

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 209.



THE WALKING VOICE.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.—GENESIS II., 8.

## LIBELS ON THOMAS PAINE.

SINCE Bishop Watson tried his hand at the job there has been no serious attempt to reply to Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. Instead of answering the great sceptic, the Christians have adopted the policy of defamation. They have thought that if they could blacken the personal character of the author they would destroy the influence of his book. For eighty years they have persevered on these lines, but with an utter absence of success. Sunday-school children and pious ninnies of both sexes are doubtless imbued with the notion that Thomas Paine was one of the greatest scoundrels that ever lived. Yet there has always been a wide demand for his theological writings, and their influence over those who read them soon gets the better of the idle stories that prejudiced them against him. His arguments produce their proper effect, his wit gives natural pleasure, and his manliness and candor induce a respect for him as a man. So long as Thomas Paine is read, his fame will always triumph over the dastardly arts of his traducers.

Among these traducers we are sorry to place the Manchester Quakers, who are circulating a four-paged tract entitled "Extracts from the Life of Thomas Paine." This is about the most infamous concoction we ever saw. The writer's name is not given, but it pretends to be the com-

position of one of Paine's contemporaries. The style is a Quaker's. It is full of "thou's" and "thee's," and June is called the "Sixth Month." Now we ask the Manchester Quakers to summon up whatever honesty they still may possess, and tell us the name of the Quaker who penned this libel. At present they impudently put an anonymous witness *under* the box, where he invisibly endeavors to rob a man of his character. We demand that the witness be shown to the Court. Let the counsel for the prosecution tell us who he is and where he comes from, and submit him to cross-examination.

Why are the Quakers, above all Christians, so anxious to defame Thomas Paine in this subterranean manner? The great sceptic was brought up as a Quaker, he always professed respect for that body, and it was his wish to be buried in their little cemetery at New York. Their bigotry however refused him the indulgence; and perhaps the Quakers libel him still, in proof that we always hate those whom we have injured.

Fortunately the lies in this Quaker tract are easily exposed. There is some loose language about a "wretched woman who accompanied him from France," and whom he left to starve "in a miserable garret in New York." Now, who was this "wretched woman"? Of course, it was Madame Bonneville. And what were her relations to Paine? When Bonaparte overthrew the Republic,

Monsieur Bonneville had to hide for his life. He was a Paris bookseller, who had shown Paine much kindness, and had once harbored him at considerable risk. With noble gratitude, Paine befriended the desolate family. Madame Bonneville and the children sailed for America, where Monsieur Bonneville afterwards joined them. The pious enemies of Thomas Paine pretended that there was "something wrong" between him and Madame Bonneville; in short, they said that he had committed adultery with her. The high-hearted sceptic disdained to notice the slander, but Madame Bonneville brought an action for libel against the chief culprit, and obtained a verdict and damages. The defendant was Cheetham. This fellow revenged himself by publishing a libellous life of Paine after his decease, and from this precious book the disciples of the religion of charity and good-will towards men have drawn freely in their efforts to vilify a conspicuous opponent of their faith. Madame Bonneville, who survived her husband, was one of Paine's three executors, and a legatee in his will. Yet the Quaker tract calls her a "wretched woman," and pretends that Paine left her in misery and destitution.

Then we are introduced to "a respectable female," to whom Paine exclaimed shortly before his death, "If ever the Devil had an agent upon earth, I have been one." The name of this "respectable female" is of course withheld. She was no other than Mary Roscoe, afterwards Mrs. Mary Hinsdale, at that time in the service of Mr. Willet Hicks, a Quaker gentleman who frequently visited Paine in his last illness and sent him many little delicacies. Mr. Willet Hicks positively declared, and his daughters corroborated him, that Mary Roscoe had never entered Paine's house. Her age was—really it is too ridiculous—only eleven. Fancy an educated, brilliant old gentleman like Thomas Paine, whose fame was world-wide, who had enjoyed the friendship of Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Burke, Pitt, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Danton, and General Bonaparte, confiding in this way to a little servant-girl what he scrupulously concealed from all his Christian and sceptical friends. But the best of the joke remains. William Cobbett, intending to write a life of Paine, interviewed Mrs. Hinsdale and questioned her closely. She shuffled, evaded, equivocated, and finally said, "I tell thee that I have no recollection of any person or thing that I saw at Thomas Paine's house." The woman bore a great reputation as a liar among the Quakers, though some of them believed what she said about Paine, on the ground that she might have spoken the truth when she was younger.

On the very next page of this Quaker tract, the "respectable female" is flatly contradicted by the testimony of Dr. Manley, who distinctly declares that Thomas Paine's last words were that he had no wish to believe in Jesus Christ. It is added that the dying sceptic used to cry in his paroxysms of pain "O Lord" and "O Christ!" Well, if these exclamations prove belief, we are as orthodox as Judge North. When Vanini saw the stake at which he was to be burnt for Atheism, he cried "O God!" A bystander said, "You believe in God then?" "No," he retorted, "it's a fashion of speaking." An argument founded on such exclamations is the height of absurdity. We might as well argue that Christians are really Pagans because they frequently exclaim, "By Jove!"

We are puzzled to know what is meant by Paine's "cruel treatment of an excellent wife." This is a fresh libel, and a clumsy one to boot. We invite the Manchester Quakers to be a little more explicit. Neither personally nor by counsel can a man refute general charges of cruelty to his wife. Specific cruelties must be alleged at definite times and places. Nor does it suffice to deplore Paine's "want of common veracity." What particular lie ever came from his lips?

We conclude with an extract from Walt Whitman's tribute to Thomas Paine:—

"Of the foul and foolish fictions yet told about the circumstances of his decease, the absolute fact is that, as he lived a good life after its kind, he died calmly, philosophically, as became him. He served the embryo Union with the most precious service, a service that every man, woman, and child in the thirty-eight States is to some extent receiving the benefit of to-day, and I for one here cheerfully and reverently throw one pebble on the cairn of his memory."

Walt Whitman's panegyric will outlast the Quaker libel.

