

hundred thousand soldiers sufficed to maintain the peace, and to repel the encroachments of the outer barbarians; while ten millions of money would have been regarded as an extraordinary sum to expend on military enterprises. The result was that under a grand succession of wise rulers the Roman empire flourished in peace and splendor; and it is justly remarked by Gibbon that "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." From that moment, as Lecky observes, "the decadence of the empire was rapid and almost uninterrupted;" and let it also be observed that it was at the very same moment that Christianity began to assume "an important influence in the Roman world."

The subsequent centuries were full of tyranny and spoliation, bloodshed and cruelty. While the Church was developing its dogmas and establishing its power, mankind was passing through the most calamitous period in history. Then came Feudalism, under which the people were ground between rival lords, whose sole occupation was fighting. Warfare was the chronic condition of society, human life was held cheap, assassination was too common to be noticed, and the Church itself countenanced the arbitrament of the sword as the last resource in litigation.

During the last two centuries, the Christian nations of Europe have been constantly flying at each other's throats. What this means, what it costs, what burdens it imposes on the people, and how foolish it is, I have shown in my *Shadow of the Sword*. I assert that the mere necessity for such a pamphlet, nay, even its possibility, is a frightful impeachment of the religion of love.

What have we now in Europe? Millions of soldiers in arms, and more millions ready to take the field if necessary. Nearly two hundred millions spent on armies and navies, and nearly two hundred millions more in the shape of interest on the unpaid cost of previous wars. Nearly five millions of men have perished through war during the last century. Every adult male in England owes £85 4s. 8d. to the national bondholder; that is, he and his future are pawned or hypothecated to that amount. During the present century we have paid *in interest alone* the terrific sum of £2,310,735,582. Adding to that sum the cost of our army and navy, we have spent nearly *six thousand millions* in eighty-six years! a sum which would buy up the soil of England and restore it to the people for ever, and still leave four thousand millions for other purposes. Surely a visitor from a distant planet, on learning these facts, would suppose that he had lighted on a race of madmen.

Nor have we seen the worst yet. Christian Europe is rushing to a great catastrophe. It looks highly probable that before long millions of the disciples of the Prince of Peace will be manuring the ground with each other's blood. Germany and France are preparing for another struggle, Austria and Russia glare at each other, England is at sixes and sevens with nearly everybody, Italy is arming for a share in any possible fight, and smaller countries like Switzerland and Belgium tremble lest their neutrality should be violated and themselves swallowed up. Altogether it is a lively kettle of fish. Who can predict the result? Yet a child can see that such a state of things is a queer product of eighteen centuries of the gospel of the Prince of Peace. Surely there must be a mistake somewhere. The gospel of Christendom is wonderfully like that of the late Mr. Peace, of Sheffield.

And what of the priests of the Prince of Peace? Century after century they educated the children of Christendom, and taught adults from the pulpit. They might have chastened the warlike spirit by constant reproof. But, instead of this, they have talked of the God of Battles, they consecrate the soldier's colors, regardless of the merits of the quarrel into which they may be carried, or the scenes of carnage over which they may float; and when two Christian nations go to war, the priests of each ask the same God to give both sides the victory. Was there ever a greater farce? Yet the farce is also, alas, a frightful tragedy. The Prince of Peace came nearly two thousand years ago, and now, while there is very little fighting among the heathen, there is no peace in Christendom, save a peace in which every man looks anxiously for the light of battle on the horizon.

G. W. FOOTE.

CANON WILBERFORCE ON THE TRINITY.

THE Rev. Canon Wilberforce, M.A., has just given his views of "The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity" in the *Christian Commonwealth*. He points out that the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible and is not therefore "of Scriptural obligation." Neither is it "obligatory as a definition upon the laity at all," for the reason that it never occurs in the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, or the Church Catechism. But although in obedience to the spirit of the age this concession to liberalism in dogmas may be made to prevent Christian quarrelling or secession, the word is an "effective description of the truth underlying it." Canon Wilberforce evidently adopts the view of Calvin, who, he says, was willing that the name "Trinity" should be buried and forgotten if everybody would only believe that Father, Son and Holy Ghost, each distinguished by a peculiar property, are one God. That is, he would be glad to surrender a word which is the constant subject of formidable attack, and to retain only the dogma which it embodies.

He further thinks that the Trinity does not mean that there are three persons "in the sense in which we use the term person" but only three somethings, which he does not stop to define, "livingly interpenetrating one another." He notes that St. Augustine supports him by warmly repudiating the use of the word "person." But Canon Wilberforce is defying the creeds and articles which he swore to uphold. Whenever he reads the Athanasian Creed to a congregation he tells them distinctly that "there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost." Furthermore the Athanasian Creed speaks of "the whole three Persons" as co-eternal together, and co-equal; and the Articles of the Church say that "in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons." If Canon Wilberforce believes what he professes, he knows that "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," because he has not kept the Faith pure and undefiled; and he is, moreover, liable to prosecution for depraving the Prayer Book and teaching heresy. But the Church is in too great danger to fire her own guns at heretics within her own ranks. Thanks to the progress of the Freethinking spirit, dignitaries of the Church enjoy a liberty of utterance which would never be theirs in an era of undisturbed ecclesiastical dominance.

Canons, however, must not go too far. Having played fast and loose with his orthodoxy by maintaining that the Sacred Three are not persons in the sense in which the word is used, he has to maintain his credit with the orthodox by defending the old absurdity by new reasonings and new illustrations from modern science.

When we speak of God as a unity Canon Wilberforce holds that we must necessarily imply plurality. "A unit is not unity," he says, and therefore if the Godhead is a unity, he must be a plurality, and it is those "who believe in that plurality in unity who are the true Unitarians!"

"Consistent, simple, and sublime" as this doctrine of "Threeness in Unity" is to-day, Canon Wilberforce acknowledges "that nothing is much easier than for the critical reason with closed spiritual eye to thrust upon it any number of difficulties." But he holds that to the believer the introduction of considerations drawn from arithmetic, science and common sense, are, of course, too absurdly irrelevant to need reply, except it be in the form of counter-challengers to the Infidel to explain the puzzles of existence and evolution. Nevertheless, it is well, as a pure act of grace, to draw confirmation from scientific considerations.

