

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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## COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 75.



A HEAVENLY LOAD.

"And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity, from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of flasks."—ISAIAH xxii., 24.

## SPEAKING OUT.

SCARCELY a week passes without I receive a letter from some person who desires advice as to how a Freethinker should comport himself towards Christian relatives or employers. I always give such inquirers a careful answer, but I invariably tell them how difficult it is for another person, who cannot know all the circumstances, to decide for them, and how necessary it is that they should finally decide for themselves. Advice is seldom much good, for very few people take it unless it agrees with their own inclinations; but there is consolation in knowing that some one sympathises with us in our difficulties and perplexities; and even when we are carried along against our will by an irresistible current, it is a relief to feel that our misfortune is regarded with pity and compassion.

Some of these letters are very pathetic. Only a few weeks ago a young man of nineteen informed me that his parents were inexpressibly shocked at his having become a Freethinker, and his mother frequently burst out into tears because her boy was on the road to hell. They both hoped that he would be brought back to the true faith if he only went to church and listened to their minister, and the poor young fellow asked me whether it would be right for him to do so. He was naturally anxious to console his mother, whose passionate grief almost overwhelmed his reason. I told him that I saw no harm in his accompanying them to church, for I went to chapel myself in Holloway Gaol; but I

warned him against playing the hypocrite, and advised him to show exceptional kindness and attention to his afflicted parents, and to trust to time and affection to heal their wounds. In the long run it is *character* and not *opinion* that endears us to others. If people who differ on speculative questions could only conquer their first repugnance, they would find that their real sympathies and antipathies are almost independent of their beliefs, except when these involve moral ideas and aspirations.

Another letter came from two young governesses, who were expected to read the Bible to their pupils and teach them the Catechism. The task was revolting to them, but what were they to do? If they declined it they would have to face certain dismissal and probable starvation. I confess that I could not advise these young ladies to do anything of the kind. I could not tell them to commit suicide by slow and painful degrees. I could not ask them to face a hostile world. I know what the world is, how cold and callous it is to weakness, how genial and fawning to strength. My first correspondent was a *man*, and his living was not at stake; the others were *women* and their living *was* at stake. And knowing as I do how awfully unjust and pitiless the world is to what it hypocritically calls "the fair sex," I dared not advise these young ladies to confront its angry power. Martyrdom is a great and noble thing, but why make useless sacrifices? At any rate let us ask the strong to begin, instead of expecting them from the weak.

There are women, it is true, who have greater strength than man's injustice has allowed the rest of their sex; and some of these are impelled by their heroic spirit to face the deadliest perils in the battle of progress. But they suffer more when they are wounded, and the stress of the fight tells more heavily on their strength. I remember how, in Holloway Gaol, I thought of the possibility of Mrs. Besant's suffering the privations and indignities I was subjected to, and how I ground my teeth with mad rage at the idea. All honor to the women who can risk everything for Freethought; but I should question the courage of any man who asked them to do it.

No one need accuse me of cowardice for writing in this strain. I hold myself beyond the reach of such a charge. True courage lies, not in inviting others to face danger, but in facing it one's self.

I will not, however, rest here. There are thousands of men who can speak out with safety, but remain silent because they fear a little social ostracism; in short, because they fear Mrs. Grundy. I have no respect for these men, and when they bring me their explanations and excuses I usually give them a curl of my upper lip. A man who knows that others have met death in the good cause, and is himself afraid to risk the loss of somebody's company at dinner, might say with Hamlet, "What do such fellows as I crawling between heaven and earth?"

Others are afraid to speak out because they might lose their trade. Artisans are not so liable to this temptation, but it besets small shopkeepers and professional men. I fancy, however, that they overrate the danger. When the late Dr. Jones, of Plymouth, took the chair at one of my lectures only a few weeks before his death, I asked him whether his Freethought injured his practice. "Not a bit," said he, "I don't want all Plymouth, I only want enough to keep Jones going." That brave and generous gentleman is now silent in the grave, but I hope those few words of his will reach the ears of many, and incite them to greater courage and determination. He who does nothing, said Christna, stops the progress of the world; and he who says nothing stops the progress of truth.

G. W. FOOTE.



## THE BUSY BISHOPS.

"How doth the little busy B  
Improve each shining hour"

is not exactly the form in which the late lamented Dr. Watts pointed one of his numerous moral lessons. It is the form, however, in which the familiar verse comes back to me when I notice the unusual stir that is going on just now among the bishops.

Their right reverend lordships seem determined to show that the accusation of idleness often levelled against them is not deserved. There has been quite an episcopal bustle of late. Nor has the phrase an episcopal bustle anything to do with a new accession to the clerical garb. That remains as ugly, as antiquated, as ever, and is therefore in good keeping with the profession whose badge it is. But the newspapers tells us of much work recently done by the lords spiritual. Whether it is the result of Sir John Bennett's damning summary of their votes and abstention from voting during the last fifty years, I do not know. So damning is that summary, such a fatal record is it of the political wickedness of these men, that even a bishop might be moved to some sense of shame. Or can it be that the recent performances of Mr. Irving Bishop have roused them to an unwonted energy? Here is one, their namesake, at least, and a formidable competitor with them in their struggle to bumbug their fellow creatures, who has achieved more notoriety in a few months than their whole bench during as many years. He, at all events, has been able to do that which the bishops themselves so pathetically lament is beyond their power. He can lead the clergy, and finds them more amenable than the Bishop of London, let us say, found Mr. Mackonochie or the Rev. Stewart Headlam, for we have had the edifying spectacle of this particular Bishop dragging a canon of the Church of England through the public streets at his will. Even in this extraordinary performance there was a certain grim fitness, for the clerical victim was, with an irony that it is difficult not to regard as intentional, chosen to represent one of the criminal classes.

Whatever be the reason of the unusual flutter in the ecclesiastical dovecote, the flutter is evident. The Bishop of London consecrated a new church at Ealing, a suburb sacred to the comfortable city people who have made money, and know that the popular religion of to-day is "so good for keeping the lower classes in their places." The Bishop of Dover has held at Yalding a large confirmation. This sounds at first like an exhibition of a feat of strength, but as I find that his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury has been holding several large confirmations at different places, I conclude there is some error on my part. One cannot conceive the Primate in all the pomp of lawn going through anything approaching to an acrobatic performance. His is more of the nature of an exhibition of conjuring tricks.

