

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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## COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. LXVI.



### BEARING EACH OTHER'S BURDENS.

"Bear ye one another's burdens."—GALATIANS vi., 2.

"Mr. Foote is anxious to have it impressed on you that he is not a licentious writer, and that this word does not fairly apply to his publications. You will have the documents before you, and you must judge for yourselves. I should say that he is right. He may be blasphemous, but he certainly is not licentious in the ordinary sense of the word; and you do not find him pandering to the bad passions of mankind."—LORD COLERIDGE.

### A DEAD GOD.

THE dismal bell of a London church was tolling slowly on Good Friday afternoon. On a doorstep near by stood a little boy, and on the pavement facing him another, "What's the bell ringing for?" said the first youngster, "Who's dead?" And with the utmost seriousness the second youngster replied, "Jesus Christ."

Yes, my little man, you spoke a greater truth than you knew. Jesus Christ is dead. Jesus the man died over eighteen centuries ago, and Christ the god has been dead ever since Science looked at him with her fateful eyes. Without a smile and without a frown she gazes calmly at the phantoms, and appalled by her steadfast regard, they vanish one by one from her presence for ever.

Christianity worships a dead god. Every year his death is celebrated, and the fact is beyond all doubt. Oh but, say his worshippers, that is not all; as we commemorate his death, so we commemorate his resurrection. It was Jesus who was laid in the tomb; it was Christ who rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us.

But *did* he ever rise? That is the question. What proof is there? Nay, what evidence is there that could warrant any sane man in entertaining the idea at all? We

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have four lives of Christ, written nobody knows when, where, or by whom. All that is certain about them is that they were in existence about four generations after the "events" they relate. There is nothing to show that they existed before then, and hundreds of things to show they did not. Tradition will not suffice to prove a miracle. We require something more solid than rumour, the common liar, to make us believe that a dead man ever got out of his grave without assistance. The corpse of Jesus may have been missing from the tomb; but, if so, his disciples must have played the part of body-snatchers. At any rate, according to their own confession, he never appeared to anybody but themselves; and to that extent we can easily believe them without asking them to "kiss the book."

Of course they were obliged to get rid of their "resurrected" Savior in some way. They could not produce him when people began to inquire, and so they had to account for his disappearance. Only one resource was possible. They reported that he had "gone up." But they did this in the clumsiest fashion, and their various accounts are a remarkable instance of "gospel harmony." Matthew (that is, the first gospel; for Matthew had as much to do with it as the man in the moon) does not even narrate the ascension. He vaguely hints that Jesus evanesced after appearing to the eleven disciples who were left after Judas stretched his own neck, up "a mountain" somewhere in Galilee. John (or the fourth gospel) breaks off with a fine piece of buncombe, and leaves Jesus flitting about in the world like a di-consolate bat. The whole positive story of the ascension lies between Mark and Luke. Luke says that Jesus ascended from Bethany, a short distance from Jerusalem, on the very day of his resurrection, or at the latest the next morning. Mark, on the contrary, without any precision as to time, distinctly states that he ascended from Galilee, at least sixty miles from Jerusalem. It cannot be said that they agree as to time; it can certainly be said that they differ as to place; and this difference puts them both out of court until one or the other can find a corroborating witness. There is only one more witness to examine, the anonymous author of the undated "Acts of the Apostles." He agrees with Mark as to the place, but differs from both Mark and Luke as to the time; for he plainly says that Jesus spent forty days (off and on) with his disciples before levitating through the clouds.

Now suppose we were dealing with a case of assault in a police court. One witness swears that it took place at Charing Cross, and another that it took place at the Bank. Neither is certain of the time, but the clever counsel for the prosecution induces the Court to believe that they both mean the 14th of April. A third witness agrees with one of the other two as to the place, but differs from both of them as to the time. He swears that the assault took place at Hampstead on the 23rd of May. Suppose further, to make the parallel complete, that these three are all witnesses for the prosecution. Would not the magistrate at once dismiss the case? Of course he would, and that is what we do. We are not foolish enough to try to prove a negative. We simply examine the witnesses for the ascension, and finding them hopelessly at variance, "we dismiss the case." And if they damn us for our obstinacy, we say they should be punished for contempt of court.

Yes, the Great Christ is dead. It is useless to conceal the fact. Christianity is played out. Science has destroyed miracles and taken its last trump. It may try a few more tricks, but the game is all over, and it may as well throw up its hand. In a universe of unalterable law there is no room for providence, and in the daylight of knowledge there is no haunt for the ghosts. They all "melt into air, into thin air." Christ is gone; the Ghost has long faded; the Devil could not survive them; and God the Father,

who is only Jehovah of the Jews with a thin varnish of civilisation over his native barbarity, unable, like an American Indian, to adapt himself to the march of progress, and sighing after the rest of the family, is following them rapidly into the realm of "dateless oblivion and divine repose." When he finally disappears Humanity will feel like a man who wakes from a horrible nightmare to find the young light and the pure morning air cleansing his brain of the hot fever of his dreams.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SECULAR SERMON.—No. 2.

### THE QUALITY OF GOD'S MERCY.

"Oh give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever."—Psalm cxxxvi., 1.

THE quality of divine mercy is unique. It requires much straining through the holy sieve of faith to be purified. It falls from heaven—not in dew drops of gentleness, but in streams of blood and flames of fire. It rained down on one occasion in homicidal torrents for a whole year, and the cataract of divine blessings did not cease to descend till the whole world of living things was drowned in the full flood-tide of God's mercy, except Noah and his floating menagerie. On another occasion it assumed the tragic and highly sensational character of fire and brimstone. This pyrotechnic display was on a scale of great magnificence, and as a spectacular performance, was only spoiled by the unfortunate circumstance that Sodom and Gomorrah, and other populous cities, were in consequence reduced to ashes, man and beast included. At another time the divine mercy was hurled out of heaven in the shape of great stones, which providentially alighted on the routed army of the five kings. These mercies fell so thick and fast on the devoted heads of the retreating rabble that we are assured, on authority which is unquestionable, that "they were more which died with hail-stones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Joshua x., 11). It was in a fiery form that the mercy of God, much to the discomfiture of the priests of Baal, came down upon the burnt sacrifice which Elijah had offered to Jahveh, and gave them so warm an assurance of the Jew God's superiority over the rival deity, and so enkindled the murderous zeal of Elijah, that the latter forthwith slew the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal (1 Kings xviii., 38-40, *cf.*, 22). It was a fiery mercy which fell from heaven at the behest of the self-same Elijah for the double purpose of consuming the two captains and their respective fifties, and of fire-branding their destroyer as "a man of God" (2 Kings i.). And, finally, the mercy of God will on some future unknown day be poured out, positively (as the Holy Ghost's advertisement runs) for the last time, in destroying heaven and earth, and the eternal but never consuming burning and torture of the great majority of god-cursed mankind. Verily doth holy writ declare, "Our God is a consuming fire." At the Flood he was famous for his great display of water-works, but his performances in that line not having given entire satisfaction—he started afresh in business with a monster exhibition of fireworks. Some of the entertainments which he then provided to an astonished but ungrateful world we have already alluded to. The headquarters of this new and flourishing enterprise were located, somewhere in the tropics, at a place called hell. The venture proved a brilliant success, though the expenses, in the shape of human suffering and divine wickedness, were somewhat heavy. It spread far and wide the glory of God and the misery of mankind. Glory so achieved is sweet incense gratefully sniffed by the nostrils of God, but, unhappily for man, it is of that Jingoi-tic gunpowder description which, being compounded of the blood and tears of mankind, has a peculiarly diabolical smell about it.

