

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.  
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 207.



HALLELUJAH DRAGONS.  
*Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons.—PSALM CXLVIII, 7.*

## CATHOLIC TREACLE.

NEARLY three hundred years ago the venerable Galileo was forced on his knees and made to recant the dangerous heresy that the earth revolves round the sun. That doctrine, however, is now taught in our elementary schools. The Church was wrong and Galileo was right. Thus has it always been. Every new truth has had to fight for its life against an infallible priesthood. Whether Protestant or Catholic has made no difference. The same spirit of bigotry, tyranny, and persecution, has been displayed by both Churches. But now the tables are turned. Science is stronger than Christianity, and she who of old shed the blood of the martyrs of knowledge sees that she must humble her pride, abate her pretensions, and supplicate instead of commanding. Darwin is buried in Westminster Abbey after being denounced for a whole generation, and the Bishop of Ripon, preaching before the members of the House of Commons, celebrates this as the age of evolution. Nor are the astute Catholic leaders behind in praising the prophets whom they can no longer stone. Some of them even go to the length of contending that not only does the Catholic Church allow the truth of evolution, but she has really taught it all along, although her clergy did not properly understand her teaching, because it lay in germ in the

writings of her greatest divines, and could not burst into full life until the time was propitious for its development. Mr. St. George Mivart, one of the few men of science who profess Catholicism, says that he and his co-religionists are quite free to believe in Darwinism, not only in respect to the lower animals, but also in respect to man himself. Two years ago he wrote an article to that effect in the *Nineteenth Century*, and up to the present moment he "has not received even a private hint of disapprobation from any ecclesiastical authority." On the contrary, he has received "warm thanks" from many of the clergy, and a letter of complete approval from a Superior of one of the religious Orders.

Evidently the priests see how the wind is blowing, and they will trim their sails to it if they can. The Church adjusted itself to the Copernican astronomy by swallowing its own anathemas. It is adjusting itself to evolution, and Mr. St. George Mivart writes another article in the *Nineteenth Century* to show that it can adjust itself to the most advanced Biblical criticism. A great conflict, he says, is approaching; but the ship of St. Peter will weather the storm.

Mr. St. George Mivart fully realises the destructive character of the scientific criticism of the Bible which is now carried on all over Europe. He has made a careful study of its general conclusions, and he is willing to go to



any length in abandoning false positions. He is convinced that Christianity must and will change its view of the Bible. The old notions of inspiration are exploded, and Mr. Gladstone (it is Mr. St. George Mivart who says it) is wasting his time in defending Genesis against Huxley.

Let us take some of this Catholic champion's admissions. Moses probably never wrote a line of the Pentateuch. No part of the Old Testament can be carried farther back than the eighth or ninth century before Christ, and some of the "historical" parts are far more recent. The older writings were redacted by the priests in their own interest. It is highly probable that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never existed. The story of Jacob's wrestling with God is "gross mythology." That God hardened Pharaoh's heart; that he "prompted, rewarded, or condoned mendacity" in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that he inspired prophets to prophesy falsely so that people might be deceived; are "shocking" statements. The Deluge never happened, and no educated man believes it did, although there may have been a local inundation at the bottom of the story. Lastly, Adam and Eve are Hebrew fictions, and man's brute ancestry is an established truth.

All this, and more, is admitted by Mr. St. George Mivart. Less than a century ago Thomas Paine wrote a brilliant, witty book to maintain such views. He was persecuted for doing so, and the men who sold his book were imprisoned by the dozen for years. Now a leading Catholic goes beyond Thomas Paine, and says he has the sanction of the priesthood in doing so! Verily the world is moving fast. Perhaps, in another century, the Church will adjust itself to Atheism. At least we may rest assured of this, that the priests will adjust themselves to anything (if we let them) rather than relinquish pay and power.

"It is conceivable," says Mr. St. George Mivart, that the inspired parts of the Bible "may consist only of brief sentences scattered at wide intervals through the sacred books," all the rest being permitted to ignorant and credulous people for many centuries, we suppose, as a means of distending the mental stomach so that the pure essence of those "brief sentences" might be digested. If this be so, the real Word of God will have to be sifted out, and it may ultimately be printed on a four-paged tract for convenient reference. Then the words of Christ will be realised—"My yoke is easy, and my burden light."

This kind of process is, of course, fatal to Protestantism, and Mr. St. George Mivart rather chuckles over the fact. With Protestants it is "the Bible or nothing." They have exchanged an infallible Church for an infallible Book, and when ninety-nine out of every hundred pages are torn away, their religion is tattered and meagre. But we Catholics, says Mr. St. George Mivart, have still an infallible Church. "She claims," he says, "to have existed before a line of the New Testament was written, to have had authority to determine what was and what was not 'canonical' and 'inspired'; and she still claims full power to place her own interpretation on whatever may therein be contained."

Well, that may be effective enough against the poor Protestants, who are left desolate with their miserable remnant of a fetish; but of what avail is it against the Sceptic? You tell us that theology has made mistakes. We know it. You tell us that theology is a growing science. We know it. It grows like a bubble, till at length it bursts. Its development is rarefaction, its consummation is disappearance. Behind *your* biblical criticism there is another science—Comparative Religion; and that shows us that every dogma of your faith is developed from savage superstition. Theology began in the blundering fancies of primitive ignorance, and though it has forgotten its source it savors of the original springs, and despite its subtle windings it can be traced back to its fountain-head.

Mr. St. George Mivart evades or overlooks a very important question, with which we must conclude. Practically his Church has been wrong from the beginning about alleged past events that could have been tested by proper methods of criticism, and that are so tested now, not with the Church's assistance but despite its opposition. What reason, then, is there for believing that a Church, which has been so continuously wrong about the past, is certain to be right about the future? If it was mistaken as to this world, is it not more likely to be mistaken as to another? Let Mr. St. George Mivart answer this question before expecting sceptics to be caught by his Catholic treacle.

G. W. FOOTE.

## A BEASTLY CHAPTER.

AMID the abundant filth of the Bible the thirty-eighth of Genesis stands out as an entire chapter which the Church is ashamed to read from the pulpit or to place before children. Not that children do not read such passages; on the contrary, they are among the best-known portions of the Bible, and are passed from hand to hand with such comments as ignorance and curiosity suggest.

If I draw the reader's attention to a chapter which may well be thought best left to the pious lover of biblical garbage, it is because the matter is full of instruction, not only as illustrating the utter absurdity of passing off as a revelation from God the records of a lower stage of morality, but as a lesson in social evolution. The sun shines on a dunghill, and is not defiled. To the eye of Science there is nothing common or unclean. It finds its material no less in disease than in health. The microscopist, indeed, may rejoice more in examining butterine than pure butter. The motto of the student of man is the Pagan one, *Homo sum, nihil humani a me alienum puto*—"I am a man, and consider nothing pertaining to man alien to me."

