

# PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Vol. II.—No. 51.]

DECEMBER 17, 1882.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—L.]



## THE PLAGUE OF LICE.

*All the dust of the land became lice, throughout all the land of Egypt. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God.—EXODUS viii., 17, 18.*

## ALL OR NOTHING.

Mr. C. KEGAN PAUL, the well-known publisher, wrote a paper for the *Nineteenth Century* on "Faith and Unfaith." He urged, or rather suggested, that there is no halting-place between Rome and Rationalism; that one incredible mystery is no harder to accept than fifty; that religion is a matter of faith, not of reason; that Christianity and Catholicism are really the same thing; and that if we once break away from the dogmatic authority of the great Church, we necessarily go on criticising article after article of our creed, until nothing of it is left, and we come to face the Unknowable in the spirit of Agnosticism.

Mr. Paul has been replied to by Mr. F. R. Wynne, a gentleman unknown to fame, and, judging from his article, likely to remain so. Mr. Knowles has, however, for some reason given this gentleman's preachy paragraphs a place in the *Nineteenth Century*, and we are therefore minded to review what he has to say on the subject. Mr. Wynne asks the question, "Must it be All or Nothing?" and answers it in the negative. He contends that Catholicism may be rejected, and even some Protestant doctrines judiciously

dropped, without any real damage to Christianity. His arguments are not very original, nor are they powerfully put, but such as they are we propose to examine them.

We begin our criticism by remarking that Mr. Wynne keeps out of sight the important fact that Protestantism is derived from Catholicism. As Michelet said, Catholicism is the ocean, and Protestantism only an estuary or a sea. If you charge the Romish Church with false doctrine and fraudulent practice, you vitiate your own faith; for all the witnesses you cite in support of your own supernatural creed belonged to that mistaken and misguided body. Further, it is undoubted that the Church determined our Canon of Scripture, by arbitrarily selecting a few documents from a heap of others, all of which were at one time accepted as inspired. If you deny that the Church was divinely guided in making that choice, you have properly no Canon of Scripture at all. If, on the other hand, you allow that the Church was divinely guided then, how can you show that it has ever ceased to hold "the living voice of God"? The Protestant polemist tries to destroy the tree of which he occupies a branch. Or, to revert to Michelet's image, we may say that if the Catholic ocean is drained out, the Protestant sea will be left nothing but a dirty mud-bank.

[No. 71.]



Mr. Wynne's whole case is summed up in the following paragraph:—

"Now a large number of considerations of various kinds certainly tend to make us believe that Jesus of Nazareth lived a life of superhuman goodness, wisdom, and power, and then rose to life after death. These considerations have their force just the same whether we accept or reject certain theories as to the constitution of the Christian Church and the nature of the Christian Sacraments. The line of proof which convinces us of the divine mission of the Savior is quite independent of the line of argument relied on to establish sacerdotal and ecclesiastical theories. A brief retrospect into the origins of Christianity will show how the truth of the former is not in any degree involved in the truth or falsehood of the latter."

Very well; let us follow Mr. Wynne in his "brief retrospect," and see whether he does not behold exactly what suits his case, without the least regard to all that conflicts with it.

He rapidly glances, in half-a-dozen lines, across the whole period between our age and the time of Justin Martyr. Now this is either very stupid or very clever; for it passes over the entire question of the Canon of Scripture, which is vital to Catholic and Protestant alike. Mr. Wynne wants to start with a Bible already made. But that will not do. It is, as the Americans say, a little "too thin."

Mr. Wynne takes us back in one flight to "the middle of the second century, when Justin Martyr was pouring forth his rich and well authenticated contributions to Christian literature." Now this is an excellent joke. Justin Martyr's writings are "rich" in another sense than Mr. Wynne's. They abound with the most puerile rubbish, and show him to have been, as Jortin says, of "a warm and credulous temper." Even the grave and cautious Mosheim admits that "much of what he relates is wholly undeserving of credit." But the most unpleasant fact of all (for Mr. Wynne) is that Justin Martyr knows absolutely nothing of either of our four gospels. So much for Justin Martyr.

"Cautiously and carefully," says Mr. Wynne, "we look back further, into the few precious literary remains that bridge over the previous century;" and he speaks of the "time stained pages" of these records, as though we had some manuscripts actually existing of that date. Later on, he refers to writings "of His (Christ's) immediate friends and followers." What are these? If they exist at all, they are to be found in the "apocryphal" New Testament, and in the wild nightmare of Saint John. Saint Paul, one of whose "authentic" epistles refers to the risen Christ, was an enemy and a persecutor; and he was converted to Christianity not by studying its evidences but by a miracle or a sunstroke. After that he spoke of Christ having appeared to him, exactly as he spoke of Christ having appeared to the disciples, without seeing any difference between the two visions. Yet Paul was probably the most clear-headed man in the Christian Church at that time; and if he believed in the resurrection on such evidence, of what real value is the belief of the others? That they were ready to die for it proves nothing as to its truth. Whoever thought, when Huxley and Owen were disputing about the monkey's brain, that the question might be settled by asking which of them was ready to die for his particular view? The idea is simply absurd.

When Mr. Wynne, conveniently forgetting that he has got no gospels yet, states that the primitive Christians pressed on men "moral and spiritual teaching which the highest culture of civilisation allows to be unsurpassable in beauty," he is taking an unwarrantable license. Many of the highest minds of this century, from Shelley to Mill, have regarded the ethics of Christianity as defective. It must also be noted that the very earliest Christian Fathers present the moral and spiritual doctrines of their faith in an extremely crude form. A great many of its finer teachings were added by subsequent converts, familiar with Platonic and Oriental ideas. Primitive Christianity was only a form of Judaism, narrow, exclusive and intolerant; and it was widened by those very Gentiles unto whom Jesus, by his own avowal, was not sent, and for whom he certainly had no message.

