

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH. — No. 85.



RESURRECTION OF THE JERUSALEM SAINTS.

"And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."—MATTHEW XXVII., 52, 53.

BREAKING UP. — I I.

With a book like the Bible private judgment was bound to lead to anarchy. Every individual began to interpret it in his own way, and personal tastes and inclinations operated as powerfully as personal intelligence. No one can read the early reformers without perceiving that they began that process of picking and choosing which has ended in the common method of arguing what the Bible ought to be instead of what it is. Long discussions often take place in Christian journals on various points of doctrine without the least appeal to God's word; one disputant saying "I prefer this," and the other "I prefer that," each of them quite unconscious of the fact that they are comparing their own likes and dislikes instead of ascertaining the will of God.

The anarchy that followed the private interpretation of such a hodge-podge volume as the Bible soon led to the formation of rival sects. Many of these differed considerably amongst themselves, but they held together, like most organisations in the past, for purposes of offence and defence. Their bond was a militant one, and union of course meant strength. They quickly passed from the pen and tongue to the sword, deciding spiritual quarrels with the arm of the flesh, and proving by persecution, outrage and murder, who were the truest children of their common father. "Is it not wonderful," says Melancthon to Calvin, in one of Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*, "is it not wonderful that the words of eternal life should have hitherto produced only eternal litigation; and that, in our progress heavenward, we should think it expedient to plant unthrifty thorns over bitter wells of blood in the wilderness we leave behind us?" But Calvin and his fellows

were not to be influenced by such an appeal. Their dispositions were below, or as they would say, above it. They believed in imitating the old policy of the Lord of Hosts, and liked to

Prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

But the very dissension of these various sects contained an element of hope. The more powerful ones were at length obliged to observe a truce of mutual fear, and this led to a growth of respect for the principle of toleration. *Liberty* was an idea altogether beyond their conceptions. They could not understand that every man had a right to think for himself; they simply agreed to tolerate each other when they could not put each other down, to wink at a nuisance they could not suppress. Of course this did not prevent their harrying the less powerful sects, who had a lively time of it. But these in turn grew stronger by persecution, as all bodies must unless they are absolutely exterminated, and by-and-bye they also entered within the ring of toleration. The process was a long one, but it was sure. People were for generations accustomed to the fact that they *might* differ on *some things*, and this naturally induced the belief in many that they might differ on all. Toleration is like a treaty between nations; it is the inevitable beginning of ultimate concord. Toleration develops into liberty, and international treaties develop into international peace.

The Bible was still retained as the great fetish of general worship, and even now the advanced Unitarians maintain a respectable reputation by using it in their churches. But other objects of devotion came into competition with it. Science, art and literature attracted their multitudes of devotees.

In the course of time their influence extended to the

Bibliolators, who were compelled to study their fetish as well as worship it.

This has led to what we see all over Christendom. Biblical criticism has resulted in the scepticism of Strauss and Baur, of Rénan and Réville, of Colenso, Greg, Newman, Arnold, and the author of "Supernatural Religion." Scientific criticism has revealed a huge gulf of contradiction between the Bible and the truths of astronomy, geology, and biology. And popular criticism, as conducted by such men as Thomas Paine, has shown its opposition to morality and common sense. The plenary inspiration of the "blessed book" is almost entirely abandoned; it is a dogma which, as Ruskin admits, is "impossible to educated persons."

All other dogmas necessarily join in this process of dissolution. Hell-fire, Eternal Punishment, the existence of the Devil, Salvation by Faith and the divinity of Christ are all being fiercely debated. Mr. Arnold goes further; he drops Miracles and sneers at the idea of a Personal God. All this discussion must lead to negative conclusions; it means throwing upon the Bible the light of Truth; it means that the Bible is dying through being found out. Like a polar ice-field, it was once whole and rigid; but the increasing warmth of discussion has slowly broken it up into floes and bergs; and these melt away as they float down to the great sea of knowledge.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE JEWISH ACCOUNT OF JESUS.

It being allowed on all hands that Christianity sprung out of Judaism, it is manifestly important to know why the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to whom alone Jesus declared himself sent, did not recognise their Messiah after all his wonderful miracles, and what account the chosen people have to give of Jesus.

The Christian narratives, be it noted, were not in circulation even among Christians until after the destruction of Jerusalem. That is to say, they were not put forward at the time, and in the place where they could have met with contradiction. When the Christians became a considerable body, pretensions were advanced on behalf of Jesus which, to every follower of Moses, were simply blasphemous. If, as is said, the sufferings of the Jews were a punishment for their rejection of Jesus, it is curious they should have known even less about him than of the many other leaders of fanatics who abounded at the time. The deicides found themselves afflicted without knowing the cause. God, it appeared, had called upon them but had omitted to leave his visiting card. He had condescended to be born of one of their women, and they only had traditions of her as *Stada*, an unchaste female. Their writers, Philo, Josephus, Nicolaus of Damascus, and Justus of Tiberias, had somehow forgotten to mention the wondrous doings of the Son of God, though, in the case of Josephus, the Christians obligingly supplied the omission. The Mishna, the main body of the Talmud, although compiled between 170 and 220 a.c., at Tiberias, on the sea of Galilee, near where Jesus is said to have lived and wrought miracles and taught, mentions neither him nor his followers. Yet the purpose of the Mishna was an exposition of the oral law as against all heresies. In the Gemara, or complement, which is of later date, there are some slight particulars concerning a certain Jesus ben Stada, of which more anon.

Modern Jews show little inclination to enter into controversy with Christians. The results have been too flamingly written in their tear-bedewed and blood-stained history. A powerful anti-Christian work, the "Faith Strengthened" of Isaac ben Abraham of Troki, is privately printed and only circulates among the faithful. Some Jews even show a disposition to accept Jesus, and Spinoza too, as men who reflect credit upon the nation. Salvador, Cohen, and others have written of Jesus from the rationalist standpoint. George Salomons, in his "Jesus of History," identifies the Jesus of the gospels with the Jesus mentioned by Josephus ["Wars of the Jews," vi., 3], who cried, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." The learned Morris J. Raphall, in his "Pcst-Biblical History of the Jews" (vol. ii., p. 374), passes by the alleged occurrences in the time of Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the remark that "at its origin, and during its infancy, Christianity has no claim on the attention of the Jewish historian." Rabbi Isaac M. Wise, who identifies Paul with Acher of

the Talmud, in his "History of the Hebrew's Second Commonwealth" (p. 258; Cincinnati, 1880) is more explicit. He says of Jesus: "Neither the place, nor the year, nor day of his birth were known to his biographers except that in rabbinical sources he is always called [נצרי] = *Notzri*, "one born at Nazareth," a town in Galilee. In fact, if it were not for those rabbinical notices of Jesus, and especially one [Yerushalmi Sabbath, xii., 4] there would not be any evidence on record that such a person ever lived. Nothing is known with certainty of his parentage and his youth. Contrary to his own statements (Mark xii., 35-37), his biographies make him a son of David, and in their eagerness to make him also a son of God, they brand him as a bastard, according to modern conceptions, although among Pagans it was no rare case that a woman was supposed to have conceived by some imaginary deity (Josephus Antiq., xviii., iii., 4)."

