

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VI.—No. 47.]

NOVEMBER 21, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 174.



J. C. ON A PINNACLE.

"Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple."—MATT. IV., 5.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."—JOHN XII., 32.

PAUL BERT.

VICTOR HUGO and Gambetta have their places in the Pantheon of history, and Death is beginning his harvest among the second rank of the founders of the present French Republic. Every one of these men was an earnest Freethinker as well as a staunch Republican. Paul Bert, who has just died at Tonquin at the post of duty, was one of the band of patriots who gathered round Gambetta in his Titanic organisation of the National Defence; a band from which has come most of those who have since been distinguished in the public life of France. After the close of the war, Paul Bert became a member of the National Assembly in which he has held his seat through all political changes. As a man of science he was eminent and far-shining, being not a mere doctrinaire but a practical experimentalist whose researches were of the highest interest and importance. His *Manual of Elementary Science*, which has been recently translated into English, is in use in nearly every French school, and there is no other volume of the kind that can be compared with it for a moment. As a friend and promoter of general education, Paul Bert was without a rival. He strove in season and out of season to raise the standard of instruction, to elevate the status of teachers, and to free

them from the galling tyranny of priests. It is not too much to say that Paul Bert was the idol of nine-tenths of the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in the French rural districts, where the evils he helped to remove had been most rampant.

This distinguished Frenchman is now dead at the comparatively early age of fifty-three. Although his illness was so serious, the French premier telegraphed that it would be impolitic for the Resident General to leave Tonquin suddenly. Thereupon Paul Bert replied, "You are right; it is better to die at my post than for me to quit Tonquin at the present moment." That dispatch was the last he was able to send himself. Subsequent dispatches came from other hands, and at last the news arrived that Paul Bert was dead. The French premier announced the fact from the Tribune in a broken voice and amid profound silence. "The Chamber loses in him," said M. de Freycinet, "one of its eminent members, science an illustrious representative, France one of her most devoted children." The next day the Chamber, by an overwhelming majority, voted a State funeral and a pension of £400 a year to Mme. Bert, with reversion to her children. The first vote was strenuously opposed by Monseigneur Freppel, Bishop of Angers, on the ground that the deceased was an inveterate enemy of religion, but the bishop was ignominiously defeated by 379 votes against 45. That is probably a fair test of the relative strength of Freethought and Christianity among educated men in France.

Monseigneur Freppel was right. Paul Bert was an inveterate enemy of religion. He was a militant Atheist, who believed that the highest service you can render to mankind is to free them from superstition. No wonder the Church hated him. At a famous banquet he proposed the toast, "The eradication of the two phylloxeras—the phylloxera of the vine and the phylloxera of the Church." His handbook on the Morality of the Jesuits (about which we shall have more to say in *Progress*) was a frightful exposure of the duplicity and rascality of priestcraft. About twelve months before Gambetta's death, that great statesman took the chair at one of Paul Bert's atheistical lectures. It was a bold thing to do, but Gambetta was a bold man. The great statesman did a bolder thing still when he took office. He scandalised the Christian world by appointing his atheistic friend Paul Bert as Minister of Public Instruction and Public Worship. Surely this was a piece of irony worthy the assiduous student of Rabelais and Voltaire. "Olericalism is the enemy," said Gambetta. Paul Bert accepted the battle-cry, but he did not content himself with shouting. He labored to place education on a basis which would make it a citadel of Freethought. The *Tory Standard* allows that he "laid the bases of military education in the schools and lycées," that he "first dispensed the pupils in State educational establishments from the obligation of attending any religious service, or belonging to any class in which religious instruction was given," and that he first organised the higher education of girls.

Paul Bert was a typical Frenchman and an illustrious Atheist. What do the clergy make of this phenomenon? Here is a man, trained by his father to hate priests, brought up from his cradle in an atmosphere of Freethought, and owing nothing to the Church; yet he becomes an eminent scientist, a fervid patriot, an educational reformer, a leading statesman, a tender husband and father, and a warm friend of the best men of his time; and on his decease the State gives him a public funeral and provides for his widow and children. The man, we repeat, was an open, nay a militant Atheist; and again we ask, What do the clergy make of this phenomenon? G. W. FOOTE.

S A I N T P E T E R .

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—MATT. XVI., 18.

WE wonder how many of those who read this famous passage have ever reflected upon the likelihood of a Jewish carpenter giving a Greek name to a Jewish fisherman and founding a church upon a pun in a foreign language. Let the reader reflect upon it, remembering that upon this passage is built the doctrine of the supremacy of the Church and the infallibility of the Pope with his power to bind and loose in heaven as in earth, and if he does not suspect something wrong he must be of a most confiding nature.

The writers of the Gospel according to John, a work manufactured long after the other Gospels, and which avoided several of their mistakes, saw that Jesus could never have called Simon Bar-jona by a Greek name. They accordingly made Jesus say upon first seeing Simon, "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is being interpreted, A stone," or as the Revised Version has it "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation Peter." With no word of a church being built on him.* But he seems from our New Testament never to have been called Cephas, but always Peter, except by Paul. In the Gospels and Acts the name occurs one hundred and fifty-four times, while the first mention of the name Cephas after Paul is by Clement of Alexandria (250), who says that Cephas was not an Apostle but one of the seventy disciples. This was in order to mitigate the statement of Paul that he withstood Cephas face to face because he was to be blamed. The critical reader will see reason to surmise that Paul knew nothing of Peter, but only of Cephas. In the passage just mentioned, the authorised version reads "withstood Peter face to face," while the Revised Version, reads "Cephas." If the reader will refer to Tischendorf's New Testament, he will find that in other passages where our version reads Peter, the oldest manuscripts concur in reading Cephas. That Cephas was the person afterwards known as Peter seems likely from his being spoken of as one of those who "seemed to be pillars" and as being together with Apollos, a leader under whom certain sections ranged themselves. The substitution of the name Peter for Cephas, is an abiding witness that our Gospels were compiled by and for Gentiles only acquainted with the Greek language.

Sufficient as to our Saint's name. Let us look to his person and record a little. He was a fisherman, the possessor of a boat and a wife, or at any rate, a wife's mother. What became of Mrs. Peter while her lord and master went about the country with Jesus is left to conjecture, though we may conclude from an allusion by Paul (1 Cor. ix., 5), that he did not resign her in hope of receiving a hundred-fold in kingdom-come as promised by his master (Matt. xix., 29), but took her about with him. We cannot sufficiently admire the divine discernment of Jesus in choosing as chief apostle a man who could find tribute-money in the mouth of a fish, even though he had to say to him, "Get thee behind me Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." So useful a member was made an eye-witness of the transfiguration which John (who is said to have been present) so unaccountably forgets to mention. He appears continually in the front asking the stupidest of questions, and although endowed with miraculous powers, when Jesus is arrested he whips out his sword like a true Christian and cuts off the ear of Malchus, servant of the high priest, an action which meets with no punishment, for we next find him seated comfortably in the servants' hall and swearing that he had never known his Master.

After the resurrection, according to Matthew, Peter went with the rest of the eleven to Galilee, but in the Acts we find him in Jerusalem. And here we cannot but compare the extreme stupidity ascribed to Peter in the Gospels with the extraordinary powers with which he is endowed in the Acts when he has no longer to serve as foil to his Master.

