

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH. — No. 81.



SAMSON'S JAWBONE.

"And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith."—JUDGES xv., 15.

THE LORD OF LORDS.

WE are in the midst of a political crisis. The House of Lords opposes a reform unanimously voted by the House of Commons. Great demonstrations are being held all over the country, to insist on the popular will being carried into effect, and there is a growing cry of "Down with the Lords." A spectator from another planet might wonder at all the fuss. He might marvel how forty millions of people needed to stamp and gesticulate against a handful of obstructives. He might imagine that they had only to decree a thing and it would immediately be; that all opposition to their sovereign will would melt away the moment they declared it. This traveller, however, would soon be undeceived. A little study would show him that the people are kept in check by faith and custom. He would learn that the nation is tied down like Gulliver was, by ligatures springing from its own head. Behind the King there is a King of Kings; behind the Lords there is a Lord of Lords. Behind every earthly despotism there is a heavenly one. The rulers of mankind overawe the people by religious terrors. They keep a body of men in their pay, the black army of theology, whose business it is to frighten people from their rights by means of a ghost behind the curtain. Nobody has ever seen the bogie, but we are taught to believe in it from our infancy, and faith supplies the deficiencies of sight. Thus we are enslaved by our own consent. Our will is suborned against our interests. We wear no chains to remind us of our servitude, but our liberty is restrained by the subtle web of superstition, which is so fine as to be imperceptible

except to keen and well-practised eyes, and elastic enough to cheat us with a false sense of freedom.

Yes, we must seek in religion the secret of all political tyranny and social injustice. Not only does history show us the bearing of religion on politics—we see it to-day wherever we cast our gaze. Party feeling is so embittered in France because the sharp line of division in politics corresponds with the sharp line of division in religion. On the one side there is Freethought and Republicanism, and on the other Catholicism and Monarchy. Even in England, which at present knows less of the naked despotism of the Catholic Church than any other European country, we are gradually approximating to a similar state of things. Freethought is appearing upon the public stage, and will play its peculiar part as naturally as religion does. Those who fancy that theology and politics have no necessary relations, that you may operate in the one without affecting the other, and that they can and should be kept distinct, are grossly mistaken. Cardinal Newman has well shown how it is the nature of ideas to assimilate to themselves whatever agrees with them, and to destroy whatever disagrees. When once an idea enters the human mind it acts according to the necessary laws of thought. It changes to its own complexion all its mental surroundings, and through every mental and moral channel influences the world of practice outside. The real sovereigns of mankind, who sway its destinies with irresistible power, are not the czars, emperors, kings and lords, nor even the statesmen who enact laws when public sentiment is ripe; they are the great thinkers who mould opinion, the discoverers and

enunciators of Truth, the men of genius who pour the leaven of their ideas and enthusiasm into the sluggish brain of humanity.

Even in this crisis it is easy to see how Religion and Freethought are at variance. The Liberal party is not pledged to the abolition of the House of Lords, but the Radical party is. Orthodox Liberalism is Christian, only a little less so than orthodox Conservatism; but Radicalism is very largely sceptical. It would surprise the dullards of both parties to learn how great a portion of the working energy of Radicalism is supplied by Freethinkers. True, many of them are unavowed Freethinkers, yet they are of our party although they do not wear our colors. But setting all these aside, I assert that Radicalism would be immensely weakened by the withdrawal of declared Freethinkers from its ranks. No one in the least acquainted with political organisation would think of disputing this. It is admitted that Mr. Bradlaugh received a warmer greeting than any other speaker at the St. James's Hall Conference on the Lords and the Franchise, although the wire-pullers did not include him in the list of invited speakers. The meeting clamored for him, and his enthusiastic reception was not in despite of his Freethought, but very largely because of his Freethought. And further support of my contention is furnished by the fact that at the great St. James's Hall demonstration in favor of entirely abolishing the Lords, which took place last Saturday, the speakers were none of them orthodox. Their heterodoxy varied from the airy indifferentism of Sir Wilfrid Lawson to the fervid iconoclasm of Mr. Bradlaugh, from the mild Unitarianism of Mr. Picton to the ironical scepticism of Mr. Labouchere.

Belief in God is the source and principle of all tyranny. This lies in the very nature of things. For what is God? All definitions of religion from Johnson's down to that of the latest dictionary agree on this one point, that it is concerned with man's relations to the *unknown*. Yes, God is the Unknown, and theology is the science of ignorance. Earl Beaconsfield, in his impish way, once said that where our knowledge ends our religion begins. A truer word was never spoken.

Now the unknown is the terrible. We become fearful the moment we confront the incalculable. Go through the history of religions, consult the various accounts of savage and barbarous faiths at present extant, and you will find that the principle of terror, springing from the unknown, is the essential feature in which they all agree. This terror inevitably begets slavishness. We cannot be cowardly in one respect without its affecting our courage in others. The mental serf is a bodily serf too, and spiritual fetters are the agencies of political thralldom. The man who worships a tyrant in heaven naturally submits his neck to the yoke of tyrants on earth. He who bows his intellect to a priest will yield his manhood to a king. Everywhere on earth we find the same ceremonies attending every form of dependence. The worshipper who now kneels in prayer to God, like the courtier who backs from the presence of the monarch, is performing an apology for the act of prostration which took place alike before the altar and the throne. In both cases it was the adoration of fear, the debasement of the weak before the seat of irresponsible power.

Authority is still the principle of our most refined creeds. The majority of Christians believe in salvation by faith; and what is the God of that dogma but a capricious tyrant, who saves or damns according to his personal whim? The ministers of Protestantism, like the priests of Catholicism, recognise this practically in their efforts to regulate public education. They dare not trust to the effect of persuasion on the unprejudiced mind; they must bias the minds of children by means of dogmatic teaching. They bend the twig in order to warp the tree.

Now God is the supreme principle of authority as he is the essence of the unknown. He is thus the head, front and symbol of terror and slavery, and as such must be assailed by every true soldier of Progress. We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions; and even if we abolish the House of Lords we shall still dwell in the house of bondage unless we abolish the Lord of Lords; for the evil principle will remain as a germ to develop into new forms of oppression.