Coupled with this "superhuman" morality, which was not true where it was new nor new where it was true, Mr. Wynne asserts that the early Christians had a superhuman "history of outward events." And he naively adds—"It was a supernatural story, indeed, but they believed it." Why this *but*? Surely Mr. Wynne does not mean that it was difficult for a supernatural story to gain credence in that age, or that the Jews were a very sceptical people. As a

matter of fact, no people were ever *more* superstitious than the Jews. They were not at all inclined to disbelieve the wildest prodigies. Yet, curiously enough, Jesus could never convince them of his mission. Although they believed in multitudes of miracles that never happened, they would not believe in the miracles that were wrought before their eyes. What a strange people! As Diderot said, the real difficulty is not so much the resurrection of Christ as the incredulity of the Jews. No wonder the Lord always had so much trouble with them.

Mr. Wynne vaguely refers to "the many scattered lines of evidence from heathen literature at the time," but he does not specify one. The truth is, there are none. One of the most damning facts against Christianity, is the utter silence of all contemporary writers as to the marvels which accompanied the life and death of Jesus. If the Devil had bribed them all, they could not have been more reticent.

David Hume knew what he was saying when he affirmed that

"There is not to be found in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned goodness, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time attesting facts, performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance of the testimony of the men."

"These," says Huxley, "are grave assertions, but they are least likely to be challenged by those who have made it their business to weigh evidence, and to give their decision under a due sense of the moral responsibility they incur in so doing."

It must by this time be pretty evident that it is a hopeless task to justify Christianity on grounds of reason and evidence. Mr. Wynne, however, after his "brief retrospect," cries out "Thank God, whatever else we may doubt, as long as we believe in the authenticity of the gospel history, we have the great essentials for a life of faith and heavenly hope." He is shouting before he is out of the wood. Nothing is now clearer to the historical student than that modern criticism has knocked the supernatural evidences of Christianity into a cocked hat. There is only one way of still believing them, and that is by relying in a spirit of faith on the authority of the Catholic Church.

Mr. Wynne, however, is quite right when he urges that what all the Christian sects have in common at present is "a tendency to dwell chiefly on the great fundamental truths of religion and morality." But this at bottom only means that they are anxious to sacrifice all those portions of their creed which are flagrantly at variance with science, history, and common sense. A very amiable desire no doubt, but it cannot be carried into effect. How can you throw overboard any part of a divine cargo from a divine ship? Every box and bale carries the same label, and if you sacrifice some the sanctity flies from all. It is literally All or Nothing. Let those who wish to remain Christian take refuge in the fortress of Rome. They will find safety there for awhile. But only for a while. For when Science and Freethought have demolished all the Protestant detachments, and occupied all the open country, they will besiege the great Catholic citadel. Then will come the crowning fight in the long war between Reason and Faith. It may be fierce and bloody, but it will decide the destiny of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.

### [SECOND SERIES.]

#### III.

#### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

6. *Thou shalt not kill.*—This is one of the most outrageous jokes the Bible contains. God is always killing. He drowned the world; destroyed the first born in Egypt; drowned the army of Pharaoh; and will burn up the world as the last act in its drama. The Israelites were everlastingly killing. Christians have always followed in their wake. Millions upon millions have they slain to exhibit their piety. They go to war, and their God goes with them. He does all the fighting. Without him the powder would not burn, the bullets would not fly, the bayonets would not pierce, the

swords would not cut. When they return they give him all the praise; and the parsons delight in the contemplation of his gory work. They are never so proud of their God as when he bedaubs himself with war-paint, and wades and strides through the blood of his enemies. Not kill? Why God commanded Moses to kill the Sabbath-breaker, the blasphemer, the worshipper of the golden calf, the nations of Canaan, and imposed upon Saul the duty of murdering the Amalekites, "infant and suckling" included; and because Saul showed a small modicum of mercy, God and Samuel rejected him, and never rested till they got him out of the way. God killed his only Begotten Son, after trying to induce Abraham to do the same.

*Thou shalt not kill.*—This command never issued from the mouth of the Jewish God—unless he forbade people to kill, as aristocrats forbid the killing of game, reserving all the "sport" to himself! The prohibition is good as far as it goes. But the Bible never tells us how far it holds. Is all killing forbidden? If so, it condemns most of the Bible and most of the policy of the God-ruler. It condemns the practices of the Jewish priests, whose chief work was murdering and burning animals. It condemns the sacrifice of Jesus, and the murder of Ananias and his wife; it condemns war. Oh horror! what would the gory Archbishop of York say to that? Just fancy his never again having a chance to praise and blame his God for killing a few foreigners! The man would die at the bare thought of it!

*Thou shalt not kill.*—Hear this, ye priests and persecutors! Attend to this, you pretended Liberal ministers, who wantonly made war upon Egypt for some vile ends of your own! That war stands written against you, and vengeance will follow; not from God, but from enlightened and humane men, who protest against bloodshed, except when necessity demands it, as it rarely or never does. However, commands go for nothing. To put an end to the killing propensities of kings, queens, and governments, poor people must be educated to be their own masters; they must positively refuse to be the hired assassins of any man. When men have renounced Godism and royalty, and have learnt to regard governments as servants rather than rulers, then war will cease.