This expensive old gentleman, the head of the bench of bishops, has really been struggling hard to make some sort of show in return for his huge emoluments. Not only have the large confirmations been held by him. He has gone the length of consecrating a churchyard. If only the whole of the bishops, and, for the matter of that, all the minor clergy as well, would consecrate the churchyards by taking up their final abode in them (I speak of them as a class, not as individuals), the clergy would earn the thanks of a long-suffering people.

One item in the Archbishop's recent doings has perhaps a more painful significance than any other. He opened a new chapel for the Maidstone Union. Adding insult to injury, he then had the hardihood and cruelty to deliver an address to the inmates of the workhouse. What a picture of the results of nineteen centuries of Christianity! A workhouse necessary under this religion, which is the one savior for suffering men—a chapel connected with it, in which are to be preached the doctrines of the poor carpenter of Nazareth, adulterated with modern extensions and interpretations—an address to the paupers from the honeyed lips of a meek and lowly follower of Jesus, who follows his master at such a distance that when the one is visible to the ordinary eye the other is out of sight.

A more bitter satire on the whole of the commercial and ethical system of the majority is inconceivable. But there is one sad point in it all. There are many who, equally with us, would rebel against the horrible idea of this rich robber of the people speaking words of comfort and advice to the men impoverished by him and such as he. And yet

those who thus feel with us in our indignation cling still to the accursed system that begets all this. They do not see that these bishops and their ill doings are the inevitable outcome of a belief in the supernatural. They cannot understand that which seems to us so clear, that all sins of omission and of commission, all the injuries done to the community politically, socially, morally, by the whole bench of right reverends, is traceable to the belief in God. When they slowly grow to see this truth they will not wonder that we, whilst attacking the power of the bishops in the House of Lords, as we attack all unjust privilege, yet devote our energies in the main to attacking that religion which makes possible this power and a thousand other anomalies and wrongs

EDWARD AVELING.

## GOD'S SABBATH.

WHEN God uttered the words of the Ten Commandments (Exodus xx., 1), he solemnly reserved to himself the seventh day of each week. No work whatever was to be done on this Sabbath Day. God said to Moses, "Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath Day, he shall surely be put to death," and this was to be a "perpetual covenant" (Exodus xxxi., 14-16). Moses announced this death-penalty to the people and forbade even the kindling of a fire upon the holy day (Exodus xxxv., 2, 3). God's injunctions appear to have been soon forgotten, for when on a subsequent occasion the children of Israel found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath Day, they "put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him." The Lord settled the difficulty in his usual gracious and considerate way. He said to Moses, "The man shall be surely put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp." (Who would have suspected that the Lord's private opinion all the while was that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," as he subsequently announced to the people who through obedience to his commands had become bigoted Sabbatarians?) "All the congregation" thereupon stoned the too industrious gatherer of sticks, "as the Lord commanded Moses" (Numbers xv., 32-36). So died the Sabbath-breaker under the law of God.

The Christians of to-day are woefully inconsistent in their Sabbatarianism. They plead as their justification the authority of a divine commandment, which they utterly decline to obey. Not one of them keeps holy the seventh day, the Saturday, and works on as the commandment directs him, during the other six days of the week. Christians coolly transfer the sacred obligation from the seventh day of the week to the first day without the slightest intimation from the Word of God that such an interference with the divine code of morals is permissible. God says distinctly that no manner of work is to be done, and that servants and domestic animals are to rest equally with their masters. Nevertheless, Christians have elaborate Sabbath meals prepared for them by their servants, and they ride about in their coaches quite unconcernedly, or take the tram-car on their way to church, while even bishops are driven to their cathedrals and palaces in direct defiance of the command of the Almighty. Yet these same Christians have the impudence to enforce upon others such an amount of obedience to this obsolete command as they think fit. In many parts of England, and still more in Scotland, they make the first day of the week—the joyous and universal pagan holiday which Christianity took away from mankind—as dull and dismal as sanctimonious piety can make it. Prince Bismarck whistling in the streets of Hull when he landed there one Sunday was requested to leave off, because it was the Sabbath. No wonder he was disgusted, and went back to his steamer at once, never setting foot in the place again.

From Sinai to Southend is a far cry. But the religious spirit which doomed a man to death for picking up sticks is identical with the modern bigotry which endeavors to ruin a poor widow for selling sweets. In each case it is humble and meritorious industry that is attacked. A rich man or an idle man would not easily be found gathering fuel or vending confectionery on Sundays, or on other days either. But rich Christians, as we have seen, break the Sabbath in many other ways. While, however, the gentry hold that the law against profanation of the Lord's Day should be enforced against honest workers, they decline to allow the law to be put in force against themselves. Mr. Petherick, finding these persecutors deaf to the voice of reason, sought



to obtain summonses against a justice of the peace, a solicitor, and the chairman of the local board, for selling tickets on Sunday by men in their employ. The necessary permission to prosecute has in each case been refused. E. A. Wedd, one of the justices of the peace to whom he applied as required by law, writes to him thus: "I know the gentlemen mentioned by you to be men who would neither desecrate Sunday or infringe in any way the law of the land. Therefore I decline giving you the written consent you ask for." These high-class offenders will not permit the cases against themselves to be heard. They have one law for the poor and another for the rich. They have yet to learn and to feel the power of public opinion. To this great and growing power they will ultimately have to submit.

Mrs. Sarah Sykes, who is a widow aged seventy, has now been fined eight times, and has had to pay amounts varying from 13s. 6d. to 15s. for each "offence." Among the other victims of this miserable persecution are William Palmer, a tobacconist, and C. Wilson, a fruiterer, who have each been fined seven times. R. Hockett, a cripple, aged sixty-four, who sells sweetmeats, has been fined twice. Yet the highly respectable trustees of the Shrubbery continue to sell admission tickets on Sundays by their agents, and the chairman of the local board similarly employs a man to drive a tramway car and sell tickets to the passengers. Their action is not allowed to be challenged.