Told in, I trust, more decent words than those used by the Holy Ghost, the story (which is dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Joseph's Brethren*) is this. Judah had three sons, Er, Onan, and Shelah. For his firstborn, Er, he took a wife named Tamar. The Lord slew Er; so Judah commanded Onan to take his brother's wife, but Onan shirked his duty, "wherefore the Lord slew him also."

Now, to understand this and what follows, we must see that this "raising of seed" to his dead brother was Onan's duty. In the early form of the family—for we are dealing with a comparatively early, though far from primitive form—it is necessary, in the struggle for existence, that its numbers shall not be diminished. We read in the Bible abundant instances of the blessing of a large family. "Happy is the man who has his quiver full." The blessing on the servant of the Lord is that "he shall see his seed."<sup>1</sup> It was the duty of the next of kin to see that the family stock did not diminish. We find at the beginning of Genesis that when Abel was slain God gave Seth "instead." In the story of Lot and his daughters—which, like the chapter before us, is told without any sign of reprobation or dissent—the daughters consider themselves justified by the plea "that we may preserve seed of our father."

In patriarchal life, as exhibited by the Bedouins, the "next of kin," the *goel*, is a most important personage. To him the tribe looks to avenge a kinsman's death or misfortune. On him the widow and fatherless depend for support. He is, above all, the blood-balancer, who sees that the house is kept in its normal strength, and who, as in this case, seeks to recruit it as far as possible from the same blood—a state of things implying feud with surrounding tribes. Job, in his anguish, can find no stronger consolation than this: "I know that my redeemer (my *goel*) liveth."

In archaic times descent was traced only through mothers; hence modern notions of incest were unknown. Abraham married his sister by the same father. His brother, Nahor, married his niece, the daughter of a brother.<sup>2</sup> Amram, the father of Moses and Aaron, married his father's sister.<sup>3</sup> These women were not relatives, for they were connected through males only; and males in those times were not as yet perfect kin. Of this Mr. MacLennan has given abundant evidence in his work on *Primitive Marriage*. On the death of the eldest brother the property, authority, and widow devolved upon the next. We see an illustration of this in the story of Ruth. The nearest kinsman had to redeem the field, and thereby purchase Ruth as his wife.<sup>4</sup> Lewis, in his *Hebrew Republic*, says: "In the earliest ages the Levir had no alternative but to take the widow; indeed, she was his wife without any form of marriage." In the Deuteronomic law we see a later form, when families had sometimes got separated. It prescribes that when brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, her husband's brother shall take her. He may, however, escape this office by having his shoe loosed and his face spat upon.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah liii, 10. See Genesis xv., 5; Psalm xlv., 16; cxxvii., 5.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis xi, 26, 29; xx., 12.

<sup>3</sup> Exodus vi, 20. <sup>4</sup> See chap. iv., 6-10. <sup>5</sup> Deut. xxv., 5-10.



Among the Hindus, in the time of the Code of Manu, upon a husband's death without children his brother took his place without marriage. The widow could claim this. She married into the family, and had in a husband's brother a husband in reserve. Moreover, custom held the deceased to be so effectually replaced by his brother that her child by the brother was counted the child of the one to whom she had first been given in marriage. This undoubtedly suggests that polyandry had prevailed previously to this custom.

According to the morality of that time, not only Tamar, but the family was grossly wronged by Onan. By refusing to allow Shelah to take the duties of goel, on the ground of his youth, Judah himself incurred the responsibilities of that office. It was his duty to see that seed was raised. Tamar resorted to cunning, the weapon of the weak. As Jacob with Laban, as Abraham with Pharaoh, she obtained her desire, which by every principle of the time was her right, by stratagem, and Judah is fain to confess "She hath been more righteous than I." This is the moral of the story. That Tamar was considered justified in entrapping her father-in-law in the way she did is one of those significant facts which deserves reflecting upon by those who oppose marriage with a deceased wife's sister on the ground that that connection is prohibited by the Bible, which is supposed to be a divine revelation suited to all time.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### GOD'S MOONSHINE.

I sat by the casement opened wide  
And gazed with a wistful eye,  
While the summer moon like a sportive bride  
Played hide and seek in the sky.  
I thought of the wondrous tales of yore,  
I often heard whilst young:  
How Luna stopped at old Joshua's roar,  
Suspended "by order" and hung  
Like a Chinese lantern in a cloud,  
Or a bonfire of the Lord—  
Symbol of hell to the patriot crowd  
Who braved old Josh's sword.  
I thought of the time when Jahveh bade  
The Sun and Moon appear,  
To light his wonderful world just made  
Of nothing and no-where.  
I wondered how the constant care  
Of God o'er all his works,  
Is shown by the moon's *inconstant* glare  
When wrong in darkness lurks.  
I thought of the "two great lights" arranged  
In such a curious way,  
That darkness reigned when Luna "changed"  
Or both of them shone by day.  
I mused on the Earth's supreme disdain  
Of Luna's claim for light  
When she gets in the way again and again,  
As though to obstruct were right.  
And then the gay moon saw fit to enshroud  
In mists her visage pale,  
And I thought, if hung this side of the cloud,  
Some lamps would as much avail.

W. C. SAVILLE.

#### ACID DROPS.

THE Kingdom of Heaven is found at last. It is the Isle of Lundy, which is owned by a man named Heaven.

THE Rev. Joseph Williams was hurriedly disappeared from Southend. The local *Observer* says that "what one hears on every hand is so utterly at variance with the conduct of a gentleman," that it would be unjust to believe it all without public investigation. We understand that Superintendent Hawtree knows something about the matter, and he should be plainly asked by the Southenders what evidence is before him.

THOMAS RYDER, of Cornwood, Devonshire, lost his life through a silly superstition. While sharpening a scythe he cut his wrist and severed the artery. Instead of securing medical assistance, his friends sent for a couple of "charmners," who have a big local reputation in that line of business. They tried their hands on the poor fellow, of course without the slightest effect, and he was ultimately put in a trap for the purpose of being taken to the hospital at Plymouth. But that was eight miles off, and the delay occasioned by the "charming" operation had cost him so much blood that he died before half the journey was completed.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* ridicules an imaginary debating society, which is supposed to have wasted its time and talent in discussing the question, "Where does fire go to when it goes out?" But Christians really do spend their time in discussing

equally foolish questions, such as "Where does life or soul go to when it is extinct?"

AN old Welsh lady begs to differ from Spurgeon's opinion that God himself couldn't understand Welsh. She says she has been speaking to Jesus Christ for five-and-twenty years in the Welsh language, and she is sure he knows it quite as well as he knows Greek and Latin.

