

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
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HOLY WATER.

And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.—NUMBERS XX., 10, 11.

IS MR. BRADLAUGH RIGHT?

SUCH a question will suggest to some minds an acrimonious discussion. Others will see in it the promise of personalities. But both parties will be disappointed. Freethinkers, I hope, can criticise each other in a friendly spirit, and stand up for opposite ideas without insulting each other. When Mrs. Besant and I debated on Socialism we struck each other's positions as hard as possible, but not a single unpleasant word passed between us. Nothing occurred, on either evening, to ruffle our amicable feelings. Similarly, if I differ on some topic from Mr. Bradlaugh, I trust I am able to express the difference without displaying or exciting animosity. Of course there may be a few fanatics who will resent *any* criticism of Mr. Bradlaugh's views, but if such persons do exist they are certainly beneath my consideration.

Let me add that I do not consider *every* difference I may have with Mr. Bradlaugh a proper occasion for rushing into print. Sometimes I may think he is mistaken, as he probably thinks I am, but it is usually best to cultivate the spirit of peace, each taking the full responsibility of his own course. Yet there *are* occasions when silence is not

to be dictated by prudence, when loyalty to conviction compels one to speak out. And such an occasion has just arisen. Mr. Bradlaugh has, at the International Freethought Congress, said things from which I utterly dissent. He had a right to say what he said, and his high position and long service to our cause should prevent anyone from treating his utterances with anything but profound respect. Mr. Bradlaugh's name carries great weight now with the outside world, and I noticed that *his* remarks at the Congress were reported in the newspapers to the exclusion of all others. For this reason, his remarks—if I may be allowed to say so—carry *more* than their proper weight, as they are unbalanced by whatever weight should attach to those of other speakers. I feel, therefore, justified in stating at length, in a serious, deliberate manner, where I think Mr. Bradlaugh's attitude on one or two important points is as likely to be mischievous as I feel it is opposed to the sentiments of at least one-half the party he leads.

First, let me take Mr. Bradlaugh's views on Education. Perhaps at bottom I have the honor to agree with him, and if so I shall hail the assurance with delight. But as his views are reported I am deprived of this pleasure. According to the *Freethinker* report, from the careful pen of Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Bradlaugh spoke in substance as follows:

"It was no part of our duty to give a child notions hostile to the creeds around it. If they assumed a distinctly hostile attitude towards religious teaching they would set up every church and religious sect in Europe against them, and induce the majority to adopt panic legislation."

These observations are given more fully in the *National Reformer*, though both reports seem to agree essentially. This is how they stand in Mr. Bradlaugh's own paper, and I am fairly entitled to suppose they had his personal revision:

"Were Freethinkers the majority or the minority? He said the minority. The majority, indeed, did not trouble themselves to decide one way or the other, but if anything compelled them to give a judgment, they were very apt to fancy they were in favor of the Established Church, and found themselves very orthodox. The majority then must rule. And if they affirmed that public education should be hostile to religion, they would justify every denomination in following the corresponding policy on their part. He held besides that it was unjust to the child to begin by placing it in a hostile attitude to any creed. Let them teach it facts apart from questions of belief and speculation. It was not their duty, when a child's mind was hardly yet a mind, to force upon it a creed. If they voted for a hostile policy they would set up every church against them. At present they were gaining ground, alike in England, in Belgium, and in France; and he asked them not to give color for panic-legislation against them. 'Indifferent' did not mean disregarding of the truth; but simply that they were not to raise questions of dogma for children. Let them not make a declaration of war over the cradle, and turn the child's youth into a struggle over religious questions."

To this lengthy extract I must add another, taken from Mr. Bradlaugh's opening speech on the Saturday morning; a speech I unfortunately missed, as I was in an ante-room with Mrs. Besant and Mr. Standring, arranging the order of business. After some sentences which I shall have to deal with later on, Mr. Bradlaugh said that the battle of Freethought was to be fought by "giving such education to children in science as would enable them to form a more correct judgment, and to consider the questions of one religion just as they did the questions of another."

Now it will, I think, be obvious to all that two very different questions are blended in these remarks. When Mr. Bradlaugh contends that *public* education should be entirely secular, and absolutely indifferent to religion, he contends for what very few Freethinkers would ever dream of disputing. Even our most "extreme" French brethren would probably give their adhesion to that principle; although, until it is completely carried out, they may feel tempted, here and there when they are strong enough, to fight the priests with their own weapons. And I venture to say that the expurgation of school-books by the Paris Municipal Council is hardly a violation of religious equality. They find passages of literature artfully selected by the old officials who are in sympathy with clericalism, and they naturally resist the attempt to instil religion into young Paris by underhand means. But public education—that is, education at the public expense—is one thing, and private education—that is, education at the individual's expense—is quite another; and much of what Mr. Bradlaugh says plainly applies to this. He preaches a very plausible doctrine. It sounds generous to say that the child shall only be taught *facts*, and that he shall be allowed to form all his *opinions* himself. But the thing is impossible. Three-fourths of what a child learns it has to take on trust. To dream of excluding the principle of authority from education is absurd. Even the statement that the earth is round has to be given dogmatically at first. Nor is it easy to see why persons of every denomination should not have their children educated, at home or in private schools, in their own religious or anti-religious principles. Is it seriously meant that parents shall instruct their children in everything but what they feel most profoundly upon? Is a child to have no moral training? And if he is to have it, how are you going to escape the crucial difficulty of the moral sanction? A Christian gives one moral reason for conduct, and an Atheist another. Can you avoid giving *some* sanction; and if not, have you not prejudiced the child's mind on the greatest of all differences between Religion and Freethought?

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

BLASPHEMY seems to cover a good deal in Bavaria. Leopold Vaeth, of Oberdorf, appears to have had a quarrel with his mother, and when she was buried he expressed an opinion that she was gone to the Devil. This being considered blasphemy, he was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labor.

LIBERAL CHRISTIANS.