We revert to the Talmudical statements, as by these orthodox Jews must be considered bound. They may be found fully cited in the works of Lightfoot and Lardner. These scattered accounts of Jesus, when brought together, give us the following:—In the time of Jannæus the Sadducee, (b.c. 106-79), one Mary, a plaiter of women's hair, was false to her husband, and had, by a person, named Pandera, a son called Jesus. This son was taken in tutorship by Rabbi Joshua ben Perachia, President of the Sanhedrin, and, at the time when the rabbis were persecuted by Jannæus, accompanied him to Alexandria in Egypt, where he learnt how to cure diseases, and other magic arts. On his return with his master they fell out because Jesus praised a woman's beauty. Jesus then taught new doctrines, defamed the rabbis and gave himself up to magical practices. He had five chief disciples, Mathai (Matthew?), Nezer, Boni and Thodah (Thaddeus?). They were put to death, and Jesus himself was stoned at Lud, twenty-two miles north-west of Jerusalem, and then hanged on the evening before the passover. There is also an account of Rabbi Eliezar meeting one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth named James of Kepharshecaniah. This James explained Dent. xxiii., 18, by Micah i., 7, which interpretation says Eliezar "did not displease me."

In the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or book of the generation of Jesus, a Jewish account of the founder of Christianity, of no rabbinical authority, but doubtless reflecting the traditions of the Jews, much the same story is told at greater length. Here, however, Pandera is called Joseph-Pandera. It is certain that this part of the story was current early, for Celsus (a.c. 170) alleged that Jesus was an illegitimate son of a soldier named Panthera, a calumny easily refuted by the Christian Father, Origen, with the powerful arguments that God would not make a teacher of a bastard, and that some animals—for instance vultures—conceive without any connection with a male. The Christian St. Epiphanius strangely enough makes the grandfather of Jesus "Jacob called Panther" (Cont. Heres. iii.) That Jesus visited Egypt is confirmed by Matthew ii., 14, the Gospel of the Infancy, chap. iv., and Pseudo-Matthew, chap. xxii. If his healing miracles had any basis in fact, what more likely than that he there learnt the art of the Egyptian therapeutics or healers, which the superstitious Jews would consider as supernatural? The stoning and hanging reminds us of the expression of Peter, "Whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (Acts v., 20, and x., 39; see Gal. iii., 13; 1 Peter ii., 24). But what is to be said of the anachronism of making Jesus live a century before the Christian era? Our perplexity is only the greater when we remember that St. Irenæus, the Christian Father (a.c. 182), ("Against Heresies, book ii., c. 22, 45), makes Jesus to have lived to be fifty years of age!

J. M. WHEELER.

ECONOMICAL THEOLOGY.—Several members of the Austin Tabernacle called on the Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter to pray for rain, he having neglected to do so. Whangdoodle received the delegation graciously. They stated that rain had been prayed for in most of the prominent churches of the white folks, and they thought that he also should urge the necessity of immediate showers, as the corn was almost too far gone to raise more than half a crop. "You all says dat de white 'piscepal bishop and de res' ob de preachers prayed for rain?" queried Whangdoodle. "Dey has done did it," was the reply. "Fools, niggahs!" exclaimed Whangdoodle, indignantly. "What's de sense ob my prayin' fur rain den too? Ef de white folks gets rain, won't you get it too, widout my prayin' fur it?"—*Texas Siftings*.

ACID DROPS.

ONE of the most popular ministers in the Established Church of Scotland, the Rev. Alex. Inglis, of Kilmours, has been suspended from his ministerial duties on account of immoral behavior towards a female parishioner.

PASSING through Clerkenwell, our eyes were struck with the words, "Enlargement of the Holy Redeemer." Anxious lest he should enlarge to bursting point, we made further inquiries, and found that the announcement referred to the ecclesiastical district of that name. We further learnt that the Marquis of Northampton had, in aid of the enlargement, given the site of the celebrated Dissenting Spa Fields Chapel for the purpose of building a Ritualist Church.

AN establishment of the Sacred Heart in France is begging five-franc pieces of young lady pupils, promising them in return that they shall pass their examination with flying colors. According to the announcement, several pious pupils attribute their gratifying success entirely to the influence of the Sacred Heart thus secured on their behalf. One young lady, who confesses her ignorance, says that she succeeded in her oral and written examinations by keeping a statuette of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in her hand or by her side the whole time. Whether there is any collusion between the examiners and the priests we cannot say.

IN an article on "The Jews and the Gospel," the *Christian Globe* says: "The day will undoubtedly come when these Hebrews, so long neglected by their Gentile brethren, will everywhere raise the banner of the cross, and, burning with love to the savior whom in ignorance they now hate and despise, will, with the heroism of a Peter and a Paul, go forth into all the world, bidding men believe and be saved." We have not found so great faith in all Israel! At the rate Jews are converted, about £1000 per head, the whole income of Christendom will not suffice to bring about the desired consummation. How the Jews wish their Gentile brethren had treated them with neglect instead of with stones, fire, imprisonment and torture!

The *Christian Herald* tells us how the Rev. Dr. Baker, in South Africa, heroically drove seven or eight miles in his gig, through a perfect hurricane, to conduct the church services. His "poor horse trembled" while crossing the hill in the face of the furious storm, and the determined sabbath-keeper was drenched to the skin almost immediately he started. When in church he found that not another soul, not even the sexton on the other side of the street, was fool enough to come to hear him preach. Asked how he felt, the modest hero gave the "noble reply": "Never happier and more contented in my life, for I felt that if all the world that day had neglected their duty, I had not neglected mine." This conceited Pharisee, while condemning his neighbors for their good sense and applauding himself to his heart's content, conveniently forgot that in driving his poor trembling horse through the storm on the Sabbath he had broken, not kept, the fourth commandment, and had set the supposed will of God at naught.

