

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

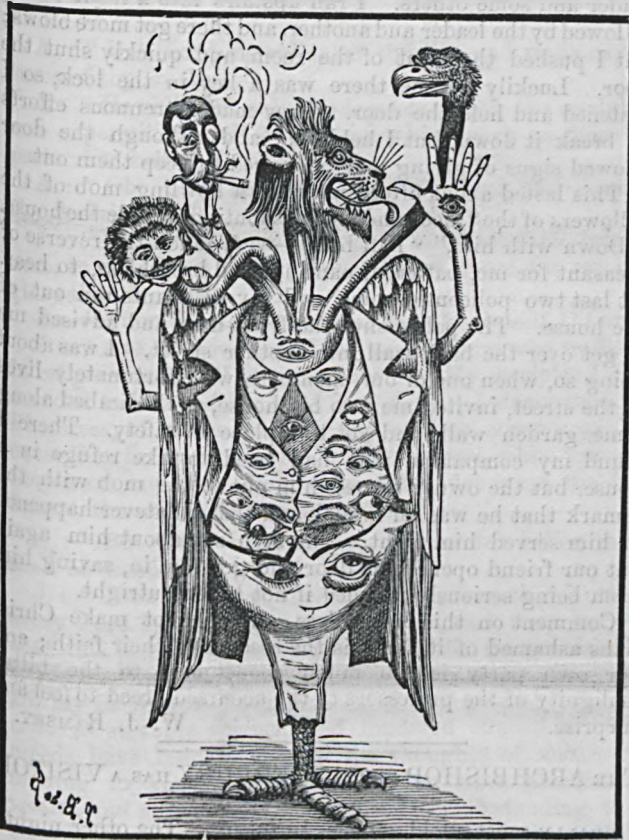
Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCHES.— No. 87



HEAVENLY CATTLE.

"A man's hand under their wings. . . full of eyes round about. . . And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle."—EZEKIEL x., 8, 12, 14.

"And I beheld, and, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."—REV. v., 6.

MY RESURRECTION.—II.

WHEN I opened the mysterious roll I found it an unintelligible document, written in some strange, uncouth tongue. Closer inspection convinced me that the characters were Hebrew; but as I am not a scholar in that language, I was obliged to delay the satisfaction of my curiosity until I could communicate with a friend who had wasted a good deal of his time on its unprofitable study, so that he had become an adept in a science which few understand and fewer value. I passed the night in fitful slumbers. The venerable stranger and his mystic parchment figured constantly in the panorama of my dreams. They were like the shifting pieces in a kaleidoscope, always the same, but ever assuming fresh forms.

Early in the morning I visited my friend. He informed me that the manuscript was indeed written in Hebrew, but without points. He therefore concluded that it was very ancient, and would take a considerable time to decipher. In a few days, however, he had wormed himself thoroughly into the text, and declared his readiness to translate it. A question then arose whether it should be translated into Bible English or into the English of our own period. Having learnt the general character of the original, I preferred to see it rendered into our present vernacular, so that the deceitful glamor of a consecrated style might be avoided, and the real facts appear in their naked verity.

The following is my friend's translation, with just a few touches from my own pen, which, he allows, do no violence to the sense of the original.

No. 164.]

My name is Obadiah. I am one of the saints who rose from their graves at the Crucifixion, and the only survivor of the company. I am doomed to roam the world until I find the appointed recipient of my story.

The Gospel of Nicodemus is a fraud. There is not a word of truth in it. The whole narrative may easily be proved fabulous. The Charinus and Lenthius are not Hebrew names. Some Roman names did creep into Palestine at that time, but they were never adopted by strict Jews, least of all by Levites like Simeon.

I became a follower of Jesus Christ in the first year of his ministry, which lasted seven years, and not three, as is generally supposed. Two years later I died of eating too much Paschal lamb. I have been informed that the Messiah was summoned to my bedside, but he came too late, as in the case of Lazarus; and no such miracle being performed on me as on that prime favorite, whose sisters also were extremely attractive, I was buried in a little cemetery near Bethany, which had already been appropriated to the use of our sect.

My remembrance of the Messiah is still vivid. I bow with reverence and humble adoration to the divinity that abode in him, but I venture to correct some misapprehensions as to his humanity. The pictures I have seen of him in my long wanderings are all false and flattering. They bear no resemblance to his form or features. He and nearly all his disciples were remarkably ill-favored. Paul, whose mean appearance has been noted, was the best-looking person in the early Church. I have always held that our ugliness was a proof of the divine wisdom and

power. God chose us for our ill looks, and designed that his dear son should be conspicuous for that quality, in order that the Gospel might owe nothing to man, but all to himself. The Messiah was adorable in the spirit, but repellant in the flesh. His figure was long and bony, and his face sharp and small. His eyes were deep-sunk through much fasting, and the curve of his nose bespoke him a Jew of Jews. We all regarded it with patriotic pride as a true sign of the Messiah.

I remained in my grave for four years. What happened during that period, what were my experiences, I am forbidden to tell. Such awful secrets must not be revealed to flesh and blood.

When the earthquake occurred at the Messiah's crucifixion, my grave was rent open with many others. Seventy of us, all disciples of Jesus, and therefore called saints by Matthew, were ordered to join our corpses, which were flung out by the shock. Some of them were in a very dilapidated state. I had to dig among the loose soil for a lost arm with the one I had retained; and when I began to walk I found two toes missing on one foot and one on the other. It required a long and painful search to complete the set. Some of my companions were in a still worse plight. Shimei, the blind disciple, had only one leg; and, being unable to discover the other himself, he was obliged to stand like a roosting fowl until we could search for his missing limb. Zambres was nothing but a trunk, and unable even to move; but we unearthed his fore-limbs at last, and fastened them on. Simeon was a hand short, and, notwithstanding a protracted search, it was never discovered. Jonathan, also, never found his lower jaw, nor could David light upon his nose; while poor Amos, the cripple, whose right leg was cut off at the stump, and whose crutches were not buried with him, was compelled to hop on his left leg, until we took pity on his sad condition and carried him by turns.

