

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



THE CALLING OF SAMUEL.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON I.

PRAYER.

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke xviii., 1).

Such is the inspired text; here follows the uninspired sermon.

I. If men pray it must be to some person, or thing, or fancy. And it is wise to ascertain before praying what it is you propose to address; for, first, you may otherwise pray to the wrong object, and so lose your labor; or second, by praying to the wrong God you may rouse the fierce anger of the right one—should he ever find it out—for he is more jealous and more subject to “tantrums” than the most ill-tempered and most neglected female in the world. Some poet says,

“Hell hath no fury like a woman scorn'd.”

But he is mistaken; the Lord is the most furious of all beings. Once in his wrath he drowned the world; and again when his fury gets the better of him he will burn it. So beware how you pray to the wrong God! “Be ye, wise as serpents;” for deities, male and female, are excessively hard to please. It were better for a man that he should not pray at all than to the wrong deity; yea, “it had been better for that man if he had not been born;” ay! he had better tie a millstone to his neck and plunge into the sea! Third, you cannot pray in faith unless you know the God to whom you pray; and “without faith it is impossible to please” any of them.

Therefore, my Honored Reader, permit me to ask, Have you found the Lord? If so, when and where did you find him? What is he like? How do you know him from Baal, or Moloch, or Jupiter, or Dagon, or Saturn, or Satan? You had better use “all circumspection,” for Gods are uncommonly difficult to catch, and almost impossible to identify. Each of them pretends to be the right one, you must remember; and the sainted Jacob did not more completely sell his poor old father than they will sell you, if you don't mind. My solemn advice to you is, Do not pray till you are sure that you have hold of the right God. And when you have really got him, send word to me.

II. When you have found the Lord, is it any great catch, think you? And do his antecedents, as set forth in that precious autobiography of his, the Bible, warrant you to place any degree of confidence in him? Has he kept his promises, as a gentleman should and would? You had better read the book before beginning your prayer. You would not hire a servant or a clerk without a sufficiently respectable character, you know. Will you think less of your soul than of your body? of the riches of earth than of those of heaven? If so, you are wise; you do not require any sermon from me.

Perhaps before you begin to pray you had better do as Jacob did. Seeing that that famous man attained unto the kingdom of heaven, you may, I presume, follow his example with confidence. Jacob, after imposing upon his blind father, felt by no means sure that he might not be imposed upon himself, do you see? So he put Jehovah to the test before he decided to accept him as his God. “If God will be with me,” bargained the saint, “and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.” (Genesis xxviii., 20—21.)

It would be superfluous, my intelligent reader, to remark that Jacob understood business, and was far too much of a son of Abraham to be taken in by a God. And since his conduct was recorded by the Holy Ghost “as an ensample” for us, see that you do likewise, and never close with the solicitations of any God whatsoever until he shows that he is willing and able to give you all that you really need. If you have found such a God, I will not presume to advise you to stick to him; you will do it. But if there be enough of him for another friend or follower, I beg of you to let me know. Provided it involved no shame, no sort of slavery, I should myself be delighted to meet with a decent, benevolent God who would find me in “bread and raiment” and a few other necessaries of life; and I must say a God who cannot do that must be of little worth to anybody. And I advise you not to pray till you find such a one; and, when you have found him, do not selfishly keep him all to yourselves. There are millions, I verily believe, inquiring—most anxiously inquiring—after a God of that sort. This advertisement will substantially express their feelings:—

WANTED AT ONCE. A STRONG, RICH, GOOD-NATURED GOD. ONE THAT WILL GIVE FOOD, CLOTHES, SHELTER, GOOD HEALTH, AND LONG LIFE TO HIS WORSHIPPERS, IN RETURN FOR THEIR HEARTY THANKS, WORSHIP, AND SERVICE. N.B.—NO OTHER GOD NEED APPLY.—Address, GENUS HOMO, Earth, next door to Venus and Mars, Solar System, Universe.

If such a God exists, that advertisement will fetch him. If there does not, then men ought never to pray, for it would be perfectly useless; while a really good and omnipotent God would never wait to be prayed to. Like the sun, he would dispense his riches in overwhelming showers, and he would find his own happiness in the bliss of his creatures. There is no such God; and therefore prayer is as unworthy of a sane man as counting of beads, or as nailing up horse-shoes to exclude witches. Amen.

J. SYMES.

DID M. LITTRE RECANT?

M. LITTRE, the great French Positivist, who died a few months ago at the ripe age of eighty-one, was one of the foremost writers in France. His monumental “Dictionary of the French Language” is the greatest work of its kind in the world. As a scholar and a philosopher his eminence was universally recognised. His character was so pure and sweet that a Catholic lady called him “a saint who does not believe in God.” Although not rich, his purse was ever open to the claims of charity. He was one who “did good by stealth,” and his benefactions were conferred without respect to creed. A Freethinker himself, he patronised the Catholic orphanage near his residence, and took a keen interest in the welfare of its inmates. He was an honor to France, to the world, and to the Humanity which he loved and served instead of God.

M. Littré's wife was an ardent Catholic, yet she was allowed to follow her own religious inclinations without the



least interference. The great Freethinker valued liberty of conscience above all other rights, and what he claimed for himself he conceded to others. He scorned to exercise authority even in the domestic circle, where so much tyranny is practised. His wife, however, was less scrupulous. After enjoying for so many years the benefit of his steadfast toleration, she took advantage of her position to exclude his friends from his death-bed, to have him baptised in his last moments, and to secure his burial in consecrated ground with pious rites. Not satisfied with this, she even allowed it to be understood that her husband had recanted his heresy and died in the bosom of the church. The Abbé Huvelin, her confessor, who frequently visited M. Littré during his last illness, assisted her in the fraud.

There was naturally a disturbance at M. Littré's funeral. As the *Standard* correspondent wrote, his friends and disciples were "very angry at this recantation in extremis, and claimed that dishonest priestcraft took advantage of the darkness cast over that clear intellect by the mist of approaching death to perform the rites of the church over his semi-inanimate body." While the body was laid out in Catholic fashion, with crucifixes, candles, and priests telling their beads, Dr. Galopin advanced to the foot of the coffin, and spoke as follows :

"Master, you used to call me your son, and you loved me. I remain your disciple and your defender. I come, in the name of Positive Philosophy, to claim the rights of universal Freemasonry. A deception has been practised upon us, to try and steal you from thinking humanity. But the future will judge your enemies and ours. Master, we will revenge you by making our children read your books."