7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*—Very good—up to a certain point no doubt. But perfectly useless. Unless marriages are contracted sensibly, and honesty and freedom rule domestic life, all the commands in the world will not render marital life pure. Besides, what constitutes adultery, according to the Bible? The only declaration the book propounds upon the subject is that of Jesus, who declares the very desire, etc., to be adultery. It seems impossible for a man to commit this crime, if the *dictum* of Jesus be laid aside as too stupid for consideration. The man may take as many women to live with him as he pleases, according to the Bible, unless he happens to be a bishop or deacon. Practically, Bible teaching upon this subject amounts just to this: The woman must be true to her husband; the man may do as he pleases, short of taking other men's wives. So far is a man at liberty that God gave David the wives of Saul; and then gave David's concubines to his very son Absalom! That was in the days when God ruled in Israel; when infidels, heretics, and Atheists were unknown. Glorious times were those! God did according to his own will then, in heaven above and in the earth beneath; and good old David was just like him. One wonders if the Holy Ghost remembered this prohibition when he paid his addresses to Mary.

8. *Thou shalt not steal.*—Hear this, ye fanatics, who stole the child from its Atheist mother; who rob Mr. Bradlaugh of his seat and Northampton of its just measure of representation in Parliament! I would appeal to you, too, New-degates, but I know you are beyond the reach of truth and honor. You can only go blindly blundering on, full of zeal and fury, to the grave which will soon hide you.

*Thou shalt not steal.*—Hear this, ye who have robbed poor Englishmen of their land, and are now fleecing them every year by taxation for the purpose of supporting in worse than idleness a royal family, an army and navy, besides an awfully expensive system of gospel and law. Governments, churches, law courts, royalty, live on nothing else than plunder; and will continue it till the people wake to vengeance.

*Thou shalt not steal.*—No. You can borrow and never return, as the God-instructed Israelites did of the Egyptians; or as Jesus did the donkey—no record is given of his sending it back to its owner. You must not steal. It is far more respectable to get money, as Booth and the clergy do,

by promising your dupes a reward in Utopia. Don't ask it for yourselves, mind! Ask them to *lend* it to the Lord. Don't even say that he commissioned you to solicit subscriptions for him; but tell them the Lord won't remain in anybody's debt, not he; and that they are sure to get a hundred-fold more even here; and life everlasting in—well, just say hereafter. It sounds better, and is delightfully indefinite. A bill like that is never due, you see; so no one can ever charge either you or the Lord with dishonesty, for it is to be paid back hereafter.

Now, I must say that a man who will steal when such respectable channels of plunder are open to him, must be a scoundrel of the low and vulgar type. Rascality atones for all its sins by respectability and piety.

9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.* I know no defender of the faith, no Christian or semi-Christian newspaper, which is not habitually guilty of this crime. The lies told of Mr. Bradlaugh, in Parliament and out, during the past two years, would fill a large volume. And they are all *pious* lies. The backbiter is a coward as well as a liar.

10. *Thou shalt not covet.* Very good, if you do not push it too far.

Such is this boasted code. If Jews and Christians were compelled to keep it rigidly how they would groan and complain! Instead of boasting they would very soon curse it.

1. Now the first half of this Decalogue is useless—it is religious, and therefore superstitious. We have nothing to do with a God. He is not one of our nation; pays no taxes; has no duties. He does not belong to our race, even, and can have no right to command.

2. The code imposes no duty upon husband or father, as such; none upon priest and ruler. It is only for subordinates; only for slaves, not free people. It is narrow; no hint is given as to how foreigners are to be treated. By this code you are under no obligation either to feed, clothe, or educate your children.

Still, meagre as it is, there is not a rule of the ten but what Christians habitually violate.

To be moral, children must be apprenticed to morality, and must be trained in all its branches, just as in other branches of education or industry.

J. SYMES.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Canterbury Town Council have resolved by a majority of twelve to four not to open the Free Library on Sunday afternoons. What else could be expected in a cathedral town? Wherever parsons crowd together, and enjoy wealth and power, there is sure to be more ignorance and more hatred of knowledge than elsewhere; and there is also sure to be plenty of drunkenness, prostitution, and political corruption.

THE Salvation Army is nearly played out at Chichester where, a short time ago, the Skating Rink was acquired by Booth at a cost of £3,000. It is reported that the female "captain" and the male "lieutenant" are kept without their salaries, and obliged to appeal for bread and butter. Amen.

THE Christian Evidence Society has issued a tract on Tennyson's "Promise of May," in which it laments the vast spread of Atheism, and urges that it alone has the true secret of how to check the disease. The tract is simply a flash advertisement of the C. E. S.'s unsaleable stock of publications. Somehow they won't go off. We have seen a few of them knocking about on bookstalls for weeks, and nobody would buy them although they were marked at waste-paper price. 'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity, 'tis 'tis true.

THE *Catholic Times* alludes to the *Freethinker* as a blasphemous paper which shows "no talent, no humor, no education." We are prepared to give a handsome prize to anybody who can succeed in being duller than the *Catholic Times*.

THE *C. T.* complains that there are not more than a few hundred Atheists in France, but they have imposed their will on the millions. This is in a country of universal suffrage! What a dreadful lot of sheep the Christians must be! Their nature seems changing. They used of show more of the tiger than of the lamb.

A GOOD story is told by the late Sir Archibald Alison in his autobiography just published. It seems that on his return from India, that gallant old veteran, Sir Patrick Grant, went to see a woman, then old and infirm, who had tended him in infancy. "Well, Mary," said Sir Patrick, "how many children have you had?" "Troth, sir, I have borne my gude man *thirteen*." "Thirteen! How in the world did you

contrive to bring up so many?" "Oh, sir, ye see the Lord was rael merciful, for aye as *He sent one, He took awa' the tither*: so we jist hirpilt through."