THE same paper, in its "General News," tells us of a lady sceptic who was so frightened of an infidel lecturer's eyes that she turned to the Lord. The lady's name of course is not given, and inquiries into the genuineness of the alleged case of conversion are only furnished with the very wide postal address of "Illinois, U.S."

ANOTHER case is given of an Atheist—anonymous of course—who was converted by a dream of Hell. The only identifying particular given is that last June he was at a meeting in the south of Glasgow. All, or pretty nearly all, of these cases are the merest concoctions of reckless piety, which feeds its dupes with the kind of lie that suits them and that brings grist to the mill of the falsehood-monger.

JOHN HAMPDEN, the foolish and notorious namesake of a brave and wise hero of old, writes to us. With characteristic inaccuracy in expressing, or rather in actually contradicting, his own intended meaning, he says:—"Sir,—Instead of boasting that you have the evidences of science and philosophy against the Bible, why do you openly prove that such is the case?" The answer is very simple. We do so because we believe it to be our duty; because the Bible is false and immoral and exceedingly mischievous; because it is one of the main objects of our life and of our paper to expose and shatter the religion which nearly crushed and ruined all hope of civilisation and progress in Europe.

THIS John Hampden the little, however, means why *don't* we prove that science is against the Bible—not why do we. He is not so mad as people think. He only believes the book which all Christians profess to believe. He knows the earth is not round, because the Word of God, which cannot lie, teaches otherwise. In this sure and certain faith he offers a hundred guineas for full and positive proof of the curvature of land or water, and the consequent rotundity of the earth; and he offers to join the Freethought ranks immediately we show that the

modern view is founded on fact. But this was proved at the Bedford Level, and Mr. Hampden's £1,000 was duly given to the winner of the wager, so that our obstinately credulous correspondent and the "many who would follow" him ought to have turned Freethinkers then. As actual measurement failed to convince him or to prevent him from bringing a law-suit against the editor who decided the wager, it is of course evident that it would be sheer waste of our time to seriously argue so well-established a scientific fact. John Hampden is but one example out of many of the practical lunacy caused by the Bible and its teachings.

THE *War Cry* likes alliteration. Among its headings this week are: "Happy Hours at Hilly Hampstead," "Shirley Singing Salvation Soldiers," "Watford Wonderful Warriors," "Successful Skirmishing in the Sunny South," and so forth.

THE *War Cry* tells us that seven Hallelujah Lasses have stormed Barking, and requests us to "Pray for Barking Soldiers." "A Cargo of Salvation" has been landed at Leeds. The Army has had a "good Free-and-Easy" at Nottingham, and "closed the meeting with one soul in the Fountain." Subsequently there were "four in the Fountain." At Birmingham "God has laid hold of the people," although "the Devil's regiment was out, and threw all sorts of things" at the "blood-washed" soldiers of the Lord.

WHEN it comes to miracles, the *War Cry*, like most of the Christian periodicals, ceases to be specific in names and localities. Three girls, it asserts, were paralysed while playing at Salvation Army and offering up mock prayers. They could not rise till some of God's people arrived and offered up real prayer, when they got up from their knees and became "real Blood-and-Fire Soldiers" of the Lord. This occurred at one of the "Outposts" situated apparently the Lord knows where. Beyond this scanty information no names of persons or places are given. Unsanctified curiosity is thus baffled and exposure prevented.

IN another part this veracious print says: On "Sunday morning at the Holiness meeting one dear little boy fell under the power of God, and he afterwards said that (in spirit) he had been to Heaven and seen Jesus, his mother and father, and many of his relations who had passed away. And he said he saw the Lamb, the Book of Life, and his own name written therein. He also saw a robe and a crown that were laid up for him; but Jesus told him he could not stay there, he had to go back and tell the sinners what he had seen." If any one wants further particulars of the robe and crown, he must apply at Lowell, Massachusetts—which is a long way off.

AT Sittingbourne, Joseph Inch was charged with assaulting William Wall at a Salvation Army tea. The affair arose out of a dispute about some marmalade. Defendant asked one of the brethren to pass the marmalade, a request that was resented by the "brother," who had appropriated that delicacy to himself. Defendant then "talked at him," and "the brother did not like it." Wall then came to the rescue of the godly gormandiser, and threatened to "chuck" the discontented disciple out of the place. When told in return that he was not "man enough" to do it, the godly "chucker-out" got assistance and threw Wall out and struck him, defendant returning the blow. The summons was dismissed. Great excitement was caused among the barge-men and brickmakers, who took up the cause of their companion and paraded the streets in procession. Finally they mingled themselves forcibly with a rival Salvationist procession, and drowned the Army songs with snatches of "Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny." A riot seemed eminent, but the anti-Salvationists, satisfied with this demonstration, retired without further disturbance.

LORD MAYOR FOWLER has gone as one of the English delegates of the Evangelical Alliance, now holding a Conference at Copenhagen. These worthy representatives of the Pharisees of old are alarmed at the fact that Evangelicalism is decaying between the spread of popery and rationalism, and urgently appeal for a union of Evangelicals in all countries.

DEAN PLUMPTRE, preaching at Weston-super-Mare a few days ago on behalf of the local hospital, reminded his hearers that Dives and Lazarus have had their counterparts in every age of the world's history. He then upbraided those who spent much money on dress, jewels and sumptuous living, while the work of Christ's Church on earth, the relief to the sick and needy, and the preaching of the gospel to the poor, languishes for lack of funds. The Dean gets £1000 a year, and the collection amounted to about £30. We wonder what the Dean put into the plate! We see that he has given £50 towards a stained-glass window for Wells Cathedral, but of course, in the Dean's estimation, that is more important than supporting a hospital, and is not quite so frivolous as spending money on dress or good living. Nor does he care about the poverty-stricken curates in his and other deaneries, so long as he gets his thousand pounds. Oh! Mr. Dean, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

THE *Christian Herald* tells us of a man who was converted

"by means of a Bible which he had stolen." Through his theft he will go to paradise. If he had been honest he would have remained in his "sins," and in all probability must have gone to hell. Pretty moral teaching this!

§ A FARMER at Thurston, near Findern, Derbyshire, retired to rest the other Friday night leaving his wife downstairs saying her prayers. As she did not follow him, he subsequently went downstairs again and found she had disappeared. A pious young man had appeared to join her in her prayers and the pair eloped to Derby.