ACCORDING to a paragraph in the *Daily News*, the priest of Canicatti, a large town in Sicily, recently caused to appear beside him in the pulpit a young man whose face was blacked, whose head was furnished with two large horns, and who had a long tail from the end of which crackers went off. The priest informed his flock that this figure was the Devil, and a great panic ensued. Women and children were injured in the crush.

THE Rev. John M'Allister, incumbent of St. Nicholas Church, Plumstead, was charged under three separate summonses with obtaining charitable contributions from the War Department under false and fraudulent pretences. He had continued to apply for and obtained yearly grants from the Department in aid of some schools which had been abandoned in 1876, and others which had been taken over by the School Board in 1878. For three years however, 1879-81, no application was made, but since then the application was renewed and the money paid. Six sums of £20 had thus been fraudulently obtained. The next charge was for fraudulently obtaining £100 for restoring the church. There were also charges of fraudulently obtaining two sums of £50 for the alleged purchase of mission halls. Bail in £1000 was taken for the defendant's re-appearance.

GOD has been pretty mischievous lately in various parts of the world. He has sent a hurricane and a waterspout to Great Karlyi, in Austria. In the course of an hour the whole town and the surrounding district were converted into a vast lake. The houses are collapsing, and several people have been killed by the falling walls. A little while ago part of the town was destroyed by fire. The inhabitants, overcome with panic and despair, believe that the Day of Judgment is commencing.

A FAR more serious flood in China has submerged the large city of Chuchow. Many miles of territory are under water, thousands of lives have been lost, and the sufferings of the survivors are terrible. Thus it pleaseth God to deal with his children. Benevolent old fellow, isn't he?

AT Zug, in Switzerland, he has sent a landslip, which has killed a hundred people, who have either been crushed by the rocks and falling buildings or drowned in the lake into which great part of the town was precipitated.

ICELAND he has favored with a famine. A number of people have died, and half the entire stock of sheep and cattle has perished for want of fodder, a severe snowstorm having covered all the vegetation.

LAST Tuesday morning a laborer named Harding, employed on the building of the new Baptist Chapel, at Northcote Road, New Wandsworth, was seized with a fit, fell from the scaffold and broke his neck. Surely the Lord might have let the poor fellow down easy as he was working at a gospel-shop.

A CARDIFF minister, the Rev. R. T. Howell, has been fined for drunkenness. He had been let out on bail, but as he failed to put in an appearance the bail was forfeited.

AT Southport, William Hull, a "lieutenant" in the Salvation Army was fined ten shillings and costs for obstructing the public way. He refused to pay and was sent to prison for fourteen days.

LEO TAXIL, whose real name is Jongand, has been to Rome and made his peace with the Pope. His Holiness forgave him on condition that he tried to undo the mischief caused by the Freethought works he published. Before leaving, the repentant ex-infidel was obliged to confess that he had failed to convert his wife, who remains an obstinate Atheist. We may add that she declares he is mad, and refuses to live with him.

FATHER MCGLYNN, of New York, says that his excommunication is his liberation, and that "The best way to get anything from the Roman machine is to show your teeth." He was received with acclamation at his last public meeting and the name of the pope was hissed.

EL *Mercurio*, of Valparaiso, reports that the pious people of Ecuador have hit upon a holy remedy to avoid revolution in that country. It appears that the new city of Azogues is to be dedicated in a special manner to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and of the pure and immaculate Mary; a public chapel is to be erected to commemorate this consecration, and it is confidently believed that the city and state will henceforward be under divine protection. No doubt the ceremony will be of equal value with the prayers and other mummeries of the sky-pilots.



JOHN THOMAS COOPER, secretary to the Primitive Methodist Provident Society, Church Gresley, is in custody on the charge of misappropriating money and falsifying the books of the society.

THE Dean of Peterborough, in a sermon in the *Rock*, says that religious life is the surest test of a nation's prosperity. He asserts that the greatness of a nation is not in her fleets or armies or in the sagacity of her rulers or in her wealth or science or commerce or colonies, for "no throne can be built upon any foundation of man's devising." Only the nation that honors God, it seems, is great. So that the Jews are a great nation and China is not. The ancient Roman Empire was never great or prosperous until Christianity demoralised and ruined it. What do the parsons mean by this bunkum? Simply that they make religion of more importance than anything else, and then, measuring by that ridiculous standard, they assert that greatness belongs only to religion. Greatness isn't great, in short, unless it is religious. They might as well say that Mont Blanc is only a mole-hill because it isn't of the Christian persuasion.

LIES about Thomas Paine penetrate to the most distant regions. The *Record*, of Valparaiso, a little sheet published for gratuitous circulation by the Rev. Dr. D. Trumbull, of the Chili Mission, has a story on the authority of one Stephen Grellet, to the effect that before his death Paine "spent much time in writing out what Grellet believes was his recantation, but these papers were certainly made away with after his death." The people nearest Paine at the time of his death were Christians; why did they destroy his recantation, if he made any? why did he not himself see that it was made as public as his scepticism? But, as is proved in *Infidel Death-Beds*, the most express testimony was given to the contrary by those who attended him in his last illness.

MR. L. J. BURKE, having written a pamphlet in favor of the Sunday opening of museums and picture galleries "from the Christian point of view," the Rev. H. W. Robinson writes a long reproof, which appears in the *Tottenham and Stamford Hill Times*. The reverend Sabbatarian says there is too much "spurious liberty" abroad at the present day. He maintains, however, that "Christians love freedom—liberty," but he evidently means the Christian liberty of tyrannising over others. He reminds us that mere knowledge of the affairs of this world is not of much account from the Christian point of view, "for the Devil," says he, "has more absolute knowledge and intelligence than all the wise men of the earth." Is this parson intimately acquainted with his Satanic Majesty that he can thus vouch for his scientific attainments and intellectual abilities?

THE sooner Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill is carried the better in reply to that gentleman, the Attorney General admits that Mr. Mears was allowed to affirm and serve on the jury at the Middlesex Sessions, and adds that "the cases of exemption from oath are so few that when objection is raised on the ground of being without religious belief, the persons were never directed to be sworn." We fail to follow this rigmarole. The Attorney General ought to know that the law on this subject is a chaos, that one rule is observed in some Courts and another in others, and that Freethinkers are frequently insulted and oppressed, as though they were responsible for a bad law which they desire to see altered.

"AN English Clergyman" writes to the *Hull Express*, in answer to Mr. Billany, and frankly confesses he does not believe that Elisha caused the head of an axe to swim, or that a whale swallowed the prophet Jonah. He repudiates having any such notions ascribed to the enlightened clergymen of England. Why, then, do they go on teaching and reading from the book which records these stories as having actually happened, calling it the Word or God? This is hardly the way of curing others of superstition.