Freethought is the real Savior. When we make a man a Freethinker, we need not trouble greatly about his politics. He is sure to go right in the main. He may mistake here or falter there, but his tendency will always be sound.

Thus it is that Freethinkers always vote, work and fight for the popular cause. They have discarded the principle of authority in the heavens above and on the earth beneath, and left it to the Conservative party, to which all religionists belong precisely in proportion to the orthodoxy of their faith. Freethought goes to the root. It reaches the intellect and the conscience, and does not merely work at haphazard on the surface of our material interests and party struggles. It aims at the destruction of all tyranny and injustice by the sure methods of investigation and discussion, and the free play of mind on every subject. It loves Truth and Freedom. It turns away from the false and sterile ideas of the Kingdom of God and faces the true and fruitful idea of the Republic of Man.

G. W. FOOTE.

WAS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

THE last of the series of "Present Day Tracts," issued by the Religious Tract Society with the object of meeting the scepticism of the age, is by the Rev. Principal Cairns, D.D., and is entitled "Present State of the Christian Argument from Prophecy." At the outset we are bound to remark that the present state of the Christian argument in the hands of the Presbyterian Principal has but little improved since the time when Matthew misquoted the Old Testament with a view to make it apply to his hero. The larger part of Dr. Cairns's tract, for we cannot call it an argument, deals with the Messianic prophecies, and to these we propose, for the present, to confine ourselves.

When the Jews were in captivity, they naturally looked back to the good old times when they were a free and prosperous people, and their spirits were sustained by the hopes of a deliverer who would overcome their enemies and restore them to their former greatness. As David had formed them into a nation, the deliverer was expected to be like him. Ezekiel even prophesies that David himself shall return and be king over them (see xxxiv., 23 and xxxvii., 24). The prophecies were for the most part couched in obscure and highly rhetorical language, but the Jews usually took them in their literal meaning. It was thought, for instance, that at the coming of Messiah the ten tribes would be gathered together, the temple would be rebuilt, the heathen nations would be overcome and judged, the Gentiles becoming Jews, after which there would be no more wars, but swords would be turned into ploughshares, and the leopard lie down with the lamb, beside, not inside, him. In short, all those unfulfilled prophecies which Christians say will come to pass at the second coming of Christ the Jews applied to the first coming of their Messiah, for not one of their prophets gave the slightest indication that he would require two visits to finish his work. This Messianic expectation first took shape at the time of the captivity, but it became a perfect fanaticism at the time of the dispersion of the Jews, inducing many enthusiasts to set up as deliverers, just as the prophecies of Hindu and Mohammedan fanatics were put to political account by the opponents of British rule at the time of the Indian mutiny.

Dr. Cairns however displays his orthodox ignorance of history by carrying back the prophecies to the time of the mythical Adam. He finds one in the passage about the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent. None but a Christian would see any reference to Jesus in this "caution to snakes." This is, indeed, what he calls "a deep interpretation of the oracle." We are next taken with a bound to the time of Abraham. We suppose Noah was too addicted to drink to remember if he had any intimation of the future savior. The passage where Abraham is promised that his seed shall be blessed, and "in thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," is declared by Dr. Cairns to be a true Messianic prophecy. If so it is most assuredly unfulfilled. The Jews have been anything but a blessing to the world, and they certainly have received no blessing from the Christians. We are next trotted to the bedside of Jacob, and told that the unanimous tradition of Judaism has found in the blessing of Judah an anticipation of the Messiah. Now the passage declares that the sceptre shall not depart from Judah till Shiloh come. But the sceptre had departed from Judah and was wielded over the Jews by Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans long before the coming of Jesus. The prophecy of Balaam that a star should arise out of Jacob comes next. This common metaphor, which may mean anything or refer to anybody, is supposed to have some connection with the mythical star

of Bethlehem. Then follows the prophecy that a prophet should arise like unto Moses. Jesus was in no essential respect like unto the savage murderer Moses. This prophecy is with far more justice claimed by the Mahometans. They say Moses began by flying to Midian, Mahomet by flying to Medina, which they take to be the same place. Moses was called while feeding his father-in-law's flocks, Mahomet while tending his father-in-law's camels. Moses allowed polygamy, led his people in wars of conquest, and gave them a new code of laws. The same may be said of the prophet of Mecca. It would not be easy for Christians to produce anything so clear in reference to their prophet of Nazareth.

Much stress is laid by Dr. Cairns on Jesus being of Davidic descent. If he was born of the Holy Ghost we do not see how his descent from David could be proved. The genealogies given by Matthew and Luke are hopelessly at variance, and evidently concocted. The tale of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth at Bethlehem is also evidently a fabrication made to fit a misapprehended prophecy in Micah, who says a ruler shall come out of, not be born in, Bethlehem and deliver Judah from the Assyrians. Anyone who will read the passage in Micah will see that the kind of person expected by the Jews was a conquering military chief.* They had no notion of a suffering Messiah. The oft-quoted Isaiah liii., refers to the sufferings of the nation personified and spoken of in the preceding chapters as "Jacob my servant and Israel whom I have chosen." Many phrases are quite inapplicable to Jesus, as, for instance, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days." The Jews have never taken this as a Messianic prophecy. They ought to know the meaning of their own books, and the fact that they reject Jesus as the Messiah is a weightier argument against Christianity than any adduced in its favor from the time of Paul to that of Principal Cairns. J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Christian Chronicle* starts a paper with the alarming title "Damming the Sacramento." An unwary reader, who hoped to find more "blasphemy," threw the paper down with disgust when he found it related to the construction of wing-dams to procure gold from the Californian river.

A NEW book is announced with the title "Days and Nights with Jesus." We should think the company very insipid and monotonous.

THE Italian priests mean to maintain their rule at the Vatican. Of the eight cardinals to be created at the next Consistory only one will be a foreigner—viz., the Archbishop of Vienna. A small clique of Italians contrive to dominate two hundred million Catholics in all parts of the world. Surely the Lord is with them, or their flocks must be very foolish.

THE Sabbatarian bigots are continuing their cruel prosecutions at Southend. Mrs. Sykes and two others have again been fined 5s. and 7s. costs each. Prosecutions have also been commenced at Luton, where both the sitting magistrates are connected with the Luton Gas Works, and reap the benefit of Sunday labor. They declared that they took a lenient view of the case, and fined one of the prisoners a shilling.

