

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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Vol. IX.—No. 13.]

SUNDAY, MARCH 31, 1889.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

THE GREAT GHOST.

LONG before there were any kings there were chiefs. Even in the early Feudal days the king was only the chief of the barons, and many centuries elapsed before the supremacy of the monarch was unquestioned and he became really the *sovereign*. It was a process of natural selection. A mob of chiefs could not rule a mob of people. There was a fierce struggle, with plenty of fighting and intrigue, and the fittest survived. Gradually as the nation became unified the government was centralised, and out of the chaos of competing nobles emerged the relatively cosmic authority of the Crown.

Similarly in the world of religion. All gods were originally ghosts. But as polytheism declined a supreme god emerged from the crowd of deities, as the king emerged from the crowd of nobles, and ruled from a definite centre. It was Zeus in Greece, Jupiter in Rome, Brahma in India, Thor in Scandinavia, and Yahveh in Israel. "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," was an exclamation that sprang from Yahveh's lips (through his priests) when his godship was still in the thick of the competitive struggle.

The ghosts become gods, and the gods become supreme deities, looked after the interests of their worshippers; gave them long life, good harvests, and prosperity in warfare, if they were true to them, and plagued them like the very devil if they slighted them or nodded to their rivals. According to the Old Testament, when everything went well with the Jews their God was pleased and when things went wrong with them he was angry. This state of mind survives into our advanced civilisation, where people still talk of "judgments," still pray for good things, and still implore their God for victory when they have a scrimmage with their neighbors.

But this infantile conception is dying out of educated minds. Prayer is seen to be futile. The laws of nature do not vary. Providence is on the side of the big battalions. God helps those who help themselves—and no one else.

Long ago, in ancient Greece and Rome, the acutest thinkers had come to the same conclusion. Lucretius, for instance, did not deny the existence of the gods; he merely asserted that they no longer concerned themselves with human affairs, which he was heartily glad of, as they were mostly bad characters. He observed "the reign of law" as clearly as our modern scientists, and relegated the deities to their Olympian repose, so beautifully versed by Tennyson.

The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm.

Even the savage, in times of prolonged peace and prosperity, begins to speculate on the possibility of his god's having retired from business; for religion is born of fear, not of love, and the savage is reminded of his god by calamity rather than good fortune. This idea has been caught by Robert Browning in his marvellous *Caliban upon Setebos*, a poem developed out of a casual germ in Shakespeare's *Tempest*.

Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
Warts rub away and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

But presently poor Caliban is frightened out of his speculation by a thunderstorm, which makes him lie low and

slaver his god, offering any mortification as the price of his escape.

There is a good deal of Caliban in our modern multitudes, but the educated are working free from his theology. Science and miracle cannot live together, and miracle and providence are the same thing. How far from us is the good old God of the best parts of the Bible, who held out one ear for the prayers of his good children, and one hand, well rodded, for the backs of the naughty ones. The seed of the righteous never begged for bread, and the villain always came to a bad end. It was the childish philosophy of the "gods" in a modern theatre. The more critical want something truer and more natural, something more accordant with the stern realities of life. Rénan has some excellent remarks on this in the Preface to his second volume of the *Histoire du Peuple d'Israel*.

"The work of the genius of Israel was not really affected until the eighteenth century after Jesus Christ, when it became very doubtful to spirits a little cultivated that the affairs of this world are regulated by a God of justice. The exaggerated idea of a special Providence, the basis of Judaism and Islam, and which Christianity has only corrected through the fund of liberalism inherent in our races, has been definitively vanquished by modern philosophy, the fruit not of abstract speculation, but of constant experience. It has never been observed, in effect, that a superior being occupies himself, for a moral or an immoral purpose, with the affairs of nature or the affairs of humanity."

Rénan has elsewhere said that the negation of the supernatural is a dogma with every cultivated intelligence. God, in short, has faded into a metaphysical abstraction. The little ghosts vanished long ago, and now the Great Ghost is melting into thin air. Thousands of people have lost all belief in his existence. They use his name, and take it in vain; for, when questioned, they merely stand up for "a sort of a something." The fear of God, so to speak, has survived his personality; just as Madame de Stael said she did not believe in ghosts, but she was afraid of them. Mrs. Browning gives voice to this sentiment in one of her poems:

And hearts say, God be pitiful,
That ne'er said, God be blest.

The fear of the Lord is, indeed, the beginning and the end of theology.

When the Great Ghost was a reality—we mean to his worshippers—he was constantly spoken of. His name was invoked in the courts of law, it figured in nearly every oath outside them, and it was to be seen on nearly every page of every book that was published. But all that is changed. To speak or print the name of God is reckoned "bad form." The word is almost tabooed in decent society. You hear it in the streets, however, when the irascible carman calls on God to damn your eyes for getting in his way. There is such a conspiracy of silence about the Great Ghost, except in churches and chapels, that the mention of his name in polite circles sounds like swearing. Eyebrows are lifted, and the speaker is looked upon as vulgar, and perhaps dangerous.

Thus theology gives way to the pressure of science, and religion to the pressure of civilisation. The more use we make of this life the less we look for another; the loftier man grows the less he bows to ghosts and gods. Heaven and hell both disappear, and things are neither so bad nor good as was expected. Man finds himself in a universe of necessity. He hears no response to his prayers but the echo of his own voice. He therefore bids the gods adieu, and sets himself to the task of making the best of life for himself and his fellows. Without false hopes, or base fears, he steers his course over the ocean of life, and says with the poet, "I am the captain of my soul."

G. W. FOOTE.

A DUTCH FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

OF Adriaan Koerbagh, the martyr in question, my only information until recently was that found in A. J. Van der Aa's *Biographical Dictionary*, that, briefly, he had been a Socinian and was afterwards an Atheist, and was condemned for blasphemy by the magistrates of Amsterdam, in 1668, sentenced to a heavy fine and ten years' imprisonment, to be followed by ten years' exile. My learned friend, "Conrad von Elborch," whose erudition goes hand in hand with his zeal for Freethought, has, however, recently found a short history of Koerbagh, and as the particulars with which he kindly supplies me are slightly too lengthy to be inserted in full in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, and the matter is of some interest in itself, I give a brief account of this early Freethinker, who is almost unknown outside Holland.

Koerbagh was born in 1632 or 1633 at Amsterdam. He lived there with his mother and his brother Jan, who was brought up for the Church. He himself became a doctor of law and of medicine. He had the same friends with Spinoza, and was doubtless personally acquainted with that high-minded man, greatest of all the Jews and chief among European philosophers.

These friends, among whom were Lodewijk Meyer, the friend of Spinoza, and Dr. Franciscus van den Ende, an Atheist and satirist to whom Spinoza taught the Latin language, used to meet at the house of one Jan Knol, who lived at *de nes* at Amsterdam, and who appears to have been the Baron d'Holbach of his time. They there discussed questions in theology and philosophy such as were certainly never then discussed in the churches.