THE curate of Rothwell Church is so imbued with the Christian kind of love and courtesy that he stopped the singing of a hymn at the funeral of a dissenter who when dying had requested his friends to sing this favorite hymn of his over his grave. The indignant mourners had to go outside the churchyard and sing the hymn in the public roadway.

At a meeting of the Town Council, Stonehaven, Kincardineshire, it was complained that two or three clergymen had taken up a position at the grounds set apart for ladies bathing, and there engaged in preaching and psalm-singing. The Council refused to believe that men imbued with the Holy Spirit could have any but pious motives in stationing themselves at the ladies' bathing place, but at the same time they appointed a woman to warn them off.

THE Rev. G. Tabberer, vicar of St. Peter's, Coventry, formerly a very popular clergyman, has been inhibited by the Bishop of Worcester from performing ministerial duties in consequence of serious charges made against him.

AMONG the definitions sent in for the prize competition in the *Weekly Dispatch* are the following:—

PARSON.

Of a very good living, incumbent is he;
So he preaches, good living's incumbent on me.

A Trinity pilot.

A wily and by no means uncommon bird; one who prays for us and who not infrequently preys upon us.

One who is always preparing others for death, himself for a living.

A spiritual finger-post. One who points out paths which he has not travelled, leading to places whereof he knows nothing.

CHRISTIAN.

One who professes to be in the "narrow way," and who has an uncommon narrow way of his own, too.

An admirer of peace, an adorer of "pieces,"

Gets a crown for his pay when his pilgrimage ceases.

One who believes in the Lamb, and mint sauce with it.

One who is so anxious about rites that he takes no notice of wrings.

One of the definitions, as amended by us, reads thus: CHRISTIAN—One who thinks on the cross instead of acting on the square.

A WOMAN who keeps a shop in Bethnal Green Road, near Pollard's Row, was struck with paralysis while praying and has not since recovered her speech. Moral—it is as dangerous to pray as to swear.

THE Rev. F. Silver, M.A., rector of Norton-in-Hales, North Staffordshire, has died with "shocking suddenness." About eight o'clock in the morning he left his residence for a short walk in the village, and later on he was found lying in the road dead, having (it is supposed) expired in a convulsion. Can't the *Christian Herald* put this case before its credulous readers, and warn them of the awful dangers of being a clergyman?

OUR illustration suggests the question how Paul could call Jesus "the first fruits of them that slept," in view of the text there cited. It is evident the apostle to the Gentiles knew nothing of the stiff resurrection yarns in the Gospels.

OVER a hundred men were wounded in the religious riots at Brussels last Sunday. The clericals, it is said, hired large numbers of paupers to take part in their procession. Great agitation is going on through the towns of Belgium. The King, who spends vast sums in Christianising the negroes, don't know what to do with his Christians at home. If he passes the reactionary education bill of the clericals, he will apparently provoke a revolution. If he vetoes the bill there will be a dissolution attended with grave peril.

IN the recent case of cannibalism at sea, Captain Dudley offered up a prayer for forgiveness before plunging the knife into the boy's jugular vein, and the men also displayed fervent piety in praying to the Almighty for water to quench their thirst. The boy was killed without any consultation with him and without any casting of lots, so that these three men will have some difficulty in escaping the charge of murder on which they are now in custody.

OUR Established Church has an annual revenue of over ten millions. Hundreds of thousands are spent yearly in sending

missionaries to give the heathen a chance of damnation, and Elizabeth Bedwin dies of starvation in a wretched garret, near Clare Market, bare of everything save a tin pail and a Bible. Such is Christianity in the nineteenth century! Possibly the poor woman was consoling herself with the text, "I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

THE *Hastings News* is dreadfully enraged at the audacity of the local branch of the N. S. S., which is converting a school into a Secular Hall. A Radical Association in Hastings was bad enough, but a Freethought society raises the editorial hair and collar. Perhaps this state of mind is responsible for the assertion that the Rev. J. M'Allister recently "encountered the Secularist lecturer on his own platform and routed him." We should like to know, Where was the platform and who was the lecturer? It may after all turn out that the editor has fallen a victim to this Tory sky-pilot, and that the story is only a piece of M'Allister's brag. If he really wants to rout an "Infidel" lecturer we will undertake to give him an opportunity of trying.

WE observe that the *News* editor is half crazy at the thought of those "abominable Secular leaflets" which some Freethought tract-distributor put into his hand as he was listening to an open-air service. He put them in his pocket, whether for pipe-lights or not he omits to state, and afterwards read them, finding to his disgust that they were simply "infamous." Like all good Christians when they are in a rage with "Infidels," he of course calls the leaflets wicked and *indecent*. By this time we are quite used to the epithet. It is a substitute for swearing. Whenever a Christian calls a Freethinker indecent, he means that he would like to utter a big, big D, but is afraid to. The pious editor goes on to say that these tract-distributors deserve to be "well tarred and feathered." Well now, we are responsible, for the titles of these leaflets show that they are our *Freethinker* Tracts. We are ready to oblige him as well as his friend M'Alister if he will let us know when he has the tar and feathers ready. Of course, he is too honorable to get assistance from his friends, but we are willing to let him get all the help he can from the Lord. Probably it would turn out that he only wishes other people to do his dirty work, and that he has as much wish to tar and feather a Freethinker with his own hands as the brave M'Alister has to rout a Secularist lecturer anywhere outside the columns of the *News*.

AT Sydney the bishop is endeavoring to convert the money devoted to university education into a consecrated endowment for his cathedral. The Church usually seeks to cultivate religion at the expense of education.

RELIGIOUS camp-meetings out West don't enjoy a very high reputation. George White, of Bakersfield, California, felt so insulted when told by his brother that he was as immoral as a camp-meeting, that he shot him dead.

THE Rev. Richard Fuller, of Maryland, has been over-careful in guarding against heresy. He bequeathed his estate for the worship of Jesus Christ according to the faith and doctrines of the orthodox Baptist churches. Judge Stewart has pronounced this clause of the will void, as it throws upon the court the invidious task of deciding which of contending sects and people are orthodox and which are not. He holds that no court of equity has this power except in countries where a legalised State Church exists. All sects in America are equally orthodox in the eye of the law.

PUBLICAN BOOTH has registered the words "Blood and Fire" as his trade mark. The Salvation Army is thus duly registered and protected as a huge trading concern. Salvation watches and hallelujah bonnets in future, we presume, will not be genuine unless stamped with the appropriate mark.

