

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

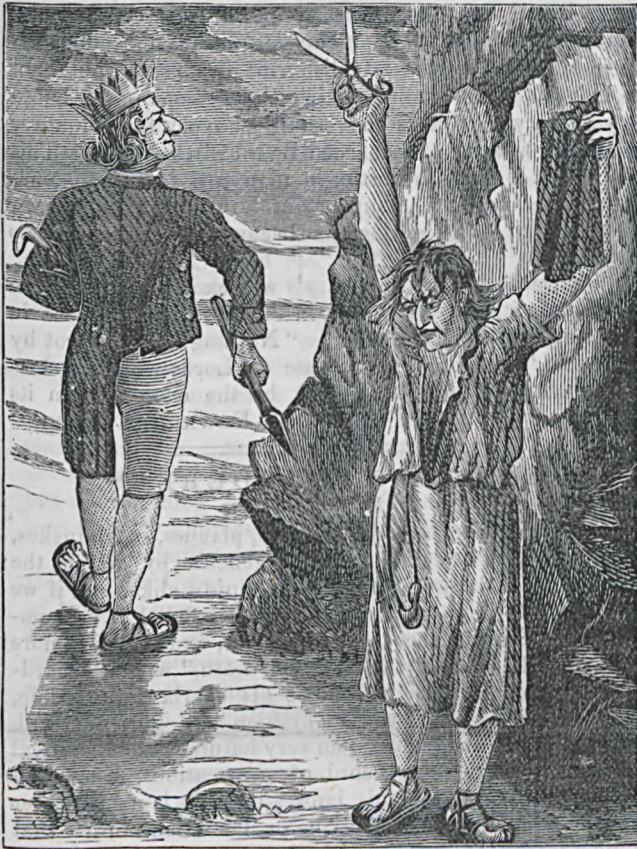
Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

Vol. IV.—No. 26.]

JUNE 29, 1884.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 76.



A PENITENT SNIP.

"Then David arose and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. And it came to pass afterwards that David's heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's skirt."—1 SAMUEL XXIV, 4-5.

SPURGEON'S LAURELS.

THE praises of Spurgeon, so lustily chanted in chorus by the daily papers lately, are another proof that nothing succeeds like success. Twenty-five years ago the London journals treated him as a vulgar eccentricity, a pulpit mountebank, a pious joke, a standing butt for ridicule and laughter. Intellectually, he is very much the same man now that he was then. His creed is as narrow, as sterile, and as alien to all the best thought and culture of the age; and the little loose learning he has been able to pick up is utterly unscientific and ludicrously antiquated. He is at home with authors that no scholar ever reads, except in the spirit with which a biologist might study a fossil organism of some extinct species. He knows next to nothing of the Biblical scholarship of modern Germany and Holland; and it is needless to say that he knows absolutely nothing of that modern Science which is revolutionising the world of thought, shattering the dynasties of Superstition, and erecting the Republic of Reason. What then has wrought this complete change in the editorial mind? Why this. Gifted by nature with a beautiful soft voice, which makes the dreariest platitudes and the baldest rhetoric attractive, and the wretchedest hymns sound like exquisite poetry, Mr. Spurgeon has held together with a more sober style of preaching the congregation he first gathered by means very similar to those of General Booth. And having, like the leader of the Salvation Army, a talent for organisation, he has succeeded in building up a church, in the ecclesiastical sense, out of the ample materials provided for him by centuries of Christian activity. His congregation was at first poor and mean; it became more respectable as his success

increased; and for years now the money has been flowing in freely from plethoric purses in all parts of the world. With money, such organisation as Mr. Spurgeon's is possible; and without it, impossible. There is an air of vulgarity about it all—a triumphant flourish of commonplace power. There is nothing high, heroic, superlative; nothing that appeals from the present to the future, and awaits the verdict of posterity. There is luxury at the top and an almshouse at the bottom. There is a huge tasteless Tabernacle for a temple, and a college to breed future high priests for similar establishments. But this kind of thing imposes on the ordinary editorial mind, which has no higher ideal than commercial success. Thus we find the columns of the daily papers full of Booth reviews and Spurgeon celebrations, without a single line on a meeting of four or five thousand earnest people to hear a debate on Socialism or to agitate for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

Mr. Spurgeon is now, as when he first preached, a Calvinist. The creed of that morose Genevan is the one he was taught, and he is not the man to think out a creed for himself. Indeed, nothing could be more certain evidence of Mr. Spurgeon's want of intellect and imagination than the *bonhomie* of his bearing, and the pleasant way in which he preaches the most horrible system that mental disease ever invented. How can a man laugh, tell stories, and crack jokes, when he knows that nearly everybody he meets is going to hell, and that God Almighty who made them will torture them for ever and ever? Charity requires us to conclude that he is unable to realise the full meaning of his belief. If he did realise it, he would be the most callous, heartless, disgusting creature on the face of the earth, and infinitely worse than any murderer who slays his fellow in a moment of passion or greed.

Judged by a fair intellectual standard, what is Mr. Spurgeon's position? Has he ever spoken or written anything that touches the world at large, or that anybody will care to preserve after his death, when his personal influence has disappeared? We venture to assert that his voluminous publications contain less valuable matter than any collection of the same size extant. It is simply absurd to mention them in the same breath with the essays and sermons of a Newman, a Kingsley, a Robertson, or even a Stanley.

Judged too by a fair practical standard, what are Mr. Spurgeon's achievements? What unpopular cause has he championed? What struggling cause has he befriended? Has he ever raised his voice on behalf of any great principle in the hour of its danger? Has he ever stood up for any of the rights of man when they were imperilled? Has he any conception of religious liberty beyond the right of Nonconformity to differ from the Established Church? How many speeches has he made on behalf of Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take his lawful seat? What protest did he make when three Freethinkers were sent to gaol for differing from thirteen Christians? Mr. Spurgeon has never stepped outside the limits of his narrow creed in religion, politics or sociology. He has always been on the popular side, the safe side, the winning side. The admiring scribes of our daily and religious press may shout "Great is Spurgeon of the Tabernacle." Lord Shaftsbury and Dr. Parker may join in the chorus, and Mr. Gladstone may contribute a cheap compliment. But posterity cannot be deceived any more than it can be bribed. Its verdict will be given on the facts. A hundred years hence, when Spurgeon is forgotten, posterity will remember the few men and women who were not "successful," in the vulgar sense of the word, who were sometimes swept into the wreckage of fortune, but who fought while life lasted for liberty and justice, offered up their all as a willing sacrifice on "the altar of man's highest hopes," and were the invincible forlorn hope of the world's progress.

