

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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JANUARY 31, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



J. VERHAEGE

HOME RULE = ROME RULE.



## GOD IN PARLIAMENT.

SOME ribald persons, on reading this heading, will be tempted to ask what constituency the honorable gentleman represents. Well, in a certain sense, he represents them all, boroughs and counties; for according to the theologians God does everything, being infinite and omnipotent, and therefore he makes our laws and conducts our foreign policy, although it pleases him to do all these things by agents who fancy they are principals. It is not our purpose, however, to pursue that line of criticism. Yet it might lead to some ludicrous conclusions; as, for instance, the Lord debating with himself, dividing against himself, and being at once the Government and the Opposition. The field is an alluring one to profanity; but, as everyone knows, that is a quality we severely repress; not only because it is reprehensible in itself, but because it leads to Glasgow Gaol, Holloway Castle and similar hospitable establishments, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest—from 8.30 p.m. to 6 a.m.

What we desire to criticise is the last sentence of the Queen's Speech, where she commends her faithful Lords and Commons to the care and guidance of Almighty God. Some people will think this a solemn mockery, a piece of royal bunkum. But it is really nothing of the sort. Lord Randolph Churchill (and in such matters there is no higher authority) declared in one of the Bradlaugh debates that the proceedings of the House of Commons (he forgot the Lords) "are under the supervision, and will be guided by the wisdom, of a Beneficent Providence." In other words, while Mr. Peel sits in the chair, God Almighty is the real Speaker. It is he who regulates the debates. He rounds Mr. Gladstone's periods, points Tim Healy's invective, and spices Lord Randolph's impertinence. As Isaiah says, I the Lord do all these things, I create good and evil.

Nor need anyone be surprised at the fact that one Parliament undoes the work of another, and that every session sees some fresh chopping and changing. Does not the Lord run the weather as well as politics, and if the one shows the versatility of his genius, why should we be astonished at the charming variety in the other? Isaiah says the Lord can be *tired*, and the Book of Revelation says he can be *sick*. We can therefore easily understand his getting tired of one party and sick of another, and giving them all a turn, for the sake of diversion. As the old Greeks said, Change overcometh both gods and men; and in the same strain our sage Sponser sang of Mutability. Probably this accounts for Mr. Bradlaugh's being allowed to take the oath at last. No doubt the Lord got weary of the game of excluding the Atheist. It was growing very monotonous. So he crossed it off the programme and inserted a fresh piece. We take it also that the profusion of nonsense talked in Parliament is a sure sign of the Lord's presence, and the occasional rowdyism shown there proves that old Jahveh is not yet tamed down by civilisation. And when a Fair Trader, a member of the Primrose League, a buckshot Coercionist, a solemn Anti-Bradlaughite, or a member of some other division of the Stupid Party, rises on his hind legs to speak, it only shows, in the language of Balaam's biographer, that the Lord hath "opened the mouth of the ass."

Another sign of the Lord's presence is the fact that Parliament is always sanctioning the spoliation of foreign states, especially when they are weak enough to become an easy prey. When we gobble up Zululand, Egypt, Burmah, and other nice little properties, we are only acting on the principles Jahveh laid down for the Jews, when he told them to seize fields they had never tilled, and manure them with the blood of their native defenders. Yes, there cannot be a doubt about the Lord's being in Parliament when we remember our achievements abroad. And if a sceptical Hunter ventures to question the Burmah business, the Lord has a pious Gladstone ready to smother the inquiry.

Just as we conclude this article we learn that the Tory ministry is defeated. The three-acres-and-a-cow the Conservatives made so much fun over, has settled their hash. The real victory is Mr. Chamberlain's; that pastiferous Radical, who sent Mr. Bradlaugh a cheque for twenty pounds. Whatever is God about?

G. W. FOOTE.

## BUDDHA AND CHRIST.\*

AMONG the causes which have led to unbelief in the supernatural claims of Christianity must be reckoned the knowledge which has of late years been unearthed concerning the rival claims of other beliefs. In Buddhism especially is found a religion which, though devoid of theology, has moulded and influenced the lives of a larger number than Christianity, and for a longer period; and which anticipated the Christian religion in teaching the doctrines of returning good for evil, and in inculcating the virtues of purity, humility, long suffering and loving kindness to all creatures. It was therefore to be expected that among those who live by the gospel of Christ someone should put forward an attempt to diminish as far as possible the claims of Buddhism, while of course exaggerating those of his own faith. The extensive popularity of Mr. Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, especially in America, where it is published at a few cents, has given opportunity to Dr. Kellogg, a professor in the Western Theological Seminary, Alleghany, who was for eleven years missionary to India, to show how arrogant and unjust a Christian can be. Dr. Kellogg first attacks Buddhism as defective in historic evidence. He boldly says: "It is agreed by the orthodox and the rationalist critics alike that the testimony upon which Christianity rests its claims to acceptance is contemporaneous with the alleged events"—a statement which, as a professor of theology, Dr. Kellogg must know to be false, unless he considers documents written from forty to one hundred years after the death of the person whose life they record are contemporaneous testimony. He points out the divergence of opinion as to the date of Gautama the Buddha, and declares that the utmost divergence of opinion as to the date of the birth of Jesus does not exceed six years.† This is hardly so, for the Jews, who ought to have some reliable tradition of the matter, place Jesus in the time of King Jannæus (B.C. 106 to 76), and Irenæus, the first Christian father who mentions the four gospels, believed that Jesus lived to be fifty years of age (Bk. ii., chap. 22). Even a small discrepancy concerning a person living in the Roman Empire at the time of the Cæsars is more suspicious than a larger one relating to a person living in Oude five or six centuries before the Christian era.