THE following is from America, where the defalcations and bankruptcies of religious people have created a general distrust of pious professions:—Curate (to new resident): "How is it, Mr. Blank, I never see you at our church?" Mr. Blank: "The fact is, I hold the responsible position of cashier and confidential clerk in a large mercantile house, and by becoming a member of any religious body I should insure my instant dismissal. Good day!"

A XENIA (Ohio) Presbyterian Church refuses to give money to any missionary board which aids "congregations using instruments of music in the worship of God." Will these Xenia people refuse to enter the portals of heaven until they have the assurances that there are no harps in the hands of the saints?—N.Y. *Truthseeker*.

THE legitimate effect of theology is seen in the authenticated story of a boy who, being in a passion with his playmate, declared that he hated him, and never would see him again. His sister rebuked him, told him that was very wrong, and not like Christ; "Christ," she said, "never hated and abused others, not even his enemies." "No," said the boy, "but he's going to."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 14, Hall of Science, Old Street, City Road, London, E.C., at 11.15, "The Cost of a Crown;" at 7, "Buddha before Christ."

September 21, Glasgow; 23 and 24, Aberdeen; 25 and 26, Dundee; 28, Edinburgh.

October 2, Hall of Science, London; 5, Liverpool; 9, Hall of Science, London; 12, Halifax; 16, Hall of Science, London; 18, Falls-worth; 19, Manchester; 20, Longton; 23, Hall of Science, London; 26, Plymouth; 30, Hall of Science, London.

November 2, Burnley; 6, Hall of Science, London; 9, Birmingham; 13, Hall of Science, London; 16, Nottingham; 20 and 23, Hall of Science, London; 25, Claremont Hall, London; 30, Hall of Science, London.

December 2, Claremont Hall, London; 7, Leeds; 9, Claremont Hall, London; 14, Oldham; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Milton Hall, London.

January 18 and 25, Milton Hall, London.

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SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS:—T. M., J. Sykes.

R. HARDY, Jubilee Square, Swanage, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular literature.

G. J. Q.—Good, but hardly up to the mark. Your verse is irregular; you want more practice.

A FREETHINKER.—No such person has ever to our knowledge written in the *Freethinker*.

W. T.—We cannot make head or tail of your letter.

MR. RAMSEY will be glad to purchase Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 18 of the *Freethinker*, Vol. I.

A. E. D.—Thanks for the jokes. It is only natural, as our space is so limited, that paragraphs should take precedence of articles.

H. H.—Always glad to hear from you, but you must not be annoyed if we are obliged to make a selection.

H. J. BARRETT.—It has already appeared in the *Freethinker*.

S. SMITHSON.—Your suggestions are extraordinary. Perhaps there is a fortune to be made by adopting them, but why not try to realise it yourself? We are not at all greedy.

V. TRUMPER.—Glad to hear Freethought is making progress at Stratford. The verses are too local in interest for our columns.

WITTWON.—Shall appear.

SWANSEA FREETHINKER.—The miracle of the sun going ten degrees back as a sign to Hezekiah may be found in Isaiah xxxviii., 8. Jahveh's recipe for holy oil, Exodus xxx., 22-23. The slaying of those who differ in religion is enjoined Deut. xiii., 6-10.

NORTH-WEST PHONO.—Thanks for jokes.

J. SINGER.—When we said that the churches were above common sense, we meant that common sense could not reach them, and that they never touched common sense. You think they are below common sense, and so should we if it helped the joke. Whether up or down, they are off the track.

JOHN SYKES.—Thanks for the cuttings. We are well aware that Smith and Son will not supply Freethought publications at their book-stalls. What else could be expected from a firm with a head like the late First Lord of the Admiralty, who was probably the original of the official in "Pinafore." At the same time Smith and Son sell Shelley's "Queen Mab," which is one of the most "blasphemous" things ever published. When our blasphemy is sixty years old it will doubtless be sold in the same way.

E. BUTLER.—It was not an indictable offence for the Mayor of Bristol the sky-pilot and the true believers to laugh uproariously because there was no Bible on the premises when they wanted to read a psalm. Laughing at sacred things is perfectly innocent in a Christian; it is only a crime in a Freethinker.

J. TIMBRELL, 400 Commercial Road, E., sells the *Freethinker*.

W. C. SCRIVENER.—We remember Mr. Croft's exposure of the strange tale of Sanderson and Little Alice. A letter addressed to Col. Ingersoll, Washington, U.S.A., will probably find him. Thanks for cutting. Mr. Foote's paper on Carlyle waits until the last volume of Mr. Froude's biography is published, when all the matter will be before the public.

H. FRIEKE.—Your notice is an advertisement.

H. LEMNY.—The instance you give of the sky-pilot who, with his family, left a third-class railway carriage because a working man entered, is but a common instance of clerical arrogance.

H. BANNISTER.—Persevere in your Freethought, but don't lose your temper. We shall win all the easier by keeping cool. Mr. Forder, 6 Cambridge Terrace, Islington, will supply you with all information about the N. S. S.

C. GOODENOUGH.—You cannot send us jokes too frequently.

A. R. A.—See answer to W. C. Scrivener.

A. H.—Thanks; we have dealt with the matter.

R. GABRUTT.—We know nothing of the clerical kleptomaniac mentioned in *Chamber's Journal*. You had better write to that paper for information.

J. C. SILES.—The matter has been dealt with.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Northern Daily Mail, Newcastle Examiner, Truthseeker, Monroe's Ironclad Age, The Ideographic, Liberator, Radical Review.

SUGAR PLUMS.

"BUDDHA before Christ" is the title of Mr. Foote's lecture at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, September 14. It is the first time that he has treated this subject from a London platform. The morning lecture will be on "The Cost of a Crown." These will be Mr. Foote's last Sunday lectures in London for more than two months.

MR. FOOTE'S Thursday lectures in October at the Hall of Science will be on "The Roots of Christianity." The subject will be divided under four heads, as follows:—The Soul, God, Christ, the Bible—to each of which an evening will be devoted.

THE *South Australian Advertiser*, Adelaide, devotes a column to reporting an interview with Miss Ada Campbell, an Australian-born Freethought lecturer. Miss Campbell reports that Freethought has obtained a firm footing both in Sydney and Melbourne. After a two months' lecturing stay in Adelaide, Miss Campbell visits New Zealand. She goes in for women's rights and land nationalisation as well as the repudiation of Christianity.