TALMAGE thus expresses his view of the soul:—"Oh, this mysterious spirit within us! It has two wings, but it is in a cage now. It is locked fast to keep it; but let the door of this cage open the least, and that soul is off. Eagle's strong wing could not catch it. The lightnings are not swift enough to take up with it. When the soul leaves the body it takes fifty worlds at a bound." Talmage also wants to know whether the soul will have to travel through long desert before it reaches the good land, and whether there will be torches to light it after it gets beyond the light of our sun. Childish questions and childish assertions seem to be fit food for Christian minds. Talmage ought to be ashamed of his foolish queries and his absurd statements alike; but we suppose Christian quacks are not capable of the sentiment of shame.

TALMAGE at one moment represents Christ as triumphant and "Infidelity" as a mere leprous outcast. At another moment he acknowledges the world-wide triumph of Infidelity and the defeat of Christ. For instance, he says of Christ: "Driven as he has been from the heart, from the social circle, from literature, from places of influence, the world gazes now upon what seems to be a vanquished Redeemer. But he shall yet rally his

forces, and, though now overcome by other troops, he shall overcome at the last." If Talmage's prophecy is no more correct than his bombastic exaggerations in general, Christ's promised victory will not be worth much.

TALMAGE'S method of getting over the "intellectual difficulties of religion" is something like Spurgeon's method of crushing them with the great steam-roller of faith. He says: "Let the great guns of Infidelity blaze away. Christ comes not to the gate of your head, but to the door of your heart." He would overcome the contradictions and perplexities by forgetting them amidst a flood of selfish emotion. People are to rush to be "saved," and to be happy by means of the belief that butters the parson's bread. Any inquiry into its truth or falsity, or ultimately mischievous effects, is worse than useless. Verily, there is no quackery like the religious quackery.

"A BANKER" for some time past has been spending his money in advertisements depicting the nature, extent, and occupations of Eternity. He says, "Let a period be imagined consisting of 100,000,000,000,000,000 years, each one of which years is of a duration equal to a hundred thousand of our years, a very prolonged period is indicated. Now imagine a line of those figures to be continued to the most distant visible star, and then back again to the earth, and each one of those years to be equal to a thousand millions of our years—yet when the very last of these awe-inspiring æons has been reached, the end of Eternity is no nearer than it was at the commencement; no—not even when those tremendous cycles have been repeated in countless succession, still Eternity goes on—on—on!" No doubt he knows all about it, but the picture he gives of the delight of eternal glory does not make it very attractive, while as for the other side its contemplation would be horrible were it not so ridiculous.

The Holy Ghost says we shall roast

Ten billion years and one;

And then our days, in that hot blaze,

Will scarcely be begun:

And though we burn, the spit will turn,

And keep us underdone!

A MISSIONARY describes a sacred mountain in China where the people flock to buy bills of credit on the next world. The stamped slips of paper are sold for about a penny each, and are supposed to be good for about £260 after death. Christians do not care to work this kind of business in so simple a way, or on such easy terms. Christian priests require a large amount of cash simply to save people from future punishments, or to get them out of purgatory. Christ promised a good interest in this world on pious investments. Men who deserted their wives and children for Christ's sake were to receive a hundredfold. The Christian rate of interest on such articles thus appears to be ten thousand per cent.

THE *Christian Herald* narrates how a child was "saved from a leopard through prayer." The child was out in the fields when her "little heathen maid" saw a leopard following her. The heathen maid—who had apparently learned quite as good an ideal of conduct as any Christian little maid ever acquired—ran to the rescue of the child, and stood between her and the leopard. Then, being in a desperate fright, she thought rushed into her mind that she would try her master's God. So she fell on her knees and called out, "Oh, my master's God, I beseech, save my master's child!" The leopard then turned round and ran away. The *Christian Herald* would swindle its credulous readers into believing that this escape was the result of prayer. But the child's safety was mainly the result of the devoted action of the little heathen maid, who had placed herself in the post of danger, but nevertheless entirely forgot to pray for her own safety. Was her safety due to a prayer for it which she never made, or to the boldness of her action frightening the leopard away?

THE last account received of the murder of Bishop Hannington in Africa, says that he was on his knees in prayer when he was speared. What does the Editor of the *Christian Herald* say to this as a proof of the efficacy of prayer? Christian quacks are ready enough to give examples of people being saved after prayer, and therefore, as they persuade credulous simpletons, because of prayer. Does not this case equally prove the utter uselessness of prayer? Christians hold the argument to be good whilst it suits them; they repudiate it immediately it tells against them.

ALL TREACLE AND NO BRIMSTONE.—Some amiable and heterodox sects retain heaven and abolish hell. A kingdom in the clouds may, of course, be portioned off according to pleasure. The doctrine, however, is interesting in an intellectual point of view only as illustrating in the naivest fashion the common fallacy of confounding our wishes with our beliefs. The argument that because evil and good are mixed wherever we can observe, therefore there is elsewhere unmixed good, does not obey any recognised canons of induction. It would certainly be pleasant to believe that everybody was going to be happy for ever, but whether such a belief would be favorable to that stern sense of evil which should fit us to fight the hard battle of life is a question too easily answered.—Leslie Stephen, *Freethinking and Plain Speaking*, p. 336.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S OPEN-AIR LECTURES.

Sunday, July 17, at 11.30, Clerkenwell Green; at 4, Regent's Park.

[The N.W. London Branch has sent no delegate to the Open-Air Committee, nor did it trouble to send in its list of lectures for the July programme. It has not sent Mr. Foote a handbill of his Regent's Park lecture, and probably it has issued none. In the circumstances Mr. Foote would be justified in regarding the engagement as cancelled, but he will fulfil it out of respect to those who may have seen the announcement. We ask Freethinkers in the district to advertise the lecture among their orthodox friends, these being the people the lecturer wishes to reach.]

July 24, Central London Branch (morning); Battersea (evening); July 31, Camberwell; August 7, Westminster Branch; August 14, Bethnal Green Branch.

## 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.

H. E. BROMLEY.—Taylor's *Diegesis* was written in Oakham Gaol, where the author could not always check his references. It is, however, useful to those who have already some acquaintance with the subject and who take nothing on trust. The publisher is Mr. E. Truelove, 256 High Holborn, W.C.

T. BRIDER.—The Venetian nobleman who betrayed Bruno to the Inquisition was named Mocenigo. It was Venice, not Vienna. You will find the details in *Progress* for May and June.

R. FOX asks "Why is Thomas Carlyle omitted in that fine little work *Infidel Death-Beds?*" Because Carlyle was only recently dead and biographical matter was still streaming from the press, and it was difficult to decide what his opinions exactly were, although it was clear he was not a Christian. Our correspondent is thanked for his scraps.