THIS old dame's view of the subject is eminently Christian. Pagan nations used to adopt pretty rough methods of keeping down the population, but they at any rate had the sense to see that there was a population question. Christianity, however, resolutely shuts its eyes to it, and says "Go on breeding as fast as you can, and leave the result with God." Yet, as a matter of fact, God does not apparently interfere; so, as the boy told the parson, the loaves go one way and the mouths another.

THE Halifax Secularists have held a public meeting to protest against the action of the local magistrates, who have stopped the Sunday use of the Gaiety Theatre for lectures and discussions. It is obviously a blow aimed at Freethought, for no other party was using the theatre for such purposes. These magistrates, "dressed in a little brief authority," may continue to play their fantastic tricks a little longer, but they will by-and-bye learn that the people are sick of their petty tyranny. Meanwhile, we hope the Halifax Secularists will not be defeated, but push on with their work in every possible way.

TWO papers on "The Fallacy of Materialism" appear in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*. The first, by G. J. Romanes, is well worth the serious attention of Materialists. The second is by the Lord Bishop of Carlisle, and is at once dull and pretentious. Mr. Romanes comes to the somewhat unsatisfactory result that the relation between subject and object is inexplicable. The Bishop, however, goes much farther. He claims to prove that mind is before matter, and that this proposition "affords the basis of a theology and altogether forbids Atheism." If the universe cannot be entirely explained by matter, Dr. Harvey doubtless thinks that a sufficient reason why bishops should take ten thousand a year. Atheists has so often been left without excuse by these gentry that we wonder they should still have to complain of the existence of such irrational wretches.

THROUGH the defalcations of its treasurer, a serious mishap has overtaken the Friendly Society of Dissenting Ministers in Scotland, which consists largely of members of the United Presbyterian body. The party in question, who has absconded, is stated to be the brother of the minister in Bristo Street. Had such a disaster happened in connexion with a Secular fund we should never hear the last of it.

THE Irish Church is always complaining of its spoliation and consequent poverty, yet there are some livings there which cannot get occupants. The *Ecclesiastical Gazette* notes that the parish of Kilshanning, County Cork, worth £300 per annum, has been refused by nine clergymen of the diocese in succession.

THE leaders of the Scottish Establishment are seeing that something must be done if they are not to follow in the wake of the Irish Church, and have accordingly started a "National Church Society of Scotland," the object of which will be to defend the Establishment and to promote the election to Parliament of members favorable to its maintenance. The more the question is stirred the better it will be for the enemies of the Church.

"ALL NIGHT PRAYER" is becoming more popular than ever among the Wesleyans and other religious bodies, who find they must emulate the Salvationists in this respect if they are to keep up their numbers. We know no more efficacious means, unless it be "home visitation."

A GOOD woman died recently at Harlow, who wished to be buried in the parish churchyard by her minister, the Rev. F. Edwards, who is a Baptist. The vicar seemed resolved to thwart her wishes, and, doubtless having an unction from on high whereby he knows all things, informed her daughter that "if her mother could return with the knowledge that she had gained by her death she would desire to be buried by the vicar." The daughter was not satisfied by the views of the other world upon the burial question, and insisted upon her right to open her father's grave. The vicar, however, fastened up the proper entrance gate, which some of the justly indignant people removed from its hinges, and the funeral was performed in spite of this worthy representative of the religion of love.

IT is stated that the congregation of Folkestone parish church have been offering up prayers for the repose of the soul of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. Surely this is a mistake, for after all his praises in the papers we conclude that the deceased primate is tightly fixed on a front seat in heaven.

THE *Church Review*, which, unlike most of the religious

press, does not go in black, is highly offended at the effusive eulogies upon the deceased Primate. It asks what are the qualities for which he was extolled. It says "'He was Broad in his sympathies.' But we are not told that *broad* is the way that leadeth to the Christian's final bliss. 'He was unbounded in his tolerance.' His tolerance, though it embraced the 'damnable heresies' of a Colenso, did not extend to the poor persecuted 'Ritualists'—at least till an admission of it could no longer be withheld."

THIS organ of the poor persecuted Ritualists is absolutely spiteful with the late Archbishop. It says "As an ecclesiastic with a policy, we are bound to say that Dr. Tait was a very conspicuous failure, and that he exhibited so extraordinary a want of sagacity, that lessons were thrown away upon him." The *Times* having said he led the opposition to Tractarianism, it says "This reads like saying that Julian led the opposition to Christianity." "The conception of the great Church of God affected his emotions far less than the parochial vestry did Mr. Bumble. It winds up with saying: 'The next age may possibly witness an outburst of infidelity, but at all events Taitism and Erastianism are to all real intents dead and buried. Yet, peace to the good man who has left us, and with whose soul we can now feel a fuller and richer communion.'" This last sentence, coming like a little bit of jam after a bitter pill, has a touch of the true Pharisaic spirit of "the poor persecuted Ritualists."

A CONTEMPORARY complains that we treat the most solemn matters with ridicule. We complain that it treats the most ridiculous matters with solemnity.

WE may perhaps be permitted to doubt if the little arrangement by which the late Archbishop managed to induce the Rev. Mr. Mackonochie to exchange pulpits with the Rev. Mr. Suckling, of St. Peter's, London Dock, will bring that peace to the Church which was the presumed object. Whoever is appointed to the Primacy will find that neither the High Church will cease its Romeward tendency nor submit to civil courts, and the Low Church will never be content to see their whole position ousted from them. Any observer of the times may see that a movement in the direction of disestablishment is going on in the Establishment itself.