The precious specimens which have above been presented of the glorious mercies of God will doubtless convey the impression that the divine mind forms eccentric notions of the nature and meaning of mercy! Such, indeed, is the fact, for "God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts." Divine mercy signifies human misery as certainly as the love of god means the hatred of man. In like manner, all the honor and service which man has squandered into the lap of deity have been undoubtedly rendered at the expense and injury of humanity. In other words, when the priests are fat the people are lean; when the gods have plenty poor humanity is famishing. It is in vain that the

friends of God and enemies of man attempt to conceal under the euphemistic name of mercy the wickedness of the God whom, as a celestial scarecrow, they have astutely planted in the clouds for the purpose of terrifying mankind. The sacred fictions, enshrined in holy infallible bibles, forged by credulity and superstition, and purporting to give the life and adventures of the gods, would alone suffice, were no other arguments available, to unmask the utter unworthiness of the mysterious object whom the priests would have us adore. For the unvarnished truth concerning the slavishly extolled mercies of God is abundantly set forth in the Bible, where on almost every page the eloquent logic of facts declares that crime and cruelty are the distinguishing characteristics of the dealings of deity with man. To take one instance out of many, the 136th Psalm, which indulges in fulsome adulation of the mercies of God, will conclusively prove that this statement is no exaggeration. This fanatical bloodthirsty effusion after asking us to "give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever" (v. 1.), proceeds to furnish us with a catalogue of the goodness and mercies of God, which, among other items, includes the fact that he "smote Egypt in their firstborn, for his mercy endureth for ever"; that is to say, he committed one of the basest of the many base crimes recorded against God in the Bible—an act totally vindictive and utterly indefensible. This claim on our thanksgiving is also based on the fact that God "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, for," etc.; that he "smote great kings, for," etc. This means that we are to magnify the mercy of God because the Lord mercilessly murdered the enemies of Israel. Such morality is charming. We are also to thank the Lord because, after having slain these great kings, he "gave their land for an inheritance, for," etc.; "even an heritage unto Israel, for," etc. This amounts to an impudent appeal to selfish, slaughtering, land-grabbing piety, to praise the Lord because, like the landlords, he stole the land from the people to whom it rightly belonged, and gave it to a robber but religious race, who rejoiced in the Lord, and gave thanks, like the landlords do, for being in possession of stolen property. It is certainly a cheap form of piety to praise the Lord for despoiling and slaughtering for us our enemies, but this has been the mode of religion chiefly in vogue among the chosen people of God in all times. The divine favors were big with mercy for Jews, because they were pregnant with misery for the Gentiles.

W. HEAFORD.

(To be concluded.)

## CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY.\*

THE attention which has been given of late years to what Max Müller has styled the "science of religion," and the investigation into other faiths, which has so abundantly shown Christianity not to be alone in its inculcation of morality, has thrown theologians upon their beam ends to make out some particulars in which Christians can pride themselves as being pre-eminent above all and sundry heathen Jews, Parsees, Brahmans, Buddhists, Confucians, Taoists and Mohammedans. The latest attempt of the kind is by the popular prebendary of St. Paul's in his series of lectures published under the title of "Characteristics of Christianity," the main propositions of which we shall briefly examine.

The title of the first lecture is "Christianity the subject of Preparation," and, at the outset, we are fairly taken aback by the assertion that, "It is absolutely certain that of no other religion can this be said with any shadow or show of truth. Muhammedanism burst upon a terrified and astonished world without any voice or note of preparation, like the flash of its founder's sword. Judaism, in its most distinctive and essential form, was given to Israel but fifty days after the Exodus, and before that time Israel was not a nation. Of the origin of Brahmanism and Buddhism we know too little to speak with much definiteness; but there is no vestige of preparation for the one or the other in what we know of either."

Dr. Leathes knows little indeed of Brahmanism if he is unaware that it was prepared for by the physiolatry and sacrificial system of the Vedas, or of Buddhism, if he does not know that it was the outcome of Brahmanism, together

\* "Characteristics of Christianity," by Stanley Leathes, D.D. London: James Nisbet and Co., 1884.

with the many other schools of philosophy which existed in the time of Gautama, its founder. The assertion as to Judaism having arisen fifty days after the Exodus must excite the laughter of anyone who has read Kuenen or Ewald, or even the Old Testament with any critical faculty. Muhammedanism was prepared for both by Jews and Christians in Arabia. Moslems, indeed, claim the Old Testament prophecy that a prophet should arise like unto Moses as being far more applicable to Mohammed than to Christ, and it must always be remembered that the prophet of Mecca was, and is to this day, accepted by the Arabs, while the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to whom alone Jesus declared himself sent, have persisted in rejecting him, despite the forcible and the fiery arguments which Christians have brought to bear on them.

The second lecture declares Christianity to be "the product of historical forces." In this we opine it is not exceptional. But because Christianity is an historical religion it by no means follows that such assertions as that of the miraculous conception, and the other big yarns of the gospels, are historical. That the rise and spread of Christianity can be accounted for on historical grounds is a sufficient proof of its nonsupernatural origin. Dr. Leathes attempts to disparage the historical substratum of Buddhism because authorities are divided as to the date of Gautama's death, but is he aware that the Jewish Sopher Toldoth Jeshu places Jesus as living fifty years before the Christian era, while a living Jew, G. Salomon, author of "The Jesus of History," identifies him with the Jesus Josephus describes as going about crying "Woe! Woe!" immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, A.C. 70? Is he aware that the early Christian Father, Irenæus, who is supposed to have been directly connected with John through Polycarp, makes Jesus to have lived to be fifty years of age?

