

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## “COMIC BIBLE” SKETCHES.—XXXI.



THE LORD OF CREATION.

“And God said . . . have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”—Genesis i., 28.

## WHO ARE THE BLASPHEMERS ?

ATHEISTS are often charged with blasphemy, but it is a crime they cannot commit. God is to them merely a word, expressing all sorts of ideas, and not a person. It is, properly speaking, a general term, which includes all that there is in common among the various deities of the world. The idea of the supernatural embodies itself in a thousand ways. Truth is always simple and the same, but error is infinitely diverse. Jupiter, Jehovah and Mumbo-Jumbo are alike creations of human fancy, the products of ignorance and wonder. Which is the God is not yet settled. When the sects have decided this point, the question may take a fresh turn; but until then *god* must be considered as a generic term, like *tree* or *horse* or *man*; with just this difference, however, that while the words *tree*, *horse* and *man* express the general qualities of visible objects, the word *god* expresses only the imagined qualities of something that nobody has ever seen.

When the Atheist examines, denounces or satirises the gods, he is not dealing with persons but with ideas. He is incapable of insulting God, for he does not admit the existence of any such being.

Ideas of god may be good or bad, beautiful or ugly; and according as he finds them the Atheist treats them. If we lived in Turkey we should deal with the god of the Koran, but as we live in England we deal with the god of the Bible. We speak of that god as a being, just for convenience sake, and not from conviction. At bottom, we admit nothing but the mass of contradictory notions between

Genesis and Revelation. We attack not a person but a belief, not a being but an idea, not a fact but a fancy.

Lord Brougham long ago pointed out, in his “Life of Voltaire,” that the great French heretic was not guilty of blasphemy, as his enemies alleged; since he had no belief in the actual existence of the god he dissected, analysed and laughed at. Mr. Ruskin very eloquently defends Byron from the same charge. In “Cain,” and elsewhere, the great poet does not impeach God; he merely impeaches the orthodox creed. We may sum up the whole matter briefly. No man satirises the god he believes in, and no man believes in the god he satirises.

We shall not, therefore, be deterred by the cry of “blasphemy!” which is exactly what the Jewish priests shouted against Jesus Christ. If there is a God, he cannot be half such a fool and blackguard as the Bible declares. In destroying the counterfeit we do not harm the reality. And as it is better, in the words of Plutarch, to have no notion of the gods than to have notions which dishonor them, we are satisfied that the Lord (if he exist) will never burn us in hell for denying a few lies told in his name.

The real blasphemers are those who believe in God and blacken his character; who credit him with less knowledge than a child, and less intelligence than an idiot; who make him quibble, deceive, and lie; who represent him as indecent, cruel, and revengeful; who give him the heart of a savage and the brain of a fool. These are the blasphemers.

When the priest steps between husband and wife, with the name of God on his lips, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he resists education and science, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he opposes freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he robs, tortures, and kills those who differ from him, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he opposes the equal rights of all, he blasphemes. When, in the name of God, he preaches content to the poor and oppressed, flatters the rich and powerful, and makes religious tyranny the handmaiden of political privilege, he blasphemes. And when he takes the Bible in his hand, and says it was written by the inspiration of God, he blasphemes almost beyond forgiveness.

Who are the blasphemers? Not we who preach freedom and progress for all men; but those who try to bind the world with chains of dogma, and to burden it, in God's name, with all the foul superstitions of its ignorant past.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE MORALS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

It is a pious delusion with many unthinking Christians that Christ and his Apostles and their converts were a most virtuous and amiable set of men, who reached as near to perfection in their moral character as the devil would permit, or the grace of God allow. Unhappily for the credit of the Church and of the Holy Ghost who bosses the concern, the plain unvarnished truth as set forth in the records of Holy Writ, gives the lie direct to this flattering but fallacious fancy, and irrefutably demonstrates the fact that the founders of Christianity were men whose virtue was of a cloudy and suspicious nature. This truth, so unsavory to the Christian palate, applies as well to Jesus Christ as to his Apostles and their converts, for “our blessed Lord” was certainly, as we shall presently see, no better than he ought to have been; and his followers showed by their numerous shortcomings that they duly appreciated the crooked example of their Lord and Master. Now, in order to help to dissipate the clouds of error and delusion which prevail in certain quarters respecting the fabled perfection of the men who sowed and watered the





seeds of that great Upas tree of superstition, Christianity, we purpose, God willing and the editor permitting, to review the evidence which the New Testament adduces concerning the early Christian Church, and which, we opine, will serve to set the facts of the case in their true light, unobscured by superstition and preconceived ideas.

I. *As to Christ.*—Jesus was an unfilial and unfeeling son (Luke ii., 41 et seq.). When not disobedient to his mother, he invariably speaks of her in a cold and distant tone (Matt. xii. 46 et seq.; John ii., 4). His references to his brethren, probably owing to the fact that they discredited his extravagant pretensions, were unsympathetic, if not positively unfriendly (Mark vi., 4; c. f. John vii., 5; Matt. xii., 49). He led a vagrant, unsettled life, after the fashion of a homeless itinerant preacher or tramping Salvationist. His roving career was at most a miserable hand-to-mouth sort of existence, in exact obedience to his sublimely insane precept: "Take no thought for the morrow." That he had loose ideas as to the sacred rights of property is evident, both by the unceremonious manner in which he converted a large quantity of swine into salt pork, and by his acts of violence and destruction when he overturned the tables of the money-changers at the Temple. He likewise displayed a lofty contempt for the principles of *meum* and *tuum*, in the felonious means he adopted to acquire possession of his congenial friend, the Jerusalem donkey (Matt. xxi., 2, 3; Luke xix., 32—34). The language he employed against his opponents was coarse and bitter in the extreme; and, considering the many times he bestowed upon them the opprobrious epithet of "fool," we may well feel apprehensive lest his soul may not now be roasting in the eternal fires of hell. His contemptuous expressions towards the Gentiles and half-bred Jews of Samaria stamp him with the brand of a narrow-minded and intolerant bigot; whilst his fearful denunciations of unbelievers, and the damnation with which he threatened them in a future life of eternal misery, mark him as a gloomy, ferocious fanatic, aflame with the frenzy of a cruelly persecuting zeal. His use of the parabolic form of teaching was avowedly an artful trap, deliberately and diabolically set for the damnation of mankind (Mark iv., 11, 12). Taking his character as a whole, we may justly say, that as a God he was an egregious failure, contemptible beneath the consideration of criticism; whilst as a man, he was, at best, a maudlin sentimentalist, a crack-brained, self-deluded enthusiast. As an ideal example, his life has furnished to his superstitious followers the pretext, if not the precept, for the most outrageous crimes ever perpetrated in the name of God against reason and humanity. Having regard to the abominations committed in his honor, by those who have professed and called themselves Christians, his name deserves the undying execrations of mankind.

