

# THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## "COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—XXII.



RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

*The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.*—  
Genesis vi, 2.

## CARDINAL NEWMAN ON INFIDELITY.

CARDINAL NEWMAN is perhaps the only Catholic in England worth listening to. He has immured his intellect in the catacombs of the Romish Church, but he has not been able to quench it, and even there it radiates a splendor through the gloom. His saintly character is as indubitable as the subtlety of his mind, and no vicissitude has impaired the charm of his style, which is pure and perfect as an exquisite and flawless diamond; serene and chaste in its usual mood, but scintillating gloriously in the light of his imagination.

On Sunday last Cardinal Newman preached a sermon at the Oratory in Birmingham on "Modern Infidelity." Unfortunately we have not a full report, from which we might be able to extract some notable passages, but only a newspaper summary. Even this, however, shows some points of interest.

Cardinal Newman told his hearers that "a great storm of infidelity and irreligion was at hand," and that "some dreadful spiritual catastrophe was coming upon them." We quite agree with the great preacher; but every storm is not an evil, and every catastrophe is not a disaster. The revolutionary storm in France cleared the air of much pestilence. It dissipated as by enchantment the horrible cloud of tyranny, persecution and want, which had for centuries hovered over the land. And certainly, to go back a stage farther in history, the Reformation was not a misfortune,

although it looked like a "spiritual catastrophe" to a great many amiable people. The truth is, Revolutions must occur in this world, both in thought and in action. They may happen slowly, so that we may accommodate ourselves to them; or rapidly, and so disturb and injure whole generations. But come they must, and no power can hinder them; not even that once mighty Church which has always striven to bind Humanity to the past with adamant chains of dogma. In Cardinal Newman's own words, from perhaps his greatest and most characteristic book,—“here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.”

We cannot say that Cardinal Newman indicates how humanity will suffer from the "coming storm of infidelity and irreligion." He does, indeed, refer to the awful state of a people forsaken by God, but in our humble opinion this is somewhat ludicrous. We can hardly understand how God can forsake his own creatures. Why all this pother if he really exists? In that case our scepticism cannot affect him, any more than a man's blindness obscures the sun. And surely, if Omnipotence desired us all to believe the truth, the means are ready to hand. The God who said, Let there be light, and there was light, could as easily say, Let all men be Christians, and they would be Christians. If God had spoken the universe would be convinced; and the fact that it is not convinced proves, either that he does not exist, or that he purposely keeps silent, and desires that we should mind our own business.

The only tangible evil Cardinal Newman ventures to indicate is the "indignity which at this moment has come over the Holy Father at Rome." He declares, as to the Pope, that "there hardly seems a place in the whole of Europe where he could put his foot." The Catholics are carrying this pretence of a captive Pope a trifle too far. His Holiness must have a tremendous foot if he cannot put it fairly down on the floor of the Vatican. He and his Cardinals really wail over their loss of temporal power. It would be wiser and nobler to reconcile themselves to the inevitable, and to end the nefarious diplomacy by which they are continually striving to recover what is for ever lost. The whole world is aware of the scandalous misrule and the flagrant immorality which, under the government of the Papacy, made the Eternal City a byword and a reproach. Under the secular government, Rome has made wonderful progress. It has better streets, cleaner inhabitants, less fever and filth, and a much smaller army of priests, beggars, and prostitutes. Catholics may rest assured that the bad old times will never return. They may, of course, promise a reformation of manners if the Holy Father's dominion is restored, but the world will not believe them. Reforming the Papacy, as Carlyle grimly said, is like tinkering a rusty old kettle. If you stop up the holes of it with temporary putty, it may hang together for awhile; but "begin to hammer at it, solder it, to what you call mend and rectify it,—it will fall to shreds, as sure as rust is rust; go all into nameless dissolution,—and the fat in the fire will be a thing worth looking at, poor Pope!"

As a sincere Christian (a very rare thing, by the way, in these days), Cardinal Newman is bound to lament the spread of infidelity. He is a keen observer, and his word may be taken for the fact. A stormy time is undoubtedly coming. Old creeds and institutions will have to give an account of themselves, and nothing that cannot stand the test will live. But truth will not suffer. Criticise the multiplication-table as much as you please, and twice two will still be four. In the storm and stress of controversy what is true and solid will survive; only the hollow shams of authority and superstition will collapse. Humanity has nothing to fear, however the Churches may groan.

[No. 37.]



G. W. FOOTE.



## GODISM'S RETREAT.

THE impartial and unbiassed observer of the great contention going on between the forces of superstition and modern enlightenment cannot fail to see the anxious and half-despairing struggle made by those whose temporal interests are vested in the maintenance of old and dubious dogmas, to keep time with modern science, and to find something in their so-called revelations that may be made to appear one with indisputable scientific fact. In the earlier ages priests went first, and read from their "god-given" guide-book all that they deemed necessary for men to know; they thought for the people, and all the puzzling phenomena of nature found a ready explanation in the Bible, or in the inventive faculty of its exponent, the priest. Men heard the thunder and trembled—it was the voice of the god; they saw the lightning flash—it was the sword of his consuming wrath; they saw the rainbow in the sky, and fell on their slavish knees; it was the god's sign as a remembrancer of a future reckoning-day. Bitten by this serpent of fear, what were men to do? They might think of inquiring themselves to see if it were true, but inquiry, said their priest, was crime; they must not insult the god by seeking to know too much, or assuredly they would be damned. Priestcraft led the people then by their fears; now the people lead the priests by theirs, for they are fearful lest the rapid march of intellect shall leave them behind, with their occupation gone. Men do not fear the thunder now as the voice of the god; they study the atmosphere, and they understand it well. They do not shriek when they see the lightning's flash; they guard it off from their gables and chimneys—nay! they make it slave and messenger of themselves, and send it with their thoughts across the sea. Men do not pray to conciliate their god when they behold the rainbow; they combine the sun's rays and the spray from the water-tap, and make a miniature rainbow in the back-yard to please their children's eyes.