MR. ALFRED ILLINGWORTH, M.P., at a Reform Demonstration at Farsly, replied to a letter he had received from the Bishop of Peterborough in answer to remarks he had made at Leicester. He pointed out that in the recent voting of the House of Lords on the Franchise Bill, thirteen out of the twenty-six bishops took counsel of their "fears"—not "peers" as the reporters made it—and stayed away. Only twelve voted for the franchise. Mr. Illingworth attributed this to the resolution brought forward in the House of Commons for the removal of the bishops from the legislature. The reception this resolution received makes the bishops cultivate a little popularity as a means of self-preservation. In conclusion, Mr. Illingworth told the "haughty and arrogant prelate," that after the passing of the Franchise Bill and the redistribution of seats, it would only be a short time before the bishops would find a common level with other men.

A SERIES of *soirees dansantes* has been inaugurated at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall by Messrs. Wright and Yates, who propose continuing these social gatherings every Monday throughout the winter. As careful attention is given to the vocal as well as the instrumental part of the programme, and an M.C. is engaged, the promoters hope their effort to provide a pleasant evening's amusement will be successful. Tickets may be obtained at the hall.

A CONFERENCE of South London Freethinkers will be held on October 5th at the new Hall of the Walworth and Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S.

PROF. PALEY, the well-known editor of the classics, who joined the Romish Church in the first fervor of Newman's Oxford movement, has seceded to rationalism, and combats the doctrines of purgatory and eternal punishment in the columns of a Unitarian contemporary.

A WRITER in the *Church Times* laments that during a month's visit to Norway he never once found a church in which service was conducted. On inquiring he found the service was held only once in every three, four or even six weeks. The priests, it seems, are so badly paid that they would be unable to make a living if they had not four or five churches to attend to. Yet the people of the country are allowed on all hands to be among the most moral in Europe.

CARDINAL MANNING, for once in a way, is a bearer of good news. In a recent sermon at Chester he said, "There was hardly a blasphemy, hardly an impiety against Christ, which was not being encouraged in the schools of those holding official authority." This is Cardinal Manning's way of saying that the authorities in France are systematically secularising national education. "Blasphemy" and "impiety" are merely hard words to frighten Englishmen from pursuing the same course.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* of the 3rd inst. contained a very able article on the "Paradox of Persecution," in which the treatment of General Booth's followers in Switzerland was vigorously denounced as a revival "in the nineteenth century of the principles and practice of mediæval times." In the same number there appeared a letter from Mrs. Josephine Butler, denouncing the persecution of the Salvationists in more vehement language. As the Berne Government only fines the Boothites eight pounds or sends them to prison for three days, Mr. Foote could not help contrasting all this indignation with the placidity manifested when he was sentenced by Judge North to twelve months' imprisonment in a felon's cell. He therefore wrote the following letter, which was inserted in the *Pall Mall Gazette* the next evening:—

"Sir,—Your admirable article on 'The Paradox of Persecution' is so convincing that I regret it did not appear at the time of my trial for blasphemy. Mrs. Josephine Butler's letter is also worthy of attention. I quite agree with her as to the stupid intolerance with which the Berne Government is treating the Salvationists. As a Freethinker I detest every kind of bigotry,

and I am ready to denounce persecution in whatever guise it may present itself. But I am somewhat amused at the vehemence of the lady's strictures on foreign persecutors when I reflect that it is only six months since I concluded my year's enforced residence in an orthodox gaol, where I was dressed and treated like a common thief. Why did not Mrs. Butler and her friends, who now seek to "rouse civilised public opinion" against the "tyrants of Switzerland," protest against my imprisonment? They cannot pretend that there is any essential difference in the cases. The Salvationists express their sentiments at meetings which the public are free to attend, and I expressed my sentiments in a paper which the public were free to buy. Nor can it be maintained that my opinions were obtruded upon the public with anything like the pertinacity and offensiveness the Salvationists displayed in Switzerland, as they display them here, before the inhabitants and the authorities were roused from derision into active hostility. Religionists always clamor for freedom when they are oppressed, but they seldom extend it to their opponents, and they forget in prosperity the principles they appealed to in their adversity. They are not usually students of psychology, or they would know that intolerance cannot be exercised and repressed at will; it will disport itself whenever it sees an opportunity. Persecution is a savage beast; they nurse its taste for blood, and childishly complain of its indiscriminate in assuaging it.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
"September 3.

G. W. FOOTE."

THE *Northern Daily Mail*, a West Hartlepool paper, after quoting a sentence from Mr. Foote's letter to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and drawing a distinction between him and the Salvationists, on the fine ground that they are religious and he is not, proceeds to call him "the apostle of indecency." It also regrets that Mr. Foote was sent to prison for blasphemy, and says that he should have been "punished in the police court for using obscene language." The *Northern Daily Mail* ought to be punished for this infamous libel, which is a fair sample of the criticism which Freethinkers are accustomed to expect from the disciples of the gospel of love. If Tom Herbert North were worth powder and shot we would prosecute him without waiting for an apology. Some day or other we shall catch one of his betters tripping, and we shall then have an opportunity of teaching a much-needed lesson to these Christian curs.

DR. PORTER ON AGNOSTICISM.

(Concluded from page 278.)

Among minor points, I notice these:—

Dr. Porter holds that summer clouds are unreal (p. 11), though any intelligent schoolboy could teach him to the contrary.

The "free will" question (p. 14) presents greater moral and intellectual difficulties to the Christian than to the Agnostic, for the Bible teaches predestination by the will of God.

The vaunted fixity of Christian teaching prevents progress, whereas Agnostic teaching is free to advance with the age (p. 13).

The association of Agnosticism with Socialism (p. 18) is not warranted by fact, most Agnostics being thoroughly opposed to Socialism.

When Dr. Porter speaks of "a modern Epicurean without the unconscious gaiety that Christianity has rendered for ever impossible" (p. 28), he seriously discredits, not Agnosticism, but the religion which in its sour asceticism has too often poisoned the springs of human joy and withered life's fairest flowers. Celibacy, as recommended by Jesus and Paul, and practised, or supposed to be practised, by Roman Catholic priests and nuns, is a case in point. Sabbatarianism, contempt for worldly joys and ties, the perversion of the moral instincts, the repression of harmless pleasures and of useful pursuits, and of honesty, truth and justice which are the very conditions whence all sound hope of happiness must arise, naturally followed.

Passages of mere abuse are not worth noticing; but if Dr. Porter likes to inquire into the daily lives of Agnostics, he will soon see as a matter of fact that Agnostics do not necessarily or inevitably, as he asserts, "become morose and surly, or sensual and self-indulgent, or avaricious and churlish, or cold and selfish," and so forth. And it is neither courteous nor truthful to describe the honest arguments put forth in scientific periodicals as "the replies of sneering despair."