THE most inconsistent and inconsequent of the religionists of the day are those who pride themselves upon being Liberal Christians. Although, when questioned, they are found to reject all the distinctive dogmas of Christianity, all that differentiates that religion from the rest of the religions of the world, they claim not only to be followers of Jesus Christ, but the only true followers he has. If we may believe Liberal Christians, the great Roman Catholic Church does not represent Christianity at all. It is true that its adherents even to-day far exceed those of all other Christian sects combined, and its history embraces a period of seventeen hundred years, during the immensely larger portion of which neither Protestantism nor any other form of Liberal Christianity was known. Yet the dogmas and doings of the one great Christian Church are repudiated as not genuine Christianity. The *Christian World*, which may be taken as a representative organ of the Liberal Christians, gives reports of the doings of such bodies as the Bible Christians, Unitarians, Swedenborgians, etc., but accounts the Catholic Church as no portion of the Christian world at all.

Liberal Christians, when challenged, also readily give up the Old Testament records as containing at any rate a certain admixture of human error derived from the barbarous past. They resign, that is, God's original revelation, and they repudiate the Church founded upon his second edition. They boast of their freedom from the creed-bound superstitions of their ancestors, which they occasionally attack with weapons for using which Annet and Woolston were imprisoned, while they shudder at the names of Voltaire and Thomas Paine as "vulgar infidels" who outraged the religious sentiment of their time. Now what right have these members of the Broad Church to be considered Christians at all? The very term implies as a minimum of faith, belief in the Messiahship of Jesus as the Christ promised to the Jews. Yet we do not find Liberal Christians prepared to defend even this proposition in debate. That the Messiah of the Jews, who was to have triumphantly restored the kingdom of David and overcome all the nation's enemies should be ignominiously put to death, is a difficulty Liberal Christians do not care to front squarely. They fail to recognise that the dogmatic edifice of Christianity, from Original Sin and the Fall of Man to the Incarnation, Atonement, and Eternal Rewards and Punishments, is all of a piece. Take but one stone from the structure and it will logically collapse. This necessarily follows on the orthodox theory. If Christianity is supernaturally given, it is divine in every part. Exercise your reason on one portion and you may on all. If it is lawful to reject one dogma, it cannot be wrong to reject the whole scheme. If the doctrine of the Trinity is a human error and not a divine truth, all the other dogmas of Christianity may be erroneous. But the Liberal Christian will calmly repudiate the Fall of Adam in the same breath in which he asserts the necessity of Redemption through Christ.

To argue with a Liberal Christian is much like punching a feather pillow. He gives way before every attack, but always bulges out in another place. If the scheme of Christianity is impugned, he appeals to its beneficent history. Expose the criminality of its history, and he repudiates the Christianity of all who lived before himself, and refers to the beneficence of its teachings. Not that the Liberal Christian ever thinks of following the teachings of Christ. To give to every one that asks, to take no thought for the morrow, or to lend hoping for nothing again, is about the last thing the Liberal Christian would think of doing. He tells you that he interprets the Gospel in accordance with the laws of political economy. He pretends to believe the Bible, but really only gives a modified assent to certain portions of it. Ask him squarely in private conversation, does he believe in Samson's slaying a thousand with the jaw-bone of an ass, or in the story of Elisha and the she-bears, and he will probably resent the supposition that he can be so silly. Push him further with the question, does he really believe that God was born of a virgin in Palestine, or that he wrought miracles and was tempted by a personal devil, or that he was crucified in order to save us from eternal damnation, and he will gravely assure you that such statements by no means represent his belief. The truth is, Christianity itself having become incredible the Liberal

Christian adopts a mongrel mixture of new science and old supernaturalism, and covers up the latter as far as possible when in the presence of those who have the courage to say they reject it entirely.

I remember listening to a well-known minister of the Church of Scotland dilating, in private, on the absurdity of believing in the inspiration of the Bible. I commended his heretical sentiments, but asked how he reconciled them with the Westminster Confession of Faith. "Oh," he said, "you can put twenty different interpretations on every clause of the Confession, just as you can upon every text of the Bible." I could not help reflecting that the gentleman's £600 a year might prove a powerful incentive to ingenuity of interpretation. Some sky-pilots are quite prepared to admit that all that has been hitherto taught as Christianity is flagrantly false, if only they may be permitted to retain their salaries. Christianity with them is not the historic religion taught in the Christian Scriptures and illustrated in the history of the Church; it is anything and everything, just whatever you like as long as you do not disturb them.

Liberal Christians are great upholders of freedom of speech in the sense of using words in whatever meaning they please. "Everlasting" only means everlasting when applied to "life," not when used with the word "punishment." There may be a hell but its temperature has probably been exaggerated. People can no longer be terrified by fear of blazes, but they may be coaxed by hopes of heaven. The worship of the Virgin Mary, a woman, is blasphemous idolatry, but the worship of Jesus, a man, is nothing of the kind. The existence of a personal devil is very questionable, but there must be something wrong with the heart of a man who would think of questioning a personal deity. The attitude of mind which perceives no difficulties in such anomalies is little likely to stumble at equivocation and hypocrisy. No wonder we find Mr. Spurgeon denouncing Liberal Christians as "making infidels," and the Broad Church newspapers as not respecting a single truth of revelation. Liberal Christianity is like Liberal Toryism—a sign that the old ideas are passing away.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIAN VERACITY.

THAT pious organ the *Rock* inserts a long letter which commences thus:

"Sir,—A certain well-known infidel editor, some months ago, being taken seriously ill, and thinking his illness would end fatally, began to pray to God for Christ's sake to have mercy upon him. Strange to say, upon being restored to health, he returned to his work on one of the most blasphemous of the infidel publications in the world, and thus again continued a series of insults to God, to Christ, and to Christians. One of the latest unfair attacks from the pen of this inconsistent person (who when in fear of death cried to God for mercy) is as follows:"

As the writer then quotes the first twenty-three lines from my recent article on "Hospitals not of Christian Origin," it is perfectly certain that he refers to myself. Anyone who reads it would suppose that being in prospect of death I turned Christian, but, like the devil in the old couplet, reverted to my former ways when the danger was over. The only serious illness to which the writer can allude was my insanity, which occurred some four years and a half ago, and which was occasioned by overwork and anxiety in connection with the imprisonment of my friend the really well-known infidel editor of this journal. Some delirious exclamations, at a time when I not only did not think my illness would end fatally, but when I could not think at all, got me the credit, with Christian friends, of turning to the faith of my childhood, although I refused to see a minister who was sent for. Certainly I have never thought of praying when in my senses. If there be such a God as Christians say, he should know my desires and aspirations without any necessity of prayer. That upon being restored I returned to my Freethought work is not strange since my insanity showed me some of the terrors of religion, and to my sane mind, the emancipation of men's minds from superstition seems one of the most beneficent tasks in which one can be engaged.

