

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



## AN AFRICAN CONVERT.

"In other parts of Africa, principally British possessions, where large numbers of nominal Christians exist, their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues, and unclean livers of the colony. . . . I regret to say that with a few—very rare—exceptions, those native African pastors, teachers and catechists whom I met, have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled immorality with an unblushing hypocrisy, and a profane display of 'mouth' religion, which to an honest mind seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself. While it was apparent that not one particle of true religion had made its way into their gross minds, it was also evident that the spirit of sturdy manliness which was present in their savage forefathers found no place in their false, cowardly natures. These are strong words, but they are not written down without reflection."—H. H. JOHNSTON, African Traveller, in the *Nineteenth Century*.

## FREE SPEECH.

"LET my name be blighted so that France be free!" cried Danton, and a finer utterance never came from the lips of man. But there are many kinds of freedom. Freedom to act, freedom to speak, and freedom to think; these three, however, include all varieties. Perhaps it will be found, at bottom, that free speech is the key to all others, just as voracity has been said to include nearly all the virtues. Unless a man can speak freely he will not long think freely; or if he does, his thought is of little use, being unfruitful to all but himself, and of small benefit even to his own personality. Nor, unless he speaks freely, can a man act freely; for is not speech itself an act, and is it not necessary to explain and justify other actions? What wonder then that Milton exclaimed, "Give me the liberty to know,

to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." "Liberty of the press," said Brougham, "includes all other liberties." Yes, in a sense it does. But the press must be really free; free from the thralldom of Mammon as well as of the Law, free from the tyranny of Bumble and Mrs. Grundy as well as of the bigots and fanatics of all parties. Unfortunately we are still far from having attained to *such* freedom, though we are making some progress towards it every day.

Freedom of the press is, however, only one side of Milton's ideal of liberty. Oratory is by no means a defunct or even a moribund institution. There is a perennial charm in the living voice, which seems the organ of direct inspiration. Generally we know it is not so, but often it is, and at all times there is some truth amidst the delusion. Public speech, too, serves a useful purpose, in stimulating the sluggish brain. Thousands, without the capacity, the inclination, or the leisure for hard study; thousands, whose nervous energies are exhausted by toil, and whose sight grows dim over the printed page, are sustained by a speaker's energy, and inspired by his enthusiasm, as their ears—so much more familiar with words than their eyes are—drink in his speech. And the voice, aided by gesture and expression, gives emphasis and accent and a thousand shades of meaning, which only a subtle and active imagination can derive from the most eloquent written words.

Another instance of the value of free speech is to be found among the masses of the people, whose views and sentiments the ordinary pressmen never catch, because they never move amongst them. These masses have plenty of thoughts and feelings, but they are untrained in the literary art, and many of them, who are well worth listening to on subjects that interest them, are quite unable to pen two lines grammatically, while their attempts at phonetic spelling are more ludicrous than the wildest orthography of Josh Billings.

Still another instance may be found in public meetings. Just as half-an-hour's personal conversation is generally better than a month's correspondence, so a public meeting is often better than tons of pamphlets and miles of leading articles. The essence of things is disengaged from its accidents, people see who's who and what's what, and vague opinions and emotions crystallise under the influence of personal contact.

Public meetings may be held indoors. That is most suitable to our purgatorial climate. But some meetings cannot be held indoors. They may be too big; no roof but the sky may be able to cover them. Or the people may be too poor, and thus obliged to adopt the policy of Buddha, Jesus Christ, Paul, and Mohammed, to say nothing of Peter the Hermit and John Wesley. Halls cost money, advertising is difficult and expensive, and bad weather may spoil everything. No doubt these reasons account for the recent "unemployed" meetings in Trafalgar Square. The men had no cash, or they would not have been there; and to tell them, as the *St. James's Gazette* did, that public halls abounded in London, was a gross impertinence. The "unemployed" met at a spot convenient for them, but their convenience was said to conflict with other people's. The police therefore got up disorder themselves, and this was used as a pretext for closing the Square to all parties. Sir Charles Warren issued his proclamation, although he knew that the Metropolitan Radical Federation had called a mass meeting on the Irish question for the following Sunday, and when the demonstrators marched to the Square they found it surrounded by thousands of police with the military in reserve.

But that is not *all* the story. My opinion is, and I expressed it in Hyde Park last Sunday amidst approving cheers, that the Government first worked up the "un-

employed" scare, and then in the most wanton and brutal manner tried to provoke riot amongst the London workmen. What for? First, to divert attention from Ireland; and secondly, to persuade the "respectable" classes that "voting Tory" is the only way to save society. I was against any march on Trafalgar Square from the first, for I saw it would be playing the Tory game; and, when, in riding up from Liverpool to London, I read how the police had attacked processions far from the Square, batoned bandmen, and smashed the heads and limbs of hundreds of law-abiding citizens, I resolved that I would exert all my strength to prevent the London Radicals from falling again into the Tory trap. Indignation was natural, a thirst for vengeance was natural; but great causes cannot be maintained by blind passion. Judgment, strategy, and patience are necessary as well as courage and enthusiasm. Fortunately Mr. Gladstone's letter and Mr. Bradlaugh's telegram came at the critical moment when reason was struggling with anger. This helped the cooler heads among us immensely. The fire-eaters were defeated at the great delegate meeting on the Wednesday, a demonstration was arranged for Hyde Park instead of Trafalgar Square, and although the fire-eaters prophesied a failure, that demonstration, despite the fog and the slush, was a gigantic success. Probably a hundred thousand people were gathered round the platforms, and more earnest and orderly crowds never assembled. Trafalgar Square, as I advised in the *Weekly Dispatch*, was left a comparative solitude to Sir Charles Warren and his motley army of despotism. Still, the question of public meetings there is not dropped. Something will be done, but that something must be cautious in the presence of superior force. Meanwhile the London Radicals have been saved from a ghastly conflict, which would have caused them huge suffering and loss, besides causing a Conservative reaction.

Personally I am proud of the part I have taken in bringing about this result. I have, of course, only contributed my share, but that share is all I have any call to deal with in these columns. I gave several days to the work, to the neglect of my own business. Now the worst danger is over I am anxious to put myself right with the readers of this journal. They know me as a soldier of freedom, and they expect me to fight for it. So I will, but I must fight according to my own judgment until it is overridden by the majority. I do not believe in fighting battles on ground of the enemy's choice. Let us choose our own ground, and select our own time for the struggle. The only justification for any other course is that it is now or never, that our extremity is so great that we must risk all at once and trust our fortunes to a supreme effort of sheer valor against overwhelming odds. But we are not come to that pass yet; although, in listening to some impatient persons, a stranger might fancy that there was no longer any liberty left in London, that we were all under martial law, that the press was silenced, and that every mouth was gagged. This is heated exaggeration. We have many liberties left, and we must use them to conquer others.