One very real Agnostic disadvantage has entirely escaped Dr. Porter's notice. He says nothing of the immense amount of suffering, direct and indirect, which Christians are pleased to inflict upon unbelievers. It is true that they now have to allow Atheists to remain alive, and that they cannot often enforce the laws which still treat them as a

section of the criminal classes. But Christians still persecute, still stigmatise, still implant slanderous prejudice and malignant hate and religious horror and superstitious fright, which drive sensitive minds into hypocritical submission and self-contempt, or into a painful and often morally weakening or even crushing sense of hopeless condemnation by their fellow men.

Section V. of the tract deals with immortality, and is not so far-fetched in its essential argument as the preceding sections, though I quite fail to see how Dr. Porter advances his cause by depicting agonising scenes of disaster. When "man shudders before nature's remorseless insensibility," he is, if Theism be true, really shuddering at God's "remorseless insensibility"; for "the forces of nature are his instruments, and the laws of nature his steadying and eternal thoughts" (p. 24). The contrast between nature's cruelty and God's goodness is absurd. The engineer is responsible for his engine. You cannot rationally blame the loom for what the weaver makes it do. Natural evils certainly yield no "hope" that their "remorseless" creator will grant immortality.

The non-belief in immortality is not "inhuman and unnatural" (p. 26). Moses and the Father of the Faithful, and the Old Testament saints generally, were in this respect quite as badly off as modern Agnostics, but Christians never venture to tell us that all the heroes of the larger part of their Bible were "inhuman and unnatural" in their ignorance of this doctrine.

That the idea of a future life is attractive to many, will readily be conceded. But the real question is the truth or falsity of the idea, and not its desirability. For falsehood and delusion bring about so much direct and indirect suffering, so much moral and intellectual dry rot and social decay, that the wilful advocacy of pleasant delusions is a social crime. No proof of immortality is given, and the intrinsic improbabilities of the supposition remain untouched. That believers like to believe in God and in heaven is no proof whatever of the objective reality or truth of their belief. Nor does Dr. Porter gain any moral or intellectual victory by taunting the honest and practical moralist with the assertion that "it is simple bravado to deny or weaken the longing for a future life which every man confesses and feels"—especially as the concluding part of the statement is obviously a sweeping assumption, not justified by fact. How can a man "deny" that which "every man"—himself of course included—"confesses"? Probably the insinuation or implication is that all denial or weakening of the wish for immortality is mere hypocrisy.

Even the desirability of endless life is highly questionable, and in proportion as thought becomes freed from the prejudices of the past, and from the influence of selfish and covetous instincts, the undesirability of any definitely imaginable form of immortality becomes more and more evident. According to the Bible, the bulk of mankind will find immortality the most awful curse conceivable. Surely the otherwise fortunate few ought not to despair overmuch at the good news of an eternal sleep which saves the huge majority from inconceivable horror and agony.

In conclusion I will call Dr. Porter himself as a witness on behalf of Agnosticism. Although the Agnostic "abandons hope of every kind," yet Dr. Porter acknowledges that "Agnosticism offers many attractions" (p. 29); that "its theories run like wildfire" (strange for so hopeless a doctrine); and that "with many persons" its evil "tendencies are comparatively harmless, at least for a time"—which conflicts with his assertion that Agnosticism makes adherents not only from its intellectual attractions, but "above all, because it releases the conscience and the life from present obligations of duty" (p. 30).

Dr. Porter has strong words in praise of science; for science has now made good its claims on the attention of mankind, and religion has to patronise so powerful a foe. But the very essence of Agnosticism is science, knowledge, obedience to known law and rejection of that which the scientific spirit exposes as false, or mischievous or unproven. To the Agnostic, science as distinguished from faith is Agnosticism, and Agnosticism is science, and includes all sciences, accepting the known and the rational and discarding the unknown and the fallacious. For we most emphatically claim that the Agnostic shall have the right to form and hold and enunciate his creed for himself, and shall not be compelled to accept the slanderous libel

of a definition or creed which malicious bigots and persecutors endeavor to foist upon him as some sort of justification for their own hatred and uncharitableness and for the legal and social punishment with which they have not ceased to visit the honest and outspoken rejection of ancient dogmas and legends which the rapid growth of the scientific spirit is fast rendering incredible. And of science—of science which is the first article in the Agnostic's creed—of science which is to the Agnostic what faith is to the Christian—of science which is practically identical with the Agnosticism stigmatised as a doctrine of despair—of science which is perfectly distinct from religion—Dr. Porter unguardedly pens these significant words: "It revels in its confidence in the future. Science believes that its interpretations of the present and its solutions of the past will be surpassed by the discoveries that are to be; that both nature and man shall continue as heretofore, obeying the same laws as from the beginning—that the revelations made of both shall be lost sight of and forgotten in the revelations of force and law which the future shall disclose, and that in all this progress one of these revelations shall prepare the way for another, as naturally and as gently as the dawn brightens into the sunrise. Here is hope—ardent, confident, passionate hope—and we may add, rational and well-grounded hope." And yet the Agnosticism which includes all this "ardent, confident, passionate hope," this scientific certainty, is put down as hopeless and degrading! Dr. Porter thinks most absurdly that his glowing expressions apply to science only so long as science remains Theistic, and accepts the Christian God as the only satisfactory scientific solution of "phenomena" and "molecules, and motion, and inertia, and attraction, and heat, and electricity, and heredity, and development, and variation, and environment." Without belief in God as an explanation of these scientific explanations, science becomes hopeless! If every explanation needs an explanation, what is the explanation of the explanation called God? And if we can do without an explanation of God, why cannot we do without an explanation of matters supposed to be of less importance, such as attraction, electricity and heredity—especially as researches bring us more and more of explanation day by day? W. P. BALL.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING; OR, THE WORLD'S FIRST BIG ROW.

[A TRAGEDY IN ONE SCENE.]

Scene—The Garden of Eden. Enter Jehovah in search of Adam and Eve, who are concealing themselves behind a bush.

JEHOVAH: Adam, where art thou?

ADAM (to Eve): Did you hear that? This is a fine kettle of fish you have got us into with your cursed inquisitiveness.

EVE: Don't be a baby, Adam. The Lord has no occasion to get into a flurry for all we've done. It was only an apple, and sour at that.

JEHOVAH: Adam, where art thou?

ADAM: By God, don't he thunder! He wouldn't shout like that if he didn't mean something awful. What shall we do?