G. W. FOOTE.

LORD SALISBURY ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

"ONCE have I heard, yea, twice have I uttered," saith the Lord, and the Lord is Salisbury. Unfortunately for the world and for himself, the uncertain marquis has spoken many times. He talks not wisely, but too much. I am not concerned here with his political utterances. But he has of late been giving forth to the world some lucubrations on the subject of religion.

As religion is supposed to be connected with morality, Lord Salisbury is not the man whom the world would expect to take up this subject. The statesman whose very title has become a nickname for a falsehood, to whose gross inaccuracies we owe the use of the word Salisbury for a political lie, might with advantage to himself be silent on such a topic. Nor can the accusation be made that we are raking up old offences against the Marquis. The familiar, and often dangerous phrase, "Let bygones be bygones" is not apt in this connexion, for the self-same journals that give us the report of Lord Salisbury's talk about religion tell us of a recklessly false statement made by the Tory peer about Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The initials of this gentleman's name, one would think, should entitle him to respect from any believer in Christianity. I am not sure, however, that the fact that the President of the Board of Trade may, when in a hurry, sign himself in the abbreviated form suitable to the founder of the Christian religion (if he ever wrote), does not increase the bitterness of the feelings of Lord Salisbury against him.

My lord has been speaking at a meeting of the National Society. This is practically a society for protecting the vested interests of the Church of England in the education of this country. Its name national can only be applied to it in the same sense as drunkenness is called the national vice of this land. For every effect of this society is detrimental to the welfare of the community. With a selfishness too striking to be regarded as wholly unconscious its members care nothing as to how they impede the general spread of education, so long as the rights and privileges of the Church are not encroached upon.

The nature of its principles may be gathered from some of the luminous remarks of the whilom leader of the Tory party. They are luminous with a lurid light threatening to the freedom of our people. "Religion in its entirety, and as a matter of dogma, should be taught to children." "In its entirety" is good. We shall have Professor Max Müller and Co. delivering Hilbert lectures to the children of our Boards Schools under the auspices of the National Society ere long.

Then comes the usual expression of anxiety on behalf of revealed religion. This is an anxiety that seems so misplaced as to be unreasonable, and always appears to indicate a disbelief in the Bible. For according to that high authority, God has revealed these things not to the wise and prudent, such as the members of the National Society and Lord Salisbury, but to the very babes on whose account these wise and prudent ones are exercised in mind.

Lord Salisbury understands one sign of the times. He is a man shrewd enough, and he knows that many conceal their opinions. But he does not know the feelings of those who, shunning concealment, fight him and his allies to the death—of religion. He calls us bitter. He does not understand that we attack more in sorrow than in anger. When friends are imprisoned, homes broken up, lives wrecked, a not unnatural feeling of bitterness comes. But in our assaults upon religion, our attempts to neutralise and undo its ill work, we are too much in earnest, and the thing we assail, hideous as are its results, is too contemptible in itself, for bitterness.

The Marquis of Salisbury kindly relieves those who think that after religion has passed through several filters something will be left behind to which no one will object. If he reads Bacon he will doubtless tell us what is then left—"like distilled waters flashing on flaccid things." But the illustration is like the policeman's life in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, it is not a happy one. For we never need to filter anything unless there is evil matter in it. Now my Lord of Salisbury would have the children drink the poisonous stream of religion in all its native foulness.

He protests against a teacher of the young "wrapping up thorny points in ambiguous language." As a diplomatist the Marquis probably feels that to do this is to encroach upon his calling. But from the protest we learn (1) that

there are thorny points in connexion with religion, (2) that Lord Salisbury wishes children to be impaled upon them.

With considerable ingenuity he tempers the rough wind of National Society ideas to such shorn lambs as may have a sneaking affection for Board Schools. The Society is not an enemy to School Boards in all places and under all circumstances. Naturally. Where the feeling of the people is too strong in favor of a true national system of education, the false National Society should be discreetly and decorously silent. But it can do its evil work in country villages and small towns, and through the influence of its emissaries on School Boards can hamper in a thousand petty ways the march of knowledge.

With great magnanimity the National Society will not oppose Board Schools "where a better form of education cannot be had," *i.e.*, where its myrmidons are not sufficiently powerful to prevent the establishment of these uprooters of the Church. The ground which these people take as to the voluntary schools is that those who pay for voluntary schools ought not to be charged Board rates as well. This is as honest a claim as that of a man not to pay income-tax because he was the support of a widowed mother, or to be exempt from a dog-tax because his cats were so expensive.

One phrase of Lord Salisbury's was excellent, if only he would apply it and expound it in the obstructive House in which he is the chief offender. "Nothing is to be got by sitting still." If only the House of Lords would understand that nothing is to be got by the country from its still sitting!

EDWARD AVELING.

CHRISTIAN MURDERERS.

If we consider the terrible famines, plagues, earthquakes, floods, and other death-dealing agencies by which the Christian God slays the just and the unjust alike, and if we consider the crimes he committed and ordered to be committed according to the Old Testament, and the still more atrocious inflictions of the "second death," which, according to the New Testament, will be his everlasting pastime, the conjunction of the words Christian and murderer will, to the unbiassed judgment, seem very natural; and historical Christianity, with its record of persecutions, wars and massacres, will confirm this impression. It is not however with the wholesale kind of divine or Christian murder that we now intend to deal, nor shall we now speak at length of the innumerable religious assassins who, since the time when God raised up Ehud to deliver Israel by assassinating a too-confiding king, have used knife and poison and bullet for the love of God or priestly gold.

Commonplace Christian murderers, especially as exemplified in the latest American case, will be the subject of our remarks. The wickedness of their offence is obvious even to Christians, for the issue is not obscured by the love of military glory, or by the hatred of rival sects. Yet these wretches, destitute though they almost always are, in common with the criminal classes in general, of conscience, and showing no signs of remorse for their guilt, or sorrow for the consequences of their crimes to others, though they often exhibit great sorrow for the consequences to themselves, often display a thorough belief in God and immortality, and a hopeful faith in Christ, to which the bulk of the non-criminal classes cannot lay claim. Peace was sure of heaven. Carey and his gang were religious from first to last. Guiteau, who assassinated President Garfield, was so pious that he could not bear to hear a profane word. Jesse James, the notorious train-robber, "was such a valiant soldier of the cross that he shot a companion for denying the doctrine of endless punishment."