ANOTHER impostor who assumed the guise of a parson has been sentenced to five years' penal servitude for the theft of sealskin jackets, after many previous convictions for similar offences. In dressing up as a clergyman, Henry Stanton traded on the factitious respect enjoyed by the cloth. His detection and punishment, however, help to show that this sentiment is dying out. By and bye we shall find the clergy subjected to more suspicion and vigilance than other people. At any rate, it is beyond question that a white choker is no guarantee of exceptional morality.

In the *Protestant Standard* we are told that it requires "far more unquestioning faith, even superstitious faith, to believe in Darwin's theory of Creation than that of Moses." If so it is the Christians who are the people of little faith, while we are ardent believers. It is the Bible-swallowers after all who, relatively to us, are the sceptics and infidels.

* The reader of Micah v., 2, should be aware of a deliberate mis-rendering of this passage. It should read: "Out of thee [Bethlehem] shall he come forth that is to be a ruler in Israel; unto me whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting." By misplacing this the translators have blasphemously made the ruler sent by Jahveh into the Eternal One himself.

THE Wesleyans have had a conference in Newcastle during the week. At a certain hotel to which they adjourned in the evening their conference was not of a very harmonious character. A Freethinker bemuddled them a bit over Jesus. They are now considering whether it would be practicable to burn all heretics who go as far as saying that Jesus was insane, or that he was only a man, or that he was a juggler if he pretended to work miracles.

BANK Holiday on the beach at Tynemouth was rendered a little lively by the performances of the Salvation Army. One coarse fellow, who was described as "Happy Jack," shouted out, "I am a Salvation soldier"; to which a stout Newcastle woman—a purveyor of strawberries—replied, as if estimating him at his proper worth, "Penny a bag."

NOBODY knows precisely the language in which Jesus spoke. One thing, however, we may be sure of—in whatever language he expressed it, his doctrine of "damnation" was very clear.

A FOREIGN damn is as easily understood as a native one.

THE *Christian Herald* speaks of "a series of providences," consisting of a robbery, an apparent murder (the victim is left for dead), a savage attack, a false charge, a burglary, an illness and two conversions. Providence and the Christian editor's ideas of him, or it, evidently move in a mysterious way.

THE Rev. W. Haslam says that "Christ is working even greater miracles now than he did in the flesh." In proof or in illustration of his statement, he told how in a railway carriage he had cast out "a dumb devil" from a Christian friend who was nervously afraid of praying out aloud in public. They knelt down together and cried out, "Lord, answer prayer," "The dumb devil is going," "Hallelujah" and so forth, never stopping even to give up their tickets to the conductor, who went away thinking they were two mad people. And so the dumb devil was miraculously cast out—that is, the friend got over his diffidence in the matter of public speaking. Marvellous miracle!

ONE of the regular writers in the *Rock* actually finds fault with the "sweeping assertions made about human depravity by religious people. He owns that "long before the Gospel, the pages of classic literature were adorned with illustrations of filial piety, and tried friendship, and noble qualities of various kinds." When the Bible declares that "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," he says it only means that "amid all these high and estimable traits of character God is not in the thoughts of men." Thus honest and intelligent Christians are compelled to explain away their Bible bit by bit.

IN an unsigned article dealing with the "Social Failures" who drift into habitual crime, drunkenness, beggary, debauchery, poverty, etc., the *Rock* says: "Many, alas! are the fallen clergy whose cases must appear in this category. They promise amendment, and their penitence appears sincere. But, just as friends are beginning to hope, the old sins reassert their dominion, and the victim relapses once more. Such cases are alarmingly frequent." This is not our statement, but the enemy's about the enemy.

THE Rev. W. J. Christie says that the three frogs of Rev. xvi., 13-14, are Infidelity, Democracy and the Mahdi. As the Bible describes these spirits like frogs as "working miracles," we fail to see the appropriateness of this identification. Any religious nonsense, however, is good enough for the pages of the *Christian Herald*, and for preaching to an ignorant congregation in return for State pay. These frogs are to summon all the nations of the world to the great battle of Armageddon. This "awful final struggle" is close at hand, for there are the most convincing signs in the way of earthquakes, famines, pestilences and celestial indications. No wonder religious lunatics are plentiful both inside and outside our asylums.

THE Rev. Chas. William Lamport, although deprived of his benefice by a sentence of the Discipline Committee of Convocation, retained the keys of the church and school-house, and the Committee has taken action in the Court of Chancery to induce him to resign them.

THE Rev. Percival Wood Hulbert, vicar of Arthington, "providentially" escaped heaven by the help of "an expert swimmer," who in the report is neither named nor thanked, though Canon Hulbert, father of the vicar, gave a special service of thanks to God for nearly drowning his son.

A PAMPHLET entitled "Lawyers and Christianity," has been just issued by the Monthly Tract Society, and is being sent round to members of the legal profession. It gives an account of Grotius, Sir Matthew Hale the witch burner, Earl Cairns, and other eminent legal Christians, but quite omits to men-

tion the distinguished services rendered to Christianity by Sir Hardinge Giffard, Mr. Poland, Justice North, and Maloney.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Hull Critic* sends the following extraordinary letter:—

"Dear Sir,—Have you ever been to Holy Trinity Church?—that is, if you go to church, which I hope you do. If so, have you heard one of the curates read prayers there? To one, who like myself, is not well acquainted with the church service, he seems to say:—'Haw he chee chaw, chaw chee he haw chaw, chaw chaw he haw chee chaw haw he chaw haw he chee chee chaw te ching chaw chee chaw hee thro Je' Chi on Lor. Amen.'—Yours truly, An occasional worshipper at Holy Trinity Church."

Perhaps this is a new sort of clerical lingo that the correspondent does not understand.

THE man who when saying his prayers reverently says, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," and then puts up a notice on his land that "trespassers will be prosecuted," is what might be termed a humbug, and is earning his salvation on false pretences. Pious Tory landowners please note!

"Yes," said a tub-thumper on the sands at Hastings, "think of all the Almighty has done for you. Look how good and kind he's been to you! Think of the mercy he has extended to you! Why he even sent you his only son, the prop of his declining years, and you crucified him."