In the case of Jesus, as in that of Gautama, he not only did not write himself, but we have no evidence that he directed any of his disciples to write; and while the earliest records of Buddhism are in Pali, the language of the district where Gautama lived, the Christian gospels are in Greek, a language unknown to learned Jews.

Dr. Kellogg then devotes a good deal of space to criticising the views of Ernest von Bunsen and Professor Seydel, to the effect that Christianity is copied from Buddhism. Into this matter I shall not enter, having dealt with it fully in *Progress*, April, 1884. He is at pains to point out the open and unqualified contradiction between the doctrines of the two religions. Buddhism is atheistic; it does not claim to be inspired; it has a salvation without a savior; it has no atoning sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty, no god born of woman for man's redemption, but only a man who becomes enlightened as a god for that purpose; its heavens and hells are not eternal; by sin it does not mean the natural depravity of the human heart revolting against God, but rather the low desires which hamper man's own moral progress. All these particulars, which in Dr. Kellogg's eyes are grave defects in Buddhism, are in ours proofs of its superiority. It is the peculiarity of his book that where it seeks to disparage it serves to recommend. Just because Buddhism pretends to be only a human religion it stands higher than Christianity with its exclusive claim to be the only divinely-revealed and only true faith. For our part, we distinctly prefer the ethical teaching of Gautama as expressed in the Dhammapada, "Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality,

\* *The Light of Asia and the Light of the World. A Comparison of the Legend, the Doctrine and the Ethics of the Buddha with the Story, the Doctrine and the Ethics of Christ.* By S. H. Kellogg, D.D. Macmillan and Co. 1885.

† Herod the Great died three or four years before the Christian era, and according to the Gospel of the Infancy the parents of Jesus stayed three years in Egypt till his death, so when the inspired Luke tells us Jesus was about thirty years of age, he must have been about thirty-six or thirty-seven.



the liar by truth," to the later and less reserved saying of Jesus, "Resist not evil."

Nor will it do to bring the backward state of the nations that have adopted Buddhism as conclusive evidence against it. Dr. Kellogg declares that Buddhism has not destroyed polygamy and polyandria. Neither has Christianity. Both these forms exist in all Christian countries, and whereas the Bible both countenances and approves of polygamy Buddhism does neither. Dr. Kellogg points out that the celibacy of Buddhist priests is more nominal than real. Exactly the same might be said of the celibacy of Christian priests. No abomination could be pointed out as existing in Buddhist countries that has not its counterpart in Christian lands. Climate, political institutions and other causes account for the differences between Buddhists and Christians without calling in the *deus ex machina* of a supernatural revelation. Civilisation, not Christianity, accounts for those differences, and if Buddhism succumbs it will not be because of its opposition to Christianity, but on account of the incompatibility which the doctrines of Buddha share in common with those of Jesus with the teachings of science and the influence of modern civilisation.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### H Y M N F O R S A I N T S .

(JACOB'S LADDER.)

GREAT God of Jacob, by whose lies  
Thy people still are led,  
Who lovest Jacob and all those  
In Jacob's steps who tread,

Oh hear our prayers as thou heard'st his,  
And sanctify our lives,  
As Jacob's thou didst sanctify,  
With concubines and wives.

Help us, great Cheat, as thou didst him,  
In swindling friends and brothers;  
We too will cheat a dying dad,  
We too will swindle others.

Then give us Jacob's godliness  
That gained its end by stealth,  
That brought great blessings won by fraud,  
And stores of plundered wealth.

We love his crooked ways and thine,  
We love thy sacred story;  
Help all our tricks as thou didst his,  
And thine shall be the glory.

If Jacob's acts we imitate,  
And Jacob's ways we love.  
On Jacob's ladder we shall mount  
To thy great throne above.

So on those slippery rounds we climb,  
And day by day rise higher,  
Emulating thy great friend,  
The coward, cheat and liar.

Thus thou wilt grant success on earth,  
And more, thou wilt grant this,  
That by that ladder we shall rise  
To everlasting bliss.

W. P. BALL.

COMFORT FOR A DYING BED.—When the Rev. G. W. M'Cree was doing mission work in St. Giles, a man came and told him that his wife had died. Mr. M'Cree sympathised with the poor man, and said he hoped that she had died in peace. "Yes, sir, she only asked for one thing, and that was a pork sausage."

SLEEPING IN CHURCH.—A Scottish minister one day inflicted upon his own wife a censure for the above offence. He had observed one of his flock asleep during his sermon. He paused and called him to order. "Jeems Robson, ye are sleepin'; I insist on your waking when the Gospel is preached to ye!" "Weel, sir, you may look at your ain seat, and ye'll see a sleeper forbye me," answered Jeems, pointing to the clergyman's lady in the minister's pew. "Then, Jeems," said the minister, "when ye see my wife asleep again, haud up your hand." By-and-bye the arm was stretched out, and sure enough the fair lady was caught napping. Her husband solemnly called upon her to stand up and receive the censure due to her offence. He thus addressed her: "Mrs. B—, anybody kens that when I got ye for my wife I got nae beauty. Yer frien's ken that I got nae siller; and if I dinna get heaven's grace, I shall have a puir bargain indeed."—*Dean Ramsay's "Reminiscences."*

## ACID DROPS.

WE sympathise with the Irish in their wish for self-government, but there is little doubt the desire of the priests is that Home Rule shall mean Rome Rule. Dr. H. F. Burnes, a late president of the Irish National League, declares in the *Times* that "The League is now essentially a Roman Catholic organisation—*i.e.*, supported and aided by the priests on condition that the chosen candidates for any post shall be Roman Catholics." The *Catholic Times* boldly discloses its hope that the Protestant colleges, churches and cathedrals will "pass into the hands of those to whom they legitimately belong." The Irish peasant will not find his position much improved till he throws the priest overboard.

