

# THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## "COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—XII.



ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF MOSES BY JEHOVAIL.

"And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him and sought to kill him."—Exodus iv., 24.

## BUTCHER VARLEY'S TRICKS.

"Prompt to assail, and careless of defence,  
Invulnerable in his impudence,  
He dares the world and, eager of a name,  
He thrusts about and jostles into fame.

And yet with all his arts he could not thrive,  
The most unlucky parasite alive."—Dryden.

HENRY VARLEY, the converted butcher, has for a long time been trying to gain a little notoriety. Incapable of achieving fame by his own exploits, he has resorted to systematic defamation of his betters. He resembles one of those parasitical insects that cannot sustain themselves, and only live by clinging to superior organisms.

When Mr. Bradlaugh was first opposed by the Tories and bigots in the House of Commons, this pious pigsticker saw his chance. Starting from his natural obscurity, he resolved to pose as the champion of outraged religion. Directly the Atheist's seat was vacant, Butcher Varley conveyed his own carcass to Northampton, trusting that the constituency would discern in him those virtues which the blind world had failed to recognise. But he was quickly undeceived. The staunchest Christians turned up their noses in disgust. The petty soul of which he boasted was no more than enough to save his body the expense of salt; while his intellect, compared with that of the man he wished to supplant, was as a tallow candle to an electric light. Unable to gain the least support, he vanished from the scene amidst general laughter, leaving behind him a name which everyone used to express the highest degree of impudence and stupidity.

A less callous mortal would have shrunk into silence after this bitter lesson. But, as Pope says, we may

take it for a rule,  
No creature smarts so little as a fool.

Butcher Varley accordingly returned home, defeated yet unabashed. The great idea still fermented in his doughy brain; and as he could not use the sword against the infidel Goliath, he decided to employ the sling. Like little David, he furnished himself with five choice stones—subterfuge, misrepresentation, insinuated falsehood, the half-truth, and the downright lie. He excels in all these vices, and especially in the last. The world, as Falstaff said, is given to lying; but we doubt if it contains a more consummate and malignant liar than Henry Varley.

His first move was to issue a pamphlet addressed "To the Electors of the Borough of Northampton." As Mrs. Besant proved, in her "Henry Varley Exposed," this little performance contained several mis-statements and at least two flat lies. Another pamphlet immediately followed "addressed to men generally, for their private reading only." This suggestive dedication caused a very large sale, and the pious author discovered a new illustration of the maxim that "godliness is great gain." His previous experience served him in good stead. As a friend of the society which published "The Confessional Unmasked," he was well aware of the connexion between pruriency and profit.

This penny pamphlet contained all the falsehoods of the original Address, with a few more added from the same inexhaustible source of mendacity. Mr. Bradlaugh was shamelessly traduced on every page. Words were attributed to him which he never uttered, quotations were made from papers that had no existence, passages were cited from books he had never written, and other passages were so wrested from their context as to make him say the very opposite of what he meant. As the wretched libel was circulated among the members of Parliament, Mr. Bradlaugh publicly denounced it, and challenged Varley to submit himself to a court of honor. The slanderer declined, and invited a prosecution for libel, knowing that a Christian jury would never give the Atheist a verdict, while the publicity of a trial would give him the advertisement he wanted. Mr. Bradlaugh was too sagacious to gratify the rascal's ambition.

Shortly after, in concert with the Protestant Alliance, Butcher Varley arranged that Exeter Hall meeting which the Free-thinkers of London so completely spoiled. As for the pious pigsticker himself, he was secreted in a private room during all the tumult, and he never dared to show his cowardly face on the platform until he was assured that not a single infidel remained on the premises. He then emerged from his hiding-place with a brazen smile, as though he were a second Wellington returning from another Waterloo.

Butcher Varley poses as the champion of religion and morality, both of which must be in a very bad way if they need his assistance. Surely the Christian God is able to protect his own creed; and as for morality, it would probably suffer little if the Notting-Hill revivalist were wiped out of existence. His influence on the London butchers does not appear to be elevating. Two of his interesting protégés tried to force their way into the Hall of Science last Sunday evening, and on being stopped they shouted "What! something to pay? Why, we goes and 'ears Varley for nothin'." After which they retreated, muttering as they went curses not loud but deep, and regaling those near them with language such as is never heard within the precincts of the Hall of Science, unless from the lips of visitors who mistake it for a little Bethel.

Varley's pamphlets were extensively circulated in Northampton, mainly, we believe, through the aid of the Protestant Alliance, an association which thinks it a virtue to lie for the glory of God, and does its best to prove the doctrine of natural depravity. Yet the electors of Northampton answered this appeal by sending Mr. Bradlaugh back to Saint Stephen's, thus teaching all pious meddlers that, after thirteen years' intimate acquaintance with their representative, they stand in no need of gratuitous information as to his character or his opinions.

Since then Butcher Varley has continued the sale of his lying pamphlet, which he now advertises as having reached its fiftieth thousand. But his magnificent brain has not been idle. It conceived an idea which, after long gestation in that dull receptacle, and fierce pains of parturition, has at length been born into the world of fact; leaving poor Varley extremely weak and exhausted, but still as well as can be expected in the circumstances.

This bantling is worthy of its androgynous parent. It takes the shape of a circular "To the Members of the House of Commons," and is described as "For Private Circulation only." Varley wishes "to submit to their notice the horrible blasphemous



mies that are appended, and quoted from a new weekly publication, issued from the office where Mr. Bradlaugh's weekly journal, the *National Reformer*, is published. The paper is entitled the *Freethinker*, and is edited by Mr. G. W. Foote, one of Mr. Bradlaugh's prominent supporters, and one of his right-hand men at the Hall of Science." The Commons of England are also requested to notice that "Dr. Aveling, who for some years has been one of Mr. Bradlaugh's chief helpers, is another contributor to this disgraceful product of Atheism."

Varley is such a constitutional liar that he cannot tell the truth when he tries. "The following quotation," he says, "is from the pen of Mr. G. W. Foote." Whereupon he prints a long selection from an article by Mr. W. Heaford, to which he joins some paragraphs from an article of mine, and at the end he claps the signature "G. W. Foote." As this cannot be an accident, but must have been done deliberately, it shows what a blunted conscience the fellow has, if he possesses any conscience at all.

This attempt to make Mr. Bradlaugh responsible for what appears in the *Freethinker* is unspeakably base. My name appears on it as editor, every member of the staff appends his signature to his articles, and we alone must take the credit and bear the blame. Mr. Bradlaugh has absolutely no connexion with this "blasphemous product of Atheism," and I for one will not let him be attacked through me. If his enemies wish to condemn him, let them do it, if they can, out of his own mouth; and not father upon him the utterances of others.