G. W. FOOTE.

## A CHINESE SECULARIST.

CONFUCIUS stands alone among the ancient great teachers by his inculcation of morality apart from any admixture of mystery or superstition. He was born B.C. 551 in the province of Loo, now called Shan-tung. His parents were of good family, but poor, and the untimely death of his father early subjected him to the discipline of toil. His mother was left with nine daughters and another son, a cripple, to keep as well as himself. He tells us himself, "At fifteen I had my mind bent on learning." He was devotedly attached to his mother; and, when she died, gave up a state office which he held to mourn her. At the age of nineteen he married, and in the following year his only son, Le, was born. He subsequently had two daughters. In his twenty-second year Confucius commenced his life-long labors as a teacher. We read "There were four things which the master taught—letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness." He was able to boast "I have never refused instruction to anyone." Becoming famous as a teacher he attracted the attention of the Duke of T'se, who wished to assign him a large revenue. This he refused, saying "A superior man will only receive reward for services which he has rendered." Not until his fiftieth year was he given charge of a city, where he immediately applied himself to the institution of reforms. He punished false dealing, suppressed licentiousness and brigandage and baronial ambition. Troops of dancing girls were sent as bribes to the Prince by those inconvenienced by these reforms. They were accepted and the sage retired. "I have seen none who prefer virtue to beauty," said he. For thirteen years he was an exile, and wandered from court to court, teaching his principles of peace, mutual duties, national unity, and self improvement. Looking earthwards to the last without hope and without fear, the sage expired in 478 B.C.

Confucius took no heed of religion. The welfare of the people, the right government of the State, and the prosperity of the empire were the great objects of his solicitude. Every one of his recorded utterances has direct bearing on the conduct of life. He was a moralist who neither appealed to supernatural sanctions nor to future rewards and punishments. Prayer has no place in his system, which, consequently, his missionary translator considers very defective. He did not call himself the way, the truth, and the life, or declare that all who came before him were thieves and robbers. He said: "I was not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there."<sup>1</sup> He avoided all references to the supernatural. His disciples record "The subjects on which the Master did not talk were prodigious things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings." The poor heathen, in his blindness, did not know anything of a personal God, or how he had passed condemnation upon the world for the sin of Adam, or that he would send his Son, the same God as himself, to redeem the guilty by being put to death by his peculiar people. He taught conduct instead of creed, and he anticipated Jesus in the enunciation of the "golden rule." He bases his system of morals on reason and investigation. "The superior man," he said, "is catholic and no partisan."<sup>2</sup> "He does not set his mind for anything or against anything; what is right he will follow."

"The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire, first ordered well their own states; wishing to order well their own states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their own families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things."<sup>3</sup>

Confucius objected to unreasoning acquiescence in anything. He complained of one disciple "Hwuy gives me no assistance. There is nothing I say in which he does not delight."<sup>4</sup> He objected to pretences of knowledge. "When you know a thing to hold that you know it, and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it—this is knowledge."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lun-Yu ii., 5. <sup>2</sup> *Ibid* vii., 24. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid* vii., 19. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid* ii., 14.

<sup>5</sup> Ta Hio chap. iv. <sup>6</sup> Lun-Yu x., 13. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid* ii., 17.

For any adequate conception of the work of the Chinese sage it is necessary to understand somewhat of the state of China previously to his time. Unfortunately for English readers, Dr. Legge, the missionary, who has done most to make Confucius known, has much obscured the religious side of the question by his manifest theological bias. Holding the orthodox dogma of a primitive state of original perfection, and the subsequent fall and degeneracy of mankind, he believes that the earliest faith in China was a pure monotheism, which subsequently relapsed into the worship of ancestral and other spirits. We venture to say there is no instance of such an order of religious evolution. In the case of China the theory is especially preposterous, for the aversion to change which distinguishes that people renders it improbable that if in the habit of worshipping one god they would ever have relinquished it, without its making a decided mark upon their history and literature, which, on the contrary, show that ancestor worship has descended from the times before tradition. Dr. Legge appeals to the conception implied in the words *Tien*, the great one, translated Heaven, and *Shang-ti*, the supreme ruler, but it is doubtful if the first meant anything more than the sky, while *Shang-ti* properly expressed the head ancestral spirit. It is noticeable that this monotheistic worship, as it is called is now, and has been through the entire historic period confined to the imperial family, while the masses find their religion in the ceremonials of ancestor worship.

Now Confucius only mentions *Shang-ti* once, and that in a way which implied that he considered it represented the ancestors of the kings. He sometimes spoke of *Tien*, but not as a personal deity. Thus he asks "Does Heaven speak?" He speaks of the sage as the equal of Heaven. He is said to have sacrificed to his own ancestors, but he was reticent upon this as upon all spiritual subjects. Upon one occasion a disciple asked him concerning the service of the spirits of the dead, the common religion of the time. His answer was the broadly secular one: "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" The disciple added: "I venture to ask about death." He was answered: "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"<sup>8</sup> The mind of Confucius was evidently wrapt up in this earth, and he looked upon all other subjects as obscure and unprofitable. He did not pretend to know the relations between man and God, but he taught the reciprocal duties between man and man. Chary of attacking the traditions of the past, in his own eye he was a restorer, not a revolutionist. He describes himself as "a transmitter, not a maker." All the more stress, then, must be laid on the fact that in editing the sacred classics of China he discarded passages most strongly tinged with supernaturalism. It is a most noteworthy fact that, while the religions of Taoism and Buddhism degenerated into vulgar superstitions, the secular teaching of Confucius has remained the doctrine of the enlightened and ruling classes in China. For over twenty centuries all that is worthy in Chinese life has traced its inspiration to a teacher who utterly discarded theology from his system. Surely this is worth considering by those who tell us that morality is dependent upon religion.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

God has been killing a large number of people in the United States with intense heat. The temperature in some of the towns has been over 100° and in one case it reached 107°. Forty-two sudden deaths from the heat have occurred at Philadelphia alone. The majority of those whom God thus kills are children under five. What have they done to offend him that he should thus slay them with sunstroke? Why don't he pick out the big rogues and hypocrites and favor them with his judgments instead of innocent children?

THE Lord is making up for the excessive heat in America by incessant rain, which is doing much damage to the crops in the Eastern states. Tremendous floods are devastating some parts. In the neighborhood of Great Barrington twenty-five bridges and many dams and factories have been destroyed.

HE has also sent thunderstorms, which have caused widespread damage. A tornado at Wanca, in Wisconsin has wrecked the church as well as the theatres and many houses. At Buenos Ayres a hurricane has washed a number of vessels ashore. God don't manage the weather as well as he might.

<sup>8</sup> Lun-Yu xi, 11.