II. *As to the Apostles.*—The Apostles of Christ formed a very miscellaneous assortment of humanity. One of them, Judas, was a thief, a devil, a traitor, and a suicide. Peter was a liar, a coward, and a profane man. Jealousies and ill-feeling broke out amongst the twelve through their selfish disputes for pre-eminence (Mark ix., 34; x., 35—41). They were intolerant of unbelievers, and would have had no objection to calling down fire from heaven to punish them for their lack of faith. They were craven cowards in the bitter hour of Christ's trial and difficulty, forsaking their God-forsaken God to his fate, and leaving the Jews to play the devil with Jesus Christ. Paul was a persecutor and probable murderer of many of the faithful. He quarrelled with Barnabas (Acts xv., 39), and kicked up a shindy with Peter (Gal. ii., 11). Peter and Paul were the leading spirits of the two great opposing sects in the early Christian Church. Peter represented the Christian Tories, who sought to retain the Jewish rites and ceremonies, and exclude the Gentiles from the Christian fold. Paul, on the other hand, stood up as the arch-enemy of this policy of conservatism and isolation, which would have permanently reduced Christianity to the rank of a mere Jewish sect. Each party helped onward the good cause by the eminently Christian means of hatred and uncharitableness. It is now recognised by several learned and impartial biblical critics that many of Paul's frequent references in his epistles to false apostles and teachers, to deceivers and adversaries, relate to Peter and his partisans, who abhorred the latitudinarian gospel of Paul, and therefore did all they could to undermine the foundations of the Churches which, at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, and elsewhere, Paul's unquenchable zeal had planted. Those references are, as we might expect

from a fiery zealot like Paul, often of the bitterest and most trenchant character (see Gal. i., 9; ii., 3—14; etc.). On the other hand, the writers of the Epistles of James, Jude, and the Apocalypse were not slow to return the compliment, for they lashed with a whip of scorpions what they conceived to be the dangerous and immoral tendencies of the reformed Christianity of which Paul was the prime mover and chief Apostle. Dr. Hooykaas points out in his "Bible for Young People" (vols. v. and vi.) that the personality of Paul is veiled under the opprobrious epithet of Satan in Rev. i. and ii., wherein the crack-brained lunatic of the Isle of Patmos thunders his anathemas against the seven Churches of Asia. And these apostles are the men—these cowardly, cursing, quarrelling, ignorant and fanatical bigots—whom we are to admire as the pillars of the Christian Church, and revere as the paragons of virtue and true nobility! But after all, who can wonder at the stupidity—we had almost said, the moral obliquity—of modern faith? Surely, if one can find it in one's conscience to extol the rascality of Jehovah, it is easy to condone a few droll eccentricities in a handful of illiterate fishermen—those "God-intoxicated" worthies, whose faith was only equalled by their fanaticism!

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

(To be concluded.)

## HETERODOX NUTS FOR ORTHODOX TEETH.

### No. IV.—THE DELUGE.

1. Was it in accordance with Divine Love to create people with evil dispositions, and then drown them for being evil?
2. What was the use of destroying mankind—were they made any better—was sin abolished? Is it just for human beings to destroy rather than reform?
3. Whose fault was it that the world went wrong? As Moses had not written and Jesus had not taught, they had no "authoritative standard" to guide them; how then could they escape going wrong?
4. Would it not have been better if Christ had come and converted them instead of drowning them?
5. How can an Immutable Being be said to have "repented" and "grieved at his heart?" (Gen. vi., 6).
6. Why should "beasts and fowls of the air" be destroyed for man's sin? Were their first parents tempted by a serpent, and did they also fall?
7. If God repented making them, why did he make them at all?
8. How could one man and his sons make an ark large enough to hold every species of animal and their food?
9. Were there taken into the ark a pair of every species, as stated in Gen. vi., 19? or seven of every clean beast, and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and the female, as in chap. vii., 2?
10. Did polygamous animals, like deer, only go in by pairs? or polyandrists, like bees, the queen with one drone? Can anyone believe there were only two fleas among Noah and his family?
11. How did Noah bring all the animals up to the ark? Did the polar bear come from the Arctic regions? the humming bird from Mexico? and the sloth from South America? Were the birds brought in by putting salt on their tails? and was the salt part of that into which Mrs. Lot was turned?
12. How did Noah provide all the varied kinds of food for all beasts, birds, and every creeping thing in the ark?
13. Were tigers and deer kept apart? and were there separate apartments for animalcula?
14. Did the carnivorous animals have a supply of other animals to feed upon? Did bees have honey, and all the myriads of insects their appropriate food?
15. How was the different temperature required for the different animals preserved?
16. Was a cubit the whole extent for the admission of fresh air? Was the one window closed, or did the rain pour in?
17. Who fed the animals, and cleaned out the sewage? Did Noah, like the Lord, "smell a sweet savor?" Or, did he take a cargo of Condy's disinfectant fluid?
18. Did the flood last forty days, according to chap. vii., 17? or 150 days, according to ver. 24?
19. Did the earth dry on the first day of the first month,



as stated chapter viii., 13, or on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, as stated in the next verse?

20. Were fish taken into the ark? If so, why are they not mentioned? If not, would not the fresh-water fish die by the mingling of the salt-water, and the salt-water fish die when overflowed with the fresh water?

21. Would not the tides have been mightily influenced by a flood which "covered the highest mountains." Could forty days rain produce such a flood; where did it all come from?

22. Was the flood universal or partial? If universal, as the Bible distinctly asserts, was the whole world inhabited at that time? If partial, how could it destroy "every living thing from under heaven?" Why take in birds who could have escaped? Must not a partial deluge, covering the highest mountains, have become universal?

23. If not universal, why did the Holy Ghost use universal terms? Cannot the Holy Ghost write grammatically? Is it a proof of the inspiration of the Bible to say "Yes" when it means "No?"