No man except a Quaker pretends that force is never to be used against force. That is a doctrine of slavery. But you must *have* your force, it must be adequate to your purpose, you must stand a good chance of winning, you must know what you are going to do when you have won, and you are bound to exhaust every peaceful remedy before challenging the arbitrament of war. For my part, I see only one justification for going to Trafalgar Square in force, while it is guarded by policemen and soldiers, and that is a determination to hold a meeting there at all hazards. Are the fire eaters prepared for that? If not, what is the use of clamoring? And anything short of that is mere child's play. What sensible Radical is going to waste his Sunday afternoons in merely looking at the police?

Whoever counsels prudence at a moment of excitement is sure to incur the charge of "cowardice." Some people always question the character of those who differ from them. But a man of any courage can afford to despise such imputations. Brave men know that it often requires more courage to face your friends than to face your enemies; and I, at least, am too much used to standing for my own opinions against all parties to feel alarmed or even hurt at a few wild words. Self-reliance is a rock. Everything else is a quicksand. G. W. FOOTE.

#### A BLESSED FAITH.

WE often hear of the beauties and consolations of Christianity. It brings, we are told, pardon and redemption to sinners. It is a blessed faith, and the source of all true felicity. If, however, we endeavor to analyse wherein the felicity lies, we find it consists of a feeling that the individual is personally saved. He or she is sure of eternal glory, because, in the words of the Second Article of the Church of England, Christ, who is very God and very man, died "to reconcile his Father to us and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." In Adam—it is affirmed on the authority of St. Paul—all sinned, but through Jesus Christ all may be saved. The promise is so conditional that all orthodox authorities are agreed the elect are few, while the rest are consigned to the everlasting tortures of hell, there to be "salted with fire." Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat, because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. Many are called and few chosen.

Each believer, however, considers that he himself is personally safe. The doctrine of eternal hell is too horrible to be realised for oneself. Hell is for vague "other people," never for the believer or his own personal friends. Sometimes an earnest, sensitive mind may be the secret prey of agonies concealed from the rest of the world. But that way madness lies. Fortunately, most people either do not realise that which their creeds profess, or they modify them, conveniently and arbitrarily, so as to allow at least comparative tranquility. In the first case they are irreligious, in the latter they are not true Christians. So much does the blessedness of the Christian faith consist in not believing it, that those who gush the most of its beneficent power are usually those who deny its essential dogmas. In those ages when Christianity really filled the hearts and dominated the lives of men, nothing was left to the timid and sincere but to desert the world and its secular duties and seek in seclusion with fasting, prayer, and mortification, refuge from the temptations of a world that lay in wickedness.

How can an average man expect the consolations of Christianity? The more attentive he is to his secular duties, the less attention can he give to the one thing needful, of making his own calling and election sure. To get on in this world is to cut short your hopes of the next. What a consolation it must be to our bishops and archbishops to know that the rich have as much chance of getting into heaven as an elephant has of getting into an omnibus. A man may be truthful and honest in word and deed, a good father, husband, and citizen; but all this will not atone for sin. Nothing avails but faith in the efficacy of Christ's blood. Moreover, except he hold the true faith concerning the Trinity, he will without doubt perish everlastingly.

Then how is salvation secured? Through a vicarious sacrifice, which is an offence against reason and justice. A just God would neither impute to unborn generations the guilt of an ancestor, nor impute the righteousness of Jesus to an unrighteous world. The Redemption through Christ depends upon the Fall through Adam—a fallacy reposing on a fable. For who now believes in a literal Adam with a woman made from his rib, created in the image of God, yet unable to resist the first temptation, and damning all posterity through one act of disobedience? And what became of all those who lived before Christ suffered? Were they consigned to heaven or hell? And how was Christ a sacrifice when he was put to death for blasphemy? The doctrine that "without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" is a remnant of the grossest conceptions of barbarism. Yet the analogy between the "blood of goats and calves," with which the savage God of the Old Testament was propitiated, and the atoning "blood of Christ," is carefully elaborated in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The Christians, indeed, have added to the barbarism of the Old Testament doctrine of sacrifice that of making the victim the son of the sacrificer. The doctrine of the Atonement presents us with the hideous picture of an Almighty Father compelled to behold the cruel tortures and dying agonies of his crucified son in exchange for an eternity of agony to which he had himself most needlessly

condemned the human race. And to this barbarity of a God slaying his own innocent son they have added the absurdity of making the son as eternal, and essentially the same as himself—a God offering up God as a victim to appease God. Since, however, it was Christ's human nature which alone could suffer and die, we have the absurdity of a finite being making an infinite atonement, which is quite on a par with our condemnation to infinite punishment for finite sin. The doctrine of the atonement makes God the Father a compound of cruel malignity and contemptible littleness, and God the Son either a suicide or an actor in a sorry farce, which has proved a tragedy to the Jews, who have been credited with his death.

Yet it is this doctrine of salvation through faith in the blood of Christ that is the very core of Christianity. This is the theme of all the most stirring sermons and ecstatic hymns. Indeed, in the words of Luther, the doctrine of Justification by Faith is the test of true Christianity. Devote your best energies to improving the condition of your fellows; earnestly strive to promote the happiness of all you come in contact with, and reject salvation through the blood of Christ, and you are doomed to an eternity of woe. Live a life of utter disregard for others, but make your own salvation sure by confessing belief in this divine heal-all—this sacred sanguinopathy—and you will, though even on the scaffold, be cleansed from all sin, even as those were healed from all disease who plunged into Bethesda's pool. What a blessed faith for the nineteenth century!

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE POWER OF PRAYER.

SAMUEL SMITH and Betsy Brown  
Resided in a neighb'ring town.  
He was a sturdy, honest fellow,  
Fond of a joke, and often mellow,  
And didn't care, he said, for preaching,  
But preferred Dame Nature's honest teaching.  
Betsy was prim, demure, and meek,  
With venom'd tongue, but mighty sleek.  
What pleased most this wily lass,  
She knew that Sam had got the "brass;"  
So she, although Sam was a sinner,  
Made up her mind to be the "winner."