IN Mexico he has destroyed the town of Bacariac by an earthquake which has laid it in ruins—"For his mercy endureth for ever."

A MAN applied to the judge at Lambeth Police Court for advice the other day. He had had the banns of marriage put up at a church in the district, and the clergyman asked if he had been baptised. On being told that he had not been christened, the clergyman refused to perform the ceremony. The judge advised the applicant to write to the bishop. It was only a few weeks ago that another clergyman took the keys of the safe away with him, so that a couple who were married in the church had to send for a blacksmith to break open the safe containing the register.

A ROMAN Catholic Missionary Archbishop in Alaska has been murdered by a brother missionary, who had become mentally deranged. God ought to be more economical of his missionaries. He wastes two of them while the world at large is still unconverted.

THE Rev. John Dickson, of St. Ninian's Free Church, Leith, is one of the good old school of Sabbatarians. In denouncing the Sunday sailings to Aberdour and Burnt Island from the port he took occasion to refer to the Tay disaster as a result of Sabbath breaking. The reverend gentleman performed a theological war dance on the editors of newspapers who countenanced this profanity. Everybody he said, knew that members of the free-thought and infidel school wrote articles for the daily press. Worst of all, as displaying the influence of Freethought, Mr. Dickson complained that "its cunning emissaries took advantage of the large crowds that gathered on the West Pier on Sunday to disseminate their literature." We wonder the West Pier does not subside and submerge them.

JOHN ANDERSON, the young man who stabbed a man in the streets of Liverpool in revenge for some injury, is described as "a frequent attendant at the Salvation Army services at the Hardman Street Barracks, and also at the Alwyn's Hall services in Lime Street, and at Bible meetings in connection with St. Luke's parish."

AN epidemic of hysteria has broken out at Agosta, in the province of Rome. The country people believe that the district is under the immediate government of the Evil One, and before retiring to rest they carefully place on the threshold the broom and the salt, which are credited with the power of keeping off evil spirits. The young women shriek and go into convulsions. This form of hysteria is well known to medical science. It is contagious, and has been the source of the phenomena of religious revivals and of the strange actions of the Convulsionists. Detachments of soldiers have been sent to Agosta by the authorities to quiet the apprehensions of the people. Ignorance and superstition always favor outbreaks of nervous disorder of this kind. The religion of the Middle Ages and of early Christianity consisted largely of such manifestations of the power of the Spirit.

THE London *Chronicle* reports a curious outbreak of superstition in Spain. A crazy woman at Torrox gave out that the Virgin Mary had appeared to her, and told her to preach a new gospel for the salvation of mankind, as the end of the world was at hand. The woman's story was believed, and the whole village was soon in a state of frenzy. Like the primitive Christians, they went in at once for community of goods. Finally they burnt their valuables and clothes in a big fire, round which they all danced in a state of nudity. The gendarmerie arrived just in time to prevent the parents from flinging their children into the flames. Such are the effects of a thoroughgoing belief in Christianity. Revivals of religion are usually survivals of savage fanaticism and superstition.

A BILLET in a City church is a nice sinecure. The living of St. Martin's, Ludgate, is £570, and it is to have the benefice of St. Mary Magdalen, Old Fisk Street, attached to it. The rector has one service on Sunday morning, and that is but scantily attended. On Sunday afternoon they open the church to see if any one comes, but soon shut it again.

MR. T. S. DIXON, writing to the *Church Times*, says of this church: "Passing one Sunday afternoon, I went into the church, and was looking at the arrangements of the altar (?) when a pew-opener informed me that I must not walk about the church, but take a seat. I paid little heed to her at first, so she peremptorily informed me I must either leave the church or be seated. Then I asked her when the service would commence. At this she stood perfectly aghast. 'Did I mean to stay to service?' 'Well, I thought so.' 'She did not think there would be a service, unless two or three more came in.' By this time three o'clock struck, and I was told I must go, the doors would be locked, and so they were within three minutes."

ON the following Sunday Mr. Dixon went and saw the rector, who remarked "that it was useless having a service as there was not a single parishioner in attendance. Remarking that it was singular that not a man, woman, girl, or boy in the parish could

be induced to attend, I suggested that if he opened the church in the evening instead of the afternoon, his parishioners might attend. He replied he was not going to do that; the service always had been in the afternoon, and he should not alter it."

WHAT a rumpus the pious Tories made about Dr. Tanner's big, big D. Had they been Freethinkers we could have understood their objection to foul language, but how believers in the Bible could be shocked at it is beyond our comprehension. To say nothing of the frightful curses scattered over the Blessed Book, did not Jesus Christ say, Believe or be damned? Yet Christ is the "great exemplar," and if he damns us it seems reasonable that we should damn each other. Or perhaps we should damn *him*.

THE Rev. D. Wheeler, a secretary of the Church Pastoral Aid Society, lost his life by falling into a crevasse on the Monteratsch Glacier. We are sorry for the poor man, but parsons should never ascend mountains, for the Lord is generally in a bad mood there, witness the story of Mount Sinai. It was also up a hill that the Lord seems to have polished off first Aaron and then Moses.

UNLESS the papers lie, the Ilkeston magistrates ordered a boy of seven to be beaten by a policeman and the punishment was inflicted with such brutality that the poor child's life was endangered. Both the magistrates and the police of Ilkeston are doubtless Christians, and we suggest that they should take a motto from the New Testament. "Suffer little children to come unto me," would do capitally.

THE Rev. Joseph Hargreaves, of Stanhope Street, London, has committed suicide at an hotel in Glasgow by cutting his throat. Talmage is right. Those Atheists are always destroying themselves.

THE Rev. Isaac Courts, a Baptist minister, fell dead on Sunday through running to catch a train. Why don't the Lord look after his own? Was he angry because the minister was breaking the Sabbath by running as well as by encouraging railway work on the Sunday?

FRESH reports reach us of the unprintable scurrilities of Edward Poulson, Christian Evidence lecturer. Last Sunday morning he lectured at Bethnal Green a few yards from Mr. Moss, and if we are correctly informed as to what he said it is a great wonder that some of his own audience did not howl him from the place. We cannot soil our pages by giving samples of this wretched fellow's Billingsgate. We understand that he has no official connection with the Christian Evidence Society, but he lectures at their stands and his name appears on their bills. Mr. Engstrom has been repeatedly informed of the disgusting language of persons who speak from the Society's open-air platforms, but he has never taken the slightest effectual step to abate the nuisance. We do not suppose the subscribers to the Christian Evidence Society are very full of charity to Freethinkers, but we suspect there are some of them who would transfer their subscriptions to some other association if they could only listen for five minutes to the disgusting language of preachers like Poulson, with whom Mr. Engstrom is not ashamed to associate, and whom he virtually countenances in their filthiness.