The next characteristic pointed out is that "Christianity is a book religion." In this respect it differs not from the other great religions. The Parsees have their Avesta, the Brahmans their Vedas and Upanishads, the Buddhists their Pitakas, the Confucians their Shoo King, the Taoists their Tao Teh King, and the Mohammedans their Koran. Dr. Leathes would have his readers suppose these books are unworthy of perusal in comparison with the Bible. He is probably unaware of the influence Buddhism is having upon European thought through such men as Schopenhauer, and when speaking of Buddhism and Christianity he says, "No man in his senses can hesitate between the two," he can scarcely have before his mind the fact that such intelligent writers as A. P. Sinnett, author of "Esoteric Buddhism," Colonel Olcott author of "The Buddhist Catechism," and Madame Blavatsky, author of "Isis Unveiled," have thrown in their lot with the older religion. To us the fact that Christianity is a book religion is sufficient evidence of its non-divinity. No omnipotent being would commit his revelation to such opportunities of fraud, corruption, interpolation and mistakes as have fallen to the lot of the book about which the different sects of Christians dispute so much.

The next point urged is that Christianity is identified with a person who declared himself the light of the world, and that all who came before him were thieves and robbers. In this arrogant claim we perceive another mark of falsity. The exclusive reverence given to Jesus is nothing less than an insult to the memories of Socrates, Plato, Zoroaster, Confucius, Gautama, Laotse and other great religious and ethical teachers of the world, and sufficiently proves the futility of Christianity claiming to be a universal religion. Nothing is more irrational than to expect old civilisations to exchange their ancestral scriptures and mediatorial names for those of other races. The example of the Hindus shows that when they escape these idolatries it is to embrace Freethought, and not the patched supernaturalism of the dogmatists. "This is my religion," said a Siamese nobleman to a Christian missionary: "to be so little tied to the world that I can leave it without regret, to keep my heart sound, to live doing no injustice to any, but deeds of compassion to all." To convince him that he needed salvation through the blood of an innocent person was beyond the power of the proselytiser, who succeeded only in making him the more certain that his own religion was the better of the two (Sir J. Bowring's "Journal of Embassy to Siam," i., p. 378).

The last lecture but one is entitled "Christianity Preserved by a Spirit." The fact that Christianity has lasted

so long is doubtless a sufficient proof that in some sort it has been able to adapt itself to the minds of men, but as much can be said for the far older faiths of Parsism, Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and possibly "a Spirit" has been as much concerned in their preservation as in that of Christianity. Moreover, it must be noticed that the Christianity of Dr. Leathes is as different from the Christianity of the Middle Ages as that was from primitive Christianity. Judged by the standard of the New Testament, there are no Christians living, for not one can be found who obeys the injunctions of that book in their evident literal significance.

The last chapter, entitled, "Christianity the Hope and Refuge of Mankind," contains no argument, but is simply the rhetorical "canter up the avenue" without which any sermon or religious book would be incomplete.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

ROBERT BUCHANAN, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, deprecates the sentence of four months' imprisonment on Edmund Yates, editor of the *World*, for a libel on Lord Lonsdale. He says: "The punishment, in my opinion, is far in excess of the offence, and, what is worse, it savors of old-fashioned persecution. No good ever has resulted, or ever can result, by treating as criminal mere offences against good taste." What humbug these "high-class" journalists are capable of! Robert Buchanan never wrote a line to any of the papers against Mr. Foote's atrocious sentence of twelve months for "insulting opinions;" but he feels constrained to ask mercy for Mr. Yates, whose sentence is only four months for scandalously libelling a lady and gentleman who had never done him the least injury. Mr. Foote, too, was treated like a common felon, while Mr. Yates will be treated as a first-class misdemeanant, wearing his own clothes, having his own books and writing materials, liberty to receive and answer as many letters as he likes, to be out of his cell all day, to have frequent interviews with his friends, and to provide his own food. Mr. Foote's real crime was being a Freethinker, or he would never have been subjected to such brutal treatment, with the applause of these snobbish journalists, who, while they cry out against Freethinkers for "insulting" orthodox "opinions," think it a trivial offence to charge innocent men and women with cruelty and adultery.

It is amusing to watch the desperate efforts of Publican Booth and his family company to retrieve their waning popularity and profit. Their huge posters contain very little about salvation now, but appeal simply to the curiosity of the public. In London recently the sandwich men have been inviting people to come and hear Mrs. Booth at so much a head, the old file, her husband, keeping pretty much in the background. There is always a fictitious interest in a female orator, and Booth now trots round his glib-tongued wife, charging as much as five shillings a seat, in the hope that the rich idlers will come out and pay for a new sensation. The business couldn't well get lower, and we fancy the salvation dodge, like other forms of the confidence trick, is pretty nearly played out.

THE Rev. Alexander Taylor, preacher at Gray's Inn, committed suicide on Good Friday. Lord Tennyson and all the champions of maudlin orthodoxy might reflect on the fact that while Freethinkers very rarely commit suicide from "despair" or any other motive, parsons do so very frequently. If the sky-pilots were honest they would immensely raise the price of razors and laudanum. They say heaven is their home. Why, then, don't they all go home, and help to keep down the population instead of raising it, as they are always doing this side of Jordan?

RELIGIOUS mania was the undoubted occasion of an attempted suicide on Saturday last by Ann Crabtree, a prominent drum-head preacher with the Salvation Army at Hull.

THERE is an endowed church in West-Central London which keeps two parsons going daily, and on Sunday they give a kind of all-day performance. The bell of their gospel-shop rings frequently to advise the attendants that the doors are open and the shutters down; and as it is about the most dismal bell this side of Hades, no person with delicate nerves can live in its neighborhood. We believe the cases of insanity within a quarter of a mile of it must be largely out of proportion to the population. The congregation is a marvellous one. Unless you look sharp after the service is over you lose sight of it, for it dissolves very rapidly in the street. On Sundays it sometimes numbers twenty, and on week-days as many as the fingers of one hand. The other afternoon

we watched the door. Out came the two sky-pilots, next came three women, and then the procession ended. The two augurs of this temple, who always walk to and from it in their pulpit costume, look a couple of sturdy fellows, and it seems a pity they can't be put to some useful occupation.