The major portion of Varley's quotations consist of impeachments of Biblical characters, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. These are described as "blasphemous," but are they false? If so, let the pious pigsticker defend the heroes of his holy book. He is clearly just the right person to perform the task as a labor of love.

That, however, he prefers to avoid; and instead he calls on the House of Commons to "devise means to stay this hideous prostitution of the liberty of the Press, by making these shameless blasphemers amenable to the existing law." We have been inviting the enemy to come on for months, so that Varley is behind the fair. A trial for blasphemy will be something novel, but it will not much advance the cause of Christianity. If a jury should convict, the imprisonment of the Editor will not stop the *Freethinker*, for there are loyal and steadfast friends of liberty prepared to stand in the breach while he is absent. Nor will it tame him. I (for I must speak directly in the first person) promise the persecutors that they shall regret their victory if they win. Every pang I may suffer shall be amply avenged; each will mean, if I live to strike, a fresh nail in the coffin of their accursed creed.

Butcher Varley pens an exceptionally mendacious postscript to his circular. He says that "infidel teachings" in Northampton "have undermined home relationship and social purity." If he believed this, we could understand why he thought there was a chance for him at the election. But he does not believe it; he is simply lying. He knows very well that the morality of Northampton is better than that of most manufacturing towns, while its church and chapel attendance largely exceeds that of Tory towns like Liverpool. As a matter of fact there is little "infidel teaching" in Northampton, for the simple reason that Mr. Bradlaugh wisely refrains from preaching irreligion in the borough which he politically represents. He makes no concealment of his opinions, but he does not obtrude them. And the Liberal vote in Northampton is overwhelmingly Nonconformist. How the Dissenters of that borough must admire Butcher Varley for his libels on them, their town, and the man of their political choice!

What is the real purpose of Varley's circular? Notoriety. The fellow is only trying to puff himself. Profit naturally follows. In due course, we have no doubt, the recipients of this circular who are foolish enough to respond, will be favored with another, setting forth Henry Varley's great services to morality and religion, and stating that certain pious and philanthropical objects he is connected with are sadly in need of funds. Like Newdegate he hopes to be rewarded for his "bold and spirited attempt" to stab an Atheist with a poisoned dagger. Pious Samuel Morley, and other wealthy members of his tribe, may put down something handsome, and gladden the revivalist's miserable heart. Here, we sincerely believe, lies the secret of his dull and feeble lucubrations.

We dismiss him with mingled pity and contempt. He is "a fool with a circumbendibus," and only acts after his kind; and if he stings at all, it is only like one of those dirty little insects which the traveller sometimes encounters in strange beds, and which he captures between finger and thumb and quietly extinguishes.

G. W. FOOTE.

[This article is reprinted as a four-paged tract, large or small packets of which will be forwarded to any *Freethinker* for gratuitous distribution on receipt of stamps for postage.]

RATHER COOL.—A Glasgow minister was recently called in to see a man who was very ill. After finishing his visit, as he was leaving the house, he said to the man's wife, "My good woman, do you not go to any church at all?" "Oh, yes sir; we gang to the Barony Kirk." "Then why in the world did you send for me? Why didn't you send for Dr. Macleod?" "Na, na, 'deed no; we wadna risk him. Do ye ken it's a dangerous case of typhus?"

## THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON XXI. GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES.

"He shall guide you into all truth" (John xvi., 13).

In the former sermon on this text it was shown to some extent how this promise had failed—how Jesus and his apostles contradicted each other, and how impossible it was for anyone to define orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The subject is here pursued somewhat further. The multitude of Christian sects, ancient and modern, furnishes the most positive proof that Christianity is but a bewildering system of perplexity and confusion. The heretics blame the orthodox and the orthodox blame the heretics; the strongest party persecute all the rest, and every one of them would do the same if it had the power. How is this? Why, Christianity is a mass of contradictory falsehoods, and there is no other method of inducing people to believe in it than by an unsparing use of bribes and intimidation.

Continuing the alphabetical order of the sects, I now turn to the—

(12) *Alascani*, followers of John Alasco, once a Polish Catholic bishop, later a reformed Dutch pastor in London, who died 1560. He held that the words, "this is my body," applied to both elements, or to both the bread and the wine in the sacrament. After all the volumes of learned rubbish that have been written on this subject, Christians are just where they were. Perhaps Jesus had taken so much of the wine that he did not know what he was saying. There is more sense in that suggestion than all that has previously been written upon it.

(13) On May 28th, 1821, the Freemasons of the United States founded a new church, near Savannah, for all denominations, "expressive of the universal love of the great Architect for all his creatures." Who the great Mason was they don't say. But fancy all denominations of Christians living together in love and amity! They will do so just about the time when foxes and geese, wolves and lambs, cats and mice, pumas and llamas, agree to live together. They must cease to be Christians before they can endure each other. Stop! I am not sure that they would not all come together to roast a Freethinker—though they would roast each other before parting.

(14) The *Allenites*, of Nova Scotia, about one hundred years ago, taught that Adam and Eve before their fall were pure spirits; that all human souls are emanations or parts of one great spirit; that they were all present in Eden, and took an active part in the first transgression, etc., etc. That apple must have been a monster to give them all a scent, not to mention a taste. It is, however, best to believe Henry Allen, the founder, for he knew as much about it as Moses or Paul.

(15) *Ammonius Saccas*, in the second century, and his disciples held all religions to "mean the same thing at bottom." He was right. They all mean that the great mass of mankind are ignorant and weak, and that fanatics and knaves understand how to make them pay for it.

(16) *Moses Amyrault*, or *Amyrault*, and his followers, held that God "desires the happiness of all men;" excludes none "by any divine decree;" refuses to none "the power of believing;" but does not grant to all "his assistance" to believe. This poor bewildered man was trying to reconcile contradictory propositions—Calvinian decrees and Arminian free grace. God desires the happiness of all men; but he decreed their damnation or endless pain an eternity ago, and has never once slackened his resolve to get them into hell and keep them there, even if he must go and stay himself to do it. These are the ideas Amyrault tried to reconcile, poor man!