The power of the priest began to wane when at last some brave thinker, more daring than the rest, threw off the chains that bound him, and soared away through the vistas of knowledge to bring back to man the golden treasures of the knowable and the real. Astronomy came as man's revelation to humanity, and the defenders of Christianity, seeing it belied their Bible, hurled the anathemas of the church against it, and called it false. The scientist judged otherwise; he saw the coming conflict, and reasoned thus: The claims of this book to truth have nothing to support them—no geometrical delineations can be applied to it; no mathematical deductions can prove its right to credence. By circles, triangles, lines, and figures, I prove the truth of what I teach; so if one or other must be shattered, let this Bible fall.

The friends of revelation saw their anathemas fall harmless—astronomy could not be moved; then they suddenly discovered that the Bible taught it, and they took the side of the enemy, vainly trying to reconcile the two, in their eagerness to reconcile their ruptured flocks. Geology stood forth and called Genesis untrue. Uprose the frenzied church again: the Bible did not teach geology, therefore geology must be false. The new science stood its ground, however, and proved itself true, when, behold! the church discovered that the god had not made the world in six days, but in six long periods, covering hundreds of thousands of years, when at last the almighty architect put on the finishing touches, and refreshed his tired limbs with a good long rest, "and the evening and the morning were the sixth immeasurable period."

So much have Bible defenders twisted and bent the god's word to fit modern thought and modern discovery, that I should not be surprised if by-and-bye they take Mr. Darwin by the hand, and tell him they have discovered that god did not make man out of the dust of the earth, but developed him slowly out of lower organisms.

When we take a careful survey of the many positions already deserted by the enemy in their retreat, we are not only impressed with the fact that the original octopus has been long dead, but we are encouraged to hope that in the not far-distant future, Christianity, or rather Godism, of every type will linger only as an amusing tradition of the things that pleased our fathers; as a legend only of the superstitions of barbaric times.

In the far-gone past, when the Adams of our race were but little removed from the lower order of living organisms, and when the intellect was being rapidly developed from a

comparison of external objects, man's wonder was excited, and the more he tried to solve the riddle of existence, the deeper seemed to him the mystery, and of the mystery was born fear. These two, *mystery* and *fear*, were the parents of the noxious god by whom the Christian must swear, before he can legislate for the intelligent and brave.

Cradled in ignorance, the god-idea was like Moses's conception of an unfinished world "without form and void;" that is, with no external appearance and sublimely empty—in fact, a veritable footless stocking without a leg. This state of things, however, would not answer; man wanted something tangible to explain his own ignorant imagining.

Observing that the sun shed its glory on the earth and brought forth life from it; noticing that everything was most joyous when the sun shone, the sun became man's god, the controlling something that explained the mystery of the universe. The sun was not a vast globe to these barbarians; it was no extraordinary size; it was removed to no great distance; it was the shining face of an enormous being that smiled down light, and joy and peace upon man, the guardian spirit who watched over him and dispelled his fears; as the darkness was dispelled when the welcome face rose above the horizon; it was the being beneath whose smile man dared venture from his cave and look abroad on the world; it was the Great Good, the High and Mighty Father, the Shining Giver of Life.

Man chose the greatest and most mysterious object, the furthest from his reach and comprehension; and thus the bogie-deity, born of Fear and Mystery, was nursed and nourished from a puzzling nothingness into a lofty and visible form.

As the sun was "the Good," it was but an easy stage further in the explanation of the ills and miseries of life to recognise in the darkness the source of ill, "the Evil," and man immediately set about the work of conciliating these ever-warring foes, the God and the Devil. The people imagined they could best appease the wrath and win the favor of these bogies by offering to them such things as were most coveted by themselves, the good things of the earth; but as it was necessary for some particular individual, a front-rank man among the tribes to act between the men and the gods, an order of cunning and unprincipled knaves sprang up; in the temples these rascals lived; through their hands passed the doves, lambs, calves, oil, wine and fruit; the stench of burning entrails went up to tickle the petulant nostrils of an odor-loving god, and within the "Holy of Holies" a gang of fat and lazy priests smacked their coarse lips over the tasty wines they guzzled, while the choicest of succulent tit-bits filled their ever-hungry maws. Round the nasal protuberance of the man of god shone a halo of surpassing glory for which the pious paid.

"He ate, he drank, he prayed, he slept; what then?  
He ate, he drank, he prayed, he slept again!"

The explanation of numerous phenomena necessitated an increase in the number of gods, and thus others were made, one to govern the thunder, one to rule disease, one to wield the winds, one for the sea, one for love, one for war, and a host of lesser gods, in part subservient to a presiding deity, but all more or less tyrannical and licentious, according to the characteristics of those who invented them. One by one, however, these deities retreated, struggling with the army of enlightenment; as Ingersoll eloquently puts it—"When India was supreme, Brahma sat upon the world's throne. When the sceptre passed to Egypt, Isis and Osiris received the homage of mankind. Greece, with her fierce valor, swept to empire, and Zeus put on the purple of authority. The earth trembled with the thread of Rome's intrepid sons, and Jove grasped with mailed hand the thunderbolts of heaven. Rome fell, and Christians from her territory, with the red sword of war, carved out the ruling nations of the world; and now Jehovah sits upon the old throne. Who will be his successor?"

Jehovah, too, has undergone great and wonderful changes; he has given place to his own incarnation, and to-day Jesus is the veritable god of the Methodists who are disgusted with Jehovah's crimes and debaucheries; to-day Jesus is given the pre-eminence in theatrical and laughable ceremony in the public streets by the English Jesuits under William Booth.

Step by step has modern Godism left its vantage-ground in ignominious retreat, throwing down weapon after weapon, as rationalism has pressed close, dealing heavy blows on its pachydermatous hide.



"The earth is the entire world, and the sun, moon, and stars are bright lights stuck in the firmament," said Godism.  
 "It is false," said Atheism; "there are millions of vast globes like ours, moving in space."

After many years' hard fighting, Godism said: "Well, yes; they do move about a-bit." Then Godism jotted that down in one of its books and said, "We told you so!"

"The planets fly at a terrific speed," said Atheism.  
 Godism thought a-bit, and then said, "They do move quickish!" and she wrote that down.

"The sun travels round the earth once a day, anyhow," said Godism.

"Wrong again!" said Atheism; "the earth travels round the sun."

"You're a wicked infidel and a liar!" shrieked Godism, "and you mustn't live."

By-and-bye the pliant Godism whispered: "I believe that fellow was about right." And she booked that.

"God divided the light from the darkness," said Godism.

