

written just two days before Sir George's sudden death, runs as follows:—"My dear Duke,—I am sorry to see you doing honor to Garibaldi. You gave him hospitality, but do you think he would have tolerated the existence of a duke? If he had the power he would have deprived you of your rank, and divided your property among the Radicals. He was a bitter atheist—as bad as Bradlaugh—a thorough Communist and Republican. When he commanded in Rome many good and unoffending priests were murdered with his sanction. He publicly defended political assassination. He derived great pecuniary profit from his political crimes—a large salary, and the payment of his own and his son's debts. His life was passed in conspiracy, violence, bloodshed, and blasphemy.—Yours, GEORGE BOWYER." This indictment is rather mixed. One point only requires to be noticed. It is said Garibaldi "publicly defended political assassination." If he did it was a grave fault, but we imagine it was more of a blunder than a crime. It would have been strange if the enthusiastic nature of Garibaldi had not led him to favor the "last resort" of the oppressed in the case, for instance, of the tyrant of Naples. Assassination is never justifiable, but the crimes of certain Italian rulers before 1859 made it a virtue in the eyes of millions of Italians. In a large sense it is true that "his life was passed in conspiracy, violence, bloodshed, and blasphemy,"—in the sense that each phase here given of his career contributes to the greatness of a very noble character. It may be said that Garibaldi *conspired* against tyrants; *violently* took possession of the Government of Naples, conveyed thither in an express train at the rate of forty miles an hour; *shed his blood* for the cause of the oppressed, and was rewarded with the never-dying gratitude of a nation; and *blasphemed* in denying the claims of superstition, priestcraft, and fraud. Who would desire a better or more enduring epitaph!

The clergy—stimulated doubtless by the advance of Freethought—are uniting to demand Bible instruction in the public schools. From the political point of view, it would be inexpedient to grant a request which would weaken the national character of the system, and cause sections of the community (minorities) to feel that the State was favoring the religion of the majority. Freethinkers, while sympathising with this view, have a decided objection to children receiving moral instruction from a book a large part of which is immoral in its tendency. The mythical part of religion, embodied in dogma, concerns them but little, being easily disposed of in argument—the best Bible scholars becoming not seldom the most advanced and accomplished Freethinkers. But when, for instance, a lustful, treacherous, and cruel character is held up for admiration as a successful man, one after "God's own heart," a lesson is imparted which, unless the child has gifts of reason to enable it to rise above the instruction, may impress the mind with the idea that an outward profession will sanctify a life of hypocrisy and badness. Believing all this, the duty of the Freethinker is clear, namely, to resist as far as his constitutional privileges will enable him to go, the introduction of a book of the kind into the public schools. And as this is the highest, it is the best ground that can be taken up. An expurgated Bible is sometimes advocated by Christians as a school-book. The onus is on them to produce such a work; but the irony of an expurgated revelation is too transparent to allow of the attempt in our time.

The question has been asked, "Can a Mason be consistently a member of a Freethought Association." In the United States no question has been more frequently or more earnestly discussed, and apparently is still far from being settled. The use made of the Bible in Masonic Ceremonies as well as in Masonic ritual has inclined some members of the Order to reply in the negative. On the other hand it is held that though Masonry is largely indebted to the Old Testament for its symbols, allegory, and forms, it is essentially a system of morality, universal in its adaptation to people of all races and creeds, almost universal in its acceptance. With the latter view we agree; otherwise it would have to be held that the ancient and memorable order was a theological sect, instead of finding its inspiration in the sentiment that has been its proudest boast—the brotherhood of man.

The House of Representatives passed in its recent session a Bill abolishing oaths and substituting therefor a simple form of affirmation. A Quaker member, Mr. Mason, was instrumental in inducing the House to take this forward step in juridical reform. The majority in favor of the principle was overwhelming, but this fact did not prevent the summary rejection of the Bill in the Legislative Council. The privilege of swearing was too valuable to be swept away with so little notice, and now we may expect the history of the Deceased Wife's Sister question repeated. The professors of Christianity do not appear to be conscious of the immorality of the formula which draws a distinction between "the truth" and "the whole truth." Equally obtuse are they to the logical dilemma of adjuring God to *help them*, and punishing them if *he* should fail to render his assistance. It is not surprising that Judge Higinbotham should ask for a revised Christianity as one of the wants of the age.

To Freethinkers as a class at present in the minority, the rejection of the School Elections Bill in the Legislative Council was welcome news. The cumulative system of voting for the Committees affords minorities the opportunity of returning members in proportion to their strength. This is fair both to majorities and minorities. The system, consecrated by time and usage, gave a majority the power to return every member; and it can easily be understood how unsparingly such a power would be exercised when Freethinkers had to be excluded. In the matter of education, the Freethought party cannot be too deeply interested. They must do battle in preserving the secular character of the system intact. Hence every change, whatever may be its ostensible object, should be closely scrutinised to discover its tendency as well as the motive of the author. The opposition to the educational system of the Colony is becoming every year more organised if not more formidable. We see the Anglican Church drawing up its forces in line with the Catholics, while murmurings of discontent are heard among the other sects. Are the friends of the existing secular system strong enough to withstand the combined attack of its enemies? We care nothing for existing combinations in the General Assembly. What verdict will the constituencies return when the appeal is made to them? That will depend largely on the prudence, intelligence, and organisation of the friends of a free, secular, and compulsory system of national education.