Being all as naked as we were born, we took refuge as quickly as possible in an old cave near by, where we remained for several hours discussing what we should do next. By this time we were all very hungry, and this new want greatly increased the distress of our situation. About midnight, however, an old beggar crept into the cave. We at once pounced upon him, stripped off his clothes, and divided his poor supper amongst us. Alas! what was such a little food among so many: How we longed for the Messiah to multiply our provisions! But he was far away, and we had to rest content with small crumbs of comfort.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

AMONG CHRISTIAN SAVAGES.

"I come not to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

"If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—JESUS CHRIST.

TRUE to this teaching, humane Christians are about as plentiful as kind wolves, gentle tigers, or loving sharks.

Last Sunday I gave an open-air lecture at Tottenham on "The Birth, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus." Within a few yards of where I stood, a revival meeting was being carried on with much hymn-singing and praying. My address was listened to in tolerable quietude, but just at the end the other meeting broke up, and a surging crowd came over towards me, and although our friends mustered pretty strong, we were pushed into the roadway. Just as we reached the road, a respectably-dressed man rushed at me and struck me a heavy blow with a thick stick; fortunately my hat was a tall stiff one, so that my head was uninjured—only my hat was smashed. This was apparently a pre-concerted signal for a general attack. Friends rushed between me and my assailant, and a general *mêlée* ensued, the mass of the crowd moving up the road towards Stamford Hill. I was outside the crowd, and the Secretary of the Branch suggested that he and I should cross the road and turn up to the station. We did so, and had got about fifty yards, having about thrice the distance to go to get to the station, when we heard a shouting and running, and looking back, saw a mob of some 200, led on by the man who had first attacked me. Many of them were armed with sticks, and shouted "Down with them!" "Settle the Atheists!" and other pious cries. They came at full speed,

and as soon as they reached us, attacked us with sticks and with fists.

It was a splendid chance for showing their Christian courage and love, and the opportunity was not lost. Our friends were in the main road, we were in a side street; there were only two of us, unarmed and helpless; they were two hundred, and armed with sticks. The leader again led on the attack upon me with his stick, his followers seconding his efforts like true Christians, whilst another batch rained blows thick and fast on the secretary's head, having first carefully knocked off his hat. Seeing no chance of breaking through, I called to my companion to make for some open door, and take refuge. I ran along the houses, and seeing the open door of what turned out to be an empty house, darted in, pursued by the leader and some others. I ran upstairs into a front room, followed by the leader and another, and there got more blows; but I pushed them out of the room, and quickly shut the door. Luckily for me there was a key in the lock, so I fastened and held the door. They made strenuous efforts to break it down, but I held on; and although the door showed signs of giving way, managed to keep them out.

This lasted about fifteen minutes, a howling mob of the followers of the "meek and lowly" shouting outside the house. "Down with him," "Kill him,"—very much the reverse of pleasant for me, battered, panting, and breathless, to hear. At last two policemen came, and my assailants ran out of the house. The police shut the front door and advised me to get over the back wall into another street. I was about doing so, when one of our members, who fortunately lives in the street, invited me into his house, so I climbed along some garden walls and got to a place of safety. There I found my companion who had tried to take refuge in a house, but the owner turned him out to the mob with the remark that he was an infidel, and that whatever happened to him served him right. The mob set about him again but our friend opened his door and got him in, saving him from being seriously maimed if not killed outright.

Comment on this is needless. We cannot make Christians ashamed of it, for it is the essence of their faith; and our own party is too much accustomed to the bitter malignity of the professors of the accursed creed to feel any surprise.

W. J. RAMSEY.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY HAS A VISITOR.

I REALLY must avoid suppers in future. The other night I was troubled by a curious dream. I suppose I had been meditating religious matters, for it seemed to me that I, who pride myself on not being a Christian, was strangely brought into communion with Jesus. Methought he was a-weary of the praises of the saints in heaven, and determined to see how his followers on earth behaved. A nice spectacle he will have, I reflected—Christian nation armed against Christian nation—a million of paupers in the richest country of the earth—and how he will be disgusted with the shady set of rascals who preach but never practise his doctrines. However, I dreamt that instead of visiting the various churches in England, Jesus went straight to the highest dignity of the Church at Lambeth Palace. I saw him enter the *sanctum sanctorum* of the Archbishop disguised as a street Arab. "Who are you?" said the Archbishop, blandly. "I am a stranger. Will you take me in?" His Grace looked to see if the stranger was smiling, but Jesus very gravely said: "There are thousands outside, ill-fed, untaught and housed in dens often owned by Churchmen like yourself—dens you would not use to stable your horses in. They have no place to breathe fresh air. Will you be good enough to open your palace park for the benefit of the crowded poor around you?" "No," said the Archbishop; "the park is my property—that is to say, the property of whoever occupies my position, and I take care the police shall protect my rights." Jesus resumed: "You preach 'Give unto every one that asketh, and sell all thou hast and give to the poor.' Why are these precepts on your lips but not in your life?"

Archbishop: "Come, come, none of your impertinence. I have to compose a prayer for the Soudan Expedition. Be off, or I'll call the police!"

He was about to ring the bell when Jesus suddenly resumed his own figure. The Archbishop recognised him, and his head drooped on his writing-desk.

"Oh, Lord, did you come out of that street Arab?" he stammered.

"The spirit of the great and good may reside within the humblest," said Jesus.

"Please, Lord, I didn't mean what I said. Thou knowest I give a portion of my income to charitable institutions."

"Yes, a part of thy £15,000 a year goes to buttress the Church in this way; but dost thou think that is all that is required of thee? When hast thou spoken for the poor and oppressed? When hast thou rebuked priestly pride and covetousness? When hast thou denounced the evil-doers in high places? Where was thy voice or that of thy Church when a man was sent by thy friends to gaol for twelve months for opinion's sake?"

A.: "Oh, Lord, that vile creature blasphemed thy holy name."

J.: "No, he is no such fool as to take me for a god; and since he does not believe in one, he cannot blaspheme him."

A.: "But, Lord, he ridiculed thy life, and made caricatures of thy works."

J.: "He ridiculed only the legends which the credulous and superstitious tell of me, and which such as thou but pretend to believe."

A.: "Oh, Lord, he denies thy holy word, and despises thy doctrines."