(17) The *Anabaptists*, or rebaptisers, formed a strong and turbulent sect in Luther's day, and Dr. Martin hated them as much as the Catholics did him. They were so full of the spirit as to be above all civil power and control; they seized Munster and changed its name to Mount Zion; proclaimed the speedy Advent of Jesus to set up a fifth or universal monarchy. Buckhold, one of the leaders, took fourteen wives, after the example of David; was besieged by the carnal princes of Germany, taken prisoner and loaded with chains; was carried about from city to city and exhibited to the gaping and pious crowds. Last of all, he was brought out, as an old book informs me, and "fastened to a stake, and is pulled piecemeal by two executioners, with pincers red-hot out of the fire. The first pains he felt,

he suppressed, at the second he implored God's mercy. For a whole hour was he pulled and delacerated with those instruments, and at length, to hasten somewhat his death, run through with a sword."

Buckhold would, no doubt, have treated his enemies just the same. It is always so in religious persecution—no horrors are too great to inflict upon heretics. What would the Protestants have said, had the Papists served Luther just as Buckhold was treated? But, seeing it was done by their own party, Protestants say nothing of it now, though they gloried in it then.

The above shows that if Jesus were to reappear and claim to be God's son, etc., the Christians would—300 years back—have pulled him to pieces with red-hot pincers; to-day, they would confine him as a lunatic. And yet they damn us for unbelief!

(18) *The Angelics* were possibly a sect who worshipped angels (Colossians ii., 18); and though I do not know what angels are, I know they are as good gods to worship as any.

(19) *The Anthropomorphites* were and are people—I am one of them—who believe that the God or gods of the Bible were by the writers supposed to be of the same shape and appearance as men. The Rev. Joseph Hussey, a learned clergyman of the Anglican sect in the seventeenth century, held similar views, as all unbiassed readers of the Bible must. The orthodox have lopped off the head, hands, legs of their God, and so peeled and rasped down his trunk that he has nothing left but his spirit; and that is so perfectly *rectified* as to be turned into an infinite vacuum. The gods of the Bible were lusty, bony, muscular Christians, blessed with all human passions and appetites, specially the brutal ones—they were big savages, in fact. The gods of the churches, when not gold and power, are really nothing in the world.

(20) *Anti-Baptists* are Quakers and others who don't believe in baptism, except for converts from Judaism, Paganism, or Atheism; consequently it may be said that they renounce baptism altogether. Common-sense tells us that baptism is a silly rite, of which no rational account can be given.

(21) ANTI-CHRIST. The commentators and expounders of prophecy are all at sixes and sevens respecting the identity of this gentleman; but I can tell him that there are legions of them. All who follow truth in preference to gospel fables; all great inventors, discoverers, executors of great ideas, scientists, capitalists, merchants, real statesmen, patriots, lovers of liberty—these are all anti-Christians—all to whom the world owes any great thoughts, great examples, great deeds, are anti-Christians. And all the parsons who are good for anything are anti-Christians also.

(22) *The Antimarians* were persons who did not believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin. Millions who know nothing about it believe she was. Amen.

(23) *The Antinomians*, or enemies of law, are people who believe with Paul that "a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Their opponents hold with James, Paul's antagonist, that a man is justified by works. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many volumes were written by Dr. Crisp, Rowland Hill's brother, Top-lady, Fletcher of Madeley, and others, *pro et con*. But the Holy Spirit guided neither party to the truth. Like every theological dispute, it is just where it was—except that its interest is dead.

(24) *Antipædobaptists* are opposed to the baptism of infants, as the name signifies. So am I. A good washing in warm water and soap is what they require. These people, though, insist that adults should have a plunge—swimming baths should therefore be attached to all their chapels.

Reader! I have given you already many instances—twenty-four to be exact—of antagonistic doctrines among Christians. They are all right, they protest; and each kindly and lovingly damns his opponent for obstinate wrong belief. And yet that promised spirit of truth never interferes. He doesn't care. The churches have been given up to mania for nearly nineteen centuries; and they will never agree or come to reason until their creeds are all buried; and when that is done, poor bewildered man may be permitted in peace and quietness to make the best of the earth. The greatest human curse is theology. Earth-quakes, plagues, locusts, famines, floods, the sweating sickness, the black death, and all other epidemics, are altogether a trifle compared with theology.

J. SYMES.

(To be continued.)

## ACID DROPS.

THE *War Cry*, under the heading, "Fishponds, Bristol," gives us the following:—"No. 4, a brother with a wooden leg, says he is serving a new master now. He was a great fighter. He told us his horse knows he is converted now, for he trots past all the public houses, and before he always stopped." Lord, Lord, how this world is given to lying!

BUTCHER VARLEY has been at it again. Clearly he hopes to entitle his sheep's head to a prominent place at the marriage supper of the Lamb. No doubt he made a blessed substitution of scraggy mutton for sanguinary lamb. His attempt to cut up the *Freethinker* shows what a botcher the butcher is. He lacks pluck.

WE were rejoiced to discover from the *Shield of Faith* that "Dr. Sexton never was an Atheist." This will come as news to many who have heard his lectures on "The Design Argument" and read his articles signed Melampus.

THIS *Shield of Faith*, wherewith all the fiery darts of the wicked were to be quenched, is sadly in need of tinkering. We always thought it had plenty of brass, but it now declares itself hard up for tin. Dr. Sexton appeals most touchingly for his propagandist fund. "The subscriptions received have been very inadequate," for lectures he has been compelled to take "miserably small fees," "the sum received for all this work has been a little more than half that of previous years." He complains that he has received nothing for editing the *Shield of Faith*, but "on the contrary it has involved me in considerable outlay." Cheer up, Doctor! Surely you believe in the power of prayer. If you would only pray without ceasing doubtless the Lord would provide without the necessity of such pathetic appeals to, we fear, the cold hearts and close fists of your few keyid Christian readers.

MR. W. H. HARRISON, editor of the *Spiritualist*, states that "none of the English spiritualistic periodicals are self-supporting." We cannot weep. Spiritism is helping to break up orthodoxy, but it would replace it with a superstition little less besotted.

THE cause of certain Christian journals being a financial success is manifested on every page. Reports of sermons and advertisements of shams are dexterously mingled, and we turn from De Witt Talmage to find ourselves confronted by "The Rev. E. J. Silverton, specialist for deafness, noises, offensive discharge in the ears, and ill-health." The precept of Jesus serve to introduce the pills and potions of half the quacks in London.

MESSRS. GRIFFITH and FARREN announce the "Confessions of a Medium," which is said to be an actual autobiography giving full details of the tricks and deceptions by which the Spiritualists impose on their deluded following.

THE Rev. C. B. Brigstocke has published a pamphlet called "The Modern Atheist." It protests against avowed Atheists sitting in Parliament, because "the Atheist is intellectually weak, and, further, he is morally corrupt." How these Christian parsons bubble over with the charity which thinketh no evil when they speak of opponents of their faith. Is it equally uncharitable to suspect that God might defend himself if their religion was not the source of their revenue?

