

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## INGERSOLL DEMOLISHED.

INGERSOLL holds the field in America. One by one his antagonists have disappeared and left him master of the situation. Even in England his critics have not been fortunate. Only a few days ago we saw a street barrow loaded with newcopies of Dr. Parker's "Answer," which were selling, or offered for sale, at almost the price of an old song. But Ingersoll's turn has come at last. The Rev. J. W. Black has settled him. "Indeed," the reader will exclaim, "and who is the Rev. J. W. Black?" He is an M.A. and vicar of Launcells. We presume he is also a member of the Guild of St. Matthew, for his pamphlet is published by Mr. F. Verinder, at 8 Duke Street, Adelphi, London, W.C., at the modest price of twopence. There is a significance in the very name of Black. It was Judge Black who first began discussing with Colonel Ingersoll in the *North American Review*. That heroic champion of orthodoxy quickly retired from the lists, and perhaps the Rev. J. W. Black comes forward to annihilate Ingersoll in order to sustain the family reputation. He evidently expects a long life for his pamphlet, for he dedicates it to "The dear memory of Henry Llewellyn Browne," whose name is thus retrieved from obscurity and given a place on the bead-roll of fame. Black and Browne will go down to posterity hand in hand.

Mr. Black replies to Ingersoll instead of Mr. Gladstone, who, it seems, is unable to come up to the scratch a second time "owing to the numerous other calls which press upon him." This is not *our* explanation of the matter, but perhaps Mr. Black has special sources of information. Mr. Gladstone, however, must have a wonderful number of "calls" if they prevent his getting his American article published in England. Judging from its surreptitious appearance in an obscure Nonconformist magazine, an irreverent observer might conclude that the Grand Old Man was half ashamed of his bantling.

Mr. Black opens by informing us that Ingersoll attacks a creature of his own imagination. We presume, therefore, that Ingersoll is very dull, or that the Bible and the Creeds are very obscure. The first alternative is too absurd for refutation or denial, though a good deal might be said for the second. There is, however, another alternative; namely, that Mr. Black is defending, not Christianity, but a creature of *his* imagination. He appears to be a good-natured person, and as he looks upon Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant as unconscious Christians, he is naturally inclined to discover nothing in the Bible but Guild-of-St.-Matthewism.

Nevertheless, as he proceeds, Mr. Black finds the parson too strong for him, and falls into the old pits of orthodoxy. His simplicity, indeed, is something wonderful. It is as though Moses, of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, should enter into a disputation with horse-dealers on the value of spectacles. After reminding us that the Bible, like all ancient histories, opens with myth and legend, he blandly tells us that "Moses wove together the legends in which the Egyptians and Assyrians had preserved the earliest facts known about the human race." What a pretty muddle! Moses as an author no longer exists but in clerical museums, and his studying Assyrian legends is a grotesque anachronism. Mr. Black, we imagine, is quite capable of taking seriously Swift's irony about Homer, who was scandalously ignorant of the English Constitution and the Thirty nine Articles. But this is not all. Mr. Black gathers from the Creation story that God "ordained the division into sexes, in order that woman, being, as a rule, both physically and intellectually weaker than man, might"—well, to cut it short, keep her place and nurse her

old man. How beautiful! How elevating! Mr. Black forgets, or does not know, that the "division into sexes" is far older than the human race. Not only is it found in animals; it is found in plants. Mr. Black should take a few lessons in biology.

When it suits his purpose, Mr. Black regards the Creation story as a myth; when it suits his purpose to regard it otherwise he speaks of Adam and Eve as "our first parents." He quibbles also (we regret to use the word) about original sin. Adam's sin was not imputed to us, but we inherit his fallen nature; a distinction without a difference, if our fallen nature leads us to hell. On the other hand, Mr. Black argues that there is no merit in goodness and courage; for, if man battles for the right, who gave him the power? God, of course; and God therefore claims all the result! Thus Mr. Black, who objects to usury on earth, goes in for unlimited usury in heaven. God is not simply entitled to a percentage; he is entitled to all the profit, while the borrower is to suffer in person for all the loss.

Mr. Black, being a man, is not shocked at Jehovah's curse on Eve and her female posterity. He is quite satisfied with "the decree of God that child-bearing shall involve much bodily pain to the mother." Now, as a matter of fact, there is very little pain among savage mothers, who sometimes walk about, as though nothing had happened, a few hours after confinement. God's curse, therefore, is to fall more heavily upon mothers as they become more civilised, as their nerves become more highly strung. What cold cruelty! What calculating infamy! Every man who loves his wife or mother should hate such a God with every drop of blood in his body.

No wonder Mr. Black finds the tenth commandment no insult to women. He differs from Ingersoll. He inclines to the view of the Grand Turk. Putting wives in the same category with asses, as things not to be coveted, raises round them "a fence of honor and dignity!" It is useless to dispute about taste. As Lincoln said of a popular book, "Well, if people like that sort of thing, that is just the sort of thing they'd like."

Coming to the Deluge, Mr. Black says it is "authenticated by other records besides the Bible," but he does not name them. Probably he alludes, in his vague way, to the Assyrian myths. With respect to Abraham's picnic with Isaac, he tells us that "God never intended the order to slay his son to be executed." Perhaps not; we don't know what God intended, and probably Mr. Black knows as little. But that is not the point. Did Abraham think that God meant it? If he did, he was a murderer at heart; if he did not, he and the Lord were playing a dull pantomime.

Ingersoll's witticisms annoy Mr. Black, who objects to his calling Aaron's anointing fluid "hair oil." Anyone who made any like it was doomed to die. Mr. Black defends this. Any Jew who tempted another Jew to forsake Jehovah was doomed to die. Mr. Black defends this. Any layman who touched the ark, even in a reverent spirit, was doomed to die. Mr. Black defends this. When the death penalty comes in he is a good old hanging apologist. His reason is that the worship of Jehovah was the national religion, and heresy was treason. The same argument is used by every community of savages; and it was used by the Church of England when it burnt and mutilated Dissenters.

After this Mr. Black would be sentimental to hesitate at approving the murder of the Jew who was found picking up sticks on a Sunday. Such an act, he says, was a mercy to the whole community, for it kept the day of rest sacred. Mr. Black should advocate the same "mercy" now. He should propose to hang Sunday costermongers, and burn clergymen who drive to church.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

THE ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF  
FREETHOUGHT LITERATURE IN ENGLAND.—III.

WOOLSTON'S *Discourses on the Miracles*, in which, for the first time, bold unbelief was put before the people in common language, created a great outcry. They had no publisher's name on them, but were "printed for the author." They were "presented" by the grand jury of Middlesex. But this only rendered them more popular. Voltaire, who was in England at the time, says 30,000 copies were sold. Possibly this means 5,000 of each of the six discourses. Woolston was tried in March, 1729, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Refusing to give sureties not to offend again, the brave old heretic was kept in prison till he died, 27 Jan., 1733. In 1754 Lord Bolingbroke's works were "presented" by the grand jury, but the case never came for trial. In 1756 Jacob Ilive was imprisoned for two years for publishing *Modest Remarks on the late Bishop Sherlock's Sermons*.