W. P. BALL.

#### WHO CARRIES HIS BUSINESS ON?

MEN don't believe in the Devil, now,  
As their fathers used to do;  
They've forced the door of the broadest creed  
To let his majesty through.  
There isn't a print of his cloven foot,  
Or a fiery dart from his bow  
To be found in earth or air to-day,  
For the world has voted so.

But who is it is mixing the fatal draught  
That palsies heart and brain,  
And loads the bier of each pressing year  
With two hundred thousand slain?  
Who blights the bloom of the land to-day  
With the fiery breath of hell?  
If the Devil isn't, and never was—  
Won't somebody rise and tell?

Who dogs the steps of the toiling saint,  
And digs the pit for his feet?  
Who sows the tares in the field of time,  
Wherever God sows his wheat?  
The Devil is voted not to be,  
And of course the thing is true!  
But who is doing the kind of work  
The Devil alone should do?

We are told that he does not go about  
As a roaring lion now,  
But who shall we hold responsible  
For the everlasting row  
To be heard in home, in church and state,  
To the earth's remotest bounds,  
If the Devil, by a unanimous vote,  
Is nowhere to be found?

Won't somebody step to the front forthwith,  
And make his bow and show  
How the frauds and crimes of a single day  
Spring up? We want to know.  
The Devil was fairly voted out,  
And of course the Devil's gone.  
But simple people would like to know  
Who carries his business on.

—New York Mercury.

#### REVIEWS.

*Elements of Social Science.* By a DOCTOR OF MEDICINE. Twenty-third edition. London: E. Truelove.—This work has been before the public too long to need a formal review. We therefore content ourselves with noting this new edition, and recommending it to the attention of those who have not already perused it. Nice people (that is, as Swift said, people with nasty ideas) should leave it alone. But those may read it with profit who are prepared to consider the deliberate convictions of a thoughtful and candid writer on the deepest problems of society, even though they conflict with their strongest prepossessions.

*Synagma of the Evidences of Christianity.* By the Rev. ROBERT TAYLOR. E. Truelove.—This also is a new edition of a

well-known old *brochure* by the learned and witty author of the "Devil's Pulpit." It was written in Oakham Gaol, like so many other productions of the Freethought party in that stormy period. Christianity has wonderfully progressed since then. It has learnt to gag Freethinkers as well as imprison them. There will be no more heretical books written in Christian gaols. Oakham is gone, and oakum has taken its place.

#### ACID DROPS.

A GRAND religious procession over a mile in length has been perambulating Vienna. The Emperor and other members of the Royal Family walked in it, as well as the Cabinet Ministers, the leading noblemen, the bishops, etc. The splendid uniforms of the Hungarian Guards and the leopards' skins and mail armour of the Austrian Life Guards were conspicuous. This religious Lord Mayor's Show takes place annually. The Empress used to walk in it with the Court ladies, magnificently dressed and bejewelled. Fancy Chamberlain, Dilke, Bright, Gladstone and the Queen doing a Corpus Christi procession through the streets of London!

THE *Christian Times* accuses Professor Max Müller of using literary "false coin" in speaking of "Forgotten Bibles," and says that he means thereby "any heathen rot which took literary form." If we described the Bible as Christian rot which took literary form, what would this pious paper say of us? Of course it is frightful vulgarity and blasphemy and outrage rolled into one when a Secularist copies such Christian language as this.

THE Rev. P. Wilson says that there are a thousand religions on earth, but his own religion is the only true one, because Jesus rose from the dead. To the question, "How do you know this?" he replies: "Glory be to God, we do know. He that believeth hath the witness in himself." Speaking of Mahomet, this polished specimen of living Christianity says: "The old fornicator is dead enough, and will be until Jesus shall bring him up to answer for his blasphemies." The *Christian Herald* prints this abuse of the founder of a religion less wicked than its own.

WHENEVER Talmage sees a lamb in the field, he cries: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." This is his own statement. A projecting cliff makes him exclaim: "Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in thee." He would probably address a pigeon as "Holy Ghost, celestial dove," and would request its internal presence in himself, which might be secured by converting the said Holy Ghost into pigeon-pie and devouring the same.

A NEW mission to the Jews is about to be established by the Free Church of Scotland, to be called "The Sea of Galilee Medical Mission." Poor Jews come for physic and advice, and are soon counted as converts to Christianity.

"You have heard of the man," said Spurgeon to his congregation the other night, "who diminished his dose of food every day to see on how little he could live," till he came to half a biscuit and then died; but, I tell you, most of you have tried on how little religion you can live, and many of you have got to the half biscuit dose."

THE celebrated Old Cockpit at Proston has fallen with a tremendous crash. Up to 1830 this building was used for cock-fighting during the week and for teaching superstition to children on Sunday, after the blood and feathers had been cleared away. Brutal sport and the worship of a ferocious deity go well together.

THE "Converted Curates" are being trotted out by Booth as his newest attractions. At Manchester one of them, the Rev. J. H. Pigott—for they still cling to the title of "Reverend"—prefaced his preaching with a song to the tune of "Champagne Charley." The great religious Barnum says his clerical recruits are "promising cubs." We hope they appreciate the compliment. If they are "cubs" now, what will they be when full-grown in the grace of Salvationism? These "promising" clerical "cubs" are apparently also *performing* cubs. In addition to figuring as religious comic singers and tub-thumpers, they have to scrub floors and sell *War Cries* in the street.

PROFESSOR MOMERIE has been appointed preacher to the Foundling Hospital. His father's name was Mummery. Finding this too suggestive for a parson, the son has altered it to Momerie. This is a pity, for the original name was far more appropriate to the whole business of soul-saving.

ABOUT sixty persons were summoned at the Pontefract County Court the other day for non-payment of tithes to the Rev. J. J. Christie, vicar. In almost every case verdicts were entered for the reverend plaintiff, with costs on the higher scale. Thus it is the clergy teach people honesty by taking



their money from them against their will. What difference is there in principle between this and highway robbery?

A WIDOW named Chivers recently took her young child with her on a visit to its father's grave in the cemetery at Hanwell. A few moments after the little boy had been kneeling reverently in prayer upon its father's last resting-place, a headstone, which had not been properly secured, fell upon him, killing him instantaneously. Christian papers please copy as another illustration of the value of prayer.