THE Rev. A. Watton, rector of Burslem, Staffordshire, has blown his brains out with a revolver. The Rev. Adam Clarke, rector of the adjoining parish of Longton, and grandson of the celebrated Methodist commentator, also committed suicide in a similar manner on the Saturday preceding. And yet Christians like Talmage are always telling us that it is only "infidels" who commit suicide.

ANOTHER clergyman, the Rev. F. R. Hole, vicar of Constantine, Cornwall, tried hard to drown himself on Sunday. In consequence of certain rumors coupling his name with that of a school-girl of the village, his bishop had been communicated with, and the indiscreet vicar found himself opening the services in an empty church, as none of the parishioners would attend. He then jumped into a pond near his own house, but the gardener rescued him in a very exhausted state and went in search of assistance. When he came back the teacher of Christianity had recovered sufficiently to seek refuge from his troubles in the pond once more. He was rescued again, but it is doubtful whether he will recover.

A BOSTON pastor, speaking of a *confrere*, alluded to him as "a dear old moth-eaten angel." Another aged person was described as a "seraph gone to seed."

THE *Christian Herald*, in an account of some mission addresses at Norwood, says: "As an illustration of the terrible influences at work upon some young people in our day, it may be stated that one boy of about fifteen boldly said he was no Christian. He claimed, however, to be a Theist, while another only a very little older, boldly professed Atheism, and even blasphemously said he would rather go to hell than heaven!" How inconsistently these Christians talk. At one minute they speak as if they were a mere handful of resolute martyrs in the midst of an unbelieving world and the next they are utterly surprised at one or two young people daring to differ from them in opinion.

THE Rev. W. Paterson is exciting great popular discontent by his determination to have his pound of flesh from the farmers who decline to pay his "extraordinary tithes." At the last sale of sheep seized by him at Biddenham, in Kent, 1,000 people assembled and drew the auctioneer in his waggon into a horse-pond, which to their disappointment proved only a shallow one. They then drew the waggon in the direction of a deeper pond, but the arrival of a dozen policemen enabled the auctioneer to escape the intended ducking. He was, however, so hustled about, and pelted with old cabbage-stalks and drenched with water, that after seeking in vain the shelter of a neighboring farmhouse, he made his peace by subscribing 5s. to the Anti-Extraordinary Tithe Association and promising never to undertake similar business again. An indignation meeting was then held. Mr. Bolton, M.P., has a bill in hand for dealing with these tithes. If the Church were wise it would itself do away with these scandals, which alienate the minds of its agricultural friends and do it an immense amount of harm in the direction of disestablishment.

A LOCAL paper states that a Clerical Defence Association has been formed for Kent, Sussex and Surrey, binding its members to distrain on the property of all who refuse to pay extraordinary tithes, and to resist any compromise. So much the better. The sooner will the end come.

WE doubt if the present Government will last long enough to bring forward the "Bill for facilitating the sale of glebe lands in a manner adapted to the wants of the rural population," as proposed in the Queen's Speech. The proposal, however, has a sinister look. Under the specious pretext of providing the laborer with allotments, it is intended to allow the parsons to sell lands which, as national property, are now inalienable, and of course to let them or the Church pocket the proceeds. We trust the attempt will be frustrated.

MR. SHIRLEY is going to bring a Bill into Parliament authorising Nonconformist ministers to dispense with the attendance of registrars at marriages. As marriage, however, is in the eye of the law a civil ceremony, it would be preferable to extend the hour from twelve to four, and make the attendance of the parties before the registrar compulsory, whether they secure the services of a priest or not.



At a hallelujah prayer-meeting in Norwich (U.S.) one night last week, according to the bulletin of that city, many of the well-dressed women became so excited at the declaration of one of the leaders that plumes and finery are a barrier to the full enjoyment of sanctification that they pulled off their bonnets, tore from them the ostrich plumes, flowers, and ruches, and threw them crumpled upon the floor until there was a pile sufficient to fill a half-bushel basket. The prayer-meeting was kept up in full force all night and long after sunrise next morning. Religion and rum, observes the *Winsted Press*, seem to have a similar effect on many people, and whether a woman fuddled with religion isn't a bigger nuisance than a man fuddled with brandy is a very nicely balanced question.—*New York Truthseeker*.

LAST Monday night a widow, named Miriam Edmund, died suddenly at a revival meeting in the Primitive Methodist School-room, Bridlington, whilst in the act of praying. Such cases are by no means rare, but what would be said if they occurred at Freethought meetings?

THE *English Churchman* not only has an article on Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P., mildly suggesting that the gentleman ought to be expelled, but it prints a special "Invitation to Prayer," asking its readers to supplicate the Almighty "that, as a Christian nation, we may be led to consider our ways, and amend our misdoings, especially in so far as we have permitted an avowed Atheist and blasphemer to take his seat in the legislature." We have no objection to the Christians indulging in any amount of prayer so long as they do not repeat the scene of August 3, 1881.