AN Islington Christian, who would not buy such a wicked paper as the *Freethinker* for the world, but has read a copy which was lent him by a friend, is terribly shocked at Mr. Symes's verses which we published last week. He prophesies that Joseph Symes will catch it hot in hell. Meanwhile he informs all Freethinkers that with God there are no vermin, that what he has sent we should not rebel against, and that all things are links in the chain of his beneficence. The indignant Christian is so moved by the Spirit that he winds up with a bit of verse as follows:

"Rats and mice, and bugs and fleas,  
Wasps and hornets, gnats and bees,—  
If they do bite; well, what then?  
I'll praise my God and say Amen."

THIS pious Christian seems quite in love with parasites. He would have been quite at home in Egypt during the third plague. Would it be too severe to hope that the Lord will give him plentiful occasion to say Amen?

THE Rev. Frederick Clarke was charged at Hampstead Police Court with obtaining money under false pretences. He collects money for an alleged church which he varyingly represents as at Stratford, Dalston, and Harlesden. Prisoner was remanded, bail being refused.

THE case of the Rev. John McAllister, who is charged with a similar offence, is still proceeding. The Under Secretary of State of War was put in the witness-box and proved that on the solicitation of the defendant various contributions had been obtained from the War Office. The case was again adjourned, bail in £1,000 being taken as before for the defendant's appearance.

THE Wesleyan Methodist Conference being held at Manchester now that the Exhibition and other attractions are on, was very

largely attended. A resolution proposed by the Rev. W. L. Watkinson was carried, declaring that while reciprocating the brotherly feeling expressed in recent resolutions of the New Methodist Connection, "any attempt to promote organic union is not at present desirable." The auxiliary fund was found to be £1,200 short, and general orders were given to rake in the shekels.

ANOTHER conference on Christian re-union has been held at Wilcocke Rooms, Lambeth Palace Road, under the presidency of the Rev. F. G. Lee, vicar of All Saints' Lambeth. Most of the few who attended were of the Romanist section of the Church of England, and a resolution was passed declaring that "in the face of advancing infidelity this meeting pledges itself to do all that is lawful to secure the return of our country to the perfect obedience of the one true Christian faith through the restoration of visible Catholic unity." The unity of Catholicism, however, has never been visible save to eyesights obscured by the spectacles of faith.

PROFESSOR TYNDALL has the smallest respect for Gladstone's excursions in theology. He says the Liberal leader has wasted a lot of time in playing with the gods of Olympus. We should like to hear his frank opinion of Gladstone's defence of Genesis as a piece of scientific inspiration.

AN article on the Book of Ezekiel, in the English *Truthseeker*, evidently from the pen of its editor, the Rev. John Page Hopps, remarks that the Old Testament is full of the records of spirit voices and spirit messages, which the authors mistakenly ascribed to God. Ezekiel was a spirit medium and trance speaker. He adds: "The case of Ezekiel does not stand alone, though it is a conspicuous one. The Bible is full of records of spirit intercourse—even to the calling up of the so-called dead, as in the case of Samuel and the witch of Endor. The attempts to put down witchcraft were simply attempts to put down irregular and perhaps obnoxious spirit-intercourse; but the attempts to put it down proved that it was believed to exist. When the boy Samuel heard the voice, it was not regarded as anything very wonderful; but it was taken at once as the voice of the Lord. Perhaps if the voice had spoken elsewhere, and outside of the recognised sphere of spirit-intercourse, it would have been denounced as demoniacal." No doubt it is true the Bible is full of spiritism, but this is only to say that it reflects the ignorant credulity and superstition of the past.

AN American Commission, appointed to examine into stories of ghosts and materialised spirits, express their regret and disappointment at not having been able to procure trustworthy evidence on the subject. We do not understand what there is to regret or to be disappointed about.

THE *Rock* is trying to grow lively. It mentions the case of an old verger at one of the Universities who remarked, "I have listened for fifty years to University sermons and yet I am a Christian!"

It also mentions a "neat answer" given to a clergyman who, although not a Ritualist, had ventured to preach in a Ritualistic church. He defended himself as having only preached the true doctrine just as he would elsewhere. "Perhaps so," replies the faithful critic, "but it seems to me rather like eating your beef-stakes off a dirty plate." For a Christian to compare another sort of Christianity to a "dirty plate" is a "neat answer." This is how they respect each other.

AN account of the conversion of an anonymous Atheist given in the *Christian Herald* attributes the conversion (if it ever occurred) to something like the right motive. The converted Atheist, speaking at a Christian meeting, says: "When Mr. G. called at our house that cold winter's morning, when we had no food in the house and not a penny to get any with, and all my children were crying for bread, the sight of a minister with a loaf of bread under his arm for me gave the death-blow to my infidelity." The loaves and fishes have been one of the most powerful arguments of Christianity. But what is the worth of a conversion thus obtained? A kindly Mohammedan would similarly have converted the starving man to Mohammedanism or a benevolent Buddhist to Buddhism. If Christianity is true because there are benevolent or artful Christians, then Atheism must equally be true because there is a Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

THE curate of a South London church, whose pronunciation is somewhat peculiar, has been in the habit of alluding to the Heir-apparent as though his name was written "Awlburt Edward." One of the parishioners asked him the other day why he so significantly excluded the Prince of Wales in his prayer for the Royal Family. "Exclude him?" inquired the curate, quite surprised, "what do you mean?" "Why," he replied, "you always pray for *all but* Edward, Prince of Wales."

THE vicar of Stratford Avon, says he distinguishes between Dissenters and Dissent. He feels an affectionate esteem for the former, but the latter he regards as "an offence against the mind of Christ."

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

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

Sunday, July 31, Camberwell Green at 11.15; Secular Hall, 61 Church Road, Camberwell Road at 7.

August 7, Westminster Branch; August 14, Bethnal Green Branch.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

AUGUST 7 and 14, Hall of Science, London.