At the grave, M. Wyrouboff, editor of the Comtist review, *La Philosophie Positive*, founded by M. Littré, delivered a brief address to the Freethinkers who remained, which concluded thus :—

"Littré proved by his example that it is possible for a man to possess a noble and generous heart, and at the same time espouse a doctrine which admits nothing beyond what is positively real, and which prevents any recantation. And, gentlemen, in spite of deceptive appearances, Littré died as he had lived, without contradictions or weakness. All those who knew that calm and serene mind—and I was of the number of those who did—are well aware that it was irrevocably closed to the 'unknowable,' and that it was thoroughly prepared to meet courageously the irresistible laws of nature. And now sleep in peace, proud and noble thinker! You will not have the eternity of a world to come which you never expected; but you leave behind you your country that you strove honestly to serve, the Republic which you always loved, a generation of disciples who will remain faithful to you, and last, but not least, you leave your thoughts and your virtues to the whole world. Social immortality, the only beneficent and fecund immortality, commences for you to-day."

M. Wyrouboff has since amply proved his statements.

The English press creditably rejected the story of M. Littré's recantation. The *Daily News* sneered at it, the *Times* described it as absurd, the *Standard* said it looked untrue. But the *Morning Advertiser* was still more outspoken. It said—

"There can hardly be a doubt that M. Littré died a steadfast adherent to the principles he so powerfully advocated during his laborious and distinguished life. The Church may claim, as our Paris correspondent in his interesting note on the subject tells us she is already claiming, the death-bed conversion of the great unbeliever, who for the last thirty-five years was one of her most active and formidable enemies. She has attempted to take the same posthumous revenge on Voltaire, on Paine, and on many others who are described by Roman Catholic writers as calling in the last dreadful hour for the spiritual support they held up to ridicule in the confidence of health and the presumption of their intellect."

In the Paris *Gaulois* there appeared a letter from the Abbé Huvelin, written very ambiguously and obviously intended to mislead. But one fact stands out clear. This priest was only admitted to visit M. Littré as a friend, and he was not allowed to baptise him. The Archbishop of Paris also, in his official organ, *La Semaine Religieuse*, admits that "he received the sacrament of baptism on the morning of the very day of his death, not from the hands of the priest, who had not yet arrived, but from those of Madame Littré." The Archbishop, however, insists that he "received the ordinance in perfect consciousness and with his own full consent." Now as M. Littré was eighty-one years old, as he had been for twelve months languishing with a feeble hold on life, during which time he was often in a state of stupor, and as this was the very morning of his death, I leave the reader to estimate the value of what the Arch-

bishop calls "perfect consciousness and full consent." If any consent was given by the dying Freethinker it was only to gratify his wife and daughter, and at the last moment when he had no will to resist; for if he had been more compliant they would certainly have baptised him before. Submission in these circumstances counts for nothing; and in any case there is forceful truth in M. Littré's words, written in 1879 in his "Conservation, Révolution, et Positivisme"—"a whole life passed without any observance of religious rites must outweigh the single final act."

Unfortunately for the clericals there exists a document which may be considered M. Littré's last confession. It is an article written for the Comtist review a year before his death, entitled "Pour la Dernière Fois"—For the Last Time. While writing it he knew that his end was not far off. "For many months," he says, "my sufferings have prostrated me with dreadful persistence. . . . Every evening, when I have to be put to bed my pains are exasperated, and often I have not the strength to stifle cries which are grievous to me and grievous to those who tend me." After the article was completed his malady increased. Fearing the worst he wrote to his friend, M. Caubet, as follows :—

"Last Saturday I swooned away for a long time. It is for that reason I send you, a little prematurely, my article for the Review. If I live, I will correct the proofs as usual. If I die, let it be printed and published in the Review as a posthumous article. It will be a last trouble which I venture to give you. The reader must do his best to follow the manuscript faithfully."

If I live—If I die! These are the words of one in the shadow of Death.

Let us see what M. Littré's last confession is. I translate two passages from the article. Referring to Charles Greville, he says :—

"I feel nothing of what he experienced. Like him, I find it impossible to accept the theory of the world which Catholicism* prescribes to all true believers; but I do not regret being without such doctrines, and I cannot discover in myself any wish to return to them."

And he concludes the article with these words :—

"Positive Philosophy, which has so supported me since my thirtieth year, and which, in giving me an ideal, a craving for progress, the vision of history and care for humanity, has preserved me from being a simple negationist, accompanies me faithfully in these last trials. The questions it solves in its own way, the rules it prescribes by virtue of its principle, the beliefs it discountenances in the name of our ignorance of every thing absolute; of these I have, in the preceding pages made an examination, which I conclude with the supreme word of the commencement: for the last time."

So much for the lying story of M. Littré's recantation. In the words of M. Wyrouboff, although his corpse was accompanied to the grave by priests and believers, his name will go down to future generations as that of one who was to the end "a servant of science and an enemy to superstition."

[From "DEATH'S TEST or Christian Lies about Dying Infidels." By G. W. Foote.]

PIOUS IMPIETY.

SYDNEY SMITH lamented that the evil of the world is mainly upheld by good people, and one might assert with equal truth, if more paradox, that it is the pious who commit all the impiety. Sceptics are sometimes absurdly enough charged with blasphemy against beings in whom they have no belief; but what shall be said of the godly ones who, believing, or pretending to believe, in an all-good and omnipotent ruler of the universe, nevertheless ascribe to that being actions which if predicated of themselves they would repudiate with indignation. The character of the orthodox God is one which any man should be ashamed to own. Giving a local revelation to an insignificant section of this little planet's inhabitants, he incites them to war against other nations and even stays the sun for this purpose. Pulling all the wires, he none the less punishes his puppets for deeds done long ere they were fashioned; he dooms the mass of his creatures to eternal torments, only bestowing a sanguinary salvation on a few by the slaughter of his son, who, himself very God of very God and co-eternal with his Father, rests nine months in the womb of a

* To a Frenchman Catholicism and Christianity mean one and the same thing.

Jewish virgin. After preaching for a short period, and turning water into wine and devils into pigs, he is crucified by his father's favorites, rises from the dead, and after eating fish, levitates through the clouds. If such an imposing farago of balderdash were ascribed to Central Africans it would be taken as sufficient proof of their barbarity. Christians can recognise discarded deities as for the most part ugly devils. They affect horror at the cruelties ascribed, and the sanguinary sacrifices offered to these; yet they spread broadcast their missionary sausage books of chopped-up Bible in which the blood is the principle ingredient. They laugh at the pretensions of the savage medicine-man, yet pray to the immutable for rain or fine weather. One who has any elevated conception of a "power not ourselves" can hardly hear a sermon or take up a religious paper without being shocked by the presumed familiarity with a personal orderer of things, as if the minister or religious editor had ever at his elbow, ready for a confidential consultation, the power in whom presumably he lives, moves, and has his being.