In 1668 Koerbagh issued (partly with the pen name of Vrederijk Waarmond, and partly with his own) a work with the title *Een Bloemhof van allerley lieflykheyd* (Flower Garden of all Loveliness). This was the somewhat fanciful name of a dictionary of definitions of foreign and strange words used in theology, law, and medicine. Koerbagh saw how the people are imposed upon by words, and the necessity of definitions and new elucidations. He gave bold explanations: The Catholic religion is not Catholic, to fast in Lent is nonsense and folly, the worship of saints is idolatry, the Protestant religion is as bad as the Catholic, the Devil is a chimera, the world uncreated and eternal, the Trinity an absurdity, and Jesus not the son of God, but the child of an unknown father, etc.!

The work created a great outcry. Pious Amsterdam was scandalised. But no one refuted his errors. One Jan Pretenz, a sculptor, who wrote against Koerbagh, was desired by the magistrates, who were wise in their generation, to suppress his work in order not to draw too much attention to that of his opponent.

The *Bloemhof* was, of course, rigidly suppressed. The writer fled to Culenborg. There he translated a book, *De Triniteit*. It seems to have been printed, but we do not know from what anti-trinitarian writer it was a translation. The indefatigable young Freethinker then began a second work entitled *Een Ligt Schynende in Duystere Plaatsen* (A Light Shining in Dark Places), to illuminate the chief things of theology and religion by Vrederijk Waarmond, inquisitor of truth. Printed by the author, 1668. The light, of course, was the light of reason shining on the dark spots of superstition and credulity. It was printed at Utrecht, but the printer, after finishing eleven sheets, would not continue. Adriaan's brother, Jan, and a physician from Leyden named Abraham van Berckel, read the proofs. The magistrates of Amsterdam prohibited Jan from preaching, and imprisoned him (17 May, 1668) during ten weeks. He was also condemned to costs. At the same time an emissary was despatched to the free town of Culenborg to persuade the magistrates of that place to arrest Adriaan Koerbagh.

Before this could be done he fled to Leyden, and hid himself in that ancient city. But a false friend from Culenborg, a Judas whose name is unknown, betrayed him for a round sum of money. He was arrested in his bed, conveyed to Amsterdam and summarily sentenced. The sentence was ten years in prison cell to be followed by ten years' banishment, in addition to a fine of four thousand guilders and two thousand guilders costs. He was on the 11 Sept., 1668, imprisoned among the worst common thieves and cut-throats. Thus did the magistrates of Amsterdam vindicate the benign divinity of the Christian

religion. Happily we should think for Koerbagh, he did not live through his term of imprisonment. The harsh treatment which was meted out to him by his Christian persecutors as fit punishment for the expression of his honest thoughts killed him. He expired in prison, Oct. 1669. His burial caused great horror, for "a black hen flew on his chest, and remained there a long time."! Probably a sign to the pious Dutch people that his soul was seized by Satan.

Such is the martyrology of Adriaan Koerbagh, one of the many pioneers of Freethought whose names deserve to be rescued from oblivion. J. M. WHEELER.

A CORRECTION.

THE Secretary of the Wesley Scientific Society writes to us as follows from 363 Old Kent Road:—"Dr. Bousfield has had brought under his notice the paragraph on page 92 (March 24, 1889) of the *Freethinker* referring to the above Society. He trusts to the fairness of the editor to insert the necessary correction as to matters of fact; the opinions contained in the latter part he has no intention of dealing with. The Society is by no means in the condition represented in the paragraph in question, which appears to have been copied from the *Manchester Examiner*. It has more than three hundred members, including many of the ministers most in sympathy with science, several of whom are graduates of the London University, and fellows of various scientific bodies, and the Society is daily receiving accessions to its ranks."

We based our paragraph on a most precise statement in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, yet Dr. Bousfield, who ought to know, assures us it is absolutely untrue. We have pleasure in publishing the correction, and we ask our readers to reflect on the ease with which falsehoods are circulated even in an age like this. With how much greater ease, beyond all chance of refutation, must they have been circulated in the ages when Christianity arose!

ACID DROPS.

SOME time ago Mr. Broadhurst, on behalf of the Trade Unions, issued a list of journals at whose printing-offices good wages were paid, with a parallel list of the opposite sort. All the Freethought journals were on the right side, and more than half the Christian journals on the wrong side. Now we hear of a row over the sweating of girl-folders at Eyre and Spottiswoode's, where our Bibles are printed. It is alleged that the girls who fold the sheets of the Blessed Book for binding are wretchedly underpaid, and a tender for Scripture cards from this firm has been referred back to the Stores Committee of the London School Board on the motion of Mrs. Ashton Dilke, seconded by Mr. Cook. The *Star* expresses surprise that Bible work should be sweated, but this is really too simple for anything.

It is contended that the Queen's printers alone have the right to print the Bible or any portions of it. Well, we don't know whether we have the right, but we are certain we exercise it. Our *Bible Handbook* contains all the rottenest parts of Scripture, and it is a pretty large selection.

MR. SPURGEON did a bit of his own trumpet-blowing on Sunday. He said he doubted if ever such a congregation of white persons as his had gathered together since the days of the Apostles. He has between five and six thousand worshippers at his tabernacle, and the size of the affair nearly turns his head. But what does it prove after all? Simply this: London has five millions of people—mostly fools; we beg pardon—mostly Christians; and out of this enormous aggregate Mr. Spurgeon has succeeded in gathering around him a large hall-full. Shakespeare had not five thousand readers in his lifetime, probably not five hundred; nor has Darwin more than five thousand readers now. Yet Shakespeare is the king of poets, and Darwin is the prophet of evolution; and both will be remembered when the South London Tabernacle has gone the way of other gospel-shops, and the name of Spurgeon has vanished like last year's snow or the foam that flecked the chalk ramparts of old England.

THE Churches have always known how to cadge. The Catholics are building a new church at St. Joseph's Retreat, Highgate, and by way of raising the wind the Rev. Gerard Woollett, who signs himself "Yours faithfully in J.C.," issues a good old begging circular, in which he says "It will be a sad misfortune for us to have to stop the work of building our Holy Father's Memorial Church, and in St. Joseph's month of March." Poor old Joe! If he is still alive somewhere in glory, we wonder what he thinks of all this begging in his name.