After a time the two were married;  
Then Sam oft wished that he had tarried.  
She was to Sam a perfect "cross"—  
He thought her gold, but found her dross.  
After supper she'd kneel and pray  
That Sam might walk the proper way.  
She called on God to change her Sam,  
And make him quite a Christian lamb,  
And keep him from the wicked ways  
In which he passed his early days.  
Sam looked on calmly, smoked his pipe,  
And said he "thought the time worn't ripe."

Years went on; the evening ration  
Was prayer enough to save a nation.  
Though both were old, and glum, and gray,  
The prayer went up from day to day  
To God, who p'r'aps was on his rounds,  
And might be out of earthly bounds,  
For nothing of her praying came,  
As Sam went on about the same.  
One night she poured out all her fears  
(Her words were mixed with briny tears),  
And prayed that God would soon efface  
Those sins that brought Sam such disgrace.  
Next day—of course it wasn't strange—  
O'er Sam there came a mighty change,  
He neither drank, nor smoked, nor swore,  
As he had done in days of yore;  
In fact, was calm as any saint  
That ere was decked with gold and paint.  
And, if the reason must be told,  
Poor Sam was—dead, and stiff, and cold.

Now who will say that prayer is nought,  
When so great change is swiftly wrought?

How do the first five names in the Bible enjoin the infliction of corporal punishment? "Adam Seth Eve, Cain Abel."

Brown: "What do you think of the play?" Togg: "Fairly good thing; but what I object to is the intense realism in the third act—a church scene, you know. It was so natural that I actually went to sleep."

#### ACID DROPS.

In the Blairgowrie divorce suit, *Playfair v. Soutar and Watson*, it transpired that adultery had been committed with Watson, the church organist, in the tower of the parish church.

THE Salvation Army seems much troubled with that eternal want of pence which vexes so many. The General, ever fertile in expedients for raising the root of all evil, appeals for free gifts, takes anything, from a cow to a cucumber, and then charges so much a head for admission to view the collection. We believe William Booth could have given points to all the twelve apostles, including Judas Iscariot.

In the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, Archdeacon Farrar gives vent to some historic doubts as to the existence of St. Anthony. He shows that the legendary account of the so-called Father of the Desert Monks is not by St. Athanasius, as alleged, and asks: "If the 'Life of Antony' is a romance of unknown authorship, how far can we regard Antony himself as an historical character?" Suppose we take out the word Antony and read Jesus instead. The Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are no whit more authentic than the Life of Antony, and the miracles related of that saint are no more improbable than the miraculous birth, the temptation by the Devil, the walking on water, and the levitation of Jesus of Nazareth.

At the annual conference of the Church Association, the Rev. J. T. Gaster said: "The Buddhist religion is essentially Atheistic. It denies the existence of the Supreme Being." Yet Christians appeal to the alleged universality of belief in a Supreme Being as a grand proof of the existence of God. As Buddhists are more numerous than Christians, will the latter now acknowledge that the Atheism of the rival religion is a grand proof of the non-existence of God? At least they might confess that as human opinion varies, it cannot be authoritative.

In opposition to Canon Taylor's remarks on Mohammedanism as compared with Christianity, the *Rock* quotes a passage which denies that slaves were set free on conversion to Islam, but acknowledges that a slave girl who presented her master with a child became free. But when did Christianity make such a law even as this last? Did the Christian slave-owners in America? Nay, mother and child remained slaves alike, and were even sold by the licentious master to other men at his sole will and pleasure. Has a religion which allowed such horrible things any right to boast itself as superior to a religion which has always prohibited them?

THE vacancy in the living of St. Michael's, Cornhill, worth £1,200 a year, opens the way to a nice piece of ecclesiastical jobbery. The Bishop of London proposes that the new rector, who has next to nothing to do, shall become a Suffragan Bishop of London. If Bishop Temple wants the aid of a Suffragan, who, of course, will take a good share of his work without any of his patronage perquisites, why does he not pay his stipend out of his own exorbitant income of £10,000 a year, instead of coming upon parochial funds? The Bishop of Bedford, the Suffragan for East London, already holds a sinecure City living of £2,000 a year, and now a second is to be provided for by a similar dodge.

A CHICAGO man has paid 1,000 dollars for a copy of the Bible. A swindling Omaha agent told him it was just out.

In an Episcopal church with few attendants the 102nd Psalm was read responsively. The æsthetic young clergyman exclaimed: "I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert." And the small boy in the gallery replied: "I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the housetop."

MISS ANNA EVA FAY, a spiritualist mejum and a relative, we believe, of the "Dr." Fay who accompanied the Davenport Brothers to England, advertising her *séances* in America, announces that "at the solicitation of her Majesty she filled the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square." We have heard it hinted that her Majesty has a partiality for spirits, but we should like some better evidence of Miss Fay's statement than her own testimony.

How to bring the gospel home to the upper classes is the problem at present engaging some religious craniums. A correspondent of the *English Churchman* suggests evening dress drawing-room parties, where the truths of religion may be introduced in a style suitable to the fashionable world, hymns sung to the accompaniment of an "Erard grand," and Christ discussed along with the champagne. No doubt there will be plenty of clergy ready to undertake a West-End mission of this character.

Under the heading "A Sceptic Silenced," the *Christian Herald* repeats an old story as to a notorious Atheist who lectured at Nottingham, and quoted from the verse which says David "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not

aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life." "Finish the verse," said a voice from the end of the hall. "I have no Bible," replied the lecturer. "Nor have I one, yet I can finish it, and the conclusion, which you omitted, is 'save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.'" The story goes on to say: "The feeling aroused against the disingenuous Atheist in consequence of this exposure of his 'handling the word of God deceitfully' was so strong that he hurriedly left the hall, and took himself out of Nottingham at his earliest convenience."

THE story is understood to refer to Mr. Bradlaugh. That gentleman has denied it. When he quotes the Bible about David he quotes another passage (1 Kings xiv., 8), which says: My servant David, "who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his might to do that only which was right in mine eyes." This verse makes no exception of the matter of Uriah the Hittite, and the fact suggests the possibility of that clause being an interpolation. But, giving the fullest weight to the exception, it follows that God approved of David's massacre and robbery of the Amalekites, of his torture of the Ammonites, whom he cut with saws and with harrows and with axes, and of his death-bed orders to slay Shimei, to whom he had sworn that he would not slay him. The Jewish writers may have objected to a king's adultery with their own wives, but they evidently thought perfidy and cruelty to other nations quite in keeping with God's commandments.