When some time since a provincial parson expressed his belief in a connexion between the prevalence of infidelity and the rinderpest, the statement only exhibited in a marked degree the old theological way of regarding nature, as opposed to the modern scientific method. The parson simply had the courage of opinions legitimately founded on a belief more or less assented to by all pious people; the belief that the purposes of the forces of the universe are identical with and can be understood by the purposes of humanity. This once allowed, the interpretation of all phenomena depends upon the mental condition of each individual interpreter, and the power of the universe is invested with human thoughts and feelings for the sufficient reason that we've nothing else to give it. On this impiety is based the creed of Christendom with all its consequences, from the inquisition, which thought it was doing God's will in putting heretics to death, to the maundering minister of to-day, who preaches on those providentially saved during a railway collision, without thinking of those who are as providentially smashed.

The Catholic, who hymns St. Anne as "Grandmother of the Eternal God" (I quote from a volume of "Hymns to Mary"); the jubilee singers who ask,

"Do you want to see old Satan run
Just shoot him with the Gospel gun!"

and the Spiritist who gets John the Baptist to rap out imbecile answers to idiotic questions at his table; are only less restrained examples of the essential impiety which characterises all pretences to know what in the nature of things we do not and cannot know; an impiety which carries more than stupidity in its train; for in the whole body of pious Christendom, from the Pope, pretending to act as vice-regent of an absentee God, and seeking to chain the living human mind to dead and putrefying dogmas, down to the rabid raunter who takes off his coat, not to do a piece of manful work, but, as he expresses it, to wrestle with the Lord even as Jacob with the angel, we everywhere find an infidelity to the best interests of humanity veiled under the form of piety to God.

ACID DROPS.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury recently issued a form of prayer for fine weather, and it has rained ever since. Why don't these fussy little people refrain from counselling Omniscience?

THE Archbishop himself puts no trust in prayer. He leaves nothing to the Lord, but protects himself behind fifteen thousand a year. Bad harvests and dear bread do not trouble him; he can afford champagne and truffles. We shall believe in his sincerity when he risks something. Let him try the Elijah business, and see whether he can keep up his fat and flourishing condition on what the ravens bring him.

POOR Herr Most, who fell a victim to Sir William Harcourt's pompous zeal for the safety of foreign despots, finds prison life very dreary. They give him nothing but a slate and pencil to write with, and nothing but religious tracts to read. Herr Most no doubt thinks these leaflets only fit for what Coleridge neatly called post-culinary purposes.

SIR HENRY TYLER must have a tile loose. In order to mark his abhorrence of "infidelity," he has gratuitously advertised it in every newspaper in the country. We deem it right to say that there is no truth in the rumor that he has arranged with Dr. Aveling for a commission on all fresh scholars at the Hall of Science classes. Sir Henry is not a rogue, he is only the other thing.

MOSCOW must be a nice place to live in, if we may trust the *Times* correspondent. Owing to the extreme piety of the people, high and low, male and female, the church has amassed an enormous amount of wealth. The town swarms with tramps, and the churches are schools of beggary. The inhabitants are very orthodox, keeping fourteen holy, including many fast days, in the month of August alone. It is almost unnecessary to add that they are greatly addicted to drunkenness and idleness. The men are very ugly, and the women uglier still.

MR. JUSTICE DENMAN has profited by the example of the House of Commons. At Norwich, recently, he insulted Mr. R. A. Cooper, a veteran Freethinker, by declining to let him serve on the jury after being summoned. Mr. Cooper is an eminent citizen, a member of the Norwich School Board, and respected by all who know him. Mr. Justice Denman occupies a more exalted position, but we beg to tell him that he is not a better man.

As the law stands, witness the decision of the judges in Mr. Bradlaugh's case, the testimony of Freethinkers is not admitted in courts of law in order that they may obtain justice, but only in order that Christians may not lose it. They give evidence not as a matter of justice, but only on sufferance. It would serve the Christians right if Freethinkers formed a solemn league and covenant never to give evidence in any court, except one of themselves is interested, until the indignity put upon them is wiped off and they stand before the law on an equality with their fellow citizens.

THE London *Cuckoo*, whose intellectual range is about as great as the musical range of the bird so named, devoted nearly two columns of its space to a descriptive report of Mr. Foote's lecture at the Hall of Science on Sunday, August 14th. The *Cuckoo* reporter is not very accurate. He says that he counted the audience, which numbered 624. As a matter of fact it numbered over a thousand. Further, there is no position in the Hall, except on the platform, which commands a complete view of the audience, and the critic did not sit there. He also represents Mr. Foote as saying "If anything happens Mr. Bradlaugh," a locution which he could not possibly use even if he were a provincial ignoramus, seeing that he is a Devonshire man and does not hail from Yorkshire.

MR. FOOTE, says the *Cuckoo* reporter, "maintained a grave, thoughtful demeanor, but succeeded in convulsing the house with laughter at about every second sentence." Thus bad begins, but worse remains behind, as the reader may imagine when the subject was "The God the Christians Swear by." "More infamous, defiant language, touching the personality of the Divine Being, was surely never before uttered in public," and so forth in a well-known style. We hope the *Cuckoo* man has recovered, as a prolonged attack of religious rabies in this weather might prove fatal.

Is it a fact that the pious Committee of a famous Young Men's Christian Association would not sanction the prosecution of a late secretary for committing an indescribable offence, because he had "only sinned against the Lord?"

AMERICA is said by the whites to be "ruined by Chinese cheap labor." Bishop Scott has recently preached a sermon on the question "Can Chinamen be saved?" After much dubitation he concludes that they may.

SWEARERS in America are greatly dissatisfied with the New Version. They complain that telling a man to go to Hades sounds just like inviting him to dinner.

THE New York *Truthseeker*, edited by Mr. D. M. Bennett, has published a profane little poem on "God's Doings," from which we extract the following—

"God made ten thousand little things,
Black, yellow, green, and red bugs,

And then he made two species more,
 We call them fleas and bed-bugs.
 He made ten thousand little things,
 Thousands of little midgets.
 They bite our dear sweet babies so
 Their mothers get the fidgets."

Mr. Bennett has suffered one imprisonment for daring to publish unpopular literature, and if he continues to publish verses like this he may suffer another imprisonment for blasphemy.

A VERY different poem, which according to an Ayrshire paper "expresses the sentiments of Christians in general," has been going the round of the Scotch press. It is by a Galston lady, whose friends ought to keep her from wasting good paper and ink. Her argument is that as God swears everybody else should. Her argument is bad, but her verse, as Sam Weller would say, is "worse."

DR. ALEXANDER MACLAREN, of Edinburgh, has been whitewashing the character of David in his "Household Library of Exposition." He admits that the dear innocent lamb "went astray," but says it was all owing to his "tremulously susceptible nature." What a pretty way of excusing lying, cruelty, adultery, and murder.