## 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. M. S., D. C., W. Schweizer.

H. CONWAY.—Papers that answer all sorts of questions cannot be always accurate. You were misinformed by the editor of *Reynolds'*. When he says that Darwin was buried at Buckingham, he probably means Bockenham. That is where Darwin died, but he was buried in Westminster Abbey, as you may see for yourself by visiting the place.

G. NAEWIGER.—Shall appear.

HENRY PORTER wishes to thank A. J. H. B. and others who sent him back numbers of the *Freethinker* for distribution.

J. UPSHORN, Honorary Secretary of the Madras Secular Society, writes that his committee will take fifty copies as a first order if we will issue a work on the crimes and follies of the popes, as Roman Catholics, who seem to be energetic in India, care little for attacks on the Bible. Our correspondent will find a great deal of what he desires in the first volume of *Crimes of Christianity*, and more as the work proceeds.

E. R. writes: "I have been reading the *Freethinker* the last three weeks, and feel very interested in it. No one can deny the force of your arguments. The Bible has been a puzzle to me for many years. 'Tis hard to shake off a faith one has been trained in for forty years, but the Christians have disgusted me with their tyranny. Will you kindly tell me what you think of a Creator or Ruler of the universe, or which of your works touch on death or a hereafter?" We have issued no work on the subject of a future life since our reply to Thomas Cooper, which has long been out of print. Mr. Bradlaugh has a pamphlet on *Has Man a Soul?* With respect to a Creator, we have no knowledge that the universe ever was created, and until we have it is absurd to speculate on who transacted the business. To our mind, the talk about a Creator and Ruler of the universe only shows that men retain the childish habit of thinking the external world is exactly like their own internal world, though on a bigger scale.

A. THOMAS.—Glad to see the Camberwell Branch is displaying so much activity.

J. K. S.—We can't do anything more. Probably the reverend scamp will get off scot free.

J. S.—*Progress* and the *Freethinker* do similar work in different ways. A mixture of both, or something between the two, would serve neither purpose.

H. ROBERTS.—The reverend gentleman is quite wrong. Both hospitals and asylums preceded Christianity. We shall publish an article on the subject shortly.

R. FOX.—Glad to hear Mr. Moss had a capital audience and a great success at Mildmay Grove. Sorry we have no evening left to spare. There are no religious words of any kind used in the marriage ceremony at the registrar's office.

ENQUIRER.—(1) The clergyman's estimate of Ingersoll was taken from the New York *Truthseeker*. (2) The facts about Stanley and the missionaries were given in the *Daily News*. (3) Lassen, St. Hilaire and Childers give the date of Buddha's death as B.C. 543; Max Müller thinks 477; General Cunningham, 478; Köppen, 480 to 460; T. W. R. Davids, 412. All are agreed that Buddhist missionaries spread abroad about B.C. 250.

E. M.—Pleased to read how you tackled the open-air preacher who pretended to have been a sceptic and had been nothing of the kind. Freethinkers would do well to bring such gentry to book more frequently.

W. D. B.—They are two Herods. According to the chronology of Josephus, Herod the Great died four years B.C., which clearly shows the story of the massacre of the children is a myth.

THIEDIMEUS.—Why try to improve on Ingersoll? Better leave it alone.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Echo—Hampshire Independent—South Wales Daily News—Daily Chronicle—Ironclad Age—Western Figaro—Lucifer—Thinker—Jus—Chat—Edinburgh Evening News—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Freidenker—Menschonthum—Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt—La Semaine Anticléricale—Liberator—Huddersfield Examiner—Portsmouth Evening News—Woolwich Gazette.

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.

MR. FOOTE had a tremendous audience at Columbia Road on Sunday morning, and many auditors at the neighboring doors and windows. Everything went off quietly till towards the end, when the Christian meeting was over and the rougher section of the orthodox crew came over to interrupt. Some of them looked

as savage as possible. When the discussion was over the thoroughfare was completely blocked. "We'll see you through, sir," said a sturdy knot of Freethinkers. "Oh, never mind," said Mr. Foote, "barkers seldom bite; and I'm in a great hurry." So he pushed through alone, the crowd parting asunder like the waters of the Red Sea. The Christians howled and looked daggers, but Mr. Foote only laughed and lifted his hat. Half a dozen followed him a few yards, but they soon dropped off. Perhaps they remembered the public-houses were open.

IN the evening Mr. Foote gave another open-air lecture at Battersea Park gates. The usual space was monopolised by the Salvationists, who had a brass band, and made the thing sound like a village fair. So the Secular platform had to be shifted across the road under the railway. Very soon a fine audience gathered, growing bigger and bigger as the lecture proceeded. Mr. Burns, the Socialist, took part in the discussion, and spoke very well indeed, but he was mostly with the lecturer. The only Christian opponent was a poor old gentleman named Jones, who wandered and maundered, and wore out the patience of the meeting. Finally he had to be silenced. "Ah," he said, "I suppose I'd better get down; I'm in the lion's den," at which the audience laughed consumedly. "Yes," said Mr. Foote, "you're in the lion's den, but the lion is civilised."

WE think we can recommend the August number of *Progress*, which is now ready, to all our readers. Mr. Foote furnishes a translation from Dr. Letourneau's *Evolution de la Morale*, dealing with the influence of religion on Morality. It is very outspoken and remarkable as coming from a scientist of European celebrity. Mr. Wheeler writes on the "Golden Rule," tracing its origin and development in his usual scholarly style. New blood is represented by an able and startling article on the Antiquity of the Christian Church; the writer being the author of that very able work, *Antiqua Mater*, which we recently reviewed. Mr. Leatham defends his Socialism against Mr. Ball, who rejoins in the same number. There is also a fresh poem by the late James Thomson, and a further instalment of Freethought Biographies, as well as a criticism of the *Quarterly Review's* reply to Mr. Cotter Morison.

THE first volume of *Crimes of Christianity*, which has been completely revised and in the larger part re-written, is now ready. The work is the result of wide reading and careful study on the part of both authors, who have done their best to make it a solid and permanent historical indictment of the Christian religion. The book is well bound and well printed on good paper and is, we trust, worthy of the cause it is designed to support.

THE *Thinker* of Madras, the organ of the Madras Secular Society, continues its good policy of reprinting from the English Freethought journals. The number before us contains portions of the discussion between Mrs. Besant and the Rev. G. F. H. Rowe, Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Early Religion," and Mr. Foote's on "Black Congresses."