Lloyd L. Majors, who has been a Methodist preacher and president of a Young Men's Christian Association, and who was hanged at Oakland, California, on May 23, furnishes us with another conspicuous instance of the religious criminal. This cowardly wretch hired and armed two assassins to do the brutal work which he lacked courage and nerve to carry out himself. Under his directions they murdered two old men for the sake of the money supposed to be concealed in their cottage. The murderers returned to him with the news that they had killed the old man but could not discover the plunder. He hastily rode to the scene of the crime and ransacked the place while one body was still warm on the floor and the other was lying outside the door. Then he fired the cottage and watched the flames until the corpse within was charred beyond recognition.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* says that "if anything were wanting to complete the measure of public disgust inspired by this miscreant, it would be the record of his last hours."

His time was spent in pious appeals to God, and the indulgence of an extraordinary appetite for ham and eggs. His spiritual adviser, an Episcopal minister, was the only person to whom he would talk. Through him this saintly believer has given the world a statement of his ideas, in which he tells us that the Bible and the holy spirit are the only rules of conduct for man in this life, and that his own faith is the faith of the established orthodox church. He hates spiritualism, and declares it to be the most pernicious doctrine taught to-day. He is sadly afraid some medical institution will obtain his body for dissection. Such a proceeding, he says, "would be most unkind." He continues: "I shall enter eternity without any fear or without any doubt. My trust is entirely in the master, and I have had the full assurance of my acceptance. I believe that every man must be born of the water and of the spirit, and then he is in the kingdom of God, and I believe that there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved, except the name of Christ. My hope is so strong in him that it bridges over all the present trouble, and by the grace of God he has saved me." He displayed no sorrow for others, no anxiety for the widow and children he left to want and shame, no remorse or pity for the aged victims of his crime, but only a selfish hope of his own glorious salvation, based on Biblical assurances.

Such sickening cases bring Christianity into utter contempt. They reveal clearly the hideous immorality of its main doctrines. As the *Ironclad Age* points out, religion saves the wrong man. It helps the murderer into heaven but does nothing for the poor fellow whom he has hurried into eternity unprepared and unforgiven.

If Christianity is true, the believing assassin, like the thief on the Cross, awakes in paradise, and sings holy songs of triumph over his unbelieving victims who writhe for ever in the flames of hell below. Is it not time that these revolting doctrines should be driven from men's minds, and that the book which inculcates them should cease to be recognised as an authoritative guide to moral conduct?

W. P. BALL.

I'D RATHER BE DAMNED.

I FIRMLY believed in the days of my youth
That the Bible was God's holy word;
I swallowed the lot, and ne'er doubted the truth
Of its tales, which I now think absurd.
Like medicine, whether I liked it or not,
Down my throat by my teachers 'twas crammed;
But now, than believe such egregious rot,
I would rather—yes, rather—be damned.

As a child I oft lay awake trembling with fear
At the threats which the vile book contains;
I said many a prayer and shed many a tear
As I thought of the horrible pains
Which for ever in hell I should have to endure
If heaven's gate in my face should be slammed,
And I should be kept out from that golden shore;
But I now would much rather be damned.

Such men are in heaven, if the doctrine be true,
As David and Peace and Lefroy,
And to be in the presence of such a vile crew
Would really be far from a joy.
Whilst with those who on earth were the noblest and best
The bottomless pit will be crammed,
And if that is the case, why it must be confessed
That I'd rather—yes, rather—be damned.

S. BELLCHAMBERS.

A POINT THEY AGREED UPON.—A clergyman tells the following story, at his own expense, with much glee: "He exchanged with a brother minister one Sunday evening when there was considerable interest in the choir performances of the church. Coming out, after service, and walking homeward in the darkness, he found himself directly behind three women, two of whom were discussing the music of the singers. They couldn't agree. One thought the soprano was flat or sharp, and the other criticised the alto or baritone, and so it went on in discordant style. Presently the third woman, hitherto silent but meditative, struck in with a single remark, which harmonised all discords and seemed to reduce the gossiping trio to unanimity and unison. "Well," said she, "'twas a miserable sermon, anyhow!" There was not the faintest syllable of dissent from this opinion. The women went their way satisfied, reconciled. The person acquiesced.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Alexander Ross has died from drinking unfiltered water which induced dysentery. His faith must have been weak, for according to Mark xvi., 17, 18, if believers "drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Church Times*, who in the proper High Church style dates his letter "St. Alban's Eve, 1884," complains of the irreverence of the worshippers at St. Paul's Cathedral, and wants the authorities to interfere. One woman was eating sandwiches, and three men were asleep on the benches. Our opinion is, that they were the most usefully occupied people in the building.

THE *Christian Chronicle* has a paragraph on "The Motherliness of God." We always thought the God of modern Christians was a bit of an old woman.

THE Rev. W. E. Oliphant, one of the "Converted Curates," says he is "married for better and worse, for richer and poorer, to God and the Salvation Army." Good heavens! Does the man really mean it? Is he married to the whole Army? If so, Solomon isn't in the running with him. Fancy, one husband to all those Hallelujah Lasses!

MONTE CARLO, with its infamous gambling-hells, which are reported to have caused thirty-two cases of suicide already this season, is correspondingly orthodox in its piety. Rome is supreme, and no Protestant is allowed to distribute tracts or Bibles, or to open a church. Piety is the readiest means of making vice respectable. Worship God and obey the Church, and it doesn't matter if you do ruin your fellow man and drive him into a suicide's grave.

THE Unitarian Association is petitioning the Queen against the Athanasian Creed. They don't like to be told thirteen times a year that without doubt they shall perish everlastingly. They resent this official "insult" as a great offence against their religious feelings. Poor things, and do they feel a religious insult so keenly? Yet they hadn't the pluck the other day to support Mr. Geldart's resolution against the wicked Blasphemy Laws. Freethinkers may suffer twelve months' solitary confinement; but poor dear Unitarians mustn't have their feelings hurt by religious rubbish uttered in churches that they don't attend.

THE Rev. E. A. Campbell, of Aberdare, complains of the ignorance of the children in religious matters. He says that a child, after attending Sunday-school regularly for seven years, had never heard of Adam and Eve. To remedy this laziness or incompetence on the part of the paid clergy and their friends, he insists that the State shall make its schoolmasters do the religious work for him in the day-schools.