In 1761 Peter Annet, who had previously issued several works boldly criticising Christian evidences, published the first Freethought journal in England under the title of the *Free Enquirer*. It only lasted nine numbers; Annet was at once pounced upon, put twice in the pillory, and imprisoned with hard labor for a year.

The next cases came in an attempt to prevent the circulation of the *Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine. The first prosecution, that of Thos. Williams, took place in 1797. It was instigated by the "Vice Society," which numbered four bishops among its promoters. Williams was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Various booksellers in the country were also prosecuted. In March, 1812, D. I. Eaton was the victim, receiving two years' imprisonment, and being also placed in the pillory, a sentence which called forth Shelley's indignant "Letter to Lord Ellenborough."

In the following year George Houston was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and £200 fine for publishing a second edition of *Ecce Homo: A Critical Inquiry into the History of Jesus of Nazareth*, which had previously been published at Edinburgh in 1799. The work was suppressed but was republished by Houston at New York in 1827. The prosecutions against Hone for his *Parodies*, it is well known, resulted in the acquittal of the publisher.

From 1819 to 1824 a series of over thirty trials took place in the endeavor to stamp out the *Age of Reason*, Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, the *Republican*, and other publications of Richard Carlile. The first trial, that of Carlile himself, lasted nine days (October, 1819), during which Carlile read the whole of the *Age of Reason* in order that it might be reprinted in the report of the trial. The work was not suppressed for a single day though shopman after shopman was imprisoned, and various mechanical expedients were resorted to so that purchasers might obtain the work without seeing the seller. Carlile was sentenced to a fine of £1,500, imprisonment for three years, and to find sureties for his good behavior for the rest of his life. The intrepid Freethinker refused compliance to the law, and was kept in gaol till Nov. 18th, 1825, when he was liberated unconditionally. The result was a decided victory for the cause of free publication. In publishing the report of the trials of his brave associates in the fight he was able to say "All the publications that have been prosecuted have been and are continued in open sale." Among the condemned publications was Shelley's *Queen Mab*.

Although the Rev. Robert Taylor was imprisoned for spoken blasphemy, there was no further attack on the right of freethought publication until the advance of the Owenite Socialist movement alarmed the clergy. C. J. Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy* was selected for attack. John Cleave and Henry Hetherington, the editor of the *Poor Man's Guardian*, who had fought so bravely for an unstamped press, were each sentenced to four months' imprisonment, but the work was continued in open sale by Hetherington and Watson and the Freethought booksellers.

In 1841 Moxon was indicted for publishing *Queen Mab*, as a profane and malicious libel concerning the Christian religion. The judge left it to the jury with the suggestion that at least one passage was insulting to Christian minds. It was however part of a collection of poems that had been long before published, and poems are by the common consent of mankind unlikely to influence conduct. The jury found Mr. Moxon guilty, but he was never called up for judgment.

The next attack was made upon the *Oracle of Reason*, started at Bristol by Charles Southwell, who for an article on "The Jew Books," was condemned to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. Mr. Holyoake then took charge of the *Oracle*, but was soon run in for spoken blasphemy and punished with six months' imprisonment despite his able defence. T. Paterson then became first priest of the *Oracle*, and he in turn was sent to prison for three months for exhibiting a profane placard. But the *Oracle of Reason* was not suppressed. It merged into the *Movement*, edited by Mr. Holyoake, and that again into the *Reasoner*.

Some prosecutions then took place in Scotland, Messrs. Robinson and Finlay having been arrested in 1843 for selling works "calculated to bring the Christian religion into contempt." Paterson went to Edinburgh to sell the same works. He was arrested and sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment. Robinson received twelve months and Finlay sixty days. Miss Matilda Roalfe then went from London to Edinburgh, and published a circular in which she stated she was "resolved to supply the public with works of a controversial and philosophical character, whether such works do or do not bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion." Police officers were speedily sent to purchase the *Oracle of Reason* and other "blasphemous works." Miss Roalfe was brought before the sheriff, and received the highest sentence in his power, two months' imprisonment. She defended herself ably and evoked much sympathy. No sooner was she incarcerated than the *Movement* announced that "Mr. Baker, of the United Order of Blasphemers, has arrived in Edinburgh to take the superintendance of the Atheistical Depot during the absence of Miss Roalfe." Upon her release this Freethought heroine resumed her shop and continued the sale of Freethought literature without further molestation. Thus ended the prosecution of Freethought literature until the attempt to suppress the *Freethinker* in 1882-3.

It is sheer humbug to say that Christianity is not responsible for these attacks upon freedom of publication. They followed naturally from its doctrine that error involves guilt. If the writings of Freethinkers lead souls to destruction, the proper religious, nay humane, course is by every possible means to suppress and destroy such publications. As long as the Church had the power it pursued this policy. During all these prosecutions which I have enumerated, the voice of the clergy has never been heard in protest. Of late years some broad Unitarians like Mr. Sharman, and a few of the Broad Church like Mr. Headlam, have protested against the Blasphemy Laws, which permit such prosecutions. Yet all the clergy now say they dislike persecution. True; and they first began to dislike it when it was found persecution did not serve their turn and only brought them into contempt. By not permitting prosecuted publications to be suppressed Freethinkers have gradually forced them into this position, and if proper support is given to Mr. Bradlaugh we shall soon see the laws repealed whereby such prosecutions were possible.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

PIGOTT shot himself on a *Friday*, and his room at the hotel was numbered *thirteen*. This "double event" has set the superstitious people of Madrid talking and shivering.

PIGOTT and his scapular remind us of the highwayman who comforted himself on the scaffold with the thought that he had never entered a church without taking his hat off, and of the Italian brigands who never take any booty without offering candles at the shrine of the Virgin.

THE Catholic papers, in noticing Pigott's death, avoided all mention of that worthy's scapular. We looked especially to the *Tablet* and the *Weekly Register* to see if they would have any comment on this instance of the common conjunction of superstition and crime. According to the *English Churchman*, there is another form of scapular granted by Pope Pius IX., and which is guaranteed to ward off all attacks from Satan. Pigott did not patronise this article, but preferred that of Our Lady, the wearer of which can never go to hell, and never stays in Purgatory over a week.

LORD HALSBURY (late Sir Hardinge Giffard) refused to join a dinner party to which Mr. Labouchere was invited. His refusal was based on the fact that Mr. Labouchere had called

him "the Lord High Jobber of England." How sad! 'Tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true.

OUR pious Lord Chancellor will miss a good many dinner parties if the hosts have to choose between him and "Labby." Perhaps his lordship will think better of it, and find discretion the better part of valor. He will have to wait a long time if he waits for "Labby's" caving-in.