HENRY LABOUCHERE does not remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Last Sunday he had an open-air performance of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream* in the grounds of his villa at Twickenham. Mr. G. A. Sala played Bottom, and several popular actresses filled the female parts. Yet some people say that "Labby" is the "Christian" member for Northampton.

REFERRING to this performance, the London correspondent of the *Leeds Mercury* says: "A good deal of feeling has been caused by its production on a Sunday. Mr. Labouchere might have found another day for his open-air theatricals. It is doubtful if Mr. Bradlaugh would have done anything so much fitted to affront the religious sentiment of the country." Oh dear, oh dear! But isn't that rather rough on Mr. Bradlaugh? What right has this correspondent to stand sponsor for "Iconoclast's" tenderness towards orthodoxy?

MR. B. BOSANQUET sends to the *Pall Mall Gazette* a few selections from some recently published letters of the German philosopher Hegel. The following passage will interest our readers: "Religion and politics have hitherto played one another's game; religion has taught what despotism chose—the inborn degradation of human nature, and its incapacity for any good in its own right. But when man is recognised in his true divine character, the halo round the heads of the oppressors and gods of this world must fade away."

THE Rev. F. Berguar, of St. Philip's, Arlington Square, Islington, has been interviewed by Mr. G. Standing about the course of lectures to be delivered in his church against "infidelity." The result is that the reverend gentleman, who seems a *rara avis*, agrees to let his schoolroom be used in October for a series of Freethought lectures in reply, with discussion afterwards. The age of miracles is *not* past.

IN his native town of Rouen a statue has been erected to Armand Carrel, the French Republican journalist whom Saint Beuve called the French Junius. Carrel was not only a Republican but a Freethinker. He fell in a duel with Emile de Girardin but cried out that he would have no priest to attend him.

## REPEALING THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

(Continued from p. 239.)

*John Straight*, a Freethinker, was tried yesterday for cruelly wounding the religious feelings of Melchisedec Godliman by publicly reading aloud certain passages of the most horrible description from a work called the *Mistakes of Moses*, and commenting on the same. Prisoner's protest against the composition of the jury and his demand for a "fair" jury composed half of Freethinkers and half of Christians, were treated with the contempt that such impudent frivolity naturally deserved. Godliman deposed that prisoner said that the religion of Moses and Joshua included robbery and murder on the grandest scale, besides slavery, polygamy, and many other striking cruelties and immoralities. It was true of course that God ordered the Jews to kill all the Caananites, but then God had the right to do as he liked with his own and to make what laws he pleased. To hear actions commanded by God publicly stigmatised as if they were crimes or blunders was inexpressibly agonising. It struck him to the very soul. It hurt his religious feelings in the very tenderest spot of all. Only monsters in human shape he thought could speak of God's actions and words in other language than that of praise and grateful docility.

The prosecuting counsel appealed to the "Christian jury" as he termed them, to protect Christian feeling from such outrages. The jury found Straight guilty, and Judge East sentenced him to twelve months' imprisonment for calling murder murder—such shocking methods of speech being intolerably offensive to the religious feeling of believers.

I presume there is no need to dilate upon the various cases given, which certainly stand good in principle, however faulty they may have been so far as legal technicalities or methods of procedure are concerned. Summing up, I object to the penal clause of the proposed Bill for Abolishing Religious Prosecutions, (1) because it enacts the very opposite of abolition, (2) because it is unnecessary, (3) because it is severe and tyrannical and is capable of the grossest abuse through the violence of religious passions, (4) because it is in restraint of free speech and free criticism, (5) because it protects deadly superstition, fraud and folly, from outspoken attacks, (6) because, as the one great fault underlying all the rest, it is thoroughly unjust and one-sided. It begs the whole question in favor of superstition, instead of leaving superstition and reason to grapple together on equal terms. It guards feelings on one side of a great controversy and leaves those who take the other side at the mercy of the majority. What would be said of a Bill protecting Tory feelings while leaving Liberal feelings open to the grossest attacks from the protected Tories? The assumption that Freethinkers have no feelings to be shocked or outraged by religious horrors and imbecilities while the upholders of those cruel and mischievous falsehoods must be legally shielded from the annoyance and pain of contradiction, exposure and ridicule, is simply the respectable remains of the cruel and asinine bigotry of the Middle Ages. Christians think nothing of hurting the feelings of Freethinkers. They regard this as the natural order of things. They feel that it serves us right and that we are used to it, like the eels are to being skinned. See how scornfully a Christian will laugh at the preposterous suggestion, as he will deem it, that it is we Freethinkers, the legally oppressed minority, who have the greatest need of legal protection for our feelings. But we who need it most do not advance any such claim. The protection we seek—and that our Christian persecutors still deny—is protection of our liberty, of our property, of our personal rights. Christians rob us of our money in tithes and Church rates, they robbed Mrs. Besant of her child, they robbed Mr. Bradlaugh of his seat in Parliament for year, they robbed Mr. Foote of a year of his life, and they still want to retain the power of imprisoning us if we hurt *their* feelings, without giving us the slightest power of imprisoning *them* in return if they hurt *ours*. They never dream of being dished in their own sauce. The unspeakable injustice and incredible absurdity of being treated by us as they treat us would be obvious to religious minds at once if so wild a supposition could ever be made to enter their thoughts. We do not seek such power. If we had it we would not use it. All we seek is simple justice—exact equality before the law. If the objectionable clause is to become law, let it be with the word "religious" struck out. Let it protect *all* feelings

from being wounded, and not merely the special feelings of the supporters of certain mischievous falsehoods. The difficulties, the absurdities, the intolerable injustices involved in such equal protection of *all* human feelings would then become obvious, and after a very brief experience of its effects the penal clause would have to be repealed with the approval of all parties. W. P. BALL.

P.S.—Mr. Courtney Kenny, I find, regards the clause as perfectly fair and impartial, and as being intended to protect both sides equally. He interprets "religious feelings" as "feelings on matters connected with religion," and holds that "such may exist as truly and as vividly in the mind of the Atheist as in the mind of the Theist." Unfortunately Mr. Kenny will not try the cases in person, and I venture to say that not one magistrate in fifty, not one jury in a hundred, will accept his interpretation unless it is expressly forced upon them by being definitely and clearly embodied in the Bill. If an Atheist claimed that his religious feelings were wounded, he would be laughed at as a foolish hypocrite and despised as a barefaced liar. A few amiable and advanced Theists may endeavor to include moral feelings, and even professedly anti-religious feeling, as being truly "religious feelings:" but the majority both of Christians and of Freethinkers will reject such an interpretation. How can a man of no religion, or a man whose avowed aim is to overthrow religion, honestly say that his religious feelings are wounded? He holds that he has no religious feelings, and he cannot pretend otherwise without incurring the censure of his own conscience and the scorn of those to whom he appeals by what to him and to them alike will appear an unworthy subterfuge.