GOD has been visiting his church at Warrington in the form of lightning. The building was found to be full of smoke and dust. The stone-work was injured and the lead flushings of the roof were either melted or torn away, so that a large quantity of water found its way into the sacred edifice and accumulated around the pulpit. The particular sin that evoked this little display of divine wrath appears to have been a defective lightning-conductor. This is rather hard on the people of Warrington, for neither Moses nor Christ ever said anything about keeping lightning-conductors in order. They would have regarded such inventions as devices of Satan and blasphemous interferences with a divine prerogative.

GOD also hurled his lightnings upon his church at Backwell on Sunday afternoon. He injured it so much that it will cost a good round sum to repair the damage. At the evening service the thanks of the congregation were offered to the Almighty mischief-worker for so mercifully preserving the church itself from destruction.

MR. LEE, "an evangelist," tells us in the *Christian Herald* how a publican found Christ one Saturday night, and how he emptied all the whiskey and the barrels of ale and porter into the gutter next morning. As this hopeful convert had not paid for the liquor, and was hopelessly in debt to the extent of ninety pounds, this wasteful proceeding appears to the carnal mind to have been distinctly dishonest. But as he trusted in God his action is highly commended. He received fifty pounds from a gentleman, and has since prospered. We are told that he is a living proof of the truth of the Scripture which says "Commit thy way unto the Lord and he shall direct thy steps."

A CORRESPONDENT wants to know if there is more than one religious denomination that believes in feet-washing. It is sincerely to be hoped that there is.

THE Christians of Roumania are still persecuting the Jews. By a new law 30,000 Jewish hawkers have been prevented from following their calling, and 20,000 of them are reported to be already in a state of destitution. Baron de Worms is to call the attention of the Government to the matter in the House of Commons. But as he is fond of Atheist-hunting in England, on what principle can he protest against Jew-hunting in Roumania? Only last week he tried to badger the Government into packing the tribunal of judges in Mr. Bradlaugh's case. He holds that an honorable Christian like the Lord Chief Justice is utterly unfit to preside at such a trial because he has strongly deprecated persecution and illegality.

A REAL bit of blasphemy appeared in the columns of the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* last week. It says that a small party of Wedmorians made an excursion to Hookey Hole, carefully wending their way down Hell's Ladder into the Devil's Kitchen, where, at the suggestion of one of the party, "God save the Queen" was sung with really fine effect. That the habitation of Old Nick has at length been discovered must be a consolation to those who believe in a personal Devil and a real hell. No wonder the people of Wedmore are Tories, living as they do so near their lord and master—the Devil. The *Gazette*, which is a Tory organ, seems to know more of the whereabouts of his Satanic Majesty than most people. It was not so very long ago that it published a letter from one of its correspondents in hell respecting the soul of a murdered man.

A FACT.—Conversation between a popular and well-known tradesman and an equally popular Roman Catholic canon:—Tradesman: "This thought-reading of Irving Bishop's is perfectly true. I have done the same thing in my own family at home." Canon: "Nonsense. I would not believe it if I saw it." Tradesman: "What! You astonish me; and you have been all your life teaching others to believe what they have never seen, and you not to believe what you do see." Canon: "Yes, but this is a different thing altogether. We believe by *faith* and not by sight." Tableau!

A FACETIOUS correspondent says that if Elisha, instead of inducing the two "she bears" to kill the children because he could not bear to be reminded that his "poll" was bare, had bared his arm and killed the bears, and then have rubbed some of their grease into the bare skin of his head, he might thereby have become the possessor of a thick head of hair.

PUBLICAN BOOTH has bought the old prison at Northampton, where he intends to carry on a branch of his Blood and Fire business. It is said that he expects to drive "Bradlaugh" out of the town in a year or two. We would give him fifty even if he had any influence over the voters; but as a matter of fact Booth's disciples care more for the politics of the kingdom of heaven than for the politics of the United Kingdom. They think a good deal of Publican Booth and very little of the Polling Booth.

CHRISTIANITY and Jingoism go well together. A pious Massachusetts man writes to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, advising England to hold on to Egypt until "the elements shall melt with fervent heat." He adds that if the Red Cross Banner goes down there is "another flag under our Western sky beneath whose starry folds the English-speaking world will yet do her Christian duty in the East." Yes, it is a *Christian* duty to carry fire and sword among the infidels of Asia and Africa, and give them a full taste of the glorious Gospel of Love.

THE Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, whose courtesy and friendliness towards his Freethinking opponents deserve cordial acknowledgment, has been denounced by the *Methodist Recorder* for "taking lodgings in the Sodom of unbelief." If we spoke of the Sodom of Christianity what would the *Recorder* say of us? Yet, as a matter of fact, the unnatural crime, which takes its name after the city of Lot, is more frequently committed by parsons than by any other class of men.

HENRY LEMMAR, a tobacconist, of Commercial Road, jumped off the Woodside ferry-boat about midstream. He stated that he tried to drown himself because "he wished to join the Lord." It is almost a pity he didn't.

THE Rev. F. G. Shepherd, Vicar of Stoke-sub-Hamdon, has committed suicide by hanging. He had lost his wife, and neither the religion he taught nor a sense of love and duty towards his children sufficed to prevent the fatal act. It is a curious thing that so many parsons commit suicide and so few Freethinkers. What does Tennyson say to this? Will he write a new version of "Despair"?

RELIGION is a beautiful and ennobling thing. The peasants in a village near Tarma, in Sicily, being almost ruined for want of rain, carried the image of the Virgin to a neighboring hill, from whose summit she could readily perceive the parched state of the country. Here they invoked her aid with prayers and loud cries for several hours. Three days of praying proving in vain, the patience of the peasants broke down. They tied a rope round the neck of the image and dragged it through the streets, men and women the while heaping blows and imprecations on it. Finally it was thrown into a swampy place, where a little water still remained. They gave the Mother of God a good soaking, even if she would not give them one in return. Strange to say, rain actually fell the next day. The image was reverently taken out of the ditch and money was subscribed to repair and regild it, in return for the miraculous aid it had vouchsafed; and so the Mother of God's herself again.