YET a Mr. J. Johnstone, of Edinburgh, who describes himself as a "theologian, electrician and engineer," puts forth a pamphlet in which he argues that Christians have been under a delusion in imagining that Jesus was crucified, for he was in fact impaled. Mr. Johnstone takes scripture for his authority. But to whom does it matter a single fig whether he was crucified or impaled? It took place, if it happened at all, a long way off and a good while ago; and as the old lady said when the chapters dealing with the subject were read to her, "It's a disagreeable story—let us hope it isn't true."

THE vicar of Huddersfield has put forward an original argument for the truth of the Bible. As reported in the *Huddersfield Examiner*, he declared at a meeting of the Christian Vernacular Society for India that "in the Bible there was no scientific teaching, and for that reason they knew it to be absolutely true and divinely inspired." The same might be said of the "Arabian Nights Entertainment."

HOWEVER Jesus may have shone in comparative anatomy he was a fool at ornithology—birds only use nests for purposes of incubation. See Matthew viii., 20.

It is said that Earl Cairns has in the entrance hall of his mansion an illuminated text with the words, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." A visitor states that he waited a long time, but was not even offered bread and cheese.

An illustration of how myths grow occurs in the number of legends concerning the foundation of the fortunes of the Rothschild family. A version of this has been put forth by a vicus Jewish lady named Maria Kaiser. She relates that an angel of the Lord appeared to the founder of the family when, through misfortune, he was tempted to embrace Christianity, and offered him great treasures if he remained faithful to Judaism. Rothschild, once the angel had given his word, replied that he could not think of accepting money unless it was accompanied with God's blessing. A voice from the Lord then said "Blessed art thou." This interview of course took place in the night—interviews with angels usually do. The morning found the Elector of Cassel knocking at the house with the red shield to entrust the blessed one with the fortune from which was founded the greatness of the firm.

THE Rev. S. W. Lloyd, rector of Barham, has gone bankrupt under disgraceful circumstances. He had had an income of about £2,000 a year, £800 of this being from the tithes of his rectory (which he had purchased for £4,000), and the remainder from his late wife's estate. He owes a coal club £50 for money which he has received of members and misapplied to his own purposes. This mean-minded sample of the Christian clergyman thinks it "most cruel" that the court should have thus dealt with him and should express its severe dissatisfaction with his shuffling answers and want of honesty.

IN an address delivered to the Church of England Working Men's Society, the Church Association was denounced as a "public pest." We will not venture to dispute the correctness of the opinions these Church associations hold of each other, but when it comes to slandering "the bloodthirsty Quakers who had gone out of the country to marry their wives' sisters," we think it high time that Christian rancor should be moderated if possible by some regard for truth and

some consideration for so peaceable and well-behaved a sect. The workmen also were told that the Church is superior to the Bible, and that as it has overridden the Word of God in changing the observance of the seventh day to the first, so it can on its own authority alone forbid marriage with a deceased wife's sister.

THE Rev. A. Maclaren, D.D., has been preaching a sermon on "What men find beneath the wings of God." We know what is very commonly found beneath the wings of poultry and of birds in general, namely, small visitors of an undesirable kind. The preacher, however, did not refer to himself and his fellow clergymen as vermin living under the sheltering wings of that queer fowl Jehovah. The next sermon ought to deal with the tail of God.

THE *Church Times* observes that "God's way of social and political reform is as far as possible removed from the Radical method. In neither the Old nor the New Testament is there a word against slavery. On the contrary, its existence is recognised in both." Just so, "God's way is to institute oppression and abuses;" the Radical plan is to remove them.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* rejoices at the freeing of the slaves in conformity with the spirit of the Word of God. "Slaves, obey your masters" is thoroughly scriptural—"slaves," of course, being euphemistically rendered as "servants"—but the text "Masters free your slaves" is not to be found anywhere in the Bible, though Christians might well offer a large reward for so valuable a discovery. If God meant emancipation, why did he not say so? Is the Holy Ghost so cowardly and so time-serving that he did not dare to be in advance of the age in which he once for all stereotyped inalterably his antiquated notions and instructions?

TALMAGE, preaching on the text, "All are yours" (see 1 Cor., iii., 21, 22), tells Christians that these words are for them "a warranty deed to the whole universe." Men of the world have no right to their possessions. God is sole owner, and he has given everything to his own children, the believers. "The meek shall inherit the earth," and therefore the Church of Christ will possess all the cities and land and wealth on earth. God will eject the irreligious "squatters upon the property" who keep the poor Christians from their undoubted right to everything. And "the Christian owns not only this world, but he owns the next world." If such arrogant and reckless appeals to Christian covetousness and Christian pride were not neutralised by the practical Secularism of modern times we should speedily experience a revival of the Dark Ages with the Church supreme over all human rights.

WHEN the godly say the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and that he has given the earth to his saints, they always add "We are his saints."

It must be a fearful task to edit an infidel paper in proximity to a church of the faithful. Dr. Monroe, of the *Ironclad Age*, thus relieves his feelings: "Religion sets horribly hard upon the stomachs of the insane Crown of Glory people in this block. Twice a week they hold commune with the empty void above, and their shrieking, groaning and howling equal the dismal wailings supposed to proceed from the alleged infernal regions. Really religion hurts worse than probing carbuncles or cutting for stone in the bladder." Our sympathies are with the doctor.

ACCORDING to a story given in *Life*, a well known nobleman, pious and peripatetic, in the course of his daily rounds called at the house of a frail and fashionable beauty, whom he considered as an eligible brand to be snatched from the burning. Ushered to her boudoir by an indiscreet servant, he found the lady standing, with her lover on his knees before her, in the act of making an offer. Most men would have beaten a hasty retreat, but Lord —, feeling quite at home, dropped down into the same attitude, and joining his hands together, said solemnly, "Let us pray!" Tableau!

THE Lord Mayor was "wagging his pow in the pulpit" last Sunday. According to a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, he dwelt on Paul's imprisonment [for blasphemy], and the fact that, despite his bodily suffering, the apostle was happy during his incarceration. So were we, but no thanks to my Lord Mayor. We rejoiced to know our imprisonment was exposing the real nature of Christian bigotry and persecution, and hastening the time when it will be swept away.