The only way of equalising the effects of the law would be (1) to equally penalise the wounding of both religious and anti-religious feelings, and (2) to grant a jury of whom one-half shall be of the defendant's way of thinking in religious matters and the other half of the prosecutor's. This would practically nullify the law; for the jury would be no more likely to agree upon a verdict than the prosecutor and defendant would.

## LETTER FROM "PALLAS."

THE letters from Juno and Vesta which have appeared in your paper have been noticed by us, especially those parts that refer to a Savior and such-like incoherences, and will help, no doubt, to explain the mysterious and maniacal behavior of a young fellow on this planet of ours. He is the son of a simple but highly-respected carpenter, and until lately was not offensively boisterous. He has now evolved from a harmless crank to a growing nuisance. His utterances are absurd. Besides, he is followed about by twelve poor devils of fish-porters; for we, no doubt, as well as you on your earth, find that a man may be as mad as the proverbial hare in March and yet will get followers round him a little more mad than himself. Our attention was first called to this young fellow by a series of lectures he was giving, and then he startled his wooden-headed audience by solemnly saying, "I am the son of God"; said, in fact, he was a third part of that vague nonentity, stating further that he must have himself killed for our salvation. The police protested, saying: "Pardon me, young man, but your being killed to satisfy your own vanity won't be of any service to us." "I must have my raiment parted amongst the soldiery," replied he. "No, no!" answered the minion of order, "the soldiers don't want your clothes; if you wish to part with them, Uncle Threeballs will oblige you." "Well really, gentlemen," said the crank, "you must allow me to sit on a pinnacle of the temple; or, if you have no temple, please allow me to spike myself on the summit of the nearest lamp-post. My reputation is at stake, I must do something. I've walked on the water of your largest swimming bath—at least it would have been a success if the too obsequious attendant hadn't flung me into the road limp and very damp."

The authorities saw the young fellow was a monomaniac, but still thought him harmless enough to be at large, and so left him alone. But he still causes great annoyance and will have to be put under gentle restraint, for he was found later on, after having been admonished, tramping round an onion field, cursing and swearing because the onions were not fit to eat. But the time of onions was not yet, so it was a sad waste of the power got out of a good square swear. After being cautioned for trespassing, he appeared some short time afterwards with only a toga on at the new Palace of Delight. He commenced turning over the tables, and in fact, playing Hades and breaking things, yelling out at the top of his voice: "My house shall be called the house of thingummy, but ye have made it into a den of slummary." The people who were there for relaxation were naturally incensed at this conduct, so they had him forcibly removed and taken charge of by the head of the police, who will have him examined by the doctor of the prison, as there remains no doubt the young fellow is suffering from religious mania, for by papers found on him it seems he was trying to organise an amateur crucifixion, or some nonsense of that kind, and had actually been tied on a wooden cross for the rehearsal of the part, and to test the sensation. This project, however, fell through, as he could not induce any two of his fishmonger friends to be slung up with him. It seems this young fellow has by some means heard of

similar nonsense in other planets, and so thinks of gaining publicity here, for your crank of weak intellect will do anything for notoriety.

We shall have, therefore, to keep him under restraint, or pack him off to some barbaric planet, where, in collusion with the medicine men of the different tribes, he can fool to the top of his bent, and have a tall old time of it generally.

### THE END OF POOR LAZARUS.

LET me just relate in a few words how poor Lazarus, ejected from Bethany on account of his overpowering odor after resurrection, met with the most heartrending misfortunes, and finally went to perdition—through no fault of his own.

Wherever he journeyed, he was avoided with astonishing assiduity and alacrity by the Roman and barbarian residents. He was still mortifying fast, and the fact of his being alive made no difference whatever; he was animated disease, and a sentient corpse. "Oh, why," groaned the gangrened youth, "why didn't they complete this miracle?" and he sighed for that harp that erstwhile he had despised. One sultry day he was captured by a squad of Parthians, who retained him three minutes, and then came to a sudden determination to release him. They didn't even keep back his clothes, but covering their faces with their handkerchiefs (weeping no doubt) they bade him go over to the enemy. Then some Persians got hold of him, and kept him two hours, at the end of which time he ran, or rather walked, away, and his keeper was much affected, and offered up twenty-six prayers to Ahura-Mazda, and made thirty-two genuflections. You never saw a man take on so. Finally a party of Dacians intercepted him, and kept him till the day of his death, which was in three weeks, and the best time on record.

The designing Dacians thought to make a fortune out of him. In a battle with the Goths, they anchored the sweet youth out some distance in advance of their army, and, chuckling with glee, bade the enemy "come on." But Lazarus was never to be depended upon for two days together, and the well-meaning Dacians placed too much reliance on the champion, though, perhaps, never throughout his second earthly career had Lazarus perfumed the air so exquisitely; never reached to such a pitch of malarious eminence, of foetid elevation; yet were the Goths too many for him. Their vanguard at first recoiled, dumbfounded and abashed. Then an universal "Phew!" went up from their serried ranks. The second charge was more successful, and the well-seasoned noses of the Goths stood them in excellent stead. Poor Lazarus was overwhelmed, extirpated, and reduced to infinitesimal mince-meat. Never was man more completely wiped out; there wasn't enough of him left to make a Gothic sandwich.

The ethereal part of Lazarus saw the game was up—it was completely emptied out—and had no excuse for stopping; so knowing the way to the celestial gates, it sailed away without more ado, amid the fervent curses of both Dacian and Goth. Arrived at the heavenly gate, it was with many a qualm and much misgiving that he rang up the porters. Moreover, he had a most hang-dog appearance for a spirit.