THE island of Chios, which has not yet recovered from the effects of the earthquakes God sent, is now suffering from another manifestation of the divine love in the shape of an unknown disease attacking the lemon and orange trees, upon which the livelihoods of the inhabitants chiefly depend. The pious islanders have borrowed a miracle-working girdle of the Virgin from one of the monasteries of Mount Athos, and a grand procession, headed by the priests, is bearing the sacred relic through the orchards. If the Virgin's girdle has any effect on the insects that destroy these trees, it will soon be tried on fleas and bugs further West, and all the people who sell vermin-powder will have to trade in some other article.

A LONG correspondence on faith-healing has been going on in the *Liverpool Mercury*. The Bethsham people claim 155 cures in the last twelve months. This is as good a list of miracles as Christ's, only they don't at present go in for raising the dead. The cures are said to include five cases of consumption, three of cancer, one of cataract, and one of total blindness. "Christianus," who is really only a partial believer, challenges the faith-healers to publicly cure a case of consumption which he will bring forward. We should like to see a couple of new legs prayed on to a crippled friend of ours. If he is cured we will subscribe a thousand prayers a year to Bethsham hospital.

THERE is a wealthy brewer in Montreal who built a church, and inscribed on it,—“This church was erected by Thomas Molson, at his sole expense.—Hebrews xx.” Some of the McGill College wags got a ladder one night, and altered the inscription so as to make it read, “This church was erected by Thomas Molson, at his soul's expense. He brews XX!”



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Saturday, June 21st, Harwick Street Board School, Sutton-in-Ashfield, at 7.30, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."  
 Sunday, June 22, Alexandra Rink, Nottingham:—at 11, "How I Fell among Thieves;" at 3, "Prison Thoughts on the Bible;" at 7, "The Gospel of Holloway Gaol."

June 29, Manchester; 30, Birmingham. July 6, Clarendon Hall; 8, Walworth; 13, Clarendon Hall; 20, Milton Hall; 27, Milton Hall. Aug. 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Clarendon Hall, London; 24, Milton Hall, London; 31, Milton Hall, London. Sept. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London; 21, Glasgow; 8, Edinburgh. Oct. 5, Liverpool; 19, Manchester.

## 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.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

DR. EDWARD AVELING'S ENGAGEMENTS.—June 22 and 29, Hall of Science.

T. KNIGHT.—The pamphlet is not worth notice, and the writer is beneath contempt.

MR. RAMSEY will be much obliged if Mr. Stebbing, late of 139 Fore Street, Exeter, will kindly send his present address.

JUSTITIA is "pleased to see the old fire infused into the *Freethinker* again," and trusts that "the reduced price of *Progress* will rapidly increase its sale."

J. R. STAMP.—Received with thanks.

F. GODFREY.—Thanks for the further cuttings. We believe that the reduced price of *Progress* will mean a far larger circulation.

R. ANDERSON writes that two fashionably-dressed young fellows have been begging in the streets at Kensington for a local church. One ground a barrow organ and the other went round with a collection-box. B. A. thinks this a sight to make Christians blush. Well, if they did it would be the first time since Peter's adventure with the cock.

J. DRENON asks us to state that the Milton Hall Botany Class meet at Charing Cross at 10 a.m., June 22, for an excursion to Keston Common, and will be glad if any friends will join them.

A. ANDERSON, Liverpool.—The paragraph referred to a church scandal in your city.

H. SEYMOUR.—The paragraph was already written.

C. GRIGGS, 7 Gilbert Road, Kennington, says that the South London Secular Hall Company have secured a fine freehold site in a prominent thoroughfare in Camberwell. More capital being needed the directors appeal for further support. Prospectuses will be sent on application to Mr. Griggs.

J.W.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

J. W. GRANTSHAW.—If your Sunday Cricket Club is ashamed to be identified with our party we cannot afford it further space.

S. TAYLOR.—We have written to the wholesale agent.

ATHEISTICAL YOUNG LADY.—All human beings do not "worship a god of some kind." We don't. Many do because they are taught to, and very few for any other reason. Thanks for the cuttings.

KAT AND DOBSON, Market Hall, Rochdale, sell the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature.

LOVER OF BLASPHEMY.—The joke has already appeared.

MRS. SMITH, 52 Leonard Street, Derby, supplies this and other Freethought journals.

P. STRZELICKI informs us that he was a Churchman until he read the report of our trials before Judge North. That converted him to Freethought, and he has since read the *Freethinker* with avidity. Michelet's *Life of Luther* is a standard work.—Price for binding *Freethinker* would be 4s. 6d.

J. L. MAHON.—When impecunious journalists spring into luxury by becoming M.P.'s, we form our own conclusion. One of these men got into the Court in Ireland through declining to pay the landlady for a swell dinner he gave his friends. The bill for champagne was enormous. Such public facts cannot be blinked. By the way, when is the League going to publish a balance-sheet?

T. SMITH.—If the Christians meet on Kingsland Green, the Ball's Pond Society should do so too. A few outdoor lectures during the summer would do the branch more good than anything else.

E. PACKHAM.—We fail to see how a poem which accuses Atheists of being dupes, callous, and debauched, is calculated to convert Christians to Freethought.

A. HARTLOW.—Too late for this week.

J. PHILLIPS.—The lecture is not published. Dr. Aveling is preparing a little work on the subject. Mr. Bradlaugh's "Genesis" is 5s.

W. BASS.—We don't think you need trouble much about the Boothites at Northampton.

INFLEXIBLE FREETHINKER.—Thanks. We have noted the Salisbury paragraph. Our Holiday Number will be ready early in July. Mr. Foote does not know yet what borough Sir William Harcourt will stand for. The text you want is in *Ecclesiastes*, chap. iii, 18-21.

G. PROESER.—We have read your letter with interest.

G. T.—Papers received with thanks.

WANTED, Nos. 1 and 2, Vol. I, *Freethinker*. Also No. 1, April, 1860; No. 6, June 1860; No. 78, November 1861; No. 107, May 1862; No. 154, April 1863; No. 182, November 1863, *National Reformer*. Would be willing to pay a good price for a copy of the *Oracle of Reason*.

## CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

MR. JOSEPH DAVIS, of Peckham Rye, has had a lively experience of Christian justice. Last March he went to St. Mary's College to hear Sir Hardinge Giffard, Mr. Marriott, and other pious patriots, denounce the "weak and vacillating policy of the Government." His ticket of admission was taken at the door in the usual way, but in the passage his right to enter was challenged, and he was finally thrown out by a number of Bible Conservatives. He was so much injured that for three weeks he was a patient at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The principal offender was William Phillips, of the Peckham Conservative Club, against whom Mr. Davis brought an action to recover £30 damages. The case was tried before Mr. Pitt Taylor at the Lambeth County Court, and the barrister for the defendant was Mr. H. C. Richards, the would-be Tory member for Northampton. The assault was clearly proved, but the jury returned a verdict for the defendant, although one of their number was so deaf that he never heard a word of the case. The judge treated this fact as a joke, and he appears to have spent most of his time in bandying puns with the witnesses. Mr. Richards, of course, dragged Mr. Bradlaugh's name into the case, and accused Mr. Davis not only of shouting "Three cheers for Bradlaugh," but of crying "To hell with the Bible," although this charge was distinctly disproved by his own witnesses. The result is that Mr. Davis is mulcted in costs to the tune of nineteen guineas. Mr. Davis appeals to us for assistance to prevent his home from being broken up. Mr. Bradlaugh has promised a guinea, and Mr. Foote another. Any subscriptions we receive before Tuesday morning, when the costs must be paid, will be handed to Mr. Davis.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

ROCHDALE gave Mr. Foote a hearty greeting last Sunday. The local branch of the N. S. S. is now in possession of a fine commodious hall, with committee rooms attached, and ground on which others can be erected. The hall, which has a gallery right round it, will hold nearly a thousand people, and when the walls are decorated as they will be with busts and portraits of great Freethinkers, it will look extremely handsome. We hope that all Freethinkers in the town will join the branch and help them to make the enterprise successful. Rochdale has shown an example which other towns in South Lancashire should emulate.

THE blasphemy demonstration at Tunbridge Wells was a great success. Delegates attended from Brighton, Hastings, Maidstone, Rochester, Chatham, Tonbridge and other places. A resolution condemning the Blasphemy Laws was spoken to by Messrs. Ramsey, Standing, Forder, Rowcroft and Seymour, and was carried in an audience of nearly five thousand with only one dissident. Mr. Tilley (of Brighton) was chairman and announced another meeting shortly at Brighton.

THE Nottingham Branch of the N. S. S. have engaged the Alexandra Rink for Mr. Foote's lectures to-day (Sunday, June 22) and they hope that all Freethinkers in the district will help to make his first visit since his release from gaol the occasion for a great demonstration against the Blasphemy Laws.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S Atheism does not appear to injure his reputation with the Northumberland miners. The Lodge votes for three outside speakers at their meeting on the 28th were as follows: John Morley, 113; C. Bradlaugh, 109; Lloyd Jones, 46. That fearful and wonderful representative of the working man, Henry Broadhurst, received only eight votes, and the erratic and too-too canny Joseph Cowen only six.

THE Rev. Dr. Curry, a Methodist preacher, is stated to have recently said in Chicago that we are not certain of the authorship of the Old Testament, and that he was "awfully shy of it, and that it abounds with ten thousand old wives' fables, which will finally drop out like a tadpole loses its tail when it has no further use for it."

OUR Holiday Number is well in hand and will be ready in a week or two. Freethinkers, professional bigots, sceptical parsons, and all sundry who are interested in "blasphemy," may look out for one of the raciest threeponnyworths ever published.

THE Swansea Corporation has decided to allow Sunday bands in the public parks, on the ground that a religious census showed that two-thirds of the population never attended a place of worship, and that something should be done for them. Sixty parsons, preachers and Sunday-school teachers formed a deputation to protest against this step, but they failed in their generous enterprise.

THE sky-pilots of Salisbury have so advertised the *Freethinker* that, according to the local *Times*, "its sale has increased in



the city." One clergyman compared it to the apple which tempted Eve, and the *Times* remarks that as apples are very appetising, the less they are advertised the better. Fortunately, however, the black gentry cannot leave the *Freethinker* alone. How can they be silent about a thing they hate. The truth is, we spend nothing in advertising because the enemy do it for us gratis.

On Tuesday, July 1, a dramatic entertainment, under the direction of Dr. Edward Aveling, takes place at Milton Hall. Tickets and particulars can be obtained from Dr. Aveling.

It is not often that Christians are honest enough and honorable enough to acknowledge the services rendered by Secularism, and its "scathing satire" in forcing men to become practical and progressive. The *Christian Commonwealth* owns that the churches fixed their attention so absorbingly on spiritual matters that they were "incurably indifferent" to the temporal miseries endured by mankind. And it continues: "Secularists declared with ringing vehemence the unspeakable value of the life that now is, and poured out rivers of scorn on churches that seemed to care only for the life to come, and not very intelligently for that. We owe them immense debts of gratitude for that service." The *C. C.* also owns that science was "fiercely decried" by bigots and was "turned from the door of the Church as a burlesque intruder."

We are often accused of drawing too harsh a picture of religion. But the *Christian Commonwealth* says:—"Unquestionably there are some religions whose paramount vice is that they have darkened down into dismal and deadly gloom every light of either reason or morality. Such religions flourish even in our midst to-day. Their object seems to be the extinction of every gleam of any light, whether of liberty, philosophy, virtue, or revelation. Every Protestant knows that he is so called as a witness against such gloomy systems." The Roman Catholic returns the compliment, and believes Protestantism to be dreadfully immoral and mischievous. Surely there must be some truth in the pictures which these Christians draw of each other.

In France, before 1881, all persons who refused to specify their creed in the census papers or who returned themselves as of no religion, were set down as Roman Catholics. Last time the results were made up rather more fairly, and seven and a half millions were returned as of no religion, against twenty-nine millions of Catholics.

The Bishop of Liverpool recently said, at Exeter Hall: "I see congregations now-a-days where everything almost is musical, everything is chanted, and a vast number of the people who attend never look at their prayer books at all. They take no part in the services, and many of them go more to listen to the musical performances than to worship Almighty God in spirit and truth."