J.: "He more despiseth thine. Thinkest thou, ignoble man, to flatter me by supposing I care more for my own glory than for truth?"

A.: "Thou didst scourge thine enemies thyself, O Lord!"

J.: "Aye, I drove out of the temple those who trafficked in religion, as do all of your church. My disciples I commanded to take neither gold nor scrip. I denounced the Pharisees, of whom you are the modern counterpart, because they for a pretence made long prayers, while inwardly they were corrupt. But when did I denounce the Sadducees, the unbelievers of my time?"

A.: "But didst thou not say, 'Whosoever believeth not shall be damned?'"

J.: "Thou art not so foolish as to believe that I uttered every word handed down by tradition, and thou knowest that this passage is interpolated into the Gospel ascribed to Mark. The Church has blasphemed worse than this. In my name you have persecuted my people, you have tried to strangle science, and hindered education. Your creeds have been fetters on the thoughts of men. Pretending to know the hereafter, you have accumulated wealth and gained authority on earth. Pretending to be successors of the apostles, you have gone in the teeth of their precepts and practice. In all Christendom there is not one who follows my doctrines, and the spirit of my opposition to orthodox priestcraft I find alone among those who pretend not to my name!"

Surely, I thought, the Archbishop will now throw up his palace, inaugurate a movement for disestablishing the church and applying its revenues to purposes of benevolence and education. But I awoke, and behold it was a dream.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Scotch are noted for combining economy with devotion. They can be pious and prudent at the same time; keen after kingdom come and devilish sharp about this world too. In Glasgow recently a Chinese witness had to be sworn according to the celestial custom by breaking a saucer. When the article was brought, the worthy bailie had a good look at it, and at once pronounced it too valuable a piece of domestic furniture to be smashed. "Swelp me God" is cheap enough, and isn't worth troubling about; but saucers cost money, and an economical Scotchman feels bound to keep down the price even when they are used for religious purposes. Accordingly the bailie sent the first piece of porcelain back, and had another fetched, manufactured of commoner clay, and about as cheap as they make them. If many Chinese witnesses turn up in Scotland we shall probably see special "swearing saucers" in the market quotations north of the Tweed.

WE are used to clerical cheek, but one of the neatest specimens is a begging circular on behalf of St. Michael and All Angels, Maidstone. It is headed "Working Men's Clergy Fund," and states that: "As a rule the few well-to-do people who reside in the parish already contribute their share towards the Clergy Fund, and it remains for the working people to put their shoulders to the wheel and raise the money" (£100). We reckon that if the stipends of the clergy depended on the contributions of *bonâ fide* working men, a vast number of them would soon

have to leave the black ranks and take to some honest employment.

THE *Boston Watchman* says that within the past nine years nearly 800 churches have been burnt in America. What an evidence that God has especial care over his own houses.

A CORRESPONDENT in a Dublin journal points out the frightful amount of blasphemy of the vilest kind prevalent among the "alcoholised Irishmen" of that city, and among the lower classes of most English and Irish cities. He loathes less the Jews who crucified Christ, not knowing him, than the "Catholic" believers, both men and women, who "thus defile, outrage and blaspheme him," with their beastly oaths and hellish, brutal profanity applied to the Son of God. He continues: "And yet churches abound and our clergy labor with devoted zeal. An American visitor remarked to me that in Cork religion and whiskey seemed to abound." This superabundance of religion is of course the chief explanation of the degraded state of the people. The correspondent may well ask: "What answer can we give an inquiring Mahomedan or Infidel?"

A STRAW best shows which way the wind blows. The *Daily News* attributes the closing of Taunton Gaol, not to Christianity, which would be absurd, but to the "spread of education among the people."

THE school children of Worthing now amuse themselves by playing at Salvation Army riots. Following the riotous example of their elders, they range themselves into Salvationists and Skeletonists, and sing parodies on General Booth's hymns. They have conflicts in the playgrounds, and are attacked at the proper time by special constables, who are sworn in by their playmates for the duty. A day or two ago a governess, seeing a string tied round the neck of one of her pupils, pulled at it, and out came a stick about a foot long. On inquiry the young damsel turned out to be a "special." It is evident that Worthing has not much to thank the Salvation Army for.—*Echo*.

AT St. George's Cathedral the stock of holy candles caught fire, and the engines had hard work to put out the divine light thus kindled.

SUPERSTITION dies hard. Hundreds of persons have been assembling at Cox's Pond, Broad Green, Croydon, watching for a supposed ghost, which was said to rise out of the water.

SAMUEL MORLEY has just given another proof of his bigoted hatred of Mr. Bradlaugh. Down at Northampton there is a Rev. H. Bradford, Baptist, who had recently to resign the pastorate of Prince's Street Church in consequence of the members resenting his diatribes against the junior member for the borough. He is now seeking to erect a gospel-shop of his own, and Samuel Morley has sent him £50 towards the cost. The pious member for Bristol is constantly proving that his purse is a great deal longer than his head.

THE Rev. J. H. Rogers, Incumbent of Christ Church, Pau, gives the following account of a "miracle" at Lourdes:—"A poor man who was paralysed was taken there in a carriage and made to drink the holy water. 'Don't you feel better,' the priests asked; and, before he could reply, he was lifted on his feet and supported. 'A miracle! a miracle!' they cried, 'see, he is standing!' The crowd closed round him, and he was fairly borne along by them. 'See, he is walking! he is cured!' and before he had time to say or do anything he was hurried away, on pretence of giving thanks, to be dragged back to the hospital in a state of acute suffering and far worse than when he left it."

THE *Rock* appears as a penitent—quite a novel position for a religious paper to assume. It speaks of the "bitter spirit" at one time exhibited in its columns as "a matter for regret," and says its "aim since then"—*i.e.*, since 1880—"has been to advocate truth in a fair and honorable way." We think the better, and not the worse, of the *Rock* for this confession. But after all, the present editor is only confessing the sins of the past editor, and not his own, which would be a much more difficult task.

