. Morgan, 1s.; A. Daniel, 1s.; W. H. Cooper, 1s.; C. Jones, 6d.; Mr. C. Jones, 6d.; E. Wilkins, 1s. W. Griffiths, 10s.; E. Sims, 2s.; E. Prestwich, 1s. 3d.; Dr. J. Laing, 10s. 6d.; Dr. A. Walker, 10s. 6d.; J. Kelling, 1s.; A. F., 2s.; Jno. Hopper, sen., 1s.; Jno. Hopper, jun., 1s.; Mary Hopper, 1s.; Ellen Hopper, 1s.; J. Hopper, 1s.; L. Harding, 2s. 6d.; E. A. Cantab, £1. Rochdale: J. Firth, 6d.; J. Cropper, 6d.; Old Atheist, 1s.; J. Butterworth, 1s. A. W. P., 1s.; Sympathiser, 1s.; J. L. Schoefer, 1s.; S. Hewitt, 2s.; Max Heine-mann, 2s.; K. Lampach, 2s. 6d.; J. Hockin, 6d.; Joseph Hemingway, 10s.; Police Constable, 1s.; Sceptical Policeman, 2s.; Robert Coultish, 1s.; John Grange, 1s.; Peter Widdicombe, 6d. Birmingham Branch N. S. S.: W. Nelson, 6d.; W. H. Wood, 1s.; J. H. Ridgway, 6d.; C. J. Bridges, 2s.; J. Partridge, 1s.; C. Davis, 3d.; J. Harris, sen., 6d.; Mrs. J. Harris, 6d.; J. Harris, jun., 3d.; A Lady Friend, 6d.; J. Needham, 6d.; W. Wright, 6d.; J. Gregory, 6d. J. Wilson, 1s.; A Friend, 6d.; — Barnes, 2s.; Charlotte Ferguson, 1s.; M. A. T., 3d.; — Worster, 2s. 6d.; Plaistow, 1s.; Civil and Religious Liberty, 2s.; A. Wilson, 2s.; W. Carter, £1 1s.; James Trollope, 6s.; Under-down, 2s. 6d.; J. Moffat, 3s. 2d.; A Physician and A Dentist 5s.; The Missing Link, 2s. 6d.; Hayes, 2s. 6d.; J. W., £1. From Grimsby: A Friend, 4s.; H. Blacklock, 1s. 3d.; — Smaile, 3d.; C. Beyton, 3d.; G. Alward, 2s.; A. Baxter, 3d.; H. Shepherd, 6d.; — Wholen, 6d.; Mrs. J. Alward, 1s.; Hester Stanhope, 2s. 6d.

The Glasgow Committee request us to acknowledge the following subscriptions which they have received:—Peter Clarkson, 10s.; R. P., 5s.; J. P. Brown, 5s.; A. Forrester, £1; R. McHarg, 1s.; William Smith, 1s.; Thomas Gordon, 3s.; J. Colquhoun, 10s.; R. White, 2s.; Malcolm Kinkaid, 1s.; James Kerr, 5s.; L. Speirs, 5s.; John Fisher, 5s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; J. F., 10s.; J. H., 2s. 6d.; John Henry, 5s.; J. M. Cunningham, 2s. 6d.; John McGlochan, 2s. 6d.; J. Smith, 2s. 6d.; Collected at meeting, 4s. 8½d.; Collected at meeting, 1s. 3d.; Profit on tea, 1s. 0½d.; John Williamson, 2s. 6d.; William Mitchell, 5s.; William Robertson, 2s. 6d.; J. M. Kennedy, 2s. 6d.; J. Wilson, 10s.; James Brand, 1s.; Hugh Irving, £1; James McWilliam, 3s.; Andrew White, 2s. 6d.; J. M. W., 5s.; Cobond d'Mello, 2s. 6d.; James Glen, 6d.; J. R., 5s.; John A. Munro, 1s. 6d.; J. F., 5s.; John H. Irving, 1s. 6d.; W. Robertson, 2s.; Joane Olivier, 1s.; David Mitchell, 1s.; Robert Marr, 1s.; M. P. Baillie, 1s.; William McAlister, 1s.; G. McL., 5s.; Robert Ferguson, 1s.; George Browning, 2s.; Matthew Kerr, 2s.; Agust Heim, 1s.; R. Gray, £1; Collected at meeting, 8s. 8½d.; J. L. Blackwood, 5s.; Ezra Keen, 1s.; John Colquhoun, 6d.; John McLean, 1s.; Baptist Elder, 2s. 6d.; C. Walker, 10s.; John Orr, 1s.; J. McDougall, 1s.; A Friend, 2s.; A. Monteith, 10s.; William Tinto, 1s.; R. Elliot, 1s.; H. A. L. (Lenzie), 5s.; A. L. Peace, 1s.; J. K., 2s.; William Sut, 5s.; Buckley, 6d.; C. J. Hunt, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Galbraith, 1s.; A Friend, 6d.; A. H. F., 1s. 6d.