THE Ritualist papers, one of which speaks of Dr. Moorhouse, the new Bishop of Manchester, late of Melbourne, as a "returned empty," simply because he is Low Church, are resolved, even before the Rev. Bell Cox is punished for his contumacy, to consider him as a martyr. One and all speak of his prosecution as persecution. Yet if he does not choose to conform to the ordinances prescribed by law, he has only to do what better men have done—resign his living. Probably he would find a place, though a less remunerative one, in the Church of Rome.

How truly representative is the new House of Laymen, which has been added to Convocation, must be judged from a letter to the *Times* from a gentleman who did not even hear of the election, although he has subscribed over £12,000 for Church purposes.

CONSIDERABLE correspondence is going on in the *Church Times* on the momentous and most sacred subject of "Wine-stained Palls." It seems that a number of communicants either tip over the "Precious Blood" or wipe their lips with the linen, leaving portions of their blessed Savior thereon. The Vicar of St. Stephen's, Windsor, declares he "cannot conceive how any priest, believing in the Real Presence, can do anything with a stained pall but burn it instantly." Others think this is only adding sacrilege to sacrilege.

SWIFT held the doctrine that there were three places where a man should be allowed to speak without contradiction, viz., the bench, the pulpit, and the gallows.

OWING to the machinations of Beelzebub, or some other cause, a severe gas explosion took place in the Church of St. Augustine, Tong Moor, Bolton, doing damage to the amount of £500. If the gas which preachers let off in church was explosive, every sacred edifice in the country would be in danger.

In a quarrel at a prayer-meeting in Greenup county, Kentucky, Charles Martin was fatally stabbed.

A NICE little storm in a tea-cup has been raised by the discovery of a dancing class in connexion with a Christian church. The straight-laced *Christian Commonwealth* denounces this new attempt to make the churches attractive. David had not the light of the blessed gospel before his eyes when he danced before the Ark, girded only with a linen ephod. The *Christian Commonwealth* says the line should be drawn at dancing classes. We would draw it at spiritual intoxication.

THE law still stands that people may be compelled to attend church, and in deciding the case at Doncaster last Saturday of George Jackson, who was summoned for wrongfully quitting the service of a farmer who ordered him to attend church on Sunday morning or go without his dinner, Lord Auckland decided against the man on the ground that a master was quite justified in saying when a servant should go to church. What nice Christian laws we live under to be sure!

THE Rev. A. R. M. Finlayson, of Liverpool, has been relating a guileless anecdote about the daughter of a certain nobleman unnamed, who asked her father what was whiter than snow? Upon the nobleman's giving it up, the girl, who was under ten years of age, replied, "A soul washed in the blood of Jesus." She afterwards repeated the sanguinary conundrum to the Prince of Wales, who was equally nonplussed. The story concludes, "the Word was used to carry conviction to the father's

heart, and he became an earnest and devoted Christian." Mr. Finlayson, however, forgot to mention what became of the Prince of Wales.

AN East London paper reports a sermon on the visit of the Magi, by the Rev. C. J. Finch. When we state that at the outset he calls the wise men "eastern princes, or Brahmins, whose names are said to have been" the strikingly Brahminical ones of "Melchior, Jasper and Balthasar," Mr. Finch's competence to deal with the subject will be apparent.

THE *Methodist Recorder* apparently thinks that Christianity is going to the Devil. It says: "The vagaries of the Christian world are at the present moment unusually numerous and humiliating. Unfortunately, a variety of follies, beclouding the brightness and impeding the progress of the Church of Christ, have never been lacking, and our day is proving not less prolific in disastrous ecclesiastical and theological eccentricity. At many points thought and action are running wild, discrediting the faith of Christ and checking the growth of his kingdom."

COL. STEWART has been lecturing upon what he calls a new religion in Persia. The new religion is that of Bábism, which was started by Ali Mahomed, a native of Shiraz, who in 1842 declared that he had received a commission by God to supersede both Mohammedanism and Christianity. He calls himself El Bab, or the Door. Persecution only increased his followers, who seem to be very energetic since we have ourselves received a challenge from one of them in Lahore, who invites us out to India for the purpose of discussing the claims of Ali Mohammed.

THE *Taieri Advocate* (Mosgiel) has an article headed "Adoption of a Lamb by a Donkey." The editor evidently thinks this an astounding fact. B-a-a! If the editor had ever heard the Salvation Army on the subject of "The lamb, the lamb—the bleedin' lamb!" he would understand that many donkeys adopt a lamb. At the same time we should advise the Auckland Salvationists to import the Mosgiel donkey, and engage him as their professional prayer—we mean brayer. The Mosgiel lamb might be of use also; it might afford the local Army some hints on the subject of *fleeceing*. Here endeth the first chapter! Let us bray.—*Rationalist*.

#### IN BIBLE DAYS.

IN the good old days gone by,  
When angels and witches ate figs,  
The jay birds lifted the heaviest weights,  
And elephants perched on twigs;  
The hippopotamus flew,  
Or sang to his charming mate,  
While Moses and God planned their new campaign  
As they swung on the garden gate.

When seasons were hot and dry  
And famine assailed each door,  
This all-wise God, with a wink and a nod,  
Rained bugs and frogs galore;  
And nothing tickled him more,  
His sense of humor was such,  
Than to answer the prayer of the good for rain  
By drowning them out with too much.

The snakes all hopped and talked,  
And men often swallowed whales  
While the fish brought the money to pay the rent,  
And the asses told long tales;  
The water was made into wine,  
And churches were always jammed;  
The angels chewed tobacco:  
Believe it all or be damned.

H. H. G.

A CLERGYMAN was rebuking his congregation for deserting him on a charity sermon one Sunday. "Why is it," he asked, "that today the church is full, and this day week, because there was a collection, it was simply empty?" "'Cos yer don't give tick!" shouted a voice from the free seats.