If Mr. Campbell has his way we shall probably see some special classes established for the study of Bible characters: Monday—Adam and Eve; Tuesday—Abraham and Sarah; Wednesday—Lot, Mrs. Lot and the Misses Lot; Thursday—Judah and Tamar; Friday—The Levite and his Concubine; Saturday—David and Bathsheba. A few weeks of this, and an occasional dip into the Song of Solomon, would make our school-children perfect patterns of innocence and modesty.

MR. SPURGEON has been unbosoming himself to the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Some of his views are worth noticing. For instance, he says that wealthy Nonconformists are only kept in the Liberal ranks by their hatred of the State Church. This is what we have always contended. At bottom, religious people take sides in all public disputes on religious grounds. Abolish the State Church and it will then be seen that the Liberalism of Nonconformity has been an historical accident. By-and-by all great issues will be cleared. We shall see on the one side Christianity and Conservatism and on the other Freethought and Republicanism.

MR. SPURGEON also gave his view of the efficacy of prayer. He needs £8,000 a year, besides the endowment, for his Orphanage; and, says he, "I ask God for it, and he sends it." It is difficult not to cry out "hypocrite!" in reply to this statement. Mr. Spurgeon tells thousands of people, as well as the Lord, that he wants money; and when the cash arrives it always comes through human channels. Let Mr. Spurgeon tell the Lord *only*, and see if that personage will supply his wants. He knows better than to try.

NATURALLY Mr. Spurgeon denounced theatres. They are in a sense rival establishments. If a man wishes to go to the theatre, says Mr. Spurgeon, it shows that he has not the grace of God in his heart. All this nonsense bears out Mr. Arnold's view of the vulgarity of Dissent. If the Nonconformists were supreme we should have no architecture superior to their ugly chapels, no painting that soared above clerical portraits and domestic scenes, no music sublimer than Sankey's solos, no poetry of a higher character than their conventicle ditties,

and no amusements more exciting than tea-meetings. They would rob life of all its color and reduce our existence to the dull drab of a Sunday congregation. May God, if there be a God, defend us from such a doom.

MR. SPURGEON'S stables and coach-house are protected against witches and devils by a monstrous horseshoe. It weighs two hundredweight. It was presented to him by an admirer, who must have thought that size added largely to the efficacy of this well-known specific against wicked spirits.

"LORD, how the world is given to lying!" exclaimed Jack Falstaff. Honest Jack himself could do a little in that line, but there are Christian editors in this fourth quarter of the nineteenth century who could beat him hollow. The *Christian Herald* has a proud distinction in this business. Its latest feat is a story of an Atheist at Croydon, who "brought one of his infidel books to a lady worker, requesting her to destroy it," and promising to "bring a hundred more the next morning." This case, says pious Baxter, "cannot fail to have an influence amongst the many infidels who are to be found in Croydon." Of course not. They will no doubt think that if the Devil is the father of liars as well as of lies, Baxter is probably his eldest son.

HOLY Baxter might, however, lie a little more cleverly. He should not be quite so circumstantial. It gives us an opportunity of convicting him out of his own mouth. This infidel book-burner was "a prominent Atheist and a preacher in Bradlaugh's Hall of Science." Now the lecturers at the Hall of Science can be numbered on less than the fingers of two hands. We know every one of them, and not one does or ever did live at Croydon. Oh, Joey Baxter! Joey Baxter, Oh!

THE *Rock* notices how deeply permeated the French peasantry are with "infidelity." At a country fair the owner of a marionette show representing the Devil and his "angels" thrusting new arrivals into an abyss of fire and smoke, made his severest comments on a priest and a nun. His scathing denunciations were vociferously applauded by the audience. In this boasted land of liberty such a show would be confiscated and its owner would experience the Christian mercies of the Blasphemy Laws.

At a certain musical church the other Sunday, the anthem occupied three-quarters of an hour and the sermon five minutes. They are afraid of being cut out by the rival performances of a Sunday band in the neighborhood.

It is from religious motives that a certain high caste among the Hindoos amputate the top joint of the third and fourth fingers of a bride's hand the day before her marriage. Brides cannot object because they are always married off in their infancy. Christian papers think this barbarous and cruel, and they want the authorities to interfere. They do not reflect that God was barbarous and cruel when he instituted circumcision, and that God the Son sanctified the pious mutilation by undergoing it himself.

"A Hour among the Dead" is the strange title under which Baron Palet describes his visit to the Barefooted Nuns, who consider themselves "dead to the world." Nearly all of them are under twenty-three years of age. The severity of the religious exercises and penances with which they gratify the Lord, is so great that almost all of these poor dupes die young. They have to spend ten hours every day upon their knees. They walk barefooted over a cold stone flooring, and never warm themselves at a fire even during the severest winter. They live entirely on alms, eat meat only once a year, sleep on a narrow board, and are very seldom allowed to speak to each other. And people tell us what an excellent thing religion is.

DR. BURTON, Dean of Chichester, has published the sermon he recently preached before the University of Oxford in opposition to the higher education of women. He is astonished at the "essential immodesty" of the idea. He is evidently great upon propriety, for on another occasion he was equally struck with the essential immodesty of men having female servants. He draws his arguments against female education from Genesis and St. Paul. Woman is to be only "a helpmeet for man," and is to learn in silence of her husband. "Sisters in Christ" may, however, be educated in "sacred science," their extraordinary "aptness" for which is "a part of the loveliness of their nature." As the Dean maintains the essential inferiority of woman's intellect, this says but little for the sacred science he extols so highly.

THE Rev. P. F. Duffey has been fined forty shillings and costs for riding on the North London Railway Company's line without paying his fare, an offence which he has committed more than once. This sky-pilot appears to think that the route to Tottenham is as free as the route to Heaven, and that railway tickets should be like the gospel—without money and without price.

THE Rev. Mercer Davies has addressed two more letters to the Bishop of London. This clergyman of the Church of England has the audacity to believe that God's Word is an authoritative guide to morality. He finds that concubinage is a thoroughly Biblical institution highly approved by nearly all God's favorites and never condemned. As he has openly and expressly made his practice correspond to Biblical guidance, the bishops excommunicate him, not so much of course for following patriarchal examples as for honestly avowing and defending his conduct in a learned book in which he proves that polygamy and concubinage are sanctioned by the Bible. He must be right, for, as the *Rock* says, the word of God is "an unerring guide and standard."