AT Great Thurlow, in Suffolk, the Rev. J. Atkins, a Congregational minister, is not permitted by his more orthodox fellow-Christians to rent a house, and the people are threatened with ejection if they let him lodgings. Dissenting papers are naturally highly indignant, but they forget that Dissenters persecute Free-thinkers far more than Episcopalian Christians persecute Dissenters. Every Christian sect cries loudly for "liberty of conscience" for itself. Which sect has the fairness to cry out aloud for the liberty of conscience which Atheists have as yet not won? *Echo* answers "Not one!"

THE Bishop of Ripon is afraid that "the real nature of Christian charity and love may be misapprehended." We beg to assure him that there is no danger of any misapprehension on our part. We studied it leisurely in Holloway Gaol for twelve

months, and we formed a beautiful conception of Christian charity which is never likely to be shaken.

THE Bishop of Manchester opines that there will be no hungry stomach in England during the coming winter if the people are only careful, thrifty and sober. This preaching comes well from a rich prelate who knows he will never suffer from an empty stomach, whether he practises those virtues or not. When bishops are reduced to earning their living like other men it will be time enough to preach the cardinal virtues to poor devils who toil hard for a bare subsistence. Until then their advice is a hypocritical impertinence.

At a "religious" bazaar which is being held at the Birmingham Town Hall, the advertised attractions include "a ballot for five and ten pound notes!" What a righteous little flare-up there would have been if this ballot, lottery, raffle, or whatever you like to call the merry "gamble," had been advertised to take place in a public-house! Wouldn't the publican who dared to start it have been pounced on, jumped on, denounced by the police, and renounced by all religious organisations! But, of course, it makes a difference when the object is a "religious" one. The holy young virgins of the congregation can plank down their stakes, giggle, and call it "such fun," lie awake at nights wondering whether they are going to win anything, and piously hate their more lucky sisters for the rest of their lives if they draw a blank—they can do all this without stepping from the paths of moral rectitude and Grundy-an propriety, in the least. But if those same virgins had bet a pair of gloves about the Leger, not even the designation of "Saint" which precedes the name of that classic race, would have saved them from excommunication, and from the title of "fast" girls. Religion, like charity, covers a multitude of sins, and that is the reason why the young men of our staff are so assiduous in their attendance at our parish church.—*Sporting Chronicle*.

THE Rev. W. Meyrick and the Bishop of Bangor have been fighting in the law courts over 14s. 4d., received as a marriage fee ten years back. Meyrick had had his living sequestered through neglecting to repair his church. He was ordered to pay the costs, and severely reprimanded for the way in which he gave his evidence and tried to deceive the court.

THE Rev. Robert Roper, "clerk in holy orders," formerly curate of St. George's, Birmingham, has been fined 10s. and costs for being drunk and disorderly in that town.

CROW FOR JESUS' SAKE.

Tune—"Rock of Ages."

WHEN life's billows cease to roll,
I will launch my little soul
Up where God and angels dwell,
Steering far away from hell.
I'll be beaked and feathered, too,
Singing praise, O Christ, to you.

Since my mother gave me birth,
I a vagrant was on earth;
But at last the light has beamed—
I through Christ have been redeemed,
And will wear a shining crown,
Playing harps in Jesus' town.

If, while flitting to and fro,
I could look afar below
And behold an infidel
Roasting, frying, there in hell,
It would give me heart to sing—
It would cause my harp to ring.

Christ will love me as his own
When I chirp about the throne;
And when heaven's day is dim
Angels all will seek a limb,
Where they'll roost till morning's break—
Then they'll crow for Jesus' sake.

—Monroe's "Ironclad Age."

THE Rev. T. W. Sale while out shooting killed his groom instead of a partridge.

THE *Catholic Examiner* says that the religion received by the negroes from Methodists and Baptists is a "ghastly sham." It wants, of course, to displace this "ghastly sham" in favor of the still more ghastly reality of Roman Catholicism.

IN a Christian paper called *Glad Tidings*—sent to us for the sake of a stupid article on "No God"—we find a poem curiously entitled "144,000 (Rev. i., 4)." The author explains that he wrote it "in contemplation of the symbolic number of the redeemed—amid the hissing of steam, the ring of hammers, and the rattle of machinery—whilst driving two engines." We should not be surprised to hear that the continued production of pious poetry under such circumstances resulted in a charge of man-

slaughter. No amount of inspiration will enable a man to drive two engines and Pegasus in harness together with safety.

THE article entitled "No God" is a twaddly amplification of the perfect *non sequitur*—because nature is wonderful therefore "Atheism is madness." Where is the logical connection between "wonderful" and a god? Because there are millions of wonders in nature are there millions of gods, as the Hindoos believe? Because there are millions of evils in the world are there millions of devils, as the New Testament would encourage us to believe? If nature had a creator or creators because she displays vast wonders, much more must the still more wonderful God or gods have had creators who designed such marvellous beings.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* is troubled by "all the voluminous varieties of denominational fancies which have made modern Christianity a monstrous tangle of complications and contradictions." Week after week it prints long articles urging a return to apostolic teaching and practice as the only means of securing "aggressive unity" on the part of Christians. But Paul and Peter themselves had bitter quarrels, which could only be ended by the separation of those rival apostles. The apostolic practice, too, included communism and such aggressive miracles as the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira and the blindness of Elymas. Are these to be imitated? And is faith-healing to take the place of medical science, as St. James teaches (v., 13-16)?

MR. SPURGEON returned to his tabernacle last Sunday after a month's absence. A religious journal says that he preached with all his wonted vigor although he was too feeble to turn over a leaf of the Bible. The age of miracles is clearly not past. If Mr. Spurgeon can preach well when he is too weak to turn a page, there is no reason why he should not edit the *Sword and Trowel* when he is dead. We notice that Mr. Spurgeon's disorder is the rich man's disease—gout. Of course the Oracle of the Tabernacle is a consistent disciple of Jesus Christ, but we venture to assert that neither the prophet of Nazareth nor any of his apostles ever had a chance of suffering from the same complaint. No wonder Mr. Spurgeon denounced in his sermon that "most absurd, wicked and cruel opinion, that sickness was the work of the Devil in consequence of some sin in the individual." Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and every twinge of Mr. Spurgeon's gout is another sign of the father's love.