THERE is one Bill just introduced into the House of Commons which we hope will be rejected. It is a Bill backed by a curious array of names—Mr. Maple, Sir Richard Temple, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. H. Lawson, Mr. R. Chamberlain and Mr. Baumann; and its object is to abolish cumulative voting at London School Board elections by breaking the metropolis into single-member districts. This would simply give the reactionists an unchecked majority. A few progressists might be elected, but they would seldom be extreme candidates, and these are the very ones wanted to keep the rest from stagnating. Mrs. Besant, for instance, found about 3,000 people to vote for her in a division which comprises over 60,000 electors. What chance would she, or any other such advanced candidate, stand in any single-member constituency in London?

THE "Sunday Amusements of the Rich" was tackled by the recent London Diocesan Conference, and the discussion gave rise to some of the prettiest talk we remember. The Bishop of London, Dr. Temple, having delivered his opening address, denouncing "mere morality" and standing up for religion—Canon Capel Cure, who boasts a very appropriate name, moved a resolution "That the laxity of the observance of the Sunday amongst the higher classes has an injurious influence on the religion of the community." He ran amuck against smoking-concerts, jugglery entertainments, parades of four-in-hands, dinner parties, dances, and boating up the river—all of which shockingly profaned the blessed Sabbath in this unbelieving age. Speaker after speaker piped to the same tune. The "upper classes" were Sabbath-breakers, and their example made the "lower classes" careless about the ordinances of religion.

BUT the real secret transpired when Prebendary Forrest suggested that musical services should be given on Sunday afternoons to attract people to church. There it is! The parsons have a professional interest at stake. When they denounce the godlessness of the "lower" orders and the Sunday jinks of the "upper," they really mean that their business is going to the dogs. Empty churches, in the long run, mean empty purses, and the parsons know it.

THE parson's care for "the Sunday rest of the poor" is very much open to suspicion. Why doesn't he rest on Sunday? Why does he keep a huge army of persons employed in carrying on "divine service," about 250,000 in all, according to a moderate computation? Far fewer would be required to keep open to all the libraries, art galleries, and public libraries in the country, and perhaps all the theatres as well.

WHAT does the Conference propose as a remedy? Tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in the streets of Askelon, breathe it not in Belgravia and St. John's Wood. It was resolved that "the Bishop be requested to write a pastoral letter to the clergy and laity on the matter." In the name of the Prophet—figs!

BARON DOWSE'S charge to the Cork grand jury contained the following statement:—"There is no religion in the world worth mentioning which does not contain the maxim that you should do unto others as you would have others do unto you." We are glad to notice this acknowledgment. At one time the Christians used to maintain that the golden rule was peculiar to their creed, but the progress of knowledge has convinced even them that the position is untenable. Indeed, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to point out a single feature of Christianity which cannot be paralleled in other religious systems. The Christian faith is in no sense unique; it is only one of the common multitude of the world's faiths.

THE Rev. Graceless Gace, Vicar of Great Barling, Essex, has been called over the coals by his bishop for saying that to attend a Dissenting place of worship was a sin equal to lying and theft. The bishop says the day has gone by for such statements. Heresy and schism were considered "deadly sins" as long as the Church was all-powerful, and they are still called so in the Church of England service. But it is no longer politic to show the old fangs and claws so openly.

How bigoted are the professions taken as a whole! Even artists—we mean painters and sculptors—are no exception. Here is the Royal Academy, after "full consideration," refusing to open its doors on Sunday. This institution, therefore, though supported largely by public funds, must continue to be practically closed to the vast majority of the public. To ask the workman to lose a day's wages in order to visit the Academy is the height of impudence; and if the place is inaccessible on the only day on which a workman can visit it, without robbing his wife and family, it is perfectly clear that the Academy is kept up for the exclusive advantage of the upper classes.

THE Rev. Mr. Osborne, one of the Winchester College Mission priests, has been preaching at St. Agatha's, Portsmouth, on Secularism *v.* Christianity. In the course of his sermon he appealed to Secularists "not to encourage such obscene publications as the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker*." Obscene, forsooth! The reverend gentleman was slightly mixed. He must have been reading the blue and purple parts of his Bible until he had obscenity on the brain. We defy him to point out any "obscenity" in any number of the *Freethinker*, and if he has a grain of honesty he will accept our challenge.

WHAT right, we ask, has Mr. Osborne to appeal to Secularists? Let him appeal to his fellow Christians, if he likes, but it is positively indecent—to borrow a word from his own vocabulary—for him to appeal to Secularists to respect his creed. While Christians maintain all sorts of wicked laws, by which Secularists are robbed, imprisoned and insulted, the less they waine about their own "feelings" the better.

WHO is George Brittain, of 10 Esher Street, Kennington, who writes to the *Daily News* against Sunday demonstrations? He contends, without assigning the slightest reason, that all demonstrations should be held on week-days; in other words, the London workmen are to lose a day's work and wages, and stint their families of their small comforts, or even their necessities, in order to gratify the Sabbatarian prejudices of the well-to-do. Fortunately the London workmen are not so verdant. They do, and will, hold Sunday demonstrations, though the orthodox Liberals croak like a pool of frogs.

THE missionary secretaries and others who have been attacking Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., for his exposure of their non-success in India must be almost "sorry they spoke." He gives in the current number of the *Christian World* a lot of facts and figures still more damaging to their case. He says, "the net result of the whole of the Baptist churches in India, over eight years, is clearly shown to be what I stated in my letter, viz., 746 members, less than one member per church per annum, and one and half to each paid agent over a term of eight years.

MR. CAINE further points to many once flourishing churches where there is now a positive decrease of membership. Thus at Serampore there were, in 1880, 85 members, in 1881 they had dwindled to 24. In Benares, the holy city, there were 15; now there are only 6. At Jessore there were 15 in 1880, now there are 19—and so on.

PERHAPS the most damaging, however, is the proof that missionary statistics are untrustworthy. At Delhi in 1881 there were 498 members. According to the published reports of those baptised and those dead, lapsed, or dismissed, there has been an increase of 95 members; yet the total return for 1888 is only 349. The rest have mysteriously disappeared. The school attendance also, says Mr. Caine, has fallen off from 960 in 1880 to 500 in 1888. Yet the staff consists of about 60 persons in the pay of or deriving material benefit from missionary funds.

THIS is not all. Four fairly prosperous missions in Bengal at the close of the Mutiny have reduced their numbers. Mr. Caine observes: "Thirty years of 'seed sowing' by fifteen missionaries has effected a reduction of 83 members—rather a poor return for £60,000 of expenditure."

IN Southern India, except among the devil-worshipping Shanars of Tinnevely, the case is almost as bad. The London Mission has in this field 150 agents, and the net increase in ten years is only 321. No wonder Mr. Caine exclaims: "If India is to be converted to Christianity at the existing cost of missionary enterprise, even taking the most sanguine view expressed by any of my critics, we shall require the revenue of an empire." Meantime of course the poor heathen are falling headlong into perdition, and Mr. Caine declares that the money spend in education is only manufacturing Atheists.

THE affairs of the London Missionary Society are reported to have come to a crisis. To do even its present work as it ought to be done demands an increased annual income of at least £15,000, and £10,000 is asked for immediately for pressing actual needs. It is to be hoped that intending subscribers will make themselves acquainted with the facts adduced by those good Christians, Canon Isaac Taylor and Mr. W. S. Caine.