THERE was a frightful row in Argyle Free Church, Glasgow, the other day. Had such a scene occurred in a Secular hall the Christian papers would have gloried in it as a fair outcome of infidel principles. The Rev. Mr. Campbell, his deacons, and the congregation seem to have got mixed up in a free fight. One deacon called in a bobby to turn the minister out, but when he came the minister employed him to turn out the congregation. Two elders tackled each other and had to be separated, after which order prevailed for a brief space. Wrangling soon commenced again, and one canny elder proposed that the reporters should be "turned out" so that the scandal might not be published for the amusement of the ungodly. This move, however, was unsuccessful, and the reporters stopped while the row went on merrily. Mr. A. Cameron cried out "Go to the pulpit Mr. McKechnie and open the meeting with prayer," a suggestion which provoked much laughter. The valiant McKechnie resolved to carry it out, but the Rev. Mr. Campbell as strenuously resisted it. What followed we prefer to give in the words of the *Glasgow News*:

"At this point one of the most disgraceful scenes which was ever witnessed in any church in Glasgow took place. Several people in the body of the church were crying out to Mr. McKechnie to open the meeting with prayer, and, amidst great confusion, he stood up, and while in the act of praying a member of the congregation rushed forward and assaulted him, and knocked him about in a most shameful manner. In a few minutes the scene in the church was of the wildest confusion, oaths and general profanity being freely indulged in, while the female portion of the audience contributed in no small degree to the uproar by screaming and waving their umbrellas, and applying them to the heads of some of those who were fighting. About twenty men and women—mostly Highlanders—fought for over five minutes in front of the pulpit with great vigor, and the minister looked calmly on without making the slightest effort to put a stop to the abominable proceedings. Mr. McKechnie, after being assaulted, was laid hold of by a number of the roughs of the congregation and summarily ejected, and about a score of the pugilists went to the Clyde Police Office and charged each other with assaults. One man was detained, and will be tried to-day at the court for attempting to choke the church-officer while in the lawful execution of his duty."

Soon after this the reporters were turned out, and all the subsequent proceedings are only known to the faithful who took part in them.

By way of contrast to this pious exhibition we introduce a remark of the Rev. H. E. Reynolds, who stated at a recent meeting of the Corporation of the Poor at Plymouth, convened for the purpose of appointing a new chaplain to the workhouse, that "he had seen lately in one union that they had separate vestries for the Roman Catholic and the Church of England clergymen, and separate altars, which were run in and out on wheels." How amicable! But we should like to know what the paupers thought of the locomotive altars.

WITH reference to workhouses, we may here say that an elderly pauper recently addressed us from a union in Lancashire, stating that he was worried well nigh to death by pious visitors, and asking us to send him some Freethought

publications so that he might give these people the latest arguments in reply. We, of course, gladly obliged the poor old gentleman, and although propaganda amongst paupers may not be particularly useful, we experience a quiet satisfaction when we reflect that the contents of our fat parcel have probably entertained many of the aged poor in that establishment.

RECENTLY, after one of Mr. Foote's open-air lectures in Victoria Park, much merriment was occasioned by a funny little fellow who opposed. He stood something under five feet, and seemed about eighteen or nineteen. His little face was of the ferret type, and his little eyes—how shall we describe them? It has been said that eyes are the windows of the soul. If that be true, the little fellow's window-panes were made of horn. On his right shoulder was a brass G, and on his left a brass B, which meant Gospel Band. His English, if such it may be called, was startlingly original. After gasping out a few uncouth and half-intelligible sentences, he was recommended by the audience to stand down, which he did. Altogether he was the funniest little fellow we have ever seen, and we wonder why the Lord selected him for such work. The only explanation we can suggest is contained in the scriptural passage about babes and sucklings.

THE Jew-hunt still continues in Germany and Russia. It is a disgrace to civilisation, yet Christianity does nothing to stop it.

As Heine reminds us, there is a touch of comedy in the darkest tragedy. It is infinitely ludicrous to see Baron De Worms, who has done his dirty worst to persecute Mr. Bradlaugh at home, now soliciting funds to aid the poor persecuted Jews abroad.

THE inquiry into the missionary atrocities at Zanzibar has amply confirmed the original report. The Christian missionaries seem to have acted as though Jesus had said "Go ye into all the world, and wollop the gospel into every creature."

WE understand there is a pamphlet in the press which will cause considerable interest in Dissenting circles when it appears, the title is "Piebald Congregationalism; or, the Rise and Fall of the Dissenting Cause in Approach Road Chapel, Victoria Park, with some comments upon the baptised heathens worshipping there," by F. W. L. Jones, Esq., formerly one of the flock.

POOR DEAR BROWNE!

MR. CHOLMONDELEY BROWNE, a very good friend of ours, dying the other day of over-vaccination, we were naturally anxious, as he was a naughty, naughty infidel, though a good fellow in other respects, to know his ultimate fate, and having (like the largest circulation) special correspondents everywhere, from Kerry to Khiva, we are enabled to lay before our readers the following account of his application for admission at the Elysian portal. He approached it with fear and trembling, for he remembered making, on earth, sundry profane jokes about Peter and the inspired "Cochin China," and now saw the "stony" janitor himself (whose promptitude and dexterity in chopping off ears he could not forget), girt with the same old sword. The following conversation then took place:—

Peter—What do you want?

Browne—If you please, Sir, I want to be an angel and with the angels stand.

Peter—What's your name?

Browne—Browne, Sir; Cholmondeley Browne, Sir.

Peter (calling up tube)—Send down the Male Ledger. (Ledger comes down the lift, and Peter thoughtfully turns over the leaves.) Let me see. Browne! Browne, Alfred—Browne, Arthur—Browne, Benjamin—Browne, Charles—Oh, here you are! Browne, Cholmondeley, of 2,222 City Road, London?

Browne (anxiously)—Yes, Sir.

Peter—Cause of death, vaccinated too much?

Browne (excitedly)—Yes, Sir! yes, sir!

Peter—Died last Tuesday afternoon at 5:30?

Browne (in an agony of expectancy)—Yes, Sir! yes, Sir! That's me!

Peter (slamming the book)—DAMNED!!! Third door on the left! Mephisto, put this chap among the goats!

Our own reflection.—It seems a pity we can't believe in the Roman Catholic purgatorial arrangement, as we could then start a subscription, and, by a judicious expenditure in masses, candles, sealing-wax, etc., we might get poor dear Browne off with the option of a fine.

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.

OWING to a slight indisposition and pressure of other work, Mr. Foote will be unable to commence the publication of the Second Series of "Bible Romances" until October 1st.

A CONVERTED CHRISTIAN.—Sincerely suitable.