MR. SPURGEON concluded with this prayer—"May God turn us into the Mary-kind of Christians." This seemed quite superfluous. Most of the Christians we meet have already past the "Mary-kind" and entered the "Molly-kind."

DR. THEODORE CUYLER does not agree with Mr. Moody that London is the most religious city in the world because, forsooth, it is about the most immoral city. Could there be stronger corroboration of Mr. Moody's statement?

A STATIST states that there are twenty-eight blind clergymen in the Church of England. He must be tens of thousands out in his calculation. Why, in London alone—

THE Salvation Army at Pittsburgh, U.S., will have to bolt soon, as they can't pay the bill they have run up for their board. Officer McKnight is on the watch for them.

PUBLICAN BOOTH has been summoned by the Sunderland Board of Guardians for the non-payment of £5 8s. 4d. poor-rate on the Army barracks, Monkwearmouth. The defendant pleaded by "Major" Dowdle that the place was used for religious purposes. It was proved, however, that the *War Cry* was sold in the building (as we believe it is in all other "barracks") and the magistrates made an order for payment.

MR. JAMIESON is lecturing in America on "Hell Closed for Repairs." We suppose something has gone wrong with the furnaces, for, according to the preachers, the temperature has been decreasing wonderfully of late.

THE Mormons have been holding memorial services at Salt Lake City in honor of their missionaries murdered by their fellow-Christians in Tennessee.

TAMWORTH is just sobering up after a good old religious burst. Two Italian padres, Fathers O'Neil and Hegarty by name, have just come successfully out of a big tussle with Slogger Satan, who was badly beaten after a fortnight's fight. The urgent necessity for the people of Tamworth having their busted souls repaired and tipped with copper on the sides that wear out first was most earnestly pointed out by the two divines; and if the local editors are not emulating Archie Forbes, many of the crowds who thronged in to be cobbled were Agnostics, Jews and Calithumpians. This is not by any means consoling. If a Jew ever gets into heaven, the first thing he'll do will be to start a pawn-shop. He must either do that or die of melancholy madness. And once the "spout" starts business, the Christians will crowd up like flies round a sugar-cask, and they'll pawn their wings, and harps, and procession regalia, until they haven't another dump, and then they'll be sold up for rent and evicted over the garden wall.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 28, Secular Hall, Drummond Street, Edinburgh:—Morning, "Judas Iscariot;" afternoon, "Bible Blasphemy;" evening, "Will Christ Save Us?"

Thursday, Oct. 2, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, at 8.30, "The Roots of Christianity.—I. The Soul." A formal invitation, with complimentary tickets, has been sent to the Christian Evidence Society; and ample opportunity will be allowed for discussion.

October 5, Liverpool: 9, Hall of Science, London; 12, Halifax; 14, Walworth; 16, Hall of Science, London; 18, Failsforth; 19, Manchester; 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; 7, South Shields; 9, Claremont Hall, London; 14, Oldham; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 21, Hall of Science, London; 28, Milton Hall, London.

January 4, Rochdale; 11, Huddersfield; 18 and 25, Milton Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. 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. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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:—Bradford Blasphemer, G. T., H. Two Radical Freethinkers, B. R. H., C. W., "Freidenker," Morgan Thomas, F. Hale.

J. W. (Stockton).—The local spouter is not worth the trouble of an answer, much less of a prosecution. We noticed his impudent effusion in the paper you refer to, but although they are distinctly libellous, we prefer to leave him severely alone.

D. ELLIS.—The parson's trick of asking for a silver collection at a nominally free sacred concert is a very common one.

ROUSE.—Good, but scarcely up to the mark.

J. W. GRANSHAW.—Thanks for the cuttings, and also for the pathetic little story.

R. WALLER.—We agree with you that the wide circulation of such trashy works as that you send us from the pen of Talmage proves there is still a great deal of work for Freethinkers.

H. L. D.—Thanks for the cuttings. We hope you have perfectly recovered.

ERNEST DEFARGE.—The sketch will probably appear.

J. BALDWIN.—An account of Thos. Woolston was given in No. 120, Nov. 20, 1883.

D. H.—See "Acid Drops."

A BRICKLAYER.—Our last week's cartoon was not intended as any imputation upon yourself and fellow-craftsmen. There was no law against 4½ in. work in the days of Solomon.

G. MORRISON.—Your compilation of jokes received with thanks.

KOSHER.—The passage in Ezekiel iv. is too filthy for illustration.

T. P. P. suggests that a hall should be taken at Stamford Hill and a price charged for admission, to prevent a repetition of the disgraceful scene of last Sunday. Mr. Foote will see if meetings cannot be held upon the ground occupied by the Christian savages.

E. R. ATHEIST.—We leave it to the theologians to decide whether Cain married his sister or an ape. Many thanks for your good wishes. It is a great pleasure to know that Freethought is extending among the fair sex.

T. D. HARRIS.—The joke about John the Baptist gobbling up the plague of locusts appeared in another form in our columns some time ago.

F. C. CULLIMORE.—The paragraph about the elopement of the Rev. W. S. Frackleton with a married woman has been contradicted.

ARTIST.—We are pleased to hear of the progress our views are making in obscure places.

W. B. DUNCAN.—We should feel obliged if you would send us the journal when you notice anything in our line.

SEVERAL answers to correspondents stand over in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in Scotland.

EXIGENCIES of space compel us to defer the conclusion of Mr. Foote's article.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Bulletin (Sydney)—Knowledge—Wellingborough News—Lucifer—Birmingham Daily Mail—Liberty—Boston Investigator—Liberator (Nos. 9, 10 and 11)—Health—Anti-Christian—Freeman's Journal—Philosophic Inquirer—Sporting Chronicle—Glasgow Herald—War Cry—Truth (Pittsburgh)—Hull Critic—Barrow News

SUGAR PLUMS.

"PROGRESS" for October will be an interesting number. It contains a complete tale translated from the Norwegian of Alexander Kielland; a paper on "Social Science and Socialism," by Dr. Aveling; a reply to Dr. Drysdale on "Malthusianism and the Race," by Mr. Jewel; a plan for the erection of dwellings for work-folk in London, by R. B. Holt; an account of Buddhist philosophy, by Mr. Wheeler; a scientific paper on Water, by W. W. Collins; two poems; the fourth instalment of Mr. Foote's "Prisoner for Blasphemy;" and a very

thoughtful paper on the "Exclusion of Placemen the Essence of Parliamentary Reform." All for threepence.