JANE WATSON, of Glasgow, for several years a regular attendant at the Adelaide Place Baptist Chapel, neatly abstracted two £1 notes from the collection plate. The result was an introduction to the police court. While we write Jane Watson's fate is trembling in the balance. It appears to us, however, that she should be discharged. When the money was once in the plate it was God's, and no prosecution should have been started without his authority.

THE writ of *habeas corpus* under which the Rev. James Bell Cox was released from prison last summer has been discharged by the Court of Appeal. So that it turns out he ought never to have been let out. Whether he will be taken back to gaol again remains to be seen. Isn't it time that Disestablishment took away the power by which clergymen can imprison each other for purely ecclesiastical offences of the most trivial character?

MR. BERRY is to succeed Beecher. He is to have ten thousand dollars a year and a free residence. A tolerable recompense for preaching a religion of poverty and self-denial.

SUNDRY young men were fined at Luton for assaulting the Salvation Army. Mr. Cumberland, one of the magistrates, said he entirely objected. He thought the Salvation Army brought this sort of thing upon themselves by the course they pursued. The way in which they paraded the streets on Sundays was extremely objectionable, although no doubt they had a right to do so; but as a resident he wished to say that it was extremely disgraceful that the Salvation Army went on in this way. Their conduct made the town hardly fit to live in. Another member of the bench, Mr. Higgins, said he quite agreed with these remarks.

THE Rev. A. E. Haegert says that "about 40,000 persons die every year from snake-bite in India." This is a greater number than given in the government returns, but these of course may be incomplete. But what has this reverend missionary to say of the God who made these poisonous serpents, and sets them to kill men, women, and children in such frightful numbers? Do the cobra and the whip-snake illustrate God's wisdom, or his benevolence? This missionary twits the native Santhals with the uselessness of their sacrifices to the Snake-god, and then prays to his own God to cure a child who is bitten. He tries to drive out one superstition in order to substitute another.

THERE has been some cannonading in the *Times*. Canon Taylor suggests that Canon MacColl was one who saw impaled men where others saw scarecrows. Canon Liddon writes to the *Times* repeating that from the steamboat on the Danube they did see a man impaled during the Russo-Turkish war. Canon Liddon urges this as an argument for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Canon MacColl and himself saw a man impaled, yet Canon Taylor suggests it was a scarecrow; therefore there is no force in the fact that the Jew of Jerusalem rejected the resurrection of Jesus. Canon Liddon forgets that the unbelieving Jews were there at the time and in the place where the alleged miracle occurred, and that the alleged accounts of the miracles were not published at the time and in the place, but a long way off, and even after the destruction of Jerusalem. The fact that credible testimony at the present time to a natural although unusual event is disbelieved, is only an argument that the evidence for a supernatural occurrence, like that of the resurrection of Jesus, should be so overwhelming that unbelief would be impossible.

THE Church of England Working Mens' Society has a debt of nearly £500, and Mr. C. Powell, who virtually is the C. E. W. M. S., appeals to the clergy for cash, because the Society is pledged to the defence of the Church.

THE *Church Times* warns the world that the decay of dogma means the spread of unbelief. It says "We respectfully suggest to those Dissenters who do not wish to enter upon the 'Down Grade,' that they should adopt the rule of singing or saying the *Quicumque vult* on the first Sunday morning in every month. Under God, there is no other prophylactic against deadly error." The Athanasian Creed, which so beautifully explains how three Almighty's are one Almighty, and which so amiably damns all unbelievers, is the only remedy for unbelief.

THE Bishop of Salisbury, who, with the Bishop of Lichfield, has been on a mission to the Continent to inquire into the position of the old Catholics, with a view to the re-union of Christendom, holds out little hope of that consummation being speedily realised. He says "he could never believe that Christendom would be re-united under the Bishop of Rome." He may take his affidavit it will not be re-united under the Archbishop of Canterbury.

"I heard of a rather amusing occurrence which took place the other Sunday. A worthy minister who is fond of putting plenty of water on the babies' faces was baptising a child which was rather too old for having this operation performed in public. Over the child's face was a huge veil, and the minister, to get it properly sprinkled, had to lift this back with the hand that didn't hold the water. Imagine the worthy minister's horror and the congregation's amusement when the baby smiled blandly, made a clutch at the ministerial whisker, and ejaculated audibly, "Peep-Bo!" N.B.—This is a fact; I heard it from the minister himself.—*Glasgow Evening News*.

SIR CHARLES WARREN is a very pious man, and fond of discoursing to Christian youths. Seven or eight years ago he lectured in the East of London on the Holy Land, and he remarked that he had been in the Garden of Gethsemane, but the difficulty was that the Latin Church had another Garden of Gethsemane a little further up on the other side of the same road. Sir Charles Warren said this quite seriously, like the pious geographer he is. He never caught the joke for a moment, and judging from his recent conduct he is as devoid of a sense of humor now as he was then.

QUERY. Could there be a worse combination for a Commissioner of Police in London than piety, want of humor, and militarism? Londoners might go farther and fare better.

MR. MATTHEWS, the Home Secretary, is a pious Roman Catholic. He and Warren differ as to a few dogmas, but being both pious, in their several ways, they agree in dragooning the people of London into "order," which, in the mouths of Tories, always means slavery.

THE Rev. Morgan Hughes, vicar of Derwen, in North Wales, is causing great excitement by enforcing his claims to the full arrears of his tithes. He obtained bailiffs from a distant part of the country and suddenly distrained on haystacks at two farms. The town crier soon proclaimed the fact at Ruthin, and five hundred farmers and others at once set out to hunt the bailiffs, who, however, had disappeared.

THERE was a large gathering on the day appointed for the sale of the haystacks. An effigy of the vicar in a dilapidated white shirt to represent his surplice was displayed on the top of one of the stacks together with another curious effigy of the auctioneer. On the other farm a grotesque image of a gigantic tithe bailiff was placed on the stack, and a red flag was hoisted bearing the word "Disestablishment." Satirical verses by a local poet were also displayed. The auctioneer, however, thought discretion was the better part of valor, and failed to appear. Resolutions were passed condemning the rector and supporting Disestablishment.