Science, it seems, has been busily making "Threeness in Unity" highly probable, and is "rapidly changing the probable into the provable." As an example of the numerous illustrations of this threeness in oneness the following instance is given at large by our scientific canon, who credits it to the researches of Professor Tyndall, as if it were previously unknown that three forms of radiant energy were given forth by incandescent matter, as in the case of the sun or an electric light:—

"An intensely heated body emits at the same time three rays [three kinds of rays the Canon evidently means], producing entirely different results, whilst this trinity of rays form such a unity as to be inseparable! There is first the 'heat ray,' which is felt but not seen; there is secondly the 'light ray,' which is seen but not felt; there is thirdly the 'actinic ray,' which is neither felt nor seen, but which is only known by its

effects, such as its chemical action in the operations of photography; these are all one, all in an inseparable unity, and yet not one is the other, and not one can exist except in conjunction with the others. Is not this a faint and far off echo in nature of the magnificent truth which has harmonised the 'Trisagion,' the 'Thrice Holy' of believing millions?"

The Canon proceeds to show the striking resemblances between the three holy somethings and the three chief forms of radiant energy.

"The Father [like heat, is] felt but not seen. 'No man hath seen God at any time.' The Son, the light ray, 'I am the light of the world,' seen but not felt. . . . The Holy Ghost, neither felt nor seen, but known by His effects in conversion, renewal, and sanctification; sensitising the heart of man to receive the photograph of its God when the Light of the World is poured into it. Thus even a superficial study of the analogies of nature forbids me to allow that 'threeness in unity' is either absurd or unphilosophical."

Truly it is a "superficial" study of science that makes such ridiculous comparisons and untenable assertions as these. If sound-waves are also produced (as by a hissing electric light) as a fourth form of emitted energy, do these represent the diabolical influence of Satan and the fourness in unity of the Supernatural Power that rules the universe? If electrical energy is also given forth, is this equivalent to the addition of the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven to convert the supreme fourness into a divine fiveness?

When Canon Wilberforce says that the three "rays" emitted by an intensely heated body are inseparable, and that "not one can exist except in conjunction with the others," he says that which is false. Before making so "superficial" an assertion, he should have inquired of some intelligent school-boy who had attended a science class. If he had read Tyndall, or any modern writer on the subject, he would have seen that a solution of alum permits the light to pass freely while it stops the heat rays: that is, it separates the "inseparable" constituents of this scientific trinity in unity. Similarly a solution of iodine in bisulphide of carbon stops the passage of the light while permitting the heat rays to pass freely. The perfectly invisible heat rays thus separated can be concentrated by a burning-glass and made to set objects on fire.

On being heated a body first gives out heat only. At a higher temperature our eyes begin to perceive the radiant energy as red light. The body, we say, becomes "red-hot." Orange, yellow, green, blue and violet rays are added by degrees as the heat increases, until the body becomes white-hot. The higher invisible ultra-violet rays of the spectrum—which used to be called the actinic or chemical rays, as if no other rays had chemical power—are given out with a still further increase of temperature. How then are such emanations "inseparable" when one of them can be given forth without the other and two of them without the third? Yet this preacher of Truth has the hardihood to impose on his ignorant hearers by telling them that not one of these forms of energy can exist without the other. But the kind of Truth he dispenses is the Truth *as it is in God*. One might as well claim grand veracity of heart and tongue by posing as an advocate of the Truth as it is in Baron Munchausen. If Truth is bound by any restrictions but her own, she has foresworn herself and become an impostor.

The forms of energy or modes of motion are moreover convertible. When the rapidity of the oscillations of the invisible "actinic" ray is lowered by passing it through a solution of sulphate of quinine, it becomes visible as light. When light is stopped by a black object it becomes heat. Are the inseparable Father, Son and Ghost transmutable? Does the red-hot Father become the Light of the World on sufficient irritation, or increase of energy? Is the Son convertible into the Father by suitable means? Is this the kind of multiplicity in unity and identity in variety that is to be found in the Godhead?

Parsons are "hard up" for illustrations and defences of this absurd and impossible doctrine. I remember a clergyman at the Charterhouse Schools teaching us boys that the Three are One just as a candle and the wick and the flame are all one. I can recommend to Canon Wilberforce and other recipients of State loaves and fishes an old comparison much less recondite and much more to the point—the trinity of £. s. d. Pounds, shillings and pence are all money, and are equal in value if the quantity of each is duly regulated.

After all, Canon Wilberforce thinks that "actinism" does not adequately represent the Holy Ghost. Electricity

is the additional form of energy that most "convincingly" represents the third person (the he, she, or it) of the mysterious Trinity. As an electric current passing round a piece of soft iron converts it into a powerful magnet upholding a large piece of iron, so the Canon hopes that "a stream of influence from the Holy Spirit brought continuously into contact with" his "hard iron heart shall keep it cleaving to the Lord Christ . . . continuously counteracting its tendency to fall." Evidently electricity and magnetism ought to be added to the original Trinity of the spectrum.

Polytheists, if they sought support from science, might thank Christians for the Canon's illustration of Tritheism, for the light which represents one of the persons or non-persons of his Trinity is again separable into seven colors by a glass prism, and of these seven colors three are primaries. They might perhaps argue for a Trinity within a Trinity *ad infinitum*, or at least for the sevenness of one portion of the divine threeness. Their arguments need not be more foolish than the Christian Canon's, nor their statements as untruthful.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS.

MISS ALLCARD was admitted into a Church of England association called the "Sisters of the Poor," and was graciously allowed to make over the greater part of her fortune to the Lady Superior. But Miss Allcard has grown tired of the imitation of Roman Catholicism and has gone in for the real thing. She now sues for her £16,000 back again, alleging that the money was obtained by undue pressure and the influence of the rules and system. The discipline, it seems, was very elaborate and harsh. The main principle was an absolute vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. Miss Allcard complains of the tasks and penances she had to undergo. She had to wash household linen for twelve or fifteen hours a day, while at other times she had to sit in absolute silence and idleness for days together. If the lady gets her money again, she will most likely only fall a prey to the Catholics whom she has joined.