THE poor persecuted Bishop of Lincoln, who is maintaining in the nineteenth century a point of ritual such as the Byzantian Christians fought over fifteen hundred years ago, looks upon his case as a "special opportunity of suffering sent by the Lord." He likewise thinks it will show working men what a grand old institution they have in the Church of England. Dr. King regards himself as a living proof of the text: that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. We regard him as an illustration of the older saying that whom the Gods would destroy they first drive demented.

A WELL-MEANING but muddle-headed "Englishman" writes to the *Star*, giving another proof of Providence. "God Save Ireland," he says, has long been prayed, and now the supplication

is being answered. He admits that it looks rather roundabout, but he falls back upon the poet who observes that "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." This "Englishman" would do well to ponder the question of why God allowed Ireland to be lost. Surgery is excellent, but it is hard to break a man's leg just to show how it can be set.

THE Rev. Gregory Gelson, of Bradford, is running an opposition to the Sunday Society's lectures. Still he finds himself an unsuccessful fisher of men, and he is going to angle with the "free tea" hook. Bread and butter and tea gratis, and the gospel thrown in to the bargain. Verily the soul-saving business is in a sad state of depression.

It is well known there is a chapel at the Foundling Hospital, Lamb's Conduit Street, and a well paid chaplaincy attached. Visitors from outside are permitted to attend upon the understanding that there is a silver collection for the benefit of the Hospital. Prof. Momerie is the well paid chaplain, and he treats his auditors to philosophical discourses in opposition to Herbert Spencer and other thinkers of the day. It seems some candid people have told him that this is not exactly suited to the foundlings, who are very unsophisticated children indeed. He retorts, "He has nothing to do with the children. It is a lesson of endurance for them." So no doubt it is, and it is probably no comfort to them that, as Professor Momerie says, "they have a service to themselves in the afternoon."

THE *Church Times* thinks to overcome Professor Huxley's objections to the miracles and the Gadarene swine by remarking that the true reading in St. Matthew is not "send us away," but "suffer us to go." If this is the true reading, what a pity the revisers could not give it to us. Not that we think it would make the narrative any whit less superstitious and absurd. But the natural instinct of these gentry, when their doctrines are attacked, is to resort to some quibble upon words.

A STRANGE case of religious madness is reported from Steinberg. Five people residing in that village have been seized with religious frenzy. They left their cattle for days without food, and spent their time on their knees praying to God and his saints, and cursing the Devil and all his associates. When the doctor and others came to visit them they fired at him, the shot grazing his neck. The door was burst open, the inmates overpowered and put in straight waistcoats, and these poor victims of religion will probably spend the rest of their days in a lunatic asylum. This comes of obeying the injunction to "pray without ceasing."

THE Lord keeps back the rain for a good while, and sends arrears in a single delivery. The result is that towns are flooded, people and horses are drowned, and the damages amount to hundreds of thousands. We shall have to go in for Home Rule for this planet. Every country should get the weather it wants. Surely any decent committee could run the business a great deal better than the present weather bureau.

THE Rev. F. Steggall, of Consett, has been vigorously denouncing the theatre and music halls. Yet he said, so far as some members of his congregation were concerned, his sermons had little or no effect. His warnings and exhortations to them during the past 25 years he had been in Consett had been nothing else but wasted breath. A minister who realises this should surely think there is something at fault. Mr. Steggall, however, knows nothing better than mouthing out the old platitudes about the snares of the Devil.

HENRY SELWAY, 21, a strange-looking young man, a member of the Salvation Army, whose demeanor in the dock was such as to lead the jury to think that he was not right in his mind, was indicted for assaulting Florence Ada Bishop, of Rupert Road, Holloway Road, a "Salvation Lass," and he was further indicted for assaulting and beating her and causing her actual bodily harm. The evidence given for the prosecution was that the prisoner had taken a "Salvation Lass" to live with him as his wife. Some time afterwards the prosecutrix went to live in the same house with them, and she stated that the prisoner behaved improperly towards her, and that when she resented him he struck her a violent blow in the mouth. The prisoner, who continually interrupted the proceedings, was sent to prison for six months with hard labor.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Western Mail* is responsible for the following story:—"The Rev. Mr. Pritchard, minister at the Blaecwn Baptist Chapel, Treherbert, having accepted an invitation to remove to Newcastle-Emlyn, was to have preached his farewell sermon on Sunday morning. When service commenced the rev. gentleman was called upon to make an apology before proceeding for something he had either done or said. He, however, went on with the service, but had not proceeded for many minutes when the Bible in the pulpit was seized. An indescribable scene ensued. The minister and his friends, although in the majority, ultimately left the chapel in the possession of their opponents, who then made speeches, in which some strong language was used. As matters were getting critical, the police were sent for, and Inspector Thomas, with

Acting Sergeant Bryan, soon put in an appearance. The chapel was cleared by the officers, who closed the place, locked the doors, took the keys, and dispersed the crowd outside."

JOSEPH COOK, of Boston, is now denouncing the rum trade, which he fears will have to be suppressed by the military. Indeed! Then what is the use of the Gospel? Mohammedanism does not require rifles and bayonets to put down drunkenness. It may, indeed, be said that drunkenness is a vice peculiar to Christians. All the world's breweries and distilleries are in Christian countries, and churches are built and supported out of the profits.

THERE is to be a tussle over the Rylands' legacy of £5,000 to the Congregational College of North Wales. Two separate establishments claim to be the right shop, and the law will have to decide the matter. Very likely the lawyers will get the £5,000 oyster, and each college a shell. Nor can we regret it. The Christians robbed the Freethought party in Manchester of the Spencer bequest, and there is some pleasure in watching the calamity of a mean and malicious enemy.

ANOTHER popular preacher in trouble! The Rev. Frederick Duffy Gordon has been convicted at the Middlesex sessions of fraud, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. For a year and a half his only "duffy" will be the prison pudding; a brown delicacy, strongly resembling a linseed poultice. The Rev. Duffy must console himself by reflecting that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.

THE Rev. Mr. Mill, vicar of St. Michael's, Coventry, has long been at loggerheads with his parishioners about the payment of the vicar's rate, which they persistently refuse to pay. Now he is at loggerheads with his churchwardens. Last quarter they made up the deficiency, some £75, by pledging their credit at the bank. This they refuse to do any longer, and the vicar is wild at being "defrauded" of his dues.

A NEW Christ has turned up at Minneapolis, in the United States. He is a reverend of course, and rejoices in the name of Schwemfurth. Like most of the modern founders of sects, he goes in for a divine woman. The Bride, who it appears has been already married, is one Mrs. Beekman. The latest Christ and his Bride keep very much in the background, but they have an apostle named Whitney, who advertises them.