"He couldn't divide what couldn't be mixed," said Atheism. "Darkness is only the absence of light, and the presence of one on any given point is the death of the other."

"Blasphemy!" screamed Godism. Then, after thinking a spell, she said: "It was only my fun; of course they couldn't exactly be mixed, you know," and she immediately jotted a marginal note in the first chapter of Genesis.

These are only two or three paces in Godism's retreat. There are sufficient deserted points to fill a volume; yet through centuries of change, little has been accomplished by supernaturalism as regards the moral improvement of her priests, and there is less essential difference than one could wish between the bloated cattle-burning man of god of ancient times and the present-day frantic Spurgeonite of cushion-thumping vehemence.

"Who on the rostrum walks, and walks, and walks  
 And talks, and talks, and talks, and talks, and talks."

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

(To be concluded.)

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHRISTIAN TACTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my native city of Glasgow there is a respectable bookseller, with a good business, who has lately taken to selling Ingersoll's orations, and the *National Reformer*, under the impression that he was at liberty to exercise his own judgment as to what articles would sell best. Talmage's "Hell" had lain beside him for many months unsold, but in a moment of inspiration he placed Ingersoll's "Ghosts," and Talmage's "Hell," side by side in the window, and, marvellous to relate, both were cleared out in a few days. This result encouraged him to order more "Ghosts," and other orations, second, third, and fourth lots were in like manner eagerly bought up. He was supplied through another Glasgow house, with a more extensive business than his own, and on making application for a further supply he found they were not to be had. Explanations followed. The large dealer a few weeks ago was waited upon by a Glasgow divine of some eminence, and informed that unless he ceased supplying Ingersoll's orations to the public, he would be indicted at his instance for blasphemy; the bookseller replied that the law had no authority over controversial pamphlets on religious subjects. The divine then showed his hand. "I am aware of this," said he; "but my application will bring your name unpleasantly before the public as one indicted for blasphemy," and would damn every other branch of your business. The threat has, unfortunately, had its effect. Perhaps it is wrong to blame the poor bookseller whose interests are at stake; but surely, it is time we had done with this miserable system of propagating "the truth." This is the way the Gospel has "free course and is glorified," this is the way "Glasgow flourishes" by the "preaching of the word." It is quite evident that it takes more than three Gods to give Christians anything like a sense of fair-play. Couldn't Mr. Moody, who is in Glasgow just now, say a word for the works of his countryman, honest Bob Ingersoll? On second thoughts, I need hardly hope for that. His is the "same God, yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Thus we stand, unable to purchase the statements of a honest critic, and a brilliant master of our native tongue, because of the ever present spirit of the Christian persecuting priest. These low dodges indicate the strong fear that is taking possession of Jehovah's warriors, and point to a not-far-distant break up of the whole system of spiritual sham and shoddy.—Yours, GLASGUENSIS.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

SACERDOTAL CHRISTIANITY.—A revival of any form of sacerdotal Christianity would be a matter of practice, and not of theory. The system which sapped the foundations of patriotism in the old world; which well-nigh eradicated the sense of intellectual honesty, and seriously weakened the habit of truth-speaking; which lowered men's reverence for the marriage bond by placing its sanctions in a realm outside of nature, instead of in the common life of men, and by the institutions of monasticism and a celibate clergy; which stunted the moral sense of the nations by putting a priest between every man and his conscience; this system, if it should ever return to power, must be expected to produce worse evils than those which it has worked in the past.—*W. K. Clifford, Essay on "Ethics of Religion," in Fortnightly Review, July, 1877.*

THE FEAR OF FREETHOUGHT.—The question (of the origin of life) cannot be solved—it cannot even be shelved—by angry abuse. Nor can it be solved by appeals to our hopes and fears—to what we may gain or lose here or hereafter by joining one side or the other. The bribe of eternity itself, were it possible to offer it, could not prevent the human mind from closing with the truth. Scepticism is at the root of our fears. I mean that scepticism which holds that human nature, being essentially corrupt and vile, will go to ruin if the props of our conventional theology are not maintained. When I see an able, and in many respects courageous, man running too and fro upon the earth, and wringing his hands over the threatened loss of his ideals, I feel disposed to exhort him to cast out this scepticism and to believe undoubtingly that in the mind of man we have the substratum of all ideals. We have there capacity which will as surely and infallibly respond to the utterances of a really living soul as string responds to string when the proper note is sounded. It is the function of the teacher of Humanity to call forth this resonance of the human heart, and the possibility of doing so depends wholly and solely upon the fact that the conditions for its production are already there.—*Professor Tyndall, "Manchester Science Lectures" (1874), pp. 150—151.*

JEHOVAH.—Jehovah is to be regarded as having originally been a family or tribal God, either of the family to which Moses belonged, or of the tribe of Joseph, in the possession of which we find the ark of Jehovah, and within which occurs the earliest certain instance of a composite proper name, with the word Jehovah for one of its elements (Jeho-shua Joshua).—*Prof. J. Wellhausen, Article "Israel," "Encyclopædia Britannica," p. 397, ninth edition.*

NATURE had destined Robespierre and Kant for the weighing out of coffee and sugar, but fate decided that they should weigh other things; and into the scales of the one it laid a king, into the scales of the other a God. . . . And they both gave the correct weight.—*Heine's "Wit, Wisdom and Pathos," p. 133.*

## ACID DROPS.

THE Salvationists complain of being bitterly persecuted in Paris, because the law against street processions is applied to them as well as others. Miss Booth says they wouldn't mind having their heads battered if the authorities would let them. Perhaps not. No doubt they are a thick-headed lot.

MISS Booth says that "one soul saved there is equal to fifty over here." Not very complimentary to the souls over here, especially when they find the cash for the souls over there!

IN his last sermon on the Cross, Talmage repeats the old rubbish about Jesus carrying a heavy cross to Calvary. He did nothing of the sort. All the culprit carried to the place of execution was the cross-piece, or patibulum, which was a very slight burden for any ordinary man.

TALMAGE is very pathetic over Jesus's having to die in the dark; but as, on Talmage's theory, he made the darkness himself, we fail to see where the pity comes in.