J. M. WHEELER.

PROTESTANT PIOUS FRAUDS.—Although modern Protestantism has never pretended to miraculous powers, yet Protestant pious frauds have always abounded, and abound in the present day. It is a gross fraud to gloss over and conceal the infamous characters and obviously interested motives of many of the principal actors in the Reformation, in England particularly, as Protestant writers have done. Awful interpositions of Providence, exaggerated and fictitious accounts of death-bed scenes, both of believers and infidels, the lying reports of missionaries, and, in particular, the long orangelical speeches they are so fond of putting into the mouths of their converts, are instances of Protestant pious frauds.—MAJOR EVANS BELL, *The Task of To-Day*, p. 37.

ACID DROPS.

THE Army of the Lord is still being persecuted at Brighton by incredulous magistrates. "Faithful Abraham" was fined £5 for excluding a complainant from the services. It appears that it is illegal to close a place of worship against the public during divine service. The fanatics will no longer be able to lock their doors against the public during their outrageous proceedings. The complainant in this case tried to enter because "King Solomon" had written a letter to his wife. Among the other shining lights of this "Glory Hole" are "Brother Caleb," "Sister Rachel," "Brother Isaac," "Brother Joshua," and "Brother Jonah."

A NEWSPAPER correspondent who questioned one of the dupes of these fanatics on the subject of faith-healing, found that the method adopted by Wood in his "Sanctuary of Jehovah" was that of absolute despotism. He has to be obeyed in all things and no questions are allowed. If he announces a doctrine that is sufficient. The member of the Army in question had seen no cases of faith-healing, but the prophets and prophetesses had witnessed such miracles. If they were ill and prayed for healing, they always believed they were healed, even though they felt no relief. Christ promised to give everything that was asked for in faith, and they must believe that he has kept his promises. What a pitiable condition for the human intellect to be brought to. With infatuated assertions of cures which have never occurred, it is no wonder that tales of miraculous healings can be foisted on foolish dupes as genuine.

THE prophets of this persecuted Army of the Lord predict that a terrible retribution will fall on Brighton, which will be destroyed by fire like the cities of the plain. They also believe that King Solomon their leader, who during the present troubles has been called away by the Lord no one knows whither, will never die.

A SUDDEN death of a minister in the pulpit occurred last Sunday morning in the Presbyterian church, Brighton. The pastor, the Rev. W. Fraser, after preaching for nearly half-an-hour, placed his hands upon the Bible and dropped as if shot. He never recovered consciousness and died in ten minutes. What lessons will Talmage and Baxter draw from this case of heart disease?

IN the case of the Rev. J. M'Allister, charged with obtaining money by false pretences, a sum of money has been returned to the War Office, and the prosecution has been withdrawn.

WHAT'S in a name? Sometimes a good deal. Helen Blases has been a great success as an actress, but her name has to be changed on the bills of a London theatre where she is to play a leading part. Will her luck hold on still? We shall see.

A HULL correspondent informs us of a new exhibition introduced by the Salvation Army at the Nailor's Row Barracks, Drypool. A converted poacher promenades the streets with a pole over his shoulder with some dead rabbits. He is handcuffed and a "soldier" in a cast-off policeman's suit accompanies him with the band to the barracks, where he gives a description of how he used to destroy cats, rats, etc., with his mouth, putting them to great torture. This sort of thing proves a great attraction to the classes from whom the Army is recruited.

A PROMINENT member of a Baptist Church and superintendent of the Sunday-schools at Leicester, named W. T. Simmons, has been charged with embezzlement to the tune of £300. This sort of thing has been so common of late that an illustrated paper has a picture of the parson asking a young man why he never attends church or Sunday-school. He answers that he is in a responsible position as cashier and cannot afford to endanger his honest reputation.

JOHN CALDWELL went into Elgin Place Chapel, Glasgow, the other Sunday and announced that he had a message from the Almighty. He bore a T-square in his hand to represent a cross. Running up the pulpit stairs he attempted to embrace the pastor. He was taken to the vestry and there stated that he had come from hell the day before. It is a pity some authentic particulars were not elicited from him concerning the state of affairs down below. Instead of that the Christian unbelievers put him in a lunatic asylum.

A TEACHER in endeavoring to overthrow the Indian belief that the earth is flat and stands still, and that the sun passes over it and under it every twenty-four hours, said in conclusion: "So, you see, it is the earth that goes round, while the sun stands still." A tall boy asked, "Then what for you tell us one story about man in the Bible—I forget his name—strong warrior—fight all day, but get dark so can't fight, and he say, 'Sun, stand still!' What for he say that if sun all time stand still?"

A CORRESPONDENCE has been published between Mr. M. Baxter of the *Christian Herald*, and Mr. Sylvanus Lord, of Burnley, in which the former threatens a summons in the event of not re-

ceiving an apology for the accusation of hypocrisy. Mr. Lord replies that he only spoke the sentiments of his mind. When he saw Baxter's diagrams in which furies and monsters belch forth fire and fasten their fangs in the flesh of panting victims he came to the conclusion "that the whole of your apocalyptic paraphernalia was the ordinary stock-in-trade of a travelling quack." It is a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous, when one who calls himself a modern "Noah" has to depend on the uncertain result of a summons in order to silence opposition. A prophet ought to be able to serve his enemies as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha did in the days of old.

THE *New York Independent* is not pleased with the courteous manner in which Dr. Field addresses Colonel Ingersoll, and says: "It is not always necessary to answer an infidel. If one will answer him, it is not always necessary to use courtesy." True Christians will of course prefer to follow their divine teacher's example of calling opponents whited sepulchres, adulterers, extortioners, hypocrites, vipers, children of hell, and so forth.

GOD is flooding Upper Egypt by the overflowing Nile. Crops are destroyed wholesale, and a famine will ensue. The inhabitants are driven from the flooded villages, many of which are more or less destroyed. The scenes among the homeless and destitute people crouching on patches of earth not yet overflowed are described as heart-rending. Christians had better remonstrate with their God for causing all this needless suffering.