A WASHINGTON lawyer has unearthed an old law, still in force in the District of Columbia, which provides that any man who blasphemes the Almighty God by using profane language shall be branded on the tongue with a hot iron. The law was enacted about 1805. It has never been repealed.

THE Rev. Joseph Cook calls himself a pandenominationalist. What a great many other people call him doesn't make such a wholesale inroad into the alphabet.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 17, Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, London, N., at 7.30, "Comic Aspects of the Bible."

August 24, Milton Hall, London; 26, Walworth; 31, Milton Hall, London. September 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Hall of Science, London; 21, Glasgow; 23 and 24, Aberdeen; 28, Edinburgh. Oct. 2, Hall of Science, London; 5, Liverpool; 9, Hall of Science, London; 12, Halifax; 16, Hall of Science, London; 19, Manchester; 20, Longton; 23, Hall of Science, London; 26, Plymouth. Nov. 2, Burnley; 16, Nottingham; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London. Dec. 7, Leeds; 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Milton Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London. Literary communications to the Editor, 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.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—G. B. Halliday, G. Morrison, A. E. D., J. W. G. Perry, J. King, J. Saunders.

C. COOKE.—You were greatly overcharged if you gave a guinea for the book. A new bound copy is only worth about 13s. 6d. You can have 8s. for it at our office if in good condition. As you have doubtless seen, Jahveh appeared in full bloom on our front page last week.

C. J. F.—It is naturally flattering to receive such compliments from one like yourself; but we cannot employ our "powerful pen" against the dirty sheet you refer to. We declined to mention it in the *Freethinker* when it constantly attacked us before our prosecution, and when its horror of "blasphemy" induced it to quote week after week the most "blasphemous" passages it could select from our columns. Pray remember the proverb about fighting a chimney sweep, and reflect on the impolicy of advertising what you abhor. Let the wretched thing alone, to live if it must, or haply to die in the gutter whence it sprang.

E. ENGLEBRECHT, Cologne, sends us the statutes of the *Freethinker's* Union of that city, and assures us that the *Freethinker* is well appreciated there. We forward *Freethinker* tracts.

W. BROOKMAN.—Summer number sent. The Christmas Number is out of print.

M. WALDEN, New Fletton, Peterborough, desires it to be known that this paper and other Freethought literature may be obtained from him.

ONE WHO HATES CANT.—Many thanks for the cuttings.

J. C. LILLES.—Glad to hear from you. Cuttings are always useful.

J. BRANT.—For texts concerning slavery see Exodus xxi., 20, 21; Leviticus xxv., 44—46; 1 Peter ii., 18.

COMPO.—Unless by special license, three weeks' notice of marriage must be given at the office of the registrar of the parish in which you reside. The fee is 7s. 6d. Two witnesses are required.

NEPTUNE.—Your views are remarkably sensible for an astrologer, but we have no space for your communications.

B.—The Portalade incident has already been dealt with. It is probably a similar myth to that concocted at Portsmouth about a young man in Haslar Hospital.

A. MACMURDIE tells us how, taking a walking tour from London to Huntingdon he distributed copies of the *Freethinker* at the villages on the route. He recommends others to go and do likewise.

A. FREETHINKER offers, in the event of any steps being taken to prosecute us, to take 100 copies, and urges that other subscribers should purchase a large number to deluge the country with them, and show the determination of the party to have the pictures continued. We intend to publish the best of our cartoons in book form shortly.

C. BENTLEY.—The picture depicts a miraculous event.

T. GRUNDY.—We have no room for your paper.

J. WIDDICOMBE, Old Exeter Street, Chisleigh, sells this paper and other Freethought literature.

J. SYKES.—Our space will not permit us to go into the matter at length.

SEVERAL replies stand over through Mr. Foote's absence from town.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Finsbury Branch of the N. S. S., has undertaken the responsibility of renting the whole of the premises in connection with Claremont Hall. This step was necessitated by the place coming into the market, and the unlikelihood of a fresh lease renewing the Society's occupancy of the hall on Sundays. An effort will be made to establish a Secular and Radical Club. A meeting for the purpose of explaining details and inviting support will be held after Mr. Foote's lecture this evening (Sunday, the 17th). We hope that all *Freethinkers* in the district will do their best to attend, considering the importance of the occasion.

THE Rev. W. Carnforth, of Nottingham, has resigned his position as a Wesleyan minister in consequence of the dogmatic position of the Conference with respect to the doctrine of eternal punishment, and its treatment of Mr. Frankland, whose case we dealt with last week. "Bully" for Carnforth.

By the way, if the Wesleyans are resolved to abide strictly by the dicta of "holy John," why don't they make teetotalism

compulsory? Wesley distinctly prohibited all members of the society from selling or using intoxicating drinks, except in extreme cases.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian World* states that Christianity is in a bad way in New Zealand, and that "the miserable negations of the Freethought school are eagerly caught up by the pleasure-loving throngs." He ends by calling the New Zealanders "God-forsaken colonists." This is cheerful news. We hope to hear as good an account from every other British colony.

ONE of the best letters from Paris in any London journal appears in the *Weekly Dispatch*. Last week the writer sensibly rebuked the English press for their absurd strictures on "the stormy scenes at Versailles," as though forsooth we had no violent scenes in our own House of Commons on much less exciting occasions. "The French," he sarcastically says, "are more lively when in public than the English, and they have not been drilled by regular Sunday attendance at church from infancy, to listen with composed faces to stupid yarns or doctrines which they ill stomach."

BRADLAUGH is at last among the prophets. The *Christian World*, in its account of the St. James's Hall Conference on the Lords and the Franchise Bill, says that "Mr. Bradlaugh met with the most flattering reception of any speaker that day," and that he "spoke with the most tremendous power." Not very long ago the same paper treated Mr. Bradlaugh as little better than a vulgar joke. We live in a strange world. We have just seen a meeting of red-hot Conservatives and white slavers, presided over by a Prince, celebrating the jubilee of the abolition of slavery. Who knows but that in another fifty years or so there may be a big meeting of orthodox Christians to celebrate the great services of Mr. Bradlaugh to the cause of religion.