A PANIC occurred on Sunday night during a revival service at a Methodist Calvinist Chapel at Brynsey, Anglesey. Scores of people leaped from the windows to the ground, others rushing to the doors, where many were knocked down and trampled upon. Severe injuries were sustained by many, but no deaths are reported. Religious people are quite as easily frightened as other people, and probably rather more so. Their trust in God breaks down immediately it is put to a practical test. Surely the faith that can remove mountains might hold up a church gallery. And if they are all safe in the arms of Jesus why show so much alarm at a few splinters?

CARDINAL MANNING'S pastoral letter is a diatribe against Secular education. He knows very well that unless the Church can manipulate the minds of children its days are numbered. Priestly opposition to the godless system of school boards is perfectly intelligible. It is a mere trick of the trade.

THE Hon. and Rev. C. J. Littleton, vicar of Penkridge, describes Mr. John Bright as "a lunatic or a rogue." There is little room for doubt as to which of these Parson Littleton is. Mr. Joseph Arch he called "a liar," and Christians outside the Church of England "drunken, dissolute Dissenters." Whenever we wish to be vituperative we have only to read for a few minutes what Christians say of each other.

THE *Sporting Chronicle* gives an amusing account of a colored gentleman's adventures as a licensed preacher under the name of Smith. For ten years he made a good living on the money he collected for missionary work. His last appeals were for the founding of a home for old people in Senegambia, where in fact he intended to settle himself. He is now in gaol, and sighs in vain for the refuge he had provided for his old age.

THIS negro preacher reminds us of an enterprising Yankee who got up a society for converting the heathen. When 100,000 dollars were collected he bolted with the cash, and from a safe shelter in Mexico wrote to his committee stating that as the money was intended to convert the heathen, and he himself was the greatest heathen he knew, he intended to devote it to his own conversion, and never cease until he succeeded.

A LIBERAL prime minister of a local parliament, speaking on the Church of England, said that when selling property to collect extraordinary tithes, the auctioneer should say—"Going in the name of the Father, going in the name of the Son, and gone in the name of the Holy Ghost."

A CLERGYMAN in the county of Durham told the following anecdote:—"He had taught an old man in his parish to read, and had found him an apt pupil. After the lessons were finished, he had not been able to call at the cottage for some time, and when he did he only found the wife at home. "How's John?" said my friend. "He's canny, sir," said his wife. "How does he get on with his reading?" "Nicely, sir." "Ah, I suppose he'll read his Bible very comfortably now?" "Bible, sir! bless you, he was out of the Bible and into the newspaper long ago."

THERE is nothing original in the claim of Christianity to be regarded as divine revelation, and nothing new either in the doctrines said to have been revealed, or in the miracles by which it is alleged to have been distinguished. There has not been a single historical religion largely held amongst men which has not pretended to be divinely revealed, and the written books of which have not been represented as directly inspired. There is not a doctrine, sacrament or rite of Christianity which has not substantially formed part of earlier religions; and not a single phase from the supernatural history of Christ, from his miraculous conception, birth and incarnation to his death, resurrection and ascension, which has not had its counterpart in earlier mythologies. Heaven and hell, with characteristic variation of details, have held an important place in the eschatology of many creeds and races. The same may be said even of the moral teaching of Christianity, the elevated precepts of which, although in a less perfect and connected form, had already suggested themselves to many noble minds, and been promulgated by ancient sages and philosophers.—*Supernatural Religion*, vol. iii., p. 579; 1879.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 29, Assembly Room, Grosvenor Street, All Saints', Manchester:—at 11, "Judas Iscariot;" at 3, "Sky Pilots;" at 6.30, "Bible Blasphemy."

Monday, June 30, Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham, at 8, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."

July 6, Claremont Hall, London: 8, Walworth; 13, Claremont Hall, London; 20, Milton Hall, London; 27, Milton Hall, London. Aug. 3, Hall of Science, London; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Claremont Hall, London; 24, Milton Hall, London; 31, Milton Hall, London. Sept. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London; 21, Glasgow; 28, 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 ENGAGEMENT.—June 29, Hall of Science, London.

ENOTS.—Your letter got mislaid; hence the delay. The prosecuted Christmas Number is entirely out of print. We shall republish some of our sketches in book form by and bye. Mr. Ramsey will supply you with catalogue of the works you refer to.

E. B. ROSE.—Paley's "Evidences" can be purchased for a shilling. There are many editions, and you can scarcely enter a second-hand bookshop without finding a copy. Mr. Ramsey will supply you with the Apocryphal Gospels for 2s. 6d. Thanks for the cutting. Let us know if you hear from the editor.

W. BELFIELD.—Cuttings are always welcome. We know the *Freethinker* is highly relished in Liverpool.

R. MORRIS.—We will look through the book, and if it is worth an answer it shall have one.

J. MORRISON.—Shall appear.

PHONO states that the Salvationists at Chalk Farm are going in for a new sensation, by spelling many of the words on their bills backwards. It looks like thieves' slang until you find out the key.

E. DAWSON.—We do not wish to enter into the subject of your difference with the Hall of Science Club, but according to your own letter the Sunday Cricket Club is open to anybody and everybody, and we therefore see no special reason for giving it repeated advertisements in a Freethought paper.

J. THWAITES.—Thanks. The Christians, like the Conservatives, may be well called the stupid party.

J. WIDDICOMBE.—Doubtless what you say is true enough, but if we published it we should be open to a prosecution for libel. After all there is nothing surprising in the fact that two Christians are not as good as one Atheist.

GORED.—The Rev. W. Jay's tract on an Infidel Death-bed is probably a pious concoction, like most other stories of the kind. The game is quite played out, but the clergy keep it going still, as they are always considerably behind the time.

A. W. FREER.—We inserted the amount. Please remit.

E. WILKINS.—Contents sheets shall be sent. We are glad to hear that the *Freethinker* has such a good circulation in Cardiff. Mr. Bradlaugh is sure to meet a large audience when he lectures for you, July 22, on Perpetual Pensions. This notice will catch the eye of our readers in your district.

GLoucester.—Our time cannot be wasted over advertising challenges, entirely obscure and probably as ignorant. The person in question appears to hail from Half Moon Street, and judging from his challenge he ought to live in Whole Moon Street.

STEPNEY ATHEIST.—Thanks for the suggestions.

ARGUS.—Cuttings received with thanks. Of course it is not possible to make a paragraph of everything.

E. O' N.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums." The quotation from Defoe is good but its appropriateness is not too obvious.

WITTWON.—Shall appear.