IN hymn-tunes with repeating phrases, and especially in artistic and operatic singing by church choirs, solemn sentences sometimes get chopped up rather curiously. A wicked infidel has collected a few specimens: "Love thee better than before," was divided "Love thee bet-." "We'll catch the fleeting hour" was sung, "We'll catch the flee-." "My poor polluted heart" became "My poor pol-." "And take thy pilgrim home" became "And take thy pil-." "And in the pious he delights," became "And in the pi-." "Send down salvation from on high" became "Send down sal-." A soprano in one case sang, "Oh, for a man-," and the chorus responded, "Oh, for a mansion in the skies." In one case the soprano modestly sang, "Teach me to kiss," while the bass rendered it quite prosaic by singing, "Teach me to kiss the rod."



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 31, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.O.; at 11.15, "The New Government;" at 7, "Prepare to meet thy God."  
Tuesday, Feb. 2, Freethought Institute, York Street, Walworth Road; at 8.30, "Christ's Miracles."

FEBRUARY 4, Walworth; 7, Brighton; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester.

MARCH 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London; 21, Leeds; 28, Milton Hall.

## CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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, 8s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

E. ANDERSON.—See a footnote to Gibbon's thirty-seventh chapter. The historian says that it is universally acknowledged that "(1) Saint Athanasius is not the author of the creed which is so frequently read in our churches. (2) It does not appear to have existed within a century after his death. (3) It was originally composed in the Latin tongue, and, consequently, in the Western provinces." Gibbon adds that Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, was so much amazed by this extraordinary composition, that he frankly pronounced it to be the work of a drunken man.—Glad to hear you find the "Crimes of Christianity" of such "immense value."

J. WATSON.—Yes, the Lord has been two or three times very unkind to Mr. Foote in the matter of weather at Liverpool. Next time he (Mr. Foote, not the Lord) visits the city the Committee must arrange about the weather with the local Spiritist medium, and hold him responsible for damages if he makes a mistake.

W. H. SPIVEY.—Much obliged.

B. F. WILLIAMS.—We have said before that the only difference between an Atheist and an Agnostic is that the one is more outspoken than the other. Practically there is no difference between them except in this respect. Both are "without God in the world."

J. DE FRAINE.—Shall appear.

W. R. JOSSLYN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

JONATHAN.—We know nothing of the matter.

T. MOON.—Pluralities still exist in the Church of England, inasmuch as the well-paid canons of cathedrals may also have benefices.

MEDICAL STUDENT.—The genuineness of both the passages in Tacitus and Pliny has been disputed. They only speak of the existence of Christians, and give no corroboration of the supernatural gospel story. Tacitus says "Christus," not "Jesus called the Christ."

J. HODGSON.—Many thanks.

YOUNGSTER.—Good work is done by circulating the *Freethinker* tracts.

L. HILL informs us that when recently an effort was made in Norwich to erect a memorial to Thos. Bilney and other Nonconformist martyrs, he endeavored to get the name of Matthew Hamond added to the roll, but without effect. We contemplate some day doing a complete account of Freethought Heroes and Martyrs.

P. C.—What John Taylor, (of Stockton,) says about Secularism is not worth a sensible man's attention. When he asserts that Secularism seeks to abolish marriage he is only drawing on his own poor imagination.

E. WILKS.—Thanks for your interesting tract. Colonel Ingersoll's Introduction to Helen Gardener's book was published in the *Freethinker* some weeks ago.

EDWIN HUGHES.—Many thanks, but Mr. Birch of Manchester is not worth more than an occasional notice.

JAMES SALT.—Proctor's "Flowers of the Sky," or any work upon astronomy will confirm the statement as to the immense distance of the stars.

CLARA A. WATERLOW.—Many thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

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.

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.O.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Mercury—Cheshire County News—Devon Evening Express—Portsmouth Evening News—Truthseeker—Alnwick Guardian—Liberal—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Lucifer—Rationalist—Liberator—Essex Weekly News.

## "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 February 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.

This evening (January 31) Mr. Foote will deliver a new lecture in the London Hall of Science—"Prepare to meet thy God." It will be an excellent opportunity for all to learn what will

happen when the Boss Judge hears the judgment summonses. The morning subject will be "The New Government."

THE February number of *Progress* contains a vigorous reply by an Irishman to Mr. Foote's article on "The Irish Question." The other contents of the number are varied and interesting. Gossip and Reviews of recent advanced works are continued.

THERE has been another big fight at Oakenshaw Colliery over the *Freethinker*, and the bigots have made another unsuccessful effort to remove it from the Institute reading-room. They were, however, defeated by a majority of 44 to 28.

THE Wigan Free Library now accepts a monthly copy of *Progress* "with thanks." There's progress at least.

THE Custon House authorities of New South Wales have deemed it best, under threat of an action at law, to give up the publications sent from the *Truthseeker* office, New York.

THIS day (Jan. 31) is the 149th anniversary of the birthday of Thomas Paine, the world-renowned pioneer of political and religious liberty. Both in England and in his adopted country, America, the name of Paine rises above the cloud of malignant clerical detraction with which it has been assailed, and we trust that preparations will be made next year to fitly celebrate the 150th anniversary of his birthday.

UNDER the heading "Lively Paragraphs," the *Boston Investigator* inserts some cuttings from our columns of "Acid Drops."