As the fruit of his first revival sermon three thousand sinners, or fully a quarter of the adult population of Jerusalem, were converted. He made the lame to walk and raised the dead to life. His very shadow cured the sick.

* In John, Andrew acknowledges the Messiahship of Jesus before Peter; a statement quite at variance with the Synoptics.

When arrested by Herod he was released by an angel. Yet as soon as Paul comes on the scene the curtain drops on Peter's wondrous career, and for further information we have to seek outside the inspired Word of God, in traditions relegated to the region of romance—and Rome.

Here indeed the blessed Scriptures are outdone. In the "Acts of Peter and Andrew" we are told that Peter made a camel go through a needle's eye four times to prove that the rich could go to heaven. In the "Acts of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul" we read that Simon Magus, by the power of devils in the presence of Nero, flew through the air and seemed to be going up to heaven, when straightway Peter invoked J. Christ, and down came Simon dead as a door-nail and divided into four parts. In the Clemen-tine Homilies equally edifying stories are related of him, while from Eusebius and other veracious writers we gather that he preached in Pontus, Galatia, Asia and Bithynia—a tolerably extensive circuit; and that he was first Bishop of Antioch and of Rome, where he was crucified head downwards, having shortly before written an epistle from Babylon, two thousand miles distant.

Beside the epistles ascribed to Peter in our Bible, the second of which is allowed to be spurious by almost all critics, while the first is contested by Dr. Giles and others, the following works are ascribed to him:—A Gospel of Peter, Acts of Peter, The Preaching of Peter, The Revelation of Peter, The Two Ways or the Judgment of Peter, and an Epistle of Peter to James, in which Paul is referred to as the enemy, and which has as good claims to be considered genuine as those found within the covers of the New Testament.

J. M. WHEELER.

SCRAPS OF SCRIPTURE.

I'm but a simple scholar in
A simple Sunday-school,
Where from the blessed Bible I
Am taught the golden rule;
But I'd rather be a teacher, so
If you will scholars be
I'll try to teach you sinners what
The Bible teaches me.

I learn how Eve was tempted by
A serpent that could talk;
I wonder had it wings to fly,
Or if it used to walk.
"Upon its belly," said the Lord,
"It shall go evermore;"
And that's what makes me wonder how
It used to go before.

It tells how Cain kill'd Abel, and
Was interview'd by God,
Who set a mark upon his brow
To pass him safe to Nod.
"Cain knew his wife," and was, I think,
The only one who did,
For who she was, or whence she came,
In mystery is hid.

It speaks of prophecy and dreams,
It mentions Balaam's ass;
It tells of dreamers who have dreamed
What never came to pass,
And Lot, whose wife was turned to salt
For looking round about;
Besides a lot of other things
Which might have been left out.

It gives the fable of the Flood,
And also tells the tale
Of the fish that swallow'd Jonah, which
Was very like a whale;
But stranger thing have happen'd since,
For now both great and small,
To make the matter simple,
Swallow Jonah, whale an' all.

'Tis passing strange. Some don't believe
It ever came to pass
That Samson kill'd a thousand with
The jaw-bone of an ass;
Yet, any true believer now
Can do the same with ease
By simply eating—when he dines—
A piece of mitey cheese.

CARLOS.

ACID DROPS.

TALMAGE has again been preaching about the eye with "all its muscles and nerves and bones, showing the infinite skill of an infinite God." The bones of the human eye are unknown to the anatomist, but Talmage wants "clergy learned enough" to teach his congregation all about them. This learned clergy is then to proceed to ask, "He that formed the eye shall he not see?" and "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" The learned clergy are not to proceed with the anthropomorphism and ask, "He that made the stomach, shall he not digest?" "He that made the teeth, shall he not bite?" The sermon from which we quote is on "Stolen Grindstones," printed in the *Christian Herald* of Nov. 3, and there stated to have been delivered on Oct. 10, 1886. Talmage has simply repeated some old rubbish of his, which has already been quoted in this journal, and he does not even revise such palpable errors as his belief in the bones of the eye. His belief in God, however, has no better foundation.

TALMAGE also repeats his demands for "a God-worshipping Silliman" to demolish "the infidel scientists of the day" by capturing their philosophy and their apparatus. Then Christians will "swing around the telescope on the swivel, until through them we can see the morning star of the Redeemer and with mineralogical hammer discover the Rock of Ages, and amid the flora of all realms find the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley."

THE *East London Press* gives a "gleaning" which says "Love God, and then do what you like." This motto has been put in practice by many religious people, but we hardly expected to find it openly avowed.

A CHURCH publisher advertises a work on *The Eternal Generation of Christ Jesus*. If this is the correct doctrine, we sympathise deeply with the Virgin Mary.

OLD Peter, or whoever wrote his epistle for him, says that "one day with the Lord is as a thousand." Those of us who have attended church when we were boys incline to agree with the statement.

THE well-known hymn "Hold the Fort" is said to be founded on an incident in the American war. General Sherman signalled to General Corse when beleaguered in Altoona, "Hold the fort; I am coming." The reply of General Corse is not so generally known. It was "We can lick all hell yet." The hymn should be revised.

"Hold the fort, for I am coming
(Jerk the chestnut bell);
Wave the answer back to heaven,
'We can lick all hell.'"

THE chestnut bell is an American invention. It is a small gong which is sounded when any stale story, old Joe Millerism, or "chestnut" is told. Its faint tintinabulation is sometimes heard in church just as the minister is saying Amen to the Lord's Prayer.

THE Rev. J. G. Wood—whose works as a naturalist have a value exceeding, we are sure, anything he does as a minister—in his last book, entitled a *Handy Natural History*, discusses the momentous question whether a whale could have swallowed Jonah. Mr. Wood fully admits that an ordinary whale could not, but he thinks "a full-size cachalot, such as the animals used to be before the modern whale fisheries existed, might have swallowed a human being, though with difficulty." We suppose that a cachalot might have got into the Mediterranean and then passed out and round the entire continent of Africa, twice crossing the Equator, and then also travelled up the Persian Gulf in order to land Jonah as near as possible to Nineveh in safety "though with difficulty."

THE *Christian Commonwealth* has a very long leading article on "Sectarian Mendacity." It accuses a Baptist contemporary of having "retailed an amount of misrepresentation perhaps never equalled before in the same space." But how is it that a Christian journal can delight in "this tissue of falsehoods" as its loving contemporary in Christ calls it? How is it that "bitter controversy" and "vilest misrepresentations" and "garbled extracts" and "reckless" statements are employed by Christian sects and Christian editors in Christian controversies with each other?

ACCORDING to the report of the Bristol Conference in the *Christian Commonwealth*, the Young Men's Christian Association, or "Y. M. C. A." as it prints it, is split up into two distinct parties with a mere outward show of superficial unity. One side, the "Prayer Meeting Only" party, consists of the old fogies and juvenile saintlings who are "hot against all progress, all educational and recreative agencies." The other party goes in for lectures, gymnasiums, clubs and such agencies as "contribute to the welfare of men and the glory of God." They are imbibing

the Secular spirit. They place man first and God afterwards, being "intensely human" to start with, and "earnestly Christian" afterwards so far as may be.