THE Rev. A. A. Rees, Baptist minister, of Sunderland, is greatly excited by the announcement of Mr. Foote's "infidel" lectures at South Shields, and he has got out special bills informing the public that he is going to demolish Atheism on Sunday evening. He "respectfully" invites "doubters of all sorts and sizes," but of course promises them no opportunity of question or reply. By way of showing his charity he puts on the top of his bill an extract from the poet Young, intimating that all Atheists are actuated by a "sinister intent." The only answer the "doubters" of Sunderland can give this pious slanderer is to stay away from his gospel-shop and treat him with contemptuous silence.

DR. TALMAGE says that the "Lord sends the hornet to culture our patience." We should like to see this learned divine "culturing his patience" near a hornet's nest; we fancy for once he would disobey his "blessed Lord's" command—"Swear not at all."

MR. MOODY says that there are three classes of Christians in the Church of God. So we should think. When we went to church the third class usually occupied the "middle aisle." Years of experience, however, have taught us that American parsons are of only one class—viz., the "Barnum."

MANY a lesson, Mr. Moody says, he has had from children "how to pray." But who taught him "how to beg" so successfully? That we guess comes to him naturally.

THE very latest representative of the Christian Evidence Society will not defend the character of the Bible God until Freethinkers are prepared to admit that the existence of a God is proved. At last even the friends of Jehovah have left him defenceless.

A CHRISTIAN of a sceptical turn of mind, who doubted the truth of Jonah's whale story, the *Christian Globe* informs us, has recently been converted, and can now swallow the whale—and Jonah too, for the matter of that—as easily as he can a camel after straining furiously at a goat.

THE conversion took place in this wise. The young man doubted Jonah, but believed implicitly in Jesus. It was pointed out by a Christian friend that Jesus staked the fact of his resurrection on the whale story. The young man who couldn't afford to give up Jesus immediately took Jonah on trust.

Lot's wife's inquisitiveness caused her to be turned into a pillar of salt. There are men to-day heartless enough sometimes to wish that miracle repeated on the wife it was their lot to marry. Such is the depravity of human nature.

WISHING to raise pity and Peter's pence, the Pope hints he may have to leave the Eternal City. Of course he never really intends any such abdication, but the hint serves to excite much inquiry as to the city in which he might take up his abode. We would respectfully suggest his Holiness should go to Jericho.

DR. SADLER has put out a new commentary on Matthew. Writing of the passage (chap. xxvii., 9), where the writer ascribes to Jeremy a prophecy found in Zechariah, the commentator says we need not suppose inspiration preserved the gospel writers from slips of memory. Judging by their discrepancies, we should fancy their memories must have been very slippery indeed. But how about the promise recorded, John xiv., 9—"But the Holy Ghost shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance." Why, the three first gossellers evidently didn't remember the raising of Lazarus. But perhaps the holy pigeon hadn't got down in their time.

THE events in connexion with the infancy of Christ mostly exist only in fancy.

THE Victoria Institute is a Mrs. Partington Society, whose object is to reconcile science with scripture. The discovery of pre-historic implements at Spennes therefore exercises what by a stretch of courtesy we may call its mind. In opposition to the teaching of the best anthropologists, the Victoria Institute concludes that the savage users of these implements were reversioners from a former high condition, and not advances upon a yet lower form. If the historian of the future ever troubles himself about the Victoria Institute, he will know that its members are less instances of reversion than of undeveloped manhood.

SOME little while ago the Archduke John of Austria cleverly

exposed the spiritualist me-jum Bastian by running a sliding iron door between the "materialised spirit" and the cabinet in which the me-jum was supposed to be seated, so that Bastian, unable to return to his dark cabinet, had to own up and decamp to his London friend. Dr. Nicholls, author of "How to Live on Sixpence a Day." This little feat the archduke has followed up by publishing a pamphlet entitled, "An Investigation into Spiritualism." It is chiefly devoted to a list of me-jum practices that have been detected, and an appeal to his countrymen to avoid a delusion which has been responsible for a great deal of fraud and insanity.

THE Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown, preaching at Myrtle Street Baptist Chapel, Liverpool, says our forefathers never believed "anything so utterly foolish as this monstrous imposture that is called spiritualism." This is an historic error. Modern spiritism is but a survival of the older belief in angels, devils, witches, etc., which finds so much countenance in the Bible, and of which people recognise the superstition when it is brought closely before them.

DR. PHILIP SCHAFF, writing in the *North American Review* on "The Development of Religious Freedom," declares that the authors of the Reformation had no idea of religious freedom beyond their own creed, and deemed it right and proper to deny to others the right of dissent which they claimed for themselves. They appealed to the civil magistrate for the support of the new churches and the suppression of heresy.

WE have recently had our attention directed to another law case, in which gross injustice was done to a Freethinker, without any appearance of his showing disrespect for Christianity. In 1843. W. J. Hartley bequeathed by will to Major-General Briggs £300 "as a remuneration for the best original essay on Natural Theology, treating it as a science and demonstrating its adequacy to constitute a true, perfect, and philosophical system of universal religion, founded on immutable facts, and beautifully adapted to man's reason, and tending as other sciences do, but in a higher degree, to improve and elevate his nature, and render him a wise, bappy and exalted being." The Vice-Chancellor declared the bequest null, as in his opinion the above words, which the testator had chosen to adopt, could not mean anything that was at all consistent with Christianity.

THE Gospel is the stepping-stone to fortune, says Richard Weaver, the "converted collier," whose peadilloes with his servant girl were overlooked on account of his preaching power. Richard has at length contrived to marry a wealthy lady.

SCROGGIE, the revivalist, has a name which is enough to make a rhinoceros shiver. Our poet could find nothing to rhyme with it except "groggy" and "foggy." He thought Scroggie a little of both. But as he was assured that the revivalist is a teetotalter, he ascribed to him a double quantity of fog. Subsequently, after scratching his head a good deal, he lighted on another rhyme to serve instead of the discarded one, and he now describes Scroggie as "foggy" and "bogggy."

GENERAL BOOTH is at last in Madame Tussaud's, and it is rumored that his old friend the Devil insists on joining the show with him. Booth suggested the Chamber of Horrors, but Old Nick remarked with a grin that Booth was the greater fright of the two. They both appealed to J. C. to decide between them. He tried it by noses and Booth lost.

CANNON LIDDON, in Congregation, opposed the admission of women to the examinations of the University of Oxford. A clergyman who in Congregation opposes women ought to have no women in his congregation.