MATERIALIZED THE WRONG MAN.—The *Philadelphia Record* is reminded by something of the importunate widow who desired to communicate with her dead husband. She asked: "Is it really such a dreadful place, John?" "Not at all; heaven is a delightful place." "Mr. Medium," said the widow, turning to that personage, "you have called up the wrong man."

HERBERT SPENCER ON JAHVEH.

"ALONG with the limitations of Jahveh's authority in range went limitations of it in degree. There was no claim to omnipotence. Not forgetting the alleged failure of his attempt personally to slay Moses, we may pass on to the defeats of the Israelites when they fought by his advice, as in two battles with the Benjaminites, and as in the battle with the Philistines when 'the ark of God was taken' (1 Sam. iv., 3-10). And then, beyond this, there is the specific statement that, when helping Judah, the Lord 'could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron' (Judges i., 19). That is, there were incapacities equalling those attributed by other peoples to their gods. Similarly with intellectual and moral nature. Jahveh receives information; he goes to see whether reports are true; he repents of what he has done—all implying anything but omniscience. Like Egyptian and Assyrian kings, he continually lauds himself; and while saying, 'I will not give my glory to another' (Isaiah xlviii., 11), he describes himself as jealous, as revengeful, and as a merciless destroyer of enemies. He sends a lying spirit to mislead a king, as Zeus does to Agamemnon (2 Chron. xviii., 20-22). By his own account he will deceive a prophet that he may prophesy falsely, intending then to destroy him (Ezekiel xiv., 9); he hardens men's hearts that he may inflict evils on them for what they then do; and, as when he prompts David to number Israel, suggests a supposed sin that he may afterwards punish those who have not committed it. He acts as did the Greek gods; from whom bad impulses were supposed to come, and who were similarly indiscriminate in their revenges."—*Ecclesiastical Institutions; being Part VI. of the Principles of Sociology*, p. 698, 1885.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

ATHEISM AND MORALITY.—Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it—not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist. And were I not a Christian, and that only in the sense in which I am a Christian, I should be an Atheist with Spinoza, rejecting all in which I found insuperable difficulties, and resting my only hope in the gradual and certain, because gradual progression of the human species.—*Coleridge*, "Letters, Conversations and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge," p. 47.

THAT Shakspeare wrote "Hamlet," or Scott wrote "Marmion," is not so sure as that the Lord God Almighty, by his prophets and apostles, wrote the Bible. . . The Bible says that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by fire and brimstone. "Absurd!" says Infidelity, "no such phenomenon ever took place." But Lieutenant Lynch drops his line into the Dead Sea, which occupies the site of those two cities, and brings up sulphur—pieces of the very brimstone which came down from heaven.—*T. DeWitt Talmage*. He that hath (long enough) ears to hear let him hear, but as to the great bulk of our readers let them hold their sides lest they split with laughter.—*Hylax*.