ON behalf of the Lady Superior the Solicitor-General pleaded that under the circumstances of the vow of poverty and obedience Miss Allcard's gift was perfectly natural and that there was nothing in the rules of the convent that was not immediately justified either from the Scriptures or from the ancient Fathers. This might be effective with a Christian jury, but as a matter of fact almost anything from a religious murder to belief in the phoenix may be justified from Scripture and the Fathers. The Apostles took the disciples' money and killed Ananias and Saphira for keeping back part of their own money. Sir Charles Russell pointed out that the nature of the rules was to absolutely efface the will of the individual and force the understanding to compliance with a superior will.

A SALVATION lass at Norwich, emulating the freaks of her fellows, dressed up in male attire in order to obtain access to young men she believed were going astray. She was landed in the police station.

ANOTHER case of suicide through religion has occurred at Burton on Trent. Emily Beardsly hanged herself because she was under the impression that she could not be saved. A Bible was found on a table by her side. The jury returned a verdict of "Suicide while in a state of temporary insanity." Her insanity was of the kind that is occasioned by Bible reading and chapel going.

ELIZA HASTINGS, when brought before the Rochester Row Police-court, Westminster, for being drunk and riotous, declared that all she wanted was "our dear Lord." Mr. d'Eyncourt evidently thought she wished to imbibe her Savior in the shape of sacramental or other wine, and committed her to hard labor for a month. How the saints are persecuted.

MR. COMMISSIONER KERR keeps up the fiction of God's evil interference in human affairs. An aged defendant having fainted in court while giving evidence, the action was postponed. The plaintiff's solicitor asked for the costs of the day. The Commissioner replied: "I will not allow them, as there are such things as the 'act of God.'" Does Mr. Kerr really attribute all sudden disasters and deaths and shipwrecks and fires and accidents to the special interference of the deity? If so, he makes him a very malignant mischief-making God who acts just as a Devil would.

THE Rev. C. B. Knox, vicar of Lower Beeding, near Horsham, Sussex, has been trying to introduce Ritualism into his benighted village. The congregation looked on with admiration at his vestments and genuflexions. The display of candles some thought to savor of idolatry, and these seceded. Recently he has taken to administer wafers instead of bread in the Holy Communion.

These so astonished the communicants that several of the ladies pocketed the wafers in order to show their friends and relatives. This coming to the ears of the vicar, he was highly incensed, believing they had taken away the body of the Lord Jesus in their pockets. Like the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims, who cursed whosoever stole his ring, Mr. Knox threatened with eternal damnation all who did not return every scrap of their blessed Savior.

GENERAL BOOTH, son Herbert, and two of the daughters, had a warm time of it at Northampton last Sunday. Their torch-light procession was broken up by the mob, and the big drum was smashed. No personal injuries are reported, however, and only one arrest was made.

No doubt it exasperates sensible people to see these fanatics playing their capers in the public streets, but it is wrong to assault them. There should be freedom for all; and if the public thoroughfares are misused by religious processions the nuisance should be dealt with legally. Mob law is a very bad law, and those who practise it to-day may be its victims to-morrow.

SALVATION funds appear to be depressed. One of the Army barracks in the Euston Road is "To be sold—a bargain." What a desecration! The place is impregnated with the Holy Ghost, and it may be turned into a bacon-and-cheese store or a Radical Club.

A MERIONETHSHIRE parson has been demanding his tithes by post-cards in red ink—suggestive, we suppose, of the blood of the Lamb! One of these missives was received by the executor of a lady recently deceased, who answered as follows:—"I beg to acquaint you that she has gone to a world where there are no tithes paid, nor any endowed Church demanding any." Good. But how does the writer know all this? Has the lady sent him an account of her new residence, or is it simply a case of the wish being father to the thought?

THE Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth's congregation had a Cinderella ball at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on the 22nd inst. Parsons, lawyers, actors and actresses, to say nothing of ballet girls, were religiously jostled together. Like his friend Headlam, Mr. Shuttleworth is fond of dancing, and it is reported that he gives the lads and lasses tuition in the art of tripping the light fantastic toe in his own house. Mr. Shuttleworth is "a good fellow," but his Christianity is a thing of his own making. It has about as much relation to the Bible as Mr. Irving has to Saint Paul.

THE Rev. W. Cuff of Shoreditch Tabernacle, asks *Tit Bits* to find a corner for religious bits. Sky-pilot Cuff is wise in his generation. He seems ambitious to advertise, and if his religious tit-bits are smart enough we will try to find him a corner in our Profane Jokes.

WE announced that a depot for Freethought literature was to be opened at Sunderland. Unfortunately, the bigots have, with their usual artifices, spoiled the project. They are now savage that they cannot prevent Mr. Foote's lectures.

THERE is a young curate in Nottingham who is said to have promised to marry five young ladies. Everyone agrees that he is a very promising preacher.

UNDER the heading of "A Clergyman's Victim," the news comes from Chicago that Miss Fannie Matthews, who eloped with the Rev. C. B. Seals, of East Lynn, Ill., has been placed in her mother's care by the Pinkerton detective agency. Seals, who was fifty years old, had a wife and family, and was highly esteemed as a pastor. He engaged Miss Matthews as an amanuensis, and eloped with her.

THE Rhode Island Supreme Court has found the Rev. Mr. Goodell guilty in two cases. Deacon Foster gets a divorce, but Mrs. Goodell is denied one on account of her own improprieties. Thus after having shown each other to be without honor or virtue, Mr. and Mrs. Goodell must still acknowledge each other as husband and wife. There is, however, some consolation left this wicked minister. The committee of the Methodist church, after spending two days investigating the charges, has unanimously acquitted him.