MR. FOOTE has at last found time to resume the issue of his "Bible Romances." Numbers nineteen and twenty are now ready—"Gospel Ghosts" and "A Rising God," the latter dealing with the great Jerusalem ghost or the Romance of the Resurrection. Four more numbers to complete the series will be ready shortly; after which Mr. Foote will begin a series of "Bible Heroes."

THE *Leeds Express* is responsible for the following story: "Some funny things are said in a very unpremeditated manner. At the Borough Police-court, yesterday, a tradesman made an application for the transfer of a beer license he held from one shop to another. Said the Mayor: 'This shop you have gone to—is it better adapted for the sale of beer than the other?' To which the tradesman replied: 'Yes, sir, it's right opposite the church!'"

WE are glad to hear that Mr. Arthur B. Moss's lecturing tour in the north has been successful so far. Next Sunday he is to lecture for the first time in Glasgow. We hope the friends will give him a hearty welcome.

WE rejoice to see that Friend Symes and his *Liberator* are being well abused by the religious press of Victoria. It is a sure sign he is doing good work. A new paper always requires some advertising, and Freethought papers have the singular good fortune to be well advertised by their enemies.

THE bigots of Melbourne have got frightened at their own temerity in interfering with the rights of free publication, and the copies of the *Freethinker*, which were stolen by the authorities from the office of the *Liberator*, have been restored.

A MODEL PRAYER.

IT should be useful to the Christian and instructive to the Freethinker to observe what kind of prayer is regarded by those who are skilled in such matters as the best and holiest and the most worthy of imitation. In a sermon published in the *Rock*, and entitled "Jabez; or, Pray and Prosper," the Rev. J. H. Stephenson, M.A., gives a scriptural "pattern prayer" on which Christians may safely model their heartfelt supplications to the throne of grace. This "beautiful and appropriate" prayer is the one uttered by Jabez when he "called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"

By the help of the religious or priestly insight which passeth understanding—or, rather, to speak more definitely, by mingling the incongruous religious ideals of ages remote from each other in sentiment and in mode of expression—the reverend preacher finds that the first clause of this "most proper prayer" was a prayer for what Jabez, in common with all sinners, needed above everything else—

namely, pardon. It was a prayer for "real blessings," including pardon of sin, peace with God by faith, justification through Christ's finished righteousness, sanctification by his indwelling spirit, adoption into our Father's family, gracious insight into the mysteries of his Word, a loving spirit breathing benevolence and kindness and hopeful thankfulness around, a hope of a glorious immortality when the vain world should have passed away, and so forth. All these, we are assured, Jabez thus pleaded for in earnest faith, and, moreover, God granted them in answer to his "holy importunity." Sigismund, King of the Romans, was "above grammar." Similarly the servants of the Lord of Lords are above logic and above history even when contained in their own vaunted book of books. Otherwise the glaring anachronism and obvious falsity of such statements and implications could not fail to strike the intellect and conscience of any preacher who possessed the least discrimination and knowledge and a desire to give utterance to actual truths rather than to a tissue of sweeping assumptions which merely suited his purpose for the moment. Such ideas were quite foreign to the times during which Jabez is alleged to have lived, and most of them were apparently never so much as dreamed of by the writers of the earlier books of the Old Testament. It would be about as accurate and as honest to say that Jabez asked the Lord for a brand-new telephone and the abolition of the House of Lords. We have as much right to assume that he asked for the blessings of modern civilisation as for the realisation of the ideals of the Christian dispensation evolved some fifteen hundred years after his time.

The nature of the "real blessings" desired by Jabez is unfolded in the next petition, where he calls on God to enlarge his coast, his territory, his possessions. Commonplace greed or covetousness is the basis of this as of most other pious prayers. Even the preacher himself, modified in his opinions by the moral teachings of later times, has to confess that at first he stands "aghast" at such outspoken selfishness in the beautiful "pattern prayer." For he remembers another text in which the prophet Isaiah (v. 8) denounces those who "join house to house" and "lay field to field." But the shock to his nobler feelings must of course be quieted down as speedily as possible. So he explains away all the difficulties that arise in the minds of Christians more high-minded and less selfish in their aspirations and desires than usual. God's will makes all clear. God had given the promised land to his chosen people, of whom Jabez was one, and the Canaanites were not yet completely dispossessed, not yet completely exterminated, as our Father in heaven had so graciously commanded. The holy covenant had not yet been carried out to the bitter end. Many of the native owners of the soil, including hundreds of thousands of aged men, peaceful women and helpless babes, had yet to be piously murdered before "God's good promise" to his ferocious saints could be fulfilled. Thus Jabez's model prayer was a prayer for divine aid in effecting the massacre of all the members of the seven nations of Canaan, a work calculated to bring special "honor and glory to Jehovah." Jabez in effect cried out to the Lord: "Enable me to walk forth through the 'length and breadth of my blood-bought inheritance' (Gen. xiii., 17)* in all the 'glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. viii., 21)." Our state-paid teacher of righteousness persuades himself, or at least endeavors to persuade others, that it is a grand and holy thing for God's servants to walk in triumph over the graves of their murdered victims, to rejoice with devout thanksgiving in the possession of their stolen farms and vineyards, to glory in the reward of awful crimes which are converted into profitable heroisms and shining virtues by the grace of God! What a picture! Justification of crime by pious fiction! Glorification of massacre and outrage by the sanctified utterance of the shibboleth of faith! Infamous atrocities in "the glorious liberty of the children of God," and as part of a vaunted system of morality so sublimely good and beautiful and perfect that man could never have imagined for himself so glorious a height of human excellence without a special revelation from heaven! In attempting to escape the unsightly rock of selfishness, the

preacher has steered his holy bark into a whirlpool of blood and horror. The model prayer is not selfish, forsooth, because it only asks the divine aid for wholesale robbery and human slaughter!