THE C. C. reports that the intensely human and earnestly Christian Y. M. C. A. football match between the "nobly masculine" saints of the North and South of England has come off at last. How many Christian kicks were lovingly administered to Christian shins, and how many Christian arms and legs were broken in the spirited if not spiritual *mêlées* and promptly healed by the faith of saints and elders in the approved Christian and biblical fashion, is not recorded. Cynics say that the only rule in football matches is that you must not murder the umpire. The Y. M. C. A. would play by Christian rules taken directly from the Sermon on the Mount. When St. Tom shouldered St. Dick we suppose each turned the other shoulder also, and when St. Fred had his eye nearly poked out by St. Gus's elbow he of course offered the other optic for further experiments. But it is possible, however, that the "intensely human" prevailed over the "earnestly Christian" in the rough-and-tumble strife of this evangelical foot-ball fight.

AFTER the "happy consummation" of Christian efforts in the kicking match, various "muscular Christians gave vigorous and vivacious addresses." Perhaps they explained Christ's opinions on the mysteries of the drop-kick as practised on money-changers' tables, and on foot-balls as a safer and less illegal outlet for the exuberant spiritual energies of modern saints. Doubtless they pointed to the "goal" of Christian effort, and gave Christ's views on the Rugby code and the milder Association rules, and his opinions of athletics generally as a preparation for heaven. Fancy Christ as our great pattern setting the right example for the Y. M. C. A.—"rising" foot-balls, twirling on the horizontal bar, making striking remarks on Peter's face with a pair of boxing gloves, and being floored in return by an unchristian retort in kind from the irate apostle, who forgets to turn the other side also for foot-ball practice.

A LIVERPOOL evangelist, named Edward Sunners, known as "The Cabman's Bishop," has been "found dead on his knees in the act of prayer." In reporting the fact the *Christian Herald* does not dilate upon it as an awful warning or terrible judgment, as it would have done had the man been reading Colenso on the Pentateuch or *Infidel Death-Beds* at the time of his decease.

THE Christian Karens, says the *Missionary News*, have remained loyal, and rendered almost the only effective service in the suppression of the revolt in Burmah. Their Christianity makes them traitors to their fellow-countrymen. They join the enemies of their native land, the invaders whose Christian journals stigmatise patriotic resistance to Christian bayonets as "revolt." Such are the hypocritical lying, the arrogant libel and the unnatural treachery fostered by Christianity among its professors and the proselytes whom they, if it were possible, make, in the elegant language of Christ, twofold more children of hell than themselves.

GOD has been drenching North Italy with floods. Among other disasters, a railway bridge was swept away near Albenga, and a train being precipitated into the river, five persons were drowned. The town of Como has been partially submerged by the waters of the lake.

FLOODS in North Yorkshire have proved fatal to men and animals. Five men and four children were drowned at Swaledale, and two farmers near Longton-on-Swale. God doesn't manage the weather to perfection yet. He likes to show his power occasionally by drowning a few of his children, or by striking them with lightning, or starving them with drought and famine.

THE Charity Commissioners have been inquiring into the Hornsey charities. It transpired that £145 was received by the senior churchwarden from one of these charities last year, and that the money was all spent on church repairs and for other church purposes, although left "for the church and the poor" jointly. On account of this and other abuses, the Charity Commissioners are preparing a new scheme for the administration of these funds.

A WITNESS named Miss Manning refused to kiss the Bible on the ground that she was a Deist, but as she also believed in a future state of rewards and punishments Mr. Justice Denman found himself unable to allow her to affirm. Her evidence was accordingly dispensed with. The Judge expressed his regret that the Act had not been passed in the form he advised, as such difficulties would then have been avoided. The *Weekly Dispatch* however points out that the best course would be to abolish oaths altogether.

THOMAS WOOD, who committed suicide by cutting his throat at Paddington, left a letter which concludes thus: "The Lord have mercy upon me. God bless my dear wife. I am going to heaven. Don't fret. My love to all my friends. The Lord has forgiven me. Glory to His holy name." All this piety did not sustain and guide him as Christians profess it will.

BIRMINGHAM is blessed with a Society calling itself the Christian Evidence and Protestant Laymen's Association, the treasurer and assistant-secretary of which issue a circular stating among other things, that the paid secretary, Mr. Ashton, has never paid any money to the treasurer; that he receives subscriptions and pays himself; that he has refused to give the names of members and subscribers when required, and that out of a three years balance of £722 there remains little more than £10 a year for the actual work of the Society.

ANOTHER scandal is alluded to in the *Birmingham Daily Mail* for Nov. 12. It appears that for some time past the authorities at New Street Station, in consequence of complaints, appointed some one to watch the waiting-room for a certain clergyman, against whom accusations of a serious nature had been made. The reverend gentleman duly put in an appearance and the detectives were communicated with. He was caught with a single woman "under unusual and suspicious circumstances," and was promptly ejected, after being informed that he had committed a penal offence and would be taken before the magistrate if discovered again. The *Mail* says the matter should be brought under the notice of the Bishop. But why was it not brought under the notice of a magistrate?

W. O. DRAKE, Spiritualist, discoursed at Westbourne Park Chapel last Sunday afternoon on "Need we Trouble about Death?" Well, that depends. If you are a solitary Drake, you would be a coward or a ninny to trouble about the matter. But if there is a Duck in the case, and perhaps some Ducklings, you should trouble about Death to the extent of taking precautions for the welfare of the mother and the brood.

THE Salvation Army barracks at Paignton fell in the other day. The front and back walls are nearly destroyed, and the roof in falling carried with it the gable end of a house adjoining. Either the prayers or the mortar were not strong enough to sustain the building during the recent wet weather.

MRS. "GENERAL" BOOTH is crying out for officers who are "willing to go barefooted and sleep in a mud hut." But none of the Booths set the example. Precept is good enough for them.

Two friends, one of whom bears a strong resemblance to a noted comedian, were recently induced to enter Exeter Hall whilst a Salvation Army meeting was being held there. The place was crowded to suffocation, and the friends were separated. After some time they met again on the stairway, one of them fairly groaning beneath the weight of books, *War Cries*, and pamphlets. "Why, what are you doing with all those things?" asked the other, who was empty-handed. "That's more than I can tell," was the reply. "All I know is that I hadn't been in there more than ten minutes when I was surrounded by a crowd of 'officers,' first one and then another forcing these things upon me—some of them expensive, as you can see—and with each gift I was urged to read it, so that I might be induced to change my way of life and save my soul. What does it all mean, I wonder?" "Well, I daresay it was because as you looked so distressed, and so absurdly comic perched up there, I couldn't help telling two or three of the officers that you were J. L. Toole, and there was a general rush to try and convert you."

THE Rev. A. R. M. Finlayson has gone bankrupt. The debts are £2,097 and the assets nil. He attributes his insolvency to the verdict found against him as co-respondent in a divorce case, the damages as found by the jury being £1,000, and the costs £800.

AN Irish rector and his churchwarden have been having a stand-up fight as the most natural termination of a religious dispute. Mr. Goggin, the churchwarden, appears to have been the original assailant. Both men fared badly. The rector was cut about the face, and his necktie was torn away, but he seems to have got the better of his antagonist, who eventually was knocked over a sewing-machine, his head going through a window. Goggin's wife then appeared on the scene, and the rector got away, but the churchwarden followed him and struck him a blow on the head with a stick, cutting him badly and confining him to his room for some days. At Castleconnell Sessions the churchwarden was sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment. Why didn't these representative Christians turn the other cheek and forgive each other unto seventy times seven? Is the Sermon on the Mount a "hum" in their opinion?