R. J. C.—Many thanks. We hope to hear from you again when convenient.

J. G.—The verse is hardly up to the mark, and the subject is a little overdone.

P. C.—Thanks for the papers. We are always glad to receive such.

W. NELSON.—In our next.

J. O'DUGAN.—We cannot find room for a paper on Floods, and prophecy is a very unsafe business. If, as you say, the next great flood is to happen about four thousand years hence, the man out in Canada who is building an Ark is clearly looking too far ahead, unless he means to live four times as long as Methuselah.

H. L. BRACKSTAD.—We may publish it in pamphlet form if we have time, or else in these pages. Your kind offer will be borne in mind.

A. BEVAN.—The epitaph, as Mr. Foote gave it, was certainly composed by Rochester for Charles II. We have no reference at hand, but the fact is notorious.

W. MORRISH.—Thanks for your good wishes. We are glad to learn that the *Freethinker* has a good sale in Bristol, and are obliged to you for your promise to push it still further.

Mr. J. R. WALLER desires us to correct the printer's blunder in the spelling of his name in our last number, in connexion with his sonnet on the Gods.

J. CRAIG.—Received with thanks.

W. C. GRANT.—We are obliged for your good wishes; but the verse is not quite up to the mark, and its subject is not of general interest.

C. WARD.—We share your opinion of Ingersoll. Many of his lectures are already published here in a cheap form, and doubtless the others will be in time.

M. PENNELL.—How can you expect us to carry on an argument with you through private correspondence? In any case the unctuous Mr. Guinness's opinions are not worth the trouble of writing about.

J. LILLIE.—We are always glad to receive such cuttings.

J. IMESON.—The tactics you complain of are those ordinarily pursued by the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers.

W. VENTON.—We have used the incident, although we could not publish your account of it in full.

C. HUNTER.—Your little biography of Mr. Kydd is amusing, but it would be libellous to print it. The facts may be useful.

J. SKINNER.—It is not a fatal objection to the *Freethinker* that most of its contents are of little interest three months' after date, even if it were true, for the paper is meant to be read when it is published. A penny journal is not a half-crown magazine. By way of something solid you send us a few jokes! However, we thank you.

J. HAMILTON.—There is not much point in the comp-undrum. We have no doubt that there are poets in Ireland still; but they must be a poor lot if none of them excel the Rev. J. Milner, whose Orange verses would scarcely do credit to a drummer boy.

A. E. HODGSON.—Mr. Foote's "God, the Soul, and a Future State" has long been out of print. G. A. Sala's paragraph on Ingersoll appeared in the *Illustrated London News* some time last spring. We do not remember the exact date.

THE Debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. Howard, on "The Moral Sufficiency of Secularism," which took place in the Temperance Hall, Stockton-on-Tees, on Monday and Tuesday last, will be reported in our next number.

SUGAR PLUMS.

ONLY five of the hundred and twenty-five young men graduated this year at Yale University propose to enter the Church.

We learn that Mr. George Chainey has been lecturing to crowded audiences in Paine Hall, Boston, all through the late tropical weather, and that there is an ever increasing demand for his printed lectures.

MR. CHARLES SCHOFIELD, whose name will be remembered by some of our readers, sends us a copy of a capital Freethought paper, the *Echo*, published at Otago, New Zealand. It is lively and interesting, and is no doubt doing good work at the antipodes. Among other things, it has a notice of the Comic Bible, which it recommends for use in schools, and adds—"Given the comic dispensation for six calendar months, and there will be a wider diffusion of Scripture knowledge than the Bible Society has procured with all their millions of copies and decades of labor."

A LIBERAL Association has been formed at Sydney, Australia, on the broadest and freest basis. The Hon. H. J. Bowie Wilson is president, and among the vice-presidents is Mr. Charles Beard. Its principles are as follows:—

"1. The universal brotherhood of man; 2. The inherent right of all individuals to hold, practise, and proclaim any opinions, on all subjects whatsoever, which their conscientious convictions

may demand; always provided that this is done in such a manner as may induce no breach of the public peace, or interfere in any way with the like liberty of others; 3. The duty of every individual to conserve and maintain this liberty; 4. The supreme authority of demonstrated fact—fidelity to knowledge; 5. Aspiration after the highest morality; 6. Respect for known worth; 7. The sanctity of truth; 8. The emancipation of woman; 9. The right of every one to product of his own labor; 10. Complete secularisation of the State."

We understand that an able sculptor has just modelled a good bust of Mr. Bradlaugh, which the public will soon have an opportunity of seeing.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S POSITION.

MR. BRADLAUGH's attempt to enter the House of Commons and take his seat, despite the frowns of the press, turned out to be the very best course he could pursue. It brought his question prominently to the front, forced it into all the papers, caused the House to discuss it, and made it the theme of universal conversation for many days. It is greatly to be deplored that he was subjected to such brutal violence, but the spectacle of a duly elected and qualified member of Parliament thrust out from the approaches to his seat as though he were an intrusive drunken brawler has done much to make the Tories and Bigots, not ashamed of themselves, for they are utterly shameless, but objects of abhorrence and disgust to the general body of Englishmen.

Recrimination is of little use now. What is the sequel to be? The Speaker has at last done the only sensible thing in his whole treatment of Mr. Bradlaugh, in telling the House that its exclusive resolution was only sessional; and Mr. Gladstone has intimated that the Government will do in the next Session what it might as well have done in the last, namely, protect Mr. Bradlaugh when he goes up again to take his seat. It is, therefore, to be hoped that the fight is virtually over, and that the member for Northampton will be allowed peacefully to enter the House, where he will, of course, avail himself of all reasonable opportunities to introduce a Bill for abolishing the compulsory oath.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bradlaugh's litigation remains. What the result will be we cannot predict, but we are certain that his pursuers will find it hard to run him down. Mr. Bradlaugh's friends are loyally supporting him with their subscriptions as well as their sympathy, and he will not lack funds to fight with. Mr. Newdegate apparently begins to find the expenses of prosecution heavy, and his admirers are going to get up a subscription to meet the cost of an action which he had not the courage to bring himself. But, setting what Mr. Swinburne would call such a carrion soul aside, it must be allowed that Mr. Bradlaugh has acted splendidly throughout this struggle, and evinced so much courage, energy, patience, and skill, as to justify the expectation of a brilliant Parliamentary career.

G. W. FOOTE.

JESUS.—A SONNET.

By John Rowell Waller, F.R.H.S., Author of "Unstrung Links," "Wayside Flowers," etc.

Thou youngest god of all the tyrant brood,
In darkest robes of cueless mystery rolled,
Oft to my ears thy story hath been told,
Yet blood-red god, 'twas never understood;
Like that grim tale of Noah and his flood,
'Twas doubted all as not of reason's hue—
The curst fig-tree, the swine thy wisdom slew,—
Yet worse, that filthy tale of saving blood,
Was told me as a truth for human good;
Poor, slandered god, 'twas not thy work I knew;
Nor can these fisher-priests the credit claim,
'Twas all by Ghost-Inspirer plan'd before;
So if a shadow rests upon thy name,
The fault is at thy phantom father's door.