THE Rev. Gerard Woollett sends out with the begging circular a lot of flimsy tickets, asking the faithful to "send this with duplicates and 10s." He informs the faithful that "This ticket will be placed under the High Altar of the New Church, where it will remain for ever." For ever is a long time. Very likely the reverend beggar means until the church goes to pot, or until the morning of the resurrection, when the names of

St. Joseph's tickets will be read out and their possessors passed into a first-class heavenly mansion. What a capital investment! Ten shillings for a freehold, or everlasting lease, of a desirable residence in the New Jerusalem, with food and entertainments "free gratis for nothing." Surely there will be a rush of good Catholics for tickets. This is the month of St. Joseph; now is the accepted time, now is the day of investment.

CARNAL as well as spiritual baits are held out. Those who buy or dispose of 20 tickets will receive a very fine and large photo of the Holy Father. That isn't much, but better follows. No less than "500 splendid prizes will be given away to those who dispose of the greatest number of these tickets." Now then, ladies and gentlemen of the Catholic persuasion, here's your chance.

CARDINAL MANNING has been writing in the *American Forum* on the Bible in State Schools. He pleads for denominational schools supported by public taxes, and meanwhile he rejoices that the Bible is read in school "even without a right interpretation." By a right interpretation the Cardinal, of course, means a Catholic interpretation. Fortunately there are too many powerful sects to admit of any one ruling the roost. Were it otherwise, the Church would swallow Freethought in a few mouthfuls. How great is the difference between these various brotherhoods of Christ may be seen from the following story. Some years ago, at Norwich, a Church of England parson on the School Board said he couldn't understand why the Catholic priest made so much fuss about the use of the Protestant Bible, the two Scriptures being so much alike. Thereupon Mr. R. A. Cooper, the Freethought member of the Board, rose to suggest a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. He proposed that, as the Church of England parson thought the difference between the two Scriptures so trifling, the Protestants should use the Catholic Bible. But that was a horse of another color, and the fat was in the fire at once.

"THE Bible is the Bible only in the right sense of the Bible," says Cardinal Manning. And what is the right sense of the Bible? Why, the sense the priests put upon it. Might not God, then, just as well have left the Bible unwritten? What is the use of giving people a book they cannot understand without an interpreter? And is the Holy Ghost so obscure a writer that he, she, or it is unintelligible without the assistance of a gospel-grinder? Has the Holy Ghost inspired the Bible, and then inspired the Church to explain the explanation? And why doesn't the Holy Ghost inspire somebody else to explain the Church?

CHARLES PARTON, the Manchester murderer, now under sentence of death, says it was "God's will" he should "come to this." His fellow Christians, of course, will turn up their noses at the statement, but really it is sound theology, which could be supported by many Bible texts. If there be a God, he creates good and evil, as Isaiah says, and "I the Lord do all these things" is the sublimest logic.

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON indulged in his usual quantity of brilliant paradoxes on Sunday, praising religion to the skies, and contending that it grows stronger every day, despite the wail of the Churches and the shouts of the Agnostics. The cream of the joke is that Mr. Harrison's "religion" is not the "religion" of Christians and Freethinkers, but something entirely different. Mr. Harrison is like the gardener who brought dahlias to market when roses were scarce, and exclaimed, "Roses scarce! Why here's plenty of the finest roses you ever saw." The salesman said "Nonsense, man, those are dahlias; very nice flowers, perhaps, but not roses." "Dahlias!" he rejoined, "why I tell you they are roses, real roses. You can call them out of their names if you like, but your horticultural dictionary is all wrong, and I advise you to get it altered." Of course this eccentric salesman did very little business, and the same may be said of Mr. Harrison.

THE *Church Times* is looking forward to Disestablishment. It is publishing a list of churches built and made over to the Church by private benevolence during the last forty-five years. It ought to know that while the Church of England remains the Church of the nation, no one can give anything to the Church without giving it to the nation.

IN 1838 it was found that 5,000 incumbents held some 11,000 livings. This led to the abolition of "pluralities" as they were called. The pluralities arose partly from a lack of ministers, but still more from their avarice of holding as many good berths as possible. Under the plea that benefices now often remained unoccupied, the Lower House of Convocation, which consists entirely of persons who would profit by the plural system, proposes that it should be restored.

MR. STEVENSON having again brought forward his Bill for Sunday Closing in England, with the exception of London, it may be useful to give the statistics showing the efficacy of the Sunday Closing Bill in the rigid Calvinistic principality of Wales. In 1881 (the year, be it noted, of the passing of the Act) the returns for the past year credited Wales with 309 arrests only on the

charge of drunkenness on Sundays; last year the numbers stand at 965 convictions for that offence.

THIS was no sudden outburst. The progress had been regular as well as rapid: 796 for 1885, 833 for 1886, 965 for 1887. Yet drunkenness on week-days has been on the decrease, convictions having dropped from 8,120 in 1885 to 7,490 in 1887. In England, 10 per cent. of the convictions for drunkenness are for offences committed on Sunday; in Wales, they are 15 per cent. At Cardiff, one person in every 1,427; in London, one in every 3,835 is convicted of Sunday drunkenness: the disparity is enormous. But the contrast holds good of the counties and boroughs; the proportion is one in 2,034 in England to one in 1,410 in Wales. Sunday closing is found to make persons who might be content with a single glass go in for a whole bottle and increases shebeens enormously.

CHIEF RABBI ADLER denounces the "blatant Atheists" who cause disturbances amongst East-end Jews, and set them against sweating as an ideal form of industry. We are not aware that Atheists, blatant or otherwise, had any special connection with the occurrences Dr. Adler refers to; though even if they had they need not be ashamed. But we are aware that the indignant Rabbi talks the grossest nonsense in describing Atheism as opposed to government and the family. Some form of government is indispensable, but it should be just; and the family, in its best and truest sense, is the ark of civilisation. Atheists love their wives and children as well as Jews and Christians.

CANON BONNEY has been lecturing to "a somewhat meagre audience" at Rochdale on "Man's Origin." He throws over the Bible chronology, recognises no chasm between man and other animals, and fails to see why dogs have not souls as well as human beings. Our immortality is not natural, but "a special gift from God." Such is the doctrine to which the clergy are being driven by science. They give up position after position, but they keep the good old Ghost behind the curtain, and trade on his promissory notes, payable the day after death.

A NEW dodge for raising money, extracted from the columns of the *High Church Times*:

A MARY WINDOW.—Those bearing the name of Mary are invited to contribute towards placing a Mary Window in Caistor Church. Daily Celebrations.

It will hardly do to try a companion window to Gabriel on this plan.

THE Rev. Michael Rosenthal urgently appeals for money for a soup kitchen, etc., for converted Jews at Stepney. No doubt his soup may be well patronised unless it gets whispered abroad that it is made out of pork bones.

THE Glasgow and Edinburgh Presbyteries have both been lamenting the decline of church attendance. They of course do not credit this to their own fossilised dogmas, but blame the press in the matter. The newspapers, it appears, fall short in their duty of instructing the people that they ought to attend the kirk regularly.