24. How was it that Noah's family and their menagerie were not frozen above the snow-line on the mountains of Ararat?

25. Would not so immense a flood destroy all vegetation, and the presence of such a mass of water obliterate all earth-marks?

26. How did all the animals get out and down from the mountains? How did they find their ways to their *habitats*, and what had they to live on by the way?

27. Did the animals which Noah sacrificed become extinct? and was not the sweet savor which the Lord smelled (chapter viii., 21) mingled with the effluvia arising from dead carcasses and decayed vegetation?

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. J. A. Atkinson, Rector of Longsight, has published a pamphlet on "The Salvation Army and the Church." For the Army he has nothing but praise, and wishes that the Church would take up its work. But he says: "I have no faith in anything being done." Yet among the "admirable principles" of the Army from which the Church is to derive benefit, he particularly mentions: "The principle of collecting the offerings of the people at every service. It is only thus that the duty of giving can be brought home to the hearts of the people." Surely its bitterest foe would never say that the Church ever required stimulus in the direction of bringing home to the hearts of the people the holy duty of giving.

THE *Christian at Work* is rough on the parsons, and would deny them all their little enjoyments. According to this punctilious paper, clergymen must not snuff or chew in their pulpits, nor blow their noses in their fingers, nor wipe them on their sleeves; must not frequent houses of ill-fame, gambling halls, music halls, nor drinking saloons, even for the sake of learning by experience the exceeding sinfulness of sin. In the name of Tophet, what are the holy men to do? They will positively be reduced to reading the Song of Solomon, and comforting the weaker members of their congregations.

ANENT numerous clerical scandals:—

"Away!" she cried, with accents bold  
And looks that were quite sinister;  
"Come near me not, for I've been told  
That you, sir, are a minister."

A STORY is narrated of the present Bishop of Limerick, which, coming from Lord Enly, must be true. The bishop, who has for some time back been in extremely delicate health, was told some days since by his physician that a trip to Nice was really necessary to set him up in health; but he positively declined to entertain the idea of going, and shook his head so determinately, that the man of pills and potions thought it only right to express himself in plain terms. "My lord," he said, very solemnly, "I tell you candidly that your case is a most serious one, and if you do not go to Nice you must very soon go to Heaven." "Oh, well, in that case," said the bishop, very dismally, "I will go to Nice!"

THE agent of the Bible Society in Brazil, makes the following statement in a recent circular: "We guarantee that the Bibles and New Testaments published by the American Bible Society, contain in their entirety all the books recognised as canonical by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles." We should say that they do, and a good many more.

AT a German post-office the other day, the letter-sorters were

considerably puzzled by the receipt of a letter addressed to "Our Father which art in Heaven; Inquiry Department." There was not a letter-carrier in the office, who could conscientiously affirm that the address quoted was on his round, which proves, by the way, that German letter-carriers are very depraved and improper characters, and nobody of them all knew how the letter was to be delivered. Then they applied to the postmaster, who also stared in silent astonishment when he beheld the address, but eventually this gentleman decided that the letter must be opened and its contents perused. This having been done, it was found that the note was from a young lady of religious instincts, who desired the ruler of the universe to prolong the eclipse from three minutes, which was announced as its duration, to thirty minutes, in order that she might get a fair view of the great natural phenomenon. By way of a persuader, this susceptible and faithful young believer added further, that as long as an eclipse was being fixed, it would not be much more trouble to make it last half an hour than three minutes. The sender of the note has had her prayer returned, not granted. The German post-office authorities returned it to her with an inscription implying that it was "Insufficiently addressed."

THERE is no arrogance like priestly arrogance, and no acrimony like clerical acrimony. At Evesham a neighboring clergyman recently objected, at the annual meeting of a workmen's club, to the election on the committee of a local tradesman, on the ground that he was neither a Christian nor a gentleman, having refused to be baptised. A scene ensued, several members protesting, and, on the tradesman replying, the clergyman threatened to have him turned out. One of those elected offered to withdraw, as he also was unbaptised; but after some persuasion consented to serve. Freethinkers everywhere should make it part of their duty to put into their proper place these parasitic blackbeetles, who consider themselves deputy God Almighty in their own districts.

MR. B. H. COWPER, ex-editor of the defunct *Christian Evidence Journal*, lecturing last Sunday at the Midland Railway Arches to a very small audience—the immense crowd there assembled having elected to listen to Mr. Foote—denounced Kuenen as guilty of fraud in having written of Jesus of Nazara instead of Nazareth. A gentleman, who was not allowed to point from the Christian Evidence platform Mr. Cowper's blunder in substituting the name of Kuenen for that of Keim, remonstrated with Mr. Cowper in private, and induced him to acknowledge his mistake. This he did in most graceless fashion, for he said though it was Keim who committed the "fraud," Kuenen was no better. The mistake of confounding the author of "The Religion of Israel" with the author of "Jesus of Nazara" may be pardonable in a slipshod scholar, but only a Christian Evidence lecturer would accuse any scholar of "fraud" because he prefers a particular spelling of a geographical term.

THE *Rock* states that the late Rev. T. Lushington Tilson made a bequest to the University of Oxford of £1,000 to provide two sermons annually on the history, religion, and unfulfilled prophecy of the Jewish nation. But the University have not deemed it expedient to accept the bequest.

HAD these sermons been opened to all competitors, we should think the University of Oxford must have had the interests of Christianity in view in declining the money. The unfulfilled prophecy of the Jewish nation is a large and dangerous topic, itself affording scope for sermons for generations.

AMONG unfulfilled prophecies might be included all those numerous glorifications of the Levites as decreed to be priests for ever, the declaration that the family of David should reign for the same period, and that Abraham should have Canaan for an everlasting possession.

AND then what a fund of unfulfilled prophecy concerning the Messiah! How when he came there should be but one religion in the world, how idols would vanish, and Gentiles turn Jews; and there should be no more war or sin, but leopards lie down with kids, and the river of Egypt be divided, and the Mount of Olives rent asunder, and the ten tribes gathered in, and all those other things which did not happen when the Messiah came, and which he therefore will have to come and attend to a second time. Only, unfortunately, the most evidently unfulfilled prophecy of all is that of Christ himself, that there were those standing around him who should not taste of death until they saw this second coming.