Stephenson, M.A., are you dead to human feeling that you can justify and extol such glorious liberty of the children of God as this? Is your conscience so stultified and overborne by dead and putrefying dogmas, or so intoxicated with the spirit of religion, that it never smites you, never brings the blush of shame upon your sanctified visage when you, from the shelter of your coward's castle, blaspheme against the very heart and soul of humanity by palliating, by defending, by honoring, the holy infamy of the conquest of Canaan? You know the biblical narrative. You know that the divine command was: "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth." You know how Moses and Joshua carried out the horrible command, sparing neither woman nor child. But you and your fellow clergymen are paid—well paid out of enforced exactions and national plunder—to glorify such deeds and such commands. Your livings, your prospects, depend on such utterly despicable work as this. The independence of the humblest crossing-sweeper is infinitely preferable to such degradation, such bondage, such treason to your fellow man. And we are afraid there is no hope for you.

Carlyle says that the scoundrel or the charlatan is not perfect in his business until he comes to believe his own lies. Whether your belief in your mischievous but profitable teachings has become fixed and genuine, whether for instance you believe your assertion—or your wretched falsehood—that prayer is "an infallible specific," we cannot say. If you are not sincere you are a scoundrel. If you are sincere, you have succeeded in repressing the workings of thought and conscience. You have blinded yourself to the fundamental rules of human morality, and you induce others to follow you in thus ignoring or perverting the most essential principles of human progress and happiness. We need not wonder that you and your fellow craftsmen look coldly on "mere morality," and prefer teaching faith in the blood of a human sacrifice as man's sole hope and comfort. And since the extermination of human beings by fire and sword has to be extolled by you as good and holy work, we need not be surprised that you imprison as vile criminals men who seek the peaceful and intellectual extermination of your noxious dogmas by reason and by ridicule.

W. P. BALL.

THE INFIDEL BARBER.

AN OLD MAN RELATES A STORY.

THE snug little shaving establishment in Long Street, Millopolis, is nearly full. Knowsome, our infidel barber, is working away vigorously. Outside it is very wet and dull; the rain is falling quickly and heavily. Pious Christians may now sing as they walk the streets "Let some droppings fall on me," and have their prayer gratified. Suddenly, with a whirlwind rush, Perry Gramme and a friend enter the shop.

"Good day, Knowsome," says Perry, whose spirits no amount of water seems to weaken, as is the case with most spirits. "Good day, old cutter, this is splendid teetotal weather, isn't it? Can you tell me why this weather is not like the Bible?"

"Eh, no," replies Knowsome; "I'm a poor hand at conundrums."

"Yes, you're good at giving things up, except at a church collection. Well, I'll answer the riddle for you. It's because it's not dry. Now I'll dry up. By-the-bye, just as I came in, I saw a lewd-looking clerical talking and ogling, or rather mashing, a sweet young lady at the top of the street. He looked as if he were telling her that virtue-ineculcating anecdote of Lot and his daughters. I'm positive he wasn't doing her any moral good. I would have liked to give him a sound kick on his "afterwards." I hate to see a girl led astray."

"Perhaps you're jealous, Perry," said Knowsome, with that peculiar movement of the eyelids vulgarly called a wink.

All the time Perry had been talking, an old man with grey head and sad, calm, yet thoughtful face, who sat in a corner of the shop, had been listening keenly, especially to that part pertaining to the parson and the young lady.

"I say, Knowsome," cried Perry, "can you tell me who had the biggest dye-works there ever was?"

"No; don't I tell you I'm bad at riddles," answered the barber.

"Well," replied Perry, "Jesus Christ had, because he dyed for all the world."

"Cessate your punning," began Perry's friend, who had come in with him. Then a voice came from the old man in the corner—"Friends!"

* Of course we do not hold ourselves responsible for the inaccuracy of this clergyman's biblical quotations. The original, we find, is: "Arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." If a Freethinker altered a text to this extent he would at once be accused of grossly falsifying his alleged quotation from Holy Writ. But a prebendary of course is specially privileged.

Everybody looked, and the serious tone in which the word was uttered caused Perry Gramme for once to have more of a sacred appearance.

"Friends," the old man went on, "when that young fellow spoke of that parson talking to a girl outside, and in all probability poisoning her mind, it brought back to me a dark, painful episode in my life." He sighed.

"Once I had a wife and child; now I have neither. The child was a daughter, and she grew into a beautiful girl of eighteen. Before me now her brown eyes shine in all the sorrow of a broken heart; her sweet face appears in the mist of dead years; I hear her voice say, 'Father, I am ruined—ruined!' I see her fall at my feet. I see the devil in the shape of a parson grinning over her prostrate form! I see her dead—dead—and a parson's hand leading her down to hell! O God, damn him, damn him! His sneering smile is mocking me now, and he points me to her grave and laughs, and there is no sunshine in all the world!" He ceased, and the tears were on his cheeks; then with a trembling voice he resumed thus:

"My daughter, my precious Fanny, was an excellent singer; so she was soon put in the choir of the church we attended. I used to be there and see her stand and sing, and surely I could be pardoned if a vision of heaven and angels haunted me then; for those we love and who love us are our angels, and where they are is heaven.

"The clergyman, the Rev. Roger Rogers, was a man I never liked. His age was about thirty, and his whole manner and look indicated the hypocrite. I detested his sly, cautious, crawling ways from the first. He was married, and had two children. Soon I noticed he talked a deal with Fanny. He lingered with her whenever he met her. He came to our house oftener than was good for my poor girl, and you guess the rest. I should choke if I tried to tell it. He led her wrong. He that should have taught her naught but good, showed her the way to evil, led her astray, ruined her for ever, and— But he shall die for it! I will kill him! Murder in this case is justice! Did he not murder her? Shall her shape follow me for ever crying with her hands before her face, and the tears streaming down, crying, 'What shall I do—oh, what shall I do!'"