THE Rev. T. Randall Davidson, son-in-law and chaplain to the late Primate, replies to the Curate's Alliance on the question of Simony. He mentions that there are clergymen who live by offering themselves as holders of vacant benefices until the patrons have had opportunity of disposing of the presentations, undertaking to resign them when they are sold. Others trade in advowsons, buying them when they are in the markets and putting money in their pockets by selling the next presentations as they become vacant. This however is not Simony, but only sharp practice.

THE *Methodist Recorder* contains a sermon on Atheism by the Rev. W. J. Marris, which is one of the silliest effusions of spiteful ignorance we ever had the misfortune to peruse. In the opening paragraph he asserts that the "fool" who says "There is no God" is a "sapless, withered apostate." Perhaps so; but as Atheists do not say there is no God, the finely turned compliment does not apply to them. Mr. Marris informs the world that the great cause of Atheism is moral depravity. This is exceedingly modest when it is remembered that Christians fill our gaols and commit all the thefts, burglaries and murders reported in the newspapers. As for the stories Mr. Marris repeats about infidel death-beds, we simply affirm them to be a tissue of lies from beginning to end. No such rubbish can be discovered in any standard or reputable biographies of the Freethinkers whom this Methodist slanderer does his paltry little best to defame.

MR. SPURGEON continues his canting letters to his congregation from Mentone. He is staying there on account of the gout, and he pretends that he is only meditating the Lord's goodness on the quiet. Why doesn't he try the Bethshan Hospital, where all diseases are cured with prayer? Spurgeon winks.

THE Bishop of Bath and Wells regrets that the Lord is no longer the light of our universities; and he laments the fact that whereas, fifty-four years ago, sixteen out of the eighteen fellows of Oriel College, Oxford, were men in holy orders, there is now not a single parson amongst them. Thank the Lord.

A CORRESPONDENT has favored us with a curious begging circular from the Christian Evidence Society, which is no doubt intended to make up for the loss of £100 a year consequent on the death of the Earl of Harrowby. The circular solicits "general liberality," not small "doles," to counteract the alarming spread of infidelity. But, curiously enough, a large tract which accompanies it claims that the C. E. S. has already pretty nearly settled the hash of half the infidel societies in London. Then, as the gentleman says in Hood's "Black Job"—Why, why, why, why, why more money?

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, Dec. 17th), in the Hall of Science, Grimsby.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

December 19th, Walworth; 24th, Milton Hall, London; 31st, Sheffield.

January 7th (1883), Claremont Hall, London; 14th, Manchester; 21st, Hall of Science, London; 28th, Claremont Hall, London.

February 4th, Leeds; 11th, York; 18th, Plymouth.

March 18th and 25th, Hall of Science, London.

## CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Publisher, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Whittiwon, Irish Lad, C. C. B., Escudrinador, J. B.

C. BENTLEY.—Mr. Dimbleby is hardly worth powder and shot. We have no doubt he could easily demolish Mrs. Besant; so can lots of spouters—behind her back.

ADMIRER.—We are pleased to know that our Christmas Number gives so much satisfaction, and we have no doubt you will find *Progress* answer your expectations.

J. STEDMAN.—Thanks.

J. BURNS AND W. MCG.—Not having inserted Mr. Gaskell's last we cannot give room to your side of the question, which must now drop. Thanks for jokes.

R. MÜLLER.—The question of the testimony for the four Gospels is dealt with in Mr. Wheeler's "Frauds and Follies of the Fathers," and also jocularly in his "Trial for Blasphemy" in our Christmas Number.

G. MACAULEY.—All information will be found in "Blasphemy no Crime."

C. A. WELLER.—Carlyle's Essay on Diderot is in the fifth volume of his "Miscellaneous Essays," people's edition.

J. M. WHEELER will give double price for any numbers of the *Secularist* for September, October, and November 1876, or will purchase the volume. Address, care of Editor.

T. T.—Thanks. Kindly forward.

J. F. S.—"Revelations of Reason" received with thanks.

H. FARRANCE.—All communications for notice in the next *Freethinker* should reach us at the latest on the Tuesday morning before date.

ARUNDEL.—Thanks for the papers. We have already published several extracts from the "Martyrdom of Man" in our "Freethought Gleanings." The author, Mr. Winwood Reade, has been dead some years.

R. GARBATT.—All orders for publications should be sent direct to our publisher, and not to Mr. Foote. We are obliged for the reference to the American prosecution.

W. SHAW.—See "Acid Drops."

J. WEBSTER (India).—We thank you for the cuttings, and shall always be glad to hear from you.

MRS. WHATCOTT.—Petition received with many thanks.

J. SANDERS.—We are always glad to receive good jokes. Thanks for your budget.

S. FRANKS.—We don't know who is to be the new Archbishop, and we don't care. All that concerns us is that the lucky person, whoever he is, will get £15,000 a year out of the nation's purse. There's the rub. In our opinion Archbishops are of less value than crossing-sweepers.

J. BRUMAGE.—See "Sugar Plums."

INQUIRE.—Our trial will probably commence next month, and we are preparing our defence. How it will end is more than we can say; but this is sure, that whatever the result to us, the *Freethinker* will go on as before. That is arranged for in any case.

H. IRVING.—You may be sure we shall defeat Tyler if we can.

W. SMITH.—Received. Thanks for your good wishes.

ALICIA.—Our readers cannot assist us better than by sending us newspapers and cuttings.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Rev. Dr. McCann, lecturing at Reading on "Modern Scepticism," told his audience that "they would be surprised to know what a vast amount of literature the Secularists issued, and how very slight was the literature that was issued to keep the young man sound in the faith." That is exactly what we have said all along, and we are glad to see our view corroborated by so high an authority as Dr. McCann.