THE Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, in distributing prizes for proficiency in Biblical knowledge, at Stonehouse, lamented the danger of children being deprived of Bible teaching. He evidently regards it as a severe calamity that the time of children should be more occupied in learning concerning the world they live in, than in reading the edifying stories of Judah and Tamar, Lot and his daughters, or the glowing poetry of the Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's.

HE said that it could not be expected that children who grew up without this beneficent teaching could ever have the same



sense of what is noble, righteous, and beautiful, as those who received it in early youth. They may fail to see that God's favorite, cheating Jacob, was an example of righteousness; that Jael, who was declared to be "blessed among women," was noble in driving a nail into the head of her sleeping enemy; or the beautiful conduct of David, the man "after God's own heart," in committing adultery with Uriah's wife and setting Uriah in the forefront of the battle.

SIR JAMES PAGET says that the mere fact of the continued existence of Christianity is a weighty evidence of its truth. What does he make of the continued existence of Buddhism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Parseeism, and Judaism—all of which are older than Christianity?

A WRITER to the *Record* asks anent the Salvationists' successes, "Have, then, the good old Gospel days of humility and decency and order gone out of date, and has the dispensation of comicality, irreverence, masquerade, and self-assertion taken their place?"

"UNITED IRELAND" is a paper owned by Messrs. Parnell, McCarthy, Biggar, and a few more Land Leaguers. Its title is a huge joke. Ireland has always been anything but *united*, except after the fashion of the Kilkenny cats.

WELL, this journal with the facetious title is very wroth with the Government for allowing the *Freethinker* to "circulate in thousands through England every week." It is aghast at our "horrid blasphemy," and bitterly complains that "an Englishman may insult God, but an Irishman may not whistle 'Harvey Duff' to a policeman." What dreadful oppression! The English people should bestir themselves, and settle the Irish question at a single stroke. Let every Irishman enjoy the privilege of whistling "Harvey Duff" to a policeman, and boycotting will speedily die out, agrarian outrages will soon cease, and even the pigs will share in the national content. We advise Mr. Gladstone to inaugurate a new policy. What Ireland wants is plenty of "Harvey Duff."

SERIOUSLY, however, we think *United Ireland* overshoots the mark. If we "insult" God, we do not starve him, or visit him by night with masked faces, or drag his wife and daughters out of bed, or break his legs for paying his rent, or cut off his ears for refusing us a subscription, or beat out his brains for violating our rules. We use nothing stronger than words, and they, as the proverb says, break no bones. We are ready to show the Lord fair play, and to give him an opportunity of defence. He is at any time welcome to a column or two of our space, provided he expresses himself a little more lucidly than was his wont in the days of the prophets.

THE Rev. Mr. Arnold, of St. Edmund's Church, Northampton, finds the *Freethinker* a very bitter pill. He has referred to it as a "lewd" publication with "indecent" illustrations. We reply that all the lewdness and indecency there is in the *Freethinker* is taken from the Bible. Will Mr. Arnold and his friends cleanse that dirty book, and take the beam out of their own eyes before they trouble about the mote in ours?

AN aged Hebrew lay dying, and his family, with the venerable Rabbi of the race, were gathered round his bedside waiting the dread moment. They thought they saw his lips move, and one of them, his favorite daughter, bent her ear down to his lips and faintly caught the words: "Shell yer a nice shuit o' close." Then they knew that the Angel of Death was approaching, and that the commercial instincts of the Hebrew had been aroused by the scanty apparel of the pallid messenger.—*Sporting Times*.

THE Salvation Army in Newcastle, drove a horse mad with their wretched discord, and the result was that William Robson, the carter, got killed. The jury brought in a verdict of accidental death. This opens up a new and safe method of murder. If you want to burke an enemy, all you have to do is to join the Salvation Army, get your victim on a cart or some other vehicle, and yell "O Jehovah," under the horse's nose. Then you may go home, and a few days after you may turn up at the inquest to witness the last act.

THE Bishop of Bath and Wells calls on his brethren in the Lord to desist from quarrels and controversies among themselves, and unite to stem "the awful torrent of Atheism" which is sweeping all before it. We all know the value of such appeals. Mrs. Partington's mop wasn't of much use against the Atlantic.

THE Rev. Canon Mony was the principal speaker at the Plymouth meeting of the Church of England Clerical and Lay Society. He deplored the fact that the devil was very hard at work, and, from the tenor of his subsequent remarks, we infer that the devil and Mr. Bradlaugh are the same person. Canon Mony, however, advised the faithful not to despair, for "sixteen out of twenty-four lecturers employed by Mr. Bradlaugh had become Christians." This remark was greeted with loud applause, but there is not a word of truth in it. Mr. Bradlaugh does not employ lecturers, and never did.

CANON MONY then talked about Northampton, and told a story of a poor old woman there who was given to understand that "when Bradlaugh got in the Queen would have to do her own washing." Worse things than that might happen without the world bursting up, although we suspect the story to be apocryphal. The worthy Canon does well to cheer up his dearly beloved brethren; let them not despair. They have God and Mony on their side—especially money.

THE Bishop of St. Alban's has just admitted four ladies as the first sisters of his community at Maplestead. They make no vows for life, but only of poverty, chastity and obedience, *revocable from time to time*. Oh dear! What are we coming to?

THE *North British Daily Mail* reiterates in its Literary Notes the old falsehood about Emerson, the philosopher, having been influenced by that charlatan, Joe Cook. The statement, which was circulated by Joe Cook himself, was given the lie to years ago by Mr. Emerson's own son, and it never could have any weight with those who know anything either of Ralph Waldo Emerson or of Joseph Cook. Christian lies about Freethinkers are like the Egyptian cattle. They stand being killed several times over.

THE *Blue Ribbon Gazette* declares that a man was so moved by what he heard at Curzon Hall, Birmingham, "that he signed the pledge, then went home and burned his infidel books, and resumed his old way of life." We are not aware of any "infidel" books which inculated bestowing money "for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth," like Deut. xiv., 26; or which says, with Proverbs xxxi., 7, "Let him drink and forget his poverty and remember his misery no more." A Birmingham friend writes that he has made inquiries, but failed to discover that the book-burning convert ever was known as a Freethinker. The incident was probably got up for effect.

THE Christians are evidently getting roused at last. An attempt was made to prevent Mr. Forder from lecturing at Peckham Rye by a mob of Christians led on by a clergyman, who appealed to his fellow Christians not to allow the infidel to spread his blasphemies.