THE editor of the *Christian Herald* is about the most brazen-faced prophet we have. He has exposed himself again and again, but he flourishes none the worse for that. His latest prediction is that we shall lose India and Ireland before the end of the present dispensation, which is to terminate about 1893-5. Common fortune-tellers are sent to gaol, but these superior humbugs are allowed to fatten on their dupes. It would be well to make these prophetic gentry stake their bottom dollar on their vaticinations. They would be a trifle more discreet then.

THE other evening a bull walked into a chapel near King's Cross, and made straight for the pulpit. The worshippers grew



alarmed, and their terror excited the animal, who tried to toss one or two of them. They should have allowed him to go through his religious rites in peace. When the singing came on, he would have served admirably in the chorus; almost as well as the Salvationists' big drum.

THERE are many ways of turning an honest penny. One of the easiest is to cater for piety. We have received a Bible Primer for children, published in London, and containing a Scripture incident in verse for every letter of the alphabet. Here is a specimen—

"L stands for Lot,  
Who found favor with God,  
But his wife was not faithful,  
She was turned into salt."

Note the exquisite rhymes. Another verse is especially strong in grammar:—

"Y stands for young man,  
Who to his Lord said,  
'All the commandments I've kept,  
What lacketh I yet?'"

Grammatically speaking, that last line is too utterly too-too. When we add that the printing, illustrations, and paper, are fully worthy of the text, the reader will see that this publication is one of the most exquisite examples of high art.

THE Salvation Army in Edinburgh is going the whole hog. It appears that the Major has an uncontrollable inclination to get up and dance, and occasionally to stand on his head on the chairman's table. We have no doubt that, for any brains the poor man has, one end might as well be uppermost as the other. The *Scotsman* has a scathing humorous article on the antics of the leading performers in this pious troupe, in which they are likened to Christy Minstrels and the Major to Mr. Bones. This eccentric person is "the wildest wag of the company," and he is "accustomed in his exuberance of spirits, to break away from his companions, and to foot it over his platform in a style that seldom fails to bring down the house."

THE way in which the Sheffield authorities consult the convenience of the Army is grotesquely absurd. In Paris, or any other French city, processions likely to disturb the public peace are strictly prohibited. They order these things better in France.

THE Prince of Wales's two boys have visited Jerusalem. We suppose they were not so lucky in finding relics as the two crusaders, one of whom sent home a little finger of the Holy Ghost, and the other a bottle of the milk on which Jesus was suckled. The Anglo-Israelites, however, must be in high glee. Verily, verily, something will happen. The time is, perhaps, not far distant when a Brunswick King of the Jews will dance round the tree of life in the New Jerusalem, after the fashion of holy David before the Ark, while countless multitudes of Gentiles look on and applaud. It seems far off to the sceptical mind; but no matter, the time will come.

DR. WILLETTS, a Presbyterian minister of Cincinnati, has been censured by his brethren in God for lecturing on "Sunshine" on a Sunday afternoon, when the weather ought to be gloomy and everybody miserable. Christian ministers usually object to any other illumination than their own rushlights on the Sabbath.

DOWN at Stroud the doorkeeper (alias, chucker-out) at the Salvation Hall forcibly expelled J. W. Carter, for not standing up when the Captain gave the word of command. For this exhibition of muscular Christianity the magistrate made him pay a fine and costs, amounting to nearly fifteen shillings. Mr. Carter, in his evidence, accused the Lieutenant, William Wilson, a youth in his teens, of bawling out to the people, "If you haven't a penny to buy a hymn-book, you can have one for two-pence, God bless you." This little incident occasioned much laughter in court. Samuel Huxford had better give up doorkeeping in the House of the Lord, and take a situation as potman in a pub'.

ONE of our pious contemporaries advertises "Talmage on the Cross." Talmage on the Square would be a great deal more of a novelty.

THE *Church Review* says that this Eastertide "upon 2,000 altars the lamb is offered in the same manner as Mr. Green is imprisoned for following." Translated from the language of theology into that of anthropology, this says that we have among us 2,000 modified survivals of the practice of animal sacrifice common to all barbarous nations.

JOE PARKER's paper, the *Christian Chronicle*, says that "no person, fit for the society of gentlemen, is supposed to deny the existence of an Almighty God." But, it goes on to remark, much unscriptural latitude is indulged in in English society as to whether God be above us, in us, around us, or beneath us. We think that much unscriptural latitude is taken when God is supposed to be other than the big warrior chief of a Semitic tribe. Joe Parker further shows his Christian charity by saying that the Brahmanical Pantheistic theory of Maya makes this world "the wild dream of an intoxicated God."

THE *Christian Globe* has discovered that "the dispersion of the Jews was brought about by their desecration of the Sabbath." We were under the impression that the Romans took advantage of them by fighting upon that day, when their superstition stood in the way of their defending themselves. But we live and learn.

THE Rev. J. P. Sandlands writes to the *Rock*, from the vicarage at Brigstock, complaining that papers such as those on the "Birth of the Moon" by Mr. Proctor, and "Missing Links" by Dr. A. Wilson, have appeared in *Knowledge*, tending to dispense with the Creator; and, further, that he having written in opposition thereto, has not had his letters inserted in full. Mr. Proctor would be departing from the purpose of knowledge indeed, if he inserted all the twaddle the clergy choose to send in opposition to the statement of scientific facts.

IT is all in vain for Mr. Proctor to deny that the "menacing comet" of 1897 really menaces the world's existence. The Rev. Mr. Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald and Signs of the Times*, will have it so, and as he wrote a book, proving that Napoleon III. was prophesied as the destined monarch of the world, he ought to know.

THE churches have been running over with gush this Eastertide. Last Sunday afternoon Canon Liddon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral, taking for his text "Thou hast put off my sackcloth and girded me with gladness" (Psalm xxx., 12, Prayer-Book version). The Canon did not look as though he had spent his Lent in a jaunty suit of sackcloth. He remarked that "the joy which filled the soul of the Christian Church on Easter Day had some kind of echo from the world outside." This is not so surprising, considering that the Christian Church has appropriated the heathen festival of the return of the Sun-God to power after bursting the grave-clothes of winter.

THE Canon went on to say that we do not appreciate the resurrection (of the sun) as the ancients did; "a modern hymn is full of man, of his wants, his aspirations, his anticipations, his hopes and fears, but an ancient hymn was full of God, full of His wonderful attributes, and of His son and His acts." That puts the distinction very nicely. In times of ignorance the unknown God was everything. As knowledge advances man gradually takes his place.