THE new volume on the Female Pope, by Emmanuel Rohoidis, is a proof that the subject of Pope Joan has not yet lost the interest which belongs to it as a fact in the province of historical criticism, but we doubt if anything material can be added to the review of the whole case which appeared in *Progress* for September of last year.

MR. J. ALLANSON PICTON, the member for Leicester, is going to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the revenues of the Established Church of England, their nature, origin, total amount, application and distribution. Such an inquiry is absolutely necessary before Disestablishment and Disendowment could be proceeded with, and it would doubtless reveal many matters the clerical party would prefer kept in the dark.

THE *Devon Evening Express* inserts a long and able article on the Church and its right to national property, from the pen of Mr. Joshua Widdicombe.

THE REV. E. H. BRADBY, D.D., is delivering a course of lectures on the "Books of the Bible," at Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, E., and, according to the syllabus, he aims at covering a vast deal of ground. We see that discussion is invited after the lectures, and we hope some East-End Freethinkers who are used to the rostrum, will take advantage of the opportunity.

By the way, Christian lecturers like a little opposition, and especially amateur opposition, after their discourses, in order to keep up the appearance of courage and fair play. But they do not like opposing Secular lecturers, knowing that while some discussion is necessary, the less of it there is the better for their creed. The Christian Evidence Society, for instance, is anxious to have a little debate after its annual course of lectures at the London Hall of Science, for it makes a brave figure in the report, and looks like bearding the "infidel" in his den. The Society will not, however, countenance any discussion after Mr. Foote's course of lectures, which sandwiches its own. Mr. Anderson sent an invitation, with complimentary tickets, and received the following reply:—"Dear Sir,—I have laid your letter before our Committee, and am instructed to say that they are obliged for your courtesy, but that they beg to decline to depute anyone to represent them at Mr. Foote's lectures.—Yours faithfully, T. T. WATERMAN."

PERHAPS it would be a just retaliation if we invited all our friends to stay away and leave the C. E. S. lecturers severely alone. But on the whole we think it best to do the exact contrary. For although the C. E. S. has very little influence with the general Christian public, it may be the means of bringing a few stray believers into the Secular hall who may bear the Gospel of Freethought for the first time, and learn that Christianity has only one leg to stand on, and has therefore to keep perpetually hopping about to preserve its equilibrium. Mr. Foote will attend himself to watch the proceedings, and we hope the Freethinkers will turn up in full force. If they also attend the two lectures in which Mr. Foote will give the C. E. S. something to answer, their minds will be the better prepared to appreciate the subsequent discussion.

THE Nottingham Freethinkers have at last secured a fairly good meeting-place. It is called St. Joseph's Hall and is situated in Beck Street. Until recently it was used by the



Roman Catholics. It holds about 500 people, and will be opened under Secular auspices for the first time at 11 o'clock this morning (January 31). We hope all Freethinkers in the district will rally round the newly-planted flag.

### THE GLASGOW PROSECUTION.

WE regret to learn that after long shilly-shallying the Glasgow police have withdrawn their offer of a compromise, and the case will therefore go on for decision in the Court of Appeal. It is quite possible however that as the compromise was broached in open court the judges may treat it as *bonâ fide* and insist on its being carried out. If they do not pursue this course the legal questions raised will be decided, and in that case, knowing what a mud-pond the law is, we cannot venture to predict the result. We cannot ascertain when the appeal will be heard; it awaits the convenience of the Court, for which the parties have to hold themselves in readiness. Meanwhile the sale of the *Freethinker* is not interfered with, although the Scotch newsagents have not yet recovered from their terror. But however Mr. Ferguson's case may end, the volunteers in Glasgow are prepared to carry on the sale of the paper *openly*, in spite of the police, should the necessity arise. The case having assumed a more unfavorable aspect we trust that a further response will be made to the appeal for subscriptions. We are printing some collecting sheets, and shall be happy to send them on application for use in private canvas or at lectures and meetings.

The Glasgow Committee ask us to acknowledge the following subscriptions as received by them:—Per James Jeffrey, Kilmarnock: James Jeffrey, 6d.; John Bayne, 6d.; Wm. Bell, 6d.; Thos. Tait, 6d.; Wm. McM., 3d.; R. M., 3d.; Amica, 3d.; J. C., 3d.; T. B., 3d.; F. J., 3d.; I. J., 3d.; A. C., 6d.; Mary, 3d.; Kate, 3d.; T. J., 3d.; F. C., 6d.; Cumbrae, 6d.; Mrs. Lawson, 6d.; Mr. Lawson, 6d.; D. Reid, 6d.

### REVIEW.

*Our Corner.* February. [Freethought Publishing Company; London.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with an article on "Supernatural and Rational Morality," containing some interesting notes that require elaborating. "D" concludes a paper that Freethinkers should read, on the "Revised Version of the Old Testament." Mrs. Besant begins a paper on "Modern Socialism." Mr. Robertson's article on Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees" is ably written, but does not sufficiently appreciate Mandeville's subtle irony, which is often so subtle as to "deceive the very elect." Mr. G. B. Shaw continues his novel, "The Irrational Knot," about which it is premature to speak.

### DIFFERENT VIEWS.

LORD TENNYSON ON GORDON—(CENOTAPH).  
 "WARRIOR of God (!), man's friend, not laid below,  
 But somewhere dead far in the waste Soudan:  
 Thou livest in all hearts, for all men know (?)  
 This earth has borne no simpler, nobler man."

### THE MAHDI'S PRAYER.

"Allah with us! The victory's won!  
 Down with the Cross! Gordon's undone!  
 Thou ranting Christian dog, farewell!  
 Where was thy God when Khartoum fell?  
 Thy nation shall this bloodshed rue!  
 Our God protects us! Allah, hû!"\*

CHAS. KROLL LAFORTE.