THE Pendleton Branch of the N. S. S. respectfully applied to the Salford Town Council for the use of the Town Hall for Sunday lectures. The Council first wrote asking who would be the lecturers, and, when they understood that they would be well-known Freethinkers, declined to let the hall; although the various sects of Christians are allowed the use thereof whenever it suits them. It is hopeless to expect fair-play from a pious town council of this kind, and we are glad to know that the refusal will only stir the Pendleton Branch to more vigorous efforts on behalf of free speech.

ANOTHER instance of petty clerical tyranny is reported from Stockton-on-the-Forest, Yorkshire. Two farm laborers were summoned for alleged violent and indecent conduct in leaving their pews, in Trinity Church, Stockton, before the clergyman had retired to the vestry. The summons was dismissed.

THE House of Lords on Monday rejected the Bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister by the narrow majority of four, the Prince of Wales and the Dukes of Edinburgh and Albany voting in favor of the Bill, and the whole bench of bishops against it. This conflict of authorities has been exemplified throughout the discussion of the question. Leviticus has been cited against it, and Deuteronomy for it. Cardinal Wiseman declared it was not opposed by the Church of Rome, but Cardinal Manning declares that it is. Meantime, the question approaches a settlement on the basis of practical utility.

MR. TENNYSON supports the movement for Sunday closing in the Isle of Wight. Of course he has a private wine-cellar; but how does he expect the yokels to drink to the great name of England, etc., unless they have access to the "public?" Or does he want them to worship Saint Jingo six days in the week, and the parson's god on the seventh by way of a change?

CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY *versus* THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY.—The doctrine that men are "one in Christ" tells merely of the bond of a common faith supposed to be eventually shared by all men alike. All its force hinges on the possession of convictions respecting an after life—convictions which every advance of real knowledge, whether biological or psychological, tends indirectly rather to weaken than to reinforce. Such a doctrine implies that man's duty of mutual helpfulness is derived from a single teacher's injunctions; and that they are to feel and to act as "brothers," not because of the simple, natural fact that they are knit by their common needs and mutual power of helpfulness, but because one large-hearted heretical Jewish artisan but yesterday was, by a section of humanity, declared a god, or a demi-god; and but yesterday, in that character, imposed the notion of the unity of humanity, declaring that all the slight varieties of men he knew of should love one another "for his sake." Needless to say, that this limited idea of the obligation of "brotherhood" is an idea likely enough to be unseated.—*Louisa J. Bevington*, "Fortnightly Review," August, 1881, p. 185.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE will lecture twice to-day (Sunday, June 18th) in London: Morning at 11.30, Clerkenwell Green, on "The Christian Evidence Society;" evening at 7.30, Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, (by special request) on "Garibaldi as Patriot and Freethinker."

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

June 25th, morning, Gibraltar Walk, afternoon, Victoria Park, London.

July 2nd, Manchester; 9th and 16th, Claremont Hall, London; 23rd Huddersfield; 30th, Liverpool.

August 6th, Burnley; 13th Rochdale; 20th, West Hartlepool; 27th, Stockton-on-Tees.

September 10th and 17th, Hall of Science, London.

October 15th, Halifax.

## 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.

A FREETHINKER.—We are overcrowded at present. Will appear in good time.

J. C. AKESTER thinks no punishment too great for writers in the *Freethinker*. If his creed be true he may have the pleasure of witnessing our eternal torments, and then surely he will be satisfied. Meantime he should save his stamps.

J. P. B., Veritas et Justitia.—The primary signification of *virtu virtutis* is manliness; honor is same as in English.

GEO. ALBANY.—We thank you for your batch of cuttings.

A. CARVER.—Thanks. We are always glad to hear from you.

FRED ALLEN.—Inability to account for the formation of the world is no sufficient reason for accepting the Bible story of creation. We can only counsel you to think the matter out for yourself. Reading F. W. Newman's "Phases of Faith;" Strauss's "Old Faith and the New;" and Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," may perhaps assist you. We shall be pleased to hear from you again.

J. DAVIS.—Monier Williams, in his "Sanskrit Manual," p. 136, 1868, cites the Mahabharata, vana-parva, v. 1160. "I follow virtue, fair Krishna, not for any advantage to be thence derived, but in conformity to the written law and to the example of the good."

W. NASH, 50, Blundell Street, Caledonian Road, wants No. 5, vol. I., of the *Freethinker*, and will give 4d. for it to anyone sending it to his address.

RECEIVED with thanks.—R. B.; "Both Sides;" J. A. Bradley; A. J. R.; C. B. B.; W. Gibb; J. S.; W. H. Wood; J. K.

A CORRESPONDENT from Inverness gives us the cheering assurance that the *Freethinker* is known and appreciated in that most northern city.

T. R. POCKLINGTON.—Your kindly words and cuttings received with thanks.

A. A. CARVER.—The statement you mention is entirely false, and you are doing good work by challenging its accuracy. A leaflet has been widely circulated giving the initials of sixteen converted infidel lecturers, but in every case, except three, where the initials can be recognised, the parties intended were so obscure as to be absolutely unknown to the general Secular body. Should Canon Mory comply with your request for the names you will be satisfied of this.

R. TAYLOR.—Buddha said, "Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." Dhammapada, c. xvii., v. 223. P. cxxii. Max Müller's translation, 1870.

W. J. SPOONER.—You doubt our statement that the moral teachings of Jesus can be found taught by Pagans before he came on earth, but do not state which of those teachings you believe to be original. It would take several papers to go through the Gospels seriatim and compare them with Pagan teachings, but this we may do some day. See answers to R. Taylor and J. Davis.

T. C. GRAY.—1. We do not know the author of the not very profound passage quoted. 2. Widdleton, New York, is the publisher of Alger's "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life." It can be procured either through Trübner or the Unitarian Association.

A FREETHINKER.—Send your recommendation to the *Church Times* or the *Christian World*. No doubt it would have an effect on the population question if all the clericals followed out the teaching of Matthew xix., 5.