CANON LIDDON said that "the apostles did all they could to show the robustness of their conviction in the resurrection; they gave their lives in attestation of it." The Canon cannot mention a single one who died in attestation of it. The lives of the apostles, as he well knows, are as audacious fables as any to be found in the Catholic Annals of the Saints.

THE Rev. Donald Macleod, preaching at Dr. Cumming's Old Church, Crown Court, Drury Lane, dealt with the resurrection fable in a different way. He said "Christ worked miracles. He raised the dead, called out devils and calmed the storms, but still the Jews had no faith in Him." This almost miraculous phenomena arose from the perversity of their hearts. So we supposed God worked miracles in order to convert the Jews, and then made their hearts so perverse that they would not believe their own eyesight. *Credat Judeus!*

SURGEON, also preaching on this stock Easter subject, said that even in the first century men tried to spiritualise away the facts. (?) But "let them follow their master upon their white horses. He was nearer than they expected, and the end of all things might be before the jibe or scoff should come out of the mouth of the next new sceptic." Look out! What a bleating of lambs there will be when Jesus comes in the clouds, to be sure.

WE don't know if we have wakened Canon Farrar up or not, but last Sunday evening the Queen's chaplain was to be heard in the Victoria Hall, New Cut, Lambeth, discoursing upon "The Resurrection Story."

THE Archbishop of York is anxious to see all public-houses closed on Sunday. How mean and cowardly are these preachers of the Gospel! They want a day all to themselves, and they funk at the very idea of competition.

DOES the Archbishop think that the men who now frequent drink-shops will go to the gospel-shops rather than nowhere? No doubt the distinction carries very little difference. There's intoxication in both cases—the one spiritual and the other spirituous.

THE Bristol Liberal Association has acquitted pious Sam Morley, like the magistrate discharged the prisoner, with a warning not to do it again. We advise the member for Bristol to be more cautious. The next offence may cost him his seat.

WE have received a report of the Bishop of Manchester's recent sermon in Leigh Parish Church on "Christianity." We decline to criticise it. Our space is too valuable to be wasted on such trash. We think the Bishop's friends should look after him. Is it softening of the brain, or what?



SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (Sunday, April 16th) in the Hall of Science, London, E.C. Morning, at 11, "How to Crush Toryism;" evening, at 7, "Comic Aspects of the Bible."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

April 18th, Walworth; 19th, Hackney Workmen's Club; 23rd, Liverpool; 25th, Tower Hamlets Radical Club; 30th, Hall of Science, London.

May 7th, Portsmouth; 14th, Plymouth; 21st, Leigh; 28th, N. S. S. Conference.

June 4th, Glasgow; 11th and 18th, Claremont Hall, London.

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. ROBINSON.—The Bible nowhere forbids any man, not a bishop or deacon, to have more than one wife. Bigamy is declared a crime by the State.

INQUIRER.—You cannot more effectually promote our circulation. The best advertisement of the *Freethinker* is letting people see it. Your doubt as to the paternity of Isaac is novel, but you must reflect that conjugal affairs were very much mixed in those days. Jehovah has certainly not fulfilled his promises to the Jews, but they still live in hopes. Don't be too severe. Give the old gentleman time.

S. R. B.—Thanks. Cuttings are always useful.

G. CASE.—Such things are almost too common for record. Thanks for your good wishes. The *Freethinker* goes up steadily every week.

R. GRANT.—It seems evident that Paul knew nothing of the supernatural birth of Jesus from his saying "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 3). In Luke ii., 48, his mother says: "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

J. E. G.—As you say you have not taken out letters patent for your title, "Heterodox Nuts for Orthodox Teeth," contributions from other writers may appear under that heading. We are always glad to hear from you.

JUMBO.—We were not aware that the true translation of *Selah* is "Hee-haw," but it may be quite correct, although unsupported by orthodox Hebrew scholars.

NEMO ME IMPUNE LACESIT.—Why cannot you chew your thistle in quiet, like a good, pious donkey?

INFIDEL.—Some of the most important changes in the Revised Version depend on little prepositions: thus, in the first chapter of Matthew, verse 22, we read, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet," while the Authorised gives, "spoken of the Lord by the prophet."

TUTOR.—Thanks. We are always glad to hear from you. We do not know when the gallant colonel will cross the herring pond.

B. J.—Easter, according to the Venerable Bede, is derived from Eastre, the name of a goddess worshipped of old in Britain. There can be no doubt of its having been a heathen festival. Some think it has connexion with the orientation of the sun's rising.

ANTI-IDOLATOR.—1. Among American Freethought writers may be mentioned Palmer ("Principles of Nature"), Abner Kneeland ("Review of Evidences of Christianity"), J. S. Hittell ("Evidences against Christianity"), D. M. Bennett ("The Gods," etc., "Antichrist"), Chainey ("Infidel Pulpit"), O. B. Frothingham ("Beliefs of Unbelievers," etc.), and the works of Theodore Parker, J. F. Clarke, H. Tuttle, and, last not least, R. G. Ingersoll. 2. If you watch our "Freethought Gloatings," you will learn the names of all the important English Freethought works.

ROBERT S., Oxford.—Spinoza was born Nov. 24th, 1632, and died Feb. 21, 1677. His principal work is his *Ethics*. It has been translated by Dr. Willis.

J. S.—Thanks. We shall make use of your notes some day.

S. W.—Gerald Massey's "Book of Beginnings" may be obtained from J. Burns, 15, Southampton Row, W.C. Thanks for paper.

W. C. SCRIVENER.—Many thanks for the great trouble to which you have put yourself. Your suggestion about sending the *Freethinker*, when done with, to coffee-shops or hairdressers who will expose it, is an admirable one.

THOUGHTFUL informs J. G. Brotherton that he can obtain the *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature from Mrs. Croyden, The Square, Walsall. Thanks. By writing the name of the news-agent, and leaving the paper in coffee-houses, as you suggest, you may extend its influence.

F. S.—Thanks for Cuttings.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society is to be congratulated on having secured Middleton Hall and its premises. There is ample accommodation for a good Secular Club, and the thickly-populated neighborhood can easily furnish a fine audience for the Sunday lectures. Although last Sunday was Easter Sunday, Mr. Foote's lectures drew excellent meetings. Middleton Hall is far enough from Baskerville Hall to obviate any idea of rivalry, and Birmingham is surely large enough to support two

secular societies at opposite ends of the town. We wish both institutions all possible success.