THE Rev. J. Forrest of St. Andrews Church, Douglas, Isle of Man, is so scandalised at some of his elders having taken part in a Burns' supper, and then, on the following Sunday, in the Lord's supper, that he resigned his pastorate. No doubt they enjoyed "a night in Burns" far better than an hour with their blessed Redeemer.

How Robbie would smile to see this little clerical dog barking at him! How he would make a mental note of him for a small place in a future satire! Mr. Forrest may thank his lucky stars that Burns is dead, and that he will not be preserved like a fly in the amber of the poet's verse.

AFTER all, however, Mr. Forrest is logical in his little way; for it is all nonsense to pretend that Burns was anything but a great-hearted heathen.

WHAT promised to be an exciting "heresy hunt" in the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh has ended very tamely. At the last meeting of that court, Rev. A. Martin's lecture on "The Authority of the Bible," came up for consideration. Mr. Martin, while affirming his very mild opinion that there are some discrepancies and inaccuracies in the Bible, withdrew his paper and the case has collapsed.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Star* writes:—"On Monday, 4 March, I attended a committee meeting at Princeton Street School, Bedford Row, W.C. While I waited in the entrance passage the Rev. E. C. Coney, chairman of the committee and of that group of schools, entered the passage. In his hand he had a parcel of books, which he handed to the caretaker of the schools, saying 'Distribute these, if you please.' As they passed from hand to hand I saw they were parish magazines. His orders were obeyed. Now, sir, if a Church of England parson gets his literature distributed in this way, why should not Mr. Moss, for whom Mrs. Beasant is seeking justice at the School Board, have an equal right to get his spread about by the same methods?" This is exactly what Mr. Moss does not do. He has never taken advantage of his position to propagate his own views, but has propagated them in his own time, and in places apart from the district where he has been employed as School Board visitor.

It appears that at Utrecht University the middle age custom still prevails that those who are called to take a degree have to prepare a thesis which they must defend against all comers. We hope Dutch Freethinkers are found bold enough to attack those who set up for doctors of divinity. If the custom was followed here, instead of the noisy nonsense which is usually indulged in by students when a doctor is capped, it would lead to a considerable advance of Freethought.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, March 17, Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, at 7.30 "The Lamb in Court: or the Row Among the Bishops."  
 Wednesday, March 20, Minor Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., at 8.30 "Animism." Admission free.

March 24, Camberwell; 31, South Shields.  
 April 7, Birmingham; 14, Hall of Science; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Camberwell.  
 May 5, Manchester; 12, Milton Hall; 19, Milton Hall; 26, Camberwell.  
 June, 8, N.S.S. Conference; 23, Hall of Science, London; 30, 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. Australia, China, and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.  
 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.  
 W. BURROWS.—(1) You speak of the writings of Celsus and Porphyry as though you had read them. Are you aware that the Christians, after gaining power under Constantine, destroyed every copy of them? Do you know that Porphyry is irreclaimably lost, and that all we have of Celsus are the fragments quoted in Origen's reply? And do you not think it the height of indecency to cite these pagans as witnesses to your faith? (2) Will you kindly tell us where Celsus refers to the four gospels as "the genuine works of their reputed authors?" (3) Your passage on the Apostles is based upon two assumptions; first, that we have their actual testimony, which we dispute; second, that honest men cannot be deceived, which is absurd.  
 A. R., who does not wish his name to appear, writes—"Your plain, simple, modest, and yet pointed appeal is irresistible. I enclose you a cheque for £10, and wish I could send one for £100. If a hundred of your readers would do the same you would be enabled to accomplish much more for the noble cause of Freethought."  
 W. V.—The language would be Assyrian. Probably the Lord gave Jonah lessons before starting him on his tour. We cannot tell you how far Tarshish was from Nineveh, as nobody knows where Tarshish was.  
 L. KARMEL—Your suggestion for a cartoon shall be considered.  
 ADMIRER—The discourses on the programme you send us do not deal with the subjects you charge us with shunning. We have often written and lectured on God and a Future life. By the way, you send us the programme when the discourses are over.  
 ATHLISTA.—We agree with you. There is at least ninety-nine per cent. of absurdity in the "What will you put in its place?" argument.  
 A. STEVENS—Your communication did not reach us. Mr. Foote is in excellent health.  
 A. BOWERS—Always pleased to hear from lady readers. A woman will make three converts to a man's one.  
 E. ALLCOCK.—We will read the MS. and let you know in our next.  
 W. SELLS.—The amiable lunatic sends us similar effusions about once a month. Trying to make out his meaning is like stirring your brains with a spoon. Don't try.  
 FREETHINKER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."  
 No. 12.—You seem to have found Christianity as bad as an Egyptian plague. Bigots are a pest out of doors, but a bigot indoors is worse than the toothache. Glad to hear you keep as cheerful as can be expected.  
 E. HUGES—Mr. Foote *did* deliver the promised lecture in Manchester. You must have missed it. The poem you enclose deals humorously with old Church traditions.  
 H. G. SHEPHERD offers to take 400 of Mr. Ball's "Because the Bible tells me so." Other correspondents promise to take smaller quantities, and the tract shall be issued forthwith.  
 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.

PERSONAL.

A FEW friends have responded to our appeal and advanced us small sums of money, for which we return them our best thanks. We shall be very glad to hear from others, as we wish to extend our publishing business during the next twelve months, and are in need of capital to carry out our projects. Some important Freethought works will be put through the press if our finances permit. We pay five per cent. interest, and advances are recallable on six months' notice sent in registered letter. This is the last time, for the present, that we shall refer to this matter; so that those who mean to communicate should do so at once

SUGAR PLUMS.

WE appear purposely without an illustration this week. The newsagents say they could sell the *Freethinker* better without the Bible Sketches. We don't know whether they are right or wrong, but by issuing a number now and then without an illustration we shall put the question to the test.

LOOK out for the first annual dinner of the London Secular Federation. It will take place on Monday, April 15, at the Bridge House Hotel, London Bridge. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside. A full list of "distinguished" guests and visitors will be issued anon. There will be a few toasts, and good vocal and instrumental music after dinner. Tickets, 2s. 6d. each, can be obtained of any Branch secretary, or at 28 Stonecutter Street.

THERE will be a social gathering, under the auspices of the Federation, at the Camberwell Secular Hall, on Thursday, March 21. Freethinkers from all parts of London are invited to attend. Tickets for concert, 6d.; for concert and ball, 1s.

MR. FOOTE'S two free, educational lectures on "Animism" and "Theism" will be given in the minor Hall of Science, London, on Wednesdays, March 20 and 27. Open-air and young lecturers are invited, as well as other studious Freethinkers. The auditors should take notes.

MR. FOOTE'S audiences at Newcastle on Sunday were larger than they were on the previous visit. The evening meeting was especially enthusiastic. Friends were present from South Shields, Jarrow, Sunderland, Chester-le-Street, Spennymoor, and other places. One, at least, owing to the lack of Sunday trains, had to walk nine miles to return home after the evening lecture.