The *Church Times* gives extracts from letters sent home by a Church missionary in China. He declares that those who trust to the usual account of missionary work "will be much misled." He speaks of it as a "sham fight," but has "no time or wish to expose all that is done." He complains that the Eucharist is "blasphemed," that Jesus has been spoken of as "half man and half God," and that the prayers have been of such a nature that a mandarin said, on leaving a service: "If any man addressed me as these men have God, I would have him beaten." Of course he says nothing against Church missionaries, being one himself. It is "some sectarian missionaries," or dissenters, who discredit Christianity, because they are "not fitted to cope with the more highly-educated and intelligent of the heathen to whom they may think themselves so far superior." He considers that Protestantism and Romanism cause the comparative failure of the missions. "These two troubles," he says, "are greater than all the natural difficulties of the field."

The *Christian Chronicle* says it is pained to see how mean the large congregations are. Even the Holy Communion, it complains, cannot move some to charity.

The following advertisement recently appeared in the *Melbourne Telegraph*:—"A Christian wanted; one who will lend on terms stated in Luke vi., 30 to 35." We may be sure that no answer has been received to this appeal. Christians do not care to "lend, hoping for nothing again," although their Lord and Master so commands them; and they think, as we do, that the divine injunction, "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again," is somewhat out of date.

MARY ELLEN CHASE (name not in directory or "Men of Our Time") gives assurance that there will be three women to one man in heaven. If Mary Ellen will stop to think she cannot but see that this is not the sort of talk which will move her sex Zionward.

## A GOOD WORD FOR THE DEVIL.

"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That they all might be damned who believe not the truth."—(2 Thessalonians ii., 11-12).

FOR many centuries the religious members of the human race have been guilty of a gross injustice. Having made or stolen a God and a Devil, they have constantly attributed all the good that has happened in the world to the former, and all the ill to the latter. They have been especially addicted to calling God the fountain of truth and the Devil the father of lies. It is a shame that it should be left to an infidel to plead in Satan's defence. Bible believers ought to be aware of his innocence, and that Jahveh is the real culprit. It is true that in some Italian churches there are, or were a few years ago, priests called the "Devil's advocates," who pretended to defend his cause in mock debate; but the traitors had taken bribes from the other side and shamefully betrayed the interest of their client.

I sometimes think that Abraham's preference for Jahveh over the other gods of his fathers, might to some extent have proceeded from that deity's ability to tell a good stout lie. Lying was a favorite practice of that patriarch. He taught his wife the art, and between them they found that, backed up with other practices we can scarcely admire for their morality, it paid very well. He said to Sarai, "Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me for thy sake, and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and men servants, and maid servants, and she asses, and camels." (Genesis xii., 13-16.) When Abram left that country he was "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (xiii., 2.) At a later date he tried the same experiment on Abimelech, King of Gerar, and received as a reward sheep, oxen, men servants, women servants, land, and a thousand pieces of silver (xx., 14-16). Now Abraham pitched upon a god who had told Adam that he should surely die on a certain day (ii., 17) 930 years before his actual death occurred (v., 5), and congratulated himself that he had found a god after his own heart. And, in truth, he made an excellent selection for his purpose. Our text tells us in the plainest terms that God makes us believe lies, and then damns us for taking his word; but as "he that believes not shall be damned" (Mark xvi., 16), the whole of mankind would necessarily travel in a downward direction were it not that, like all tyrants, Jahveh makes exceptions of his special favorites. "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (1 Galatians iii., 6.) Those who are not willing to barter honor, truth, and every human virtue for camels, he asses and she asses, must expect different treatment; and as god is sure to damn them either for believing or not believing, it would only be wise of them to take sides with the Devil, the proprietor of their future residence.

It is an abominable misrepresentation to call the Devil the "father of lies." In the third chapter of Genesis we have an account of a conversation between Eve and a talking serpent, but it is not stated that that serpent was the Devil. John in his wonderful book of Revelations calls the Devil "an old serpent" in two places (xii., 9, and xx., 2), but the serpent of Genesis was no fallen angel, but "a beast of the field the Lord God had made" (iii., 1.) And even if the serpent and the devil were one, or if, as most theologians have supposed, the Devil spoke by the instrumentality of the serpent there is no falsehood recorded against him. "The serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die. For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (verses 4, 5). According to the rest of the story, it happened just as the serpent had foretold, but had it been otherwise he could not have been the father of lies, for Jahveh had been beforehand with him in that business.

If I believed this silly fable, instead of thanking God for my creation, I would rather say, "O wise serpent! O excellent and merciful Devil! You saw your old enemy had started a manufactory of naked savages and gaping idiots, whom he intended to keep in ignorance of the



difference between good and evil, that they might be blind to his crimes, and pay him senseless adoration. But you changed all that. We owe our moral sense, our freedom, our humanity to you, for without you we might all have been like grovelling beasts, staring at a fruit we dared not touch, without knowing whether it was right or wrong to do so. We can only judge of the future by our experience of the past. God gave me only bare existence, you have furnished me with all that makes life worth living. If I am to have an existence after this, grant me a place in thy kingdom. O praise the Devil all ye nations; praise him all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Devil endureth for ever. Praise ye the Devil." (Psalm cvii., slightly altered.)

E. J. BOWTELL.

(To be concluded.)

### INGERSOLL THREATENED.

COLONEL INGERSOLL has been threatened with arrest for blasphemy in Philadelphia, the city whose name signifies brotherly love. The Rev. I. H. Terrence, secretary of the Pennsylvania Bible Society, announced that if the Colonel indulged in his usual blasphemy in lecturing he should find himself in a prison cell, under a law which says that any person who shall "blaspheme or speak loosely or profanely of Almighty God, Christ Jesus, Holy Spirit, or the Scriptures of Truth" shall be fined a hundred dollars and imprisoned for three months. Ingersoll laughs at the threats, and says he did not think anyone was idiotic enough to have him arrested for blasphemy. He thought an infinite being could take care of himself without the aid of an agent of a Bible society. He had been threatened before, but never arrested. The threat showed that his lectures were needed—that religious people do not know what real liberty is. If all who took the name of God in vain were imprisoned, there would not be room enough in the gaols to hold the ministers. They speak of God in the most flippant and snap-your-fingers way that can be conceived. They speak to him as though he was an intimate chum, and metaphorically clap him on the back in the most familiar manner possible. As Christians believed that he (the Colonel) would suffer in hell for ever, they ought to be satisfied and let him have a good time here. Mr. Terrence could amuse himself through all eternity by seeing him wriggle on the gridiron of God's revenge, and that ought to be enough to satisfy, not only an agent, but the whole Bible society. He thought that when Mr. Terrence cooled down he would see he had made a mistake. If arrested he should do nothing except defend himself in court.