AN ATHEIST.—You can have the volumes at half price by applying to Mr. Ramsey. Mr. Bradlaugh did not vote for the Coercion Bill. As a matter of fact he moved its rejection, in the place of Mr. Parnell, who had given notice of his intention to do so but was absent when the time came.

A. HASSALL.—Jokes are always welcome.

W. JAMES.—The Christian Evidence Society's lecturer in Hyde Park, who said that Tacitus was a contemporary of Jesus Christ, and born A.D. 14, either was grossly ignorant or presumed on the ignorance of his hearers. Tacitus wrote in the early part of the second century; the date of his birth is not exactly known, but it was probably about A.D. 60.

EDITORIAL.

MR. WHEELER is much improved, and has gone to the seaside to recruit his physical health. As the doctor advises that he should make a prolonged stay there, it will probably be a month or two before his pen will be again active in our pages. He desires to thank the numerous friends who have made so many inquiries about him.

The July number of *Progress* is now ready. There is a varied list of contents, and we think the first number of the

new series is especially bright and interesting. The reduction of its price to *threepence* puts it within the reach of a wider circle of readers, and we anticipate a much larger sale. We hope the friends of *Progress* will make it known among their acquaintances.

The Holiday Number of the *Freethinker* will soon be ready. Freethinkers are sure to purchase it, and if the Christians follow their example it will tend to diminish madness and bad temper in the dog days. Our Holiday Number will also be a certain cure for dyspepsia; it will be better than all the pills in the world for a sluggish liver; and hypochondriacs ready to die will read it and live. We hope, after conferring these immense benefits upon the world, it will not prove ungrateful, and give us in return another twelve months in Holloway Hotel.

We are issuing a general poster of the *Freethinker*. Any society or friend that will undertake to exhibit fifty of them can have the names and addresses printed on them of the local newspapers who sell this paper.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR Manchester readers should notice that Mr. Foote's lectures in their city to-day (Sunday, June 29) will be delivered in the Assembly Room, Grosvenor Street, as it is thought advisable not to engage the great St. James's Hall in midsummer. Mr. Foote will lecture on three novel subjects, and he hopes to meet a large number of his Manchester friends.

ON Monday evening Mr. Foote will lecture at Birmingham for the first time since his release, in Baskerville Hall, on his prison experiences.

NOTTINGHAM gave Mr. Foote a hearty greeting last Sunday. Freethinkers came also from Leicester, Derby and many other places. Some of them walked eight, nine or ten miles, from towns and villages where the train service was inadequate. At the evening lecture the chair was taken by the Rev. Professor Symes, who expressed his utter detestation of the bigotry from which Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp had suffered. Mr. Porter, of Beeston, presided in the morning, and Mr. Hooper, of Nottingham, in the afternoon. We are glad to notice that the Nottingham Freethinkers, who have been ousted by Christian charity from place after place, are about to make a desperate effort to obtain premises of their own.

A CRICKET-PLAYING correspondent notices that Peter stood up before the eleven and was bold (bowled), while Paul made a long stop at Ephesus, and Rhoda kept the wicket.

MAX MULLER says that man alone "looks up to heaven and yearns for something that neither sense nor reason can supply," this something being the satisfaction of his religious instincts. Exactly. It is our opinion to a "t," that religious wants are "something that neither sense nor reason can supply."

"How did you like our minister's sermon last Sunday?" said Brother Smith to Deacon Jones. "Not at all," replied the deacon, who did not like to confess that he had been asleep all the while. "Not like it?" said Smith, who had been kept awake by the brotherly interest he took in watching the deacon's slumbers. "Why I saw you nodding assent to every proposition he put forward."

A BROOM made of royal hair, shorn from the head of the pious king of Cambodia for the special purpose, is used to sweep the floor in front of the shrine of Buddha at Colombo. We should like to see a broom of the Queen's hair wielded by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the next reign this will be impossible unless Albert Edward discovers a new and improved hair-restorer.

THE only true Messiah has at last appeared in America. This time he comes as a negro. Probably he was born of a black virgin, so that in future there will be two mothers of God—one white and the other black. The colored people of Georgia worship him, and he forgives their sins quite lavishly. He exhibits the marks of the nails driven through his hands and feet, and of the spear wound in his side. So perhaps he hasn't been born again, but is only the original Jesus dyed black for a change. He declares that he shall soon appear on a white horse as the hope of Israel, and lead his faithful followers into "the promised land." The *Christian Herald* thinks his appearance may be one of the signs of the speedy coming of the white Christ.

J. TAYLOR, a noted spouter at Stockton, announces a course of Sunday morning lectures against that "infamous production the *Freethinker*." He is in a great state of indignation

because a local Freethinker has had the audacity to "freely distribute" copies of this journal in the market-place. J. Taylor is going to stop this by telling the people of Stockton what an awful paper the *Freethinker* is. The natural result will be a considerable increase of our circulation there. We thank Mr. Taylor for gratuitously playing the part of an advertising agent.

We have received the following sums for Mr. Davis, whose case we dealt with last week:—Miss Howell, 10s.; Forest Hill Branch of the N. S. S., 5s.; Mr. Bowyer, 1s.; Mr. Page, 1s.; Mr. Simmons, 6d.; R. Watkins, 6d.; J. Coles, 6d.; E. Ellsmore, 1s.; A. W. Frere, 2s. 6d.; R. O., 1s. 6d.

The *Christian Commonwealth* claims to be "of no side in religion," and proceeds to denounce the Ritualistic movement as "atrocious swindling" and a "traitorous conspiracy." It notices that Protestants profess to stand by the Bible alone, and asks, "Why do they not do so *de facto*?"—a very pertinent question, which we have often put to Christians. Why don't they sell all they have and give to the poor? Why do they take thought for the morrow and lay up treasure on earth? Why don't they as a body still go in for exorcism and faith-healing and raising the dead? The fact is that even among Christians the Bible is being insidiously but inevitably superseded by practical Secularism. They are coming round to our side by degrees.

The same paper informs a correspondent that the goodness and purity of Christianity are the reasons why it is "so much persecuted by infidels—*i.e.*, Atheists, Deists, Secularists, etc." The *C. C.* and its correspondent must be laboring under a strange delusion. They must imagine that Mr. Foote has £10,000 a year of the public money and that the Archbishop of Canterbury had twelve months in Holloway Gaol for advocating Christianity. The *C. C.* should take a lesson from another of its columns, in which it finds fault with Faith-healers, who make themselves ridiculous by complaining of a persecution which does not exist. When persecutors themselves pose as martyrs they must expect to be treated as consummate hypocrites, egregious fools, or dangerous fanatics.