"GENERAL" BOOTH celebrates his sixtieth birthday on April the 10th. He will celebrate it in the usual way by a collection. But this time £5,000 is to be raised. An appeal for that sum as a thank-offering is issued by W. Bramwell Booth in the *War Cry* and notices are stuck all about the paper, "Don't forget the General's birthday. What are you going to give as a present to the General?"

AN illustration of Scotch piety in the days o' auld lang syne is given in a just published book entitled *Popular Traditions of Glasgow*, by Andrew Wallace. One of the tradesmen employed at the erection of a Unitarian chapel in Glasgow went into an ironmonger's shop to make a purchase of single-flooring nails for the woodwork, and having paid and got delivery of the nails, the shopman, struck at the quantity wanted, inquired, "Whaurto are ye gaun to drive a' thae nails, man? They might sair ane o' the toun kirks." "An' they're just for a kirk! though no' ane o' the toun anes," was the reply. "Maybe ane o' our meeting houses?" was the next query. "They're for the woodwork o' the Unitarian chapel," replied the tradesman. "Say ye sae?" said the man of metal, "and had ye the impudence, sin' I maun say sae, to try to get them frae me! There's your siller to you, and gie me back my nails. I'll no' sell a pin to prop up the tabernacle of Sawtan."

BROKEN heads and bruises in Cardiganshire still attest that the tithe-war in Wales goes briskly on. The police, who endeavored to enforce their Christianity on the parishioners of Penrhyn, were pelted with stones and attacked with pitchforks and bludgeons, and had to fight their way in a battle-royal for a whole day.

THE priest, who eloped from Paris with a young woman and, after travelling a good deal, settled at Algiers, and procured an appointment by means of a friend's diplomas, has got off by throwing himself on the mercy of the court, and declaring that his sole object was to secure a modest livelihood for himself and his young wife.

MANY anecdotes are told of the late Dean Burgon, of Chichester, a high old Tory, a strong opponent of the Revised Version and a virulent antagonist to the doctrine of evolution. On one occasion in a sermon directed against Darwin, Huxley, etc., he exclaimed "Man is a progressive being. All other of God's creatures are stationary. Look, for example, at the ass! Always and everywhere the same creature, and you never saw a more perfect ass than you see at the present moment."

M. BLOUET, "Max O'Rell," in his book on *Brother Jonathan*, tells the following story:—"A new minister had been appointed in a little Kentucky town. No sooner had he taken possession of his cure than he set about ornamenting the church with stained-glass windows of gorgeous hues. This proceeding aroused the suspicions of several parishioners, who imagined that their new pastor was inclined to lead them to Rome. A meeting was called, and it was decided to send a deputation to the minister to ask him to explain his conduct and beg him to have the offending windows removed. The head of the deputation was an old man of Presbyterian proclivities, whose austerity was well known in the town. He opened fire by addressing the reverend gentleman thus: 'We have waited upon you, sir, to beg that you will remove those painted windows from our church as soon as possible. We are simple folks, God's own light is good enough for us, and we don't want to have it shut out by all these images—' The worthy man had prepared a fine harangue and was going to give the minister the benefit of it all, but the latter, losing patience, thus interrupted him: 'Excuse me, you seem to be taking high ground; who are you, may I ask?' 'Who am I?' repeated the good old spokesman, 'I am a meek and humble follower of Jesus, that's what I am, and damn you, who are you?'"

We always look abroad to learn the news. The Paris *Figaro* alleges that Queen Victoria will yet be received into the Roman Catholic Church. If we thought it would reach her majesty, we would send her a copy of Colonel Ingersoll's *Rome or Reason?*

THE *Jewish World* laments the Decay of Purim among the chosen race. Can it be they are learning that the whole story of Esther, upon which the feast of Purim is said to be founded, is a myth without any historical basis?

CRANKS are often very sensible, and sometimes very able, when you get them off their monomania. The Rev. Arthur Merton, of Chicago, is a good hand at physiological charts, but in religion he is as far gone as our Baxter and Hampden. He believes he has a mission to establish a Republic in Palestine, which is destined to extend and become universal. No doubt some softer cranks will drop a good deal of money over the enterprise, though the English Anglo-Israelites look upon it coldly.

THE Rev. F. A. Gace is contumacious. The Bishop of St. Albans called him over the coals for saying that attending Dissenters' chapels was as much a sin as thieving, but he means to republish his catechism. He says he cares no more for the growlings of Dissenters and School Boards than for the snarls of a puppy dog. The *Church Times* seems to countenance him, for it says "it is difficult to understand how Dr. Claughton could have brought himself to have delivered so unqualified a censure upon the offending clergyman, unless he was desirous of playing to the gallery, and was seeking a cheap popularity, at the expense of truth." The truth, of course, being that heresy and schism is denounced in the Church standards as "deadly sin."

"If one smite thee on the one cheek, turn unto him the other also." "I'll be hanged if I do," says the Rev. R. Johnson, of Theydon Lodge, Boscombe. Somebody has damaged his shrubs, and the reverend gentleman offers ten shillings reward for the culprit—dead or alive, we presume.

THE Metabele headmen have had a fine time in England. Seeing so many churches and chapels, and so many people in them, they concluded that our greatness was owing to the frequency and fervency of our prayers. But they changed their minds on seeing a review at Aldershot. After the cavalry swept by they exclaimed, "Come and teach us to drill and fight like that!"

IN the British Museum the other day we happened to pass by the case which contains the Alexandrine MS., while a clerical gentleman was explaining it to a number of students. He told them that the more the variations in the different readings of manuscripts, the better our chance of knowing what the apostles originally said, and a lot more of the usual orthodox twaddle. He forgot to tell them that the Alexandrine Codex contains two books of Clement not found in our New Testament, but expatiated on the providential preservation of manuscripts which brought us within four hundred years or so of the apostolical authors. The opportunity was too good to be lost, so we politely asked the gentleman if he could inform us what had become of the original documents as actually written by the apostles. The gentleman seemed rather nonplussed at this simple question, and rambled off into a disquisition on the effects of bad climate, the ravages of time and insects, and the ignorance of monks. So

that it appears God Almighty takes precious care of late and faulty copies of his Holy Scriptures, but left the originals to perish. We always thought the Christian God a curious customer, and our learned clerical guide confirmed our opinion.

ACCORDING to *La Lanterne*, Papal decorations and accompanying apostolical benedictions have just been bestowed upon fraudulent bankrupts, divorced persons and notorious evil livers. These decorations are all given in return for hard cash, and, as the French observe, *L'argent n'a pas d'odeur*—Money has no smell.

THE Evangelical *Record*, writing on the Lord's Day Question, declares that "Christianity is not in possession, not in South London merely, not in East London merely, not at the West End merely," and recommends bright, short services, hearty hymns and other attractive features, since the Church can no longer "compel them to come in."