THE census taken by the *British Weekly* reveals the utility of the highly-endowed churches of the City of London, where the multitudes who throng the streets on week-days are absent on Sundays, leaving the churches to a few pensioners who find their account in attending. At St. Martin's, Ludgate, for instance, there were in the morning twenty persons; in the evening it was shut. At St. Swithin there was also twenty, in the evening thirty-three. At St. Anne's, forty-two in the morning, twenty-two in the evening. At St. Augustine and St. Faith, thirty-two in the morning and thirty-five in the evening.

At the Lord Mayor's Court on Monday an action was brought by Mr. Wolff, wine merchant, against the Rev. W. Rowley, vicar of Reighton, near Hull, for wine supplied to the amount of £7 4s. The rev. gentleman is said to be very fond of wine, yet he did not seem very fond of paying for it. But he had to pay. Perhaps he would like Jesus Christ to come and make him a few gallons, and thus have it on the cheap.

THE controversy about the Priest in the Family has been continued. The Roman Catholic *Tablet* gives the name of the husband Captain Carlisle, who it insinuates acts the tyrant in the family. The husband, however, writes to the *Times*, declaring that several statements of the priest, the Rev. C. H. Moore, are not true, and that he had no intention of forcibly preventing his wife's perversion. All he complains of is the systematic deception which was connived at by the priest.

APROPPOS of "The Priest in the Family," the *Pall Mall Gazette* has an article entitled "Have Women Souls?" It credits Mohammed with relieving the sex from that responsibility. This is a mistake. Mohammedan doctors have debated the question, but there is nothing of the sort in the Koran. Christian doctors also have debated the matter. At the Council of Maçon, in the sixth century, a bishop started the question whether women were possessed of souls. St. Gregory of Tours records the incident, but is silent as to the name of this worthy successor of the apostles. The *P. M. G.* says that among Protestant sects only the Quakers and the Salvation Army have admitted with all its corollaries the doctrine that women have souls. It does not point out that in allowing women to preach these bodies set themselves in direct opposition to St. Paul.

ENTERPRISING Joseph Parker has started a discussion at the City Temple on "Is a State Church Compatible with True Christian Unity?" This, he says, is a wider question than the interchange of pulpits, which he finds won't work. Will he kindly explain what he means by True Christian Unity? We believe it to be an article often spoken of but never yet seen.

IN the *Jewish World* they have been discussing the question whether Uriah, the Hittite, was a circumcised Jew or not, as the settlement of the momentous point would, in the eyes of a Jew, profoundly influence the verdict upon the moral character of David. One writer admits that the Talmud settles it that Uriah was a Jew, but contends that nevertheless David did not commit adultery, as it was customary for Jewish soldiers to divorce their wives before going to wars. The Bible, however, does not mention any divorce given by Uriah, but does mention that David took care of that part of the business by having Uriah set in the fore-front of the battle.

At the Glin Catholic Church, in county Limerick, when a young woman went to the sanctuary lamp, she found an infant on the altar steps. It was only about a day old, and wrapped in a knitted shawl. It was taken to the workhouse. There is no trace of its parents other than may be surmised from its being left in the house of God.

THE Rev. J. B. Jones has appeared before the Thurles Police-court on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences. He begged to be dealt with summarily, but the magistrates committed him for trial.

AT the Penrith police-court, George Brown was charged with bigamy. The accused, it was alleged, married his first wife at a registry office in Carlisle, in 1872. They soon separated, and prisoner enlisted as a soldier. At the end of eight years he returned to his wife, and asked her to take him back. She refusing, Brown joined the Salvation Army, and, according to the evidence for the prosecution, married a woman named Carlton, at Penrith, stating that he had been divorced from his first wife. He was committed to the assizes.

SHORTLY after the commencement of the service at Dunotter Church, Stonehaven, Mrs. Forrest, the wife of Captain David Forrest, was seized with illness and died whilst being removed from the church. Such cases should receive the attention of those who are fond of speaking of judgments upon infidels.

"WHAT are the Blenkinsopp girls in mourning for?" "Their parrot." "In mourning for a parrot! Why, it's a positive sacrilege." "Oh, but this one could repeat the Lord's Prayer, you know."

A CLERICAL gentleman was the other day walking along the main street of a village where he had once been minister, and on meeting one of his old parishioners paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Vera weel, sir," replied the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My man, sir, is in heaven, sir, this twa year." "In heaven? I am very sorry to hear it!" responded the clergyman absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 21, Thornton's Theatre of Varieties, Union Alley, South Shields; at 11, "Mansions in the Sky;" at 3, "Is Christianity True?" at 7, "The Holy Ghost."

NOV. 23, Borough of Hackney Club; 28, Hall of Science, London; 30, Walworth.

DEC. 5, Portsmouth; 12, Milton Hall; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 2, Milton Hall; 9, Manchester; 16, Milton Hall; 23, Liverpool.

CORRESPONDENTS.

- LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 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. 3d.; 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.
- RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—H. P.
- JOSEPH BATES (Northampton).—We have read the correspondence in the *Chronicle* on Pre-Christian Hospitals, initiated by your own letter dealing with Canon Barker's untruthful statement. Such correspondence in the local press cannot but be productive of good, especially when, as in this case, the Freethought side is maintained with ability and tact.
- J. P. MORRIS.—Thanks, but the joke has appeared before in a better form.
- S. EASTOD says the distance between Sydney and Melbourne is under 600 miles [we said six or seven hundred], and there is railway communication between the two cities, the mail train doing the journey in eighteen hours.
- W.—We did not mean that we should decline to debate with Mr. Whitmore, or any other Christian minister, if the proceeds, after paying expenses, were to go to some charity; although, as Christian ministers have regular salaries for all their labor in the Lord's vineyard, and we have only what we earn from day to day, the condition is much easier for them than for us. We should have to sacrifice the time, and they would only have to give a little of their leisure. What we really object to is Mr. Whitmore's arrogant attempt to stipulate all the conditions himself. If the proceeds went to a charity, we should claim a voice as to what charity it should be. The best plan would be to divide the proceeds; the Christian side could name its charity, and get a receipt for the money, and the Secular side could do the same. It is a farce to pretend that open Freethinkers are generally treated with respect in public hospitals. Orthodoxy is rampant in most of them from top to bottom.
- MAHOMET.—Most of the old Tracts you refer to will be reprinted. We will consider your other suggestion.
- X., having noticed that the title of one of our lectures, "Are the Foundations of Christianity Sound?" replies "Yes they are, and nothing else." X. is a wag.
- W. CABELL.—Your texts, in our opinion, don't apply; at least their application is remote. The best proof that Jesus did not abolish the Mosaic law is to be found in the fact that the primitive Christians were Judaists, who all observed the orthodox ceremonies, continuing to do so until these had to be set aside for the Gentile converts. That schism was the parting of the ways.
- H. COTTERELL.—We acknowledge your courtesy, and regret we cannot accept your invitation.
- R. E. H.—Pleased to be of service to you in the matter. We will bear your offer in mind.
- G. COCKMAN.—Sir George Macfarlan's reference to Beethoven as a Freethinker is in the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography*, published by Mackenzie.
- A. BEADLE.—Received your amusing letter as to the Booths. You ask "When will humbug cease?" Answer: When fools cease.
- R. FOX thanks the Glasgow correspondent who sent him back numbers of the *Freethinker* for distribution.
- ENQUIRE.—The walls of Jerusalem were never more than three or three and a half miles in circuit. A man could walk round it easily before breakfast. Dr. Edersheim, whose work we reviewed in *Progress*, tries to make out that the holy city was a very magnificent place, but he allows that "Jerusalem covered, at its greatest, about three hundred acres." There is no means of ascertaining the precise population, but it could not have exceeded that of a third-rate provincial city of modern Europe. (2) Neither Josephus nor Philo mention Jesus Christ or allude to his performances. There is a passage about Christ in our copies of Josephus, but as De Quincey says, its authenticity is given up by all men not lunatic.
- MICHAEL.—The Rev. Charles Webster Leadbeater was received into the Buddhist Church at Colombo, Ceylon, about 1882. We will look up the exact date. A Miss Mary Flynn also became a convert. Colonel Olcott and A. P. Sinnett, author of *Esoteric Buddhism*, have given up Christianity for Theosophic Buddhism.
- S. WATSON.—You appear to mistake Mrs. Besant. By a friendly discussion, she does not mean a milk and water one. She simply means that two Freethinkers working together amicably for the cause are going to debate amicably on an important outside subject on which they differ. You may depend upon it, although good temper and politeness prevail, it will not be a gingerly debate.
- G. SHEARD.—It is a mere play upon words and not worth a moment's attention.