GOD has evidently deserted some of his would-be defenders in the West. A Kansas clergyman who had engaged to debate with J. E. Remsburg was stricken with paralysis a few days before the debate was to have taken place, and a Nebraska clergyman who attempted to answer one of his lectures fell in a fainting fit before he had uttered a dozen words.

THE *Christian Advocate* relates this instance of special providence: "In Boston a large house prints for several religious papers of different creeds, and also an Atheistic paper of evil fame as especially venomous. The building was damaged by fire, and the only formes saved were those of the godless sheet above mentioned." What was the name of the "especially venomous" paper?

THE Rev. Dr. Keatinge, "the clerical impostor," has been lecturing to a large audience in the Rotunda, Dublin, on the history of the religious reformer Savonarola. The reverend gentleman has only just been released from gaol on a ticket of leave. He was attired in the ordinary garb of a clergyman. Several ministers were present and many ladies. A bouquet was presented to him. The conclusion of his religious lecture was interrupted by cat-calls and demands for a song. He is about to favor Australia with the blessing of his presence.

ON Sunday, at Needmere, near Nashville, Tennessee, a church fell when filled with people. Seventy persons were injured, one fatally. The floor fell 13ft. Why don't the Lord look after his own? Is it the power he lacks, or the will?

MR. SPURGEON'S denunciations of the Liberal Christians have set all the religious papers inquiring into how far it is true that Nonconformist ministers are departing from the faith. The *Nonconformist and Independent* contends that generally speaking they retain all the faith they can make any use of, and resents what it calls the Inquisition of the Tabernacle.

ALICE SCOTT, *alias* Russell, *alias* Smith, a prominent member of the Weston-super-Mare corps of the Salvation Army has been sentenced to two months' hard labor for theft.

GEORGE GRICE, of Tipton, Staffordshire, is committed for trial on the charge of criminally assaulting Miss Caroline Seragg in a railway carriage, and imperilling her life by forcing her to climb along the foot-board to another compartment. On being asked whether he had any witnesses to call, the prisoner replied, "Witnesses! Yes; I have got God and the Lord Almighty, who will prove that I am innocent." We shall look forward with interest to the appearance of these witnesses at the trial, but at present we wonder whether the other third of the Trinity will let these two-thirds attend.

FROM our French contemporary, *La Semaine Anticlericale*, we learn that M. Lebouc, the village priest of Trognon, in the arrondissement of Chinon, has been found guilty of criminal assaults on children under thirteen, and condemned to seven years' seclusion. Another curé, named Ligier, of Campagne-les-Wardrecques, Pas-de-Calais, has been arrested and imprisoned at Saint-Omer on a charge of committing acts of immorality with several children of both sexes who attended his catechism class.

HENRY NIXON, who has the misfortune to be a pauper in his old age, is experiencing the full force of Christian charity in his delightful residence. He occupies No. 4 Ward in the Union of Barton-Regis, Eastville, Bristol, and several weeks ago we sent him a packet of our publications, besides inserting a note that he would be glad of similar contributions in the future. But poor Henry Nixon has been hauled before the Guardians and told

that if papers like the *Freethinker* are sent him they will be confiscated. Nor is he to be allowed any pamphlets "of the same tendency." The parson obligingly added that he did not care what Henry Nixon read himself, but he was afraid of the other inmates being polluted.

WHY don't the Christians go the whole hog? They have turned Henry Nixon out of the infirmary, they have stopped his little bit of tobacco, and now he is to read nothing but tracts. Hadn't they better dispose of him altogether? We take it that they have the will, and if their ingenuity is at fault they might pray to God for assistance.

A CHRISTIAN street-preacher in the East End of London was recently heard howling in the following strain: "Wot did Tom Paine cry out on his death-bed? I'm lorst, I'm lorst, I'm lorst! Wot did Voltaire cry out? I'm lorst, I'm lorst, I'm lorst! Wot did Gambetta cry out? I'm lorst, I'm lorst, I'm lorst! Wot does all them blasphemers and infidels cry out when they comes to die? I'm lorst, I'm lorst, I'm lorst!"

WHAT a surprising unanimity! But the preacher need not wait until he is dying to cry, "I'm lorst." He is evidently "lorst" already, and if Jesus does not call him home pretty soon he may terminate his mortal career in one of those institutions where the inmates think everybody mad but themselves.

JOHN NICHOLSON, landlord of the Commodore Napier Inn, Leeds, was visited by a Catholic priest, who solicited a subscription towards a new church. Owing to bad business he was obliged to decline, and on the following evening his house was again visited by the priest, who ordered every Catholic out of the place. Night after night a fanatical mob assembled in front of the house; they hooted every person who entered, and finally burnt Nicholson's effigy in the street. The unfortunate landlord had one of the rioters arrested and fined twenty shillings, but his business is nearly ruined, and he is now meditating the text that "godliness is great gain."

NEWCOME'S CIRCUS, at Edinburgh, has been burnt down. The pious say it was a visitation from God because the place was let for lectures by Bradlaugh. But why on earth should God punish the insurance company? Newcome is jingling his guineas, Bradlaugh has got another hall, and the insurance company are the only losers. By-and-bye we shall hear of an application from all the companies to restrain Jehovah from these destructive tricks.

SEVERAL letters have appeared on the subject in the *Edinburgh Evening News*, and an editorial article chaffing the city on its "outbreak of theological hydrophobia."

THE Rev. J. Tremelling, pastor of the Zion Bible Christian Chapel, Torquay, has, like many another sky-pilot, made the calamity at Exeter the subject of a sermon. Few, however, it is to be hoped, have had his taste to found his discourse on the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Having sat in judgment on the dead, Mr. Tremelling proceeded to libel the living as "vain, drunken, ignorant, thoughtless stage-players." The report ends with the significant words "No collection was made in aid of the relief fund."

CANON WOOD deplors the "infamous anarchy" that prevails in the Church. He would produce uniformity by means of compulsion. He says: "We sadly and speedily need a Coercion Act. Every diocese ought to be proclaimed." A pretty scene of tyranny England would be if the more zealous Christians could only have their own way. Michellstown shootings would soon be repeated in every town in England.

THE Rev. David Seymour of Janesville, Minnesota has eloped with the wife of the editor of the *Janesville Argus*. Seymour left a wife and five children but took the church funds with him. He has been arrested. The detectives say they have seldom seen a more unprepossessing couple than the elopers. The man is tall, angular, dark, and black moustached. The woman is about 25 years old, short, thin, and white-faced, with red hair. Detective Perazzo states that he has heard of two other instances in which, in small Illinois towns, Seymour had induced married women to abandon good homes, to be in turn abandoned by Seymour when he had tired of them.