NEARLY the whole of Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Laoutsze and the Taou-Teh King," in the last number of *Progress* is reprinted in *Public Opinion* for September 19.

MR. FOOTE had a splendid reception at Glasgow last Sunday. Freethinkers and sympathisers flocked in from the surrounding districts, some driving all the way from Greenock. In the evening the hall was crowded to suffocation with a most enthusiastic audience, the lecturer being greeted with round after round of cheers as he stepped on the platform, and receiving an immense ovation at the close of his address. Mr. Foote was interviewed during the day by a representative of the *Glasgow Evening News*, and a report of two columns appeared in the Monday's issue of that enterprising journal.

THE Glasgow Secular Institute, in Ingram Street, is a great success under its present able management. So far from there being any loss, there is a handsome balance at the bankers after all liabilities are met. The fine commodious hall is open for lectures every Sunday, and the premises are in good use during the week. Freethought Societies in difficulties (fortunately their number is decreasing) should write to the Glasgow "saints" and ask how they do it.

THE magistrates of Ottawa, Canada, are likely to rue their bigotry. They refused to let Colonel Ingersoll have any hall, so that at one time he thought of chartering a steamer for delivering his lecture. However, the Theatre Royal was secured, but the authorities instructed the police to stop the proceedings. A large crowd assembled, anxious to hear the Colonel. Alderman Fell began to condemn his fellow magistrates for their attempt to frustrate free speech. He was enthusiastically cheered. The scene that followed beggars description. Windows and doors were smashed in, by which entrance was effected. The police were powerless to carry out their instructions. The crowd were with the lecturer, and were determined to hear him. After the police found they could not prevent the lecture going on, they contented themselves with endeavoring to keep order. Colonel Ingersoll will sue the Corporation of Victoria for heavy damages.

MR. SYMES is very busy in his new home. The *Liberator* is full of his contributions, and recent numbers report two debates with the Rev. D. M. Berry and the Rev. Canon Potter. The Christians seem more ready to submit their creed to discussion in Australia than in the mother country.

THE *Methodist* recently published some gratifying information. It appears that 44,089 new members joined the Wesleyan Methodist body during the past year; so that, allowing for 4,793 deaths, there should have been an increase of 39,296 members. On examination, however, it appears that the actual increase is only 3,378, which means that 35,918 members have "ceased to meet." That a large and powerful body such as that of the Wesleyan Methodists should have to confess to the loss in one year of almost 36,000 members is a fact which should give us great encouragement in our efforts to advance Freethought. Of course we do not mean to say that these thousands have left the ranks of Methodism for the ranks of Secularism; but it is not too much to say that an increasing number of Wesleyans are becoming dissatisfied with the narrow and dogmatic theology of Methodism, and are fast leaving it for more liberal Churches—in other words, are starting on the road which leads eventually to Secularism and to the substitution of natural ideals for supernatural, the amelioration of this earthly life instead of striving after one of which we know nothing.

LORD BRAMWELL recently remarked that the result of his many years' experience as a judge was that Sabbath-breaking was the beginning of all crimes, "because it was the most easy, most natural, and most rational of all things that a man, woman, or child could do. A child who was told that it was as wicked to break the Sabbath as to lie or steal, naturally got a very confused notion of morality." Lord Bramwell expresses a hope that "before long innocent amusements on Sunday, such as cricket and lawn-tennis, would be sanctioned by public opinion in this country."

CREMATION is one of the burning questions of the day, though the black brigade detest the very idea of it, because they perceive that it is destructive of soul as well as of body, and that it practically annihilates another burning question with which they delight to terrify weak-minded believers in immortality. The vast majority of Christians are intensely materialistic in their beliefs. They cannot imagine that a body reduced to ashes will rise again. Thus every case of cremation is a blow against common Christianity. At Milan the body of a priest more enlightened than usual, has just been cremated. The Rev. Don Giovanni Sartorio—shrewder than Garibaldi in this respect—left a will disinheriting his heirs if his instructions were not faithfully carried out. Eleven priests who officiated at the funeral withdrew in disgust when they found the body was to be committed to the flames. They carried their indignation to such an extent as actually to return their fees—an act hitherto unprecedented, we imagine, on the part of priests.

THE ROCK ON SCIENCE.

In an article entitled "Scientific Fancies," the *Rock* endeavors to demolish modern scientific theories in general and Darwinism in particular. It sees that of the many attacks made upon Christianity, "not the least dangerous are those made under cover of science;" and it acknowledges that among philosophic theories "few have been more permanent or popular than that of evolution." But so long as Darwinism flourishes and its advocates are "welcomed as leaders of thought," the *Rock* holds that it must continue to warn people of the true signification and tendency of the doctrine. These two points it proceeds to set forth.

The signification of the doctrine of Evolution is, as we might expect, somewhat over-stated and misrepresented, not intentionally, we believe, but more probably from the incompetence which the average pious mind necessarily displays when attempting to cope with the unusual or impossible task of accurate scientific discrimination and description. Darwinism does not quite proclaim, as the *Rock* puts it, that all forms of life have been evolved from a single original, but only that they have probably been evolved from a comparatively small number of original types, which may either have originated independently of each other, or, on the other hand, *may* quite possibly have been evolved from some single original form, or cell, or substance. In the second place, "these loose theorists," as the *Rock* complacently calls our scientific leaders of thought, do not attribute Evolution to "pure accident," nor adaptation of structure to "blind chance." They have the most profound belief in natural law, and none whatever in "chance," so that the "perfect prostitution of the cause of science" of which the *Rock* blindly and ignorantly accuses them on this ground is a crime of which they must be pronounced innocent.