TALMAGE has given up the paid pew system and resorted to Beecher's plan of selling the choice of seats by auction. Thereupon the *Christian Union* cries out that churches should be sustained by State aid or endowment. "He will be a bold man," it says, "who, after the failure of Dr. Talmage's experiment, endeavors to sustain a metropolitan church by merely passing round the hat after the church is over." It seems, too, that at Beecher's last auction sale, about £500 less was realised than year's last. As the total pew rental comes to nearly £8,300 this isn't so bad for a humble follower of one who had not where to lay his head.

THE result of a religious census taken at Derby shows that considerably less than a fourth of the inhabitants attend any place of worship. Doubtless the Derby parsons will follow those of Nottingham in crying out for £60,000 or so to provide church accommodation, although the existing places are not yet half-filled.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Rock* declares that the best weapon for the Christian to use in the Bradlaugh difficulty is prayer. The editor, however, shows by his articles on the amenities of Atheists, that he relies rather on the power of spite and misrepresentation.

THE *New York Herald*, of January 16th, gives a shocking picture of immoralities practiced at the Oneida Community, presided over by Father Noyes. The relation is from the mouth of an eyewitness, who was bred in the community. He tells how

Father Noyes, under pretence of being inspired by God, carried on the most iniquitous debaucheries. "Noyes," says he, "was for ever quoting the Bible." Those who have really read that undateable collection of the books of a barbarous people know how readily it lends itself to the purposes of such a Father Noyes.

TALMAGE has struck on a gold mine at last. He has taken up the subject of Ingersoll for his lectures. He first deals with Noah's Flood. He says Ingersoll is the champion blasphemer. The tale of Noah's Flood is quite credible because he, Talmage, has known horses that knew when it was coming on to rain—ergo, the polar bear from the north, the kangaroo from Australia, and the sloth from South America must have started for the ark. Mount Ararat, we learn, was not the name of a mountain, but of a range of hills "twenty feet or one hundred feet" where Noah alighted. Above all, Noah's ark must be distinguished from "Ingersoll's ark, with whole lairs of panthers that with spotted claws, if they could, would maul the eternal God to pieces." Even after this we won't call Talmage the champion howling ignoramus, though we should not like to back anyone against him. But we have not yet been the round of the churches.

JOHN PERCY FRENCH was charged at the Mansion House with disturbing the congregation of St. Paul's Cathedral, on Sunday evening, by shouting out, "I am the son of the Lord Jesus Christ." In a volume of "Anthems to Mary," the Catholics have denominated Saint Ann, mother of the ever-blessed Virgin, "Grandmother of the Eternal God," and here, it appears, is his grandson. It is unfortunate that the only scion of this renowned and interesting family known to be at large should have been carried off to a lunatic asylum. But they were always an ill-starred set.

THE Rev. S. C. Gordon, M.A., B.D., lecturing at Chatham on "Physical Science and Belief in the Supernatural," makes some curious statements. He says: "Science, when it is true, is the handmaid of religion, but is unable to find out God." Must it not then be the handmaid of a religion which does not concern itself with God, and what is this but saying what anti-supernaturalists contend—that science serves humanity? Why this qualification "when it is true?" Untruths form no part of science. There is no false science, but "much science falsely so-called"—the whole bulk of theology for instance.

MR. GORDON further says: "The old idea of Creation in six days by the voice of God has been laid aside, and it is the doctrine of modern science and accepted by all intelligent religious people that this earth was prepared and furnished in countless millions of years."

"INTELLIGENT religious people" are almost as scarce as facts in theological science falsely so-called. This very week the *Guardian* denounces Mr. Gordon's view of creation as unsettling the Christian faith. And is it true that the Sabbath founded on God's rest after his six days' work is laid aside, and, if so, should not the whole story of Eve's Fall and the Redemption be laid aside with it?

CARDINAL MANNING has discovered that the Franco-German war was the result of the poor Pope being robbed of Rome. Now, the occupation of Rome took place on December 20th, 1880, whereas war was declared between France and Prussia on July 15th. This is how theologians understand cause and effect.

WE understand that a Church of England Salvation Army is being formed. By and bye we shall have all the sober Christians infected with this monstrous lunacy, and every true believer will howl like the early disciples at their feast of Pentecost.

THE National Club has passed a resolution against the subversion of "a right which the representatives of the people have always enjoyed of publicly testifying their belief in a Supreme Ruler, who is King of kings and Lord of lords." What is the National Club? Where and how does it exist? We pause for a reply.

THE Coutts-Bartlett paper does not enjoy a very wide circulation. It publishes Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett's speeches in full. People who suffer from insomnia should purchase a copy, and take it with them to bed.

"ENGLAND," the impudent title of this youthful American's organ, is extensively advertised in London. Its big posters represent a rampant lion treading down Atheism and Sedition. People look at it and fancy 'tis a picture of some menagerie performance, which they would much like to see; and when they find it is only a fresh instance of Bartlett's cheek, they swear some awfully big D's.

LADY COUTTS sank nearly a quarter of a million in the useless Columbia Market, and she must be sinking a good deal in her juvenile husband. She is a very estimable lady, no doubt, but some people and their money—well, the proverb is rather stale.

LAST Sunday Miss Annie Swift fell down dead while teaching a Bible class at Salisbury. If such an incident had occurred in a Freethought hall it would have been bruited abroad as an instance of the Almighty's vengeance.

SOMETHING like a riot occurred at King's Cross, owing to the preaching of half-a-dozen Mormon revivalists. They were hooted and stoned, and a free-fight ensued. These low types of Christians, for the Mormons are Christians, and defend themselves ably from the Christian books, always remind us of the primitive Christians themselves. They have the same fervid fanaticism, the same belief in the supernatural establishment of a kingdom of heaven upon the earth, and the same success with the dregs of the population. As it is, their following, in the first thirty years since the death of Joe Smith, was much larger than that of the Christians thirty years after the death of Jesus, and this in an enlightened age, and among peoples supposed to be foremost in civilisation.

THE Mormons do not now seem likely to attain the political success which Christianity achieved under Constantine. A widespread feeling of hostility to polygamy has grown up in most of the States of the Union, and the initiative has been taken in the Legislative assembly for its suppression.

MEANTIME, what a comment on the ignorance and credulity, fostered by our Christianity, is the fact that annually large shiploads of Mormon converts leave our shores for Utah, and that among these the larger number are women.