TOURNEALES.—School boards were established by the Education Act of 1870.

F. S.—We do not know the work you refer to.

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Freethinker's Magazine*—*Liberator*—*Liberty*—*Birmingham Daily Mail*—*Menschenheit*—*Fair Trade*—*British Weekly*—*Light Bearer*—*Rochester Journal*—*Nottingham Express*—*Sussex Evening Times*—*Eastern Morning News*—*Staffordshire Sentinel*—*Chat*—*Charleston Sunday News*—*Protestant Times*—*Southport Guardian*.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a crowded audience at Milton Hall last Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Where is God?" Laboring against physical weakness, the lecturer managed to hold the attention of all his listeners for an hour. On Tuesday evening Mr. Foote closed the series of Free Lectures at Milton Hall. These lectures have brought many strange faces to the Hall, and have in many ways been productive of good. Strange to say—or is it strange?—not a solitary sky-pilot has dropped in on either of the six evenings to say a word for his Savior. Christianity has no champions; it has only parasites.

THE Rev. Dr. Rankin, of Mutthill, Scotland, told his congregation that "a man was deficient in common sense who would refuse to lay his hand vigorously to work on a fair Sunday when the fruits of the earth were in danger of destruction." Very sensible, Dr. Rankin! But how about the fourth commandment "In it thou shalt do no manner of work"?

THERE will probably be a public debate early in the new year between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote on Socialism.

MR. COTTER MORISON'S volume on *The Service of Man* will be published before long. Mr. Morison is a Humanitarian, perhaps a Positivist. He is the author of the very able volume on Gibbon in the "English Men of Letters" Series, and he has had the high honor of a dedication from George Meredith.

RELIGIOUS intolerance in Spain has received a check. The Government repudiates the action of the Alcade of Puerto Santa Maria, who expelled a Protestant congregation, insulted the preacher, and threatened to imprison him if he dared to hold any further services. The Alcade is officially reprimanded and further interference with the congregation is forbidden—thanks to the action of the British consul, for it is political considerations, and not religious, that force Christians to tolerate each other.

BISHOP STUBBS'S new volume of lectures on Mediaeval and Modern History contains the following notable admission:—"Where Protestantism was an idea only, as in Spain and Italy, it was crushed out by the Inquisition; where, in conjunction with political power, and sustained by ecclesiastical confiscation, it became a physical force, there it was lasting. It is not a pleasant view to take of the doctrinal change to see that, where the movement towards it was pure and unworldly, it failed; where it was seconded by territorial greed and political animosity, it succeeded."

WE have not a very exalted opinion of amateur parliaments, but we notice with some pleasure the announcement of a discussion at the South London Parliament, Hawkstone Hall, Kennington Road, on the Bradlaugh Question. Mr. W. H. Smith's name is down as the mover, and Mr. W. S. Shirley, M.P., as the seconder of a motion to expunge the anti-Bradlaugh resolutions from the records of the House. The Stranger's Gallery, we observe, is free.

WE have received from Dr. August Specht of Gotha some numbers of his journal *Menschenheit*. The most recent, for November 14, contains a paper on Woman's Rights, by Dr. Buchner, author of *Force and Matter*.

THE anniversary of the battle of Mentana, in which the Garibaldians fought against the United Papal and French troops, has been celebrated this year with unusual solemnity all over Italy. Not the slightest disorder has occurred, but according to the *Daily News* "the demonstrations have had a decided and prominent anti-clerical character."

THE *Freethinker's Magazine* of Salamanca, New York, keeps up its high standard of merit. Mr. James McCann writes on "The Myth of the Great Deluge." T. B. Wakeman writes on "Liberalism and Earthquakes," and Moncure D. Conway continues his strictures upon Professor Fiske's "Cosmic Calvinism." Mr. Conway has apparently advanced beyond South Place theology, for he now holds that "if man harbors the notion that some providence outside of himself is striving to humanise this world, that delusion will surely impede his progress."

CURSING THE FIG-TREE.

CHRIST did many idiotic things. His fasting for forty days—imitated by devotees and charlatans even to the present day, often with the result of death by starvation or by the ultimate effects of the weakness produced—was an idiotic act of asceticism and religious vanity. The fasting contests of the present day only excite the disgust of sensible men, and in Christ, if a man, the abstention from food was equally foolish and culpable, while if a God, it was absurd and meaningless. But the idiotic acts of which he was often guilty were not always directed against himself. Horsemanship the money-changers from the temple and drowning thousands of pigs, were mischievous actions directed against others. But the pettiest act of spite, the silliest piece of revenge, the most childish indulgence of angry temper, was seen when the baffled God of the universe cursed his own fig-tree because it acted as he had made it act and did not miraculously provide fruits to satisfy his expectant hunger when "the time of figs was not yet" (Mark xi., 13).

Why do Christians call it the "barren" fig-tree? It was full of leaves, which in fact deceived its omniscient maker, who had evidently forgotten the times and seasons he had appointed unto the tree. The Bible does not speak of it as "barren," but Christians naturally invent that libel in order to excuse the otherwise indefensible act of vengeance perpetrated by an enraged deity on an inanimate object. Without devices of this kind the clergy know their Christ is discredited and their game is up.

Archdeacon Farrar says that "the criticisms upon this miracle have been singularly idle and singularly irreverent because they have been based for the most part on ignorance or on prejudice." But those who, as he says, "daringly arraign the motives of him who performed it" do not care to invent authoritative additions to the plain Bible story. When judging the inspired narrative they prefer to ignore the unwarranted guesses and convenient assumptions of Christian apologists; and they prefer to retain a not altogether unnatural prejudice against childish stupidity and malicious wrath. What warrant has the Archdeacon for assuming with such perfect assurance that the tree was "barren" and "useless"? The Bible gives no hint of the kind, and surely God knew what he meant to say without the Archdeacon's assistance. The Christian reasoning really is that as Christ blasted the tree it *must* have been in fault; which is simply begging the whole question by assuming as an accepted fact that Christ is faultless—the very thing which his opponents dispute.