MR. WATKIN ROWLAND, an eminent Christian and church benefactor, of Croesyceiliog, committed suicide, and the Rev. Mr. Griffiths at the funeral made the following ingenious explanation of the act: "As the apostle said, 'I have a desire to depart to be with Christ, which is far better;' so in the case of their departed brother the desire in his heart was so strong and powerful that he could not wait for the summons to go home to be with his Savior the Lord and to enjoy his presence for ever." This looks very much like a Christian defence of suicide. The next thing Mr. Griffiths has to do is to recommend all the cranks who earnestly desire to live with the Lord to go and do likewise.

GRANT THORBURN, the calumniator of Thomas Paine, was a puny Scotchman. He used to visit his native country, and on one of the return voyages the captain called on the passengers to help him to quell a mutiny. Thorburn turned to a fellow-passenger of large stature and said, "You help the captain, and I will go down in the cabin and pray." The mutiny was quelled, and on the arrival of the vessel at New York an account of it was published in the newspapers, in which the successful result was attributed to the powerful efforts of Grant Thorburn!

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Saturday, Nov. 26, Albert Hall, Willington, at 7.30, "Why I Reject the Bible."

Sunday, November 27, Co-operative Hall, Green Street, Sunderland; at 11, "Thus Saith the Lord"; at 3, "The Blood of Christ"; at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

DEC. 4, Nottingham; 5, Clay Cross; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 1, Milton Hall, London; 8, Manchester; 15, Hall of Science, London; 29, Blackburn.

FEB. 5, Camberwell; 12, Milton Hall, London; 19, Liverpool.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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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.

A. BANNISTER.—All orders for publications should be sent to R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street.

W. HANGER.—We have handed your complaint to Mr. Forder. We know nothing about it.

H. W.—The handbill is the work of an enterprising idiot. "Infidelity Exposed" is put at the top to catch pious flies. Yes, the Catholic Bible is different from the Protestant. It contains many books of the Old Testament which Protestants call "apocryphal," and follows the Latin Vulgate in preference to the Hebrew and Greek texts.

A CORRESPONDENT wishes to know where the *Freethinker* can be bought in Dublin. Will one of our Dublin readers answer the question?

T. H. DUKE.—We make no charge for such an advertisement. We regret to hear of Mr. Wallace Nelson's ill health, and trust that he may be enabled to enjoy the trip to Australia which his doctor so urgently advises.

J. KEAST.—We hope the Bristol Freethinkers will support the N. S. S. Branch better. Union is strength, and organisation is the secret of success.

STUDENT.—We have just reprinted Ingersoll's spirited reply to Dr. Field as a pamphlet. We agree with you that "it should sell like wildfire." The second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* is in active preparation, but it is not a work to be hurried. Every line has to be pondered, and every quotation verified and re-verified. We are happy to say that Vol. I. is selling well.

OAKENSHAW.—Always pleased to hear from you, and should be glad to see you.

R. FOX.—C. J. Haslam, author of *Letters to the Clergy* is still living near Newcastle. Darwin was not included in *Infidel Death-Beds* because his life was not then published. Indeed, it is only just issued. He, with several others, will be included in the next edition.

II. RICHARDSON.—The Welsh minister who says that a man, speaking from Mount Sinai, could be distinctly heard twelve miles off, should be engaged to draw up the advertisements for Barnum. Perhaps he heard a jackass bray, half a mile off in a fog, and recognised the voice of a brother. For the death of Paine see *Infidel Death-Beds*.

G. DOUGLAS.—Pleased to hear you like the *Freethinker*, though differing from its views. By the way, why talk of "the science of Moses"? Every scholar knows that the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, or any part of it, is an exploded legend. Besides, the Bible story of Creation is very much like the myths of various ancient peoples.

E. BOWLES claims to be the sailor that the Rev. Mr. Bloomer says he converted on board the "Colonel Smith." He says that Bloomer's story is mostly a concoction. The grain of truth is that our correspondent showed him a copy of the *Freethinker*, and argued with him till he cried "Enough."

B. W.—The only advantage of belonging to the N. S. S. is that you will be helping the Freethought cause. Mr. Forder will send you a form to fill up. The subscription is 4s. a year, or 1s. a quarter. Pleased to hear that your Freethought tendencies became pronounced after "accidentally seeing a copy of the *Freethinker*." The joke has appeared before.

O. D., on learning that *Progress* is still a loss, promises to take four copies instead of one.

J. BROWN.—Mr. Foote hopes to pay you a visit another time.

C. HEATON.—Thanks, but the subject is not worth pursuing.

W. ALEXANDER.—Certainly the parson was right. Both the Catholic Church and the Church of England hold that baptism is necessary to salvation. No sprinkling no heaven. Ingersoll has not yet published his own edition of his defence of Mr. Reynolds, and he ought not to be misrepresented by imperfect reports.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Jus—Lucifer—Freidenker—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Rock—Birmingham Daily Mail—Christian Herald—Christian Commonwealth—Thinker—Evening Express and Star—Truthseeker—Hope—Sydney Evening News—Sydney Daily Telegraph—Leeds Daily News—La Semaine Anticlericale—L'Union Democratique—Sunderland Echo—Pontypool Free Press—North British Daily Mail—Northampton Reporter.

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 large audience at Camberwell last Sunday evening. Mr. Thomas took the chair, and submitted a resolution after the lecture, condemning the action of the authorities in reference to Trafalgar Square. The resolution was carried unanimously. Two opponents, Messrs. Morden and Jones, lengthened the proceedings and caused much laughter, without imparting much information. Mr. Jones, who has as much logic as a hen hatching a chalk egg, challenged Mr. Foote to a four nights' (why not forty?) discussion on the existence of God. Mr. Foote replied that he did not accept everybody's challenge, or he would spend all his time discussing with a multitude of fools. If the Camberwell Branch wanted him to meet a Christian it considered competent, he was always ready; but it was unfair to throw upon him the onus of accepting or declining individual challenges. That meant that he must express his opinion of the challenge, and as he wished to be courteous he begged to be excused.

MR. FOOTE lectures at Sunderland to-day (Nov. 27). The hall he previously lectured in being no longer available, owing to the conduct of the bigots, the Branch has engaged the Co-operative Store Company's fine new hall for this occasion. We hope the Freethinkers in the district will make the lectures widely known, and, by securing large audiences, teach the local bigots that their paltry tactics are, after all, futile.