R. S. JOHNSON.—Contents sheet shall be forwarded. Thanks for your assistance.

J. W.—Jevon's little book is a good one; then read Whately's "Logic," after that Bain's, and finally Mill's.

W. F.—We received and acknowledged a copy of your verses several weeks ago.

S. HILL.—The resolution seems superfluous. We have no room for reports.

P. H. DAVIS.—We are always glad to receive such scraps.

T. C. BREE.—If, as you say, you "occupy a prominent part" in the Christian Church, it must be worse off than we thought. For the rest, we wish you good-speed. You will never put down the *Freethinker*, but you may help to advertise it. An active agent is very much wanted in Bristol, and when we are rich enough we'll pay you a commission.

J. R. writes that he sold nearly six dozen of Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances" in his shop last week. As this is within easy distance of the Bishop of Manchester's cathedral, we suppose we must thank his lordship for advertising us so effectively.

INQUIRER.—The *Freethinker* goes up every week, and never declines. Its success is unprecedented in the history of our movement.

R. WALLACE.—If the Rev. Mr. Howie can satisfy you of the essential truth of his story, he shall have fair acknowledgment in our columns.

J. H. COOKE.—The lecture on "Bible Blunders" will be partially included in one of the "Freethinker Tracts," which are now in the press and will be shortly ready. Mr. Foote will visit the Arches again next month.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

We congratulate the Glasgow Freethinkers on their change of premises. Their new hall, in Ingram Street, is handsome and commodious; and there are several fine rooms adjoining it, suitable for all the purposes of a large society. All the members and friends who have worked hard to make the place both clean and handsome deserve hearty thanks and praise.

The *Freethinker* circulates well in Scotland. There is a large demand for it in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Dundee, and a "Well-wisher" writes to inform us that even as far north as Inverness one news-agent alone sells over six copies weekly.

THE REV. H. R. HAWES is giving a Sunday exhibition of various articles of interest in connexion with Garibaldi, Mazzini, and other Italian liberators.

In his address before the Massachusetts Historical Society, Oliver Wendell Holmes gave this testimony in regard to the liberal religious views and teachings of Emerson: "The ministers denounced his heresies, and handled his writings as if they were packages of dynamite, and the grandmothers were as much afraid of his new teachings as old Mr. Piozzi was of geology. We had had revolutionary orators, reformers, martyrs; it was but a few years since Abner Kneeland had been sent to gaol for expressing an opinion about the great first cause; but we had nothing like this man, with his seraphic voice and countenance, his choice vocabulary, his refined utterance, his gentle courage—which with a different manner might be called audacity—his temperate statement of opinions, which threatened to shake the existing order of thought like an earthquake."

## A MYSTERY SOLVED.

Tubs, pots, kettles, and dishes,  
Baby, cradle, and broom!  
No rest for the toiling women,  
Except in the church and tomb!

Yet wiseacres ask and wonder  
Why women are proud of the church;  
As well might they ask why my caged birds  
E'er rest on their only perch.

Give them healthy amusements,  
Affection and needful rest,  
The church would then be empty,  
And every household blest.

(Jeremiah Hacker, Berlin, N. J., May 24, 1882.)

VICTOR HUGO's latest production is a drama entitled "Torquemada." The great Inquisitor is depicted as an exalted mystic, anxious to save souls by the burning of bodies.

THIS, doubtless, has been the genuine feeling of many Christians who have burnt each other, well persuaded that all the Apostles would have done as they did. What is the momentary torture of this poor house of clay compared to the everlasting torture of hell? Many an inquisitor doubtless considered himself truly merciful if by the application of fire to mortal bodies he could save immortal souls from destruction.

J. J. MEYRICK writes to *Light* as under: "The ancient Jews, being a race of bloodthirsty barbarians, thought that their national God, Jehovah, could be appeased only by the sacrifice of the lives of innocent animals, offered by those who had offended him. In process of time this national God was transformed into the Creator of the universe, but the idea still remained that he was unable to forgive sins unless his vengeance (then called justice) was satisfied by the death of some one, and the early Christians, imbued with this idea before their conversion from Judaism, concluded that the one was Christ. The tenet of vicarious suffering is fit, not for true women any more than men, but for mean-spirited cowards who dare not face the consequences of their own acts. It is a doctrine which could have originated only in the hearts of savages. If salvation was offered to a civilised man upon such terms, honor should compel him to refuse it, and say: 'Let me suffer the penalty of my own sins, for that alone is justice.' With respect to sin and its consequences, the teaching of Buddhism is certainly more in accordance with reason and every idea of justice than the teaching of Christianity."



*Nature* is publishing a series of papers on "The Life and Works of Charles Darwin," under the superintendence of Mr. G. Romanes.

IN a very able article on the "Church Attendance Problem," the *Inquirer* mentions among the intellectual obstacles to church attendance, the doctrine of Biblical infallibility, the orthodox dogmas of the Trinity, the Fall, the Atonement, and Eternal Punishment; the belief in miracles, which is rapidly fading among cultured people; and the poor, unsatisfying preaching common in the pulpit of to-day. We should like the *Inquirer* to inform us how much that is distinctively Christian will remain when these intellectual obstacles are eliminated.

THE *Southampton Times* has opened its columns to a correspondence on "Infidel Death-beds," in which Mr. Rayner and other local Freethinkers have taken an effective part. A good deal of use seems to have been made of Mr. Foote's "Death's Tests; or, Christian Lies about Dying Infidels," a pamphlet which has had a very large sale and will soon go through another edition. Freethinkers cannot promote the cause more effectually than by judicious correspondence in the local press.

WE observe that all the writers on the orthodox side, in this correspondence, quote from a preacher, Stephen Grellet, against Thomas Paine, and from a French priest, the Abbé Barruel, against Voltaire. They might as well go to Randolph Churchill for the truth about Gladstone.

MR. HARRIS, the secretary of the Burley Society, has another telling letter in the *Express*. The Rev. Mr. Giles seems "pegged out."

A RADICAL REFORM ASSOCIATION has been started in North London. Fresh members are earnestly sought. The Secretary, C. F. Haiden, will be happy to supply applicants with a copy of the Rules.

A MELBOURNE CORRESPONDENT informs us that Mr. Walker, who lectures on the Secular platform out there, is a man of great ability and eloquence, and draws splendid audiences of from one to two thousand people. Joe Cook is going to pay them a visit, after he has converted all the Hindus, and the Freethinkers mean to give him a warm reception.

MR. FOOTE'S open-air lecture at the Midland Arches last Sunday drew one of the largest audiences that ever assembled there. The Christian Evidence Society's lecturer, Mr. B. H. Cowper, was almost deserted. In the evening Claremont Hall was crowded, even the platform being utilised by some late comers. To-day Mr. Foote will deliver another open-air lecture on Clerkenwell Green, when a disturbance is promised. The lecture commences at half-past eleven; and we hope to see a strong muster of friends.