AT the last General Election in France the Abbé Dagorne defeated the Republican candidate, but was afterwards unseated for the use of clerical influence in the election. On Sunday last the Abbé and the same Republican candidate stood again, and the Abbé was defeated. When the peoples recognise that mental independence is the prerequisite of political progress it will be a bad day for the priests everywhere.

EXETER HALL, the headquarters of the Young Men's Christian Association, has long been a byword for cant and caterwauling. The hire of the hall has frequently been refused to Radicals, on the ground that the semi-sacred edifice so consecrated by May meetings, soft soap and dish-water, is not intended to be used for political purposes. It was, however, readily accorded to Mr. W. H. Smith, M.P., to address his constituents, probably because it was known that this newsagent and ex-ruler of the Queen's Navy, would declare his opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh's fulfilling his duty to his constituents.

A GENTLEMAN named Kankowski was recently hung out in America for too close an imitation of the man after God's own heart. As murderer's souls are very precious there was a fierce competition for Kankowski's. The Catholic priest and the Protestant clergyman nearly came to blows in his cell, and it appears that the interesting object of their attentions was quite willing to see fair play. The Protestant called the Catholic a "fat priest," but the latter retorted that Kankowski was booked for a seat in his heaven. There was a great crush at the hanging, but the dispute between the rival soul-hunters is still open. The best way to decide it would be to hang them both and send them after Kankowski.

LAST Monday a meeting was held in Bristol to consider the report of the Bishop's Committee on the spiritual destitution of the city. It was unanimously resolved that cash was wanted. Parsons' meetings generally end that way. Fifty thousand pounds are to be raised, and the clergy undertake to do as much spiritual washing and mangling as they can for the money.

QUAINT PRAYERS.—In the year 1379 a dreadful pestilence occurred in the northern parts of England. During the prevalence of this epidemic the Scots invaded the country, but dare not stay long for fear of infection. Having asked some English people the reason of so great a mortality, and being told that it came by the grace of God, the Scots sought protection from its ravages by using every morning and evening the following prayer:—"God and St. Magno, St. Thomas and St. Andrew, shield us this day from God's grace and the foul deaths that Englishmen die upon." A writer on "Presbyterian Eloquence" furnishes the following specimens of quaint prayer:—"A Mc Hurstone once prayed:—'Lord, give us grace; for if thou give us not grace we shall not give thee glory; and who will gain by that, Lord?' One who is now [1690] head of a college, and looked upon as their [the Presbyterians'] great advocate and oracle, prayed thus:—'Good Lord, what have ye been doing all this time? Where have ye been these thirty years? What good have ye done to your poor kirk in Scotland, that has been so long spur-galled with anti-Christ's riding her? She has been long lying on her back and sadly defiled, and many a good lift we lent her. Oh! how often have we put our shoulders to Christ's cause when his own back was against the wall. To be free with you, Lord, we have done many things for thee that never entered thy noddle, and yet we are content that thou take all the glory; is not that fair and kind?'"

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

February 9th, Southwark Radical Club; 12th, Grimsby; 14th, Walworth; 19th, Manchester; 26th, Liverpool.

March 5th, Claremont Hall, London; 12th, Edinburgh; 19th, Glasgow; 26th, Nottingham.

April 19th, Hackney Workmen's Club.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

ALL business communications to be addressed to Mr. W. J. RAMSEY, 28, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

J. M.—William Rounseville Alger was born in 1823. His "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life" is written from the Universalist standpoint. It is a work of great research, and its bibliographical appendix is as nearly as possible a perfect repertory of all the literature upon the subject.

ROBERT S.—Southwell's "Fable of the Monkeys" originally appeared in the *Lancashire Beacon*. It was transcribed by Mr. J. P. Adams in the *National Reformer* about 1865.

PLYMOUTH.—We could fill our columns with such instances of clerical bigotry.

H. S.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

READER points out that Mr. Symes might have commenced his list of sects with the Abecedarians, a sect of German Anabaptists who claimed direct inspiration, which they maintained was obstructed by human learning. They therefore declared against even learning the A, B, C, since all human knowledge is founded on the Alphabet. The Rev. J. H. Blunt, in his "Dictionary of Sects and Heresies," from which these particulars are taken, says: "The Abecedarian theory in a more modified form has had much influence on some modern sects, especially the more ignorant sects of Methodists." Mr. Blunt catalogues fully 100 sects under the letter A alone.

J. E. M. ROBINSON.—Your question shall be answered next week.

O. B. OLSEKO.—The *Freethinker* is published at the same time as the *N. R.* The fault lies with your newsagent, or else with his wholesale agent in London. Insist on having your copies in proper time, and threaten to take your custom elsewhere.

A. J. ROBERTSON.—Thanks for cuttings which are always useful.

J. RAWLINSON.—We will make a fresh search as soon as we have time.

J. C. S. PARKER.—Thanks for your good wishes. We shall be glad to hear of your starting a branch this summer.

D. W.—This kind of parson is trying to run a new business under the old name.

A. L. thanks Mr. Foote for his oration on Paine, and suggests that Mr. Symes' "Running Commentary on the Christian Sects" might form good matter for separate publication.

GEO. PAYNE.—We are well pleased at all opposition, even where we have no opportunity to reply. Much is attained when people are got to think at all on Freethought subjects. They soon learn that the dogmatic attitude is not the only one whereby they can be approached.

S. ROGERS.—Bain's new volume on "James Mill" will afford you all the information you require as to John Stuart Mill's family and antecedents.

W. LUCAS.—We do not answer legal questions.

SUBSCRIBER wishes to know Butcher Varley's quotation for the sanguine fluid. We understand that it is not sold by the ton, as our correspondent, who desires it for manure, supposes; but by the imperial pint like asses' milk. For the exact price we must refer Subscriber to Varley himself, who will be happy to supply all that bring their own mugs.

L. SMITH.—Mr. Foote's two fresh "Romances" will be ready next week—"A Virgin Mother" and "Saint John's Nightmare." The remainder of the Series will rapidly follow.

ENQUIRER.—Macrobius lived at the end of the fourth century. He was the author of a work entitled "Saturnalia," in which occurs the only supposed corroboration of the story in "Matthew." He says Augustus upon hearing that Herod's son had been slain with other children under two years, said: "It is better to be Herod's hog than his son." Note that the early Christians never pretended that Herod's son was massacred with the innocents. Possibly Macrobius gave the jest of Augustus, and added the occasion from the usual belief of Christians. So thinks the learned Lardner (Works, vol. viii.). It is absurd to contend that Macrobius confirms an event said to happen 400 years before his time. If the tale of the slaughter were true, the silence of Josephus cannot be accounted for.