The *Rock* assumes that Darwinians teach that "a giraffe was once a fish." Many Darwinians believe that the giraffe, in common with all mammalia, is descended from a fish, but in a serious discussion they would probably object to the loose popular conversational representation of descent as identity. If the editor of the *Rock* were told that he was once Adam and Eve, or that Queen Victoria was once Alfred the Great, he would readily see that this was a misstatement of the theory of descent in each case. Of course all mammalia at a very early period in their lives pass through a fish-like stage, but the *Rock* is not referring to embryology, but to genealogy only. If, indeed, the editor of the *Rock* were acquainted with the leading facts of embryology, he might possibly perceive that a change or development which actually and indisputably takes place in all the higher animals during a few months does not really become ridiculous or incredible when millions of years are allowed for the gradual transformation of living beings by means of Natural Selection and other influences. Evolution is a grand idea, a living truth, a wonderful explanation, and a trustworthy guide. Those who, like the *Rock*, regard it as "without proof," and as "a desert of theory without an oasis of fact to relieve it," merely show that they themselves are utterly incompetent to criticise the careful life-work of such men as Darwin or to appreciate the vast mass of facts which he and other scientific observers have collected in support of the most important doctrine or generalisation the world has yet seen.

When the *Rock* passes from the signification of the doctrine and deals with its *tendency*, it says much with which we thoroughly agree. It believes that "the sure tendency and avowed object of such pernicious doctrines is to lead us away from the clear and distinct Scriptural account of the Creation;" and it warns its readers that between Evolution and Creation "there can be no point of agreement." Nominal "Christians" who believe in Science and Evolution, rather than in Moses and Genesis, will do well to ask themselves if they are honest in retaining a name which they have really outgrown. Such time-servers or semi-Christians should take home to their consciences the truthful and outspoken declaration of the *Rock*:—

"With such plausibly destructive speculations we as Christians have nothing to do; to dally with them under a vague impression that they may be reconciled with true Christian theology is to deceive ourselves: whilst yielding to their fascination we may find that our faith is being secretly undermined. When would-be scientists put human nature before us in a form which, if pressed to its logical conclusion, would place the faculties of

man and of brutes on the same level, the gulf which separates them from Atheism is not very broad. Such writers are responsible for much of the infidelity of the day. . . . Evolution can have no place in the world of him who believes by faith 'that the worlds were framed by the Word of God,' and remembers that 'the Lord giveth not an account of any of his matters.'"*

The *Rock* also quotes the words of Darwin:—

"Science and Christ have nothing to do with each other. I do not believe that any revelation has ever been made."

When the *Rock* says further that "there is an end of moral responsibility" if we accept the teaching of Evolutionists, it assumes, as Christians commonly do, that morality cannot exist apart from religion. Those who maintain that by abolishing God we abolish all good, might just as reasonably conclude that by abolishing the Devil we have abolished all evil.

W. P. BALL.

G O D K N O W S !

How often, when overwhelmed with mental difficulties, driven almost to the verge of desperation by the fix in which he has been placed by the Freethinker, have we heard the theologian exclaim, as though apologising for his own ignorance or his deity's weakness, "Ah! Though I cannot answer your question, though man cannot solve such a problem, depend upon it, God can. My friend, 'God knows!'" With this avowal the discussion usually terminates; for though religious people believe in the infinite wisdom of God, they do not, as a rule, appear to think that he is at all anxious to impart any of it to them, or if so, he is in no hurry about it. But does God know? And suppose he does, what power has man of knowing it? Knowledge implies consciousness—intelligence and all human experience favors the idea that these qualities belong only to finite organised beings.

It is of little avail that the theologian says that he does not mean the same when he is speaking of wisdom as applied to God as when he is speaking of it in regard to man, but means something infinitely higher and better. This only shows that he uses language, not to express, but to hide his meaning. If God is not intelligent in the same sense as man and other organised beings, how are we to know that he is intelligent at all? Would it not be better to use some other words to describe the deity's attributes than those which express a definite idea when applied to man and some of the lower animals?

I have just come across some extraordinary sermons by Mr. M. A. Savage, minister in America of a kind of Pantheistic doctrine, which, I dare say, will be very acceptable to a certain school of rationalists in the States. The universe, in the mind of Mr. Savage, is God. Deity, therefore, is eternal and infinite. In addition to this, he is also conscious, intelligent, and infinitely powerful and good.

Very clever indeed is Mr. Savage's attempt to prove the consciousness, intelligence and goodness of his deity. He does it after this fashion. Quoting Matthew Arnold's favorite phrase, that there is perceptible in the universe a "stream of tendency," he tries to show that on the whole it is good, and in the general evolution of things there appears to be "a definite and intelligent line of movement, as though, at any rate, there was a will manifested in, and propelling, the entire course of universal progress." Wherever there was will there was consciousness, and, from the stupendous order perceptible in the universe, he argued that there was also intelligence and goodness.

"All I know," said the eloquent preacher, "of human intelligence outside myself is just this—that the words and actions of people outside of me do correspond to the logical and rational order of my own thought. Now, then, I look abroad over the universe, over its past history and its present condition, and do I not see everywhere a most stupendous order—from the chemical constituents and their relations that make up a drop of water; from the orderly arrangement of leaves upon the branch of a tree; from the marvellous and inflexible order and arrangement of the parts that make up a crystal, clear up to the sweep of stars and constellations over my head—everywhere a stupendous, an infinite, a majestic order, a movement that corresponds, just so far as I can rise to the magnificent idea of it, to the logical and rational order of my thought?"

* Job xxxiii., 13; but two words are changed and one inserted. If a Freethinker were to quote texts in this loose way, he would at once be accused of garbling the Word of God.

If, then, I have a right to say that man is intelligent, I have an infinitely grander right to say that there is intelligence, or that which transcends what we mean by that word, in the universe. God, then, wills, and God is an intelligent being."

Having sought to show that death, sickness, pain, etc., are either not evils, or are produced by man's folly and ignorance, and not by deity at all, he proceeds in the same eloquent strains to demonstrate his God's goodness.

But before we glance at these arguments, the reader should understand that Mr. Savage's God is by no means the popular God. Very few orthodox theologians would consider the universe worthy of worship, or as manifesting those qualities which Mr. Savage ascribes to his deity. If the universe is God, the question is—Is the universe as a whole intelligent? If at any point there can be shown something that is destitute of intelligence, then by that much the universe is not infinitely intelligent. So far as human experience goes, Nature appears to be only intelligent in some of her modes.