LORD CAMPBELL'S OPINION OF THE QUALIFICATION OF A GOOD PARSON.

LORD CAMPBELL, when speaking the other night in the House of Lords, on the Defamation and Libel Bill, said, "There was a case in year books, in which the grossest language had been used towards a clergyman, who had been called a *darned fool*, but it was ruled that no action would lie; that if indeed the phrase had been applied to a lawyer, it would be actionable, as being likely to injure him in his profession; but that as regarded a clergyman, it was possible in the law French phrase to be a *bon parson et a damned fool*. (Loud Laughter.)"—*Times*, Wednesday, August 23, 1843.

MR. FOOTE AND THE REV. JAMES McCANN.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE.

IN accordance with our promise we publish the conclusion of the correspondence, which explains itself.

SIR,—My letter to you was intended for publication. The reasons for my delay, you know. I did not see any necessity for hastening the debate, so preferred waiting till I could give my mind more thoroughly to it. When I wrote on June 20th, I had not seen any number of the *Freethinker*. The three numbers were shown to me about a fortnight ago. I am not aware of any "libellous falsehoods of the unscrupulous underlings" of the Christian Evidence Society. If you allude to the pamphlet of Mr. Varley, I can only say I never saw it, as I have taken no part in the political opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh. There may not be any essential difference between holding with you an oral and a written discussion; it is one of feeling in this particular case, and refers only to an offer already made for the discussion of a lecture already delivered. If you or your readers cannot understand my feeling, I have nothing more to say. I have a dislike to public oral discussion because it so frequently excites angry feelings, is necessarily so superficial, and a momentary snatching at a momentary triumph. The search for truth is seldom satisfactorily conducted in this manner. But when necessity arises I put my dislike to one side, as I have done in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh, whom I have invited to a discussion, on a new method, of the whole subject of dispute between us. This I have delayed meantime, because I thought his Parliamentary and legal troubles quite enough at once. I hope, however, that in the coming winter we may find time for it. Your modest insinuation that I am afraid of you, and your courteous one that I am dishonest, I leave to the judgment of your readers. My proposition with regard to the pamphlet meant nothing disrespectful to yourself. I thought that, as you would have the trouble of bringing it out, etc., you were entitled to any profit there might be, for I presume that neither you nor I can well afford to give our time for nothing. As you have time for written discussion only in your own paper—though how another paper should require more time I do not see—I am quite content to let the matter stand as you have left it.—Yours, &c.,

JAS. McCANN.

9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, W.C.

July 28th, 1881.

SIR,—Your last letter requires only a brief reply.

I did not allude to Mr. Varley. I am not aware that he is connected with the Christian Evidence Society, although I find many of its representatives helping him in his dirty work. I referred to statements which appeared in the *Freethinker*, and which I thought you had read, not supposing that your condemnation of its editor was based on a partial and cursory examination of its pages.

I did not insinuate that you were afraid of me. I merely said that you seemed to share the common disinclination of the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers to meet Secular lecturers in oral discussion. The other matter I am content to leave to the judgment of my readers.

Your explanation of your pecuniary offer is unsatisfactory. It is not likely that I should or could take all the trouble of bringing out a joint correspondence; nor did you say anything about this in your former letter.

I am surprised at your obtuseness in one respect. You are unable to understand how I can find time for a written discussion in my own paper, but not in another. My paper must be filled, and a discussion is good copy. Correspondence elsewhere would increase my present heavy work.

In conclusion, I am glad to hear that there is a prospect of your meeting Mr. Bradlaugh on the platform. Your objections to me do not apply to him. We all know how tenderly he treats your creed. I suspect, however, he will give you a good thrashing, and so long as you get it I don't much care who administers it.—Yours,

G. W. FOOTE.

HARPS AND TRUMPETS.

A MUSICIAN'S DILEMMA.

"PAPA," said my youngest—a sweet little darling of some seven summers, whose lovely—but, there, you perhaps have lovely ones of your own, and don't want to be bored with a doting parent's description of his darling—"Papa, I want to play a trumpet."

"Certainly not, my darling," I replied. "Halfpenny trumpets produce a sound which is not conducive to the well being of my nervous system."

"I don't mean halfpenny ones," she replied; "I mean proper long gold ones, what angels blow."

"And who, my innocent chick, has given you that piece of information," I asked, knowing she was of an inquiring turn of mind, and would seek for information on any subject that interested her.

"Miss Spiffins, our Sunday-school teacher, says that angels

play trumpets and harps for evermore, and I want to be an angel."

"Bless your dear innocent heart," I replied, "you are one."

"No, but I mean when I die and go to heaven; though," she added, seeing that I looked somewhat sad, "not yet you know, for I want to live with you and mamma for lots of time yet."

"Then you might live to be a middle aged, or perhaps a grandmamma angel."

"Yes," she naively replied, "that is so. You see, papa, that if you'd let me learn a trumpet here, while I am alive, I shouldn't want teaching when I got up there."

"No," I said. "But why a trumpet? Why not a harp? it's a more elegant and ladylike instrument, my child."

"Because, papa, it blisters your fingers so."

"But, my dear child," I said, "surely you'd suffer a little blistering here in order to be at it all day and night there. Besides, you would play on a heavenly harp with heavenly strings, made from the bowels of heavenly sheep and ethereal cats. And, besides, in order to fit you for a good position in the Handel Festival orchestra up there, you would have to learn a trumpet which is obsolete—that is, my darling, a straight chap, with no valve or slides, and having to make all the notes with your lip would be terrible punishment for you. In conclusion, I said, give my compliments to Miss Spiffins, and ask her that as an angel is not a material being, how would she contrive to blow without lungs, and as a trumpet is a material instrument, and a golden one would be a great temptation to gentlemen of the Peace class to execute a sneak, how it would be conducive either to your health or peace of mind to join the orchestra. So run away now and practise your earthly piano, and when you are an old woman you can go to heaven a ripe old angel, and sit on a nice heavenly arm-chair, and when you feel inclined to join in chorus you can do so, but don't think of having anything to do with the orchestra, for I believe I know lots of trumpeters and harpists, who are supposed to be aloft, whose society I should not care about your keeping."