We have just issued another well-printed little work from our publishing-office—Mr. J. M. Wheeler's "Frauds and Follies of the Fathers." It deals with a subject of immense importance, and throws a flood of light on the mental and moral character of the ancient gentlemen who acted as the first sponsors for the Christian creed. Mr. Wheeler is especially

conversant with the whole period, and we recommend our readers to procure a copy of his little treatise. We defy any Christian to read it without feeling that the foundations of his faith are mostly rubbish.—G. W. F.

IN regard to Mr. Darwin's religious belief, Dr. Robert Lewins, writing to the *Journal of Science*, says: "Before concluding, I may, without violation of any confidence, mention that both *viva voce* and in writing, Mr. Darwin was much less reticent to myself than in his letter to Jena. For, in answer to the direct question I felt myself justified, some years since, in addressing to that immortal expert in biology as to the bearing of his researches on the existence of an *anima* or soul in man, he distinctly stated that, in his opinion, a vital or 'spiritual' principle, apart from inherent somatic energy, had no more *locus standi* in the human than in the other races of the animal kingdom—a conclusion that seems a mere corollary of, or indeed a position tantamount with, his essential doctrine of human and bestial identity of nature and genesis."

WE are pleased to hear that Mr. A. B. Moss's propagandist pamphlets are having a large sale. The one on "Bible Horrors; or, True Blasphemy," is very appropriate just now. "Fictitious Gods," "The Secular Faith," and "Health, Wealth, and Happiness," are also well worth reading.

THE Freethinkers of Mansfield were denied the use of one of the Board Schools for a lecture by Mr. Symes. They have, however, returned to the charge, and this time with success. There was a tie on the Board, and the chairman gave his casting vote in favor of fair play. Of course the Rev. F. Broadhurst opposed the right of the sceptics to attack his creed, but he was plainly told by Mr. Hayes that if the Christian hope in heaven could not be defended it should perish and go to the four winds. Mr. Symes will now deliver his lecture, and other lecturers will probably follow suit.

LOUIS BLANC's funeral on Tuesday last was attended with great ceremony, and every mark of the people's gratitude for a life spent in their service. The Freethinking Parisians are a century ahead of Christian Londoners in civil life. They don't crowd to see such tomfoolery as a Lord Mayor's show, but they will line the street to pay a last tribute of respect to a great and good man.

ANOTHER meeting will be held this afternoon at Mr. T. Shore's, 33 Newington Green Road, N., to hear a report as to the purchase of the premises for a Secular Club in the district, and to make final arrangements.

A CORRESPONDENT informs us that our Christmas Number was in great demand at a public newsroom near Ludgate Hill. The first evening it was there it was the centre of an eager group. "The New Life of Christ," says our correspondent, "afforded them unbounded mirth."

WE are very glad to see that the London workmen's clubs have been pitching into Mr. Broadhurst for his vote and speech in Parliament on the Sunday question. Perhaps they had better leave him alone now. There can be little doubt that he will speak and vote straight enough next time.

THE Portsmouth *Evening Star* has a remarkably fair and outspoken article on Dr. Aveling's election for Westminster to the London School Board. It "ventures to predict" that he will amply repay the confidence of his electors. So do we.

THE Derby Branch of the National Secular Society has taken a new room at 152 Sidales Road, and we hope it will receive the support of all Freethinkers in the district. There is a shop in front, which one of the members has taken for the sale of Freethought literature.

## A NEGRO SERMON.

MY DEAR BROTHER AND SISTERS,—My tex' will be from the second chapter of Genesis an' de seventh verse—"an' de Lord made man." Now, in de fust place, I will tole you how de Lord made man. He took a lump ob clay an' he made it into de shape ob a man, an' den he sot in de sun to dry, an' when it was got dry he breeved de breef ob life inter it, an' dus he made man. Now wen de Lord had made dis man he took an' put him in de Garden ob Eden, an' interduces him to all de anamiles an' show him all de fruit trees, an' melon patches, an' so on, an' tells him dat he might eat all de fruit excep' de apples offen de tree in de middle ob de garden, cause dey was de Lord's winter apples an' he wanted dem for preserbing.

Well, Muster Adam he fink it mighty fine, an' he enjoys hisself all ober like a nigger wid a big water melon, till he eat so much fruit dat he hab pains in de internal part ob his belly, an' den he feels a bit lonesome, an' wants company; so de Lord 'e make Ebe. Now I jes tole you 'ow he make Ebe. When Adam had big belly-ache he took some lodnum, which made him go rite off to sleep; an' while he was asleep de Lord

gourges out one ob his ribs an' makes dat rib grow into de woman; an' den when Adam wakes up de Lord interduces Mr. Adam to dis Mrs. Ebe. an' den de Lord toles Ebe all about de winter apples, same as he tole Adam.

Well, one day de Lord goes out wisinging, an' den Mrs. Ebe thought she would hab a nap under de apple-tree in de orchad; but wen she gits dere she sees Mr. Debbil come along, an' he says "Good mornin' Mrs. Ebe." An' she say "Good mornin' Mr. Debbil; what a nice coat you hab got on"—because de Debbil got on his Sunday coat made out ob de skin ob some serpents he killed one day in de woods. Well den dey got talkin', an' de Debbil he say, "Why you no hab some ob de apples off dat tree?" An' Ebe say dat dey's de Lord's winter apples. But de Debbil he say, "I tole you dey is de bes' apples in de 'ole patch." So den Ebe she eat some, an' wen Adam he come she gub him some too.