If I were compelled to choose between Talmage and Barnum, I should say, without any hesitation—Give me the Sunday circus. I could listen even to the stale jokes of the clown on Sunday, and receive less shock to moral and reverential feeling than was given by these clerical jokes intended to ridicule the noblest triumphs of the century. Even the clown sings a sentimental ballad which awakes a real emotion in some of his listeners, and, in this respect at least, the clown's ballad is better than Talmage's prayer.—*Rowland Connor*.

PROFANE JOKES.

TEACHER to Tommy: "What did God say to Adam in the Garden of Eden?" "Tommy: I don't know; I wasn't there."

THERE is a religious sect in Ohio which believes that when human beings die they turn into cats. Doesn't it make a man shiver, though, to think that perhaps he has been slinging boot-jacks all winter at his wife's grandmother.

A BISHOP, upon his visitation, found a curate of the diocese so ignorant that he did not know how to say the mass. The bishop, enraged, asked him, "Who was the ass of a bishop that gave you ordination?" "Your most illustrious lordship," replied the curate, with a humble reverence.

AN old Scotch lady was told that her minister used notes; she disbelieved it. Said one, "Go into the gallery and see." She did so, and saw the written sermon. After the luckless preacher had concluded his reading on the last page, he said, "But I will not enlarge." The old woman called out from her lofty position, "Ye canna, ye canna, for your paper's give out!"

"I REMEMBER," says an old-fashioned satirist, "when at Trivoli, near Rome, conversing with a monk, who, with a face of much sorrow, told me that he was a great rascal, and the chief of sinners, worse than Judas Iscariot, and altogether vile. I said to him in reply: 'Alas, my poor friend, it is but too true.' And then the man got very angry and would not talk with me any more."

3d. NOW READY. 3d.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF THE "Freethinker" CROWDED WITH COMIC ILLUSTRATIONS AND WITTY ARTICLES.

Calculated to make Sky-Pilots rave and Honest Men laugh. People given over by doctors should read it and take a fresh lease of life.

One dose sufficient. Give it a trial.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

- Satan's Adventures. (Fourteen sketches). By PAUL BELLEVUE. The Transfiguration. The Deluge! By F. WILCOCKSON. The Baby God. By F. WILCOCKSON. A Corpse Reviver. By F. WILCOCKSON. God in a Cloud. By G. L. MACKENZIE. Our Rector. (A series). By E. CLARE. A Bag of Sins. Happy Eliza! Etc. Etc.

ARTICLES:

- The Star of Bethlehem. By G. W. FOOTE. God as a Barber. By W. P. BALL. A Bethlehem Scandal. Discovery of Noah's Ark. By J. M. WHEELER. Jehovah's Election Address. By SCOFFER. The Archbishop's Prayer for the General Election. A Modern Judas. By A. B. MOSS. Going to Church. By G. STANDRING. Mrs. Brown on the Bible.

VERSE:

- God's Holy Word. By LUCIANUS. The Bible Alphabet. By SCOFFER. The Creed of Burns. Merry Christmas. By G. L. MACKENZIE.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- Celestial Announcements. Johnnie's Inquiries. Biblical Museum. To Facetious Correspondents. Prize Bible Questions. The Bible Simplified. Rib Ticklers. Etc. Etc.

MIRACLES OF CHEAPNESS.

- Paine's "Age of Reason" ... 0 6 Paine's "Complete Theological Works," including "Age of Reason" 1 0 Ditto, in cloth ... 1 6 Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.

TO FREETHINKERS, Etc. A TRIAL SOLICITED. BEST STYLE, FIT AND VALUE.

H. HAMPTON, TAILOR, 14 Gt. Castle Street, W. A FEW DOORS FROM REGENT CIRCUS.

RUBBER STAMPS.