CHRISTIANITY seems to be in possession in Wandsworth, where a boy was imprisoned from Sunday till Monday for gambling on a piece of waste ground near Putney Bridge. Mr. Plowden, the magistrate, in discharging the boy and recommending him to better employ his leisure, lamented that there were not reasonable facilities for recreation on a day when people are forced to be idle.

CARDINAL MANNING, like the Pope, Queen Victoria, and General Booth, is also having a "jubilee." Over a thousand pounds has already been subscribed by the faithful.

THE Catholic *Weekly Register* has at last something to say in reply to the many remarks on the late Mr. Piggott's scapular. It reminds its readers that there is a great gulf between ultimate salvation and immediate admission into heaven, and declares that not one of the children of the Church "supposes the gloomy soul of a Richard Piggott to have flown straight up to the New Jerusalem because he was invested in a scapular." Still, it says, he who wears the scapular wears Our Lady's livery, even though he may be unworthy; and the question is, "will the Mother, of whom he is so unworthy, have recognised the livery of her servant and the spark of faith in her child?" Evidently the Catholic Church, as represented by the *Weekly Register*, does hold with Mr. Piggott that there may be much virtue in a piece of woollen cloth.

THE doctrine of salvation through a scapular is no whit more absurd than that of salvation through faith in the blood of Christ. The dying thief was told he would go the same day into Paradise, and salvation by repentance at the last moment has been the doctrine of orthodox Christianity through all the ages of its history.

THE Rev. Thomas Maycock draws a large congregation by issuing a ticket: "To admit bearer to Major Road Baptist Chapel, Stratford New Town, E., on Sunday evening, 6.30. Subject, 'The Recent Murder.' A description of my visits to the prisoner, Arthur Teasel, in Holloway Gaol. By Thos. Maycock." The prisoner is only on remand, yet the worthy Christian minister who visits him describes the charge as a murder, and uses his visit to attract a large audience to himself.

WILLIAM HAZELL was fined five shillings for disturbing divine service at Eltham parish church on Sunday. He was under the influence, not of "wine which cheereth God and man," but of common swipes, which was all he could afford. He pleaded intoxication, and added that if he hadn't been drunk he wouldn't have gone to church. A clear case of "when the beer's in the wit's out."

BISHOP ULLATHORNE (Catholic) died at Birmingham, and his body has been exhibited (lying in state they call it) in St. Chad's Cathedral. So great was the rush to see the show that several women fainted in the crowd, but happily no one was seriously injured. Very likely we shall hear of a miracle or two—somebody's baby recovering from the whooping-cough, or a blind man being enabled to see into the middle of next week.

"OUR first in Heaven" appeared after an obituary notice in a morning paper, and the father of the child came into the office raging mad. It was the third death in the family, and he wanted to know "where the hell the other two had gone."

WE have just been reading a Swedenborgian tract on the Trinity. It is immense, and we are almost persuaded. The Trinity is not so hard to understand after all. There are so many instances of "three in one." For instance, as the tract tells us, "In the body there is the head, trunk, and limbs, and these three are one." Now and then, of course, a man is born without any limbs, and has only two persons instead of three, but that doesn't matter; the illustration is beautiful, and so convincing! And see how you can find plenty more if you look round. There is the foot, for instance, which has the big toe, the little toe, and the other toes. Oh, it is wonderful how you find the Trinity everywhere if you only look for it.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Saturday, March 30, Conference of Northern Free-thinkers at Newcastle, 3 p.m.
 Sunday, March 31, Free Library, South Shields, morning, afternoon, and evening.
 Tuesday, April 2, Central Hall, Darlington.
 Wednesday, April 3, Co-operative Hall, Chester-le-Street.
 Thursday, April 4, Hull
 Friday, April 5, Grimsby.

April 7, Birmingham; 12, Debate with Rev. W. Rossiter, Camberwell; 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. B. 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.
 R. SHAW.—Thanks for the cutting. See "Acid Drops."
 H. W. KITCHENER.—If you prefer Agnostic stick to it, but what you say you are is precisely what Atheism has always meant.
 J. FLEMING.—Your explanation suffices. Enclosure received, in the circumstances, with thanks.
 S. STANDRING.—Glad to hear of the stirring-up at Southgate. See our "Sugar Plum." Mr. Foote will try to pay you a visit some time in April, to deliver a free lecture and help in forming a Branch. Can a decent hall be procured?
 QUEBIST.—A person who rejects Revelation, yet believes in a God, is a Deist. Please notice that orders should be sent to Mr. Forder.
 J. KEAST.—The Lord seems to have been very unkind to you at Bristol. If Booth brings snow and floods with him his visits ought to be timed for the dog days.
 C. DOEG.—The Liverpool Branch should be one of the strongest. We cannot understand why it is not. The faithful few who stick to the work deserve the greatest credit, but why are the rest so inactive?
 CONRAD.—Thanks. The items are not lost, but should be fuller.
 W. J. MERCER.—Delighted to hear from you as one of our converts, and to learn that you now take pride in distributing a paper you once hated. The second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* will, we hope, be published during the present year.
 C. K. LAPORTE.—Pleased to see your handwriting again. Discretion—you know the rest of the proverb. Ridding the world of knaves is a big task. Even Hercules didn't succeed.
 T. M. SMITH.—Mr. Foote will not be able to visit Bishop Auckland this journey, but he will try to do so next time. It is a pity to leave any place where a Branch can be formed without one.
 H. G. S.—The Martin Elginbrod epitaph has been printed hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of times. Mr. Forder will see about the missing *Freethinker*.
 JOHN MORTIMER says, "I am a recent convert to Freethought, and directly I have read one number of your paper I am ready for the next." See "Acid Drops."
 G. S.—The extract was from *Freethought* of San Francisco. We know that Ambrose Bierce is "Dod Grile."
 L. CLIFFE.—Cutting received with thanks, but too late for comment this week.
 RECEIVED—Lucifer—Independent Pulpit—Ottawa Free Press—War Cry—Ironclad Age—Evening Post—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Truthseeker—Bulletin des Sommaires Le Mot d'Ordre—L'Eclair la Lanterne—Le Centenaire de 1789—Boston Investigator—De Dageraad—Western Figaro—Menschentum—Freethought—Scotsman—Leith Pilot—Bournemouth Guardian.
 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.

By way of trial we again appear without an illustration. With the first twelve-page number of the *Freethinker* we shall issue a cartoon on the Bishop of Lincoln business. Up to the present the absence of illustrations has made absolutely no difference to our circulation. Strange!

We are not absolutely sure, but it is highly probable that next week's *Freethinker* will be twelve pages. It all depends on whether the paper is delivered in time. Twelve pages make a special size and the paper has had to be specially milled. Should the change have to be postponed for a week our readers will understand the reason.