When my child left me I pondered much. 'Tis true, I thought, our old friend David is mostly responsible for the heavenly orchestral arrangement, but then in his days harps and trumpets were the only available instruments. 'Tis true there were cymbals, but David doubtlessly thought that they would clash with the others. But why should not our modern hymnists introduce a few instruments of the present day, so that some of us would have a chance of a tidy engagement? And while they were about it, why not introduce a professional newspaper—a sort of *Heavenly Era*, so that we could see the advertisement sheet, and, looking in the list of Wanted's, drop on something of this kind—

"Wanted, a Pianist, well used to concert business; sobriety strictly necessary. Apply to Signor Gabriel, musical director, Theatre Royal, Heaven."

OPEN-AIR WORK.

OUR work has been going on bravely despite some occasionally rough weather. At all the stations the best of order has prevailed, a sure sign that our principles are making rapid progress among the thinking portion of the masses. Thanks to our organisation, the Open-air Committee, the work is now done in a thoroughly systematic fashion, and we would urge upon every Freethinker the duty of joining the nearest local branch of the N. S. S. and helping in the good work. There are several districts around London where good branches might be formed for carrying on open-air lecturing, and the *Freethinker* will always be ready to do its best toward such an object. Our new stations at Balham and Streatham Common have been most successful. The local bigots are threatening to give the common to the Board of Works for the purpose of having us stopped, and the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers are more abusive than ever; they have uttered a portion of the catechism and "keep their tongues at evil speaking, lying, and slandering" continually. The season closes with this month, and we trust it will continue its successful career to the end.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S FREETHOUGHT
OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LECTURERS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1881.

STATION AND TIME.	Chairman	4	11	18	25
MIDLAND ARCHES, ...11.30	Leekey	Job	Forder	Moss	Job
CLERKENWELL GREEN 11.30	Hilditch	Forder	Symes	Ramsey	Haslam
VICTORIA PARK, 3.30	Jones	Footo	Symes	Thurlow	Moss
GIBRALTAR WALK, ...11.15	Ramsey	Ramsey	Moss	Haslam	Groat
MILE END ROAD,11.15	Reeve	Haslam	Ramsey	Job	Moss
STREATHAM COMMON, 11.15	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey
BALHAM, 6.30	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey

J. WILLIAMSON, Secretary,
26, CLOUDESLEY ROAD, ISLINGTON, N.

THE COMIC BIBLE.

VOLTAIRE'S method of attacking Christianity has always approved itself to French Freethinkers. They regard the statement that he treated religious questions in a spirit of levity as the weak defence of those who know that irony and sarcasm are the deadliest enemies of their faith. Superstition dislikes argument, but it hates laughter. Nimble and far-flashing wit is more potent against error than the slow dull logic of the schools; and the great humorists and wits of the world have done far more to clear its head and sweeten its heart than all its sober philosophers from Aristotle to Kant.

We in England have Comic Histories, Comic Geographies, and Comic Grammars. But a Comic Bible would horrify us. At sight of such blasphemy Bumble would stand aghast, and Mrs. Grundy would scream with terror. But Bumble and Mrs. Grundy are less important personages in France, and so the country of Rabelais and Voltaire produces what we are unable to tolerate in thought.

La Bible Amusante is being issued by the Anti-Clerical publishing house in the Rue des Ecoles, Paris; the text being by Leo Taxil, and the designs by Frid'Rick. Each number contains twenty engravings of a Bible story, and the price is half a franc. The first two numbers are before us.

Plate I. represents Chaos. "Papa bon Dieu," (God the Father) sits huddled up in a state of ennui, scratching his head, and meditating the creation of the world. Plate II. is awfully blasphemous. It is called the "Creation of Light." Paris artisans usually strike their matches on the seats of their trousers. Jehovah, clothed in a long dressing-gown, smoking-cap, and slippers, has a long pipe in his mouth, and with his right hand he strikes a match in the fashion described, saying "Let there be light." Plate III. represents him as creating the atmosphere by means of a retort, and in Plate IV. he is filling the ocean from a water-tap. Plate V. represents the creation of trees and plants. With a face very much like Sir Stafford Northcote's, the old gentleman carries a tree on one shoulder, and some vegetables under the other arm, to plant in the garden. In Plate VI. he is on a ladder hanging up the sun, moon, and stars. Plates VII. and VIII. depict the creation of animals and of man. The story is continued in IX. and X. Plate XI. is exquisite. The Almighty reposes after his labors. He leans back on a tilted chair in the garden, with his feet on a table, close to a glass of wine, enjoying a quiet pipe, and contemplating his works with an air of benevolent satisfaction. Plate XII. shows Adam in his first sleep over a copy of the Ultramontane paper, the *Univers*. The creation of Eve and the prohibition of the famous apples are seen in XIII. and XIV. In XV. Adam is fishing, while Eve is being tempted by a serpent with a Jesuit's head. In XVI. Eve seduces Adam, and in XVII. they discover their nakedness; Adam putting on a box hat and Eve a crinoline. In XVIII. they hide themselves from the old gentleman, who shouts after them. In XIX. they are on their knees with placards affixed to their backs, Adam's "disobedient" and Eve's "glutton." Plate XX. represents the Lord driving them out in a terrible passion, his sword extended in front of a notice "Campagne à louer"—Garden to Let.

We can only notice the most striking designs in the second number. In XXI. Abel offers Jehovah a fine fat goose, which is received gratefully, while in XXII. the Lord turns up his nose at Cain's vegetables. In XXIV. Cain, having murdered Abel, has put him in a box, which is too short, and the unfortunate's legs stick out. The murderer sits on the lid smoking, and in response to the Lord's query about Abel protests his ignorance with an air most childlike and bland. In XXVIII. Methuselah, a father at the age of a hundred and eighty-seven, nurses the infant Lamech in his scraggy old arms, and regales him with a feeding bottle. Plate XXXV. represents Noah building the ark and his neighbors chaffing him, while in XXXVII. he sails away with his thumb at his nose laughing at them. In XXXIX. the ark, tremendously exaggerated, rests on the top of Mount Ararat. One of the sons is at the foot of the mountain, superintending the descent of a pig which is being lowered by a rope. Plate XL. shows "Papa bon Dieu" describing the rainbow with a big pair of compasses.

The designs are admirably conceived and skilfully executed. We shall introduce the subsequent numbers to the attention of our readers, and, if possible, we shall reproduce in the *Freethinker* some of the raciest plates. We shall be greeted with shrieks of pious wrath if we do so, but we are not easily frightened.

INGERSOLL AT HOME.

THE *Washington Gazette*, for Sunday, July 24th, devoted its first two columns to an account of its reporter's interview with Colonel Ingersoll, the great Freethought orator of America, on the subject of President Garfield and his would-be assassin. We extract the opening description of Ingersoll and his surroundings.