J. M. WHEELER wishes *National Reformer* for April 17. Will remit stamps in return.

H. HISCOCK.—If Mr. Dunn wishes to speak after Mr. Foote's lecture, on Clerkenwell Green he will have to confine himself to the subject. If he has detected any "substantial errors" in the *Crimes of Christianity* he can state them in black on white and send to our office. The only one he pretended to have discovered when we saw him at the Hall of Science a few months ago was a perfect mare's nest.

R. DUNN.—We regret the mistake. The Christian Evidence Society's stand at Plaistow was too far off for us to identify anyone, and we were informed that you were the lecturer. That you are lecturing on Clerkenwell Green this morning, as well as ourselves, is doubtless an interesting fact; but if you expect us to forego our lecture, for the purpose of answering what you may have to say, you are a curious specimen of Christian humility. If you have found "four wilful misstatements" in *Crimes of Christianity*, put your indictment into writing, and let us have it. The mare's nest you did discover at the Hall of Science raised roars of laughter at your expense. Still, if your fresh discoveries, after two years' microscopic study, are any better, we will print them (if you put them briefly) with our answers.

J. P.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

A. FREETHINKER asks us what is the sin against the Holy Ghost. We have said before that we don't know. Nobody does except the Ghost, and he keeps his own counsel. Most parsons think it is unbelief, but that is a professional view. A great deal has been written and preached upon the subject, though there is no dogmatic utterance by any of the Churches. Many people have fancied they had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, and have gone raving mad in consequence. Their nearest relatives should have brought actions against the publishers of the Bible. An action ought to lie against the Holy Ghost, but there is a difficulty in serving the writ.

A. TAYLOR writes: "At a meeting of the Hackney Branch, held last Sunday evening, it was unanimously resolved—That the best thanks of the branch be tendered to Mr. Foote for his splendid lecture in Victoria Park this afternoon." Our correspondent adds that the collection for the Freethinker's Benevolent Fund realised £1 17s. 6d.

E. F. TOZER, 30 Mill Street, Guernsey, supplies the *Freethinker* and all our other publications, as well as Ingersoll's lectures. Other booksellers on the island refuse to supply this journal, so intending purchasers should apply only to Mr. Tozer.

S. S. G.—Thanks for your second donation to the Open-Air Fund. Many have forgotten to subscribe once.

H. ROBERTS.—The case of the Rev. J. M'Allister is *sub judice*, and it is only fair to refrain from comment until it is decided, although the magistrate's requiring a £1,000 bail gives it a bad appearance.

R. GREEN (King's Lynn).—Mr. Foote was not ill when you "had the pleasure" of hearing him on Kingsland Green. His throat and chest were sore with a sudden cold; that was all. We are glad to learn that you "derive much pleasure from reading the *Freethinker* and *Progress*." It is good of you to contribute towards the expenses of the open-air work in London.

CALED.—Schopenhauer's chief work, *The World as Will and Idea*, is published in three volumes by Trübner. If you read French, there is an excellent summary of his philosophy by Ribot, published at 2s. 6d. The three volumes of Schopenhauer's Essays, which contain his freest writing, can only be read in the German.

G. MANCO.—The Christian Evidence Society's lecturer who held forth outside the "Salmon and Ball" public-house last Sunday morning must have known very well that he was lying. Of course

Mr. Bradlaugh never charged Mr. Foote with embezzlement and running away with another man's wife. Running away is rather out of Mr. Foote's line. The passage in the paper he referred to, which was the *Secularist*, edited by Mr. Foote himself, is part of a long ironical article, which nobody but a blackguard or a fool would ever think of retailing seriously. The whole article is written in the Mark Twain vein; but it appears that some people are so dull or perverse that they require a notice at the end of every joke, as Artemus Ward suggested—"N.B.—This is writ sarcastic." For the rest, why should you be aggravated at the Christian Evidence lecturers being libellous liars? Pigs grunt and bugs smell. They can't help it; 'tis their nature; and you must make the same allowance for Mr. Engstrom's cubs.

THEOSEBES.—The argument is good, but not new. It has been used by scores of writers.

E. B.—Sir John Lubbock, in his *Origin of Civilisation*, gives much evidence contradicting the supposed universality of belief in God. As to our being more indebted to the Jews than to the Greeks, that is a matter of opinion in which we differ from the Unitarian gentleman.

W. B.—The first person who names Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in connection with the Gospels is Irenæus, who is said to have lived towards the end of the second century. If you read *Crimes of Christianity*, or any work on monkery, you will find that thousands voluntarily lived in the manner described. One sect went on all-fours, and were known as *Boskoi* or grazers.

R. T. PHILLIPS.—Not quite up to the mark.

F. R. BIRD.—The tract by George King, ex-pugilist, is a gross exaggeration. He or somebody did button-hole Mr. Foote after an East-end lecture many years ago, but he never said all he attributes to himself in this tract, nor would Mr. Foote have stopped to listen to it. The man spoke very excitedly about the wonderful way in which he had been converted, and the lecturer had to get rid of him somehow. Mr. Foote may have said, "It is remarkable," but if so he was ironical. Certainly he was not "puzzled," for the man looked a lunatic or something worse. It would be more to the purpose if the writer of this tract would explain his own life since his conversion, and especially his relationship to a certain Mr. "Thompson."

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to receive your subscription towards the outdoor work which you have always so earnestly assisted. We wish better-to-do Freethinkers would show something of the same generosity.

J. HUME.—Mr. Forder has executed your order. Kindly send orders to him direct in future. We are pleased to hear from you as a recent convert. You will find Freethinkers in all classes of society.

J. K. S.—Our compliments to the little fellow. Glad to hear you are bringing him up a Freethinker, and protecting him against the mental assaults of the parsons and their satellites.

W. C. (Hastings)—Thanks for your subscription. Friends of the open-air work should wake up soon or the season will be over.

P. BRACKER.—The repetition was an oversight. You are quite wrong in your calculation. Besides, you mistake our point. We do not argue that Christians commit suicide oftener than Freethinkers. We simply say they do so as frequently, and we occasionally print cases from the public press. This disposes of the Talmago-and-Tennyson theory that Atheism leads to suicide.

H. M. RIDGWAY, in sending a subscription for the open-air campaign, says: "I am glad you are working so vigorously in the field, for I think you will do more good that way than any other at present."