AT a recent performance of "Faust" in a provincial town when the time came for the orthodox, descent of Mephisto into the lower regions, the apparatus would not work, and Mephisto stuck just his head and shoulders visible above the stage. "Thank God" cried a Christian spectator, "Hell's full."

WHAT we are chiefly amazed at, is the number of young persons who use St. Paul's as a place of assignation, and either walk about during the progress of the service or cuddle up into cosy corners for the purpose of indulging in a quiet flirtation. The noonday services at St. Paul's, indeed, remind one of nothing so much as "The Holy Fair" which Burns has so satirically described.—*Whitehall Review*.

A SICK man, lying on his death-bed, expressed a wish to see General Booth and his son before his death. Accordingly they were sent for, and promptly arrived at the sick man's bedside. On seeing them the sick man requested the General to stand on one side and his son on the other, and then said: "I can now die happy and like Jesus Christ."

**SPECIAL NOTICES.**

**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

Saturday, April 19th, Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Newcastle, at 7, "My Three Trials for Blasphemy."—Sunday, the 20th, Free Library Hall, South Shields: morning, at 11, "How I Fell Among Thieves;" afternoon, at 3, "Prison Thoughts on the Bible;" evening, at 6.30, "The Gospel of Holloway Gaol."—Monday, the 21st, Lecture Hall, Newcastle, at 7, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."—Tuesday, the 22nd, Roxburgh Hall, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, at 8, "How I fell among Thieves."—Wednesday, the 23rd, Roxburgh Hall, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, at 8, "The Gospel of Holloway Gaol."—Thursday, the 24th, Hall of Science, London, "Oliver Cromwell"—third lecture.

April 27, Portsmouth; 28, Ball's Pond; 30, Battersea. May 1, Hall of Science; 4, Hall of Science; 11, Hall of Science, London; 13, St. James's Hall—Demonstration against the Blasphemy Laws; 18, Claremont Hall London; 25, Leeds; 26, Bradford; 27, Bradford. June 1, Plymouth Conference; 8, Claremont Hall, London; 22, Nottingham. July 6, Claremont Hall, London; 13, Claremont Hall, London; 20, Milton Hall, London; 27, Milton Hall, London. August 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Claremont Hall, London; 24, Milton Hall, London; 31, Milton Hall, London. Sept. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London.

**CORRESPONDENTS.**

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 28 Stonecutter Street, London.

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DR. EDWARD AVELING'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 20, Birmingham; 27, Liverpool. May 4, 11, 18, Milton Hall; 25, Hall of Science. June 8, 15, 22, 29, Milton Hall.

RECEIVED.—A Reader of the *Freethinker*, Reading, J. H. Rogers, A Thinker.

1st ESSEX ARTILLERY.—Your letter, unfortunately, got mislaid. Mr. Foote's answer was that he was not aware that "man was a monkey."

JOSEPH WADDINGTON, 63 River Street, Hulme, Manchester, will be glad to supply the *Freethinker* and any other Secular publications at his address.

F. W. H.—Mr. Porter is of course aware that no such person ever lived as the Jesus of the Gospels, but that does not affect the advisability of "getting at" Christians from all points of the compass.

A. A. W. complains of the difficulty of procuring the *Freethinker* in Durham. Under the shadow of the Cathedral bigotry grows rankly, and the newsagents dare not touch this journal yet, although one of them at least supplies the *National Reformer* on the quiet.

R. BROWN.—It can hardly be correct to call Jesus a Christian since the disciples were first so called at Antioch.

S. BROWN, Leeds.—Joshua x., 13; Isaiah xxxviii., 8—21; Exodus xxx., 22—33.

W. T. LEEKEY.—We are glad to hear you have begun the open-air campaign at the Midland Railway Arches. Thanks.

ATHEISTICAL YOUNG LADY.—According to Professor Blackie you must be a monster; but we fancy you have the three reverences towards humanity which he agrees with Goethe in calling true religion.

JOHN HARTLEY.—The swallow of any whale known to naturalists would have to be much distended to admit of the passage of a man's body.

"Though the word of the Lord cannot fail,  
And 'tis blasphemy even to doubt it,  
Yet we think it as easy to swallow a whale  
As swallow that story about it."

OTTO.—One of our readers may be able to oblige you with a copy of the first number of the *Freethinker* at a price. Mr. Ramsey will get the volumes bound for you in half roan at 4s. 6d. each. We note your remark that you find "the best physic to convert the Christians with is your book of Bible Romances."

DEVIL'S HOOP.—Shall appear.

J. T. CONGREVE.—You appear under some misapprehension. When we speak of the Reverend W. Sharman we mean no more than when we speak of Lord Churchill. It is merely a matter of convention, and one must speak so as to be understood. For the other matter, you surely don't mean that if Mr. Sharman likes to devote a good portion of his time to working for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, we should decline his assistance because he preaches in a Unitarian church? That would be committing the very crime of bigotry which we always are, and rightly enough, condemning in others. Mr. Sharman is not, as you seem to think, "on our platform" as a secular lecturer; he merely comes among us now and then as a visitor. Nor is Mr. Headlam paid to teach certain doctrines. As a matter of fact, he was persecuted by his bishop, and robbed of his living, for his uncompromising Radicalism. Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, Dr. Aveling and Mr. Foote will be among the speakers at St. James's Hall, and that fact alone ought to dissuade you from withholding your subscription.

J. HOVAN.—Mr. Foote is extremely pleased to learn that his lectures at Liverpool were the means of inducing you to join the local branch of the N. S. S. Intelligent and educated young men of your stamp are just the sort of members we most need in our movement. Your article shall be carefully looked through, and we will state the result.

AGENTS wanted in town and country to sell this paper and other Freethought literature.

T. CHAPMAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drop."

W. C. SAVILE.—We are always pleased to hear from converts through our work or our sufferings. Thanks for the jokes.

J. W. CALDWELL.—We cannot all agree. Let each do his own work in his own way.

T. W.—Apply to Mr. Ramsey. Post free 4d.

A. MOONEY.—We will look into the matter by next week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Liberal*—*Truthseeker*—*Boston Investigator*—*Hull News*—*Western Time*—*Portsmouth Evening News*.

It is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, to whom all Post-office Orders should be made payable. Considerable delay and annoyance are caused by the disregard of this rule. In remitting stamps halfpenny ones are preferred.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

MR. FOOTE'S four letters to Lord Coleridge, Judge North, Sir William Harcourt and Sir Hardinge Giffard have just been published in pamphlet form, price one penny, under the title of "Law and Gospel." We intend to send some hundreds of copies to the press, to show them with what spirit Freethinkers meet persecution.