Well, when de Lord he come home an' looks roun' de kitchen garden he misses his winter apples, so he finks an' finks an' den he sing out "Adam! yo Adam!" but Adam got 'fraid, so he lays low an' hides hisself. So den de Lord he sing out agin, "Adam, yo' dan tief, yo come out now." So he come out an' de Lord say, "Who stole my winter apples?" An' Adam he say, "Oh, Lor, I dunno', but I 'spects it was Ebe." And den de Lord he call out, "Ebe! yo' Ebe." And Ebe she lay low. So de Lord call again, "Ebe! yo' Ebe." And Ebe say, "Ay Lord." And den he say, "Who stole my winter apples?" And Ebe say, "I dunno'; Adam I 'spects." And den de Lord he git mad an' takes em boff an' frows dem ober de garden fence, an' tole dem to go an' work for deir libing.

An' now let me tell you dat if I sees any ob you stealing chunks off my wood pile dis winter, de very fust time I sees you in dis place of washup I will frow yo' out so dat you bump on ebry step.

### FREETHOUGHT FABLES.

#### III.

##### THE FOOLISH AND THE WISE.

A WOLF and a Dog began to quarrel for the body of a dead sheep. They fought till exhausted, and then agreed to divide the cause of the fight. At this juncture the other animals, who had been watching the combat, claimed a hearing in the treaty for the division of the sheep. "If you eat the heart," growled the Lion to the Dog, my stomach will never rest easy." "I must have the liver!" roared the Tiger. "Give me a leg, or you'll rue it" threatened the Bear. "And me another," said the Lynx. And so on. In the end, in addition to their wounds, the Dog and Wolf got for their share the tail only, and dared say nothing against it.

#### IV.

There was a man who, as he walked along, despised the things with which he was connected and which concerned him most, and continually gazed at the stars. He always looked up in day at the sky, in night at the distant suns.

One night, as he walked along, he suddenly ran against a lamp. Through looking so much at heavenly lights he forgot there were earthly ones.

#### V.

Some men look for diamonds in gold fields; others seek gold in diamond diggings.

#### VI.

Some men were looking at a small stone. All but one wore spectacles of colored glass. He had cast his aside. He and others had bought them from a seller named Superstition, yet he only had discovered the deception of the glasses. They examined the stone, and strange to say, each of them, when giving his opinion as to its color, said he did not look through the glasses although he wore them, when his very opinion proved he did. One man—he had red spectacles—swore the stone was red. Another believed it blue. The third termed it yellow. Another almost agreeing with him, called it orange. The next, a little more different, thought it green. The man without glasses said the stone was no color at all, that it was simply natural white. Then the others shouted him "Unbeliever!" and would have liked to have tortured him into their creeds.

Had he leaned to the opinion that it was any color it would not have been so bad; but to say it had none was the height of scepticism; and though each said the other was wrong in regard to the color, they all combined to crush him who knew it was colorless.

The spectacles are creeds.

WHITTWON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Just a line of testimony as to the telling effect of the *Freethinker* Christmas Number on a Christian:—

A cousin of mine, who, by the bye, fell into the fountain only a few weeks back, made a call at our house, Saturday evening last, just in time to hear the refrain of a cramping fit of laughter I was recovering from, caused by "The New Life of Christ" sketches. I offered him the lively organ, which to my astonishment, he readily accepted. The result I cannot with free justice describe:—Sketch No. 1 produced a smile; No. 2, increased ditto; No. 3, a titter; No. 4, the fun became furious; No. 5, a raising of hands to sides; No. 6, a scream; No. 7, a regular burster; No. 8 to 18 he was absolutely beyond control. On surviving he had the coolness to remark "It's really a shame, and they ought to be locked up for publishing such improper things." I replied, "Well, 'tis awfully cruel and too bad of you to make such an objection after enjoying the laugh." "Oh, well," he exclaimed, "who could help laughing?—they are so funny." I urged him to purchase the *Freethinker* weekly, but he refused on the ground of inconsistency on his part to support the Freethought cause. I eventually offered to forward a copy to him, to which he did not object; therefore the desired effect will be produced I hope—viz., of converting him from the dark vale of superstition to the light of Freethought. I may say, in reference to the Christmas Number, that I never enjoyed anything so much in all my life, and I only regret that Christmas-tide does not come oftener. Wishing you the compliments on the arrival of the seasons,—I am, etc.,

Manchester.

A YOUNG FREETHINKER.

### THE FIRST POLITICAL PLATFORM.

WHEREAS, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and am steering thee to the land of Canaan, where there is milk and honey, and every man shall have forty acres and a mule; and

Whereas, I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, and opposed to competition in the deity business, insisting upon a monopoly of admiration and worship; and

Whereas, I visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and thus get square with the whole family; and

Whereas, in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, including sin and sorrow, and loafed the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and made the saloons close up; therefore be it.

Resolved, that thou shalt have no other gods before me, inasmuch as I am the great and only original, and all others are base imitations.

Resolved, that Jehovah vieweth with alarm the constant encroachments of stone gods, wooden gods, mud gods, and little tin gods on wheels upon the prerogatives and perquisites of the big boss God, and therefore declareth that thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

Resolved, that thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for too much familiarity breedeth contempt, and the Lord will endeavor to make it sultry for him who waxeth too fresh.

Resolved, that the Sabbath-day shall be remembered and kept holy and devoted exclusively to the giving of taffy to Jehovah, who is a vain God and pointeth with pride to his record on the labor question, which lieth in the first chapter of Genesis. As the Lord made everything in a six-day's go-as-you-please race with nothing, thou shalt do no work on the seventh day.

Resolved, that the time-honored principles of eternal justice which were recognised by men before the Lord thy God was invented be reaffirmed and included in this platform for the sake of appearances and to give countenance to the preceding resolutions, as follows:

Resolved, that thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.