THE *Protestant Standard* and other religious journals are crying out for the legal suppression of Divorce Court reports. Was there ever a greater piece of hypocrisy? These very papers cry up the Bible, and insist on its being thrust into the hands of children, though it contains filth that throws the worst revelations of the Divorce Court into the shade.

How stories develop with age! *Modern Society* tells a highly-finished story of a man who took Joseph Symes down a peg. The original fact was very different. But what does that matter? Who cares about the truth of a story so long as it tickles, especially if it is at the expense of an Atheist?

A ROMAN Catholic widow at Audlem, Cheshire, complains of her windows being smashed by Protestant neighbors on account

of her religion. One night a gun was fired into the cottage, and on another occasion a stone struck her on the forehead, inflicting a serious wound. Christianity is evidently a great source of harmony between its professors. They love each other with brickbats and rifles as was seen at Belfast.

THE Belfast Riots Commissioners have issued their report. The riots at a very early period assumed to a great extent the aspect of a determined attack by the Protestant mobs upon the police and upon the places of business of Catholics residing in Protestant quarters of the town. The police were strictly impartial, and if the Protestant mob suffered more severely than the Catholics it was owing to the folly of its persistent attacks upon the police.

THE Commissioners recommend the issue of truncheons to enable the police to deal with these religious riots more readily and at an earlier stage than they can with rifles. They trust that all classes will be thoroughly ashamed of the disgrace brought on the town and will endeavor to terminate the disastrous feuds and bitter animosities which led to the calamitous riots. But these animosities were primarily Christian animosities. Instead of calming feuds religion incites and feeds them. The Commissioners of course say nothing on this point. If they did the religious dogs of war would probably be aroused from their enforced quietude into active protest once more.

AT the Manchester police-court on Thursday, an elderly man, who gave the name of the Rev. James Mulkerns, of Wessington Vicarage, Alfreton, Derbyshire, was charged with being drunk and incapable. He was fined 2s. and costs.

THE Rev. W. M. Edwards recently curate at Darfield had a stipend of £160 a year and a house, but run into debt to the extent of £175 and has had to file a petition in the Bankruptcy Court.

WILLIAM BOWEN, who pleaded guilty to charges of stealing sundry watches and other articles from various ladies upon whom he called, was a member of a Young Men's Christian Association. His card of membership was found on him at the time of his arrest.

AT Haverfordwest Assizes, Mr. Justice Wills and a special jury were engaged for a long time hearing a case of libel, brought by the Rev. J. H. Lewis, curate of St. David's, against the Rev. Garibaldi Thomas, Independent Minister. The libel complained of was contained in letters written to a local preacher just after the election of 1885, headed "Is the Church in danger at St. David's?" in which the plaintiff was charged with neglecting his duty to an aged parishioner, and, furthermore, with having "grossly misinformed" his vicar as to the facts of the case. The Church of England curate will hardly be satisfied with the verdict which gave damages to the amount of one shilling.

IT appears from the *Catholic Directory* for 1887, that within the past year the number of Romish priests in England rose from 2,256 to 2,273. Places of worship have increased from 1269 to 1280, and in Scotland from 326 to 333. The Catholics look upon the conversion of England as sure though slow.

SOME enthusiastic Christians are proposing that the churches should commemorate the Queen's Jubilee by throwing open all the seats. But the vicars know better. Catch them giving up their pew-rents. Modern servants of Christ know the value of money too well. But they wouldn't object to receiving cash down to build themselves a meeting-place or to augment their salaries. Acquiring wealth, not giving it up, is the clerical method of showing loyalty.

ONE Sunday afternoon, Mr. Jeakes, rector of Hornsey, was addressing his Sunday-school. After the address, he said, "Now, boys, I wish you all a happy New Year, and hope you will be better boys this year than you were last." "Same to you, sir," was the immediate response from different parts of the school.

AT a Y.M.C.A. meeting the other night one of our great merchants was addressing the "dear young men." "Ah," muttered one of the Christian young men, "he doesn't say 'dear' young man when I ask for an increase of salary."

A METHODIST clergyman of Chicago has prepared an *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* which he submitted to a council composed of his fellow-ministers. The *Index* includes, among others, the works of Dickens, Voltaire, Rénan, Holmes, George Eliot, Arnold, and Theodore Parker. The writings of these authors have, according to the reverend censor, been injurious to the minds of their readers, and it is likely that, if he possessed the power, he would have them publicly burnt after the manner of the Inquisition and of John Calvin.

A CHRISTIAN woman in North-West Dakota, whose favorite phrase was "The Lord is my shepherd" etc., was recently lost in a snowstorm and devoured by wolves.—*Truthseeker*.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 30, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell Road, S.E.; at 7, on "Where is God?"

FEB. 6, Sunderland; 13, Milton Hall, London; 20, Plymouth; 27, Huddersfield;

MARCH 6, Cardiff; 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Hall of Science, London.

APRIL 10, Birmingham.

TO 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.—J. Langford, Argus.

W. CABELL.—Sorry we misread Freethought for Free Love, but it does not alter our point. Malthusians do not, to our knowledge, advocate the abolition of marriage. They merely say that married people should not have too many children. We are aware of the matter you refer to concerning Melchizedek, but we had no room to introduce it.

J. LESTER (Danesmoor) writes that only one copy of the *Freethinker* came into his village twelve months ago, but he induced a news-agent to supply it, and now twelve copies are sold every week. The result is, a few miners have formed a Branch of the N. S. S., and Mrs. Besant is to deliver their first course of lectures. Well done!

J. CRESWELL, Market Hall and Bridge Street, Clay Cross, supplies this paper and all Secular literature.

J. DAVIDSON.—The *Bible for Young People*, by Oort and Hoorykass, is published in six volumes, by Williams and Norgate, at 31s. *Chambers's Encyclopædia* is a good work, but you would do well to consult special encyclopædias or special dictionaries for special subjects.