MRS. BESANT presided at Mr. Foote's second lecture on Cromwell at the Hall of Science on Thursday, the 10th inst. The audience was more numerous than before. The third lecture of the course on Cromwell will be delivered on April 21st, instead of the 17th, and the last on May 1.

MESSRS. BARROW AND GIBSON send us a very interesting account of their adventures in Freethought bookselling at Consett. They have had to meet a great deal of petty persecution from the local sky-pilots. Some of these blackbirds, being on the Committee of the Co-operative Society, got our two friends turned out of their shop on the Society's premises, for selling Foote's and Ingersoll's publications, after vainly trying to get the police to take proceedings against them. Fortunately another shop has been obtained, and Messrs. Barrow and Gibson, who sold over 60 gross of Ingersoll's lectures last year, hope to sell still more this year, in consequence of the gratuitous advertisements the sky-pilots are giving to their business.

It is pleasant to notice how Freethinkers from the provinces make a point of visiting our London halls. Last Sunday morning there were one or two country visitors at the Hall of Science, among whom was Mr. Smith, President of the Plymouth Branch of the N. S. S. In the evening two more banded in subscriptions towards the Blasphemy Demonstration, to Mr. Foote after his lecture, one being from Jersey and the other from Blackburn. There may have been other visitors in the hall; if so, it was a pity they did not introduce themselves. Our lecturers are always glad to shake hands with country friends in town.

ANOTHER pleasant fact is the way in which Freethinkers face the tedium of Sunday travelling to hear a lecture. Our London halls are attended by Freethinkers from all parts of the vast metropolitan area, and from distances beyond it. Last Sunday evening at the Hall of Science there was one auditor at least from Blackheath; and another, a lady, had travelled over fourteen miles. We have known this exceeded in some parts of the provinces, not only by rail, but on foot. A few years ago, when we were lecturing at Newcastle, two Freethinkers walked in seventeen miles to hear us; and we might give many similar cases in the experience of all our leading lecturers.

WE have received the following further subscriptions towards the expenses of the great Demonstration against the Blasphemy Laws, to be held in St. James's Hall, London, on May 13th:—T. W. H., 2s. 6d.; W. C., 2s.; S. Stalder, 1s.; D. Wood, 1s.; A. Shalt, 6d.; J. W., 2s.; A., 4d.; H. G., 6d.; Mr. Dister, 1s.; Mrs. Dister, 6d.; J. T., 6d.; Gallery, 3d.; J. Worster, 2s. 6d.; Friend, 1s.; S. B., 6d.; T. W., 2s. 6d.; J. (Blackburn), 4s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s.; Mr. Choesewright, 2s.; Galvani, 6d.; T. Ford, 1s.; M. G., 1s.; H. Mortimer, 2s.; Sanders (Jersey), 1s.; J. Shok, 6d.; S. Bussenden, 1s.; Milroy, 2s.; G. Tyne, 6d.; H. Stiffin, 2s.; T. G. Bower, 6d.; C. J., 6d.; H. Style, 6d.; F. M., 1s.; Rachel Payne, 6d.; C. B., 1s.; — Selfe, 5s.; W. B., 6d.; G. B., 2s. 6d.; Uncle Tom, 1s.; W. Weber, 1s.; A Catholic, 6d.; J. Robertson, 2s. 6d.; L. R. C. P., 7s. 6d.; J. H., £1.

WE want our friends and readers to subscribe the entire expenses of this first Demonstration against the iniquitous

Blasphemy Laws, and as the date of it is fast approaching we hope they will forward their remittances at once. All moneys we acknowledge are handed over to the Rev. W. Sharman.

M. RENAN delivered a very fine discourse on Michelet, Quinet, and Mickiewitz, on the 12th inst., at the Collège de France. One passage on the value of Freethought is well worth quoting: "Liberty is our breath of life. Rather than do without it we should choose to be crushed. When the wind of narrowmindedness and of intolerant dogmatism blows upon the earth, we wait; and the world always comes back to us, for we are the discoverers of truth, and the discovery of truth in whatever province is the thing that most concerns the free man. Society, deprived of sworn upholders of truth, is left without defence to ignorance, brutality, and superstition, those monsters who have been vanquished by mankind, but who unceasingly strive once more to lay hold upon her."

ACCORDING to the *Italian Times* only seventeen per cent. of the population of Berlin ever attend church, and of these the majority are females. The Germans are too sensible to waste their time by having the drivellings and snivellings of the pulpit pumped on them Sunday after Sunday.

IN Sweden, a Christian and monarchical state, they are improving. A professor in Upsala, a disgrace to whatever science or art, save sycophancy, he professes, proposed that the Prince Eugene of Sweden, having passed an excellent ordinary examination, be excused the further examination. By 43 votes against 28 this was rejected. A second proposition to congratulate the Prince on his success in the past examination, found no seconder. If university boards are going to pass votes of congratulation to every one who passes exams., they will have enough to do. If they only pass them for princes they will not have much difficulty, except to clear themselves of the charge of snobbery.

THE Merton College Oxford Debating Society has carried a motion that the laws relating to blasphemy ought to be repealed, by two to one.

THE St. Helen's Branch of the N. S. S. has now a permanent meeting-place at Wellington Rooms, Naylor Street, where all Freethinkers will be welcome.

A SPECIAL meeting will be held at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, on Wednesday, April 23, at half-past eight, in order to form a company for the purpose of acquiring land and building a hall to seat 1,500 people. It is thought that 2,000 shares of £1 each will suffice. There is ample room in the neighborhood for such a venture to prove a great success, and we hope the first meeting of intending shareholders will be numerously attended.

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

(Continued from p. 118.)

MATTHEW VIII.—*There came to him a centurion* (v. 5).—That is very indefinite, Mr. Matthew; why did you not name him, giving details that would lead to his identification? Were you an eye-witness, now, or did you merely set down the gossip of others? It is not likely that a centurion would be so superstitious as to apply to a wandering Jewish peasant, a mere Galilean uncertainty, to cure his servant. Besides, how was it neither the centurion nor servant left any record of the event? Had they done so, the Christians would have paraded it before the world.

*Shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven* (v. 11)—A very flattering prediction, truly! O ye Gentiles! Abraham, the slave-holder, the coward who denied his wife, who ruined Hagar and kicked her out of doors, who almost murdered his son; and Jacob his grandson, the swindler and polygamist are now in the kingdom of heaven! You are welcome to come and sit down by them!—It won't do, Jesus! No decent people will enter heaven till the parties you name are expelled. Tell the world you have got Zoroaster, Confucius, Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates within, and the people will patronise your show; but the bible saints won't draw; you will never secure a respectable audience with such attractions.