THE *Christian World* has an article entitled "Wanted—A Re-statement of Christianity." The writer says, "The social tendencies of the hour are certainly ominous and not favorable to Christianity." He wishes his religion so re-stated that it will attract the thoughtful and intelligent section of the people who are now but slightly attached to any of the churches. He finds difficulty "in naming any one treatise in which the doctrines of Christianity are exhibited in a manner at once intelligible and acceptable to the men of to-day." What is this but saying the men of to-day have outgrown the Christianity which was acceptable enough to their ancestors? We venture to think that Christianity will not be improved by any re-statement. It will be either in flagrant opposition to the intelligence of the age or like *Hamlet* with the part of the Prince of Denmark omitted.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, September 25, at 11.30, Regent's Park (open-air), "Bible Blunders." At 7.30, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town (near the "Mother Redcap"), "The Blood of Christ."
OCT. 2 and 9, London Hall of Science; 16, South Shields; 23, Portsmouth; 30, Hall of Science, London.
NOV. 6, Birmingham; 13, Liverpool; 20, Camberwell; 27, Sunderland.
DEC. 11 and 18, 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.—T. P. S.
H. C. JACQUES.—Your pamphlet will be noticed.
W. V.—The *Church Reformer*, edited by the Rev. S. D. Headlam, is the only paper, we believe, that reports the doings of the Church and Stage Guild. Headlam means well, and would like to convert the actors and actresses, but he doesn't seem to get any further than the ballet girls.
E. T. GARNER.—Hone's edition of the Apocryphal Gospels can be had of Mr. Forder. You will find that it will take you as much (perhaps more) time and trouble to learn to write what is worth reading as it would take you to learn a trade.
F. G. LAMPARD.—That old church bill has already appeared in the *Freethinker*, and in nearly every other paper as well.
C. BAKER.—You are obviously sincere, and you are very courteous, but we have nothing to retract from what we said of Spiritualism—or, more properly, Spiritism.
W. BURRELL.—Your letter was dated the 12th, but it was not posted till the 13th, and did not reach us till the 14th. Communications reaching us on Wednesday are too late for our next issue.
T. TURNER.—The work is out of print. All communications of this sort should be sent to Mr. Forder.
G. LUCKING.—Many thanks for the little Voltaire engraving.
J. CRUIKSHANKS, 26 Cuthbert Street, South Shields, sells the *Freethinker* and all other Secular literature.
F. J. BOORMAN.—Our compliments to your Branch. We hope to pay Chatham a visit one of these days.
J. W. GOTT (Bradford) orders a packet of *Royal Papers* for gratuitous distribution.
JOSEPH ELLIS.—Your brother's letter from Gibraltar is interesting. It is gratifying to learn that the *Freethinker*, by keeping up his spirits, helped him to pull through his illness; and also that this journal and our pamphlets are going the round of the garrison.
J. RUTHERFORD.—The date is booked for you.
R. WRIGHTMAN.—Always pleased to receive cuttings.
X. Y. Z.—This journal can be sent to any part of the United States for one halfpenny.
A FREETHINKER.—(1) The half tribe of Manasseh was so called because both Ephraim and Manasseh took the place of Joseph in the division of Palestine, when the tribe of Levi was omitted. (2) The tribe of Judah is mentioned so often because the Bible writers were of that tribe. (3) In the worship of Moloch children were offered as burnt sacrifices. (4) Ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam. They were afterwards carried away as captives to Assyria, and it is not likely they ever returned. (5) The Urim and Thummim were oracles on the priest's breast-plates by which he divined. (6) The celibacy of priests was instituted to ensure their devotion to the Church and to prevent the wealth of the Church going into secular hands. (7) You must ask the Holy Ghost what is the sin that has never forgiveness. Perhaps, as you suggest, it is accusing the Holy Ghost of adultery with Mary. We cannot answer questions through the post.
R. FOX.—The collapse of the McAllister case is certainly strange, but it will not do to say all we think. There could only be one result if a Christian clergyman, however spotted, were to prosecute a Freethought editor for libel.
S. MORRIS AND J. R.—You have misread the passage. We did not say that abstinence from alcohol, but that "signing the pledge" was a moral crutch for drunkards. We are acquainted with Dr. Richardson's writings on the subject, and are quite prepared to admit that three-fourths of the money spent on drink is wasted, and worse than wasted.
HOMO.—We wish you all success in the effort at Dundee, and when we visit Scotland again we hope to be able to pay you a visit.
APOLLYON.—The verses on the Flood are not up to your former level.
H. E. BROMLEY.—The Gladstone and Huxley controversy on Genesis appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* at the end of 1885 and the beginning of 1886.
W. T. LEEKEY.—Thanks for the extracts and cuttings.
PAPERS RECEIVED.—Midland Free Press—Jus—Noah's Ark—Port Elizabeth Spectator—Weekly News—Sydney Daily Telegraph—L'Union Democratique—Le Journal du Peuple—Thinker—Menschentum—Liberator—Devon Evening Express—Cape Mercury—La Semaine Anticlericale—Colchester Chronicle—Freidenker—Independent Pulpit—Open Court—Daily Chronicle—Western Figaro—Bristol Evening News—Lucifer—Melbourne Argus—Chat—Echo—Brighton Argus.
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.

THE London Open-Air Lecture Committee held another meeting on Monday evening at the Hall of Science. Mr. Foote presided. Mr. R. O. Smith (Treasurer) read a favorable balance-sheet, showing only a small deficit by the time all liabilities were met. To rectify this, it was resolved to hold a soiree some time in October, and a sub-committee was appointed to make all arrangements. The tickets, it was decided, should be sixpence each; they will only be sold to members of the N. S. S., and no member will be supplied with more than three. Six Branches continue their open-air work during October, and the Committee resolved to print a common programme for them as during the summer months. On Mr. Foote's suggestion it was also resolved that the Committee should meet once a month during the winter, and prepare beforehand, financially and otherwise, for a still more spirited campaign next summer.