- National Secular Society Monogram ... 1 0 Any two-letter Monogram ... 1 0 Name in full ... 1 4 Postage to any part of England 2d. extra. Agents Wanted.

IRETON AND CO. 92 GRACECHURCH ST., E.C.



Bible Contradictions,

Being PART I. of a BIBLE HANDBOOK FOR FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

EDITED BY G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball, WITH A Special Introduction by G. W. Foote.

STITCHED IN WRAPPER. PRICE FOURPENCE.

"It is the most painstaking and accurate work of the kind we have yet seen, and quite blows to smithereens the Protestant's infallible book."—Secular Review. "It is questionable whether a more effective impression could be made on a Christian of ordinary candor than by getting him to go through this little handbook. Belief in inspiration could hardly survive the perusal. . . . A somewhat close scrutiny discloses no errors or serious omissions; and reveals that the collection has the merit of giving in abundance the contradictions not only of the letter but of the spirit, while yet presenting nothing that is not of the most distinct logical validity. The antitheses are always precise and forcible."—Our Corner.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.

Comic Bible Sketches

PART I. OF THE FREETHINKERS' COMIC BIBLE.

Containing the best of the Illustrations that appeared in the Freethinker before the imprisonment, including all those for which Sir Henry Tyler prosecuted Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote and Ramsey.

Printed on special paper, and bound in a Handsome Wrapper with an exquisite Design on wood.

Price Fourpence.

Part II. will be published early in December.

REDUCED IN PRICE!

- The Darwinian Theory ... 3d. The Origin of Man ... 3d. Monkeys, Apes and Men ... 3d. Darwin Made Easy ... 1s.

The best popular expositions of Darwin in the market.

By DR. EDWARD AVELING, (Fellow of London University.)

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler. In parts of 16 pp. Price One Penny each:—

- I. Christ to Constantine—II. Constantine to Jovian—III. Athanasius to Hypatia—IV. Monks—V. Pious Frauds—VI. Pious Frauds (concluded)—VII. The Rise of the Papacy—VIII. The Crimes of the Popes—IX. Ignorance, Vices and Quarrels of the Early Clergy—X. The Jew Hunt—XI. The Jew Hunt (concluded)—XII. The Crusades.—XIII. The Crusades (concluded)—XIV. Witchcraft.

Ready Next Week. PART XV.—THE INQUISITION.

The succeeding parts will be issued at intervals of a fortnight.

"The two authors of this work (which is well described by the title) are doing a good work in England in exposing the prevailing religion. In this work new cases of Christian cruelty are unearthed and new authors cited as authorities. We wish every English-reading Christian could have a copy."—New York Truthseeker.

"A most useful addition to the Freethought library."—National Reformer.

"The evidence against the culprit, Christianity, is led with forensic skill."—Secular Review.

"The brochure now before us is a most serviceable and effective compendium of the overwhelming historic testimony against the Christian Church from its origin to the Dark Ages. . . . The bulk of the work is beyond cavil; and if it be complained that the spirit of the writers is too determinedly hostile to Christianity, the answer is that they always speak from cited evidence."—Our Corner.

NOW READY.

VOL. I., including Parts I. to IX. Price One Shilling.

144 pp. Bound in handsome wrapper.

Price Sixpence.

PROGRESS

A Monthly Magazine, EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The DECEMBER NUMBER contains—

- Herbert Spencer on Ecclesiastical Institutions By Hero E. Jewel. Prisoner of Blasphemy. XVIII. By G. W. Foote. Neither Slumber nor Sleep. (A Poem.) By John Harvey. A Forgotten Reformer—(concluded). By George Payne. Browning as a Dramatist. By Edward Aveling. Charles Darwin. By J. M. Wheeler. Schopenhauer. By James Thomson (B.V.) The Origin of Mind. By a Graduate. Agnosticism. (A Review of a Recent Criticism.) By Robert Batho. The Old Sot's Song. By E. V. Ward.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter Street.