## HOW CHRISTIANS HAVE LOVED THE NEGRO.—*Concluded.*

BUT mere brutality was the least of the wrongs which the Negro endured at the hands of his Christian owner. The means adopted to ensure his complete degradation were of the most refined description. Not being held to be men, the cure of their souls became of little or no consequence. On this point evidence abounds. Jay, in his "Miscellaneous Works on Slavery," p. 12, says: "They are, moreover, kept in ignorance, and compelled to live without God, and to die without hope, by a people professing to reverence the obligations to Christianity." Even in the few and far between cases in which participation in religious service was permitted "the colored race must worship apart; they must not enter the white man's church; if they do, they must be fenced off into a separate corner" ("History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America," by Wilberforce, p. 426). This fact is corroborated by that freethinking advocate of slaves' rights Theodore Parker, who tells us: "There are few churches in which he can sit in a pew" (Works, vol. vi., p. 165). What a commentary is this on all the high-flown bunkum of Christian special pleaders as to the civilising influence of Christianity!

Being thus shut out from an equal share in the Christian kingdom of heaven, we are not surprised to find that they were also expelled the Christian Sunday-school. "In Louisiana, the penalty for instructing a free black in a Sunday-school is, for the first offence, 500 dollars, for the second offence, death" (Jay, p. 27). Had such a law been passed in "infidel France" during the throes of revolution all Christendom would have howled in horror. But being, as it was, passed in one of the American Christian States, it is quietly and very conveniently ignored.

Further, education was studiously denied the Negro. It was illegal to teach him to read. What little he knew was generally acquired by stealth. Even in the few exceptional instances where owners ignored the law and its penalties by teaching their slaves the rudiments of education, greed of money formed the ruling principle—the "nigger" becoming to some owners the more valuable. But kindness pure and simple, in some few cases, was the reason for teaching the slave, and these deserve all honor. How very different this was to the slaves' position in pagan Rome can be seen in Lecky's "History of European Morals," where he writes: "The physician who tended the Roman in his sickness, the tutor to whom he committed the education of his son, the artist whose works commanded the admiration of the city, were usually slaves. Slaves sometimes mixed with their masters in the family, ate habitually with them at the same table, and were regarded by them with the warmest affection. Tiro, the slave and afterwards the freed man of Cicero, compiled his master's letters, and has preserved some in which Cicero addressed him in terms of sincere and delicate friendship" (vol. i., p. 323). Some of the finest writers of antiquity were slaves. Terence was a slave. Phædrus was a slave. The immortal Æsop was a slave. Epictetus was a slave, and passed at once from a state of servility to the friendship of an emperor. Such instances have no parallel, and were indeed impossible, under the slavery system of Christian America. Even the reality of such a slave as George Harris was doubted on the appearance of Mrs. Stowe's "Uncle Tom." The very doubt shows the depths to which Christian slavery had fallen.

But, in fact, in all relations between the white and the black, social, political, or otherwise, the inferiority of the latter was rigorously maintained. Thus the alleged infallible panacea for slavery—the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man—broke down; was, in fact, ignored or deliberately set aside by men who pretended to observe it most, and its most sacred obligations trampled under foot with callous indifference. No Negro was esteemed a man. "Negroes," said the *Richmond Examiner*, "are not men in the meaning of the Declaration of Independence" (see Parker's Works, vol. vi., p. 22). And in formulating this doctrine the paper in question was but reproducing the opinion of America generally. Romanists and Protestants of nearly every type agreed in this. Both walked together in fraternal harmony in their treatment of the alleged descendant of Ham. To rob him of the indefeasible right of personal liberty was only to fulfil the words of Holy Writ. Therefore, Christians of all denominations were not ashamed to go hand in hand in degrading the Negro from a man to a mere chattel. By Christian men and women he was shut out from the train, the car, and the right of choice of travel. He was denied the franchise, and all right of legal redress by prosecution, or petitioning. He was excluded the army and the militia. He was rigidly excluded from the most honorable and lucrative branches of labor. He was everywhere the object of insult, mean spite, and oppression; and was, when legally free, in constant dread of seizure, and of being again reduced to slavery. He was denied conjugal rights, his wife being generally selected for him by his owner, who also had the right to deprive him of her and give her to another or sell her off the estate for ever. Adultery was an impossible crime with the Negro. His conjugal bonds were only *pro tem*. Christian ministers met in solemn conclave, and decided that the seventh commandment had no relation to, and was not binding on him. Thus he was placed, by Christian ministers of the Gospel, on the same lines as a dog or cat. His children, too, were not his own. They were wholly his master's property, who defended his right to retain them by express Scripture language.

In Dickens' "Household Words" the horrible nature of Christian slavery is thus vividly placed before us:—

"Indeed, one of the most horrible features in this most horrible traffic is the fact that fathers sell their children, and brothers their brothers, without thought or care; that fathers and brothers do worse than sell to another master their daughters and sisters; that all natural duties are violated, and all natural boundaries overpassed. In no other country, and under no other condition of slavery, have such things been done before. . . . Slave-owners would as soon think of preserving conjugal fidelity among their sheep and horses as among their slaves. The farmer who sells his calf, and the planter who sells the suckling from the mother's breast, act with exactly the same feeling, and from the same motive. . . . This has never been in any age of the world's history before. Judaism, the Greek and Roman times, Moham-medanism, all recognised the rights of nature in their slaves. Christianity is the only faith whose professors have violated and



destroyed these rights; yet Christianity is the only faith (?) whose essential element has been human equality" (vol. xiv., p. 137).

Such, then, was Christian slavery as pictured by Christian pens! Such was the wonderfully beneficial effect of the so-called Christian teaching of "love to all"! Such was the result of the doctrine of "universal brotherhood" so constantly prated of as going to reform and remodel the whole civilised world! After centuries of uninterrupted sway, the Christian religion left the Negro worse than it found him—denuded of every right which distinguishes man from the beast—equal to his white Christian "brother" only on the gallows. That some few Christians opposed the horrible system we know. Honor be to such whatever their creed. But their very opposition was in spite of, and dead against, the book from which their fellow-Christians drew their authority to hold their fellow-men in bondage. And their marked isolated position in this good work only too clearly involved the remainder of the Christian world in universal condemnation.