MR. POWELL, who gallantly undertook to resume the old station at Mile End Waste, reported a gross libel perpetrated against him by a Christian Evidence lecturer. Fortunately Mr. Powell who was publicly accused, among other things, with cheating the Ball's Pond Branch, has not only received a written repudiation of this scoundrelly accusation, but he has also received from the gentleman who audited the accounts at the time a handsome subscription, which will enable the Mile End Waste station to be supported during October.

ALL the out-door stations report a surprising revival of interest in our propaganda. What is the reason of this? The answer is simple—Co-operation. Hitherto the London Branches have been working in isolation. They are now beginning to learn that union is strength; nay more, that it is cheerfulness, enthusiasm and success. The matter must not stop here. We must go in for Home Rule in London altogether. The London branches should organise for their own exclusive purposes, and the sooner the task is begun the better. Personally, if the idea is taken up, we shall throw all our energies into the work. Real solidarity among all Freethought workers in the metropolis would soon multiply our forces tenfold.

THE Chatham Branch of the N. S. S. has passed the following resolution: "That this meeting offers to Mr. G. W. Foote a hearty vote of thanks for his active service at our out-door stations in London, and for his able efforts in carrying forward the propaganda of Freethought principles during the summer season." It would be a very false modesty on Mr. Foote's part to say that the time and money he has spent on this work are unworthy of thanks; yet it is only justice to say that Mr. G. Standing, Mr. R. O. Smith, and all the Open-Air Committee, to say nothing of the lecturers and other workers in this movement, are entitled to a large share of recognition. It has been a real pleasure to work with them. Their disinterested zeal for the cause is truly inspiring, and Freethought has reason to be proud of such loyal servants.

MR. FOOTE will deliver a final open-air lecture this season in Regent's Park to-day (Sept. 25). The station is nearly opposite the Park entrance to the Zoological Gardens, and the lecture begins at 11.30.

MR. G. WEIR, the gallant Freethought open-air lecturer of Edinburgh, has been arrested again. Last Sunday evening he was discoursing at the Mound, in opposition to the Young Men's Christian Association, who have "special permission" to meet there. Mr. Weir had a large and attentive audience, to whom he was expounding the Sermon on the Mount, when two policemen intimated that they would not permit him to speak any longer. They were told that one party had as much right as another to address audiences in a public place, but they were careless of argument and gave the lecturer ten minutes to clear off. Mr. Weir stuck to his post and at the expiration of ten minutes he was arrested and taken through Prince's Street to the police-station, followed by a crowd, who cheered him and hooted the police. At the station the constable had the impudence to charge Mr. Weir not only with obstruction, but with uttering oaths and imprecations and using obscene language; but after two hours' examination of witnesses, these charges were seen to be preposterous, and Mr. Weir was liberated, with an intimation that he would be prosecuted immediately. The same threat, however, was made when Mr. Weir was arrested before, and nothing has come of it. This evening, Sept. 25, Mr. Weir will "blaspheme" again at the Mound, and compel the police either to test the legality of their action or to leave him in undisturbed possession. Mr. Weir expresses a wish—which we echo—that he "could get one or two more bold enough to speak out of doors with him."

A SPECTATOR of the scene writes to the *Evening News* on the subject of Mr. Weir's arrest. He says the meeting was quite orderly, and that while orthodox meetings are allowed at the Mound the police interference with the Freethinkers is "a distinct violation of the liberty of the subject."

THE Dundee meeting last Sunday afternoon was fairly successful. Sixteen members were enrolled, and a committee was

appointed to find suitable premises for secular lectures. Another meeting will be held to-day (Sept. 25) at 51 Reform Street. We regret to hear that some of the older Freethinkers are holding aloof. Still, the younger ones must not wait for them. The work is to be done, and *if* done it matters not by whom.

THE Westminster Branch of the N. S. S. has collected £1 1s. 4d. at an open-air meeting in aid of the sufferers from the Exeter fire.

WE are pleased to hear that the North Lambeth Branch is getting larger audiences every Sunday at its lecture hall, 122 Kennington Road, S.E.

THE *Crimes of Christianity* is noticed in the *Midland Free Press* of Leicester. After giving a quotation from the preface, setting forth the purpose of the volume, this journal says that "Those who wish to know how this is set about will send for the book." Of course. But what is the *real* meaning of this sentence? Why this. The reviewer is afraid to venture an opinion on the work, so great is the fear of Bumble which oppresses the journalistic mind.

THE *Huddersfield Examiner* is a little more courageous. It says that the book "is entitled to a fair hearing," but adds that "it is directed against the manifestation of Christianity rather than Christianity itself." But what is the *history* of Christianity except the *manifestation* of Christianity?

Parson Aaron and *General Joshua*, two new numbers of "Bible Heroes," will be published on October 1.

OUR *Comic Bible Sketches* afford great amusement in some parts of Germany, where it has been taken by visitors. The natives cannot read English, but they can see the text beneath the picture, and they hunt it up in their Bibles.

MR. C. E. FORD, who has done some good work in Brighton by the distribution of his own pamphlets, is a candidate for a seat on the Brighton and Preston School Board. Mr. Ford states in his advertisement which appears in the *Brighton Argus*, that he is in favor of Economy and Free Education. He also says: "I am in favor of Science Classes. But in the interests of truth and purity I am strongly opposed to religious instruction for the young, and should you honor me with your confidence I will pledge myself to use every legitimate means in my power to exclude the Bible, as I cannot but consider the reading of such passages as those found in Genesis xix., 30 to 32; Exodus iv., 25; Numbers xxxi., 18; Ezekiel iv., 12 to 16; St. Matthew xix., 12, and others are calculated to lower the tone of juvenile morals." We wish Mr. Ford all success in his candidature. Whether he succeeds or not his bold address is sure to do good.

WE have received the first number of *Noah's Ark*, a "Free-thought advocate for the Midland Counties," published at Nottingham. The editor hopes to disseminate Free-thought amongst people who will not read a journal like the *Freethinker*. The longest article is entitled "Noah, the Navigator," and it is a stew-down (with acknowledgment) from *Bible Heroes*. There is also a page of extracts from *Bible Atrocities*, and Ingersoll is drawn on pretty freely. We wish the editor success.

THE *Daily News* devoted half a column to giving an account of the services at the funeral of the late Major Evans Bell. Although Mr. Voysey, of the Theistic Church, conducted the service, Major Bell lived and died a Freethinker who rejected every form of religion.