THE Federation of the London Branches of the N. S. S. is now within sight. A delegate meeting was held on Thursday evening, Nov. 17, at the Hall of Science. Mr. Foote presided. Messrs. G. Standring and R. O. Smith were present, with twenty-four delegates from fourteen Branches; namely, Camberwell, Ball's Pond, East London, Battersea, Westminster, Finsbury, North London, North-west London, Paddington, Hyde Park, Peckham and Dulwich, Bethnal Green, North Lambeth, and West Ham. A resolution in favor of Federation was carried unanimously. Messrs. Foote, Smith, Standring, Rogers and Hiscock, agreed to act as a sub-committee to draw up a draft constitution which will be sent out in a few days to all the London Branches for full discussion at a special members' meeting, which each Branch is requested to convoke. Another delegate meeting will be held at the Hall of Science on Thursday, Dec. 15, when the Constitution will be finally discussed and ratified. This will allow the Federation to begin business with the new year.

OUR Christmas Number is now on sale, and, judging from the trade orders, it is going to be a success. We believe it will be pronounced by Freethinkers "up to the mark," and by Christians "a budget of blasphemy, for which everlasting hell-fire is too light a punishment."

WE have reprinted Ingersoll's splendid reply to the Rev. Dr. Field in the *North American Review*, which is only partially reproduced in the *Truthseeker* and the *Investigator*. The article, which is in the form of a letter to Dr. Field, occupies thirty-three pages of the magazine, and we reprint it on good paper in good type for twopence. As Ingersoll gives it no title, we have christened it "Faith and Fact."

MR. ROBERT FORDER has been delivering a "blasphemous" lecture at the Liberal Club, Broadway, Deptford, and the *Kentish Mercury* denounces it as "a great scandal." So it is, a very great scandal—that such lectures require to be delivered in an age like this. Our contemporary is so wroth at this "propagation of the most hideous Atheism" that it threatens to return to the subject "next week." We hope it will. The more it keeps the pot boiling the better.

THE people that sat in darkness have seen a great light. The people are the North Devonians, and the great light is the Judge of the Bideford County Court. Mr. J. H. Powe, one of our friends in that benighted quarter, was summoned as a juror. He bravely told the judge that the invocation of the oath was to his mind meaningless; and, on being questioned, replied that he did not deny the existence of God, but simply had no conception of such a being. Thereupon the judge remarked "You can make an affirmation, then." The litigants were asked if they objected, and they answered "Not at all." So Mr. Powe affirmed and did his duty as "a good man and true" in sheer defiance of the law. That judge has common sense, however; though we suspect the litigants pocketed their bigotry for the occasion out of respect to Mr. Powe's sterling character.

THE case against Mrs. Slenker has fallen through, on the ground that the indictment was faulty. We hope she will be troubled no further.

THE collection of goody-goody extracts which goes by the misnomer of *Great Thoughts* gives this week a portrait of Ernest Renan and a tame extract from the great Frenchman's *History*

of *Israel*, from which no one would imagine that Renan was a thorough Freethinker.

THE Sydney papers report the seventh annual meeting of the Australasian Secular Association. The President, Mr. Frederick Jones, occupied the chair. Mr. Jones congratulated the society on a very successful year's work. He regretted they had not beaten Sir Henry Parkes over his action in illegally closing the theatres on Sunday. If they had been commanded by a man like Joseph Symes, Mr. Jones believed they would have beaten the New South Wales bigots, as he had those in Victoria. However, out of evil came good; and they had to thank Sir H. Parkes for the magnificent response to the appeal for funds to build a Hall of Science. Before another year was over he trusted a large building would be ready for the use of Freethinkers. They also had to congratulate themselves upon their successful efforts over the Jubilee business. A balance-sheet was submitted and adopted, which showed a credit balance of £3,700 for the building fund. Mr. E. Easton was elected president, with Messrs. Jones, Tye, and Flowers as vice-presidents, and a committee of fifteen.

### THE ROCK ON INFIDEL ATTACKS.

(Concluded from page 374.)

THE force of facts is such that the *Rock* is actually compelled to acknowledge that there are people who attack the Bible in the interest of truth and morality. It says:

"We candidly admit that there are some—not many—who honestly take up this ground. There are not a few strange phenomena in the present age; but we doubt whether the sun has ever looked down upon a stranger phenomenon than that combination of Puritanism in morals with unbelief in religion which is one of the signs of this highly peculiar time. Atheism and moral license used to be regarded as pretty nearly synonymous terms. But there are Atheists of to-day who are understood to be rigidly moral, who gather up their skirts when visiting scenes of Old Testament history, and who think it a pity that the refined youth of our modern cities should seek moral instruction in so antiquated and unscientific a book as the Bible. In very many cases this is sheer hypocrisy; and in the few instances in which it is sincere, it argues a fantastic, superfine, super-subtle, and dangerously high-flying order of mind."

In any case, the *Rock* argues that "the depreciation of Bible morality" is "a farce and a sham," because if Bible morality were as bad as Freethinkers allege, believers in the Bible would be cruel, false, idle, dishonest and all that is bad. Well, there are plenty of believers who are cruel, false, and so forth, just as there are also many who endeavor to be just and kind. But the pretence that obedience to the Bible is the rule of their lives is certainly "a farce and a sham." Do they put all witches and sabbath-breakers to death? Do they give all they have to the poor, and take no thought for the morrow? The best of them would rather die than obey the Bible which they are taught from infancy to regard as their guide. They disobey its conflicting precepts in a thousand ways, simply using those sayings which agree with their own ideas, and ignoring the others.

So certain is the *Rock* that Christians cannot be cruel, etc., that it says:

"It is notorious—no infidel dares to dispute the fact—that those who make the Bible their rule of life are the reverse of all this—humane, truthful, industrious, upright, steady."

But it is simply a piece of impudent mendacity—or blind stupidity—to say that no infidel dares to dispute this alleged fact. I, for instance, am what the *Rock* insultingly and lyingly calls an "infidel," that is, I am Atheist; and I not only dispute the assertion, but, in common with thousands of other "infidels," I deny it. In the first place there are no people who really make the Bible their rule of life. It would be simply impossible to follow its conflicting injunctions. The of the Old Testament are often too hideously barbarous for civilisation to tolerate, and the overdrawn moralities of the New Testament would speedily be subversive of society and virtue if faithfully carried out. Even those who contrive to believe that they make the Bible their rule of life, are not conspicuously humane, truthful, etc. Religious employers are often the severest of task-masters, and the least liberal in paying wages. As to their boasted truthfulness, the pious leading article I am now criticising is a sample. For humanity, and kindness and justice, let the imprisonment of Freethinkers speak, and the dastardly persecutions which all powerful Christian sects have employed against each other and against those who differed from them in opinion.