C. DEANE.—Sorry to hear you have been ill, and afraid it has made you a little hypercritical. We did not write of the "black coated army," but the Black Army, in contradistinction to the Red Army, both being maintained by the State, the one to fight the enemy and the other the Devil. We should reply to your other objection in a similar way. Remember that we issue 52 numbers a year, and in so much matter there is sure to be something displeasing to somebody. Judgment must go by the general result.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Freidenker—Lucifer—Jus—Hull Express—Woolwich Gazette—Southend Observer—Truthseeker—La Semaine Anticléricale—Echo—Burton Chronicle—El Mercurio—Thinker—Liberator—Chat—Menschenium—Sunderland Echo.

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

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a very large audience in Victoria Park to hear Mr. Foote last Sunday afternoon, and the proceedings ended with three hearty cheers for the lecturer. A collection was made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. The only opponent was a converted Jew named Lewis. He has turned Christian, for reasons best known to himself, but he does not understand Christianity; for, amidst the laughter of the meeting, he said that Jesus was not exactly God, but he proceeded from God; while the Holy Ghost was a personage he seemed never to have heard of.

"God's image cut in ebony," the darkie preacher Edwards, was orating a little way off, and he appeared to be talking a good deal about the Open-Air Committee's tract at the top of the monthly programme, for "Did You Evah?" was frequently blown across to the Freethought meeting. The black evangelist began in fine form about a quarter of an hour after Mr. Foote. His followers cheered him lustily, and they roared every time he showed his teeth. But he soon used up his wit and wisdom, and although he left off at least a quarter of an hour before Mr.



Foote, the finish of his performance, judging from the applause, was "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

As Mr. Foote was hurrying off to the station a young man ran up and accosted him. "Pardon me," he said, "for joining you, but I wanted to thank you for your lecture. What you say about the Christians persecuting is only too true. Three years ago I was working for a big East-end firm, and some of the employes told the principals I was a Freethinker and a Malthusian. The principals said that if I was I should be discharged, as an unbeliever wasn't fit to be employed by a respectable firm. But fortunately they asked for proofs, and none were forthcoming, so I pulled through the bother. I believe they actually sent to the Malthusian League to see if I was on the members' list. Of course I got another situation as soon as I could, but the house I am with now would discharge me at once if they knew I was a Freethinker. I wouldn't renounce my opinions for all the bigots, but I've got to keep my tongue still. It's nothing but slavery, and very bad slavery too. The Christians talk about their hospitals and all that sort of thing, but giving you a bottle of physic if you're ill, and starving you if you dare to think for yourself, is a funny sort of charity. Good day, sir. I'm obliged to hold my tongue, but I'm glad somebody can speak out. Good luck to you!" And with a hearty shake of the hand the lecturer and his auditor went their several ways.

ON reaching the station Mr. Foote was joined by a Freethinker who had come up from Walthamstow. This man had turned from Christianity at the time of the third trial for blasphemy before Lord Coleridge. He couldn't stand a persecuting creed any longer. For a while he tried, with a few other Freethinkers, to carry on open-air work in the forest, but the Christians brutally assaulted them, and when they met in a private garden roughs were paid to fling tiles at them from an adjoining house. Since then the pious Christians, and especially women, have been bothering him perpetually. He has a child between three and four years of age who cannot walk yet, and a Christian of some standing dropped in last week and told him that the child's weak legs were the result of his infidelity. But curiously that very Christian has a member of his family who never walked at all, and two near relatives who are paralytic cripples. When it was suggested that this was a result of their Christianity, he regarded it as an insult. Poor creatures! They are trained up to be silly, superstitious, and ill-natured, and their teachers are more to be blamed than themselves. We must add that the much-pestered Freethinker keeps pegging away. He had *Bible Contradictions* and *Bible Absurdities* in his pocket, and a bundle of Freethought tracts for judicious distribution.

WE have to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions for the London open-air work:—W. C. (Hastings) 10s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 2s. 6d.; C. Simson, 1s.; S. S. G., 2s. 6d.; Young Freethinker, 5s.; R. Green, 5s.

THE first volume of *Crimes of Christianity* is now in the binder's hands and will soon be ready for sale. It is well printed on good paper, and the sheets have been hot-pressed to give them a pleasant finish. The binding will be in neat cloth, and the price half-a-crown. With respect to the literary part, we may state that Messrs. Foote and Wheeler have spent a great amount of time and labor in making the work, so far as this volume carries it, as complete and accurate as possible. No such indictment of Christianity has ever been attempted. The authors scarcely expect anything like remuneration for their work. It has been to them a labor of love, or rather of hate. Every Freethinker who can afford it should have a copy of this work, which is crowded with the damnable doings of Christianity, ample authority being given for every charge. A mere glance at the footnotes will show that the literature of the subject has been thoroughly ransacked.

MR. FRANCIS GALTON has pointed out some very curious facts concerning the children of eminent men. He found from the study of the heredity of some of the members of the scientific societies of London, that the legal profession presented the most eminent men and the fewest idiots. The medical profession came next, and lastly the clergy, who produced the smallest number of eminent and the largest number of idiots and feeble-minded. The lawyers gave origin to six times as many eminent men as the clergy. The clergy gave origin to six times as many idiots and feeble-minded as the lawyers. —*Weekly Budget*.

MR. TRUELOVE, the veteran Freethought publisher, of 256 High Holborn, has brought out a new edition of Robert Cooper's seven philosophical lectures upon the Immortality of the Soul, which remain among the best popular expositions of materialism made in this country. The little work, which has hitherto been sold at a shilling, can now be procured for sixpence.

THE Hall of Science Children's Summer Excursion will take place on August 14; ages from six to twelve. Friends wishing to accompany the children in brakes, tickets 2s. 6d. each. Parents wishing for children's tickets will please state what Branch of the National Secular Society they belong to, as they will be supplied first. Please send stamped and directed envelope. Further subscriptions:—Mrs. Besant, 10s.; J. Fitzgerald, 1s. 6d.

All applications for tickets to be sent to Wm. Cookney, Hon. Sec., 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

DISESTABLISHMENT and Disendowment are growing apace across the Channel. The Catholic schools find formidable rivals in the State-aided communal schools. The abolition of the Concordat has been recommended by a Commission, and although this measure is not ventured upon by the present Government, it has the support of men like MM. Floquet and Clemenceau. *La Semaine Anticléricale* calls on all French Freethinkers to unite and demand the separation of Church and State and the suppression of the budget of worship.

MR. SYMES reprints in his *Liberator* Mr. Foote's account of his appearing before Justice Hawkins in the capacity of a jurymen, and appends some remarks from the London correspondent of the *Melbourne Argus*, who says:

"I think Mr. G. W. Foote has had hard measures dealt him by Mr. Justice Hawkins. The former offered himself as a jurymen if only his affirmation should be taken instead of an oath, and since this was declined it seems to me mere petty spite that he should nevertheless have been detained in court in order that he should not 'get off' his duties. It surely cannot be supposed that any considerable number of persons would declare themselves Atheists merely to escape the inconveniences—great as they are—of the jury-box; and even if that is so, we cannot desire to have such people to decide what is right or wrong among us."