J. B. CORPOCK.—We regret that we are overburdened with copy just now.

RECEIVED.—"Freedom, Love and Brotherhood," by Progressus.

## MR. BRADLAUGH'S PROSPECTS.

No one can tell what will happen next Tuesday at St. Stephen's. One thing only is certain. Mr. Bradlaugh will present himself to be sworn. All the rest is speculative.

Will the Tories repeat their old tactics? We think so. Sir Stafford Northcote will probably move again his old resolution that Mr. Bradlaugh be not allowed to take the oath; and as there has been an urgent whip issued, the

Tories will doubtless muster in strength and vote as one man.

How will the Speaker act? He has the power to terminate the struggle. If he would only treat Sir Stafford Northcote as he treated Sir Wilfrid Lawson, and Mr. Bradlaugh as he did Mr. Tom Collins, there would be an end to the miserable affair. But as he grossly exceeded his powers once, he will probably do so again, and afford the young bloods of the Opposition another opportunity of "baiting Bradlaugh," which they think a much finer sport than shooting pheasants or pigeons.

How will the Government act? We are afraid that it will do nothing. A Coercion Bill was demanded for the enforcement of law in Ireland, but the Government will not coerce the law-breakers at Westminster. Some private member, probably Mr. Labouchere, will be allowed to move "the previous question," whatever that may mean when there is no other business before the House; and every Liberal member will be permitted to vote as he pleases. In that case, it is quite possible that some weak Liberals will abstain from voting, while others, like pious Samuel Morley, will desert to the enemy, and thus enable Sir Stafford Northcote's resolution to be carried.

How will Mr. Bradlaugh act? If he is again denied his legal right, we believe he will claim to make a speech at the bar, in which he may stigmatise his cowardly and slanderous opponents according to their deserts. He may be arrested for contempt of the House. That is the best thing that can happen. Or the House may shrink from the logical consequence of its policy, and allow him to escape free. In that case his words will be reported and will ring from one end of the country to the other.

What will happen afterwards? We trust that Mr. Bradlaugh will not again subject himself to the brutality of fourteen hired "chuckers-out." We respectfully submit that his duty demands no such indignity. He will understand what we mean, and so will the earnest men who thronged Westminster Hall on the third of August. We do not say that Mr. Bradlaugh should not again visit the House of Commons, but we do say that there should be no fresh risk of his having to cope single-handed with fourteen assailants.

We hope that after a sharp debate Sir Stafford Northcote's motion will be defeated, but we cannot help seeing that this is very uncertain. If Mr. Bradlaugh is again excluded from his seat, he may rest assured of the inexhaustible devotion of the Freethought party, and of the tireless aid of every pen, tongue, and pair of working hands among us. During the few days that remain, let every Freethinker rapidly glean all signatures yet procurable to the petition, and send them either to local members or straight to Mr. Bradlaugh for presentation early on Tuesday. A petition with a hundred thousand signatures cannot be ignored. It will strengthen the speeches of Mr. Bradlaugh's defenders in the House; it will a little daunt the Tories; and what is more, it will make some of the recreant Liberals pause before they irrevocably forsake the principle of religious liberty.

Next week we shall have either to rejoice over a satisfactory end of this long struggle, or to bid Freethinkers prepare to carry it on with renewed energy and a sterner determination.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR article on "Butcher Varley's Tricks" is reprinted as a four-page tract. We shall be happy to supply large or small packets, for gratuitous distribution, to any of our readers who can use them to advantage. They should be circulated, as far as possible, among pious people, and especially among those who are likely to have been deceived by Varley's falsehoods.

A BILL is now before the Jersey States Assembly for abolishing the sacerdotal element in the legislative body. The rectors of the twelve parishes are *ex-officio* members of the States, forming one of the four bodies of which the Assembly is composed. Complaints have been made of want of attention on the part of several of them to their legislative duties. When will our Bishops in the House of Lords be served in the same way?

THE Children's Party at the Hall of Science was a proper treat. What with magic-lantern, dancing, sack-racing, and distribution of prizes, in which everyone of the 500 or more little ones partook, there was plenty of amusement, and the fun was

kept up merrily. More solid fare was provided in the shape of buns, fruits, sweets, and plenty of cakes and ale, raspberry ale we mean. The children reversed the miracle of Jesus. They ate about twelve baskets full, and left two small buns as fragments.

WE are glad to see our Oriental contemporary, the *Philosophical Inquirer* of Madras, keeps the flag of Freethought flying bravely. We heartily reciprocate its new-year greeting to friends across the ocean. The Hindu Freethought Union should in time embrace every educated inhabitant of the Koh-i-noor of nations. As it is, Christianity makes no headway with the cultured classes in India. It succeeds only with the ignorant aboriginal tribes such as the Kols, Santals and Shanars, who are not Hindus at all, but devil-worshippers. To such as these Christianity may be acceptable, but to the highly-educated, keen-witted, and rationally-minded Hindus the name of Christianity is a synonym of contemptible credulity. There is scarcely a student even in the Missionary Colleges who is not a pronounced Freethinker, both in regard to Brahmanism and every other religion. The Hindu Freethought Union carries the war into the enemies' camp, and almost every week large shipments of Freethought works go to meet the missionaries in India. We guarantee, moreover, that our literature is not put to the base uses to which the Hindus frequently apply the missionary tracts and portions of the word of God.

THE Birmingham Town Hall, which has for some time been closed against all Sunday Services, was last Sunday opened under the auspices of the Sunday Lecture Society.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY is now engaged on a work on Bishop Berkeley, and his contributions to mental and medical science; which the Professor's friends anticipate will prove his *magnum opus*.

THE *Saturday Review*, in an article on the Judenhass in History, mentions that, "at the beginning of the sixteenth century it was proposed by the theologians of Germany and France, backed by the University of Paris, to destroy the whole literature of the Jews with the exception of the Old Testament, and it required the whole influence of Reuchlin to avert this wholesale proscription." Be it remembered that it is through such gentry as these that God's Holy word, and the wondrous evidences of the Christian religion, have been so miraculously preserved and handed down to us.

AMONG recent works of interest to Freethinkers may be mentioned John Stuart Mill; a criticism by Prof. Alex. Bain and James Mill; a biography by the same gentleman; a "Life of Emerson," by G. W. Cooke; and "Myth and Science," the latest volume of the International Scientific Series, by Tito Vignoli.

THE Philosophical Faculty of the University of Breslau has conferred upon Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, author of "Indian Buddhism," etc., the honorary degree of Philosophiæ Doctor, in consideration of the services he has rendered to the comparative study of religions. We may add, that Breslau has the reputation among German universities of being specially stringent in the granting of such degrees.