THE Newcastle Branch has quadrupled its strength since the South Shields Conference. Mr. Brown is a very active organiser, and is well supported by his colleagues. During Mr. Foote's visit to the north, at the end of the month, he will attend a Conference of all the Branches within a reasonable distance of Newcastle, with a view of forming a real, working Northern Secular Federation. The Conference will probably be held at Newcastle in the Branch's rooms on Saturday afternoon, March 30th. We urge upon all Secularists in the district to make this gathering a success.

FOR the first time under the new management, Mr. Foote will occupy the platform at Claremont Hall, London, this evening (March 17). His subject is a novel one—"The Lamb in Court: or the Row among the Bishops."

RADICALS are asking—Can any good come out of West Birmingham? Well, yes. Joseph is not altogether lost. He voted the other evening for Mr. Bradlaugh's motion to expunge that old resolution against him from the journals of the House.

THE three months' imprisonment of our Swedish comrade, Viktor E. Lennstrand, expired on the 1st instant. On the day following his liberation he lectured again on the same subject for which he has been imprisoned, and also on "What have the Authorities gained by my Imprisonment?" being received with much applause. He has since lectured almost daily on these subjects, and on the right of free speech and assembly. On the 6th, at Helsingburg, an assembly of four hundred persons was broken up by the police, the consequence probably being a third prosecution. At the time of going to press we have not heard the issue of Mr. Lennstrand's second prosecution at Malmo on March 8th. We earnestly trust the jury will not convict one so evidently earnest and conscientious; but whatever the result to the individual, we are confident the prosecutions, in the long run, will only serve the cause of Freethought in Sweden.

THE Peuge Branch of the Dulwich and Peuge Liberal Association (Peuge being in the Greenwich Division) have passed a resolution denouncing the intolerant action of Mr. Gover on the School Board in voting against the proposition of Mrs. Besant to relieve Mr. Moss (a Board visitor) of the disabilities imposed upon him by the Bye-laws Committee. The Sydenham Liberal and Radical Club has also held a special meeting and condemned Mr. Gover's action.

MR. MOSS'S case came up before the full London School Board on Thursday, March 7. Mrs. Besant moved that the Bye Laws Committee be ordered to rescind its resolution. There was a hot discussion and the debate was adjourned. We believe Mrs. Besant's motion will be carried, but the result will not be known until after this number of the *Freethinker* is printed.

THIS month's *Radical*—a title now becoming a misnomer—contains a good portrait of Mr. A. B. Moss, and a brief biography. Mr. Staudring writes on Richard Carlile.

INTEREST in Spinoza is by no means diminishing. A work on *The Rational Appreciation of Spinoza*, by M. Berendt, has just been published at Berlin, and at the Hague they are now issuing

an *Inventory of the Library of Benedict Spinoza*, with an introduction by Herr Servaas van Rouijen, and bibliographical notes by Dr. David Kaufman.

A REFORMED Judaism, Miss Frances Power Cobbe, tells us in her volume, "The Scientific Spirit of the Age" is growing up in Germany and America, and already numbers some adherents among the younger Jews in this country; which clearly indicates that Hebrew not less than Gentile thought is being influenced by the searching light of the higher criticism. Reformed Judaism neither expects nor desires the coming of a Messiah, and would regard the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine as a nation as a retrogression towards tribalism. It rejects the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, and does not recognise the perfection and immutability of the law contained in the Pentateuch. There are many Jews especially on the continent and in America who go beyond this, and who are more attracted by the teachings of Spinoza than by those of Moses or Jesus either.

WE remind all friends who have not yet done so to write to their members of Parliament, urging them to be in their places to support Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Petitions should be signed and sent in without delay.

WE are pleased to notice greater Freethought activity on the Continent. Preparations for the forthcoming International Conference at Paris on Sept. 22nd are being already made. The Belgian Freethinkers have established a new journal, *La Raison*, which reports itself a complete success. A Commission of Belgian Freethinkers, composed of MM. Arnould, De Paepe, and Bertiaux, we notice are engaged in translating the works of Eduard Douwes Dekker, the greatest Dutch Freethought writer of modern times.

A NEW Freethought journal, *Der Lichtfreund*—The Friend of Light—has been started at Vienna by Edward Schwella. No. 3, which lies before us, contains a very good article on "How Gods Become Idols."

AN article in the *Open Court* entitled: "Aspects: Christian and Human," points out how many of the world's best works are either avowedly not Christian or act entirely upon non-Christian lines.

MR. GERALD MASSEY has been lecturing with much acceptance in America on "The Origin of Christian Dogmas" and kindred subjects. We regret to hear that he was recalled to England to attend the deathbed of his daughter Hesper.

THE Rev. Alex. J. Harrison has been surprising his clerical brethren by a discourse at Sion College, Lightcliffe, Yorks, on "Our Attitude Towards Freethinkers and Freethought." Considerable dissent from Mr. Harrison's views was expressed, as also some astonishment at his remarks on the mistakes of the clergy. In reply, the lecturer said, among other things, "Some of you do not believe all sceptics to be sincere. For my own part, I doubt if all the clergy are sincere. I am here to-day, not to expose the errors of opponents, except as a help to our treatment of them, but to frankly uncover our own faults with a view to their amendment." Mr. Harrison makes the strange statement that the sincere sceptic (whose existence, doubted by his brethren, he not only admits but maintains) is really a Christian. "Technically he may not have come to Christ, really he has." So that a man may have "come to Christ" who actually doubts the existence of any such person, and denies the doctrines ascribed to him. Mr. Harrison is a very Liberal Christian, so Liberal that his Christianity is almost lost in his Liberalism.

FREQUENT mention is made in the papers of the Lick Observatory at Mount Hamilton, California, which possesses the finest astronomical instruments in the world, but it is seldom noticed that the donor of this magnificent benefaction to science was an Infidel. Mr. James Lick was a warm admirer of Thomas Paine, and one of his first large benefactions was given towards the Paine Memorial Hall now erected in Boston.

ARRANGEMENTS have been made for a public discussion in Cleveland, Ohio, March 21, 22, and 23, between B. F. Underwood and Dr. C. S. Bates, rector of the Euclid Avenue Episcopal Church of that city. Dr. Bates is one of the most popular clergymen of Cleveland, and the discussion promises to be one of much interest. The propositions which will form the basis of the debate are the following:—

1. Some of the teachings of Christianity are detrimental to the welfare of mankind. [Underwood affirms.]
2. The Bible contains special revelations from God to man. [Bates affirms.]
3. The miraculous is both possible and probable. [Bates affirms.]

THERE was an important black beetle show at King's College to-day. On a raised platform at the end of the room was a splendid specimen of the *Scaribæus episcopalis Londiniensis*, whilst on chairs all over the floor was on view in assorted variety the

common or garden *Scaribæus clericus*. This particular family of the genus blackbeetle is distinguished by the fact that whilst its body, legs, and arms are of a jet black, it has a small white mark, called in technical language a "tie," just beneath its proboscis. It is not a gregarious insect. It is frequently found in churches, where it generally exists in small families of two or three, of which one is a sort of chieftain, and exercises a despotic sway over the others. It is a dainty but voracious feeder, and generally manages to pick up an abundant livelihood by preying upon the other insects that come within its reach. The learned Buffon remarks of it that the *Scaribæus clericus* is one of those insects that are to be found in endless variety all over the world, but for whose existence in the economy of nature no adequate excuse can be suggested. Occasionally instances can be found of specimens who subserve useful functions, but these are exceptions to the rule. It is an insect of wonderful fecundity, and as its powers of destructiveness are enormous, it has been found necessary in some countries to adopt rigorous measures of repression. It is believed to be identical with the locust of whose ravages upon the crops of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh there is historical record.—*Star*.