This correspondent declares that had he been in Mr. Foote's case he would have withdrawn from the court and tried the question of the judge's right to punish him elsewhere. He is evidently unaware that a judge of the Queen's Bench Court is the supreme authority as to what constitutes contempt of his court, and that the question cannot be tried elsewhere.

## REPEALING THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

(Continued from p. 223.)

ON the following day, Bully South, Esq., being on the bench, *Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.*, was charged with wilfully wounding the religious feelings of numerous Christians by profaning the oath. Sir Robert Fowler, with most touching solemnity, deposed how the prominent infidel before the court had shocked his most sacred convictions by flaunting his opinions before the world, and how he then, by a blasphemously hypocritical mockery of a Christian ceremony, by reciting its sacred words, and by his revolting gesture of kissing the sacred book, had almost killed him with pious horror at beholding such a wanton desecration of sacred objects and so deliberate an insult to all believers. Other equally honest and irreproachable Christians gave similar evidence. Defendant raised many points, but the magistrate immediately cut them short and dismissed them as frivolous, whereupon the defendant wrote a note in pencil and dispatched it to his solicitors. Justice South sentenced him to six months' imprisonment with hard labor, and regretted that he couldn't increase the totally inadequate punishment without first sending him for trial before a jury, which in these profane and degenerate days was a highly inconvenient and tedious arrangement. Defendant: I submit —. Justice South (promptly): Yes, you'll have to submit. Usher, remove the prisoner to a cell at once, and take an adequate force of police in case of violent resistance. Prisoner's demand that a case should be stated was contemptuously ignored. Two hours later, however, he was released under an order from a judge in chambers, pending an appeal to a higher tribunal. On leaving the court Bully South's religious feelings were deeply wounded by the tumultuous applause of prisoner's friends as the notorious infidel triumphantly drove away in a cab.

*Courtney Kenny, Esq., M.P.*, appeared in the dock charged with having wounded the religious feelings of Mr. Joshua James, a Bible Christian, by taking the oath. This blasphemous ceremony was gone through in direct defiance of the Savior's plainest and most emphatic command, "Swear not at all." Kissing the Book that forbade it, was acting like Judas, who also betrayed his Lord with a kiss. Such a public desecration of sacred things was a most shocking sight to faithful believers in Christ's divine teaching. The hypocrisy of professing reverence for the Lord while making a human fetish of his book and an open mockery of his words only made the act the more distressing and revolting to his religious sense. The frivolous way in which the forbidden oath was gabbled through showed that the pretended believers in the Holy One of Israel had no true sense of the dignity and sanctity of their Lord and Savior.



Mr. Kenny pleaded that he certainly had no intention of wounding the prosecutor's religious feelings, though he could not deny, in a logical sense, that Mr. James's feelings might have been wounded, just as a Protestant might feel hurt at the kissing of the crucifix by a Roman Catholic. But the intention to wound was the essence of the offence.

Plaintiff's solicitor urged that Mr. Kenny doubtless knew his own intentions in drawing up the Bill under which he was now prosecuted, but, nevertheless, his defence was inadmissible. Otherwise the Act would leave men free to wound religious feelings for trade purposes, or for a money payment. The Buddhists of Ceylon, who carry a monkey on a cross as one of their religious emblems, would be at liberty to include this outrageous emblem in a procession through London, while a scholar or disputant might be sent to gaol for a whole year for quoting Swinburne or Shelley to a Christian friend.

The magistrate, who is understood to be a Bible Christian himself, said the prisoner had undoubtedly flouted his flagrant defiance of Christ before a Christian assembly, and he should therefore sentence him to a month's imprisonment, with leave to appeal on the point whether earlier Acts of Parliament legalised a breach of the later Act so far as oath-taking was concerned.

Prisoner appeared utterly confounded by the unexpected result of the case. As he was about leaving the dock he was observed frowning reproachfully at the Secretary of the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Society, who had taken up the matter. The Secretary thereupon remarked that prisoner need not be in a hurry about his appeal, as there would be a number of other cases against him. The Society thought they could not do better than give Mr. Kenny the full benefit of his own Act. Prisoner protested against this as persecution. The Secretary consoled him with the observation that when he had passed a few years in gaol, off and on, he could use the intervals between his imprisonments in agitating for a repeal of the clause. As that very agitation, however, would wound the feelings of some faithful Christians, he had perhaps better refrain from thus aggravating his guilt.

It is understood that many zealous Christians have joined the Society for the Abolition of Religious Prosecutions. They perceive the enormous advantages of prosecuting people for hurting their feelings rather than for blasphemy. They intend imprisoning every Freethought lecturer and bookseller. As every Atheist who avows his opinions is horribly offensive to their pious susceptibilities, they expect to make a clean sweep of "infidelity," thanks to Mr. Courtney Kenny's admirable abolition of religious prosecutions. Orangemen and Roman Catholics are also preparing to demolish each other by means of this Act in their respective districts.

W. P. BALL.

(To be continued.)

#### TRIBUTE TO HENRY WARD BEECHER.

[The Beecher Memorial volume, which has been compiled and edited by Mr. Edward W. Bok, and of which a limited private edition has been printed, contains a remarkable series of tributes to the great preacher. Among the hundred contributors are Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, President Cleveland, Mr. Gladstone, Signor Salvini, the Duke of Argyll, Senator Sherman, General Sherman, the poet Whittier, Dr. Talmage, Canon Farrar, G. W. Childs, Dr. McGlynn, Henry George, Andrew Carnegie, Charles Dudley Warner, John Burroughs, Julia Ward Howe, Ristori, Miss Cleveland, Mrs. Garfield, and many other names of prominence. The following is Colonel Ingersoll's tribute:]

Henry Ward Beecher was born in a Puritan penitentiary, of which his father was one of the wardens—a prison with very narrow and closely-grated windows. Under its walls were the rayless, hopeless, and measureless dungeons of the damned, and on its roof fell the shadow of God's eternal frown. In this prison the creed and catechism were primers for children, and from a pure sense of duty their loving hearts were stained and scarred with the religion of John Calvin.

In those days the home of an orthodox minister was anquisition in which babes were tortured for the good of their souls. Children then, as now, rebelled against the infamous absurdities and cruelties of the creed. No Calvinist was ever able, unless with blows, to answer the questions of his child. Children were raised in what was called "the nurture and admonition of the Lord,"—that is to say, their wills were broken or subdued, their natures deformed and dwarfed, their desires defeated or destroyed, and their development arrested or perverted. Life was robbed of its spring, its summer, and its autumn. Children stepped from the cradle into the snow. No laughter, no sunshine, no joyous, free, unburdened days. God, an infinite detective, watched them from above, and Satan, with a malicious leer, was waiting for their souls below. Between these monsters life was passed. Infinite consequences were predicted of the smallest action, and a burden greater than a God could bear was placed upon the heart and

brain of every child. To think, to ask questions, to doubt, to investigate, were acts of rebellion. To express pity for the lost, writhing in the dungeons below, was simply to give evidence that the enemy of souls had been at work within their hearts.