J. E. GARNER.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE "FREETHINKER" IN IRELAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is not often that you have a communication from Ireland, therefore I hope you will the more readily find space for this one. *United Ireland*, the organ of the Land League, devotes considerable space this week to a criticism of the *Freethinker*. The leaderette in the Land League organ apologises "for polluting our pages with the most horrid blasphemy" from your journal. Not only does it do this, but, in language strongly resembling the sanctified mumbling of a querulous old crone at a chapel gate on a Sunday morning, it declares that in your columns "there are stories reeking with filthy indecency as well as blasphemy." Of course, it is quite natural that the sight of the *Freethinker* in Ireland should strike terror to the priesthood; and that *United Ireland*, which, while professedly Radical, is largely susceptible to clerical influence, should be made the medium of embittering the populace against a journal which boldly advocates independent thought—a thing hated, detested and abhorred by the priests. Viewed from an independent standpoint, the great majority of the Irish population—and I am an Irishman myself—are sadly servile and pitifully abject to the clerics of the country; and until they, as well as landlords, are banished from the country, peace and a high-class morality will not reign. Of the two evils the priesthood is the greater, for whilst landlordism keeps the people in a somewhat degraded position, the priests hold them in that worst of all states—mental bondage. The priests made a great show on behalf of the peasantry during the Land League agitation, and why? They knew that a reduction of the landlords' rentals would increase their own fees—that the Irishman who gave a shilling before would be able to give more; thereby they, who denounced in such grandiloquent terms "Mammon and the flesh-pots of Egypt," would in practice be enabled to enjoy them the more. This scheme, it will be admitted, was possessed of a fair portion of cunning. If *United Ireland* devoted some attention to the public morality of the Irish priesthood, it would be well, and undoubtedly there is a wide field for its labors. Perhaps you are aware that, some time ago, the priests of the dioceses of Cashel and Emly, presided over by Archbishop Croke, preached that "the murdering of the rich was not as deserving of commiseration as the murdering of the poor, and that the protection of dumb and defenceless animals was a higher virtue than the protection of human life." This atrocious doctrine was preached by men who profess to believe in the injunction, "Thou shalt not kill." How their acts belie their profession! I regret polluting the pages of a Freethought journal with such "filthy indecency." Towards such abominable priestly morals the Land League organ was silent. What is wanted in Ireland is independent journalism, which is the only suitable medium wherewith to destroy the power of the priests of all churches, to whom, despite their loud and frequently-iterated bellowing,

"The golden sheen of the mundane dross  
Is a magnet stronger than Calvary's cross."

Sincerely yours,  
ANTI-PRIEST.

10th June, 1882.

BIBLIANA.—Who was Saul? The son of Kish. He was at first breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, but being sent to Damascus to seek his father's asses, heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Saul, Saul, it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." He then went into Arabia, and was anointed king of Israel by Samuel. And the Spirit of God came upon him, and he went forth with Barnabas to consult the witch at Endor and make war against the Philistines. He withstood Peter to his face because he was to be blamed, whereupon David sought to kill him. He was afterwards known as Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, and died at Gilboa by falling on his armor-bearer's sword.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

### SOME MODERN SAINTS.

I've known some brilliant saints who spent  
Their lives absorbed in one intent,  
Salvation each of his own soul;  
The race they ran had just one goal,  
And just one modest little prize;  
A wicket-gate in Paradise,  
A sneaking in there through the wall  
To bliss eternal; that was all.  
Some of them thought this bliss would too  
Be spiced by the contrasting view  
Of hell beneath them, surging crammed  
With all the tortures of the damned.

James Thomson, "Vane's Story," p. 17.

THE BELIEF IN HELL.—Wherever the tremendous alternative of everlasting torments is believed in—believed in so that it becomes a motive determining the life—not only persecution, but every other form of severity and gloom, are the legitimate consequences.—*G. Eliot*, review of "Lecky," in *Fortnightly Review*.

SAMSON.—Samson is the Jewish Herakles, and his exploits are altogether as fabulous as those of his Hellenic counterpart; though it is not impossible that such a personage as Samson may have lived and may have led the people with some glory against their hereditary enemies.—*Viscount Amberley*, "An Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. ii., p. 251.

PRAYER.—If Christians wish to show the utility of prayer, let them produce patients cured by their science; and as "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," let such a specimen be given us as cannot fail to prove the power which the Testament says praying men have. Let water freeze at 70°, instead of 32°, and vapor arise at 40°, instead of 212°; let prayer restore to life a dead man, or let a bullet stay in its course until a useful man has got out of danger.—*Robert Cooper*, "The Investigator," p. 28, 1857.

## PROFANE JOKES.

In a little north-country village chapel, where it is often difficult to get a congregation, the only member present on one special occasion was the old woman who cleaned the place and lighted the fire. The night was wet and stormy, and a pedlar, coming past, saw the cheerful light and ruddy glow from the stove. He stealthily entered and squatted by the stove, unobserved by the pious old lady, who, impatient at the absence of "the friends," determined to start the service by herself, and began to sing the hymn in Wesley's Collection, commencing:

"Come, O thou traveller unknown,  
Whom still I hold, but cannot see,  
My company is before me gone,  
And I am left alone with thee.  
With thee all night I mean to stay,  
And wrestle till the break of day."

The pedlar jumped up in astonishment, saying, "If that was her game his name was 'Walker,'" and he vanished in the storm.

"PRAY don't attempt to darn your cobwebs," was old Grundy Slade's advice to a minister of strong imagination and weak memory, who was laboriously trying to explain the Scriptures.

A CERTAIN doctor of divinity said every blade of grass was a sermon. The next day he was amusing himself by clipping his lawn, when old Grundy Slade said: "That's right, doctor; cut your sermons short."

A MINISTER having preached a very long sermon, as his custom was, some hours after asked old Grundy Slade his opinion of it. He replied that "It was very good, but it spoilt a dinner worth two of it."

### MR. SYMES'S ENGAGEMENTS.

June 18, Manchester; 25, Claremont Hall, London. July 2, Heckmondwike; 16, Huddersfield; 30, West Hartlepool. September 24, Hall of Science, London.—All applications to be sent to Mr. JOSEPH SYMES, 142, Hagley Road, Birmingham.

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