WE are delighted to see the liberality with which the *Weekly Dispatch* inserts letters in defence of the honesty of Freethought. Its last number contained an able letter by "A Social Reformer" on "Forced Hypocrisy," showing the hardships entailed on many Freethinkers who bravely decline the oath in courts of law.

THE French Freethinkers have been holding meat banquets during Easter as a protest against Catholic superstition. English journals profess to be greatly shocked. They think it is no offence to be a Freethinker, but a dreadful crime to act like one.

THE *Standard's* Paris correspondent says: "It is a well-known fact that a great many of the leading politicians now in power—that the Intransigents and M. Gambetta and his followers—never by any chance enter a church. Even when they have to attend a funeral or a wedding which is not laicised, they remain outside." This frank statement will give a shock to great Bumble, who is the real God Almighty of Great Britain.

JOE COOK's visit to India has not been entirely unproductive. A new monthly has been started in Calcutta with the pronounced title of the *Anti-Christian*. It has taken upon itself a heavy task, that of exposing the absurdities of the Christian faith. The task is a heavy one, not on account of its difficulty, but from the enormous mass of material.

BIBLE WITCHCRAFT.

"THOU shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii., 18)

מכשפה לא תחיה;

"If there had been no *witches*, such a law as this had never been made. The existence of the *law*, given under the direction of the Spirit of God, proves the existence of the thing. . . . that *witches, wizards, those who dwell with familiar spirits, etc.*, are represented in the sacred writing as actually possessing a power to evoke the dead, to perform supernatural operations, and to discover hidden or secret things by spells, charms, incantations, etc., is evident to every unprejudiced reader of the Bible."—*Dr. Adam Clarke*, Commentary on the above passage.

Thus wrote the great Methodist theologian. His master, John Wesley, had previously declared, "It is true that the English in general, and, indeed, most of the men of learning in Europe have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

That Wesley was right is a fact patent to all who have eyes. From the Egyptian magicians, who performed like unto Moses and Aaron with their enchantments, to the demoniacs of the Gospels and the "sorcerers" of the fifteenth verse of the last chapter of Revelation, the *Jew-book* abounds in references to this superstition.

Matthew Henry, the great Bible Commentator, writing upon our text, at a time when the statutes against witchcraft were still in force, said: "By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking, or employing, any evil spirit to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any enchantment, charm, or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person whatsoever, is made felony without benefit of clergy; also, pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death. The justice of our law herein is supported by the law of God here."

The number of innocent, helpless women who have been legally tortured and murdered by this law of God is beyond computation.

In Suffolk alone sixty persons were hung in a single year. The learned Dr. Zachary Grey states that between three and four thousand persons suffered death for witchcraft from the year 1640 to 1660.<sup>2</sup> In Scotland the Bible-supported superstition raged worse than in England. The clergy there had, as part of their duty, to question their parishioners as to their knowledge of witches. Boxes were placed in the churches to receive the accusations, and when a woman had

<sup>1</sup> Journal, May 25, 1768, p. 308, vol. iii., Works 1856. The earlier volumes of the *Methodist Magazine* abound with tales of diabolical possession.

<sup>2</sup> Note on Butler's "Hudibras," part ii., canto 3, line 143.



fallen under suspicion the minister from the pulpit denounced her by name, exhorted his parishioners to give evidence against her, and prohibited any one from sheltering her.<sup>1</sup> A traveller casually notices having seen nine women burning together in Leith, in 1664. "Scotch witchcraft," says Lecky, "was but the result of Scotch Puritanism, and it faithfully reflected the character of its parent."<sup>2</sup>

On the Continent it was as bad. Catholics and Protestants could unite in one thing—the extirpation of witches and infidels. Papal bulls were issued against witchcraft as well as heresy. Luther said: "I would have no compassion on these witches—I would burn them all."<sup>3</sup> In Catholic Italy a thousand persons were executed in a single year in the province of Como. In one province of Protestant Sweden 2,500 witches were burnt in 1670. Stories of the horrid tortures which accompanied witch-finding, stories that will fill the eyes with tears and the heart with raging fire against the brutal superstition which provoked such barbarities, may be found in Dalryell, Lecky, Michelet, and the voluminous literature of the subject. And all these tortures and executions were sanctioned and defended from the Bible. The more pious the people the more firm their conviction of the reality of witchcraft. Sir Matthew Hale, in hanging two men in 1664, took the opportunity of declaring that the reality of witchcraft was unquestionable; "for first, the Scripture had affirmed so much; and, secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons."

Witch belief and witch persecutions have existed from the most savage times down to the rise and spread of medical science, but nothing is more striking in history than the fact of the great European outburst against witchcraft following upon the Reformation and the translations of God's Holy Word. This was no mere coincidence, but a necessary consequence. "It was not until after the Reformation that there was any systematic hunting out of witches," says J. R. Lowell.<sup>4</sup>

If the Bible teaches not witchcraft, then it teaches nothing.

Science and scepticism having made Christians ashamed of this Biblical doctrine, as usual they have sought a new interpretation. They say it is a mistranslation; that *poisoners* are meant, and not *witches*. Now, in the first place, poisoners were already dealt with by the command, "Thou shalt not kill." In the second place, not a single Hebrew scholar of repute would venture to so render the word of our text. Its root קשף [kah-shaph] is given by Gesenius as "to use enchantment." Fuerst, Parkhurst, Frey, Newman, Buxtorf, in short, all Hebrew lexicographers agree. Not one suggests that "poisoner" could be considered an equivalent. The derivatives of this word are translated with this meaning wherever they occur. Thus Exodus vii., 11, "the wise men and the sorcerers." Deuteronomy xviii., 10, 11, "There shalt not be found among you anyone that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard or a necromancer." 2 Kings ix., 22, "her witchcrafts." 2 Chronicles xxxiii., 6, Manasseh "used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit and with wizards." Isaiah xlvii., 9 and 12, "thy sorceries." Jeremiah xxvii., 9, "your sorcerers." Daniel ii., 2, "the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans." Micah v. 12, "And I will cut off witchcrafts, and thou shalt have no soothsayers." Nahum iii., 4, "witchcrafts." Malachi iii., 5, "I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers." The only pretence for this rendering of *poisoner* is the fact that Josephus ("Antiquities," book iv., chap. viii., sec. 34) gives a law against keeping poisons. As there is no such law in the Pentateuch, Whiston tried to kill two difficulties with one note, by saying that what we render a *witch* meant a *poisoner*. The Septuagint has also been appealed to, but Sir Charles Lee Brenton, in his translation of the Septuagint, has not thought proper to render our text other than, "Ye shall not save the lives of sorcerers."