Among all the religions of this world—from the creed of cannibals who devoured flesh, to that of Calvinists who polluted souls—there is none, there has been none, there will be none, more utterly heartless and inhuman than was the orthodox Congregationalism of New England in the year of grace 1813. It despised every natural joy, hated pictures, abhorred statues as lewd and lustful things, execrated music, regarded nature as fallen and corrupt, man as totally depraved, and woman as somewhat worse. The theatre was a vestibule of perdition, actors the servants of Satan, and Shakespeare a trifling wretch, whose words were seeds of death. And yet the virtues found a welcome, cordial and sincere; duty was done as understood; obligations were discharged; truth was told; self-denial was practised for the sake of others; and hearts were good and true in spite of book and creed.

In this atmosphere of theological miasma, in this hideous dream of superstition, in this penitentiary, moral and austere, this babe first saw the imprisoned gloom.

The natural desires ungratified, the laughter suppressed, the logic brow-beaten by authority, the humor frozen by fear—of many generations—were in this child, a child destined to rend and wreck the prison's walls.

Through the grated windows of his cell this child, this boy, this man, caught glimpses of the outer world, of fields and skies. New thoughts were in his brain, new hopes within his heart. Another heaven bent above his life. There came a revelation of the beautiful and real. Theology grew mean and small.

Nature wooed, and won, and saved this mighty soul.

Her countless hands were sowing seeds within his tropic brain. All sights and sounds—all colors, forms, and fragments—were stored within the treasury of his mind. His thoughts were moulded by the graceful curves of streams, by winding paths in woods, the charm of quiet country roads, and lanes grown indistinct with weeds and grass, by vines that cling and hide with leaf and flower the crumbling wall's decay, by cattle standing in the summer pools like statues of content.

There was within his words the subtle spirit of the season's change, of everything that is, of everything that lies between the slumbering seeds, that, half-awakened by the April rain, have dreams of heaven's blue, and feel the amorous kisses of the sun, and that strange tomb wherein the alchemist doth give to death's cold dust the throb and thrill of life again.

He saw with loving eyes the willows of the meadow streams grow red beneath the glance of spring, the grass along the marsh's edge, the stir of life beneath the withered leaves, the moss below the drift of snow, the flowers that give their bosoms to the first south wind that wows, the sad and timid violets that only bear the gaze of love from eyes half closed, the ferns, where fancy gives a thousand forms with but a single plan, the green and sunny slopes enriched with daisy's silver and the cowslip's gold.

As in the leafless woods some tree aflame with life stands like a rapt poet in the heedless crowd, so stood this man among his fellow-men.

All there is of leaf and bud, of flower and fruit, of painted insect life, and all the winged and happy children of the air that summer holds beneath her dome of blue, were known and loved by him.

He loved the yellow autumn fields, the golden stacks, the happy homes of men, the orchard's bending boughs, the sumach's flags of flame, the maples with transfigured leaves, the tender yellow of the beech, the wondrous harmonies of brown and gold, the vines where hang the clustered spheres of wit and mirth. He loved the winter days, the whirl and drift of snow, all forms of frost, the rage and fury of the storm, when in the forest, desolate and stripped, the brave old pine towers green and grand, a prophecy of spring. He heard the rhythmic sound of nature's busy strife, the hum of bees, the songs of birds, the eagle's cry, the murmur of the streams, the sighs and lamentations of the winds, and all the voices of the sea. He loved the shores, the vales, the crags and cliffs, the city's busy streets, the introspective, silent plain, the solemn splendors of the night, the silver sea of dawn, and evening's clouds of molten gold.

The love of nature freed this loving man.

One by one the fetters fell; the gratings disappeared, the sunshine smote the roof, and on the floors of stone light streamed from open doors. He realised the darkness and despair, the cruelty and hate, the starless blackness of the old malignant creed. The flower of pity grew and blossomed in his heart. The selfish "consolation" filled his eyes with tears. He saw that what is called the Christian's hope is that, among the countless billions wrecked and lost, a meagre few perhaps may reach the eternal shore, a hope that, like the desert rain, gives neither leaf nor bud, a hope that gives no joy, no peace, to any great and loving soul. It is the dust on which the serpent feeds that coils in heartless breasts.

(To be concluded.)

## REVIEWS.

*Our Public Expenditure.* By LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL. Routledge and Sons (1d).—A report (31 pp.) of the Wolverhampton speech, and really worth reading. Now that the Marlborough pension is commuted, his lordship seems in earnest about economy. If all he says be true, it is high time some attempt were made to sweep out the Augean stable of our army and navy service.

*The Radical,* Edited by GEO. STANDING. The July Number opens with an account of Mr. Bradlaugh's Parliamentary career, by the editor, which will be interesting to Mr. Bradlaugh's many admirers. Mr. E. T. Craig, the veteran social reformer who in the current number of *Progress* calls attention to some misstatements of Mr. Holyoake in regard to the early history of Co-operation, continues the subject in the *Radical*. He calls special attention to the unrecorded services of Robert Cooper, who, we believe, received a legacy Mr. Holyoake expected to drop into, and whose services and talents we are glad to find are not yet forgotten.



### PROFANE JOKES.

A FRENCH priest was asked if he knew what difference there was between a priest and an ass, and upon answering in the negative, he was told that the only difference was that the priest carried the cross on his breast and the ass carried it on his back.

A MERCHANT on his death-bed sent for a Free Church clergyman. Having some fears regarding his future prospects, he asked the reverend gentleman, "Do you think if I were to leave £10,000 to the Free Kirk that my soul would be saved?" "Well," answered the cautious minister, "I couldn't just promise you that, but I think the experiment worth trying."

"YOURS is a very dangerous occupation," said the philanthropist to the policeman. "Yes," replied the policeman, carelessly. "Officers are sometimes killed while in the discharge of their duty," continued the philanthropist. "Yaas," yawned the policeman. "You're not afraid of death, then?" "Certainly not. Our minister says death is only a sleep, and I ain't afraid of sleep."

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

"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."—Secular Review.

"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."—Our Corner.

"This excellent work..... Many valuable thoughts on the subject."—Truthseeker (New York).

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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

### BIBLE SAINTS.

By Arthur B. Moss.

Parts I., II., and III.

Drama, Comedy and Farce in one.

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