Resolved, that thou shalt not kill; provided, however, that the Lord may suspend this commandment when he deems it advisable to have Philistines, and people who disbelieve in him as the only original God, slaughtered for his eternal glory.

Resolved, that thou shalt not commit adultery [certainly reservations will be made in favor of prophets and holy persons.]

Resolved, that thou shalt not steal; but, for the sake of harmony, the Lord declareth that plundering the Amalekito is not stealing.

Resolved, that thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Resolved, that thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.

*Resolved*, that the foregoing platform and resolutions be lithographed and published by Secretary Moses under the title of "Ten Commandments."—American Paper [*Liberty*.]

ON Thursday last two of our friends, Mr. A. Pike and Mr. H. Pike, met their deaths in a terrible manner. Whilst working on the line, they were cut to pieces by a passing train, which a heavy snowstorm prevented them from seeing. They were the sons of Mr. A. Pike, an old Chartist and Freethinker, well known to London Radicals as being, with his sons, foremost in all the progressive movements. All were prominent members of the Hackney Workman's Club—for which Mr. Pike, senior, was the delegate to Mr. Bradlaugh's meeting last Wednesday—and had won for themselves the friendship and esteem of all who knew them.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

RELICS AT JERUSALEM.—Not far from here was a niche where they used to preserve a piece of the True Cross, but it is gone now. This piece of the cross was discovered in the sixteenth century. The Latin priests say it was stolen away long ago by priests of another sect. That seems like a hard statement to make, but we know very well that it was stolen, because we have seen it ourselves in several of the cathedrals of Italy and France. The priests tried to show us, through a small screen, a fragment of the genuine Pillar of Flagellation, to which Christ was bound when they scourged him. But we could not see it, because it was dark inside the screen. However, a baton is kept here, which the pilgrim thrusts through a hole in the screen, and then he no longer doubts that the true Pillar of Flagellation is in there. He cannot have any excuse to doubt it, for he can feel it with the stick. He can feel it as distinctly as he could feel anything.—*Mark Twain's*, "New Pilgrim's Progress."

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.—It can be shown that from the time of Constantine to the time when the rationalistic spirit wrested the blood-stained sword from the priestly hand, persecution was uniformly defended in long, learned, and elaborate treatises, by the best and greatest men the Church had produced, by sects that differed on almost all other points, by multitudes who proved in every conceivable manner the purity of their zeal. It can be shown too, that toleration began with the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, expanded in exact proportion to the growing latitudinarianism, and triumphed only when indifference to dogma had become a prevailing sentiment among legislators. It was only when the battle had been won—when the anti-dogmatic party, acting in opposition to the Church, had rendered persecution impossible—that the great body of theologians revised their arguments, and discovered that to punish men for their opinions was wholly at variance with their faith.—*W. F. H. Locky*, "History of European Morals," vol. i., p. 397; 1877.

JESUS.—An object of religious adoration must be a divinity, and thinking men have long since ceased to regard the founder of Christianity as such.—*D. P. Strauss*, "The Old Faith and the New," p. 54.

## PROFANE JOKES.

A MAN of tact always manages to get out of difficulty. The clerk of a parish, whose business was to read the "first lesson," came across the chapter in Daniel in which the names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego occur twelve times, and finding it extremely difficult to pronounce these names, he went through the chapter referring to them as "the aforesaid gentlemen."

It was somewhere in Glasgow, the land o' Kirks, that a man got a bit mixed on his Scripture, and said at a prayer meeting, "Brethren, when I consider the shortness of life I feel as if I might be taken away suddenly, like a thief in the night."

FRANKLY TOLD.—"Little girl, do you know whose house this is?" asked a solemn looking old man of a bright child seated on the church steps. "Yes, sir. It's God's, but he ain't in," she added as the old gentleman was about to walk up the steps, "and the agent's gone to Europe."

CHIEF POCOTELLO'S CONCLUSIONS.—Old Chief Pocotello, now at the Fort Hall agency, in answer to an inquiry relative to the true Christian character of a former Indian at that place, gave in very terse language the most accurate description of a hypocrite, that was ever given to the public: "Ugh! Too much God and no flour."

A CLERGYMAN preached on the subject, "Why was Lazarus a beggar?" We suppose because he didn't advertise.

WILSON, the comic singer, was very modest and unassuming in private life. When he presented himself at Peter's Gate, he said depreciatingly of himself, in answer to the inquiry who he was, "I'm only Jammie Wilson, the poor comic singer, and I suppose I'm nae good enough for such as ye have got inside." Oh, said

Peter, "you're the very fellow we want, we're infernally tired of psalms-singing; come in."

"ARE you alarmed at the approach of the King of Terrors?" said a clergyman to an expiring man. "No," he replied; "for six and thirty years I've lived with the Queen of Terrors, and the king can't be much worse."

A SUNDAY school teacher lately asked a boy what passage in the "Burial of Sir John Moore" he liked best. After a moment's reflection the lad replied: "Few and short were the prayers we said."

## TWO TEACHERS.

BUDDHA said: "A man once had grief because his lusts could not be appeased, and so he seated himself on some sharp knives, in order to free himself from the cause of his sin. Buddha addressed him and said: 'If you succeed in getting rid of the external cause, this is not to be compared to getting rid of the lustful inclination. The heart is the busy contriver of these lusts: compose the heart, and these evil thoughts will all be still. But if the wicked heart be not set at rest, what benefit will self-mutilation bring.'" Sutra of forty-two sections, section 30 (S. Beal's "Catena of Buddhist Scriptures," p. 200). See also "Texts from the Buddhist Canon," p. 40.

"Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."—MATTHEW xviii., 8.

"All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."—MATTHEW xix., 11, 12.

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Printed and Published by H. A. KEMP, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.