J. W.—If Paul wished to condemn polygamy he had plenty of opportunities for doing so. We do not agree with your interpretation of the verse in Timothy, nor do we see how Paul can be held up as a champion of monogamy on the strength of a disputed meaning of an incidental reference to the subject of marriage. How do you know that St. Paul had not some special reason of his own for ordering bishops one wife? Paul plainly states elsewhere that celibacy is preferable to marriage, and it is quite possible that his allowance of one wife to a bishop was a concession to the weakness of prelatical flesh. More than one wife, however, would have diverted the bishop from his religious duties, and therefore Paul would not allow *him* the ordinary indulgence of polygamy. As to the "humanity of Christ," we dare say there was a man called Joshua, the son of a carpenter or somebody else, but the matter is of the most trifling importance. Besides, Christians have been so active in constructing a supernatural story that they have obliterated the biography of Jesus, which is now irrecoverable.

J. ANDREW.—We have some interest in the subject, but have no time to give it special attention.

T. EDWARDS.—An index for last year's *Progress* can be obtained from Mr. Forder; price 1d.

G. JEFFERY.—Hardly up to the mark. There were some better verses on the same subject in one of our special numbers.

GEORGE SMITH, a Salvation soldier, sends us an ill-spelt scrawl, telling us that he is saved himself and is praying hard for our salvation. Peg away, George Smith, peg away.

R. N. (Stoko on Trent).—Of course matters will not be minced in the Debate. Mrs. Besant is very much in earnest, and so is Mr. Foote.

W. J. FORD.—Many thanks, but we had already written an article on the subject.

A. H. H.—The passage "I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh," occurs Proverbs i. 26.

W. SCHWEIZER.—Your batches of cuttings are of much service to us. Many thanks.

A. SOUTHFIELD (Battersoa).—It could not be helped. Mr. Foote has paid all the expenses, and promised the Branch a free lecture in March.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—Oldham Evening Express—Chat—Sunderland Echo—Truthseeker—Eastern Evening News—Great Thoughts—South Wales Daily News—Blarney—Boston Chronicle—Glasgow Citizen—South Wales Echo—Ironclad Age—Leeds Mercury—Boston Investigator—Staffordshire Sentinel—Liberator—Sunderland Echo.

THE following appeared in the Correspondence column of last week's *National Reformer*: "We shall publish a descriptive account of the debate between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote. We intended to publish, as usual, a verbatim report; but Mr. Foote refuses to allow this, on the ground that it will interfere with the sale of the report by the disputants." Mr. Foote has written the following letter to the editors of the *N. R.*:—"TO THE EDITORS OF THE 'NATIONAL REFORMER.'—Your reference to the Report of the Debate between myself and Mrs. Besant is, to say the least, misleading. Without going into all the details I must ask you to let me inform your readers that I have had no correspondence or negotiation with you on

the subject, and therefore I cannot have 'refused' you anything I have necessarily had some business conferences with Mrs. Besant as to the publication of our Debate, but they were of course of a private nature. Since, however, she has obviously confused Mrs. Besant the Debater with Mrs. Besant the joint-editor of the *N. R.*, and the matter has therefore become public, I am obliged to say that I gave more than *one* reason for objecting to the Report appearing in instalments in the *N. R.* Besides, it is fair to state that I was to pay half the cost of the Report, which I was to have half the use of when the *N. R.* had done with it. Why also do you say that you "intended to publish as usual?" Whenever have you published a verbatim report of any debate of mine? And is it *usual* for debaters to pay for the shorthand notes that are used by newspaper proprietors?—Yours obediently, G. W. FOOTE. 14 Clerkenwell Green, E.C., Jan. 21, 1887."

SUGAR PLUMS.

NEXT Wednesday evening the debate on Socialism between Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote will begin at the London Hall of Science. According to the metropolitan and the provincial press the debate is looked forward to with great interest. There is sure to be an exceptionally large attendance, and those who desire course tickets to admit by private entrance to the reserved seats should lose no time in obtaining them, as none will be sold at the doors.

MR. FOOTE had large audiences at Liverpool last Sunday. Every inch of room was occupied in the evening, and several persons were turned away. There was a good collection for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Bible Heroes, Mr. Foote's new work, will be issued in monthly instalments of two numbers on the 1st of each month instead of the 15th. *Mr. Adam* and *Captain Noah* are now on sale. Numbers III. and IV. will be published on March 1. The work is being printed with brand-new type on special paper, so as to make it a handsome volume when bound up. It may be added that *Bible Heroes* does not repeat any of the matter in *Bible Romances*. The latter work was written with an eye to the former, and all the biographical facts and legends were carefully left apart for the companion volume. *Bible Heroes* will be followed by *Bible Women*.

THE February number of *Progress* will contain the first instalment of "Sarpalus of Mardon," an hitherto unpublished sketch, by the late James Thomson, and "Some Unpublished Remains of Samuel Butler," which prove conclusively that the author of "Hudibras" was a Freethinker. Mr. Foote reviews Mr. Cotter Morison's remarkable new book on *The Service of Man*.

In a letter to the *Boston Investigator*, James Parton, the author of the *Life of Voltaire*, points out that Thomas Paine originated the very idea of having a Constitution of the United States, as well as suggested the Convention of the People that formed it in the year 1787. He did these two important things in *Common Sense*, which was published in February, 1776, eleven years before the Convention assembled. When the war was nearly over, he renewed the suggestion in his pamphlet entitled *Public Good*, written in 1780. See *Common Sense*, near the end, the paragraph on a "Continental Conference." See in *Public Good* the last two paragraphs. Mr. Bancroft concedes the priority of suggestion to Paine. See Bancroft's *History of the Constitution of the United States*, vol. i., p. 13. During the year 1887 the formation of the Constitution will be celebrated everywhere. At how many of these festivals will the name of Thomas Paine be mentioned?

WE are glad to see that the London Branches of the N. S. S. are arranging, through the Executive, for quarterly social parties. The first will be held at the Hall of Science on Thursday, March 3. Tickets will be 4d. each, and will only be sold to members of the N. S. S. Any balance will be handed to the Propagandist Fund. Tickets can be obtained of any of the Branch secretaries or of Mr. Forder.