But apart from texts (of which I have only given those in which occurs one word out of the many implying the belief), the *thing* itself is woven into the structure of the Bible. Not only do the Egyptian enchanters work miracles, and

the witch of Endor raise Samuel, but the power of evil spirits over men is the occasion of most of the miracles of Jesus. The very doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, so cherished by Protestant Christians, is but a part of that doctrine of men being possessed by spirits, good and evil, which is the substratum of belief in witchcraft.

A recent incident has shown that this belief is not entirely extinct in England. The modern Roman Catholic priest is cautioned in the rubric concerning the examination of a possessed patient "not to believe the demon if he profess to be the soul of some saint or deceased person, or a good angel."<sup>1</sup> As late as 1773 the divines of the Associated Presbytery passed a resolution declaring their belief in witchcraft, and deploring the scepticism that was general. In the Church Catechism, explained by the Rev. John Lewis, minister of Margate in Kent—a work which went through many editions, and received the sanction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—a copy of which lies before me, published in 1813, reads (p. 18): "Q. What is meant by renouncing the devil? A. The refusing of all familiarity and contracts with the devil, whereof witches, conjurers, and such as resort to them are guilty."

Let it never be forgotten that this belief which has not only been the cause of the deaths of tens of thousands of innocent women, but has sent far more into the worst convulsions of madness and despair, is the evident and unmistakeable teaching of the Bible.

J. M. WHEELER.

## SIGNS AND WONDERS.

THE Christian religion is built upon "signs and wonders;" and divines prove its truth by appeals to its miracles; and prove its miracles true by appeals to its doctrines. But the world in ancient days was full of miracles quite as good as those of Christianity; and where there is plenty of faith and little science they are as frequent to-day as ever. Every religion is supported by miracles, and miracles always occur when people have sufficient faith. It is the want of faith that prevents miracles. When the world repents of its reason, its science, and its experience, and returns, crushed with remorse, to the bosom of the Church, miracles are sure to come again—they are always most plentiful where least needed, and entirely *non sunt* when wanted. It is only faith that is gratified by a sign; the sceptic or the doubter who needs one can never see one. You must believe first—yes, and middle, and last also, or you cannot please God.

Just now, leaving the beaten track of "Signs, etc.," I turn to the Eskimo, a people, as my reader knows, occupying the Northern parts of America, Greenland, etc. Not being myself a traveller, and feeling no desire to visit lands of so much cold, I have to depend upon the reports of others. The book I just now cull from is "Tales and Traditions of the Eskimo," by Dr. Rink: Blackwood and Sons, Edinburgh, 1875. This work I have found very interesting and instructive, and, during the past two or three years, have turned to it again and again without weariness.

The second tale in the book relates how a wicked mother blinded her boy; and how years later he was restored to sight by some wild geese, who used fresh guano and their wings in the surgical and successful operation; and how his mother was turned into a whale. Thus "the Lord hath not left himself without witness" even in Eskimo-land.

A little later we have a story of a madman who could walk upon the water, showing that the same spirit, which so kindly assisted Jesus, is not above helping the Eskimo—when they are mad enough for him.

Katerparsuk was an orphan, and scorned by an old man. But he studied *angakok*, or magic science; and by singing an incantation he could make a hare or a walrus jump literally out of its skin. He once practised upon the latter animal, and then got into the skin himself, and played a trick upon the old man who scouted him. Nothing in the Bible beats this.

Another story tells how a woman, to gain some private end, went down to the bottom of the sea, and continued there for *three days*, wrestling with a sort of aged sprite. Then she returned home. This must rank with the tale of Jonah, though a little above it.

Another story relates how an orphan saw her companions

<sup>1</sup> See "The Darker Superstitions of Scotland," by Sir John Graham Dalryell, chap. xviii. Glasgow, 1835.

<sup>2</sup> "History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe," vol. i., p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> "Colloquia de Fascinationibus."

<sup>4</sup> "Among my Books," p. 128. Macmillan, 1870.

<sup>1</sup> "Rituale Romanum de Exorcizandis Obsessis Dæmonia."



turned into gulls and fly away out to sea, and how a queer little woman afterwards brought her a fire that could never be extinguished. That, I presume, must have been a cresset, full of hell-fire; though, by the way, the Eskimo hell is up in the sky, and their heaven below the earth. That seems a sensible arrangement, at any rate. It is easier to descend than to rise; and by so arranging matters the Eskimo makes it so much easier to go to heaven than to hell. As Christians are all going to hell themselves, if the New Testament is true, perhaps they will some day regret that their heaven had not been made as easy of access as the heaven of those northern heathen. As it is, Christians can go to hell like winking; the best as well as the worst of them find it impossible to get to heaven, for "it is beyond the clouds and beyond the stars," in a region called Utopia.

It appears too, from Dr. Rink's book, that amongst the Eskimo, as everywhere else in all the ages, it is the idiot or imbecile who gets a monopoly of inspiration, clairvoyant powers, etc. The reason is obvious, viz., any man of ordinary intelligence could instruct the Lord in most things. All kinds of animals, nearly, can speak, too, amongst this curious people, and can speak to some purpose. Balaam's donkey said but little; and he must have been a donkey not to have been able to say what he did without any assistance from the God of Israel.