"Our 'Royal Bob' was found by *The Gazette* in the gloaming of one delicious evening during the past week, within the open portals of his friendly residence, dedicated by the gracious presences within to a simple and cordial hospitality, to the charms

of friendship and the freedom of an abounding comradeship. With intellectual and untrammelled life, a generous, wise and genial host, whoever enters finds a welcome, seasoned with kindly wit and Attic humor, a poetic insight and a delicious frankness, which renders an evening there a veritable symposium. The wayfarer who passes is charmed, and he comes frequently, goes always away with delighted memories. What matters it that we differ; such as he and his make our common life the sweeter. An hour or two spent in the attractive parlors of the Ingersoll homestead, amid that rare group, lends a newer meaning to the idea of home and a more secure beauty to the fact of family life.

"During the past exciting three weeks Colonel Ingersoll has been a busy man. He holds no office. No position could lend him an additional crown, and even recognition is no longer necessary. But it has been well that amid the first fierce fury of anger and excitement and the subsequent more bitter if not as noble outpouring of factions' suspicions and inuendoes, that so manly a man, so sagacious a counsellor, has been enabled to hold so positive a balance. Cabinet officers, legal functionaries, detectives, citizens—all have felt the wise, humane instincts, and the capacious brain of this marked man affecting and influencing for this fair equipoise and calmer judgment."

PROFANE JOKES.

COLORED PREACHER: "My bredren, when God first made man, he took up a 'lectle' mud, just as I do 'dis.' 'Den' he 'breafed' into it, and stuck it up against a fence to dry." "Hold 'dar,'" said one of his auditory, "you say dat was de first man made?"—"Yes, sar!"—"Den who constructed dat dar fence, sar?"—"Hush, chile," said the preacher impressively, "ten more questions would spile all the scripture ever written!"

SCHOOLMASTER (to small boy at bottom of class): "Who made the world?" No answer. "Who made the world?" Still no answer. "Who made the world?" (cane comes down heavily). Small boy (dancing about the room): "Please, sir, I did, sir! but I'll never do it again!"

A NEGRO named Ephe, who was a church-goer and proud of his Bible learning, was one day sawing wood. He said to his master's son, who stood by, "Which of de apostles do you like best?"—"Oh, I dunno!" drawled the boy.—"I likes Samson best," said Ephe, "'cos he piled up dem wicked foaks so."—"Git out," said the boy, "Samson wasn't a 'postle, Ephe." The old darkey laid down his saw in amazement, and said, "Look hear, white boy, how old am yer?"—"Twelve," was the answer.—"Well, den, I'se forty," said Ephe emphatically, "now who do yer fink should know best?"

A FACETIOUS old lady, describing her parson's rambling sermons, said, "If his text had the small-pox, his sermon would never catch it, no fear!"

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER (reprovingly): "Boys, do you know what day this is?" Small boy: "Hi, fellers! here's a cove as don't know what day this is! I guess he's been out all night!"

JOSH BILLINGS says, "Heathens are alwus kind to hosses; it iz onla among Christian people that a hoss haz tew trot 3 mile heats in a hot da for 25,000 dollars in kounterfeit munny."

A CHILD was shown a picture of "Daniel in the Lions' Den," and began to cry. "Don't grieve, pet," said the mother, "he was not devoured." "I'm not a-crying for *that*," was the reply, "but look at that poor little lion up in the corner; I'm afraid he won't get any, 'cos Dan'l's so mighty skinny he won't go round."

JOHN THE BAPTIST and Jesus Christ were walking together along a dry and dusty road one warm day, and, feeling somewhat thirsty, John proposed they should enter the first inn they came to, and partake of a cooling drink, and it was further proposed by John that they should toss as to who should pay, and so saying he threw up the dice, and lo and behold, turned up an impossible number. Christ looked at him reproachfully and said, "I say, John, my boy, you musn't try on any of your hanky panky miracles with me over a pint of four ale!"

REVIEWS.

Irreligion of Science, and The Wickedness of God. Two penny pamphlets by Dr. E. B. AVELING. (London: Freethought Publishing Co.)—The first of these is a reprint of Dr. Aveling's paper read at the Bury Conference. Both are written in the Doctor's well-known style, and no doubt they will command, as they deserve, a large sale. We would, however, suggest that the list of historical Freethinkers in "Irreligion of Science" should be amended in the second edition, which will surely be required, for at present it conforms to no fixed plan. The literary names should be added to or excluded. Why include Grotius and omit Spinoza, who has exercised the profoundest influence on modern and especially on German thought, and whose dissertation on the Passions, which Huxley well calls *magnificent*, entitles him to a high place among psychologists? We think, too, that the scientific portion of the list might be improved. Surely the French section of a list which is described as including "almost all the foremost scientists of all time" cannot be deemed satis-

factory when we look in vain for the names of Buffon, Cuvier, and La Place. It is also a strange *scientific* list which includes Diderot and omits Lavoisier. The English section, likewise, gives us Jeremy Taylor, the golden-mouthed divine, and withholds sceptical Priestley, whose name marks an epoch in chemical science. Dr. Aveling is a scientist, and we are not; but the *history* of science is open to all, and that justifies our criticism. We hope that the amendment we suggest will be duly made, and that a rapid sale of the first edition will give the author an early opportunity of doing it. "The Wickedness of God" is a warm title, but if Christians could be got to read the pamphlet, it might do them a great deal of good.

The Bible God and His Favourites and Christianity Unworthy of God. Two penny pamphlets by ARTHUR MOSS. (London: Watts & Co.)—Mr. Moss has, it is true, followed a well-beaten track, but he has expressed himself vigorously, and his pamphlets will doubtless lend good aid in the work of propaganda.

The Religion of Secularism and the Perfectibility of Man. By the Marquis of QUEENSBERRY. (London: Watts and Co.)—We have never before had to criticise the writings of a live Marquis, and we scarcely know how to begin. The Marquis of Queensberry has just been made President of the British Secular Union, probably for the reason which the most secular of the apostles, St. James, condemns in the opening of the second chapter of his Epistle. The British Secular Union had no presidency before, but it made one so that the Marquis might fill it. This happened at the Leicester Conference a few weeks ago, and the pamphlet before us contains the paper which was read by his lordship on that occasion. It is well worth reading, but its price is almost prohibitive. Sixpence is a heavy charge for sixteen pages of print. The Marquis must adapt himself to the means of his audience if he wishes to be heard. His pamphlet says very little about the Religion of Secularism, and a good deal about the Perfectibility of Man. It advocates restriction and selection in human breeding, and asserts that Lord Beaconsfield once admitted that the practice would have to be adopted. Herbert Spencer's ideas of perfectibility through evolution are introduced, and there is a very good statement of the well-known objections to the doctrine of immortality. Altogether, if his lordship's pamphlet were cheaper, we might heartily recommend it; but we cannot honestly advise our readers to spend sixpence on it, as they can purchase plenty of publications quite as good for much less money. Perhaps the Marquis is not to blame; the fault may lie with his publishers.

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