THE *South Wales Daily News*, in a descriptive leader on Mrs. Besant, dealing more with her dress than with the subject of her lectures, says: "There must be a great many people in Cardiff if a census of the Queen's Lecture Hall be taken as a guide." We trust the Cardiff Freethinkers will follow up their success and keep a united front in presence of the strong bigotry which surrounds them.

A CHRISTIAN journal called *Great Thoughts* gives a portrait of Darwin and a description of his work and teachings by the Rev. R. A. Armstrong. "Five-and-twenty years ago," says this clergyman, "the great theory which Darwin afterwards adopted was the subject of universal ridicule." But "those five-and-twenty years have glided by, and the Darwinian theory rests on a body of evidence so vast and so minute that no serious attempt at its refutation is any longer possible." Religion was of course foremost in resisting the new truth. Our Darwinian minister

thus describes the "incredulous amazement" and "storms of protestation" that met the introduction of Darwin's books: "The revolution was so tremendous. The thing men were invited to believe was so astounding—to some minds, indeed, so horrific. Human nature seemed to have lost its moorings, or was rudderless on the surging sea of thought. All the accepted relations of society, the universe, and God, seemed to be upset. Religion, sacred aspiration, the hopes of thousands of years, the outcome of experiences hallowed by sufferings and martyrdoms, the Divine will-force exerted in the marvellous progression of the great universe, were all at stake. And so, passionate and dark, the tempest burst, and the new teaching was held up to universal execration."

OF course, as Science has won the battle, the educated clergy now contrive to reconcile Darwin and Genesis by quietly abandoning the latter. The Rev. R. A. Armstrong concludes that "the Theist may safely accept evolution with Divine control." He holds that there is a break in evolution by the introduction of a soul into Adam when God breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. Such a policy is a sign of defeat, a token of a submission which would be impossible if religion still had power to burn and slay the teachers of truth.

THE veteran *Boston Investigator* has a capital paper by Mr. J. E. Remsburg on "The Fathers of Our Republic." Mr. Remsburg advances proof that Washington, Jefferson and Franklin, like Thomas Paine, were Deists, believing in God but rejecting the fundamental dogmas of Christianity.

IN the following significant passage we have Jefferson's opinion of the Christian religion as a whole: "I have recently been examining all the known superstitions of the world, and do not find in our particular superstition [Christianity] one redeeming feature. They are all alike, founded upon fables and mythologies." (Letter to Dr. Woods).

A RECENT traveller in Palestine says the holy city, Jerusalem, is a dirty, one-horse little town, with the streets narrow, crooked, and some quite steep, and much infested by touts, beggars and fleas. As for the Holy Land, if it ever flowed with milk and honey, it must have undergone some strange geological catastrophe since. The writer says he cannot understand how any pilgrim acquainted with civilisation can visit the Holy Land and come away without having his respect and reverence for historical and doctrinal Christianity very much shaken, if not absolutely shattered.

DR. MONROE in his *Ironclad Age* always speaks to the point. Speaking of Christian praise and prayer the Doctor says: "Today the food of deity is adulation. Formerly omniscience was kept from mischief by ascending savors. Only think of pumping air into the ears of the almighty from the lungs of a shouting Methodist or with the bellows of a church organ! The superstition that feeds deity with wind through the ears can boast but little over that which feeds him with smoke through the nostrils."

THE *Southport Guardian* prints a long letter from "Observer," who oppugns the inspiration of the Bible and the dogmas of Christianity in the most thorough-going fashion. Evidently the press is beginning to see that Freethought must have some attention.

THE Shelley Society intends shortly to issue a *facsimile* reprint of the poet's pamphlet on "The Necessity of Atheism." It will be edited by Dr. Thomas J. Wise.

A NEW book entitled *Outlines of Jewish History from B.C. 586 to C.E. 1885*, published by Longman's, says: "Of Jesus himself very little that is trustworthy is known; Christianity as a new religion in opposition to Judaism, was founded by Paul of Tarsus." The doctrine of the Trinity is treated as "a welcome thinning of Olympus." The authoress, Mrs. Magnus, is of course, a Jewess, but this does not detract from the value of the work.

NOTICING Tennyson's *Promise of May*, the villain of which is depicted as an Atheist, the *Literary World* says: "Men's views on religion do undoubtedly influence their deeds; but unfortunately the strictest orthodoxy has not been found inconsistent with great laxity of morals where the passions have been strong, while, on the other hand, men who have been as little under religious influences as the late Mr. John Stuart Mill have been of unimpeachable character in all the relations of life. We do not suppose the Laureate really intended us to presume that immorality of the kind Philip Edgar practised necessarily or usually follows on the abandonment of traditional beliefs; but, if the public thought he so intended, it was sufficient to create a prejudice against his drama. For, as a fact, there are few in this age who can say honestly that they have no doubts whatever on any of the matters comprised in what passes, or a short time ago did pass, as orthodox Christianity, and therefore a suggestion of a connection between unorthodoxy and immorality could not but be distasteful to the majority."

ON EVIDENCE IN GENERAL AND CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE IN PARTICULAR.

ACCUSTOMED as we are in the present age to following the demonstrations of science and reading the requirements of legal evidence in the reports of public trials, few except those acquainted with old literature have any conception of how much more easily satisfied our forefathers were in the matter of evidence than ourselves. In the Middle Ages, especially when triumphant Christianity had stamped out, as far as possible, all pagan doubt, and encouraged a spirit of abject credulity, arguments which now would not pass muster with a boy of ten, were gravely advanced by the most learned men. Tales of miracles abounded. Even at the Renaissance, Poggio Bracciolini, apostolical secretary to three popes, a man of sceptical spirit, and a great restorer of heathen learning, records the most wondrous prodigies upon the report of some monk. Legends and conjectures had a large place in history. Our own Holinshed, as late as 1577, opened his *Chronicles* with a speculation on the state of England "before the flood," proceeding to tell us that "Noe being the only monarch of all the world, allotted Britain among the other isles of Europe to Japhet." Even the common-sense philosopher Locke, towards the beginning of last century, argued with Filmer from the supposed covenant of Noah with his sons!