"Ho, ho! back again, then, Mr. Lazarus, eh? You are a beauty, you are—I don't think." "I couldn't help it, I had to go," whined Lazarus. "Had to go, did you? Well, you'll have to go again now; I've no orders to admit you." "Perhaps there's a telegram waiting for you," suggested poor Lazarus. "Please don't thrust me back into those immeasurable wilds of shoreless chaos, where the piercing blasts of—" "You'll be warm enough, my man, in a short time, never fear." Bang went the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem, and no sooner were they closed than a horrid creature caught hold of Lazarus and dragged him shrieking to Sheol.

He found it intensely warm here on starting, but he had also found it somewhat torrid on earth; so when he had been introduced to Beelzebub and a few other choice spirits, he said he preferred to be there to twanging a blessed (only he didn't say blessed) harp.

He says resurrectionists will have to bawl a deuce of a long time before he'll come forth again. ENDOR.

## REVIEWS.

*A Fish in Labor.* By HUMANITAS. Freethought Publishing Co Smart, vigorous, interesting and, considering the imprint, remarkably blasphemous.

*Discourses to Women on Medical Subjects.* By MRS. A. M. LONGSHORE-POTTS, M.D. Published by the Author: 32 Dorset Square, London, N.W. Contains a good deal of useful information and sensible advice, though nothing fresh after the works of Bull and Chevasse. There seems to us, also, a good deal of nonsense in the chapter on Pre-Natal Impressions.

*England's Ideal.* By EDWARD CARPENTER. London: Sonnenschein and Co. (1s.) Mr. Carpenter is a Socialist and something more. He is a thinker on many aspects of life, and his poetical nature gives a charm to his writing. We often dissent from Mr. Carpenter's economical views, and we think he is sometimes, as in the discussion of Interest, very one-sided; but we heartily commend his little volume to the attention of our readers. It may stimulate those whom it does not instruct, and it is always grateful to come in contact with a fine personality, which yields aroma as naturally as a flower.

OBITUARY.—We regret to notice from the *Ironclad Age* of July 9th that Dr. J. R. Monroe, the editor of that lively Freethought organ, has been afflicted with the loss of one of his sons. The *Ironclad Age* does not reach us as regularly as we should like or we should have before this expressed our sincere sympathy with the genial doctor in his bereavement.

1 See *Freethinker* May 29, p. 175.

## A DEMON GOD.

(NUMBERS XV., 32-36.)

IN the wilderness sticks are not private property, and a man who picks them up, even on the Sabbath day, is not guilty of any offence. At the time this event is said to have occurred, no law existed forbidding such an act, and no wonder when the poor fellow was brought before Moses the great ecclesiastical lawyer should not know what to do with him. He thereupon consults his patron Yahveh "in nubibus," who unhesitatingly gives the order that the man must be stoned to death—an unjust and cruel punishment to inflict upon a poor creature who has done no wrong. If I had been Moses and this poor man had been brought before me, the following dialogue with Yahveh might have found its way into the sacred volume after verse 34:

LAPORTE: Halloh, old man! are you asleep?

Yahveh, rubbing his eyes, yawns terribly.

L.: Wake up, governor! There's a chap down in the desert who has been caught collecting a few sticks on the Sabbath-day. There's no law against it. What shall we do to him?

YAHVEH (yawning): Stone him to death.

L.: What? Didst understand me? Only a trifling trespass.

YAHVEH: Understand? aye. (Another yawn.) Put him to death.

L.: He's done no harm, and did not know he was doing wrong. Besides, his is a hard case. He has a wife and nine children. He took those sticks merely for his little ones to play with. There are no toys in the desert.

YAHVEH: Kill him and be damned!

L.: I'll be damned if I do! Do it yourself.

The Lord of hosts, thoroughly roused, sends down a flash of lightning, misses the culprit, and kills a—spectator.

Lamentations of the poor wife.

L.: Old Blazes! thou'st killed the wrong man.

YAHVEH (laughing): All right, I've just landed him in Paradise.

All Israel feared.

L.: Wonderful, indeed, are the ways of the God of love. The sooner I cut the connection the better for my reputation.

Joins the staff of the *Freethinker*.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

## FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN.

UNDER the head of "More Popery," the *Reformed Church Record* writes against Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill as a danger to Protestants "if they denounce the deadly errors of Romanism." It is amusing to see these Christians up in arms when their own liberty of unlimited attack is threatened. The Protestant claims his right to ridicule and denounce the Roman Catholic, but considers it almost a felony for the Freethinker to laugh at both.

THE *R. C. R.* describes the bill as one "to secure immunity from legal punishment for offenders like Mr. Foote." This is quite contrary to the truth. The bill would put Mr. Foote and all such Freethinkers in further danger. The fact is the Christians are so alarmed at the danger to themselves that they cannot see the danger to others; otherwise it would afford them some consolation in their misfortune.

THE *Christian Herald* heads a paragraph with the words "A Breeze in Answer to Prayer." A ship is helplessly drifting on to a reef under the influence of a strong current. Cannibals on shore are awaiting the the shipwreck, and are lighting fires for cooking the poor missionaries. A perfect calm prevails, but the captain and three others in their last resource, retire to their cabins, "and in agreed prayer, asked the Lord to send immediately a breeze." The "agreed prayer" is italicised to show the importance of the combined effort. The Lord thereupon sent the breeze and the savage cooks had to go without their barbecued missionary.

ANOTHER account in the *Christian Herald* describes how a missionary boat got stove in by a snag, and the native crew were devoured by alligators, the missionaries, however, escaping by clinging to the boat till rescued by the steamer. Evidently the natives must have lost their lives through the culpable negligence of the frightened missionaries in not praying for their safety. But the *Christian Herald* forgets to point out this corollary of its doctrine of the efficacy of prayer.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"WHAT was the text this morning?" asked a stay-at-home husband to a church-going wife. "Many are called, but few are chosen." "What jury did it have reference to?"

A LAKE VIEW boy was delighted when his mother returned from the city with a new pair of trousers for him, but when asked to try them on he refused, and gave as his reason: "No, I'll save them till next Sunday and s'prise Jesus when I go to Sunday-school."

A FARM was lately advertised in a Yankoo newspaper in which all the beauty of the situation, fertility of the soil, and salubrity of the air, were detailed in the richest glow of rural description, and which was further enhanced with this: N.B.—"There is not a parson within fifteen miles of this neighborhood."

SAID a good sister in her testimony at a late camp-meeting: "My husband opposed my coming to this sacred spot, but I can truthfully say that in coming here I have received a blessing, and I know that when I get home my husband will get a blessing." No one seemed to doubt her.

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