The Archdeacon asks, "Is it a crime under any circumstances to destroy a useless tree?" But no one says that Christ's act was a "crime," and the assumption that the tree was "useless" is purely gratuitous. The act was a petty, stupid and mischievous one, especially bad in one who was to set an example of self-control and good temper. The motive as represented in the Bible was unworthy of a rational being—it was the disappointment of a hungry and revengeful God who expected unreasonable things of inanimate objects. Archdeacon Farrar, who of course knows better than the Word of God, reveals a better motive for blasting the tree, and says that Christ "founded, on the destruction of its uselessness, three eternal lessons—a symbol of the destruction of impenitence, a warning of the peril of hypocrisy, an illustration of the power of faith." Thus the impenitent fig-tree—the hardened wretch—was well punished for its hypocrisy in not bearing unseasonable fruit; and the fate of the tree was an illustration—and a very good one too—of the withering power of faith. The manufacture of fine excuses for palming off upon the public as certainties is a process resorted to by theologians who in private life would regard such a course as thoroughly discreditable. The two accounts of the fig-tree are in Matt. xxi. and in Mark xi., and in neither is anything said which in the slightest degree refers to the destruction of impenitence or the peril of hypocrisy. To foist in such pretended teaching is a sheer forgery of extenuating circumstances which are entirely absent from the original accounts. Where was the impenitence in a tree which put forth abundant foliage in the season for foliage, and where the hypocrisy in not bearing fruit when the time for fruit was not yet come? Would Archdeacon Farrar have a boy of ten destroyed or punished as an impenitent hypocrite because he did not do the work of a

man of forty? Are Christians entitled to invent facts as needed because they themselves are perfectly assured of the goodness of their motives and of their cause? Any offender, small or great, could easily escape blameless from any charge whatever if allowed such Christian privilege or benefit of clergy as this. The thief will show he only took his own, and the murderer that he acted in self-defence. Defenders of Christ will have to learn that the flimsy assertions of convenient guesswork are not solid evidence that can override or correct or put aside the original depositions.

In dealing with the good acts of Jesus, Christians make mole-hills into mountains. Of his evil acts they either say nothing or by the help of sophistries, hypotheses, and falsehoods they make the evil appear as good. Talmage says, "When Christ said to the sick man, 'Take up thy bed and walk,' He laid the corner-stone of every hospital the world has ever seen"—including of course those founded by Asoka in India more than two hundred years before the birth of Christ. Similarly by healing the blind man Christ founded all blind asylums ever built. But if this method of reasoning is permitted it will be evident that in cursing the fig-tree Jesus originated every blighting blasting act of destruction and malice, every deed of despotism and vengeance, every piece of pious persecution and bigotry.

W. P. BALL.

CHRISTIANITY AND MENTAL SLAVERY.

FINDING the ordinary sermon insufficient to attract thoughtful men and women to church, some of the more progressive spirits have hit upon the idea of drawing audiences by announcing Sunday Secular lectures with the pleasant addition of good musical performances to assist in digesting the more dry among the lectures. Canon Shuttleworth, a minor canon of St. Paul's, a creedless sort of Christian, has inaugurated this movement in London. On Sunday afternoon last a large gathering attended his church, St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey, Queen Victoria Street, to hear a lecture on the very inviting subject of "Freethought" by the Rev. J. Llewellyn Davies.

The lecture, to say the truth, was a very disappointing performance. It did not deal with the questions at issue between the Freethinker and the Christian at all, for the reverend gentleman early in his discourse announced that the question he wanted to discuss was "Does Christianity mean mental slavery?" Even this question the reverend gentleman did not deal with at any length, but satisfied himself, with the assertion that Christianity and Freethought were not incompatible. Of course he did not refer to the declaration of Jesus, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi., 16) to demonstrate the absolute freedom in view of this declaration to Christians in accepting their belief.

He frankly admitted that Freethinkers might regard it as somewhat unfair that they could not reply to his arguments at the close of the lecture, but then, he too stood at a disadvantage, because he did not know what kind of audience he was addressing—whether it was mainly composed of good "Christian churchmen" or Freethinkers "at home at controversy." No doubt he would have preferred not to address an audience mainly composed of persons "at home at controversy," but if he merely wished to proclaim truth as he understood it, the kind of audience he was addressing ought not to have entered into his calculation. As a matter of fact, the reverend lecturer said, "A thought is free now," and what the Freethinker wanted was not so much Freethought as free action. But in regard to the latter, every rational being would admit that there must be some kind of limitation put upon actions. For instance, no one, the reverend gentleman went on to affirm, would think of allowing children unlimited liberty to discuss the character of their parents. But whether they would allow it or not children would do it when they had a chance. If the reverend gentleman imagines that children do not discuss and comment on the character of their parents, his knowledge of children must be extremely limited. Ask a half-starved, ragged urchin whether his father or mother gets drunk and he will very soon show you that he exercises considerable liberty of criticism in regard to the conduct of his parents. But to the reverend gentleman the "dry light of reason" was a very unsatisfactory guide in conduct. He knew of a better, and he found it in the Bible. The Bible was the true emancipation if only people would trust it; for by a careful study of its sacred pages the inquirer would learn the truth, and "the truth would set him free."

Christ and his apostles exercised Freethought. They fought against authority and tradition, and were not Christians of today free to do the same? Of course they were. But equally, of course, the reverend gentleman might have added, were they bound to suffer for so doing? If they fought against tradition and authority they would probably, like Jesus, be called "blasphemers;" they would also be socially ostracised; they would be denied their rights as citizens; and though, perhaps, they would

not be "crucified," they would suffer many pains and penalties as the result of their honesty and courage.

In conclusion the reverend gentleman was prepared to say that the highest freedom could only be attained through faith, hope and love. If this were so the highest freedom was to be attained altogether apart from Christianity, for these qualities are to be found in human beings of all religions and of no religion—they were qualities indigenous to humanity, and will remain when all superstitions shall have been swept forever out of the human mind.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

OMNISCIENCE LIMITED.

THE heading of this paper is self-contradictory, for strictly speaking, omniscience cannot be limited. But I write of the kind native to the Bible—a work not by any means a cyclopædia among books, although a great authority on the short and easy subjects of omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience, these three being merely the alphabet of divinity easily taught to babes and sucklings. Illustrative of my position is 2 Chron. xxxii., 30, 31, "And Hezekiah prospered in all his works. Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land God left him to try him that he (God) might know that was in his heart." If language has any meaning, and some say Biblical language has many meanings, we gather from the foregoing that God was not only ignorant of Hezekiah's "inner man," but that he was "almighty curious" to know. Hezekiah stood the test badly. In the absence of the omnipresent he blundered, not being posted up to date as regarded the will of the Lord. The absentee God who had left the little kingly should have known better after than to put his trust in princes, though for the sake of his high reputation for mercy, we will suppose he never dreamed of the calamity with which he would visit the sinner's sons.