If the *Rock* merely maintained that some Christians are good (just as it admits that some "infidels" are strictly moral), I should not dispute the assertion. If it simply held that Christians were morally better than Secularists the contention would be a fair matter for argument. But the *Rock* is sure—and is sure that the infidels themselves are sure—that Christians are all that is good! And it continues:

"Nor is there the slightest difficulty in understanding why it must be so. The law of Moses is a code of morals for civilised society to the end of time. The man who strenuously endeavors to obey it is a moral man, exemplary in all relations of life, and a good citizen. If the Jews, whether priests or people, broke it, they disobeyed the Bible, but their doing so did not prove that the clear and unmistakable canons of universal morality were not engraven for ever on the front of Scripture."

"The law of Moses"—with its slavery, its permitted polygamy and concubinage and capture of girls, its massacre of idolators, its executions for such petty offences as eating blood or picking up sticks on a Saturday, and all its cruelties, superstitions, bloody sacrifices, and barbarous follies—"is a code of morals for civilised society to the end of time"! Is the editor of the *Rock* a lunatic? No, he is simply a Christian who blindly exalts religion above reason and faith above fact. Having piously satisfied himself that the savage precepts of barbarians are the clear and unmistakable canons of universal morality, he asks triumphantly:

"Can any honest man, fairly consulting the Bible, allege that it bids him be immoral, and that it does not bid him, under terrible penalties, to be moral? That is the question; and until infidels can answer it in the affirmative, it is a travesty of all logic and all honesty to say that they succeed in invalidating the morality of Scripture."

But "infidels" can and do answer this question in the affirmative. How far the *Rock* will allow that any of them are "honest" in doing so, is, of course, quite another matter. I and thousands of Freethinkers, after duly consulting our Bibles, do most emphatically declare that it bids us be immoral under most terrible penalties. It bids us exalt faith above reason under penalty of eternal damnation. It bids the father slay his daughter, the husband his beloved wife, for a difference of religion (Deut. xiii., 6-10). It places an unreal duty to God above real duty to man, teaching men even to hate their wives and children in comparison with God, and to desert them for the purpose of securing personal salvation or for spreading the Gospel. It condemns forethought and enjoins indiscriminate charity and non-resistance to evil. In these and in hundreds of other matters the Bible teaches men to break the laws of true morality.

The *Rock* by no means repudiates the Old Testament in any plain, honest fashion. It only seeks to do so indirectly and by equivocation. It says:

"It corroborates and crowns our argument, that the Old Testament and the New Testament stand or fall together, and that the final canons of Bible morality are to be found in the discourses of Our Lord. Christians are not commanded to model their lives in all respects upon those of 'them of old time;' but Christ distinctly said that he 'came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil,' and called upon his hearers to search the Scriptures. Every infidel, therefore, who would prove himself an honest man, really seeking purity and truth, must refrain from disparagement of the morality of the Old Testament, until he has read it in the light cast upon it from the face of Christ."

The command to stab one's daughter for idolatry is to be read in the light of the golden rule, and then we shall not be able to condemn it! Similarly, I must suppose, the Mosaic injunction that bids men love their neighbors as themselves (Lev. xix., 19) is to be read in the light of Christ's command to hate father and mother. What remains of the old law when read in the light of conflicting precepts of the new superstition? The Christian pretence that the New Testament confirms or fulfils the Old Testament, while at the same time demolishing or abrogating it by the light cast upon it from the face of Christ, is mere playing with words. No such special pleading as this can save the Old Testament from the condemnation it deserves.

W. P. BALL.

DANEHILL CHURCH, in Sussex, has been burnt down. The tower has fallen and only the walls remain. God is evidently very negligent. If he won't look after his own buildings we can hardly expect him to trouble about less sacred edifices.

## DARWIN'S RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

"DURING these two years I was led to think much about religion. Whilst on board the 'Beagle' I was quite orthodox, and I remember being heartily laughed at by several of the officers (though themselves orthodox) for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality. I suppose it was the novelty of the argument that amused them. But I had gradually come by this time—i.e., 1836 to 1839—to see that the Old Testament was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos. The question then continually rose before my mind and would not be banished—is it credible that if God were now to make a revelation to the Hindoos, he would permit it to be connected with the belief in Vishnu, Siva, etc., as Christianity is connected with the Old Testament? This appeared to me utterly incredible.

"By further reflecting that the clearest evidence would be requisite to make any sane man believe in the miracles by which Christianity is supported—and that the more we know of the fixed laws of nature the more incredible do miracles become—that the men at that time were ignorant and credulous to a degree almost incomprehensible by us, that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events, that they differ in many important details, far too important, as it seemed to me, to be admitted as the usual inaccuracies of eye-witnesses; by such reflections as these, which I give as not having the least novelty or value, but as they influenced me, I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation. The fact that many false religions have spread over large portions of the earth like wildfire had some weight with me.

"But I was very unwilling to give up my belief; I feel sure of this, for I can well remember often and often inventing day-dreams of old letters between distinguished Romans, and manuscripts being discovered at Pompeii or elsewhere, which confirmed in the most striking manner all that was written in the Gospels. But I found it more and more difficult, with free scope given to my imagination, to invent evidence which would suffice to convince me. Thus disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress.

"Although I did not think much about the existence of a personal God until a considerably later period of my life, I will here give the vague conclusions to which I have been driven. The old argument from design in Nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seems to me so conclusive, fails now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. We can no longer see that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by man. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows. But I have discussed this subject at the end of my book on the 'Variation of Domesticated Animals and Plants,' and the argument there given has never, as far as I can see, been answered."—From *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, edited by his Son.

## REVIEWS.

*Freidenker Almanach für das Jahr 1888.* Freidenker Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.—This is the eleventh year of this useful publication, which we trust is well supported among the German reading population of the States. In addition to the usual features of a calendar, it gives articles by C. H. Boppe, M. Grossmann, F. Schuneman-Pott, Edward Schroeter, Dr. Paul Carus, Otto Soubbron, and other German Freethinkers of America.