In the evening the Colonel gave a splendid lecture on Orthodoxy to an unusually enthusiastic and responsive audience. Nothing more was heard of the Christian threats till a day or two afterwards, when Mr. Terrence announced that notes of the lecture would be placed in the hands of counsel. "If our shorthand report is found to contain such blasphemous expressions as come legally within the statute," continued Mr. Terrence, "then you may be quite sure that a decision will be reached which, very probably, will lead to Colonel Ingersoll's arrest. We don't want to give Ingersoll any notoriety, but we do think that it would be beneficial if he should be remonstrated with by the enforcement of the law against blasphemy."

### GOD'S TRUTH ABOUT GOD.

(A CHAPTER OF CONTRADICTIONS.)

(Continued from p. 62.)

God, who is everywhere (Psalm cxxxix., 7) and whose eyes are in every place (Prov. xv., 3) "came down to see the city and the tower (of Babel) which the children of men builded," and being afraid lest they should reach heaven, hit upon the bright idea of confounding their language, so that they should not succeed (Gen. xi., 2-8)

God, who is invisible (1 Tim. i., 17), promised to show Moses his back parts (Exodus xxxii., 23.) "No man hath seen him at any time" (1 John vi., 12), yet Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihir and seventy of the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel, and the nobles of the children of Israel also saw God (Exodus xxiv., 1-11) and lived! although "there shall no man see him and live" (Exodus xxxiii., 20.) He is the invisible God (Colossians i., 15) yet Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face" (Genesis xxxii., 30.)

"With God all things are possible" (Matthew xix., 26), yet it took him six days to make the world, after which he was so tired that he had to rest one whole day to refresh himself (Gen. i., etc.)

"Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. xviii., 14.) Surely not, "for with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke i., 37.) Wherefore it is written—"He drove out the inhabitants of the mountains, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron" (Judges i., 19.)

"His anger endureth but a moment" (Psalm xxix., 5), "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and fourth

generations" (Exodus xx., 5), although "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Exodus xviii., 20.)

God, who is a god of love and peace (2 Corinthians xiii., 11), who hates iniquity (Psalm v., 5), hardened Pharaoh's heart that he might continue in sin, and plagued him and his people because he did continue in sin (Exodus vii. to xiii.)

"There is no unrighteousness in him" (Psalm xcii., 15.) "He is without iniquity" (Deut. xxii., 4), yet his anger being kindled against Israel, "he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. xxiv., 1); and, because David did what he had moved him to do, he slew seventy thousand men (2 Sam. xxiv., 15.)

"Good and upright is the Lord" (Psalm xxv., 8), yet God hardened the spirit of Sihon, King of Heshbon, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into the hands of the Israelites; who said, "And the Lord our God delivered him before us, and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people; and we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city—we left none to remain" (Deut. ii., 30-37.) (For a similar instance God's love see also Deut. iii., 1-21.)

God, who felt sorely aggrieved that Jonah should think him capable of the wickedness of destroying "persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (Jonah iv., 11), yet commanded Moses to war against the Midianites, and said, through Moses, his mouthpiece, "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones" (Numbers xxxi., 7-18.)

After all these proofs, if there are any who still do not believe in God's "marvellous loving kindness" (Ps. xvii., 7) and "tender mercies" (Psalm xxv., 6), here is another instance—"The children of Israel, having had nothing but manna to eat for two years and two months (Numbers x., 11), wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat. . . . And the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly. . . . And there went forth a wind from the Lord and brought quails from the sea. . . . And the people stood up. . . . and they gathered the quails. . . . And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed. . . . The Lord smote the people with a very great plague" (Num. xi.)

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xii., 22), as we have previously argued; but to impress the truth more firmly upon the minds of doubters, we would mention that he blessed Abram, who lied twice in representing to Pharaoh and Abimelech at different times that his wife Sarai or Sarah was not his wife, but his sister (Gen. xii., 10-13; xx., 2); that he blessed Sarah, who lied to his face (Gen. xviii., 12-15); and that he also blessed Isaac, who likewise lied in representing his wife to be his sister (Gen. xxvi., 17.) This list of God's favorite liars is continued in the next paragraph.

EDGAR T. BENTON.

### PROFANE JOKES.

In Scotland, a clergyman of the Established Church and a Free Kirk clergyman had long been sworn enemies, had abused each other and each other's doctrines, both in the pulpit and out of it. One evening the latter returning home drunk falls into a ditch. His enemy passing by an hour later has the magnanimity to offer to pull him out, but looking up to him with an angry glare the Free Kirkman repulses him with: "Go you son of Belial and let the servant of the Lord rest."

"I THINK I shall go to the circus this year when it comes round," said the minister to his wife. "Why! my dear," she exclaimed, shocked at the idea; "you surely will not act so inconsistently. You have always been opposed to theatres, circuses, and things of that kind." "That is true, but the circus this year has a sacred elephant, and, of course, there can't be any harm in going to see that." "Certainly not, my dear; we will go together!"

DRAW poker has a great hold on some people. It is their ruling passion—a passion so strong that conversion cannot stand before it. One night this week, four Sunday-school teachers and exemplary church-members met together in a certain house on — street. After comparing experiences and discussing the best methods of instructing the youth how to shoot, one of the brothers proposed a game of religious and sanctified draw poker. It is a very fascinating and strictly moral game. The brethren played all night. Each card has an appropriate Bible text printed upon it. Brother R — was badly broken up on a flush of "Come unto Me's," and Brother M — won three dollars on a pair of "Seek Me Earlies." Pious poker is destined to be a very fashionable game in Sunday-school circles.

"ARE you still a member of the Temple Baptist church?" "Yes," she answered, "but its very pokey, and I'm getting awfully tired of it." "Tired of it! You surprise me!" "Do I? Then you can't imagine what it is. In Mrs. Sprawl's church they're trying the clergyman for bigamy; at Mrs. Chizzleton's there's a jolly row among the deacons; Mr. Jorkins tells me a big scandal is brewing in their congregation, and unless something exciting happens in our church pretty soon, I know I shall have to attend divine worship somewhere else."





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