God's justice demanded satisfaction and we forthwith see what a wonderful thing justice is. In Solomon's time it was not a great crime to show a foreign visitor the nick-nacks and curios, but after some years (showing that the Jew god did not know his own mind for any lengthened period) he was angry with King Hezekiah for a similar proceeding, although consistently with that peculiar relation of time to himself by which a thousand years were as one day, and one day as a thousand years in his sight, he waited for Hezekiah to be dead ere he vented his spleen.

At this juncture some reader may impiously inquire why a thousand years should be as one day and *vice versa*. I can only hazard the supposition that Jehovah did not know the difference. We know that in the New Jerusalem we are to find "no more sea," and probably "on that beautiful shore" there are no sands obtainable for charging eternity-glasses. Hence God's ignorance of the "swift course of time," and his subsequent anger with Manasseh for having observed times, etc. For further particulars, I refer the reader to the *Sayings of the Seers*, original edition, very rare, price one shilling. We will suppose that the history of the kings was written after they had existed, and that the historian recognised in the punishment of several persons for the fault of one, the sweet reasonableness of that theological conceit of Calvinism "that God's own glory and not the greatest good of the universe is the great end of God in creation and providence." This leads one to modify Milton, and exclaim "For what is glory but the blaze of hell!" Since the Lord is so slow to wrath, that a curse earned by one man usually arrives in time to be inherited by his grandson, I am confident that Adam and Eve both went to glory, since it is too much to suppose that God knew how to construct his grand crematorium during the few years of Adam's life, which only meant, in heaven that part of a day comprised between the morning bath and the tea-time of the angels. That God was of an eminently inquiring turn of mind during his perambulations in the garden of Eden, we have sufficient scriptural proof. He was wont to walk about beneath the currant bushes, anxious to know the latest *on dit* concerning current events in that part of the universe.

Since his unchangeable majesty no longer promenades Eden, he must suffer increased disadvantage in getting information respecting the doings of the teeming millions inhabiting the earth to-day. When we read of his interrogations put to Adam, whose doings a finite being like a detective could have been fully acquainted with—and when we remember that in himself at least God is supposed to be the same yesterday, to-day, and for evermore—and remembering also that a man's, or a God's ignorance is only great in proportion to the amount of knowledge there is to be gained, and as the chief business of God is to know the hearts of men, we can only marvel when we try to picture the littleness of God's knowledge of each one of us since the world has become so largely peopled.

W. C. SAVILLE.

PRIESTS.—All priests have necessarily the desire of influencing the minds of others. From their very calling they have a disposition to be teaching. Women and children are the materials they like to work upon. Next to the Devil they dread men of understanding.—WILLIAM CORBETT, *Political Register*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 297.

REVIEW.

Life after Death. Palinodia. By F. W. NEWMAN. London: Trübner and Co., 57 and 59 Ludgate Hill; 1886. One shilling. —Professor Newman has often been solicited to write his maturest thoughts upon life after death, and he does so now in his extreme old age, not, as he says, because he imagines that anything he can write will bring this question nearer to a close, but because he now sees that in his book on *Theism* he was one-sided. Believing the doctrine of life after death an important complement to a Theistic creed, he tried to persuade himself of its truth and wrote less as an inquirer than as an advocate. He now, while holding that God may grant continued existence after death, dwells rather upon adverse considerations. He says:

"In the case of the horse, the dog, the elephant (animals displaying much mental activity), mankind in general regard it as certain that life perishes with the dissolution, as it began with the organisation, of the body. That is accepted as the obvious law of Nature, and no one thinks it strange. *Until someone brings strong, clear argument to the contrary*, we must (provisionally at least) hold that what is true of other animals is true also of man. Man, no doubt, is mentally superior to the dog, as is also the dog to the pig; but in all the cases the soul is cognisable *only* as dependent on and connate with the bodily organisation."

Plato's argument for immortality, that the soul is unoriginated because "it moves itself" Professor Newman regards as trash. He remarks "It is hard to make those Englishmen who are unversed in ancient literature, to believe that one is not misunderstanding and garbling Plato; so incredibly absurd is his reasoning to English common sense." Butler's assertion that "all living power is indestructible" is declared not proved.

"No Christian can seriously allege that in creating the souls of men and of butterflies, God barred himself from destroying them: how then can they fitly be called 'indestructible'? Further, in Butler's day Geology was not yet born. He did not know that rocks of vast extent and depth consist of shells once animated; while according to this theory the souls which formerly dwelt in those billions of shells either are now roving ghosts or animate new bodies."

The arguments of the spiritists, or as Professor Newman rightly calls them the modern necromancers, are met by the counter arguments, First, that the power over matter ascribed to spirits would fundamentally vitiate physical science. If in weighing gold against lead a spirit could be believed to pull down one of the scales, the experiment would be worthless. Professor Newman next argues that God would not allow unseen spirits to play tricks with us. He fails to see that the Theistic idea is a remnant of the same superstition as the belief in other spirits, and that in regard to it as to the immortality of the soul, there is no real consent of mankind; that what consent there is may be traced to weakness of understanding, and that advance in culture does not corroborate the thought of ruder men; on the contrary, seems rather to undermine it.

Our author disputes the supposed moral tendency of the belief in immortality. He says:

"Many a magistrate or judge has scolded out of court with rude insult a witness whose evidence would have damaged a hostile party, when this party has cunningly objected that the witness had no belief in Judgment to come. Such wiseacre judges would have ruled that the solemn word of Joel, Isaiah or Jeremiah was not worth a straw."

He further shows that pride engenders cruelty. An eminent priest in Rome has preached with contempt of those who object to the torture of brute animals. Men, says he, must not be tortured, for they have immortal souls. Other animals are not immortal, therefore they have no rights that man needs to respect. Pope Pius IX. laid it down as a theological error that man had any duties towards animals. Professor Newman instances many cases of slaughter at the death of chiefs, Suttee, etc., where the belief has undoubtedly had a pernicious effect, and the same may be said of the whole history of the Christian doctrine of hell.

Among other arguments Professor Newman deals with his own "overstrained argument" in "Theism" that this world was designed to be a school of Virtue to man, and that if Virtue perish with each man, the divine aim is thwarted. He now argues against his former self that if the divine aim be the moral advance of the race, it is not necessarily made void when good men die, for their virtue may have helped forward the virtue of survivors, as in science the "lamp" is passed on. He moreover now sees how largely human virtue is relative to circumstances and dependent on them. "In the Christian heaven neither chastity nor bravery, nor compassion, nor prudence, nor generosity, nor justice, nor long suffering can have any exercise."

This disposition of Professor Newman at his time of life to revise the beliefs of his youth and manhood, cannot be too highly commended. It is of a piece with the whole career of his truth-loving nature. We have only found space to touch upon a few of the many points dealt with in his little book, which we cordially commend as a thoughtful, suggestive, and fair-minded contribution to the discussion of this most important question.

WHEN at a loss to elicit the answer "Cain" to a question relative to that individual, the Sunday-school teacher to jog his memory, asked: "What does a man walk with?" Quick as a flash came the reply, "A woman."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Why, how tight you wear your corsets!" said one lady to another, as they were dressing for dinner, "I never could enjoy anything I ate if I wore mine as tight as you do."

"LADY (to servant's mother): "And why has your daughter given me notice? Isn't she satisfied with the place?" Mother: "Well, mum, the fact is, when she went to you we thought you was Methodists, but it turns out you are only Vegetarians."