The *Tunbridge Wells Advertiser* has a long account of the demonstration there against the Blasphemy Laws. It is surprised at the large number of the "local Freethinkers," and says that they and their friends from various parts of the country "had every reason to rejoice" at the "successful issue to which they brought their proceedings." Only one hand was held up against the resolution.

At a grand clerical dinner at Manchester not long ago, the toast of the bishop and clergy of the diocese was followed by the glee—"Ye spotted snakes with double tongue." The double-tongued creatures have had their day, but they are now fast being "spotted" in another sense of the word. All the creeds are dying, as Leslie Stephen says, of the one disease of being found out.

MR. FORSTER believes that "the sea of faith is flowing with a far stronger stream now than some thirty or forty years ago, and that it will in the time of some of those now living engulf the whole of these islands." We deny the truth of Mr. Forster's statement, and we question the accuracy of his prediction. There is a far larger demand for sceptical literature than there ever was, and the publications of the Freethought party are circulated five times more widely than they were ten years ago. No Secular journal ever had anything like the sale of the *Freethinker*, and it is also worth noting that no Secular journal was ever so "extreme" in its policy.

ONE of the jurymen in Mr. Bradlaugh's case stated that he could not attend the adjourned hearing last Monday as he was summoned by a committee of the House of Commons. The judges said they could not help that. "But," replied the jurymen, "I understand the Attorney-General to say that the House of Commons is all-powerful and above the law. The House of Commons has summoned me for Monday next—which am I to obey, the House of Commons or the law?" The judges smiled, and everybody saw the absurdity of the Attorney-General's contention. That jurymen knows now whether the House of Commons is omnipotent, and we dare say this will influence his verdict.

PUBLICAN BOOTH has long been engaged in the conversion of souls. He is now holding a series of special revival meetings for the conversion of the Salvation Army debt. No doubt this will be more successful than the other performance. Booth's converts are questionable, but he and his family know that the cash is O. K.

CONSIDERABLE excitement was caused at Manchester by the appearance and antics of a lunatic in the cathedral. We should have thought that a lunatic in a cathedral was the most natural thing in the world.

A PETITION was presented the other day by certain distressed weavers in Madras to the governor of that province addressed: "To Almighty God, care of his Excellency the Governor of Madras." This reminds us of the letter to "Our father which art in heaven," which the Post-Office authorities returned to the writer marked "Insufficiently addressed." One letter addressed to "The Lord Jesus, Paris," was returned with the mark "unknown," and another directed to the same person, "London," was returned with the mark—"Gone away. No address."

The *Madras Thinker*, one of the best of the many Freethought journals now published in India, prints long extracts from Mr. Foote's letter to Judge North and other articles written since his release from goal; and sends us "warm and heart-felt sympathy across the wide ocean."

JUDICIAL GODLINESS.—Two learned judges who were recently engaged in a *cause célèbre*, had their patience severely taxed a short time ago by a tedious argument in a hopeless case. All attempts to curtail the counsel's eloquence failed, and the bench sank into a state of apathetic resignation. From this condition Mugliston B. at length aroused himself to silence the counsel with a crushing presentment of his own argument. Retorted Mr. South cheerily—"That, my lord, is a point entirely distinct from the one I am now upon, which I will deal with *presently*." That last word was the last straw, and Mugliston B. groaned—"Oh! my God." This unexpected exhibition of piety provoked one of the broadest of Proven J.'s grins, accompanied by the laughing reproof—"The bench is hardly the place for your devotions, at any rate such audible ones."

A GOOD WORD FOR THE DEVIL.

(Concluded from page 199.)

JAHVEH not only invented the system of lying, but he carried it to the highest pitch of perfection it has ever reached. His Omnipotence was once in a terrible difficulty. He wished to destroy Ahab king of Israel, but was utterly at a loss for means to accomplish his end. I suppose his thunderbolts were out of working order, his fiery serpents had lost their teeth, and his destroying angels had turned out on strike. He was "sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left" (1 Kings xxii., 19). They held a very serious debate on the best plan of killing a petty monarch of ten barbarous tribes! There was a great variety of opinion in that assembly, but it only concerned the manner of carrying out a treacherous and brutal slaughter. No one pleaded for mercy on Ahab, or on the thousands of Israel, Judah, and Ramoth Gilead, whose blood was to be shed along with his. They knew better. Had anyone ventured to give expression to such a sentiment, a resolution would immediately have been passed, excluding him from the precincts of that house. No peace party there. Everyone a Jingo in that upper chamber. "And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the lord and said I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him wherewith. And he said I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so" (verses 20, 22.)

Nothing of so vile a character as this has ever been suggested of Satan. We read in Revelations xx., 10, that the Devil for deceiving the nations "was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," but no special art of deception is recorded against him. The prosecution of the Devil seems to have been always conducted upon the principle of indiscriminate abuse for want of evidence. The worst thing told of Satan is that he successfully tempted God to commit gross injustice upon Job. "Thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause" (Job ii., 3). By working upon Jahveh's vanity he gained his point. "Satan answered the Lord and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Has thou not made a hedge about him and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job i., 9-11). To my mind this passage completely solves the difficulty of those Christians who puzzle themselves about the Devil daring to tempt the Son

of God in the wilderness. Why should he hesitate, when he had succeeded so well with the Father in heaven?

Altogether, taking the accounts of both characters given in the Bible, I consider the Devil so much the better of the two that I should much prefer taking up my abode with him in the lower regions to dwelling with God for ever in heaven. The climate below may be warm, but on the other hand it must be chilly to sit on a cloud without clothes, playing a harp. Then for company in hell I should meet all the honest Freethinkers of all ages, the poets with very few exceptions, all the philosophers, the scientists and wise men of every nation and every time. In heaven, according to Revelations iv., there is a great throne, and sitting on it a being "like a jasper and a sardine stone," I suppose on account of his utter want of sympathy for every other being. Then there are four beasts full of eyes before and behind, and four and twenty elders, who for ever vie with the beasts in praising God for his gross selfishness. "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Besides these there are angels, in number "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" (v. 11) "an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel" (vii., 4), with seals on their foreheads, probably to prevent them using their brains, and "a great multitude which no man could number" (verse 9) who have washed their linen in blood. Then those of my fellow human beings who have been most anxious to secure a place up above are precisely those whose acquaintance I care least about renewing. But what I chiefly object to in heaven is the occupation. I should blush with shame to join in the chorus of that multitude, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen" (verse 12). Having read Jahveh's history in his own book has spoiled me for that. I hope heaven itself would not so entirely imbue me with its lying spirit, but I should throw down my harp in disgust, and demand a passage to the other country, where the business is to blaspheme God. And as this, according to our Christian friends, is to be the future work of all Freethinkers, let us practise it well in this life, that we may become accustomed to it in time. And as eternity is long, let us not neglect reading of God's actions in his holy book. If we do that, everlasting ages will not exhaust our material for blasphemy. And for myself I hope that whatever judgment may be passed upon me by gods or angels, men or demons, it will be always remembered that I have made an attempt, as far as my power would extend, to shift the blame of evil-doing on to the right shoulders, and say a good word for the Devil.