SOON after his return from the North, Mr. Foote will see through the press a thick brochure on the religious ideas and

development of Charles Darwin. It will contain all that can be desired by the many readers who cannot go through all the volumes dealt with themselves.

MR. FOOTE will do another week's organising work early in May, taking South Lancashire for his field of operations. Places that desire his services should lose no time in communicating with him or with Mr. Forder.

THE debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. Rossiter will take place in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, on Friday evening, April 12. The chair will be taken by the Rev. Hugh B. Chapman. The question for discussion is—"Is Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress?" Mr. Foote, of course, takes the affirmative, and Mr. Rossiter the negative. A big meeting is expected.

THE London Secular Federation is urgently in need of funds. Its work, indeed, is crippled for want of means. Readers who can afford to send a subscription are earnestly requested to do so at once. The treasurer is Mr. R. O. Smith, 142 Old Street, London, E.C. Subscriptions sent to us direct will be acknowledged separately.

PART IV. of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* will be published on April 1. It is a costly production, and we hope the parts will continue to have a good sale. The author has devoted great labor and pains to the work.

OLD Morality took Mr. Bradlaugh's afternoon for discussing the Blasphemy Bill, and paid for it by losing twice as many hours through provoking a stiff-backed opponent. Mr. Bradlaugh will get his chance, though, on Friday, April 19. We hope to hear the debate, and give a descriptive account of it to our readers.

MR. S. STANDRING writes that a very successful Freethought meeting has been held at Southgate, where a rich harvest awaits the Secular reapers, any number of souls being ready to be saved from Christianity. There is no Society yet to pay lecturers even for their time, but some, we are quite sure, will be glad to pay the locality a visit if their out-of-pocket expenses are defrayed. Mr. S. Standring's address is 7 Finsbury Street, E.C.

A SPECIAL general meeting of the Liverpool Branch will be held at Camden Hall on Sunday, April 7, at 11 in the morning. We hope there will be a full attendance, as very important business will come up for discussion. The younger members are particularly required to take an active part in the Branch's work.

BLASPHEMY is spreading. The Liverpool *Echo*, under the head of "Newspaper Wit," prints some American profanity that would have raised the ordinary reader's hair twenty years ago, and the skin as well twenty years before that. Hallelujah! The Church of the Future will canonise the editor of the *Freethinker* yet.

A NEW Freethought journal has started in Spain. It is entitled *El Boletín del Libre Pensamiento*—the Bulletin of Freethought. We wish the new journal all success.

LENNSTRAND, the Swedish prisoner for blasphemy, has been lecturing continually since his release, and his lectures have drawn on him four more distinct charges to answer. Like Charles XII. of Sweden, when the market balls whistled round him, he says, "This will be my music."

THE Rev. C. Webster Leadbeater, who was formerly a Church of England curate in Hampshire, and who a few years back went out to Colombo, Ceylon, and there renounced Christianity and was received into the Buddhist Church, has recently published a Buddhist Catechism for children.

De Dageraad, of Amsterdam, March 15, devotes a page to a review of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. It mentions Marchal's *French Dictionary of Atheists*, and highly commends our sub-editor's work as a superior production.

EDGAR SALTUS, the author of the pessimistic *Anatomy of Negation*, when asked what character in fiction he most admired, replied "God."

Yone Santo: a Child of Japan is the title of a book the American missionaries tried to suppress, but could not, though they induced one publisher to decline it. The author is Mr. E. H. House, and he gives the observations of a long residence in Japan, and shows that the Pagans there are just as good or indeed better than the Christians, and that they want no change of heart or of creed to be morally better. The missionary work is shown in its true colors as an absolute failure.

MR. CHARLES WATTS, who for some time refused to debate with the notorious Clark Braden, has, we read, finished a four nights' debate at Salt Lake City, which, according to the reporter in *Freethought*, "resulted in an overwhelming defeat of Braden and the Church militant." It appears that after the first

night very few of the Christian ministers endorsed Braden, whom they had put forward, even with their presence. One of the daily papers said "the debate was finished last night, but Braden was finished the first night."

MR. ST. CHAD BOSCAWEN has been again lecturing at the British Museum on the Religions of Babylonia. He holds that moon worship had priority over sun worship "as the good genius of wanderers by night." This, we believe, was not the only reason. Early man took his time from the moon; hence the common division into weeks of seven days. Mr. Boscawen finds that many of the Bible names, as Laban, Milkah, Sarah, Ishtar, all refer to the moon. He noticed the legend of Ishtar descending into hell, which, of course, is fully a thousand years older than that of Jesus Christ. Mr. Boscawen, moreover, discovers monotheism in Babylon. Merodach, or the holy sun, was recognised as the supreme god in early Babylonian hymns. He rightly holds that prior to the Babylonian captivity the Hebrews had no universal tendency to monotheism. Indeed, their own history shows that their tendency was all the other way. But if, as Mr. Boscawen makes out, Babylon was the nursing mother of Judaism, we want to know what becomes of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. They must be swept into the limbo of unhistoric myths.

MANY of the Secular Societies commence their outdoor work in April. This should mean an increase in the circulation of tracts and propagandist literature of all kinds.

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 23 Stonecutter Street.

THE HON. Q. T. CHOLT of Chicago has undertaken to introduce into Illinois legislature a bill for the taxation of church property. This is simple justice. Church-property untaxed, means an unjust impost on the rest of the community.

Der Lichtfreund, the Friend of Light, a new Freethought organ, is giving in its columns an account of the Freethought movement in Germany, under the title of *The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century*.

A GOOD proportion of the leading American Freethinkers have been recruited from the Ministerial profession. Among the ex-preachers are found Francis Abbott, W. S. Bell, A. B. Bradford, M. D. Conway, Photius Fisk, Ella Gibson, Parker Pillsbury, S. P. Putnam, C. B. Reynolds, J. D. Shaw, L. K. Washburn, R. B. Westbrook, and J. L. York.

A WICKED OLD GOD.

CHRISTIANS seem to have an idea that God the Father is of a loving and merciful disposition; but if the Bible is to be credited, he does not quite come up to that standard, and seems more fit to be classed with the lowest savages. His punishment of Adam and Eve, and cursing posterity for their sin, certainly does not show that he is all-good; neither does the drowning of the world exhibit his merciful kindness. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah might have been a kind action on his part, but the inhabitants doubtless thought otherwise. The Egyptians did not imagine him particularly loving when he hardened Pharaoh's heart so that they should suffer ten horrible plagues, especially the last one, when he killed the firstborn of every family. God seemed rather fond of hardening people's hearts, for Sihon, King of Heshbon, was a victim to that malady, by which our loving God had the pleasure of causing the capture of several cities, and the slaughter of all the men, women, and even the little ones. And yet Christians go down on their knees and worship such a deity.