THIS week M. Yves Guyot has been holding a conference at Clermont to consider the best means of bringing about a separation of Church and State in France. His idea seems to be that each municipality should have its own share of the *budget des cultes*, and vote the money as it pleases to churches, schools, or other local institutions. This we believe M. Guyot deems the best method of dealing with the question.

A CONVENTION of the Freethinkers of Utah meet in the Opera House, Salt Lake City, on September 24 and 25, for the purpose of organising a Territorial Secular Union, whose object shall be the total separation of Church and State in the political government of Utah and the United States. Mr. S. P. Putman, secretary of the American Secular Union, opens the Convention.

THE *Sunday Chronicle*, which is certainly one of the liveliest of our provincial papers, has—under the title of "A New Religion"—a capital article on the sermons of the bishops at the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The *S. C.* says that, being afraid to argue the cause of Genesis against geology, the perplexed prelates adopted the desperate expedient of throwing the whole of their theological ballast overboard, and of loading, for this occasion, with a scientific cargo.

AMONG new publications likely to be of interest to our readers we notice a translation of E. Burnouf's work on *The Science of Religions*, by J. Liebe, and a new book on *Serpent-Worship*, by

C. Staniland Wake, author of the *Evolution of Morality*. A new Life of Shelley has recently been published in France, which shows that the influence of the Atheist poet is extending.

GOD'S HOSTILITY TO ART.

GOD'S hostility to art is evident from many passages in the Old and New Testaments. He totally forbade the making of statues and pictures by the Israelites, and he ordered the complete destruction of the images and pictures made by other nations. The following texts may be quoted in proof of his hatred of the sculptor's and painter's arts:

"Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the Lord thy God hateth" (Deut. xvi., 22).

"Ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places" (Numbers xxxiii., 52).

"Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth" (Deut. iv., 16-18).

"Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee. For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. When thou shalt beget children, and children's children and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image, or the likeness of anything, and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed" (Deut. iv., 23-25).

No exception is made. The prohibition is complete. Christians who pretend that only the *worship* and not the making of images or pictures is forbidden by their God simply defy the commands of their Bible because those commands have now become inconvenient. God was jealous of the attractions of art. The certainty or the danger that the barbarous Israelites would look upon such wonders with some amount of religious veneration may perhaps be pleaded as an excuse or palliation. Neither God nor his people seem to have had any idea that statues or pictures could be made except as rival objects of superstition. Hence the utter detestation in which they held such objects and the relentless savagery with which they endeavored to crush the arts that created them. This is perfectly intelligible as an explanation of the barbarous policy of the past, but it is no excuse for teaching children to admire such divine methods, and it is no excuse for the adoption of so wretched and deceitful a policy by an omnipotent God.

If the commands of the righteous and unchangeable God of the Christians were carried out, we should see frightful scenes of iconoclasm and of persecution. The sculptor and the artist would be hung off-hand, or at the very least would be deprived of their means of livelihood. The photographer, the maker and seller of plaster of Paris images, the wood-carver, and thousands of others, would be ruined. So largely is ornamentation now employed that hardly a trade would escape. The publisher would suffer for his illustrations, the bookbinder for stamping figures of birds or animals on book-covers, the iron-founder for casting artistic patterns or designs. The boy who made a snow man in winter, or the amateur who tried his hand at a sketch, might alike be guilty of a crime.

As it is, instead of obeying God we most thoroughly repudiate his ideas and commands. We adorn our homes with busts and engravings, we teach drawing in our Board Schools, we support Art Schools for training the people in the artistic work forbidden by the Bible, and we endeavor to beautify our public squares and buildings with statues which in some instances might justify a salutary revival of God's law. No one dreams of obeying the Bible, and scarcely a Christian seems conscious of the hypocrisy of defying and ignoring the book which he professes to accept as his great rule of life.

So important was this ancient divine prohibition of art that it was inserted in the decalogue, and children are still put through the form of repeating it in the first section of the second of the ten great commandments.¹ The commandment runs thus:

¹ Or the second section of the first commandment, according to the Romish Church. For our division and numbering of the decalogue differs from that employed by the Roman Catholics, who run our first and second commandments into one and then alter the number of each succeeding command. They make up the number ten again by splitting

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. xx., 4-6).

Christians pretend that the prohibition is revoked by the additional command not to worship, and they indignantly charge those who repudiate this absurd modern limitation of God's plain command, with being guilty of gross lying or of fraudulent misrepresentation. If God tolerated sculpture and painting why did he not say so? Was he so deficient in intelligence that he could not express his intention in a matter of such importance that it has been to a large extent the basis of intellectual progress and of civilisation? The explicit prohibition of imitative art is obvious—we are not to make the likeness of *anything*; the explicit toleration or encouragement of art in general is nowhere to be found. If these ancient commands did not mean what their words conveyed, then God so shaped them as to deceive the Jews, and so as still to deceive the Mohammedans, who allow no sculpture and religiously frown upon pictorial art as they do upon alcohol. It is left to modern Christians to discover and reveal God's real meaning, and to explain how and why God so stupidly deceived his faithful worshippers.

Christians who find out that Thou shalt *not* make images: Thou shalt not worship them, means "Thou *mayest* make images but thou shalt not worship them" will be able to find out whenever it suits them, that "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery" means "Thou *mayest* murder, but not in order to commit adultery." A law which said "Thou shalt not make false coin: Thou shalt not utter such coin," would in their eyes incontestably allow counterfeit coining; for it would mean "You may make false coin to your heart's content, but you shall not pass it."

Children fortunately do not pay much attention to the old-fashioned and irrelevant religious teachings poured "into one ear and out of the other." If they did accept them sincerely and thoroughly, the nation would retrograde to such a state of barbarism as originated those teachings. But they learn habits of insincerity, of hypocrisy, of saying a thing and not meaning what they say or caring what they say or what they mean. Such habits are seeds of moral death.

The second commandment is curiously incomplete as a prohibition either of idolatry or of art. It only forbids *graven* images and imitations of existing objects. It is debateable whether this would include molten images of imaginary things or creatures, such as the winged bulls of Assyria, the Sphynx, the centaur, and of griffins, angels, dragons and all their kind. It is even sarcastically said of some of our modern works of art that they would not fall under the condemnation of the second commandment, seeing they cannot reasonably be accused of being the likeness of anything that is in the earth or in the heavens above the earth or in the waters under the earth.