E. J. BOWELL.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

BIBLE readers who have reflected upon the story of Moses receiving the two tables of the law from God, must have wondered how he was able to walk down more than 9,000 feet above sea level, with his heavy burden after a fast of forty days and forty nights; but their wonder must be considerably increased when they read that he repeated the act, after so rashly breaking the first gift in his anger. A second fast of forty days and nights must have reduced his dimension to that of a mere skeleton. Before the first adventure he made the people a promise which was not fulfilled (Exodus xix., 11): "And be ready against the third day, for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." But though they heard thunders and lightnings and a loud trumpet, and saw smoke like a furnace, that was all. Their faith was naturally shaken, and they proceeded to make the golden calf, which, when Moses came down and saw them worshipping it, he forced the naked people (for Aaron had diverted himself by stripping them) to eat, hashed up with water. Moses was careful not to repeat the promise he made to them on the first occasion, but he forbade them to even touch the mountain, and the flocks and herds were not to look at the show this time.

But let us look at the precious Decalogue written for him by the finger of Jahveh. "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me." Jesus being God's only begotten son, whom Christians are taught to worship, that makes two gods, so the first commandment becomes useless. The 2nd.—"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything in heaven above," etc. The crucifixion and other images of Christ have been made into graven images by various denominations of Christians for worship, with the sanction of the priest, for nearly 1,900 years, so the second commandment is virtually destroyed. The 3rd was positively overlooked by the propaets, especially Ezekiel, who used the name of the

Lord to substantiate all the filthy wanderings of his crazy mind; so that no wonder God's name has been used in vain daily and hourly ever since. The 4th may have been kept from the time of Moses downwards, possibly by the wealthy heads of households, but all the subordinates have been bound to break it; so that commandment was incompatible with life as it has ever been. The 5th.—The Christian has been taught to rise up against his parents by Jesus, and to venerate him for setting a man at variance against his father (see Matthew x.) How then can men consistently keep the 5th commandment? The priest should erase that one from the number. The 6th was written on the first tables of stone which Moses possessed, but should have been omitted in the second composition, for when he saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf, after dashing the tables to pieces, he said to them, "thus saith the Lord God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor." After obeying that commandment there could not have been one man left alive, and that was decidedly wholesale murder. The 7th.—The Lord himself apparently disregarded this commandment, as may be seen by any Bible student in 2 Samuel xii., 11. The 8th.—"Thou shalt not steal." Why then, so soon after receiving this good commandment, did the Lord direct Moses along his route to Canaan, to destroy and plunder all the different tribes? For instance, "the spoil of the Midianites was six hundred thousand, and seventy thousand, and five thousand sheep, three score and twelve thousand beeves, three score and one thousand asses" (Numbers xxxi.) This booty, after the slaughter of the unfortunate possessors, was carried away triumphantly by the Israelites. Of course the priests got their portion. The 9th and 10th commandments were both broken at once in the infamous story related of Abigail and David (1 Samuel xxiii.) The former was a false witness against her husband Nabal, the latter coveted his neighbor's wife, and his oxen, and his asses, his sheep and his goats. Their united villainy was successful—Nabal's heart was turned into stone, Abigail became David's together with her husband's property, and the man after God's own heart thanked the Lord.

If heaven is to be gained by unquestioning belief in this supposed divine revelation, the Bible ought to be a sealed book, and ignorance of its contents the means of salvation.

C. B.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE late Rev. Dr. Raphael was fond of a witty retort. Once a Gentile physician attended the funeral of an Israelite. "I don't like a Jewish funeral," said he afterwards to Dr. R. "There is no long oration, and everything is too quiet. I prefer a Christian funeral." "So do I," replied Dr. Raphael. "I prefer a hundred Christian funerals to one Jewish."

"PA," asked a boy of his paternal progenitor, a man noted for his numerous backslidings, "what are souls made of generally?" "What a question!" was the response, "I am sure I don't know." "But the minister said you thought you knew." "He did?" "Yes, he said he supposed you thought that souls were made of asbestos."

A YOUNG URCHIN.—"Who was the meekest man, my son?" said the superintendent of a boys' Bible class in America. "Moses, sir." "Very well, my boy; and who was the meekest woman?" "Please, sir, there never was no meekest woman."

THE REASON—A clergyman once went with a gentleman to one of the churches where the "Gregorian" chants are sung. After the service, the clergyman remarked: "Well, Mr. —, how did you like the service? The chants are said to be sung to the tunes that were used in the time of David." "Ah!" said Mr. —, with a sigh of relief, "that accounts for it; I have often wondered why Saul threw his javelin at David!"

A POPULAR clergyman was greatly bored by a lady who admired him without reserve. "Oh, my dear Mr. X," said she one Sunday afternoon, "there isn't any harm in one loving one's pastor, is there?" "Certainly not, madam," replied the worthy cleric, "not the least in the world, so long as the feeling is not reciprocated."

A CLERGYMAN thought he would raise his own pork. So he bought five pigs and fattened them. Now that they are fit to kill, he says they seem so much like his own children that he hasn't the heart to kill them. The pigs are in good luck, but it's rather hard on the children.

HE was a good boy, and his mamma took him to see the procession of Sunday-school scholars on Whit-Monday. But it was too bad of him, when he saw a banner with a book painted on it and the words "The Secret of England's Greatness" written underneath, to ask his mamma in a very loud voice if that was papa's betting book.

IT is difficult to explain the workings of the youthful mind. A boy who will listen indifferently to the sublimest truths of theology, will be aroused to the acutest interest by the progress of a caterpillar over the collar of a bald-headed man in the pew in front of him.



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