PARISIAN freethought is coming well to the fore. The library of anti-clerical works, edited by Leo-Taxil, has been eminently successful, and a new series is being issued, entitled "The Materialist Library." One of the first volumes is "La Renaissance du Materialisme"—The Revival of Materialism. Even French novels, from those of Jules Verne to those of Emile Zola, are being impregnated with the scientific spirit.

TITO VIGNOLI, in his work on "Myth and Science," goes the whole oung for evolution. He says: "It is evident, at least to those who do not cling obstinately to old traditions, that man is evolved from the animal kingdom." Some prefer mud. We don't quarrel with tastes.

WE derive from the same American paper, which gives Talmage's vituperation of Ingersoll, the following from Professor Adler on "Pagan Bob." "There may be those who censure him for his lack of historical sense, and for handling too roughly the sanctities of men. But, whatever else may or may not be, certain it is that he is a thoroughly American unbeliever; that he does not stand alone as some would represent—a single phenomenon that has appeared and will disappear, leaving no trace behind—but rather that in him the common-sense of the American people has risen in rebellion against the traditions of the Church—a common-sense blended with humor, tenderness, and noble pathos—but yet essentially common-sense, and as clear and self-conscious, if also as crude as common-sense is won't to be."

THE Concert and Ball of the National Sunday League was a great success. The entire suite of sumptuous rooms at the Cannon Street Hotel being filled with a gay throng on pleasure bent. Dancing was kept up as merry as a marriage bell until it was time to go home with the milk in the morning.

## THE ZODIAC.

### I.

O, THOU all bountiful and glorious sun!  
Parent of life! High on thy burning throne,  
World-worshipp'd everlastingly. Thou one  
And only God! In various ages known  
By various names—Jove, Savior, Christ, Most High—  
All meet in thee, bright sovereign of the sky!

### II.

Adored by men of every race and clime,  
From icy Lapland to the glowing pole,  
In rite barbaric of primeval time,  
In mitred pomp of crosier and of stole,  
In hallelujah pealing through the dome—  
The gorgeous praise of sacerdotal Rome.

### III.

The tapers eastward gleaming at the shrine,  
The cloister'd lamp of never fading-fire,  
The ray encircled monogram divine,  
The wheat and wine; all symbolise the sire,  
The Lord of Life, the Everlasting One,  
Eternal God, the world redeeming sun.

### IV.

With heavenward ken the seer of early days  
Mark'd how the golden fires unerring roll'd,  
And in mysterious and fantastic phrase  
Their annual revolutions truly told.  
The glorious things he heard the seer rehearse,  
Inspired the poet's soul and filled his verse.

### V.

He sang the year's renewal in the birth  
Of Christ, the sun, the annual newly born,  
Who comes with light and heat to glad the earth,  
From hell's grim depths, the pit of capricorn,  
He sang—"The herald of the birth divine,  
Hangs in the wintry east, a radiant sign."

### VI.

He sang the Sun's ascension, thence the cross,\*  
The badge of Christians, which when understood,  
And dispossessed of grovelling Christian cross,  
Is proved of metaphor and not of wood,  
And shows the ghastly literal relation  
A wretched blundering interpretation.

### VII.

Struggling with murky glooms a lurid sphere,  
Or feebly eastward glimmering, ghast and wan,  
Amid stark desolation chill and drear,  
No verdant spot the sad gaze resteth on,  
Black frost and icy glare where'er we turn  
Or flood fierce-raging from Aquarius' urn.

### VIII.

Now doth the stony hail and driving sleet  
The melted torrent and the whirlwind's yell,  
Assail the laboring earth with furious beat,  
Till dimly heaving from the wintry hell,  
Watching his joyous advent doth he see  
The Fishers of the heavenly Gallilee.

### IX.

See Aries, glad precursor of the Spring,  
His path with daffodils and violets strewn,  
The godhead greets. The lark on skyward wing,  
Sings to the glowing orb a jocund tune;  
Forth wings the bat, uncoils the spotted snake,  
And torpid life is everywhere awake.

### X.

The Eastering orb, the equatorial line  
Doth now divide, and, rolling upwards, scans  
The azure vault. Beneath with baleful shine  
The demon Scorpio spreads his dusky vans;

\* "He sang the sun's ascension thence the cross." *Apropos* of this the *Family Herald*, March 12, 1870, has the following:—

*Signs and Symbols*.—There are three symbols or signs, which, from their universal use throughout all ages, demand notice. These symbols are the cross, †; the aureole or circle, known also as the halo, ○; and the triangle, △. All these signs were in use ages before the Christian era. The cross is frequently found on the Egyptian mummies. It was held as a sacred sign among the Pagans, and is still so in many lands where the cross of Calvary is unknown. The aureole or disc, encircling the heads of saints signifies perfection; but among the religionists it was the emblem of monotheism. The triangle was used to tipify fire when placed with its apex upwards; but when downward it was the emblem of water. The conjunctions of these signs is frequently to be found on the most ancient monuments of the world. Thus, when conquerors had conceived the idea of ruling by divine right, they adopted the aureole to denote the solar sphere and the cross, † emblematic of dominion. These signs are perpetuated in the British Crown.

Christians may argue as they will, the fact remains that heliolatry is now and ever has been the universal worship.

So Christ the Sun is born from year to year,  
To save mankind and guide the rolling sphere.

## XI.

Next Taurus, o'er the fields of heaven afar,  
Bright glances flings. The primrose-laden air  
Is sweet and tranquil as the vesper star.

Yet doth the wintry demon oft-time dare  
Despoil with Eastern horrors fell and drear  
The budding promise of the infant year.

## XII.

The Twins of May have now all thick bestrewn  
The kindling earth. How fresh the dewy morn,  
How bland the eve, what time the gibbous moon  
Doth touch the rose-flushed blossom of the thorn!  
Fair Earth, no longer pain'd by wintry strife,  
Exults in joyous and abounding life.

## XIII.

Behold the Crab, of hot translucent June,  
Receives the rolling sphere, that seemeth fain,  
To retrogress. The fiercely glowing noon,  
Hath charg'd the gathering clouds with grateful rain,  
The levin-flash descends with vivid glare,  
And the loud thunder hurbles in the air.

## XIV.

Gloom shrouds the heavens, the swift descending rain  
Relieves the gasping earth and swells the streams,  
Freshens the hedge-rows, bends the ripening grain,  
When lo, a radiant phantom sudden gleams  
In vapory splendor, spanning vast and high  
The brightening vault of the disordered sky.