DANIEL TRAVELLED WITH THE SHOW.—"Can any little boy or girl tell me why the lions would not hurt Daniel?" asked a gentleman, addressing a Sunday-school. "I know," said one bright little fellow, holding up his hand. "And what was the reason, my little man?" said the speaker stepping forward, with his face in a joyous glow; "speak up loud. Why wouldn't the lions bite Daniel?" "I guess it was coz he b'longed to the circus!" The sedateness of the occasion was interrupted.

\* The Mohammedan war cry. The wounded Arabs were killed after the battles. All died like heroes, without uttering a word or a groan.

### CHAINED TO THE CHURCH.—II.

#### YE BLIND GUIDES.

MANY of the readers of this journal will, no doubt, be amazed to learn that I find upon inquiry that all theologians are not quite agreed as to how much of the New Testament it is essential I should believe in order to escape the eternal wrath of the infinitely wise and good ruler of the universe. This is embarrassing. Among the multitude of clerical guides who are eager to instruct me concerning "divine truths," I know not into whose hands it would be safe to entrust the destiny of my immortal soul. But this is a small question. Of more importance is it to me to know that on the "general doctrines of the Gospel the clergy are at one."

Then all agree that Christ came to bring "glad tidings of joy!" One of the gladdest of these tidings I find is that though Jesus came to save the world he commanded his disciples to "go not into the way of the Gentiles (Matt. x., 5) and that of those for whose especial benefit he did come "many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii., 14). Great comfort this! It shows how superior is Jehovah's judgment to man's—he is the Lord and he knoweth his own. Many of the unchosen ones on the day of judgment will no doubt find themselves in the same predicament as that

"party in the parlor,  
 All silent and all damned."

But what matters? *Damned*, I am informed by a more than ordinarily erudite divine, merely means *condemned*, and so long as the condemnation takes the form of a gentle admonition preparatory to being consigned to *Sheol*, and *Sheol* doesn't turn out to be a brimstone hell with a new name, what, I ask, does it matter?

All men are sinners, even the saints (or perhaps I ought to say, if no theologians are listening, especially the saints). We have all sinned against God the Father; and as the Father is the Son, and as the Father and the Son together, or taken separately (every few hours), are the Holy Ghost—we have sinned against the Holy Ghost too; or one, or three.

The apparent confusion of thought in the above sentence is due entirely to my carnal reason being altogether unable to grasp the sublime idea of the oneness of the Trinity. A little more faith and the difficulty would disappear.

Another of the glad tidings I find is that all sin may be forgiven. Here's consolation indeed. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah i., 18). "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance" (Luke xv., 7).

But though all sins may be forgiven, there is one sin that will never be forgiven, and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost (Matt. xii., 31). What this sin is the Lord alone knoweth; theologians don't. Maybe I have committed this sin already. Then am I truly damned! Why then should I care for the Church? In the next world I shall have to suffer unutterable agony. Why then should I not have my fling now, especially when I remember that if I have any doubt as to whether I have really committed the unpardonable offence against the celestial ghost, I can repent at the last moment and get a ready and cordial reception into the heavenly mansions amid the shouts and rejoicings of the saved?

But I will put the theologians aside, and take the doctrines from the Testament itself. St. Paul says that by faith I shall be saved. To this James gives an emphatic denial, and says I shall be saved by works, and not by faith alone (James ii., 24). James also says that the prayer of the righteous "availeth much;" Paul says "not much," for there are "none righteous, no not one" (Rom. iii., 10).

Jesus says: "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you," etc. (Matthew v., 44). In order to illustrate his meaning, he says later on: "But those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay before me" (Luke xix., 27); and "If any man come unto me and hate not his father, his mother, yea and his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv., 26).

John supplements this by declaring that "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 Epistle iii., 15). St.



Paul tells us that we must believe "in Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. ii., 2); but we must "prove all things and hold fast that which is true" (1 Thess. v., 21).

That we may have no difficulty in distinguishing the true from the false, Thessalonians informs us that God will send "strong delusions, that we may believe a lie and be damned (ii., 11, 12). Jesus enjoins us to "resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v., 39).

To demonstrate that he is not like those ungracious pastors who, as Shakespeare says—

"Show me the steen and thorny way to heaven,  
Whilst, like a puffed and reckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,  
And recks not his own rede"—

Jesus gently refers his hearers to the purpose of his mission: I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household (Matt. x., 34—36).

All this reads strangely enough to those who merely exercise their reason, but to those who can transcend the petty affairs of this world, and consider these matters from a spiritual standpoint, the absurdities disappear and the true wisdom of these declarations shines forth with a lustre that is truly divine!

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

(To be concluded.)

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE holy Church, throughout all the world, has ever received the temptation of Christ as a real event (and I am sure it is so) as his crucifixion, and so much more important than that, that while it requires us to keep but one day's fast in commemoration of his death, it enjoins a forty days' abstinence in commemoration of his temptation: and would have us expect our eternal salvation, not more from the merit of his precious death and burial, or from his glorious resurrection and ascension, than from his baptism, fasting and temptation. As in the form of incantation for the first Sunday in Lent are these words: "O Lord, who, for our sakes, didst fast forty days and forty nights." And "when he had fasted forty days and forty nights," says our text, "he was afterwards hungered." But sure, that was a miracle that any of us could have beaten; for if you or I had fasted twice as long, we should not have been afterwards hungry: we could have kept it up to all eternity.—Rev. Robert Taylor, *Raising the Devil*.