W. P. BALL.

WHY AM I A HEATHEN?

BY A CHINAMAN.

(Concluded from p. 287.)

THE only positive point Christians have impressed on heathenism is that they would sacrifice religion, honor, principle, as they do life, for—gold. And then they sanctimoniously tell the poor heathen, "You must save your soul by believing as we do!"

Members of my faith do not so worship gold, although they know it is a very handy thing to have in the house; but honor and principle are dearer than pelf to the average heathen. But I dare say when the heathen have become sufficiently demoralised by contact with Christian civilisation and its Vanity Fair of pretence, pride and dress, they will probably be worse even than the Christian in beating their way through this wide, wicked world. Pupils are often too apt.

In public affairs, it is either niggardliness that puts a premium on dishonesty, or loose extravagance for show, that encourages political debauchery and jobbery. In general, business men are lauded as great financiers who actually conspire to buy laws, place judges, control senates, corner and regulate at will the price of natural products; and, in fact, act as if the whole political and social machinery should be a lever to them to operate against the interests of the

our tenth commandment into two. Coveting a neighbor's wife is thus very properly dealt with as a separate offence from coveting his house or his donkey. The Roman Catholic arrangement of the decalogue appears to me to be decidedly superior to the Protestant arrangement.

nation and people. In a heathen country such conspirators against social order and the general welfare would have short shrift.

Here in New York, the richest and the poorest city in the world, misery pines while wealth arrogantly stalks. The poor have the votes, and yet elect those who betray them for lucre to corporate and capitalistic interests; and the administration of justice—in fact, the whole system of jurisprudence—is to stimulate crime rather than prevent it. As to preventing poverty, or rendering it less intolerable, that is the most remote thought of religious and political local administration.

It is no wonder, under such circumstances and conditions, that New York is a most heavily taxed city, and the worst governed for the interests of New York. "Public office a public trust?" Rather, it is a farm to be worked, Christian-like, for all it is worth. Public spiritedness and moral worth have no value or utility in "practical" Christian politics. Such civic virtues "don't pay."

Do as we do. Give public office to the competent. Pay them well. If they are inefficient or indifferent, remove them at once. If dishonest, morally or financially, kill them as traitors.

"It is better that a child knows only what is right and what is wrong than to have a rote knowledge of all the books of the sages, and yet not know what is right and what is wrong." Collegiate education does not necessarily make a youth fit for the duties of life. And men like Lincoln, Greeley and other such Americans prove it.

"The most successful youth in life is not the most learned, but the most unblemished in conduct." So say the heathen. But here it is called smart when a boy is merely impudent to the old, and it is "smartness," and is excused by the phrase that "boys will be boys," when a boy throws a stone with malice to break some one's window, or do some injury. And parents of such a boy, while they chide, will secretly chuckle, "He's got the makings of a man in him."

It is our motto, "If we cannot bring up our children to think and do for us when we are old as we did for them when they were young, it is better not to rear them at all." But the Christian style is for children to expect their parents to do all for them, and then for the children to abandon the parents as soon as possible.

On the whole, the Christian way strikes us as decidedly an unnatural one; it is everyone for himself—parents and children even. Imagine my feelings, if my own son, whom I loved better than my own life, for whom I had sacrificed all my comforts and luxury, should, through some selfish motive, go to law with me to get his share prematurely of my property, and even have me declared a lunatic, or have me arrested and imprisoned, to subserve his interest or intrigue! Is this a rare Christian case? Can it be charged against heathenism?

We heathen are a God-fearing race. Aye, we believe the whole universe-creation—whatever exists and has existed—is of God and in God; that, figuratively, the thunder is his voice and the lightning his mighty hands; that everything we do and contemplate doing is most and known by him; that he has created this and other worlds to effectuate beneficent, not merciless, designs; and that all that he has done is for the steady, progressive benefit of the creatures whom he endowed with life and sensibility, and to whom as a consequence he owes and gives paternal care, and will give paternal compensation and justice; yet his voice will threaten and his mighty hand chastise those who deliberately disobey his sacred laws and their duty to their fellow-man.

"Do unto others as you wish they would do unto you," or "Love your neighbor as yourself," is the great divine law which Christians and heathen alike hold, but which the Christians ignore.

This is what keeps me the heathen I am! And I earnestly invite the Christians of America to come to Confucius.

WONG CHIN FOO.

REVIEW.

Thus Saith the Lord. By John Page Hopps. London: Williams and Norgate (6d.).—Seven lectures on the origin, structure, contents, and authority of the Old Testament. Mr. Hopps accepts the general results of modern criticism, and presents them in a forcibly lucid style to the ordinary reader. His conclusion is that the Old Testament is "not the infallible word of God, but the many-sided word of man." On the whole the *brochure* may be cordially recommended, and we may express the wish that Mr. Hopps will have the courage to do as much for the New Testament. Our only regret is that Mr. Hopps foists his childish spiritualism into the subject. Surely the theory that Jehovah may, after all, have "a strong militant spirit" who took possession of the Jews, and that the prophets may have been mediums, is nothing less than ludicrous. It is simply interpreting one savage belief by another, instead of explaining it scientifically; for Mr. Hopps's spiritualism is only a survival of savagism, however he may decorate it with fine phrases.

PROFANE JOKES.

SOME people seem to be extremely sensitive. At one of the churches on Sunday the minister read the prayer for a person in deep affliction, and a man who had just been married got up and went out. He said he didn't want public sympathy obtruded on him in that way.

"THE racing association will give you one hundred dollars an acre, deacon, for the lot!" "To build a race-track on? No, sir. I don't believe in horse-racing; it's sinful!" "Say, one hundred and fifty!" "Well, I'll take a hundred and fifty; but if they build a race-track it will be against my earnest protest!"

THERE is a good story of a minister who was paid to preach a sermon on some special occasion in the chapel of a neighboring town. As the congregation was not very rich, he was informed beforehand that they could not afford to pay him more than a guinea for his discourse. When the sermon was over he received in the vestry the congratulation of the elders, who were loud in their admiration of his eloquence. He turned round upon them with almost a smile of contempt, and said: "Do you call that an eloquent sermon? I should just like you to hear my three-guinea one!"

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PROGRESS

THE

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EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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"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 slanders 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*.

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