Here is a story which beautifully explains a trait in the character of dogs. Some foreigners murdered the two sons of an old Eskimo couple; and thereupon the woman adopted a young pup and reared it as her foster-son. The dog became immensely wise, understood magic, and eventually went to the murderers of the two brothers and frightened them to death. After this his foster-mother herself became afraid of him, and one day she and her husband departed in their boat, leaving this clever dog behind. He followed them along shore for a great distance, and when it was impossible to do so longer, he stood on a jutting cape and tried to give vent to his wounded feelings in moans and whines. Herein is the origin of the habit dogs still have of whining. If the reader doubts, let him reflect, that the rainbow did not exist till Noah's day; that languages had their origin at Babel; and that the serpents never went upon their bellies till God had cursed the old one which tempted Eve. If my reader should unfortunately be tempted by the Devil to doubt the stories of the Bible, he may very much quicken his drooping faith by reflecting upon this wonderful dog; and should the Devil tempt him to question the record of the dog, he may put the tempter to sudden and ignominious flight by recalling to mind the wonders of the word of god. I think believers might send me a present for that useful hint, a hint such as the pulpit never supplied.

A poor widow had a son whose name was Kujanguak. Near her lived a number of brothers, all clever hunters, who refused, and insultingly refused, to help her and her son. One day the widow took one of her boots and began to practise a charm. The next morning her son found an eider duck in the water-pot; a part of it was cooked at once and part laid by for future use. In the evening she repeated her charms, and a small seal appeared in the water-tub. The third day her son was delighted at seeing a fully-equipped kayak, or hunting-boat, in the house—the result of his mother's magic. This boat he at once got into the sea and began to practise hunting. He almost suddenly became expert and very successful, much to the chagrin of the brothers who had insulted him and his mother. But vengeance soon overtook the whole of this wicked family. Kujanguak caught a seal, and his mother sent a portion to this family, but not before she had practised a fatal spell upon it. One of the brothers died in eating it, as the wicked Israelites died in eating the God-sent quails. After this she caught up a handful of filth and threw it towards them; and it produced a sickness amongst her enemies of which they all died except one. Reader! Remember the widow's cruse of oil and barrel of meal, if thy faith fail thee.

An old man—he must have been a prophet of the Lord, though it is not said—was out on the ice watching for a seal to rise. Some little girls were playing in a cleft between two rocks, their baby brothers and sisters hung in *amovts* at their backs. Just as the old prophet was about to spear the seal the children thoughtlessly shouted and frightened it away. The old gentleman, in a great rage, called out, "Shut up, O, mountain cleft." It did so, and the children with the babies at their backs were enclosed in a deep pit,

whence, though they could be seen from above, no one could rescue them. There they remained and died of starvation.

Sceptics may laugh at those beautiful and miraculous records; but good people, accustomed to read the Bible and its blessed stories, will reverence them, and praise the Lord for his miracles amongst Eskimo as well as amongst Jews. Nothing is too hard for the Lord—Pharaoh's heart, indeed, was not hard enough. With God all things are possible. Why should we doubt? Beloved, hear what Charles Wesley says of the wonders that god wrought "when Israel out of Egypt came:"—

"The sea beheld his power, and fled,  
Disparted by the wondrous rod;  
Jordan ran backward to its head,  
And Sinai felt the incumbent god;  
The mountains skipped like frightened rams,  
The hills leaped after them as lambs!

\* \* \* \* \*  
Creation, varied by his hand,  
Th' omnipotent Jehovah knows;  
The sea is turned to solid land,  
The rock into a fountain flows;  
And all things, as they change, proclaim  
The Lord eternally the same!"

Exactly. Therefore he must do to-day what he did yesterday. Hence, as in duty bound, we reverently believe all records of miracles, from whatever quarter they come; and feel sorry there are not more of them to swallow. But the exclusive and bigoted Christians and Jews will not believe any miracles outside their own parties! Bless them!

J. SYMES.

## PROFANE JOKES.

It is said that a fortress near Sacramento is situated in the hottest spot on the surface of the globe. A soldier, named John Smith, who had been stationed there upwards of twenty years eventually died, and, as it turned out, went to brimstone and blazes. He was disappointed with the infernal regions, and one of his first acts was to telegraph back to his friends to "send on his blankets!"

It is nearly always untrue to say of a man that he wishes to leave a large property behind him when he dies. Usually he would like to take it along.

It is very wicked indeed to sell bad whisky on a Sunday. In Scotland, they recognise this important truth, and shut up the shops.

LAZARUS JACOBS, seeing a very fine ham in Bishopsgate, smacked his lips, and exclaimed, "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian."

HOW A LARGE CONGREGATION WAS GOT TOGETHER.—An amusing misunderstanding was the cause of Mr. Haweis's church in Westmoreland Street, Portland Place, being crammed to overflowing. He had given out the subject of his sermon for the coming Sunday evening, and had been understood to say that it would be the "Sanitary Aspects of Hell." Nothing more was needed to attract church-goers; but meanwhile the story had reached the rev. gentleman's ears, and on mounting the pulpit he said, before anything else—"I fear some misconception has got abroad as to the subject of my discourse, the result of which has been to incommode very considerably the regular attendants at this church. I am understood to have given notice of a sermon on the 'Sanitary Aspects of Hell.' I know nothing about hell. What I wish to speak to you about now are the 'Spiritual Aspects of Health.'"

A PROVINCIAL "daily" mentions an "infernal" meeting of certain clergymen. The word intended was "informal," but the compositor said the copy was bad, and how should he know?

## REVIEW.

*An Essay on Miracles.* By DAVID HUME. With an Introduction by JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER. London: Freethought Publishing Company. Threepence.

HUME'S famous essay needs no praise. After innumerable attacks, it stands firm and impregnable. Mr. Wheeler's introduction, commenting on the views of Paley, Campbell, Mill, Powell, Greg, Mozley, Tyndall, Huxley, and others, is a worthy addition to the original text. It gives in a succinct form and lucid style the history of the battle which has raged around Hume's logical fortress. Mr. Wheeler's perfect acquaintance with the literature of the subject, and his thorough competence to deal with it, make us regret that the exigencies of space did not



allow of his treating it at much greater length. Yet, as it stands, this is by far the best edition of the "Essay on Miracles," and perhaps the only one that we should venture to recommend.

G. W. F.

MR. SYMES'S ENGAGEMENTS.

April 16, Middleton's Hall, Birmingham; 23, Burnley; 30, Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. May 7, morning, Mile End Waste; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Hall of Science; 20, Middlesbro'; 21, Stockton-on-Tees; 28, N. S. S. Conference. June 4, Liverpool.—All applications to be sent to Mr. JOSEPH SYMES, 142, Hagley Road, Birmingham.

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