He stopped for a minute, then continued: "Gentlemen, excuse this passion, but I cannot help it, and only myself knows how much reason I have for it. Well, I told the parson what he had done, and he retorted that my girl was a forward piece of impudence, that she had hung about him, and tempted him, and done everything that I'm sure she never would; and, gentlemen, when he said that in cold, cruel tones, I clenched my fist and knocked him to the floor. Then I hurried home, and asked for Fanny. She was not in. Her mother did not know where she was. I guessed. She had gone to meet that vile serpent of a parson. I hastened out. It was an autumn night. All the stars were hid. Heavy clouds covered the sky. I rambled for about an hour. Down the dull streets, never noticing any one, I passed and passed again. Then I left the town and walked to a wood through which the river flowed. I came to the edge of the quiet lethargic water. The wind moaned a dirge in the trees; the rustle of falling leaves sounded like the trailing of the white robes of Death as he passed through the wood. I heard voices on the bank of the river. I crept on and watched, peering intently through the gloom—that horrible gloom that was soon to stamp itself on my soul for ever. I recognised the voices. It was my Fanny and her deceiver. I saw her kneel down, I heard her implore him to help her, I heard her pray to the God that he professed to serve, and I could not stir, I could not speak, and I felt as if torturing fiends were passing daggers through and through my heart. She begged and begged for him to do something for her, and he only laughed; and then—and then, as she knelt there, I heard a splash, and he had pushed her into the river and fled! I knew no more. I only heard her dying cry, and I fainted. O that scream! 'Tis in my ears now! It is cutting my heart! It echoes all through the room! I see her white hands lifted heavenward, her despairing eyes turned to the skies, and the waters rise up and hide her head, and the dark trees whisper as they shudder 'Murder!' and the shivering wind cries 'Murder!' and God sits on his throne, and lets such things be! And I am an old man!—an old man! whom God hath dealt with thus, while he, that damned diabolical parson, enjoys the sweets of life, and knows no care. O God! God! I curse thee!"

A pause of some minutes occurred, then the old man, with great emotion went on: "Some persons found me later on raving mad. I had lost my reason. And, as I afterwards learned, the parson told the police he had seen me push my own girl into the river in a fit of insanity. I was sent to a lunatic asylum. The generous parson paid my expenses. I came out three months ago, after having been in twelve years. My wife was dead. I intended accusing that hell-sent parson of murder, but then I thought they would only send me back to the asylum again if I did. And he, the Rev. Roger Rogers is living yet. I know he is alive, but I don't know where. But I'll find it out, and then woe unto him! I cannot rest till I see him, seducer, murderer, and perjurer, to accuse me of killing my own child. And oh, where is God! where is God! That parson lives, while my wife and daughter are dead through him, for my wife died of a broken heart, and I— I carry one in my bosom; and I have no friend in all the earth, and not a friend in heaven, for God is

deaf; all I have is in the grave; I hear them call for me; they shall not wait long, but he shall go before I do!" And the old man rushed from the shop, and Knowsome never spoke, and even Perry Gramme made no jest again; for the sad story of the old man had touched them all, and deeply too. WITTIVON.

EXTRACTS FROM JOS. SYMES'S "LIBERATOR."

THE SECOND ADVENT.—When Jesus left his disciples he told them he'd be back in a crack. About 1850 years have fled since then, and Jesus is not even in sight of our biggest telescopes. Perhaps he missed his way, poor fellow; or the cross wind Milton mentions may have blown him "ten thousand leagues awry into the devious air;" or, most likely, he has heard that his followers would tear him to pieces, should he return, for preaching against riches; and so he has determined not to show his face this way again until Freethinkers rule the world, and deal out justice to men and gods alike.

THE LORD'S DAY.—"A thousand years with the Lord are as one day, and one day as a thousand years." Had the Lord been brought up in some commercial house he might have learned to distinguish time a little more correctly. As it is he may give a bill for three months, and forget that it is due until 91,000 years have passed. This is a loose way of doing business; and the reader will not be surprised to learn that the Lord's business has lately fallen off about 100 per cent. No honest man or devil can deal with him except on cash principles, and of that article he seems to have none.

WINDING UP AN IMPOSTOR.—I was going along the streets in Leeds some time in 1878, and met a big pious man, who eyed me intently as we neared each other. When nearly opposite he darted towards me, exclaiming: "How are you brother? I have a message from the Lord unto thee! "Ah!" said I, "How is the Lord? When did you see him last? I've heard nothing from him for a very long time." He looked very silly. If all messengers from the Lord had always been treated in a similar manner, the world would never have been cursed with a divine revelation. Neither prophet nor priest can stand honest questioning. Only the victims of vicious education and those who "have a taste for being diddled" fall a prey to religious impostors. As a prophet himself said, and he ought to know, "The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad" (Hosea ix., 7). The Bible does not need any confirmation, of course, or instances might be given.

PROFANE JOKES.

A GENTLEMAN who rejoiced in the name of Kane, was arraigned before a facetious justice by a sergeant of police with, "Very dhrunk, yer worship. Gave the police a dale of thrubble." The law-giver looked down upon the prisoner and then at the charge-sheet, and as the name struck his eye he said, "Oh, you're Kane, are you? Are you the man that slew your brother?" "No, your honor, said the accused. "I'm the man that was slewed." "Ah," responded the magistrate, "then you'll be further slewed for \$10, or ten days."

THE Royal Academicians have been likened to the lilies, on the ground that Solomon in all his glory was not R.A.'d like one of them. It was probably not the work of an Academician upon which a critic, being asked for his opinion, evasively remarked that the painter was doubtless a good man, seeing that he had at any rate obeyed the scriptural command, and, being pressed for an explanation, added, "He has not made to himself any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth."

A MODEL CONVERT.—Mr. K., a missionary among a tribe of Northern Indians, was wont to offer refreshment to his converts when they came from a distance to see him. An old man desired much to be admitted to the refreshments, and proposed to some of his friends to accompany them on their next visit to the missionary. They told him he must be converted first. What was that? He must know all about the Bible. When the time came he declared himself duly converted, and undertook the journey with them. When he arrived he seated himself opposite the missionary wrapped in his blanket, and looked exceedingly serious. In answer to an inquiry from the missionary, he rolled up his eyes and solemnly uttered the following words, with a pause between each: "Adam—Eve—Cain—Noah—Jeremiah—Beelzebub—Solomon." "What do you mean?" asked the missionary. "Solomon—Beelzebub—Noah—" "Stop, stop!" said the missionary, "what do you mean?" "I mean—whiskey," replied the old man.

THE congregation of Lunan, in Forfarshire, often distressed the minister by the habit of sleeping in church. One day Jamie Fraser, an idiot, was sitting in the front gallery, when many were sleeping around him. "Look," said the minister, "you see even Jamie Fraser, the idiot, does not fall asleep as so many of you are doing." Jamie, not liking to be thus designated, coolly replied, "Au' I hadna been an idiot I would have been sleeping, too."

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