## XV.

The fiery Lion of the swart July  
Watcheth the Sun on his meridian throne,  
Now all beneath the palpitating sky  
Is vigorous life. The ringing scythe has mown  
The meadow grasses, and the golden ear  
Doth wave propitious for the future year.

## XVI.

Down-glancing thence with scarce diminished heat,  
The burning God salutes the radiant maid,  
The virgin lady with the ruddy wheat  
And tendril of the luscious vine arrayed—  
Of Christ the body and of Christ the blood,  
Man's universal life-sustaining food.

## XVII.

The grain is garner'd, the rich juice expressed,  
The world redeemed, the Savior's work is done;  
Now of his heat and glory dispossessed,  
Down droppeth he, as 'twere he sought to shun.  
The earth so late all glorious in his might,  
Was smitten sore with universal blight.

## XVIII.

The scales deserted, lo the scorpion's gleam!  
A baleful lustre doth disturb the eye,  
The trees forsaken by the solar beam  
Look ague-smote. The flowers do fade and die,  
The snow-wing'd blast raves o'er the withering plain,  
Fell harbinger of winter's dreary reign.

## XIX.

And lo, where doth the centaur demon ride  
Exultant, holding in his murderous grip  
The dying Christ, from whose transfixed side  
The watery life-stream doth continuous drip.  
Then in the goat expires his waning heat  
And the Almighty heart hath ceased to beat!

PATROCLUS.

A JEWISH VIEW OF CHRISTMAS.—The *Jewish Chronicle*, after remarking that "there is nothing original in Christmas beyond a few touches of mediæval superstition," proceeds to take for a moment the Christian view, and asks "whether a strain of diabolical mockery cannot be heard through all those melodious hymns and anthems with which Christendom is about to resound. There is not a single Government in Europe which does not act habitually on the assumption that the policy of its neighbors is, like its own, the most absolute heathen selfishness, and that each nation wants but the power and a mere figment of excuse to proceed to what in private life would be barefaced murder and robbery. We can recognise all the beauty of the idea of a Universal Church, binding men together by ties stronger than those of race, locality, or mean self-interest. Such a Catholicism is the hope of the enlightened Jew no less than of the liberal Christian. But on this noble conception what a satire are the rival churches of Christendom! The despised and persecuted Jews might more justly claim to be the true Catholics. We ask all earnest Christians to consider if it would not better become them to keep their great feast as a day of fasting and humiliation, in token of how far their vaunted creed is seen to fall short of its professions."

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

MORALITY INDEPENDENT OF THEOLOGY.—To assert that there is no morality but what is based on theology is to assert what experience, history and philosophy flatly contradict—nay, that which revolts the conscience of all manly purpose within us. History teaches that some of the best types of morality, in men and in races have been found apart from anything that Christians can call theology at all. Morality has been advancing for centuries in modern Europe, whilst theology, at least in authority, has been visibly declining. The morality of Confucius and of Sakya-mouni, of Socrates and Marcus Aurelius, of Vaue-nargues, Turgot, Condorcet, Hume, was entirely independent of any theology. The moral system of Aristotle was framed without any view to theology as completely as that of Comte or of our recent moralists. We have experience of men with the loftiest ideal of life and of strict fidelity to their ideal, who expressly repudiate theology, and of many more whom theology never touched. Lastly, there is a spirit within us which will not believe that to know and to do the right, we must wait till the mysteries of existence and the universe are resolved, its origin, its government, and its future. We know that the just spirit can find the right path, even whilst the judgment hangs bewildered amidst the Churches.—*F. Harrison.*

PROTESTANTISM AND PERSECUTION.—The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and, above all, whoever has studied their history, must know, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them as it did among any of the Catholics even in the worst days of the papal dominion.—*Henry Thos. Buckle*, "History of Civilisation in England," chap. viii., p. 504, vol. i., 1858.

MONOTHEISM in Western Europe is now as obsolete and as injurious as Polytheism was fifteen centuries ago. The discipline in which its moral value principally consisted has long since decayed; and consequently the sole effect of its doctrine, which has been so extravagantly praised, is to degrade the affections by unlimited desires, and to weaken the character by servile terrors. The pursuits of practical life were never sincerely promoted by it, and they advanced only by evading or resisting its influence. The noblest of all practical pursuits, that of social regeneration, is at the present time in direct opposition to it. For its vague notion of providence it prevents men from forming a true conception of law, a conception necessary for true provision, on which all wise intervention must be based.—*Comte's* "General View of Positivism" (Bridges' translation) p. 294.

## PROFANE JOKES.

A CERTAIN part of Australia was recently suffering from a long-protracted drought. A day of prayer for rain was appointed and held, and as it happened the rain came the following morning. A remote quarter of the same colony was at the same time being visited by a superabundance of moisture. A worthy magistrate of the district, on hearing of what was going on at C—, and fancying that the rain in his own neighbourhood was sensibly increasing, in haste despatched the following telegram to the authorities at C—: "Stop praying now, or we'll be flooded in five hours."

ON St. Stephen's day a monk, having to deliver a panegyric on the saint, his brother monks, who were hungry and feared that he would be too long, whispered to him to be as short as possible. Accordingly when the monk ascended the pulpit, after a short preamble, he said, "My brethren, this day twelvemonth I told you all that I knew respecting the saint of the day; and as I have not heard that he has done anything fresh since then, I cannot add anything to what I then said." He then gave the benediction and left the pulpit.

WIFE of Episcopalian clergyman to her washerwoman—"Well, Bridget, how did you like the sermon on Sunday?" Bridget—"It was beautiful. I like to go to that church. It's so nice to see your husband curtseying around in his shroud!"

A CHAP who was told by a clergyman to "remember Lot's wife," replied that he had trouble enough with his own, without remembering other men's wives.

A VERY NICE THING.—A Sunday-school teacher was giving a lesson on Ruth. She wanted to bring out the kindness of Boaz in commanding the reapers to drop larger handfuls of wheat. "Now, children," she said, "Boaz did another very nice thing for Ruth; can you tell me what it was?" "Married her!" said one of the boys.

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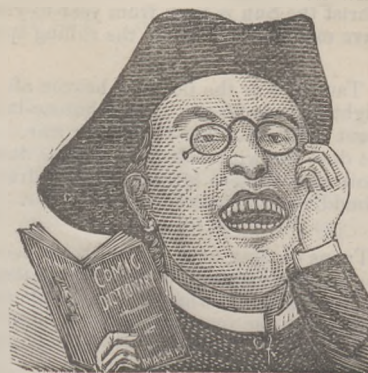
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