"SHE did wrong to look back, didn't she, Bessie?" "Yes, mamma." "And what do you think Lot thought when he saw his poor wife turned into a pillar of salt?" "I don't know, mamma; I 'spect he wondered where he could get a fresh one!"

A MINISTER, desirous of increasing his flock in the morning, announced that he should preach in the morning to saints and in the evening to sinners. He had a pretty fair audience in the morning, but at the evening service there was only the beadle and a deaf old woman.

A LITTLE child who was told by his mother to say his prayers and to ask for what he wanted, prayed for "one hundred brothers and fifty sisters." The mother was so disgusted with the petition that she hurried the little sinner off to bed before he could say amen.

JUST REPRINTED.

SOME MISTAKES OF MOSES

By R. G. INGERSOLL.

The only Complete Edition published in England; faithfully reprinted from the Author's American Edition. Accurate as Colenso and fascinating as a novel. Destined to hold a permanent place in Free-thought literature.

WITH A BRIEF INTRODUCTION BY G. W. FOOTE.

A Handsome Volume of 136 pp.

Paper Covers, 1s. Bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LATEST LECTURES.

- Myth and Miracle - - - 1d. (Full of Poetry.)
Live Topics - - - 1d. (Full of Points.)
Real Blasphemy - - - 1d.

NOW READY.

LETTERS TO JESUS CHRIST.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Something Startling and Unique.

PRICE FOURPENCE.

JUST REPRINTED.

CHRISTIANITY or SECULARISM

WHICH IS TRUE?

VERBATIM REPORT OF A FOUR NIGHTS' PUBLIC DEBATE

BETWEEN THE

REV. DR. JAMES McCANN

AND

MR. G. W. FOOTE.

(Revised by both Disputants.)

- Bound in Paper - - - 1 0
,, Cloth - - - 1 6

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall 36 NEWINGTON GREEN ROAD, N.

SUNDAY EVENING LECTURE, November 21st, at 7.30,

MR. F. G. PROCTOR.

THE BIRTH OF THE WORLD. Music at 7. Free Concert at 8.45.

INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS.

BY G. W. FOOTE.

Being a faithful history of the deaths of the most eminent Freethinkers of all ages, and a triumphant answer to the lies and misrepresentations of Christian apologists. No pains have been spared to give the most precise particulars from original sources, and this work will be a standard one on the subject. Every Freethinker should have a copy, and keep it constantly by him.

List of Freethinkers dealt with—

- Lord Amberley Hobbes
Lord Bolingbroke Austin Holyoake
Giordano Bruno Victor Hugo
Henry Thomas Buckle Hume
Lord Byron Littré
Richard Carlile Harriet Martineau
Professor Clifford J. S. Mill
Anthony Collins Mirabeau
Condorcet Robert Owen
Robert Cooper Thomas Paine
Danton Shelley
Diderot Spinoza
George Eliot D. F. Stranass
Frederick the Great John Toland
Gambetta Vanini
Isaac Gendre Volney
Gibbon Voltaire
Goethe James Watson
Henry Hetherington John Watts
Thomas Woolston

"Special thanks are due to Mr. G. W. Foote for his new pamphlet. The sketches of the various Freethinkers are very readable, and a double end will be achieved in refuting pious slanderers and reviving the memories of our dead."

"Mr. Foote's little manual cannot fail to be of great service in refuting the ancient and silly death-bed argument. . . We should be gratified to hear that the little book meets with an extensive sale."

"Mr. Foote is in his element in Infidel Death-Beds, and his carefully-stated facts about the last hours of well-known unbelievers ought to be in the hands of every Freethinker."

"This excellent work. . . Many valuable thoughts on the subject."

PRICE SIXPENCE.

Superior edition, on superfine paper, bound in cloth, 1s

MR. FOOTE'S WORKS.

Small Stock left from the Fire.

Table listing works and prices: Athelism and Suicide, Athelism and Morality, The Folly of Prayer, The God Christians Swear By, Shadow of the Sword, Jonah's Excursion to Nineveh, Mill's Christ, Bible Romances, Crimes of Christianity, Prisoner for Blasphemy.

CHEAP WORKS.

- The True Source of Christianity. By an INDIAN OFFICER. 1s., cloth, 1s. 6d.
The Frauds and Follies of the Fathers. By J. M. WHEELER. Half-price, 3d.
Hume's Celebrated Essays on Miracles. With Introduction by J. M. Wheeler. 3d.

CHEAP REMAINDERS.

- Life of the Emperor Julian (The Apostate). By NEANDER. Translated by G. V. Cox, M.A. Cloth, 180 pp., 1s.; postage 2 1/2 d.
English Life of Jesus. By THOS. SCOTT. Cloth, 349 pages. 2s. 6d., parcel post, 2s. 9d.
R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C.

W. J. RENDELL,

CHEMIST AND DRUGGIST, 26 GT. BATH ST., CLERKENWELL, LONDON, E.C.

Drugs and Chemicals, Surgical Appliances, Patent Medicines, etc.

Particulars of a Malthusian discovery sent on receipt of stamped directed envelope. Orders by Post promptly executed.

LOOK OUT FOR

JACOB THE WRESTLER.

Reduced to Threepence.

PROGRESS

THE

Freethinker's Magazine,

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The NOVEMBER Number contains:

- Sentimental Christianity. By G. W. Foote.
Some Real and Alleged Atheists. By J. M. Wheeler.
Henry George on Protection and Free Trade By W. P. Ball.
The Atheist Marlowe. By S. Britton.
Four Great Essays on Liberty. By G. W. Foote.
The Joy that Never Fails. (A Poem.) By H. S. S.
Brief Freethought Biographies. By J. M. W.

PRISONER FOR BLASPHEMY

By G. W. FOOTE

A full history of the author's Trials and Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

"Altogether apart from the theological opinions of its author, it is an interesting record of prison life, and will make many who do not sympathise with his views regret the scandal caused by their own injudicious partizans."

"An important Preface." "The book is valuable just now, but will be much more valuable by-and-by." "The book is a quiet, manly way, without any sensational or hysterical shrieking, how he was subjected to gross injustice and indignity."

"Well written." "The book must have a certain value as associated with a case that will be historical." "This interesting, and in some parts very humorous description of a prisoner's life in Holloway Gaol."

"Seeing what ample excuse Mr. Foote has for being angry, his narrative is very temperately written, and should be not only interesting to readers now, but also, as he says, 'of service to the future historian of our time.'"

"Among the books which have a value for many a long year after the author has passed away."

Cheap Edition, in Paper Covers, 1s. 6d. Superior Edition, in Cloth, 2s. 6d.

BIBLE ABSURDITIES

PART II. OF THE

BIBLE HANDBOOK FOR FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

Edited by

G. W. FOOTE & W. P. BALL.

Containing all the chief absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each absurdity in a sentence.

In Wrapper, price Fourpence.

ALSO

BIBLE CONTRADICTIONS

Price Fourpence.

PRINTED IN PARALLEL COLUMNS.

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 97 GRACECHURCH ST., E.C.

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, Nervousness, Biliousness, Costiveness, 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 danger of taking a cold. Prepared only by GEORGE THWAITES, 2 Church Bow, Stockton-on-Tees. Sold at 1s. 1 1/2d. and 2s. 9d. per box, or by post for 1s or 8d Penny Stamps. A Price List of Herbs free.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, Lond. E.C.