As a further proof of God's loving kindness, he commanded his friend Joshua to have a man named Achan, his family, and his cattle stoned to death for the offence of taking some gold from a conquered city and not giving it to the priests. Joshua seems to have been butcher-in-chief to our heavenly Father, for it is stated that he massacred thousands of men, women, and children at his command.

God himself slaughtered 50,070 men of Bethshemesh for looking into the ark, and he also struck poor old Uzzah dead for saving the ark from toppling over. Not content with this bit of bye-play, he enticed King Ahab by a lying spirit and killed him.

This loving God slaughtered 70,000 men because his own friend David enumerated them in a census. God also sent an angel to destroy 185,000 Assyrians in one night, and, says the Bible, "when they arose early in the morning behold they were all dead corpses." Jehovah must have been highly amused when the "dead corpses" arose the next morning—to have a

final look at their exterminator, perhaps. Jehovah seemed particularly fond of bloodshed, for Agag was hewn in pieces before his august presence by his prophet Samuel. And he had all the Amalekites slaughtered for an offence committed 400 years previously. This benevolent God, in his Bible, blesses Jael for inveigling Sisera into her tent and driving a nail through his head while her victim was sleeping. Why even Old Nick wouldn't praise such a mean action as that.

The children of Israel happened to complain of the treatment they received at God's hands, so he sent fire among them to consume them. In Elijah's time he burnt 102 men with fire from heaven, so doubtless this was merely a pastime of Jehovah's. He also sent fiery serpents to the children of Israel to kill a few thousand of them for grumbling because they had nothing to eat or drink. How extremely kind of him. Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, were burnt alive by the Lord because they offered up the wrong incense to him. And yet sceptics will not believe that he is a forgiving and all-good God.

We are told in the Bible that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations. The vilest wretch would hardly carry his malice so far as that. As a further proof of his goodness, the Lord says, "I will send wild beasts among you which shall rob you of your children." And he lovingly adds "Ye shall eat of the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters." In Psalms it says "Happy shall he be that taketh and dash thy little ones against the stones." What grand beautiful sentiments for a loving and merciful God to write in his Holy Book!

God's laws are supposed to be very humane. One can see at a glance that none else but an all-good and benevolent being could devise them. For picking up sticks on the Sabbath day people are only to be stoned to death till they die. Slaves can be cruelly ill-treated by their masters, but they must not be killed outright, or else the masters are to be punished. If a slave lives two or three days after ill-treatment the master has committed no offence according to God's just law. Witches are to be put to death, says the Lord, and his ardent admirers have only been too eager to carry out his command. Anyone who worked on the Sabbath day should be put to death; and there are several other terrible offences (almost too heinous to mention) for which people are to be killed, such as eating fat, lighting a fire on the Sabbath, and approaching too near a holy candlestick.

He is well described in Nahum i. as "a jealous God, revengeful and furious"; and it also says "the mountains quake before him and the rocks are thrown down by him." If he rules the world now, no one can doubt that he is revengeful and furious, for he is continually working destruction in some part of the globe.

By merely taking his character from the Bible (which is the Word of God), one cannot help thinking that he is not the loving, merciful, and all-good deity that Christians make out; but, on the contrary, he is a very wicked old God, especially when we also remember that he is the inventor of a hell of everlasting torments for the majority of mankind.

SCOFFER.

PROPHETS DIFFER.

"In nineteen hundred one this world will end,"
Mused Prophet Baxter, D.D., heav'n-inspired.

"You're cracked!" said Hampden; "just to me attend,
For by the Holy Spirit I am fired.

"You mean in eighteen hundred ninety sev'n;
My calculations you will find quite right;
The chosen people then will land in heav'n,
Believers, join in my aerial flight!

"I proved the world to be a planisphere
(From my domain at Balham, Cosmos House),
Exposed Sir Isaac Newton without fear,
And crushed the savant like a little louse."

"Oh, Lord!" retorted Baxter, full of bile;
"Blind leader of the blind, enough of that;
Such silly talk won't even fools beguile:
'Tis not our blessed earth, but you're a flat!"

CHAS. KROLL LAFORTE.

A RECENT tragedy in Japan illustrates the moral force of religion. The Minister of Education was stabbed by a Shinto priest. Years ago, the Minister had entered the temple in which this priest served, and had forgotten to remove his shoes. The holy man swore to kill him for this act of desecration, and he at last kept his word.

OBITUARY.—Died at Bristol, on March 5, Edwin Eilcox, aged forty-one. Despite the obtrusive affection of the soul-snatchers, he remained an Atheist to the end, and enjoyed our article on Pigottism, which was read to him two days before his decease. He desired to be buried without religious rites, but his Christian relatives disregarded his wishes.

CORRESPONDENCE.

REV. J. W. BLACK REPLIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER"

SIR,—May I venture to hope that you will kindly insert in your very interesting paper the following reply to some of the criticisms you made on my pamphlet with reference to Colonel Ingersoll. It would have been quite out of place to discuss whether Moses was really the author of the Pentateuch, or whether it was the work of some other person or persons. As the object of Col. Ingersoll's pamphlet was to criticise the teaching of the Bible in the form in which it has come down to us, and as Moses is popularly—though erroneously supposed to be—the author of the Pentateuch, I do not think I was wrong in loosely using his name when speaking of the writings that are popularly ascribed to him. That the Creator ordained the division into sexes of animals and plants is surely no proof that he did not ordain a similar division of the human race, though created long afterwards. And though Adam and Eve may be regarded as mythical persons, and the early part of Genesis as a myth (though one that veils a deep truth), that is no reason why we should not speak of "our first parents," since the human race, like everything else, must have had a beginning. There must have been a first generation of men and women morally responsible for their actions. To say that it is a distinction without a difference, to say that Adam's sin is not imputed to us but we inherit his fallen nature, is like saying that there is no difference between hanging the son of a murderer if he imitates his father's crime, and hanging him for his father's crime whether he imitates it or not. I do not argue that there is no merit in human courage or goodness, but that the chief praise is due to the divine source from which it comes rather than the human channel through which it flows. Why increased civilisation should involve increased susceptibility to pain of all kinds on men and women is one of those mysteries which with our present limited knowledge we cannot hope to solve. It is hardly fair to say that Abraham was a murderer at heart if he thought that God intended the order to slay his son to be executed, since the moral guilt of murder attaches only to those who slay their fellow creatures to gratify their personal feelings, or promote their personal interests. The infliction of the death penalty (which was naturally more common in a barbarous age where the sanctity of human life was inadequately realised than it is among us), for acts of idolatry or irreverence I defend not on the ground 'that the worship of Jehovah was the national religion and heresy was treason,' but because it was necessary at all costs to maintain purity and reverence in their religion, as it was only by doing this that the Hebrew nation could escape sinking to the level of, and eventually falling a prey to the surrounding nations, who were all without exception given up to obscene and licentious modes of worship. No price was too great to pay for the maintenance of a full amount of rest and recreation for all, and it would have been well for the English nation to-day if they had acted in the spirit of the Hebrew law-giver, not by hanging Sunday costermongers who are the victims of an evil system, but by inflicting the extreme penalty of the law on the first man, and all following his example, who should dare for the furtherance of his own private ends to deprive any one either on Sunday, or on any other day, of his fair share of rest and recreation.—Yours truly,

J. W. BLACK.

Launcell's Vicarage, Stratton, Cornwall.
March 22, 1889.