The 14th and 15th verses tell how Jesus cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever. Here also we meet the incredible. Peter would never have denied, with oaths and curses, the man that had wrought a miracle in his own house—except, by the way, mothers-in-law were as unpopular in Palestine as now in America? Is that why Peter denied Jesus, because he had saddled his mother-

in-law upon him for years after he had concluded he had seen the last of her. If Jesus had only told the people how to avoid fevers, or have left a remedy for them, he would have done some good to mankind.

*And he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick* (v. 16).—Here we plunge into the grossest superstition. Jesus believed in devils; that is, that spirits entered and possessed human and other bodies, and bewitched them with various diseases! "The great teacher," the son of God, did not know but what disease sprang from witchcraft. He himself was a conjuror, an exorcist, before whom the boldest devil in Pandemonium would draw his tail under him, and bound howling off, like a cur, from the strokes of a whip! People who still reverence Jesus laugh at the witch stories of later times; and yet there never was a man more perfectly blinded by this degrading superstition than he, if the gospels correctly report him. If Jesus had only come from heaven in the latter half of the nineteenth century, so that he could have been taught a little science and have understood somewhat of the real nature of disease, he might have proved a teacher and savior of some worth; but as it is, we can only pity and despise him.

*That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, etc.* (v. 17).—What do you mean, Matthew? Did Jesus cast out devils for the express purpose of fulfilling the prophecy? The prophecy you quote is, *Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses*. No doubt Jesus had his share of infirmities, but he took nobody else's surely! Do you mean that he too had a devil, or devils, in him when he bore our sicknesses? Because that is what your words imply, if they have any sense. His enemies said he had a devil and was mad. We saw above that the devil tempted him for forty days and nights. It is plain, therefore, that Jesus had a devil, or more than one, for he bore our sicknesses, says Matthew; and all sicknesses in those days were due to devils!

But Matthew shows no honesty in quoting a statement made by Esaias as a prophecy. Esaias relates what some one had suffered in his day, and uttered no prophecy of Jesus. That ancient prophet knew as much of Judge North or Tom Thumb as he did of Jesus.

*The son of man hath not where to lay his head* (v. 20).—If "son of man" means Jesus, and if Jesus had the means, or might by honest industry have earned the means, of securing good and respectable quarters to live in, and yet failed to do so, he acted very foolishly, and set a bad example. Good houses, good clothes, good living have so much to do with human welfare, that no enlightened friend of man will despise them without a plain and obvious sense of duty. The man that lives for wealth and its acquisition is not to be followed. But he who creates wealth by honest means is a benefactor to his race; while he who scorns wealth, and voluntarily reduces himself, without the most pressing reasons, to a lower level than beasts and birds, as Jesus did, is too much of a fool to command respect. In this Christian nation a man who to-day should attempt to play the rôle of Jesus would be sent to prison as a vagabond, no matter how earnestly he might plead that the prophets foretold his life and character, or that Jesus set him the example.

*Then he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm* (v. 26).—Now, Matthew, this story is altogether too theatrical—Jesus asleep in the storm—the disciples, some of them old fishermen, too, in a panic—Jesus rose and rebuked the winds, etc. This is mythology. Æolus kept the winds in a mountain cave. At Juno's solicitation he struck the sides with his spear, and the winds bounded out to destroy Æneas and his fleet. But Neptune, at the bottom of the sea, was roused from his slumbers; he rose to the surface, and sent the winds packing, and smoothed down the waves and breakers. But Neptune is out of date, and so is Jesus. "Cloud-compelling Zeus," and Jehovah that rode on the wings of the wind, and Jesus who rebuked the tempest, and Prospero and Ariel, and all other rulers of the wind, have vanished into wind themselves. Real life they never had; real tempests they never raised nor allayed.

*They besought him that he would depart out of their coasts* (v. 34).—Jesus had just expelled a flock of devils from two fierce demoniacs, and had sent the spirits into a herd of swine; the swine, feeling as if they had been filled with the essence of cayenne pepper and turpentine, scampered off to some sea, and plunged in, where they and the devils, too, I

presume, were drowned. The people, of course, loved their pigs more than Jesus, and bade him go elsewhere with his mischievous tomfoolery. Jesus is welcome nowhere to-day so little as amongst his rich followers. They hate his very name.

JOSEPH SYMES.

(To be continued.)

### WE'VE GIVEN JEHOVAH THE SACK.

THE God of the Bible is out of a place,  
And we'll ne'er in our shop have him back;  
He has proved himself useless, dishonest and base,  
So we've given Jehovah the sack.

Like fools that we were, we engaged him as boss,  
But we found that he knowledge did lack  
Of his trade, and he brought us not profit but loss,  
So we've given Jehovah the sack.

Long enough have we looked over fault after fault,  
And indeed they were many and black,  
Whilst with us he never earned even his salt,  
So we've given Jehovah the sack.

We thought in his trade he was second to none,  
But we found he was worse than a Jack  
Of all trades, who is master of no single one,  
So we've given Jehovah the sack.

To engage such a lazy and indolent drone,  
Why we must have been really a pack  
Of fools, but we thought the best way to atone,  
Was to go and give Jahveh the sack.

Yes, now we have done with him once and for all,  
And henceforth occupation he'll lack,  
He need not again for a job on us call,  
For we've giv'n him forever the sack.

S. BELLCHAMBERS.

### RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

RELIGION is not a plant that flourishes in the Army. Temperance work meets with a fair amount of success, regimental schools are well attended for mental improvement, and the gymnasium for bodily; but, notwithstanding scripture readers, soldiers' homes conducted on evangelical principles, tracts and guilds, Tommy Atkins remains an irreligious animal. Not but what in a regiment one meets with a few men, who, known as "Bible thumpers," attend church voluntarily, and assist in tea-fights and "sich." But they are not celebrated in any other manner, they are not the men who rise to the top of the tree, and their religion is generally of a spasmodic nature; they "break out" and go on the spree occasionally until a thunder-storm or something equally puerile frightens them back to their most suitable trade of hypocrisy.