#### A "WISE" OLD GOD.

GOD Almighty is said to be all-wise, but if Christians only read their Bibles and carefully study God's actions described therein, they must come to the conclusion that he is exactly the reverse.

God's wonderful wisdom was surely not displayed when he created Adam, for he did not discover till some time after that it was not good for man to be alone, and then he had to pull poor Adam to pieces again and take out one of his ribs for the purpose of making a woman. If God is wise would he have placed temptation in the way of an inexperienced young couple as were this first pair of human beings, unless he intended that they should sin? It is more charitable to suppose that God was unwise than to imagine him to be guilty of such a mean action. And what need was there for him to create a Devil to upset all his plans, as undoubtedly is the case? Surely such actions do not show that God is all-wise. If anyone acted in the same fashion now-a-days he would be reckoned fit only for a lunatic asylum.

Would a wise God make a world and then destroy it by a universal flood, as he did in old Noah's time? Not only did he destroy men, women and children, but animals and every living thing upon the face of the earth. A wise God would never have made people who would turn out so wicked that he was obliged to kill them off in such a wholesale manner. Being all-wise, he might have found some means of reforming the people he himself created.

God is supposed to have shown his wisdom when he came down from heaven to stop the building of the Tower of Babel, in case it would reach to his private residence; he did not seem to have sense enough to know that it would take them all their time to even reach the moon.

The wisdom of God is also abundantly proved, we suppose, by his destroying Sodom and Gomorrah with brimstone and fire, and only sparing Lot and his daughters, who soon afterwards committed one of the most horrible crimes. How clever he must have been to pick out such a worthy family for preservation. And a wise God would never have loved such a shuffling and deceitful wretch as Jacob, neither would he have condescended to have a wrestling contest with that unworthy individual.

It does not show God's wisdom when he had to work serpent tricks and inflict ten horrible plagues on the Egyptians before he could persuade Pharaoh to release his chosen people from bondage. A wise God would have made Pharaoh relent without having to go through such a rignarole. And would an all-wise God have waited until the time of Moses before he published his Ten Commandments? By-the-bye, how was it that it took God Almighty forty days and forty nights to write ten commandments, when it took him only six days to create the whole world? Perhaps he was not so lively as when he first started business. And does any sensible individual think an all-wise God would trouble himself about what sort of hangings should adorn the tabernacle, and what kind of dress the priests should wear, and how Aaron and his sons should wash their feet; and further, would he instruct people how to make a certain kind of pomade, or bother himself about other ridiculous rubbish mentioned in some chapters of Exodus?

A wise God would not try and make people believe that the sun and moon stood still while his friend Joshua butchered a few thousand people; nor would he declare David to be a man after his own heart. Any sensible God would be ashamed to own such a companion, particularly as this psalm-singing individual danced naked before the ark, and robbed a man of his wife, and had him purposely slaughtered in battle.

God, by allowing Jephthah to offer up his daughter to him as a sacrifice, did not show much wisdom; and how wise he must have been to send two she-bears to swallow up forty-two little children for calling his prophet Elisha old bald head! The most stupid fellow in existence would not have resorted to such an extreme measure.

What wisdom was there displayed in God's treatment of poor old Jonah, who was compelled to take apartments in a whale's

belly for trying to skeddadle from his presence? Poor Job also experienced the wonderful wisdom of God when he was smothered in boils, and suffered much agony and grief, so that God could prove to the Devil that he was an upright man.

Would an all-wise God have to undergo the farce of being himself tempted by the Devil, and then have to work some miracles to try and make people believe in him? And what individual with a grain of sense would preach such a stupid sermon as he is said to have delivered on the mount; or curse a fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season?

How wise God must be to make a world so wicked that he has to come down and get crucified in order to redeem mankind, and save from everlasting flames all those who will believe in him. If he could not have made a better world, he should never have attempted such a huge task, and then he would never have been obliged to make a hell for the majority of mankind. Surely we ought to expect something better from an all-wise God.

Floods, earthquakes, famines, and disease are no doubt a further proof of God's wisdom. The creation of sharks, tigers, snakes, and all manner of vermin is also a sure sign of his wisdom. Parts of the world he often parches up for the want of rain, whereas at other places he deluges the land with rain until everything is utterly spoilt. Such are the ways of this wonderful wise old God.

SCOFFER.

PROPHET BAXTER.

The following account of the editor of the *Christian Herald* is so rich that we reproduce it from the *Star* for the amusement of our readers:—

The Prophet Baxter was on view at Cannon Street Hotel yesterday morning, just to give any wealthy City man a chance. As far as a *Star* man who dropped in can judge, the prophet was not getting a great many City converts. The Pillar Hall of the hotel was prettily well filled, but the proportion of miserable-faced women was very large—why is it, by the bye, that so many women love to be made miserable—whilest the majority of the men present appeared to be either weak intellects or else scoffers. Mr. Baxter is a tallish middle-aged man, with a hard metallic voice, and talks in a dry, mechanical, unimpassioned manner. He does not look a bit like a prophet, and he does not talk as though he really believed what he was saying. Yesterday's gathering was a kind of anniversary beforehand of the end of the world. Yesterday was the 5th of March. On March 5, 1896, the second coming is to happen, according to Baxter, and 144,000 Baxterites are to ascend. In the seven years intervening, the number of Baxterites will have to increase in a considerably larger ratio than so far has been the case if the 144,000 vacancies are to be all filled up. Baxter's prophetic faculty seems to have a considerable pictorial development, for whenever he holds a meeting the walls of the room are ornamented with striking illustrations. And his pictorial prophecy has a notable zoological tendency. The room at Cannon Street yesterday looked very much like an exhibition of the outside illustrations of penny monstrosity shows. One picture represented a lion with the benevolent smile of a missionary, in the act of fulfilling the prophecy with respect to his relations with a little child; another was a miscellaneous-looking animal, such as a daring showman would select as an inducement to the public to "pass inside, there is no waiting, remember." It would seem irrelevant to refer in adequate terms to some of these pictorials if they were not themselves such ludicrous burlesques of the subjects to which they refer. It would seem irrelevant to refer in adequate terms to the prophet Baxter and what he puts forward as his beliefs, if it were not that his statements are such ludicrous burlesques of the subjects, concerning which he talks so glibly. The Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation are Baxter's great hunting grounds, and he finds prophetic passages in them to prove anything he pleases. Sufficient as to his interpretations of prophecy it is to say that he announces it to be beyond doubt that Boulanger is indicated by Daniel as the forerunner of the coming Anti-Christ; that on this day seven years 144,000 living Baxterites are to be lifted bodily, and without dying, to glory; and that in 1901 the Millennium will finally arrive. There seems to be no living man whose name cannot be numerically interpreted into the number of the beast, 666. Gladstone, Napoleon, Lucien Bonaparte, Bradlaugh, Boulanger, all have been shown to figure out at that total, and probably Prophet Baxter would also, if anyone cared to make the calculation. But as to the Prophet's method of argument, it is beyond the comprehension or the explanation of men. But in his style of putting his argument he largely employs, as uneducated orators frequently do, the plan of exhausting synonyms. No man could reproduce him, but this is something like his style. "Daniel gives us the date 2,300 years, which is the basis, the foundation, principal element, or beginning of our faith, belief, reasoning or understanding. Then we have the ram with two horns, which represents, foreshadows, symbolises, refers to, and personifies the Medo-Persian kingdom, empire, rule, or dynasty. These being quadri-partited, divided into four, or split up, tell, inform, and advise, or convince us of the fact, event, or happening of a king who will come from Macedonia, as is universally admitted by commentators or expositors to refer to 5 March, 1896. And the manner of it is this. With a piece of soft rag, calico, washleather, sponge, or silk, you take a small pinch of the preparation, substance, or powder which I hold in my hand; moisten, wet, or damp the sponge, rag, or washleather with water, milk, beer, gin, brandy, whiskey, or other fluid such as common saliva from the mouth, and rub, wipe, brush, or apply it to the article, crock, pan, plate, or piece of silver ware, when all grease spots, dirt spots, finger marks, stains, burns, or tarnish will disappear, vanish, or go away by magic, and the price is one penny the packet. Then, take the 2,200 years, or weeks of years, or days of weeks of years subtract from them the 739 years of weeks, double them, add four