[Mr. Black thinks it defensible to speak of Moses as the author of the Pentateuch though he was not. We don't. Sex in man was not "ordained" for the reason Mr. Black gave; namely, that woman should be dependant upon man. The human race inherits sex from its brute progenitors. Nor is it right to speak of "our first parents" when Adam and Eve are "mythical persons." Properly speaking, too, there was no "first generation" of responsible men and women; it contradicts the gradual process of Evolution. Adam's sin is virtually imputed to us if we inherit his fallen nature, which may lead us to hell. Justice demands a fair start at least. Dividing the merit of good actions between man and God is unjust if man is an independent being; absurd if God is omnipotent, in which case he does everything, good, bad and indifferent. Mr. Black's plea for Abraham is not improved. A man who is ready to kill his son is a murderer at heart, whether he intends to please God or himself. Excusing murder on religious grounds is trifling with morality. As for the Canaanites, we deny that there is any proof that they were worse than the Jews. Mr. Black's Sabbatarian views are certainly stringent, but he forgets to tell us whose "fair share of rest and recreation" was stolen by the man who was stoned to death for picking up sticks on a Sunday.—EDITOR]

MR. MOSS RETURNS THANKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR MR. FOOTE,—I have received an official communication informing me that the resolution of the 9th of May, 1888, prohibiting me from lecturing has been rescinded, and I am, therefore, again free to continue my work in the cause of Freethought and progress. I take this opportunity of publicly thanking Mrs. Beant for her earnest and eloquent support, and all the clergymen and laymen of the Board, and the Freethought party

generally, who assisted by their efforts in winning back for me my rights. I also wish to express my sense of the kindness you have shown me by giving publicity to the case in the various stages of its progress. I trust I shall now be able to render useful service by eradicating superstition, by propagating what I regard as the true religion for man—viz., Secularism—a religion based upon science, and having for its sole end the permanent well-being of the people.—Yours sincerely,

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

44 Credon Road, S.E.

JESUITISM IN CANADA.

CHARLES DICKENS, when travelling in Switzerland, remarked that the Protestant cantons were better tilled and the inhabitants in every way superior to those in the Roman Catholic cantons. The same remark has been made by those who pass from the Protestant to the Catholic parts of Ireland. The more religion the less secular improvement. Much the same phenomena may be observed in Canada. The oldest settled portion of that vast Dominion is divided into the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The former, though smaller in area, is more populous, active, and thriving. According to the census of 1881 the statistics were as follows:—Ontario, area, 101,733 square miles; population, 1,973,228; pupils under instruction in elementary and high schools, 491,634; religious divisions—Presbyterians, 417,749; Church of England 366,539; Roman Catholics, 320,839. Quebec, area, 188,688 square miles; population, 1,359,027; pupils under instruction, 323,274; religious divisions, Roman Catholics, 1,170,718; non-Romans, 178,319.

The majority of Catholics in Quebec is owing to its being the seat of the old French Canadian Stock. The Jesuits have availed themselves of the situation to acquire vast property and influence. To such an extent has control over the the legislature of Quebec been already secured, that the French civil code has been substituted for English law in that province, with the two-fold result, already, that the validity of marriages is decided by Roman Catholic custom, and not by English statute law, and that English farmers are being steadily crowded out, that their places may be taken, as they actually are taken, by French Roman Catholics, who pay tithe to their priesthood, and thus are more acceptable to the dominant party. In the city of Quebec, a system of ruthless boycotting has been instituted against all non-Catholic tradesmen, who are steadily being driven out of the city. The very judges on the bench refer to Catholic ecclesiastical authorities in giving their decisions.

Flushed by such success, the Romanists have made bolder advances and brought in a "Jesuits Estates Bill," the purpose of which is to reinstate the Jesuits in all the property which they held under the French Dominion, before the Jesuits were suppressed by Pope Clement XIV. in 1773. As a matter of fact, even the French crown never admitted the rights of the Jesuits to all these lands, yet it is hoped the English Crown will tamely submit to hand them over to that body.

The excitement stirred in Canada is great, so great that sensational United States papers speak as though Canada was on the verge of civil war. The Protestant majority in Ontario naturally sympathise with their brethren who are in a minority in Quebec, and the Orangemen, who are a force in Ontario, are anxious for retaliation. Religious fanaticism is being aroused on both sides, and when once that beast is unchained, bloodshed and oppression may confidently be looked forward to. The Jesuits Estates Bill is pretty certain to be passed by the Legislature of Quebec, especially as a sop in the shape of 60,000 dollars is offered to the Protestants, and it will be the duty of the Home Government to step in with its imperative veto, or the priests, as is the nature of their tribe, will only use the fresh power and pelf as a stepping-stone to making the will of the Church supreme in Canada.

LUCIANUS

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister: "And do you like to go to church with your papa and mamma, Bobby?" Bobby (inclined to be non-committal): "Well, I guess I like it as well as pa does."

A missionary tells a story of a Zulu chief who embraced Christianity at once when told it meant only one wife. The tawny gentleman was in search of peace.

Minister (to boy who is digging for worms): "Little boy, don't you know that it is wrong to work on Sunday, except in cases of necessity?" Boy (going on with his digging): "This is a case of necessity. A feller can't go fishin' 'thout bait."

Clerical Visitor: "And now, my little man, what are you going to be when you grow up to be as big as I am?" Johnny: "I'm going to be a minister." Clerical Visitor: "But why do you want to be a minister?" Johnny: "So that I can holler on Sunday, like you do."

A farmer out west who had never paid much attention to religion was last summer brought to seek grace and a change of heart by his pious wife, though he was evidently a reluctant pupil. The weather was dry and rain badly needed. His wife thought he should pray for rain. He consented, and down upon his knees he went one night before retiring and assailed the Throne of Mercy. "O Lord," he said, in conclusion, "if it rains to-morrow it will do my potatoes good. If it don't, I can get in my hay. There!" turning to his wife, "I think I've got God up a tree."

NOW READY.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION

A DISCUSSION BETWEEN

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

AND THE

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

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