Even at the present time, when nearly every mind has had some slight training with logic and familiarity with the nature of evidence, we find that the mass of beliefs are held not according to evidence at all, but simply upon authority or as the believer's previous habits of thought have led him to regard a thing as probable or the contrary. Ask an ordinary Christian why he believes that Jesus was born of a virgin, and he will probably give some most far-fetched argument or utterly irrelevant reply.

The truth is that the Christians accept their religion upon grounds which they would repudiate in regard to any other matter. Tell an orthodox Christian that Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, was born of a virgin, and that he came to life again and ascended publicly to heaven after he had been shot, and he will laugh at your credulity. Add that these miracles are certified in books the earliest of which was written forty years after Joseph Smith's death, and he will be astounded at your conception of the nature of evidence.

Now in regard to the Gospels, what evidence is there of any original witnesses capable of judging of what they tell? In the case of the birth from a virgin evidently none. We have not even the recorded words of Mary, who is indeed made to allude to Joseph as the father of Jesus.* Nor is there anything which a court of law would consider evidence in the case of the other alleged miracles. It is clear that neither Mark nor Luke profess to have been present at the events which they narrate. The Gospel according to Matthew is evidently a compilation. We have only a Greek version which is not a translation, whereas Matthew is said by all the earliest fathers to have written in Hebrew. The Gospel according to St. John is entirely out of court, as there is not the slightest evidence of any portion being in existence within one hundred years of the death of Jesus.

In the case of the Old Testament miracles the evidence is, if possible, worse. There is nothing whatever to show that the prodigies in the books of Moses were known until at earliest some seven or eight hundred years after his death.

The old school of evidence writers appears to a modern to be beating the air. The great point was the honesty of witnesses. The apostles were good men, and good men would not deceive. Apart from the imperfect knowledge of human nature here displayed—for no man is wholly good or wholly bad—the question as to any witness of any fact is not simply one of honesty but one of competency. The proposition ought to have stood, "good men could not be deceived." It is however, after all our training in habits of exactitude, the unfortunate experience of every judge, that out of any number of men willing to tell the truth, a very small proportion indeed can do so with exactness without letting their preconceived opinions manifestly influence their story. Of the competency of witnesses there is every degree, from the judicial impartiality of a

* "Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."—Luke ii. 48.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen to the open-mouthed credulity of a Dr. Rugg, who believes that Englishmen are descended from Jews, and that Colonel Ingersoll has been converted to this belief!

Paley showed an advance in his proposition that the original witnesses of miracles underwent labors, dangers, and sufferings in attestation of their truth. But instead of addressing himself to the task of proving this, he occupies his pages with wholly irrelevant matter. The simple fact is that nothing whatever is known of any single original witness of Christianity. The lying Romish legends of the apostles even Paley dared not venture to produce, while of the early Christian martyrs who were put to death for sedition, or other crimes in the eyes of the Roman law, there is no proof that one of them was ever examined on the evidences of his belief. Christianity came to Rome on a wave of credulity, and neither those who offered or those who accepted it ever thought of questioning its miracles or relying upon "evidences."

J. M. WHEELER.

BIBLE READING.

SCENE I.

"Ma," inquired ten-year-old Flossie, "wasn't David a good man?"

"Yes, my dear, the best of men—the 'man after God's own heart.'"

"But the Bible says he danced with all his might. But you won't let me dance."

"No, it's not right for you to dance; but David danced before the Lord, to please him."—2 Sam. vi, 14.

"But, ma, does the Lord dance, that he was pleased to see David dance?"

"Oh, no, my child. Please don't ask me any more questions."

Flossie pursues her reading, then suddenly raises her head, with—

"Ma, what does concubine mean?"

[Hesitatingly.] "A woman, my child."

"Yes, I know that. But what is it all about—Absolom and his ten concubines? I can't understand."

"Oh, I can't stop to explain it now, child. Don't ask so many questions."

"Why, you always told me to ask, so I might understand what I read, you said."

Flossie reads on; horror-struck, exclaims:

"Ma, did David have more than one wife?"

"Yes, my dear; several."

"Why, it says he took him more concubines and wives —"

"Come, Flossie, won't you go and see if your father is coming? There's a good girl."

"Let me finish this chapter first. Is a concubine a wife, ma?"

Mother rises, takes the Bible out of Flossie's hand and lays it on a high shelf.

"Now, my love, run out and pick up those pears under the trees in the garden; you'll get a whole basket full."

Flossie slowly leaves the room, half sobbing, and muttering:

"Ma won't let me read the Bible after she asked me to, nor answer my questions when she told me to ask them, when I didn't understand. In Sunday-school I learned about David, and teacher said it was a beautiful story, and I must read it in the Bible when I grow older. But I can see, for some reason, ma don't want me to read it. But I'll get the Bible and read it when she don't know it, and guess at the meaning" (clapping her hands).

SCENE II.

Enter father. Mother, with clouded brow, says:

"I don't know about setting children to read the Bible. I have just been forced to send Flossie out into the garden to get rid of her questions about David and his wives and concubines. The child is beginning to understand what she reads. It is all well enough in Sunday-school, where only select portions are given for their instruction. She was at the first so fascinated with David killing Goliath with his sling as to sit all the afternoon and hunt out everything where David's name was mentioned, and I had to actually take the book from her by force and put it beyond her reach in order to stop her reading and questions. What shall I do with her?"

"Well, it all comes from sending her to Sunday-school. I never did approve of it, you know."

"But it would have been all well enough, if the teacher had not set her to reading the Bible."

"Being a woman, I suppose she had no idea what a mass of filth it was. Probably she never read it through in her life."

"I presume not. I'm sure I never did. I knew the outlines of the life of David, but I had not the least idea that it was such a mass of corruption and crime, until that child began to call attention to it through those pointed questions. What shall I do with her? She makes her application too quick for a child of her age."