to them, take away the number you first thought of, and the result is the answer, namely, 5 March, 1891, at twenty-one minutes to one o'clock, or the ninth hour of the month Nizam." And yet Baxter calls himself a "Rev"!

REVIEWS.

*Pauperism: its Cause and Remedy.* By P. M. Schelling. London: Reeves.—The author is a disciple, though not a blind disciple, of Mr. Henry George. He has thought on social questions for himself and says what he means with modesty and lucidity. We have not space to discuss all the problems he touches; suffice it to say that he is always pithy and suggestive. His remedy is the abolition of masses of wealth by illegalising inheritance, so that every man's property, at his death, would revert to the State. Whether the remedy would be effectual, whether it is just, and whether it would affect the springs of industry, are questions which the reader would do well to think out for himself.

*Darwinism and Politics.* By D. G. Ritchie, M.A. London: Sonnenschein and Co.—An exceedingly able essay, worthy the attention of Socialists and Individualists alike. Agreeing or differing, no one will deny Mr. Ritchie's claims as a serious and careful thinker. His position, in brief, is this—Natural selection can be superseded by conscious progress through education and social arrangement. Without arguing one way or the other, we point out that Mr. Ritchie stakes too much on an uncertainty. It is still in dispute whether the effects of use and disuse are transmitted. Should the affirmative opinion prevail, Socialism has a scientific hope; but should the negative opinion be established, it is difficult to see any escape from the theory that natural selection must be left to operate unchecked.

*The Quintessence of Socialism.* By Dr. A. Schäffle. Translated from the German by B. Bosanquet. M.A. London: Sonnenschein and Co.—M. de Laveleye refers to Dr. Schäffle's book as the only one which explains Collectivism in a scientific way. This is a sufficient recommendation of the little volume. Dr. Schäffle has gathered the leading ideas of Socialism from its chief exponents, and worked out what he regards as their logical application to existing society. Unlike some writers on this subject, he is transparently candid and perfectly intelligible.

*The Ethics of Socialism.* By E. B. Bax. London: Sonnenschein and Co.—Under this tempting title Mr. Bax has collected a number of his articles and essays. There is a certain hardness about Mr. Bax—we mean as a writer. He is a professed Humanitarian, but his principles are rather mathematical than vital. Nevertheless, he is a man of real ability, and as a leading Socialist writer he should not be neglected. Mr. Bax has also the full courage of his opinions, and that is something in an age of feeble convictions and prevalent hypocrisy. We welcome his scorn of the Agnostic gentlemen who "are not Atheists—oh dear no!" though they believe precisely what Atheism has always meant, and etymologically must ever mean.

*A More Excellent Way.* By Constance Howell. London: Sonnenschein and Co.—Miss Howell's freethought writings are known to many of our readers. She has now turned her attention to Socialism, which she seeks to advocate through the medium of fiction. We cannot congratulate her on the experiment. Novels with a purpose, and especially a purpose as open as a hat, are mistakes. Nothing but genius can render them even tolerable. Miss Howell writes good English and has a slight gift of humor; she has also some, but we fear not a decided, talent for fiction. It may be, however, that she has done it an injustice by harnessing it in the shafts of an "edifying" vehicle. Essays should be essays, and stories should be stories; mixed together, they are two very good things spoiled, as Charles Lamb said of brandy and water. Were Miss Howell to reflect that if one person writes a story to prove one opinion, somebody as clever may write as good a story to prove the opposite, she would probably abandon this sterile field.

*John Ward, Preacher.* By Margaret Deland. Longman and Co., 1889.—This is another of the many novels with a purpose, which, if not called forth in America by the success of *Robert Elsmere*, at any rate probably owes its reproduction in England to the success of that work. The motto on the title page, however, the striking lines from Omar Khayyam,

I sent my soul through the invisible,  
Some letter of that after-life to spell,  
And by-and-bye my soul returned to me,  
And answered, "I myself am Heaven and Hell."

suffice to show the purpose is by no means an ordinary one. Nor is it at all too obviously introduced. The story of John Ward, preacher, and his love for and separation from his Freethinking wife Helen, is told with considerable skill, and although the novel cannot be recommended as a happy one, we doubt not it will have a wide circulation and do something to break down the dogmas of orthodoxy.

*Believe or be Damned.* By John L. Crum. *Ironclad Age*, Indianapolis.—A bold little pamphlet by the President of the Order of Natural Morality at Vienna, Illinois.

PROFANE JOKES.

Little girl (looking at a one-legged man): "Oh, mamma! Where was he made?" Mother: "Made in heaven, my dear." Little girl: "Why don't he go back and get finished?" "I see you go to church, Johnny?" "Yes," replied the boy, frankly; "my mither tak's me." "An' what do you do when you get there?" asked the lady. "Eat sweetsies!" said the cherub. "What," asked a Southport Sunday-school teacher, "is that invisible power that prevents the wicked man from sleeping and causes him to toss upon his pillow?" "Fleas!" shouted the bad boy at the foot of the class.

NOW READY.

# THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION

A DISCUSSION BETWEEN

**COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL**

AND THE

HON. F. D. COUDERT and GOV. S. L. WOODFORD.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

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