EVE: What can we do but just keep behind the bush and not let him get us?

ADAM: But there is no use in hiding from God. He is everywhere and knows everything.

EVE: Then what's he shouting for?

JEHOVAH (louder than ever): Adam, where art thou?

ADAM: Thunder and lightning, don't he get terrible! We'd better make a clean breast of it. Lord, Lord, was you a-talking to me?

JEHOVAH: Ha, ha! I've found you at last, rascal. What's this you've been up to, eh?

ADAM: Well, to tell the God's truth, my old woman is fearful inquisitive; and ever since you told us about that forbidden fruit she's been dying to have a taste of it.

JEHOVAH: What then, villain?

ADAM: Well, she took an apple.

JEHOVAH: But what about yourself? Out with it at once. I'm in the middle of making a world, and can't wait.

ADAM: Well, Eve would persist in making me take a share, and as I didn't want to have a family quarrel over an apple, I took a bite too.

JEHOVAH: O, you wicked, diabolical couple! To go and eat an apple when I told you not to! Horrible! But I'll have it out of you, see if I don't. I'll not permit you to go naked another day. Eve, I sentence you to petticoats. Adam, I condemn you to trousers.

ADAM and EVE: Alas! alas! how shall we bear it?

JEHOVAH: Adam, you scamp, you'll now have to work for your living. Eve, you inquisitive creature, you'll have to suffer for this every time you get a baby. I tell you I curse you all—

serpent included. And, mind you, my curse isn't a mere sessional affair; on the contrary, I make it a standing order. Every human soul which shall hereafter have the audacity to be born shall have to suffer the same punishment for the same apple. (Here Jehovah retires to everywhere, exclaiming "I curse you all; I curse you all; I damn and curse you all.")

EVE: My faith, don't he swear?

ADAM: Hush! You mustn't talk in that way of the Lord, Eve.

EVE: Well, what's he making all the fuss about? He couldn't have said more if we had swallowed the whole garden.

ADAM: But then he's the Lord—he is all-powerful.

EVE: If he is, it's a pity.

ADAM: It's very wrong of you to say that of God Almighty. You must remember that he made us. He manufactured me, for example, out of a heap of dust.

EVE: If things are to go on like this, it's a pity he didn't leave the little heap o' dust alone.

ADAM: Oh, Eve, you're a wicked sceptic; you haven't half enough of faith. As the poet says:

The ways of God are wondrous ways,

And difficult to grapple;

He made the world for you and me—

EVE: *And damns us for an apple.*

WALLACE NELSON.

SACRED COMIC SONG.

[ADAPTED FOR SUNDAY USE.]

(Air—"How does he do it?")

This world out of nothing was made,

In a very peculiar way.

Man was made out of dust,

And quickly got cuss'd

For eating an apple one day.

Chorus—Why did he do it?

Why did he do it?

Of Adam 'twas really too bad;

If he hadn't liked apples

We shouldn't want chapels,

Nor churches (thank goodness!) have had.

The serpents would all have had legs,

And walked on their feet like the rest;

And as man daily works,

Those unfortunate "circs."

For making him work he has bless'd.

Chorus—Why did they do it?

Why did they do it?

What a very warm trio they were.

In this thought we can revel,

We'd not have the Devil

If they hadn't caused such a "flare."

No clothes we'd have needed to wear,

Except p'rhaps a fig-leaf or so.

What a saving of "rhino"

To do without "Kino,"

And nothing of "mashers" to know!

Chorus—Why did they do it?

Why did they do it?

I think I a reason can show.

If Eve touched not the fruit tree

Her daughter would mute be;

No subject to talk of they'd know.

No doubt you will think I make game

Of that story so true and divine!

But strange as may seem

This wonderful scheme,

Just remember the story's not mine.

Chorus—Why do they preach it?

Why do they teach it?

In chapels, and churches, and schools?

Don't think for a minute

There's any truth in it;

The tale's only swallowed by fools.

J. DE FRAINE.

REVIEWS.

Bible Makers. By ARTHUR B. MOSS. Watts and Co.—Mr. Moss is sustaining his reputation as a Freethought pamphleteer. His latest publication will no doubt command an extensive sale.

The Origin of Man. By EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc. Progressive Publishing Co.—A neat little volume of the same size and shape as the author's "Darwinian Theory," to which, indeed, it is a companion, or rather a supplement. All who have the first volume should at once possess themselves of this. Dr. Aveling is fully competent to deal with the subject, and he has an unusual faculty for popularising it. He writes with great

clearness and, so far as we can judge, with great precision. "The Origin of Man," is a cheap repository of facts and arguments on one of the most profound and fascinating of modern problems.

The After Life of the Apostles, written for young Freethinkers, by CONSTANCE HOWELL. Freethought Publishing Company. — This little volume supplies an obvious want. It gives a simple lucid history, mainly compiled from the New Testament, but also partially from other sources, of the spread of Christianity by the apostles. Young Freethinkers would find it as instructive as it is interesting, and older Freethinkers might peruse it with advantage.

PROFANE JOKES.

A RAGGED little girl in a London school was recently asked why Adam and Eve were turned out of Paradise. She promptly answered: "Because they didn't pay their rent." Her parents had been evicted for non-payment of rent several times within a few months.

"It's a pity," remarked a preacher, "that the world is so prone to be untruthful." "Well, yes, rather," replied a layman. "I have noticed, for some time past, that the evil has been

growing, and not only in great things, but even about small things, lies will be told." "True, very true," answered the layman sadly. "I was reading only yesterday that 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy.'" Then the preacher put on his hat and went out to commune with the hitching-post.

A VERMONT deacon, whose hen-roost was suffering from deprivations, upon being called on in meeting to pray, arose and prayed earnestly that the Lord would have mercy on that thief if ever he (the deacon) got hold of the fellow.

A CLERGYMAN was expatiating before a deeply interested congregation upon the alarming condition of intemperance in his parish, when he astonished the hearers by saying, "A young woman in my neighborhood died very suddenly last Sunday, while I was preaching the gospel in a state of beastly intoxication."

THERE is a story of a priest who preached on faith, and said that anything that men asked of the Lord would be given if they only had sufficient faith. "For instance," said he, "you see that trap-door in the ceiling. Well, I will call upon the Lord to send some of his heavenly fire down from it." Upon calling, fire at once came down. The priest then cried out, "Oh Lord, please send more fire." As he finished, a voice above the ceiling cried out: "I can't send no more fire, 'cause I ain't got any more paper and matches!"

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