The answers given by recruits to their commanding officer to the question, "What is your religion?" are various and amusing. One says he guesses he'll "follow the big drum." Another doesn't rightly know what he is but will "go where you go, Sir." Cunning chap that. One who shows himself indifferent is advised by some of their older soldiers to say he's a Wesleyan. "You see they go to chapel out in town, and you might slip the sergeant and get a pot of beer." Shakers, Bible Christians, Salvationists, Plymouth Brethren, etc., are nipped in the bud at once—men are only allowed to choose from four denominations: Church of England, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Roman Catholic. The last denomination is abbreviated in all regimental documents to R.C.; consequently they are nicknamed "Roast chops." They are also facetiously described as those that "dig with the left foot." I have tried to discover the meaning of that remark, but have hitherto failed.

The Sunday morning's church parade is a serious affair. Everybody must mount his best clothes for that, from the Colonel downwards. The band "obliges" with sweet strains while the work of inspection is being carried on, and then to some lively air the regiment marches to church. But the parade is by no means liked by the men, and they show their dislike to it by indifference in church. The service is short, and is gone through as quickly as possible to let another regiment in to go through the same lot, and the men go back, glad that it's over, to the tune of "Over the garden wall."

So much for the morning service, at which the church is crowded to excess. But at the evening, or voluntary service as it is called, there is a change. A few officers and their wives, the choir (who are generally paid) and the corps of "Bible thumpers" mentioned above, constitute the whole congregation.

The religion of a regiment depends much on the commanding officer. If he is a church-goer there are sure to be plenty of time-servers, who, in order to curry favor, will be devout

in and out of season. Religious officers are looked upon with suspicion in the army. They often encourage a petty system of espionage—I may say that after over ten years' service, all the religious officers I saw were not only duffers at their profession, but also the most tyrannical and over-bearing. In illustration of the remark which heads this paragraph, I remember a regiment in India, the Colonel of which was a "demon for praying," as the men expressed it. He started a semi-total, semi-praying society, which under his presidency "grew and multiplied." But alas! for the true faith, his tenure of command expired—and so did the society; and the last end of that corps was "worse than the first." Men of more sincerity but of lower rank tried to keep it up, but the attraction was gone.

Perhaps church parades are seen to their greatest absurdity on board a troop ship. Take for instance the four Sundays on an outward-bound voyage to India. The first Sunday morning we were passing Gib., and as everybody, the chaplain included, wanted to have a look at that grand, weather-beaten Rock, our souls were neglected in order that we might feast our eyes. The second Sunday we were in a gale, so the Captain passed the word that there would be no prayers. The next Sunday we managed one. We were detained in the Bitter Lakes owing to a French steamer being aground ahead of us in the canal. Great preparations were made, the harmonium was hauled up "out of the depths," on which a profane Jack Tar was to discourse heavenly music. The church was rigged on Sunday morning—i.e., planks were placed on baskets and tubs, etc., for the men, and chairs arranged for the ladies and officers. The chaplain came up from below in his gown (he must have found it hard to leave off playing discobulus for one day) and the service got under way. The captain looked solemn, the boatswains—grizzled old sea-dogs—were on the alert to keep everything quiet, and Tommy Atkins was hot, restless and indifferent. The sermon was concluded; the benediction, "The grace," etc., etc. A "schree-ee" piped the boatswain's whistle, followed by the order "Unrig church," and in less time than I have taken to write this, before the parson had finished a little prayer on his own account, the harmonium was carried off to the lower regions, the pulpit was "unshipped," and the work of shifting and stowing planks was going merrily forward. I had a naughty friend on board who used to stand "afar off" and smile at these proceedings, and he in the profanity of his heart used to call this temple made with hands, "St. Rig's Church."

The fourth Sunday, matters were lively; the wind was dead behind us, and we were bowling over the Arabian Sea at a fine rate. The Litany was being served up; many had closed eyes, who not engaged in devotion were groaning in spirit, when the first Lieutenant whispered something to the Captain. The Captain looked up and nodded. The Lieutenant tip-toed his way to where the boatswain on duty was standing, and then, amid the "beseeching thee to hear us good Lord," the shrill pipe sounded, and the order "all hands shorten sail" was given. The sailors sprang up, some ran aloft, some hauled ropes, and instead of the still small voice of the parson, gruff commands, and in place of the responses and amen's, came curses both loud and deep. The poor chaplain retired gracefully to his cabin, having earned his month's pay in a most energetic and praiseworthy manner. C. J.

### PROFANE JOKES.

"MAMMA," said a promising youth of some four or five summers, "if all people are made of dust, ain't niggers made of coal dust?"

Who was it that walked on earth, talked on earth, reproved man of sin? He's not on earth, he's i.o. in heaven and cannot enter in?—Balaam's ass.

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON.—Young lady: "And who comes after Esther?" (Panic). "Is it Job?" Pupil: "No, miss; Billy Piper's big brother: I see him a Sunday."

"EVERYONE should give up something for Jesus," said the preacher. "What will you give up, my lad?" "I think, sir," replied the boy, "I'll give up coming to church."

The worthy parson intended to preach from the lucid text "I am that I am." The first "I am" came at the bottom of the page, and he turned over two leaves instead of one, reading "I am—an ass and a colt, the foal of an ass," then seeing he was wrong, went back a leaf and ended "that I am," and the congregation said "Amen."

HE was a simple Christian, and the curate preached from Revelations that the Devil was bound for 1,000 years, and he rejoiced greatly thereat. But the next Sunday the vicar preached "That the Devil goeth about like a roaring lion," and the simple one wondered exceedingly, and said unto the vicar, "How can the Devil go about like a roaring lion if he be chained for 1,000 years?" And the man of God answered and said, "Verily the eye of sin seeth not the beauty of the saying. Behold the Devil is chained, but he is like unto a roaring lion, because he hath reach enough to scoop the whole earth into his breeches pocket." Amen!

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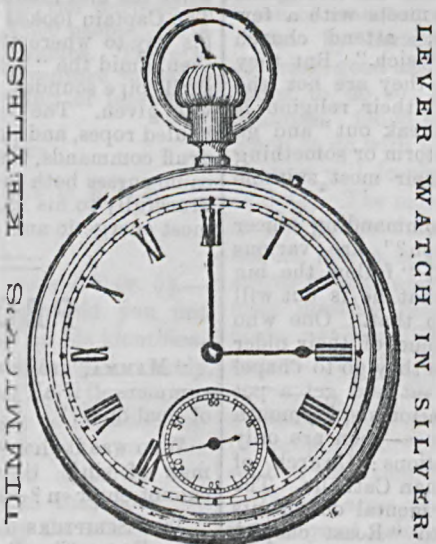
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