*St. Paul the Author of the Last Twelve Verses of the Second Gospel.* By HOWARD HEBER EVANS, B.A., late vicar of Mapperley. London: James Nisbet and Co., 21 Berners Street.—The first part of the Rev. H. H. Evans's thesis, that Mark xvi., 9-20, did not originally form part of the second gospel, is easily maintained. The passage is wanting in the two oldest manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, although these MSS. are not earlier than the fourth or fifth centuries. The style, moreover, is not in keeping with the rest of the gospel. That Paul was the writer of the passage is, however, more difficult to prove. Indeed, we think the theory baseless. What Mr. Evans does succeed in showing is that certain expressions in this section are similar to some in the epistles ascribed to Paul. Our conclusion would be that the writer was acquainted with Pauline theology. It is nonsense, in the face of the many interpolations in the New Testament, to argue as if only a person of authority could have inserted the paragraph. If Paul wrote it, why did he not say so? On the other hand, there is the evidence of Eusebius that genuine copies ended with the eighth verse. This would never have been written had there ever been a tradition that the addenda was the production of Paul, who was probably dead before any portion of Mark was written.

*Paris and London.* By JULES MAGNY. London: Standring (1d.)—Some translated extracts from a forthcoming volume by Felix Pyat, contrasting the ways of London with those of Paris. There is more amusement than the author intended, for every page has an eruption of comical mistakes.

*Sun Worship.*—This little pamphlet has no publisher's name, but, we gather from the dedication, is written by Thomas May, of 151 Fulham Road, S.W. The author holds that there is one God, that the sun is his vice-regent, to whom we are indebted for all material comforts, and who, therefore, is worthy of adoration, and that the Holy Spirit is the "Divine warmth, the soft, soothing influence or atmosphere which we enjoy, and which proceeds from the Sun." He may be interested to learn that there is an American book by Dr. Milton Wooley which contends that Jesus Christ is the rain. Sunshine finds no sceptics, but Mr. May's proposal to return to sun-worship is about as feasible as bringing back the mastodon.

## PAUL AT ATHENS.

Zealot uncouth, whose seething brain  
With theomaniac visions glows,  
What seek'st thou where Athena's fane  
Empurpled mount and sea o'erbrows?  
No desert-cradled prophet here  
His mystic rancour ever poured;  
But blue-eyed Pallas, calm, austere,  
The might of reason, is adored.

To song and dance and joyous thought  
The muse of Hellas sane inspires;  
No dream of doom the soul o'erwrought  
To pentecostal madness fires.  
You is the stately Stoa, where  
Wise Zeno taught with fluent might:  
Amid his listening pupils there  
Serenely walked the Stagyrite.

Of hero-moulding ethics stern  
The founder one; the laws of thought  
The other clearly did discern  
With keenest introversion fraught.  
O wandering dreamer! well may shine  
With wild, unsteady light thine eyes,  
Gazing at altar, marble shrine,  
Where glorious shapes of beauty rise.

Bards, sages, artists, statesmen grand,  
With Jove-like brows, a noble throng,  
In bronze and stone, on every hand,  
What bring'st thou from thyself, O Paul,  
Palm-shaded sand and blazing sun?  
Fanatic zeal! thou com'st to mar  
All that the might of thought has done.

Reason is by thy narrow race  
Unheeded—nigh dethroned in thee,  
Thou heraldest the mind's disgrace  
First of a priestly pedigree.  
Because of thee for ages long  
Shall thought in chains and darkness sit,  
While reign a wild and squalid throng  
Of monks, fierce foes of wisdom, wit;

And science, manhood, leave the world  
In total, thousand-year'd eclipse;  
Sense, judgment, into exile hurled,  
No utterance find from human lips.  
Fanatic Asia's rancor fierce  
Shall poison Europe's spirit proud;  
Long, long 'twill be ere reason pierce  
With sun-bright shafts faith's murky cloud.

B. W. BALL.

## WESLEY'S OPINION OF CALVIN'S GOD.

THE *Christian World*, having referred somewhat doubtfully to Wesley's indignant repudiation of Calvin's God as worse than his Devil, a correspondent sends the editor a quotation from a sermon (number 128) on "Free Grace," in which the eminent divine says of Calvin's views: "This doctrine represents our blessed Lord. . . as weeping crocodile tears; weeping over the prey which himself had doomed to destruction! Such blasphemy this as one would think might make the ears of a Christian to tingle. . . It represents the most holy God as worse than the Devil; more false, more cruel, and more unjust." Wesley dwells upon these terms, proving each, and proceeds: "This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible decree of predestination!" The underscoring is Wesley's. He proceeds: "And here I fix my foot; on this I join issue with every asserter of it. You blaspheme God as worse than the Devil," etc. Wesley, it appears, in editing his revised Book of Common Prayer, rejected the Seventeenth Article, along with thirteen others, and abridged four of the 'Thirty-Nine.'

A SCOTCH MINISTER, in one of the parochial visits, met a cow-boy, and asked him what o'clock it was. "About twelve, sir." "Well," remarked the minister, "I thought it was more." "It's never any more here," said the boy, "It just begins at one again, then!"

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*List of Articles, Etc.:*—Judge North and the Devil, Moses in Egypt, Re-Incarnation of Jabers, Life in Heaven, Joshua at Jericho, Jehovah's Jubilee, The Wicked Cat, God Almighty Died for Me, Two Preachers, The Dying Freethinker, Correspondence Extraordinary, Bible Curios, Rib Ticklers, Pious Advertisements, Etc., Etc.

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 "Two keen writers."—*Truthseeker* (London).  
 "If we are not mistaken, the first-named of these authors is the same gentleman who was imprisoned for blasphemy. We may be excused from any detailed review of a work animated throughout by the bitterest hatred of Christianity."—*Literary World.*  
 "Presented in a concise and impressive manner. . . so far as we have been able to verify the quotations they are given accurately."—*Open Court* (Chicago).

**AN URGENT APPEAL.**  
**MR. WALLACE NELSON,** a most worthy and active worker in the cause of Secularism is in ill-health. His medical attendant (Dr. Hardwicke) declares that only a voyage to Australia can restore him, and even that, to be effective, must be taken *at once.* As Mr. Nelson's means will not enable him to incur the expense, the Committee of the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. have determined to initiate a subscription on his behalf. They are already promised sums amounting to £8, and urgently appeal to Secularists, especially in the North of England, for immediate aid in raising the sum of £30 or so which is required. Subscriptions may be sent to Mr. E. A. Field, 9 Rye Street, Clarendon Road, Manchester, to Mr. A. Hemingway, 25 Higher Chatham Street, Manchester, or to Mr. Nelson direct at 142 Landsdowne Road, Sheffield, and will be duly acknowledged in the *Freethinker.*

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