Nor can it be said that the universe *per se* displays absolute and perfect order. Nature is absolutely reckless in her mode of operation, and as many of her actions might be fairly described as disorderly or inharmonious as can rightly be described as orderly. But if God is conscious and intelligent and good, what use does he make of these attributes? Surely he knows that there are thousands who doubt his existence; does he try to convince them? Surely he knows that there are moral evils that need remedying; that thousands of our sisters' lives are sacrificed on the altars of selfishness and vice; that there are still many slaves who yearn for freedom; that might often overcomes right; that many from ignorance ruin themselves and injure others; and that in the name of God the most horrible crimes have been perpetrated that have stained the history of man—and surely if he knows this, his goodness ought to prompt him to remove these evils, and being all-powerful he could do it if he would.

It is worse than useless for the theologian to tell us that "God knows" this or that, unless he can also satisfy us that he acts up to his knowledge. Nobody thinks of calling a man wise unless he gives mankind the benefit of his wisdom; and intelligence, wisdom, goodness, power, whether of small or large degree, are of little worth to the possessor unless they are employed to extinguish misery and promote happiness, and this whether they are the qualities of a God or of a man. ARTHUR B. MOSS.

JAHVEH INTERVIEWED.

"You are just, Father Jahveh," the young man said,
"And peace and goodwill is your teaching;
But sinners you'll fry till eternity's sped—
Can you reconcile that with your preaching?"

"In the days of my youth," the Almighty returned,
"I was angry with what I created;*
And in seeing some thousands of millions burned
My natural resentment is sated."

"You are true, Father Jahveh, and hate and abhor
Him that loveth and maketh a lie;
Yet David and Jacob, and one or two more,
Could always on favor rely!"

"When a man is my favorite," Jahveh replies,
"His morals are apt to be free;
And cheating, adultery, murder and lies
Are convenient for them and for me."

"You are pure, Father Jahveh, and don't understand
The 'way of a man with a maid';†
But you trespassed on Joseph the carpenter's land,
And his bride you seduced and betrayed!"

"I won't condescend to a man of your stamp—
You think yourself dreadfully clever!
I am that I am, you impertinent scamp;
Be off, or I'll damn you for ever!"

R. K.

A RELIGIOUS weekly tells "how to keep from going to sleep in church." One way is to change your minister; but the most effective way is to go fishing in the morning and remain home at night to rest.

* Gen. vi, 7. † Prov. xxx, 19.

THE OTHER SIDE OF NATURE.

PRINCE KRAPOTKIN has been relieving the tedium of his imprisonment by experimenting with a favorite kitten. On showing it a mirror it immediately went behind it in search of the kitten reflected therein. "But," says the *Daily News*, in a leading article, whose light humor is mixed with a fair amount of philosophy, "after Prince Krapotkin's cat had got behind the mirror and found that there was no kitten there, she did not waste her time in empty speculation, questioning the universe, and dashing her intellect vainly against the craggy and irresponsive nature of things. To have done so would have been unworthy of the most practical of animals. . . . 'When it discovered that there was no cat behind the mirror it went away and did not concern itself about the matter any more.' Ah, what a lesson to vain inquiring man, who, for all these many years since he began to be, has been asking what there is behind the mirror—behind this glowing glass of colors and shapes that the universe holds up to us. We unluckily cannot get behind the mirror, but we might by this time have determined, like the cat, not to concern ourselves with the matter any more." For *feline reflection behind a mirror* we must read *anthropomorphic God, etc., behind the universe*. The lesson in practical Agnosticism then becomes perfectly plain.

A FUNNY MISTAKE.

AN elderly lady with delicate features and refined manners entered the custom-house yesterday with timid steps. It was evident that she had never been there before, and she seemed bewildered by the whirl, bustle and clatter of the rotunda. The doorkeeper directed her to the desk where she could transact her business. This was of a nature that required—as nearly everything at the custom-house does—an oath.

"You'll have to swear to this, madam," said the deputy collector to the old lady. Her pious countenance became very thoughtful and troubled at this announcement. She said nothing, but anxiously watched the deputy collector make out her papers. This done, he said:

"Do you swear to this, madam?"

The old lady had clearly made up her mind that it was necessary for her to pass the ordeal. So, with a sweet but hesitating voice, she replied:

"God have mercy on me—damn it."

The deputy collector was dumbfounded by this reply, but a glance at the lady assured him of her sincerity. She had mistaken "swearing" for profanity, and had actually believed that it was necessary for her to utter a "swear word" in order to get her papers.—*New York World*.

PROFANE JOKES.

"SPEAKING of the sagacity of animals," said Mr. Marrowfat, "I never knew that our dog Bruno had much intelligence until last Sunday, when he followed us to church and slipped unobserved into the pew." "I should rather accept that as an evidence of his piety," interrupted the visitor. "What proof did he give of his sagacity?" "Why, he slept during the whole sermon."

A YOUNG gentleman while calling on his girl asked for her hand and heart and was accepted. He told her that he had had something on his mind for a long time, but was afraid she would get mad. Says he: "I have two brothers in the penitentiary." "That's nothing," replied she; "I have two brothers in a theological seminary."

"YOU had better make haste with your breakfast, deacon" said his wife, "or we'll be to late for church. Don't you want a cup of coffee?" "No I guess not," the good old deacon replied. "Coffee keeps me awake."

Mrs. Rambotham has been getting up poetry lately. *Apropos* of some warm theological discussion, she came out with—

For forms of faith let graceful zealots fight,
He can't be wrong who's always in the right.

"WHAT was cats made for, mother?" asked a Somerville little boy, who had been scratched by a household tabby. "Cats made for? Well, I suppose, to kill mice." "Who made 'em?" "God made them." "What was mice made for?" "For some purpose, I suppose. For cats to catch, perhaps." "Did God make the mice, too?" "He did. He made all things." "Well, if the cats is made for catchin' mice, God wouldn't needed to make cats if he hadn't made any mice, would he?" "No, I suppose not." "What did he make 'em for, then?" "Make what?" "The mice." "Child, it's time for you to go to school. Hurry, or you will be late."

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