MR. FOOTE'S WORKS.

- Arrows of Freethought ... 0 6 Theological Essays, including all the theological pamphlets now in print. Cloth ... 2 0 Blasphemy No Crime ... 0 1 Mill's Christ. Being an exhaustive examination and exposure of John Stuart Mill's panegyric on Christ in his Essay on Theism ... 0 2 The Folly of Prayer. New edition; with fresh Introduction ... 0 1 Atheism and Morality. New edition; fresh Introduction ... 0 1 Secularism the True Philosophy of Life. An Exposition and a Defence. (In Wrapper)... 0 4 Atheism and Suicide ... 0 1 The God Christians Swear By ... 0 2 Was Jesus Inane? ... 0 1 Brown's Story; or, The Dying Infidel. 16pp. 0 1 Law and Gospel. Letters to Lord Coleridge, Judge North, Gaoler Harcourt, and Lawyer Giffard ... 0 1 The Shadow of the Sword. An Essay on War ... 0 2 Jonah's Excursion to Nineveh. With twenty-four illustrations ... 0 2

BIBLE ROMANCES (1d each).

- 1 The Creation Story 8 The Tower of Babel 2 Noah's Flood 9 Balaam's Ass 3 Eve and the Apple 10 God's Thieves in Canaan 4 The Bible Devil 11 Cain and Abel 5 The Ten Plagues 12 Lot's Wife 6 Jonah and the Whale 7 The Wandering Jews

FIRST SERIES, bound in elegant wrapper, ONE SHILLING.

- 13 Daniel and the Lions 18 Bully Samson 14 The Jew Judges 19 Gospel Ghosts 15 St John's Nightmare 20 A Rising God 16 A Virgin Mother 21 The Bible Menagerie 17 God in a Box 22 The Crucifixion

SECOND SERIES, bound in elegant wrapper, NINEPENCE.

"For regular go-a-head propagandist work we know of no literature likely to be so effective as Mr. Foote's series of little pamphlets entitled Bible Romances."—Secular Review.

HYDE PARK FREETHOUGHT CLUB.—Old members and Secularists in the vicinity are earnestly requested to attend at the "Carpenters' Arms" Seymour Place, Portman Square. Lectures every Sunday evening at 8.

Thwaites' Liver Pills.

Are acknowledged to be the best Family Medicine in the World by the many thousands that are using them in preference to all others. It is almost impossible to enumerate in an advertisement what they are good for; it would take up too much of your time to read it, and after you had read it you might say it was only advertising puff; but I ask One Trial of the LIVER PILLS; if not better than any you have tried before, I cannot expect a continuance of your custom. I recommend them for INDIGESTION, LOSS OF APPETITE, DIZZINESS, BILIOUSNESS, CONSTIVENESS, NERVOUSNESS, PALPITATION OF THE HEART, PILES, ETC., all of which are, in many cases, caused by the Liver being inactive, or what we call a sluggish Liver. Try some of the LIVER PILLS as soon as you can, as they are PURE HERB PILLS, and may be used at any time by anyone without any change of diet or change of taking cold. Prepared only by GEORGE THWAITES, 2 Church Row, Stockton-on-Tees. Sold in 1s. 1d. and 2s. 9d. per box, or by post for 1s or 2s Penny Stamps. A Price List of Herbs free.

TEETH, 2s. 6d. each, on vulcanite; upper or lower set, £1. Best quality, on vulcanite, 4s a tooth upper or lower set, £2. No extras. Completed to four hours when required. Best teeth on Platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 18-carat gold, 15s. Painless extraction daily with gas, 6s.; without, 1s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.—MR. STANTON, B.D., 128 Strand, London. Hours nine to eight.

J. WORSTEE, WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANT. "Duke of Ormand," Princes Street, Westminster, The "National Reformer," "Freethinker," and other Freethought journals at the bar.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.