"SACRED SPOTS."—Mr. Charles Dudley Warner relates the following incident of his visit to Jerusalem in the *Atlantic Monthly*: "We had a guide who knew every sacred spot in the city, a man who never failed to satisfy the curiosity of the most credulous tourist. 'Whose tombs are these?' we asked. 'That is the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and that beside it is the tomb of Nicodemus.' 'How do you know?' 'How do I know? You ask me how do I know! Haven't I always lived in Jerusalem? I was born here.' 'Then perhaps you can tell us, if this tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea and this to Nicodemus, whose is this third one?' 'Oh yes, that other,' replied the guide, with only a moment's paralysis of his invention, 'that is the tomb of Arimathea himself!'"

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.—Now it is absolutely certain that portions of the Bible, and those important portions relating to the creation of the world and of man, are not true, and therefore not inspired. It is certain that the sun, moon, stars and earth, were not created as the author of Genesis supposed them to have been created, and that the first man, whose Palæolithic implements are found in caves and river gravels of immense antiquity, was a different being from the Adam who was created in God's likeness, and placed in the Garden of Eden. It is certain that no universal deluge ever took place since man existed, and that the animal life existing in the world, and shown by fossil remains to have existed for untold ages, could by no possibility have originated from pairs of animals living together for forty days in the ark, and radiating from a mountain in Armenia.—S. Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, p. 257; 1885.

### SUPERSTITION.

By education most have been misled;  
So they believe because they were so bred.  
The priest continues what the nurse began,  
And thus the child imposes on the man.—

John Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*.

## THE CONTRAST.

(Disrespectfully dedicated to God.)

THE icy wind swept o'er the hard highway,  
The cold was most intense, and eve drew nigh;  
The bleak and dreary landscape, dead and gray,  
Stood grim and silent 'neath the threat'ning sky.  
The strongest and the sturdiest forbore  
To leave the fireside's cheerful warmth and light,  
But spoke the useless prayer, as oft before,  
"May God have mercy on the poor to-night"—  
And none, save God, could see the tiny child,  
Who dragged himself along in fear and pain,  
Who dumbly looked upon the wintry wild,  
And wept for rest and shelter, but in vain.  
His famine-stricken limbs were blue with cold,  
And down the shrunken face coursed tears of pain  
Each time he tried the useless rags to fold  
Around his shiv'ring form, 'gain and again.  
A building loomed in front, and at the sight  
With joy and hope the little heart nigh burst.  
He hastened on, and reached the gate aright—  
A glance dispelled the hopes that he had nursed.  
It was a church. The door was closed and barr'd,  
The porch alone scant hope of shelter gave;  
The child sank down upon the pavement hard,  
Despair, at length, had crushed the spirit brave,  
And there he died: in bitter pain he died.  
Anon the clouds passed by and from above  
The round moon poured a flood of silver rays,  
Then carved in whitest stone could be descried,  
Above the tortured corpse, a brooding dove  
And, eager to arrest the passing gaze,  
The mocking, lying legend—God is Love.

EX-RITUALIST.

## PROFANE JOKES.

WHY is a church bell more obedient than an organ?—Because the bell will go when it is toll'd, but the organ will be blown first.

A LITTLE boy was coming home from Sunday-school. The lesson had been about the wicked children mocking Elisha. He was a youth of an inquiring and experimental turn of mind. Seeing a bald-headed old man, he shouted—"Go up, thou bald head! Now, then, where's your bears?"

ON board a fleet of American steamers the Church service is read every Sunday morning. The muster-roll of the crew is called over, and they attend service. A gentleman one day said to one of the sailors, "Are you obliged to attend public service?" "Not exactly obliged sir," replied Jack; "we should lose our grog if we didn't."

A NUMBER of wicked little boys were playing base-ball in a vacant lot up-town last Sunday morning. "This is scandalous," remarked a gentleman on his way to church. "I wonder there is no policeman about to stop it." "He'll be here purty soon," said a small boy, "I'm watching out for him." "Watching out for him?" "Yes; he's over at the beer saloon, playing seven-up wid de boss."

A WELL-AUTHENTICATED story has been told of a certain vicar, who several years ago lived a few miles from Loughborough. He was rather eccentric, and not easily imposed upon. On a particular occasion, he and several of the principal inhabitants dined together at one of the inns of the village, and one of the company, thinking that the affair would not be remunerative to the landlord, suggested that he might charge an extra bottle of wine or two in the bill by way of making it up. "That," said the landlord, "might be done; but the vicar put every cork in his pocket, as a check to the account."

DR. SLOP is one of the most pious men in his section of the state. He observes Lent very closely. A few months ago he saw his colored servant with a piece of fat pork, and asked him what he proposed to do with it. "I've been greasin' yer boots and de harness, sah." "Greasing my boots with fat pork, and here we are in the middle of Lent! Well, I'll be d—! Why, you infernal black—, havn't you got any religious sentiments in your infernal black carcass?" And, seizing the sacrilegious darkey by his trousers, he slung him against a picket fence, and broke three of his ribs.

ONE of Brown's little nieces' holiday books is a scripture picture-book. Her mamma was explaining to her an engraving representing the three Eastern monarchs bowing down before the manger at which two long-eared beasts of burden were quietly feeding. "Good draw, wasn't it?" said Brown. "Good draw? What do you mean?" said his indignant sister-in-law. "Why, yes," replied the unconscious innocent, "three kings to a pair of jacks; pretty good, I call it." And he walked away humming softly.



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