"All children do. Keep her out of the Sunday-school and from reading the Bible for a few years, and then she will be old

enough to read and understand it as she does Munchausen. If we attend well to her morals, I think she will be able to wade through Bible obscenity and come through unscathed. Let us dismiss the subject. I'm tired and hungry, and want my supper. I'll call Flossie."

ELLA E. GIBSON.

REVIEW.

God and his Book. By SALADIN. London: W. Stewart and Co., 41 Farringdon Street.—I have paused before reviewing this book, unwilling to condemn a work written in the interest of Freethought, yet unable to commend what is so little likely to serve that purpose. It needs some ingenuity in the present day to compile a bad attack upon orthodoxy. So many are the errors of the Bible and so much has criticism done to expose them, that one who can make a plain statement of facts and an appeal to common sense can scarcely go wrong. But the too facile pen of Saladin has been equal to the effort, and he has produced a volume of considerable size, in which the good points are so covered up by dashing, slashing and splashing, that a sober inquirer must be tempted rather to put it aside as the writing of a man with a bee in his bonnet than as a serious assault on the Christian faith. Saladin says:

"To those who can pierce through the outward seeming to the inner soul, I write for the vindication, not for the destruction of God. Behind the veil there stands the awful Eidolon, the Pleroma filling more than conceivable Space, dispensing with the conditions of Form, and obtruding beyond the upper and nether ring of Eternity."

I do not pretend to pierce to the inner soul. Perhaps if I could I might perceive how a long diatribe on Thames water and its animalculæ is a vindication of GOD. To outward seeming, I fear, Saladin and his book must seem impertinent. The writer is always obtruding his own personality. "I personally, O Lord, have never had much to thank you for. . . . You blighted all my young life with a lofty nature and a paltry doom," etc., etc. The pages are, moreover, padded out with cuttings from newspaper paragraphs and scraps from all sorts of sources, with little regard to their relative value, threatening, like the Pleroma, to fill more than conceivable Space, and emulating that "awful Eidolon" in "dispensing with the conditions of Form." All this may be tolerable in a weekly journal, but it is out of place when reprinted in a work intended for a permanent place in a library. Nor are the few references given of much use to the student. What is the good of "*Vide Corn. Agrippa*," when the collective works of the old astrologer and sceptic extend to over two thousand pages?

The besetting fault of the book is that of so many orthodox publications. We are treated to rhetoric instead of argument. Saladin would have us believe that the legend of Eden was taken, not from the Chaldeans, with whom the Jews are known to have had intercourse, but from the Hindus, about whom no such allegation can safely be made. Instead of giving us reasons for his belief, with some evidence for the date of the Hindu story and some suggestion as to how it came to be incorporated among Hebrew legends, he treats us to such "high falutin" as this:

"From what mine was the gold dug; what hands fashioned the original vase? Ask India's awful Temples, hewn into the rock, as if by Titans, and which are shrouded in the dim mists of the world's morning, where history gives no echo, and where even legend is dumb. Ask the manes and the ashes of the people of Bharata-Varsha, whose star-eyed Philosophy tried to peer through the bars of the portcullis of Being, and whose Poetry wafted the soul of the Ayrian [*sic*] to the sublimity which is God, some 2,000 years before Jesus Christ was invented."

This sort of thing may be Poetry, and of the kind which wafted Aryan souls to the sublimity which is GOD, but I fail to see what practical service it can render to the Freethought cause.

J. M. W.

LORD SHAFTESBURY used to tell the following story. He was sitting one day as chairman of the Lunacy Commission when the alleged insanity of a lady was under discussion, and he took a view of the case adverse to that of his colleagues. One of the medical men who was there to give evidence crept up to his chair, and said in a confidential tone, "Are you aware, my lord, that she subscribes to the Society for the Conversion of the Jews?" "Indeed!" replied Lord Shaftesbury, "and are you aware that I am president of that society?" Lord Shaftesbury of course thought the story told against the medical man. We think that the professional opinion of the matter told quite as much, to say the least of it, against Lord Shaftesbury's religious cranks.

TALMAGE speaks of "God our Mother" as having been teaching Christians for thirty and sixty years, "one word of one syllable, and we do not know it yet—f-a-i-t-h, faith." What a bungling teacher God must be. He—or rather she, if Talmage's phrase is correct—needs a Board School examiner over her who will see that she does her work efficiently or is dismissed in favor of a more competent instructor. The correction in gender will better enable us to understand God's relationship to her son. God the son of God the Mother is more intelligible than God the motherless son of a bachelor Father. On the orthodox theory, of course, God the Son was motherless from all eternity until the year 1, when he finally selected the Virgin Mary as his maternal progenitor. Couldn't God our Father let us all choose our mothers beforehand? Why should the miraculous privilege have been reserved for Jesus alone?

PROFANE JOKES.

"FATHER," said an observing son to his venerated sire, "you must stop praying or stop swearing—I don't care which!"

At the production of "The Lady of Lyons" at the Salt Lake City Theatre, an aged Mormon arose, and went out with his twenty-four wives, angrily stating that he wouldn't sit and see a play where a man made such a cussed fuss over one woman.

Two little boys were talking together about a lesson they had been receiving from their grandmother on the subject of Elijah's going to heaven in a chariot of fire. "I say, Charley," said George, "but would you not be afraid to ride on such a chariot?" "Why no," replied Charley, "I should not be afraid if I knew that the Lord was driving!"

LITTLE four-year-old had heard in Sunday-school, for the first time, of the omnipresence of Deity, and, like many an older head was puzzled. "But, mamma," queried she, wondering, "is he everywhere? Is he in this room?" "Yes, my child, God is everywhere, even in this room," answered the mother. The little one's face assumed its company expression as she smilingly said, "Take a seat God!" She wanted him to feel at home.

His papa was a clergyman who strictly enforced the rule that the young scion should attend Sunday service despite his tender years. Imagine the feelings of this dominie parent, when, pausing at his study door, he discovered the young man in the act of expelling a large bumblebee, waving his small arms frantically in the air and crying,—“Sh-h! sh-h! Get out of here! Get out, I tell you, or papa'll preach you to death!”

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